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

Introduction

The place to begin with is to notice the essential areas of change and the factors driving it. Gender relations is anomaly that has been discussed in a world level as it’s not only an important optimum but it’s also something that drives the society to where it should be. But first to begin with to harness the question is gender relations changing in the 21st century we have to first answer the further question which is **is inequality trending today?**

Yes inequality between genders still goes on today. Firstly the society where we live in practices Andro- Centrism, which can be defined as the doctrine of male centeredness, which relates to the notion of putting men at the Centre and relegating women to outsider in the society. The practices are those whereby the experience of men are assumed to be generalizable, and are seen to provide the objectives criteria through which women experience can be organised and evaluated rather than using the experiences of women to be generalizable in a society. Also the system of “Patriarchy” being used. It is defined as a system in which women are subordinate to men in terms of power and status, which is based on the belief that “it is right for men to command and for women to obey”. It maintains that men have created boundaries for women, thus making it harder for women to hold power therefor there is an unequal access to power between men and women.

Economic Independence. Increase in female labour force participation result in faster economic growth, but women continue to participate in labour markets on an unequal basis with men. In 2013, the male employment to population ratio was 72.3 percent compared to 47.1 percent for women, and women continue to earn only 60-70 percent of men’s wages globally. It is estimated that women’s income could increase globally to 76 percent if the employment participation gap between men and women was closed, which could have a global value of 17 trillion dollars. Women also carry a disproportionate amount of responsibility for unpaid care work. Women devote one to three hours more a day than men. The time given to these unpaid tasks directly and negatively impacts women’s participation in the workforce and the ire ability to foster economic independence.

Another area of change is also they aren’t allowed to go any sporting centre such as football stadiums.

Representation in government. As of June 2016, only 22.8 percent of all national parliamentarians were women. There is growing evidence that women in positions of leadership and political decision-making improve the systems in which they work, but they are not given the chance because of the population men possess in the government leaving very few and little positions for women to occupy.

**FACTORS DRIVING THE CHANGE OF GENDER RELATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

Equal economic empowerment

This is a cornerstone of development. When both genders male and female have equal economic empowerment in a society, poverty will be reduced, economies flourish and the health improves among all genders as well as other service deliveries. Gender inequalities create gap for underdevelopment that is largely realised in developing countries despite strong efforts and campaigns on women empowerment by development agencies, there is need for both because some of the other gender (male) are incapacitated economically that has always created domestic violence. Therefore if women are more economically empowered may lead to vulnerability and can leave risks of high rate of divorce in families due to care and respect that male traditionally demand from their spouse. In women empowerment, there have been some improvements recorded in many reports like in United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2015 report. Reports show that men spend much time on leisure each day while women spend more time doing unpaid domestic works which traditionally are her roles and responsibilities while men’s role is to provide for the family. Therefore leaving man out of empowerment may mean women take role of being heads of families whereby it may inject in serious rate of divorce that might call for another advocacy on equal treatment for men. However, there is need for equal economic empowerment for both genders.

*Education and Exposure for both genders*, we are all responsible and have power to change the world the way that pleases us. There is need for education of genders and expose them to different environments so they can know what happens in each part of the world. Despite massive explanations about gender but still remains as if its unheard from different parts of the world due to inadequate education and exposure of genders to different environments and cultures. For example the traditional approach of understanding gender in Africa may be far different from understanding of gender in Europe. This inadequate exposure and education leads to misunderstanding of gender in the current generation. Some traditions in Africa in viewing gender interpret it in terms of their tradition whereby it’s a taboo for women to wear trousers likewise men to wear skirts while in Europe, its normal for a woman to wear a trouser for example Brighton College in Britain is the first school to scrap uniform policy so all children can wear skirts or trousers (Mirror online by Steve Robson. January 20th 2016). Therefore there is need for education and exposure for both genders.

*Cultural transition*

Adapting new culture especially in the 21st Century of technology which has taken young generation by surprise has led to frustrations and disenchantment with new things that are both positive and negative to gender relations. This can be termed as cultural shock that has brought hard time in handling proper transition from tradition to technological culture that has always created gap in between genders of male and female. There is need for proper and sustainable cultural transition from traditional culture to technological culture that would not harm gender in any way.

*Counter stereotypes through young generation.*

It’s so challenging to erase gender stereotype from adults and old age. However, to counter the existing wide spread stereotype across the world on gender, there is need to start educating and sensitising young generation in schools and out of schools. These are categories to be changed despite long period of time to realise positive results but its sustainable and very effective solution. A child’s imagination when paired with experimental learning opportunities can be a powerful tool to confront gender challenges. This is a proven fact that children once instilled in them on gender solutions, they will always remain and believe in the same unlike adults who will remain referring to past practices whether good or bad but will always say ‘we are accustomed to’ based on past practices. Therefore stereotype can be resolved through young generation.

REFERENCE

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