



Women & Family

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Amina Sambo: Care, the shade of womanhood

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WOMANHOOD is sublime and it has purpose that is equally sublime. The essence of womanhood that radiates compassion and care can remove the negativities of time, brighten the path of virtue and enliven our humanism. Where compassion and care are needed, womanhood is the central focus. So graciously has this heavenly value been used to comfort many in desperate and dire situation.

If compassion and care are central to womanhood, what explanation is there for their sudden disappearance in our world of today despite the growing population of women? The truth is that when compassion revolves around our immediate families and relations it is still in short supply. Care is truly expensive to give because one has to demonstrate the will to extend it to the larger world, beyond our immediate families and relations. No segment of the human race is not in need of care. It is the will to extend it beyond our families and relations that is the expensive side to it. It is this expensive will that Hajiji Amina Namadi Sambo, the wife of the executive governor of Kaduna state has come to herself with such admiring ease and sparkling flow that has caught the attention of many.

As a woman with a disciplined orientation, rich in value and at positive ends with the luxuries of life yet she feels unfulfilled in retaining and circulating her fortunes around her immediate family and relations. This is the aspect that reconnects her present status and activities with what she has been doing for a long time now - hearkening to the need of the vulnerable in and out of public glare and devoid of ostentatious profligacy.

Hajiji Amina Namadi Sambo may pass for a quiet, unassuming and harmless woman but the originality of the essential features that defines her woman personality has never been mistaken even in her younger days. She has a long history of philanthropic tendencies. Her long standing relationship with the less privileged class provides the drive that captures her noble features of plain womanhood sustained by care and compassion. Her arrival on

the scene today as the first lady of Kaduna state and her burning desire to effect a change in the lives of the vulnerable segment of our society can only be described as timely because the world of today is sick and afflicted on many fronts.

The many afflictions of the world of today e.g. cruelty, domestic violence, poverty, disease, HIV/AIDS, slavery, child labour and human trafficking can be traced to the loss of one basic human value which not only sustains life but makes life meaningful. The world has lost care and compassion in its conscience. If every one in the world of today absorbs and disseminates these precious human values to close and distant neighbours, the world would have been better than what it is today. Care is the shade around which womanhood revolves. It is the shade of care and compassion that sustains a helpless child in her mother's womb and obviously it is the first experience of life everyone has received.

Ever since the idea of first lady and the activities that goes with it assumed dominant role in our polity, variations in message, method and approach have continued to trail the activities of first ladies across the length and breadth of Nigeria. For any whose turn it is to answer the exalted name of 'Her Excellency' a pet project is floated either to offer assistance to the vulnerable members of our society or address a persistent societal ill. But the clear distinction of exceptional excellence is when an idea is conceived that is different in form and content and whose message revolves around a fundamental concept that is central to the essence of our nature and humanism. This offers more interesting insight into the originality, sustainability and credibility. Ideas, however, noble they may be can suffer sudden death if poorly conceived on a faulty concept.

Hajiji Amina Sambo made a significant departure from all that came be-

fore her when she conceived a project whose driving philosophy and concept are built around the essence of womanhood which is care. Womanhood is rooted in care and compassion.

It is supposed that in the hi-tech world of today and against the illusion of repetition of what already exist programmes must be thoroughly conceived via planned action, weighed and balanced against constraints and likely hitches before they are translated into action. When this is done, digestion and absorption of various planned action into various channels of execution become easy and success guaranteed.

Amina Sambo seemed to have embraced this challenge from the start. She

excellence that she has scored.

Amina's intention to extend her message beyond her borders of her immediate environment is a lesson in time borne out of the realization that humanity after all share common values. In the bid to export and extend the depth of her message of care to close and distant needy environment, she recently initiated and pioneered a coalition of Northern Governor's Wives Forum to discuss issues that affect women and children. The world of today as a global village is in need of such initiatives that galvanize support for export to distant neighbours which will eventually reach humanity as a whole. With the interest shown by international organizations and other agencies in her programme, the export content of her message is obviously close to the global neighbours of the human race.

As one who believes that the show of compassion must graduate from the local trend of paltry donations at festive occasions or on request in dire situation and circumstances, her frequent unscheduled visits to hospitals to comfort the sick and offer gift items are eloquent testimonies to all that have been said about this noble woman.

Recently, she waded in to relieve the family of one Garba Mohammed from Tudun-Wada who has been having a long running battle of land dispute with Kaduna South Local Government. On account of her intervention, a powerful committee was set up by the council of works in the local government to investigate and handle the issue with the ministry of land and survey. The cost of the land was put at N5, 250,000 which she personally gave the family as settlement for the land. At chosen occasions, she orders for provision of exercise books, writing materials and computers to schools without formal request. Such unsolicited provision of succour and relief to the needy are issues that revolve around the magic of womanhood in care-needing situations.

Though her programme centres principally on assistance to the vulnerable groups, she has classifications of vulnerable people, each with specific attention, given in a manner that accom-

modates the basic message of care. For example, talented children whose parents lacked the means to sponsor their education fall in her definition of vulnerable group. She has evolved a way of fishing out these groups and taking the burden of sponsorship off the shoulders of their parents. On account of the many sides to her programme and the need to pursue all identified areas needing attention, she has itemized some of her planned actions as short and long term. Those that will take time to realize have been enlisted as future programmes and all that are necessary to make an effective start are currently under study and they include: The building of model school that would provide free and compulsory basic education to the less privileged; The building of skills acquisition and adult centres; The setting up of youth-friendly and adult education centres; The evolving of a continuous training programme in various vocation trades for women and youth.

The activities of a woman like Amina whose philosophy of assistance is built on care can obviously not be narrowed down to what we are too used to in the past. Like paltry donations and gift items at chosen occasion and festive periods. Her's is an all-season activities as they come bound by time and demand. This is why one would not be surprised to learn that she has been involved in paying the fines of convicts with minor offences and ensure that they are rehabilitated and integrated back into the society.

Her elaborate approach to the persistent problem encountered by the weaker segment of the society particularly women and children and the physically challenged bears eloquent testimony to the extensive research work she carried out before embarking on this course that is set to leave a mark in the sand of time.

Rather than just maintain an official unit with overlapping congestion of administrative chores doling out paltry donations she has several units, each tasked with different functions in the overall interest of aiding the realization of her noble objective. Such units include library, information and project evaluation and monitoring, administration and counseling. These units provide easy channels for reaching out to all target groups and stakeholders. This is to generate a sustainable tempo of activities as the project expands which can be guided to conclusion in the course of time.

Education, awareness and knowledge of the convection of times are necessary in a fast changing world of today; moroso when one seeks to address a societal problem that is common to the human race of this generation. Her decision to incorporate the essential elements of the media through publication of journals, articles and recently the publication of the book, 'HIV/AIDS and the Nigerian Youth' is another significant chapter added to the elaborate approach she has taken to confront the challenges ahead. She is bent on exploiting the crucial role of media creation in generating awareness and expanding the boundaries and content of her message. In the task of enriching the details of her message and the length to which she has decided to take it to, she saw the need to enroll herself for various national and international workshops and seminars relevant to her programme. The overall objective of this is to feed back her experience to advance the course of her programme.

In the direction she is going, with the speed, zeal and courage applied we have no doubt that the concept of 'care' she invented and the shade of 'her woman personality that accommodates it, the improved living condition of the vulnerable group she has identified will further enrich the content and contribution of the activities of first ladies in our national life.

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HAJIJI AMINA NAMADI

SAMBO involved a treasured item (care) that is in harmony with the desire of nature, essence of womanhood and life itself. Her pet project christened 'I Care Women and Youth Initiative' is a warm embrace of the true concept of womanhood with practical attractions that accommodate the reality of our society. To conceive an idea whose moral value defines the content and character of the woman personality is the first point of

HOPE Africa donates items to St. Gerald's hospital, church

HOPE Africa, a non-governmental organization has donated medical equipment/supplies, Christmas cloths and spiritual books to St. Gerald's Catholic Hospital and Holy Family Catholic Church in Kaduna respectively.

The donations which is part of activities lined up to mark the 3rd World Elders Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) and 18th International Day for Older People 2008 were made by a representative of HOPE Care Services, U.S.A., Mr. Francis F. John, who was in the country to make the

corporate organisations and individuals.

On the choice of St. Gerald's Hospital, he disclosed that a Nigerian friend visited the country from Kansas, Missouri, U.S.A. and had to rush his (friend's) wife to the hospital for medical attention; but the lack of necessary equipment to take care of her made him resolve to share the experience with friends and associates in America who rallied round to ensure that the items were sourced and supplied.

According to him, HOPE Africa is an NGO founded in 2000 by Africans

in Europe and America and registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission, to provide adequate and essential services to African aged and people with disabilities. He added that as part of its achievements, HOPE Africa was an appointed delegate by Nigerian government to draft the first ageing policy which is currently before the National Assembly. He said HOPE will source for more items to assist needy individuals and bodies.

Receiving equipment for St. Gerald's, Rev. Sister Theresa Dung commended the NGO for the items

which she said will go a long way to assist in taking care of accident victims and rehabilitation of others.

The hospital, she said, caters for all patients without discrimination, and therefore appealed for more assistance considering the large population that troops into the hospital for care.

Items donated include wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, blood pressure measuring and testing equipment etc, while Holy Family Church received cloths and spiritual books amongst others.

presentations as international requirement of the NGO.

Speaking to newsmen after the donation at St. Gerald's Hospital, Mr. John said other activities include distribution of survey questionnaires to pensioners, retirees and people with disabilities and hospitals to ascertain their needs, and help required, adding that certificates of recognition were also presented to international partners.



Representative of HOPE USA, Mr. Francis John (2nd left) during the presentation of equipment to St. Gerald's Hospital, Kaduna. Right is Rev. Sister Theresa Dung, Administrator of the hospital and others.



... Mr. Francis John (right) presenting cloths and books to officials of Holy Family Catholic Church.