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Is Gender Relations Changing in the 21st Century? What are the areas of change and the factors derived?

In the present generation of the 21st century, gender is in most cases misunderstood as a practice that promote women who take proactive roles in dissimilar sectors, and careers. Irrespective of specific tradition that still holds women as the interior in their society such as the many instances reported among the Indian cultures that come from strict traditional homes, they have accepted their responsibilities and feel comfortable in their decisions. As a result, those factors it led to the formation of a feminist movement to gain momentum in the 1970s in the US as well as various Human Rights groups to advocate for equal rights among all genders after observing that the women gender was being domesticated through barbaric cultural norms. Consequently, with success exhibited by feminist movements the 21st century has seen additional movements particularly transgender movements to enhance transgender rights and to exterminate violence against transgender individuals and discrimination.

The roles of women are still developing and changing, depending on need, circumstance and personal choice. Men and women both are establishing their roles within the twenty-first century society. And there are many men who demonstrate just how far the male-female relationship has developed and how it can work and be equal. Whether you believe a relationship is based on love or friendship, romance or companionship or a combination of the two, there are many modern relationships that demonstrate mutual respect, care and faithfulness.

We need to create a culture that not only speaks out against sexism, but celebrates those who stand against it, and encourages a mutually respectful, supportive relationship between all men and women. This might seem daunting but we can do it on a small scale – by publicly challenging sexist comments, if only on a bus or at the bar.

When a person hears the word sexism they often think of women; the discussions are centered round them and their experiences of it, with men only pictured as the enemy. We act amazed when we find a sweet man in our lives, friend or boyfriend. In fact, we’re so used to being surprised that we often forget how many times we’ve actually met a man who knows how to treat women right. And it’s those men who need to help change attitudes to women.

We live in a strange society where women can be praised for their independence in one news story, and reminded of the gender inequality in the next. I’m proud to be a female academic, but I still see sexism present in every day acts. From unpleasant comments in a pub, to off-hand comments made by male students walking home, sometimes it seems like men’s attitudes to women haven’t changed since the 60s.

Feminism is a movement that has over the years been introduced and widely adopted in Nigeria and the world at large as a mechanism that seeks justice for women and end sexism in all forms. In many of its context, feminism seems to involve at least two claims, one normative and the other descriptive. The normative claim concerns how women ought (or ought not) to be viewed and treated and draws on a background conception of justice or broad moral position. The descriptive claim concerns how women are, as a matter of fact, viewed and treated, alleging that they are not being treated in accordance with the standards of justice or morality invoked in the normative claim. Together the two claims provide reasons for working to change the way things are; hence, feminism is not just an intellectual but also a political movement. This movement has been propagated by so many illustrious personalities of notable figure all over Africa such as Ghanaian-British documentary filmmaker, producer, and writer, Yaba Badoe; Liberian peace activist, women's rights advocate and Nobel Peace Laureate, Leymah Gbowee; and Nigerian critically acclaimed author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie; who have all identified themselves as feminists and has written and given speeches on various current topics relating to women’s issues in Africa and beyond.