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IS GENDER RELATIONS CHANGING IN THE 21ST CENTURY? WHAT ARE THE AREAS OF CHANGE AND THE FACTORS DRIVING THE CHANGE

The drivers examined here do not only lead to positive change in gender relations; some also provoke resistance and backlash. The selected papers address both positive change towards greater gender equality and situations where discriminatory gender norms have remained, or hardened. However, because the overall orientation of the programme relates to identifying factors that underpin greater gender justice for adolescent girls, the majority of the papers focus on positive change. We have tried to include material from several regions in the discussion of each change driver, but this has not always been easy, as many analyses are regionally clustered. For example, there is much analysis of economic change as a driver of gender norms in South Asia, and many analyses of backlash and resistance to change focus on Latin America and the Middle East and North Africa.

Our societies are changing such that the gender roles rapidly change. The 21st century has seen a shift in gender roles due to multiple factors such as new family structures, education, media, and several others. The article examines the influence of social change on traditional gender roles. Two hundred and twenty seven respondents consisted of 135 Females (59.5%) and 92 Males (40.5%) participated in the survey. The study adopted descriptive method of research design. The age of respondents ranged between 15 to 56years with the mean age of 36years. Two hypotheses were tested and the results revealed that there is statistically significant difference between traditional gender roles and contemporary gender roles in selected local government areas of Lagos State, Nigeria. The study further reveals that there is statistically significant difference between social change and female gender supports in selected local government areas, Lagos Nigeria. This research work attested to the fact that the shifts from male breadwinner and female career model to double-income and single-parent or female headed households have transformed the established ways of distributing work between men and women. In policy terms at least, women are no longer seen as being solely responsible for family work and care. House chores that were regarded as solely the females’ work are now being shared by women and men. Contemporarily, though Male gender is still regarded as the head of the family and is still ahead of female gender in the provisions of family needs, female gender share in all household expenses, such as house-rent, decision making, payment of children school fees. To promote gender equality in this post millennium development goals (MDGs) era, there is need for more women empowerment programmes and projects, enlightenment campaign on more female involvement in decision making and inclusion of women interest in development policies in Nigeria. Feminist theory generally defines gender as a social construct that includes ideologies governing feminine/masculine (female/male) appearances, actions, and behaviors. For instance, gender roles would be that males were supposed to be the educated breadwinners of the family, and occupiers of the public sphere whereas, the female’s duty was to be a homemaker, take care of her husband and children, and occupy the private sphere. However, our societies are changing such that the gender roles rapidly change as well. The 21st century has seen a shift in gender roles due to multiple factors such as new family structures, education, media, and several others. Therefore, according to contemporary gender role ideology, gender roles have been and still are constantly changing all over the world. Gender role theory posits that boys and girls learn the appropriate behaviour and attitudes of the family and overall culture they grows up with, and non- physical gender differences as a product of socialization (Gilbert and Radar, 2008). The theory also proposes that the division of labour drives the sex- differentiated behaviour between two sexes within a society. Thus, the division of labour creates gender roles, which in turn, lead to gendered social behaviour (Gilbert and Radar, 2008). Gender role theory is grounded on the supposition that individuals socially identified as males and females tend to occupy different ascribed roles within social structures and tend to be judged against divergent expectations for how they ought to behave. As a consequence, the theory predicts that males and females will develop different skills and attitudes and that they will behave differently. The physical specialization of the sexes is considered the distal cause of gender roles. Men’s unique physical advantages in terms of body size and upper body strength provided them an edge over women in those social activities that demanded such physical attributes such as hunting, herding, and warfare. On the other hand, women’s biological capacity for