

In the Margins of Political Power: Rewriting women into history

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Abstract

History is biased towards men. The prevalence of history as gender biased is central to the marginalization of women in different folds. Although African women were an integral part of the liberation struggle, nationalist movements, women's movements, and development their contributions were omitted in historical narratives. Although women fought alongside men, they were later not accorded the same recognition. Women are also missing in monuments and symbolic artifacts, despite their contribution to national developments. Notwithstanding their omission in historical political narratives, women assumed leadership roles as healers, rainmakers, queens, chiefs and war veterans. Post independence women are found in the margins of political leadership. The absence of women in public memorials and omission in history inadvertently validates the exclusion of women in political leadership and decision-making. An understanding of the historic positions of women in African societies is useful in determining the evolution of women into their current positions and roles in society. The invisibility of women remains a challenge and has been extended to modern day systems of governance. This paper contributes to writing women into history by recording historic contributions of women, and highlighting omissions of women and the implications of the omissions on governance.