

THE MODERN AFRICA WOMAN: AN AID TO SUCCESS OF PAN AFRICANISM

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INTRODUCTION

Africa is home to all who address themselves as people of Africa descent; she is an entity that has fostered a variety of ideologies that were and are proffered by foreign countries that has further foiled the growth of the quest for full Africa freedom and development. The colonial rule in ancient Africa interrupted African political system as they fostered policies that drove African politics to extinct. Ancient African politics practiced Africanism but the interruption ostracized Africanism; the extinct state of Africanism and the grave effects felt by Africans during colonial rule aroused the Pan-Africanist movement to help salvage and promote Africanism among Africans. As a philosophy, Pan-Africanism represents the aggregation of the historical, cultural, spiritual, artistic, scientific, and philosophical legacies of Africans from past times to the present. Pan-Africanism as an ethical system traces its origins from ancient times, and promotes values that are the product of the African civilizations and the struggles against slavery, racism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism (Falola and Essien, 2013¹). Legume, a journalist according to Tesema (2014²) defined Pan-Africanism as an expression of a sense of unity and solidarity among the up-rooted Africans in the Diaspora since they felt homeless and were subjected to alien cultures.

According to Padmore (1956³), Pan-Africanism was a reaction against the oppression of the black people and the racial doctrines since the period of slavery and the slave

¹ Falola, T., & Essien, K. (2013). Introduction. In *Pan-Africanism, and the Politics of African Citizenship and Identity* (pp. 1-10). Taylor and Francis. DOI: [10.4324/9780203725030](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203725030)

² Tesema, T. (2014). Pan-Africanism: A historiographical analysis. *EJSSLS*, 1 (1), 63-77.

³ Padmore, George. *Pan-Africanism or Communism? The Coming Struggle for Africa*. London: D. Dobson, 1956.

trade. For him it began from a movement for self-assertion and resistance to enslavement. His definition in fact refers to the origin of the ideas and the earliest movement beyond the year 1900 which is often referred to as a turning point for the beginning of an organized Pan-African movement. Another writer, Esedebe (1982⁴) cited in Tesema (2014) strongly criticized scholars who defined Pan-Africanism as an irrational concept, emotional and depicted it as a racial movement. He remarked that there has not been universally accepted definition of Pan-Africanism. He also underscored that the term Pan-Africanism was not coined when the movement began. It was rather named after it had established itself like a child that is named after birth. Consequently, he defined Pan-Africanism as a political and cultural phenomenon that regard Africans and African descendants abroad as a unit. He asserted that the movement glorified the African past and indicated pride in African values. He argued that the desire for unity and African pride did not change from the beginning (Esedebe,1982, pp. 5-21 in Tesema, 2014).

Pan Africanism is an ideology that was agitated by many and diverse Pan-Africanists, nationalists, political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, journalists and historians who descended in various part of the world; they drove the vehicle of Pan Africanism with what they experienced in their residential abode. The slave prone status of African states in ancient Africa emanated some Pan-Africanist in Africa and this was rationale to many other Pan-Africanists' engagements in the Pan-Africanism struggle. Many see the evolution of Pan-Africanism as an ideology that agitated the freedom interest of leaders such as Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, W. E. B. Du Bois, and others in the Diaspora. However, it was an ideology that fostered the emancipation movement; this movement entailed predominantly people from the Diaspora (people of African heritage living outside of the Continent). The rise of Pan-Africanism was attributed by many as a movement that is racial bound i.e. trying to uphold the Black race above the other races of the world. Pan-Africanism was driven to combat solely the superiority strides of Western countries on Black people on and off Black soil; the inequality promoted by Western states drove Black people in anguish and in spirit of vengeance so as to re-claim Black independence and development. The spirit to ensure Black people reclaims their independence

⁴ Esedebe, P. O. (1982). *The Pan Africanism: The Idea and the Movement*. Washington D. C. : Howard University Press.

called for musicians, human activists, world celebrities, scholars both from Africa and foreign abode to spread the gospel of Black freedom and equality.

In 1961, Panikkar in his book indicated that Pan-Africanism came into existence in 1900 by the blacks of African descent in the West Indies and the United States. He portrayed Pan-Africanism as an African-American movement for social equality and the need to look for the land of their forefathers. Panikkar provided detailed information on the origin of Pan-African movement and had also compared and contrasted Pan-Africanism with the Jewish Zionism (Panikkar, 1961⁵ in Tesema, 2014). Tesema (2014) cited Legum (1962⁶) who has already been mentioned earlier, he wrote a book on Pan-Africanism where he provided a fairly complete description on the origin, development and the long-term consequences of the movement on Africa. He traced the roots of Pan-Africanism to the Black settlers in the New World, and like Panikkar (1961) he compared it with Zionism based on their formation in the Diaspora (Legum, 1962 in Tesema, 2014). In the same year, *Pan-Africanism Reconsidered*, a book edited by the American Society of African Culture, contributed a detailed historical account on the subject. The work dealt with the roots of the movement and its growth in the United States, Europe and later in Africa. Moreover, it underlined that W.S. Williams of the West Indies and W.E.B. DuBois of the USA were the pioneers of the Pan-African Movement (American Society of Culture, 1962⁷ in Tesema, 2014). During the early inception of the of Pan-Africanism ideology; it was driven in different forms (art, literature, music, and media and with different calibers of people (musicians, human rights activists, religious scholars among other groups of people across the world); these people persisted and still persist in the struggle to uphold the values and heritage of the Black people. They have portrayed efforts to eliminate racism and poverty-prone programme through their songs, conferences, seminars, awareness campaigns, protests to ensure the message of freedom and unity is disseminated globally.

Before the formation of Pan-Africanist Movement, there were various African-inclined groups such as the Sons of Africa, this was a political group addressed by Quobna Ottobah Cugoano in the 1791 edition of his book “Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery”; the

⁵ Panikkar, K. (1961). *Revolution in Africa*. Bombay: New York.

⁶ Legum, C. (1962). *Pan-Africanism: A short political guide*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger.

⁷ American Society of African Culture (ed). *Pan-Africanism reconsidered*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962

Universal Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.) under leadership of Marcus Garvey; the Niagara Movement, a group of African-American activists who wanted equal rights for blacks under the leadership of Du Bois and host of others in Diaspora. These groups have an ideology in common which was Pan-Africanism; thus, they united their efforts to evolve the Pan-African Movement. Pan-Africanism as an ideology of the Black race can be trace back to the 1897 where it was renamed from the African Association; this strive was made by Henry Sylvester-Williams, who organized the First Pan-African Conference in London in 1900. In 1900, the Trinidadian barrister (Henry Sylvester Williams) called a conference that took place in Westminster Hall, London to “protest stealing of lands in the colonies, racial discrimination and deal with other issues of interest to Blacks”; this conference drafted a letter to the Queen of England and other European rulers appealing to them to fight racism and grant independence to their colonies (Lubin, 2014;<http://www.padeap.net/the-history-of-pan-africanism>). Consequently, there were five Pan-African Congresses that gave boost to Pan-Africanism; the 1919 congress held in Paris, France which was convened by the African American scholar and writer, Dr. William Edward Burghardt (W.E.B.) Du Bois, he also demanded independence for African nations; the 1921 congress held in London; the 1923 Congress held in London and Lisbon; the 1927 Congress held in New York and the 1945 Congress held in Manchester.

Also, the first All-Africa People's Conference at Accra in December 1958 agitated Pan-Africanism in Africa; it is for this movement that Dr. Nkrumah claims Ghana has a special destiny. The independence of Ghana (March, 1957) and until the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU, May 1963); Ghana became the focal point of the struggle for the movement for African Unity, and Kwame Nkrumah became its standard-bearer. Later, after the death of Kwame Nkrumah in 1972; Muammar Gaddafi assumed the mantel of leader of the Pan-Africanist movement and became the most outspoken advocate of African Unity (Martin, 2012⁸). He consistently strived towards establishing the dream United States of Africa before his demise on October, 2011. The standing fame of Pan-Africanism by Kwame Nkrumah emanated other Pan-Africanist leaders who included Sékou Ahmed Touré, Ahmed Ben Bella, Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, Amilcar Cabral, and Patrice Lumumba who were in various ways fought relentlessly for Africa independence.

⁸ Martin, G. (2012). *African Political Thought*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan

The ethics and laws of Pan-Africanism today are seen much more as cultural and social philosophy rather than the politically driven movement of the past.. Pan-African consciousness under the auspices of Pan Africanism ideology to a promising pace has been in the awakening of Black people world-wide to see themselves in one accord and drive their efforts in a united fold. It has contemporarily fostered the drum of unending war against post-colonialism and in-depth mental slavery in Africa. No doubt, the presence of the Africa women engagement in Pan Africanism has be down-casted by Africa societal cultural and philosophical disparities; Africa women have often be discouraged with the adverse effects of engaging in Pan Africanism struggle. Some of these women see the Pan Africa struggle as the Africa-man's responsibility and sole obligation; they have failed to see their worth in the struggle of Pan Africanism. The contemporary Africa women have seem to be waking up to the reality of their involvement in Pan Africanism; this is envisaged in many Pan African groups where women are ensued to be driven in veritable roles in the organization.

Though, there are few women in modern day Pan Africanism, but they seem to be more committed and dedicated; this is because they are ready to venture in the planned programs and activities without fear or favour unlike most Africa men who join the Pan African struggle for fame, wealth and power. The modern Africa woman is no doubt a much needed tool for the success of Pan Africanism and its mapped out goals. This paper tends to portray the vital role of modern Africa women in Pan Africanism as well its correspondent issues.

THE BLACK-WOMAN: THE NEEDED PAN-AFRICAN

The word Black is synonymous with strength and power as well as the zeal to be relentless in any endeavour till whatever aim that it strives is achieved. Many have been acclaimed as Black men and women, as some had enjoyed the benefits of being Black as well suffered grave consequences of being Black. To be a Black man is not an easy task; as Black men and women, we are hard-working fellows, aim-achievers, innovators. It is a good thing that many have called out to be Black men and women or chosen to foster Blackism and it is a promising fact that the Black race is near full Uhuru (Freedom). The Black woman is one that must rationally think and be courageous in attending to matters that affect the Black race; she

must be patriotic and be ready to persevere at all expense to ensure she attains the goal of Pan Africanism. The Black-woman is one that ventures in activities that drive towards re-claiming Black ancestral knowledge; acknowledges that the possession of ancestral knowledge will build in Black people the immune gadgets that will remove western civilization and install a new dawn of Black civilization. She is one that is anxious to patronize and accept Africa values, beliefs, ethics and norms; an individual who is against xenophobic attacks among Africans and ready to invest her resources in the growth of Africa.

Consequently, for one to be reckoned as a Black- woman, one should possess or dwell in the following features:

- One that is capable of promoting activities that will encourage black people towards the full exercise of African human spirit, the re-awakening of all its inventive, creative and moral capacities.
- One that can stand against all acts of racial contempt and conflict, exclusion, discrimination and intolerance.
- One that can encourage in researches on African traditions and culture.
- One that can internalize and create realistic approach towards providing solutions for Africans problems.
- One that can enhance and promote the image of Black power all over the world.

CONSTRAINTS FOILING WOMEN ACTIVENESS IN PAN-AFRICANISM

The struggle of Pan-African groups for Africa development revolves around sacrificial actions and services that tend to establish a standard of living for Africans. Explicitly, Pan Africanism is an ideology that all Africa people must adopt and foster if truly they want to be salvaged; this is because it revolves around the principles, techniques as well as prospects of imbibing consciousness and patriotic values in the Africa populace. Many groups have evolved in this likelihood but not all have excelled, this is because they have driven their affairs in disarray; we all must have one goal “United Africa State”. Because when the Africa State is united the success of the Pan Africa struggle is inevitable, consciousness is sure and development will be established. All Pan African groups must ensure their programs and modus

operandi is driven towards uniting all Africa States; differences of any nature must be set aside and one heart must be accommodated. Truly, the Black people are awake and they are pushing forward for the much needed UNITY.

Unfortunately, some Pan Africans have seen the establishment of these Pan African groups as a means of survival, they place their daily requests and needs on the Pan Africa organization. This has resulted in their exploration for support, sponsorship and recognition; Pan Africanism expects your selfless and undoubted devotion and commitment, this implies you should not expect anything in return but rather the achievement of the goal. Consequently, most Pan Africans who are at the fore-front are unemployed and this has made them engage in public recognition and deceitful measures to source for funds so as to earn a living. Beloved Black people, Pan Africanism will dwindle if it is be piloted in this fold; we cannot allow the likes of these sort of Pan Africans to lead at the fore-front because they are subjected to be easy sell-outs, they can afford to destroy a Pan African group that took years and resources to build just for mere stipends that will be consumed for a few months.

Pan Africanism solely requires your Africa heart and nothing more and if truly you have given your consent to Africa, no matter your condition you will never sell Africa out; we are at this state today because of the sell-outs some of our ancestors perpetuated and we must leave this stage for a better stand by dissociating from the sell-out culture. In Pan Africanism, everyone is rich no matter your state; this is because you are independent in all ramifications and cannot beg for external aids or resources. The day you plead for support that day you lose your independence and when your independence is gone you are subjected to slavery and this will be your state till you pick up the mantle and go to combat and acquire your independence. This is sound warning to the spies in our midst, the traitors at the fore-front and the devil incarnate in our thoughts to beware, retreat and reappraise themselves because when you are caught no mercy; the Africa land is divinely secured and her people are groomed under this divinity, thus the presence of these hungry sell-outs Pan Africans will be severely addressed by God who knows all. It is not too late to reappraise your actions and thoughts, this is because the Black struggle needs you and you have no choice but to join the struggle in total devotion and commitment.

However, there are envisaged problems constraining Africa women in this struggle and they range from social problems, economic problems and political problems to religious problems. And this had gravely hindered the steadfast of members of Pan-African groups. These constraints that are driven under the afore-mentioned umbrellas include corruption among Pan-African leaders, political instability in Pan-African leadership, tribalism, nepotism, cronyism in Pan-African governance, embezzlement of national resources for members for Pan-African groups, electoral malpractices in emerging Pan-African leaders, religious segregations, dishonesty and terrorism among others too numerous to mention. Similarly, the negative concepts disseminated in African schools without due consideration of the Africans' culture and traditions; the persistent cold war among African tribes in the Nigeria terrain; the decline in the public campaign for the use of intellects for productivity; have posed as constraints foiling Pan-African groups in driving their affairs in Pan-Africanism.

THE CONTEMPORARY AFRICA WOMAN'S ROLE IN PAN AFRICANISM QUEST FOR UNITY IN AFRICA

The Pan African struggle is driven to uniting the Africa people, this is to ensure oneness in the struggle against post-colonialism; there have be watch-out of things happening in and outside our terrain; it baffles one to say we have one unique problem in Africa and in Diaspora "DISUNITY". Let it be noted that all the issues and problems facing us Africa people, be it corruption, religious intolerance, economic differences, territorial disputes, tribal conflicts among others are products of DISUNITY. Observing disunity as the mother of Africa problems, it is important to address MENTAL SLAVERY as the father of Africa problems. Africa is now a land filled with visionless people as we are often pushed to any direction that we are made to perceive is fit for development; we disagree to see such a lane as misappropriate and often devote our whole time and resources to the much desired lane. Beloved, a variety of impediments have be put in place by western powers to ensure we are made to be happy at the moment at the expense of our future; we have be made to decide to live happy now and suffer later. It is pertinent to note that this generation has be more victims of western politricks as their minds have be purchased; the contemporary Africans have little or no control over their minds and this impregnated disunity and gave birth to the numerous problems facing Africa.

However, the contemporary Africa land according to the present day Pan Africans is at the verge of acquiring Africa full freedom; but the questions are: Have the present day Pan Africans exhibited immense sign of UNITY among themselves? Have they been responsible for their actions? Have they agreed to stand true to their values and norms? Have they agreed to support themselves in times of stress? Have they agreed to uphold the ethics and principles that bind them? Have they agreed to combat any form of distraction that tends to foil their struggle? It is time we examine ourselves PAN AFRICANS, if we are really WALKING the TALK or we are employees under the payrolls of western powers; let it be noted that it is better to get of the PAN AFRICAN struggle than to be in pretence because you are more dangerous than the enemy itself. PAN AFRICANISM is an ideology that requires immense level of patriotism to Africa and her people; as PAN AFRICANS we are Africa soldiers and it is our duty to ensure Africa and her people are safe. When there is any form of unrest or threat either within or external, we must see to the safety of the Africa land and her subjects; PAN AFRICANISM also buttress the right to combat the inside enemy, Africa people have be the tools for Africa destruction and we must first combat the enemy within and with this we can get fact of the external enemy.

If truly this is what Pan Africanism is all about, then the various Pan African groups must come together in one accord to fight the enemy within; no doubt, in any Pan Africa group, we have at least an enemy within. Thus, the united fold of Pan African groups will call for an examination that will drift out the enemies within and then shall we stand in one accord, one belief, one vision and one mission to combating the external enemy. I must stress it here that **“No victory will be achieved against the external enemy if we fail to extinct the internal enemy”**. The question that begs to be asked, who is more suitable to check-mate the enemy within and propagate the much unity in Africa; and solemnly the contemporary Africa woman is the answer. The contemporary Africa woman is capable of surfacing the hidden tools responsible for foiling and defacing Pan Africanism; the woman they say can destroy and repair in a twinkle of an eye. This is because they have the requisite skills to poke out what is hidden in a man. The contemporary Africa woman is a veritable tool in addressing Pan Africans’ woes and unity prospects. They are good assets in disseminating the gospel of Pan Africanism to the younger Africa generation;

In this regard, the author Umudjere Sunday Oghenebrorhie (Umudjere Africaman) begs to join other comrades for the call for the enlistment of contemporary Africa women in Pan Africa groups and thus establish a more formidable team that will see to the success of the affairs and aspirations of Pan African groups geared towards the attainment of Africa full freedom and development. On the wisdom of our relentless ancestors shall we strive, the virtues of our holy land shall we be steadfast and to the fate of our holy land (Africa) shall we be conscious.

Long live Africa

Long live all Africa patriots

Long live Pan Africanism