**IRD 318 ASSIGNMENT**

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QUESTION

Is Gender Relations changing in the 21st century? What are the areas of change and the factors driving the change?

Answer

Firstly what is Gender Relations?

This refers to relations between men and women that are socially determined by culture, religion, or socially acceptable ways of thinking or being

Is Gender Relations changing in the 21st century?

The 21st century has brought milestones to all sectors of the world, the topic of Gender Relations has actually been a sector that has seen drastic growth, changing the opportunities and benefits women know have in society, but the fact still remains that it is not a change only positively but also negatively because as new sectors opened up difficulties where brought along with them. Strong beliefs restricting both genders in society have actually found other ways for the concept of gender relations to actually change along with society not to mention some of the restriction that are actually still around.

The simple fact that anyone with a mind-set that still supports this social restrictions can easily portray his mind and actually receive an audience, people today have ways of forcing their beliefs and ideals on others getting defensive or even hustle towards anyone opposing their beliefs. Others create groups or societies to keep these believes alive finding ways to affect all parts of society, work place, or even political sector, yes I will never dispute the fact we have grown out of some restrictions but found a way to grow into new walls still affecting society in ways it did before.

What are the changes in Gender Relation?

I believe that yes the gender relations have changed in the 21st century, but at different rates at different parts of the world, and has different effects on different accepts of society. The political sectors has opened its door greatly to equal gender anticipation over the years, basically killing the mentality of “women not meant to be participating in the decision making of society” but again it comes at different accepts and affects some areas more than others, in the many 1st world nations women are at the for front of their nations carrying out acts to better their nation on a whole different level and perspective than some men can think, women in even in this core areas face problems of discrimination and attitudes off inferiority coming from the men in power, so yes women have entered the political sector but have met a new problem in the form of misogynistic behaviour from men in power. The problem actually is much worse in places in Africa, excluding places like Rwanda which have adequately found a way to make gender equality a core aspect of who their society, but a large amount of African societies believe that women are not meant to do anything relating to decision making and should be confined to being mothers and the kitchen, basing it on reference to their beliefs or tradition which at this point of development in the world should not be a justified excuse.

The next aspect of gender relations to tackle is the industrial aspects, which comes from the belief some jobs aren’t meant to be done by women, this has been seen only as a minimum reduction as some organization will not hire women as they believe some jobs are meant for men and men alone and even within a lot industries women have to face the “Glass Ceiling” which is basically a barrier that stops women from obtaining certain positions and point of power due to patriarchal system already put in place, though the reasons for this discrimination varies in different organizations but the problem still stands non the less

Finally I’d like to make reference to a major problem affecting selected aspects of the world, and this is tradition, religions and cultures, these sector is driven by years of lifestyle being passed down from one generation to the next, or people being orientated into the belief one way or the order. Some arears refuse to let go of these ideas no matter the situation, so if by chance their ideals shortlists women as below men, it’s hard to integrate this new ideals of bringing the world out of gender relation norms, usually these traditions, cultures, and religions are practiced nations wide, places like Iran, Africa, China etc varying in intensity across the nations but it is a major problem still attacking the nations changes.

Factors driving the Change?

Role of assets: There is a growing body of evidence on the relationship between female asset ownership and women’s empowerment. The WDR presents evidence indicating women’s asset ownership is associated with lower levels of domestic violence and women’s earnings (rather than simply household assets or wealth) are associated with greater decision-making power; personal assets also play a key role in enabling women to leave a marriage, to cope with shocks and to invest and expand earnings and economic opportunities. However, improvements in women’s economic position can also challenge social norms on women’s role in the household and society and lead to an increase in some forms of domestic violence or threats of such violence, particularly in the short term.

Globalisation and economic change: The WDR summarises the growing body of evidence on the relationship between women’s economic activity and empowerment – much of it based on women’s involvement in formal sector manufacturing in South and South East Asia and on analysis of women’s involvement in export-oriented agriculture. Based on this evidence, it argues ‘expand economic opportunities, and human capital investments in girls will increase. Markets can affect private household decisions, even with slow-moving social norms.’ Greater economic opportunities for women and girls can also promote women’s exercise of agency by broadening their networks – from mostly kin-related networks – and thus expanding their sources of information and support. The increased physical mobility that often comes with employment puts women in contact with a new set of individuals at work and in other places. This, in turn, contributes to changing gender norms and relations. However, where information flows associated with globalisation are perceived as leading to pressure to adopt ‘western’ social norms, there can be backlash. For example, the WDR cites evidence of more conservative attitudes in Jordan to women working outside the home among younger men than among middle-aged men. The WDR also highlights factors that limit women’s capacity to benefit from globalisation, including male appropriation of technology and norms concerning care as a female responsibility.

Migration. Migration can be associated with changing gender norms (as in the case of adolescent girls’ and young women’s large-scale migration into manufacturing industries in South East Asia and Bangladesh. However, in other cases, migrant communities conserve older social norms, even where these have shifted in their location of origin.

Technological change: The WDR largely discusses the implications of technological change for gender relations via two routes: its impacts on economic opportunities and its impacts on exposure to information. There is some evidence of expanding opportunities in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector in India leading to greater investment in girls’ education and changing norms about unmarried and married women’s employment outside the home. Evidence from Brazil and India also indicates changes in gender norms (concerning fertility, gender-based violence and mobility) related to exposure to cable television.

Legal change: There is a substantial discussion of the potential contribution of legal change to gender equality, although less discussion of the barriers to accessing legal justice that many disadvantaged people of both genders face. The WDR highlights the role of laws that increase control over income and assets in increasing women’s position, bargaining power and exit options within their household. It also argues improvements in the legal status of girls can also, by increasing their value, induce other changes, and cites evidence indicating reforms to inheritance laws in India have resulted in delays in marriage for girls, more education (increasing the number of years of schooling by an average of 11-25%) and lower dowry payments.

Public investment: The report makes a strong case for public investment – in health, education and water and sanitation – as a route towards gender equality. For example, expanding access to secondary schooling has helped shift norms in favour of both boys’ and girls’ attendance.

Education. In some contexts, education is strongly associated with greater decision-making power. ‘In South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa, women with more education are not as likely to have to ask their husbands or family for permission to seek medical care. Education gives them more freedom than earnings.’

Political mobilisation. The WDR also highlights the transformative role of women’s collective agency – in both formal settings and informal associations – which both depends on and determines their individual agency. Mandating quotas for political representation has also help shift norms concerning women’s leadership capacity – for example in India. There is evidence this has helped girls increase their aspirations and led to changed perceptions of the value of girls’ education.

Access to information. Drawing on social norms theory, the WDR argues in egalitarian norms sometimes persist because of misinformation, either about the costs of adhering to a norm or about the extent to which others are doing so. It argues that, sometimes, simply providing more information is the key to shifting sticky norms. For example, Indian villagers’ exposure to women political leaders led to less gender stereotypical views within households and concerning the effectiveness of male and female leaders.

Development. As economic conditions change, so do norms around work, as economies become less agricultural and more people attend school and move to live in cities. But many gender inequalities do not change, because of interrelated policies, formal and informal institutions and markets that impede these social changes.

Globalisation. Access to information, advertising and television can expose men and women to new and varied ideals of gender roles and expectations.

External crisis. A major political, social or natural disaster can create the conditions for national dialogue and catalyse change. For example, in Nicaragua, Hurricane Mitch in 1998 created the conditions for a national dialogue on domestic violence, led by non-governmental organisation(NGO) Puntos de Encuentro, with the slogan ‘Violence against Women Is a Disaster that Men Can Prevent.