NAME: SHEHU HASSANAT AMEERAH

MATRIC NUMBER: 19/LAW01/245

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TOPIC: GENDER INEQUALITY

 Gender Inequality acknowledges that men and women are not equal and that gender affects an individual’s living experience. It is the state where every individual do not get equal opportunities and rights in political, economic, education and health aspects even though every individual yearns for equal status, opportunities and rights. However, it is a general observation that there exists lot of discrimination between humans. Inequality exists because of cultural differences, geographical differences and most especially gender inequality. Inequality based on gender is a concern that is prevalent in the entire world. It highlights the immense gap in opportunities in women with comparison to men in such that women are neglected in many areas like education, health, decision-making areas and financial independences. Women, today, have come to be accepted as the pillars of the smallest economic unit, the family and from them all great people, both male and female, have been birthed. This goes to show that women are forces to be reckoned with in terms of nation building and economic development. However, the special qualities possessed by women have been toned down and played to a minor key due to ignorance on the part of most and lack of concern or appreciation by others. The establishment of structures of inequality against women, as opposed to men, has come to generate the phenomenon of gender inequality. Gender inequality is not just a human rights issue, it is essential for the achievement of sustainable development and a peaceful, prosperous world. Women are not the objects of pleasure of men or property to be used and disposed of. Indeed, women have the same intrinsic worth as men. Therefore, any custom that seeks to treat them as inferior to men or treats women as the property of their husbands cannot and should not stand. According to the Supreme Court, “any culture that disinherits a daughter from her father’s estate or wife from her husband’s property by reason of God-instituted gender differential should be punitively dealt with.”

 The causes of gender inequality are ideologies behind it in Nigeria, whether it’s cultural or religious, it stems from somewhere, and its lengthy existence simply means the causes are as strong as the impacts. Below are some of the common causes of gender inequality in Nigeria:

* IMPROPER EDUCATION

 “Knowledge is power.” It might not be a strong point, but this is pointing more towards some parts of Nigeria that are rejecting western views on women, to stick to cultural ones. Education is nothing if you leave all you learn in school and still behave like a savage when you get back home. In other words, it must be obvious that you are educated. There are two ways to this, a community that’s poorly educated can never know the worth of women and a woman that is not educated cannot know her rights, not to talk of the myriad of things she is capable of contributing to the modern society. It has also been noticed that parents don’t usually encourage the education of their female children because they believe it will be of no benefit to them, as money or success she earns in the future, due to her education, will be of her husband’s, not their's.

* TRADITION AND CULTURE

 Tradition is said to be the custom of a particular society, while culture is simply the way of life. When was the last time you heard about a female traditional ruler among the ethnic groups? The reason it has never happened is that it is deemed an abomination in almost every ethnic groups. “Why should a woman be leading when there are able men that could lead?” such is the typical cultural dogma that has plagued many thrones and political seats in Nigeria. Don’t even dare suggest female leadership to the elders of the community, you might lose your head.

* MENTALITY

 It is hard to keep “mentality” as a standalone point, as it is largely influenced by culture and tradition. However, if you look at it from a subjectively, from a woman’s view, it stands alone, how? Many women are not ambitious because they believe top positions aren’t meant for men. Even some ladies complain about having a female boss simply because they are used to having a male boss. It almost seems clandestine for women to want to occupy a political position or the hot sit in a company. Such a mentality is usually created and forged by a woman’s intermediate environment. If you’ve never seen a woman lead, you would think it’s normal for women not to lead even if you weren’t directed told, right?

* RELIGION

 It is not a secret that religion is one of the top contributors to gender inequality in the world. Should religion be erased? No. In fact, religion is one of the many things that guide the masses in living a good and peaceful life. Religion is one of the biggest contributors to peace on earth. However, some religions or religious practices restrict the role of women to just domestic roles, making it impossible for them to even think about holding a political post.

The effects of Gender Inequality which is the unfair treatment based on person’s sex. Unfair treatment may include promotions, pay raises, or even sexual harassment. While most gender inequality is directed towards women, it is possible for anyone to be discriminated against because of gender. Gender inequality affects everyone, including men. Stereotypes or ‘rules’ about how women and men, girls and boys should begin in childhood and follow us to adulthood. Not everyone experiences inequality the same way. The situation is worse, and often different, for people who face more than one type of discrimination.

* There can be lost productivity if employees have to focus on dealing with sexual harassment, the attention they are able to give work may be significantly diminished.
* In situations when women are not included in the labour force, only a particular portion of the workforce is being used, thus leading to the wastage of economic resources, on a large scale.

 Gender Inequality is always a touchy topic when it comes to Africa because it is largely influenced by religious beliefs and the diverse cultures. Nigeria is not left out. In the Northern Part of Nigeria, women are largely considered to be lowly to men, as women are only seen fit to be home keepers and child bearers which implies the solutions to be laid out.

* Increase enforcement of existing laws against gender-based employment discrimination and against sexual harrassment.
* Reduce socialization by parents and other adults of girls and boys into traditional gender roles.
* Increase mentorship and other efforts to boost the number of women in traditionally male occupations and in positions of political leadership.
* Access to education for girls should be provided.
* Issues regarding racism which seems to play a major role in how women are treated and compensated should also be raised.