Gender and sexuality across the african continent research paper

Introduction

Gender is a word mostly used according to the sphere of study. It generally describes femininity or masculinity of a person and what each is associated to or roles attached to each. It is also extended to cover the state of being either a male or a female. Several gender roles are attached to ethnicity of a person.

Ethnicity on the other hand is the grouping of people according to their ethics and traditions. This can be well elaborated by use tribal names and features that show the ethnic origin of a person.

Thesis statement

In most African countries, ethnicity has taken root in the society to a point that almost everything is based on ethics and traditions. This has contributed to inferior gender roles adopted by women as well as the youth. Men have on the other hand developed a superiority complex which is supported by the aspects of ethics and traditions.

Under the cover of fear and marriage, the African woman has been subject to sexual violence and torture. This can be attributed to the fact that the African man is taken as the overall decision maker whose decision is final. As a result, the woman is left without any choice but to subdue to the demands of the partner. This has also been witnessed among the teens where young girls leave all decisions pertaining to sexuality and sex to their poorly or scantly endowed partners. This is a fact that has deprived the African woman her sexual satisfaction and sexuality enlightment. On top of it all, it has also robbed her off her dignity and conscience including the power to fully control

her life especially her social sphere.

In a number of researches conducted across the African continent, there is adequate evidence that gender and sexuality is not a well known topic. This can be claimed to be one of the root causes of sexual violence and unhealthy sexual practices. So as to fully understand the situation at the ground, let us look at some causes of these atrocities.

According to Chris Beasley in his paper ' the challenge of pleasure: Re-imaging sexuality and sexual health', one of the main causes of such atrocities is reluctance or opposition offered by men towards embracing the idea of ending gender violence. This can be attributed to the African traditions that treat men as superiors over their partners petrifying women while strengthening men to continue with their plans. The author rules this as the main cause of gender based violence which can be traced virtually in all races across the world (Chris, 153).

Another source of violence is as discussed in Poll's article on ' being the butt of the joke: homophobic humor, male identity, and its connection to emotional and physical violence in men'. This article discusses various causes of gender based violence and sexual violence empirically from a male's perspective. Some of the main causes discussed include:

- Homophobic humor. In this topic of discussion, gender based violence is traced to originate from jokes meant to hurt homosexuals. In the paper, the author uses an illustration of boys who are in school and asked who they would like to associate with in the society. Virtually all boys don't like to be associated with anything suggestive of guy behaviors. As a result, use of jokes that someone is guy sparks a quarrel which might eventually lead to

physical violence. This can be claimed to be one of the main causes of gender based violence in the African continent. In support of the same idea, consider an aspect in which a lady insinuates that her boyfriend is guy. This sparks the quest to proof that he is not guy and as a result engages in sexual violence. The man may not see any violence in the process but instead of enjoying, the lady is regretting the whole thing (Poll, 512).

- Male identity. From male psychology, every male creature demands recognition from its female counterpart. As a result, the male may not feel honored enough by the female thus use excessive force to exhibit his power over the female. This has been in the African society all through and can be claimed to be one of the main causes of gender violence as well. This extends from the physical violence even into sexual violence. Here, the man makes sexual demands instead of requests or any other protocol agreed upon by the two. This is meant to show the lady that he is the man of the house and in all spheres, he should be given the first priority (Poll, 517).

- Femininity and inferiority complex. This comes in due to the above point in which women develop some negative aspects about themselves. They think of themselves being junior compared to men and take their femininity as the cause of their weaknesses. This makes them suffer in silence and fear of exposure to the outer world. They also hold too tight on family matters which falls under femininity making them too much docile hence not responding to violence (Till, 539). This in turn encourages the man to continue with his behavior.

Having discussed the issue to this point, it is also advisable to take a look at the aspect of sexuality in itself. To be much precise, sexuality comes in as a

social aspect that revolves around the sex of a person. This is much influenced by the fact that the society has different gender perceptions of the term, making it to he understood differently by different society. A much precise definition can be traced to the reproductive roles assumed by an organism. This traces back to the aspect of men and women and how the society views each and every. In the African context which forms my sources of illustrations, women are taken as mothers and nurturers nothing more. This diminishes their ability to make decisions and take part in active positions. As a result, women have developed even distrust in themselves even in matters regarding to their sexuality. This makes the whole idea of sexuality to be looked into only form the masculine perspective in the society.

In spite of all what is happening, struggle to make the African continent as well as the whole world a better place to live without any form of gender based violence has been initiated and suggestive control measures devised.

Ways of promoting healthy sexual behaviors and reduce gender based violence.

There have been many measures tried and succeeded in making the world society a place free of violence but the key ones have been discussed below.

- Civilization. This involves adoption of many cultures mainly their strengths. The main aspect of civilization adopted by all parties is education. Education was introduced in the African continent and I can confidently claim that it has changed to continent. Children have been allowed to attend classes which enlighten their minds on the fact they are equal in all aspects thus

should have equal respect for each other. This has helped see the continent do away with some inhumane sexual practices which includes polygamy and female genital mutilation. This is well supported in Chris' article which addresses the concern that men should embrace equality as part of their responsibilities in ending gender based violence. The author tries to explain more on how men should accept this fact in the subsequent subtopics in which men are viewed to be opposed to the whole idea. By education, the author claims that men can find other means of exhibiting their control and sexuality rather than the archaic and barbaric mode of using violence. Still under education, the author tries to explain how understanding or sexuality can help end this conflict. In the discussion, the author claims that there is general deficiency in knowledge among the world population which tend to make men across the globe reluctant to accepting equal consideration and acceptance (Chris, 156).

- Self acceptance. From Till's article ' Quantification of gender: anorexia nervosa and femininity', the author depicts ladies as beings in psychologically trauma. Instead of accepting that they are who they are and enjoy their sexuality, ladies tend to fight themselves. As a result, they develop some psychological problems which they brush away by claiming it is just femininity. If ladies accept what they are, then they can easily work their way out of gender based violence (Till, 541). According to the author, this problem is social and not individual but if reviewed as a social problem first then an individual problem, a very appropriate solution would be possible. The author describes femininity and sexuality as being rather individual thus understanding this helps resolve this psychological trauma.

- Understanding of the masculine complexity of a man. This solution falls directly from the above point that it is important for the lady as well and health workers to understand what it takes for a man to feel completely healthy. This involves understanding of how a man's brain and behavior operates and their connection to any external source of information. This is very important since most of the gender based violence cases are rooted in misunderstandings which can be often claimed to be rooted in poor understanding of a lady on her man. Since a man is very secretive, a lady must know how her man behaves under certain conditions so as to know how to approach different topics (Till, 548).

Despite the ideas inculcated to ensure that the people live together peacefully without any form of gender violence, some hindrances are still visible in the societies across the globe. Some of these hindrances include:

- Culture and norms. In most societies, traditions and norms give some room for existence of gender based violence. For example, most of the African societies take wife battering as a less serious offence than husband battering. This has escalated the levels of battering and use of violence among the people.

- Cultural diversity. As much as this aspect is advantageous, it also comes with adoption of some foreign behaviors which may not be acceptable according to personal tastes. As a result, a person may result into use of force and violence to control the situation.

- Inferiority complex in women. Most of the women are not oppressed because they can't speak out but because they believe that it is part of their life to meet such challenges. They therefore suffer in silence.

In conclusion, several aspects have been discussed in the paper and addresses the main causes of gender based violence and how it can be reduced if not fully eradicated. This in turn leads to exploration of the many ways in which gender based violence can be fully eradicated and the main hindrances to the achievement of the main goal.

Works cited

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