**OKONKWO IFUNANYA MARYANN**

**17/SMS09/077**

**Is Gender Relations Changing in the 21st Century? What are the areas of Change and the factors driving the Change?**

Gender relation in Africa could be seen as **impossible** because men are dominant over women or women are being discriminated by the society either because of tradition or stereotype. The improvement of gender relation can be possible but this will take awhile due to the arrogance of the society towards women. Gender relation in Africa is changing bit by bit every year due to some countries in Africa that has started viewing women in another perspective.

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. A woman is capable of holding onto a large number of tasks as well as carry them out successfully. A man, on the other hand, is more successful in linear processes aimed at a narrow goal. 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.

Gender roles are influenced by the media, family, **environment**, and society. The new **family** trends and patterns **have** been paralleled by **changes** in **gender roles**, especially an expansion of the female **role** to include economic provision for a **family**, and lately also transformation of the male **role** with more intense involvement in **family** responsibilities, especially care for children.

Role of assets. There is a growing body of evidence on the relationship between female asset ownership and women’s empowerment. The World Development Report 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 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 reflects 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.

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 the changing gender relation (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. 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 mobilization. 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. The WDR argues that inequality among genders 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.

a change in social values associated with urbanisation. By contrast, increasing gender parity in education has

played a much greater role in increases in women’s labour force participation in Latin America.

**REFERENCES**

* Adsera, A. (2004). Changing fertility rates in developed countries: The impact of labour market institutions. Journal of Population Economics.
* Adsera, A. (2005). Vanishing children: From high unemployment to low fertility in developed countries. American Economic Review.
* Adsera, A. (2011). The interplay of employment uncertainty and education in explaining the second births in Europe. Demographic Research.
* Ahlborg, T., Misvaer, N., & Moller, A. (2009). Perception of Marital Quality by Parents With Small Children A Follow-up Study When the Firstborn Is 4 Years Old. Journal of Family Nursing.
* Ainsworth, M. D. S. (1982). Attachment: Retrospect and Prospect. In C. M. Parkes & J. Stevenson-Hinde (Eds.).
* Aisenbrey, S., Evertsson, M., & Grunow, D. (2009). Is there a Career Penalty for Mothers’ Time Out? A Comparison of Germany, Sweden and the United States. Social Forces.
* Ajzen, I. (1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes.
* Albrecht, J. W., Edin, P.-A., Sundström, M., & Vroman, S. B. (1999). Career Interruptions and Subsequent Earnings: A Reexamination Using Swedish Data. Journal of Human Resources.
* AllenAllen, S. M., & Hawkins, A. J. (1999). Maternal gatekeeping. Mothers’ beliefs and behaviors that inhibit greater father involvement in family work. Journal of Marriage and the Family.
* Anxo, D., Mencarini, L., Paihlé, A., Solaz, A., Tanturri, M. L., & Flood, L. (2011). Gender differences in time-use over the life-course. A comparative analysis of France, Italy, Sweden and the United States. Feminist Economist.
* Becker, G. S. (1991). A Treatise on the family (Enlarged ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.