

Gender inequality in nigeria

[Sociology](#), [Human Rights](#)



Feminism in Nigeria: Gender inequality and Gender gap

Feminism is a very huge social issue in the country of Nigeria which is located in West Africa. For the longest of times it has been a trend that men don't treat women as equals in almost every demography of life. Definition often referred to, by renowned writer and one of the key figures in the feminist movement, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is that " a feminist is a person that believes in the social, economic and political equality of the sexes". Feminism refers to a broad range of ideas, approaches, and ideologies directed towards advocating for gender and sex equality for women. Feminism is a movement that seeks to achieve equality and social rights for women in all key areas which includes education, personal issues, economic stability, employment, and cultural sphere of human endeavours. This essay seeks to discuss the inequality among the men and women in Nigeria. According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, " feminism is the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes". Feminism plays a huge role in our country Nigeria, and this is because there is so much gender inequality. It is believed that men are superior to women, and clearly this has females to oppose to that statement because they see themselves as people that can do anything the opposite gender can do. " Masculinity becomes this hard cold cage and we put boys" (Chimamanda N. Adichie). In other words, with this construction of masculinity, we not only set up power dynamics, but also jeopardize the humanity of the male by forcing him to become this rigid being directly or indirectly asserting his dominance over anybody that appears feminine . Suddenly, anyone who opposes or challenges this understanding of masculinity becomes a threat to manhood

and it becomes the duty of the man to protect it. “ the problem with gender is that it prescribes who we should be rather than who you are”. This simply means society tells us who we should be in the sense that women are seen as less than men. Women are told how they should act and behave.

“ We teach girls to shrink themselves

To make themselves smaller

We say to girls, you can have ambition

But not too much

You should aim to be successful but not too successful

Otherwise you will threaten the man

Because I am female

I am expected to aspire to marriage

I’m expected to make my life choices

Always keeping in mind

That marriage is the most important

Marriage can be a source of joy and love and mutual support

But why do we teach girls to aspire to marriage

And we don’t teach boys the same

We raise girls to see each other as competitors

Not for jobs or accomplishments

Which I think can be a good thing

But for the attention of men

We teach girls that they cannot be sexual beings

In the way that boys are” (Chimamanda N. Adichie)

My country of origin, Nigeria is a perfect example of a country that degrades and undermines the ability of women. In Nigeria, people have the perception that women are made for the kitchen and also in some cases, just for the bedroom. Men don't usually allow their wives seek employment opportunities but instead they tell their spouse to stay at home and just cater to the needs of their kids and be full time housewives. The men also have the mentality of telling their daughters to cook and clean so that they can cater and serve their husbands in the future but will never teach their own sons how to cook and clean as well and this is always passed from one generation to another and due to this there is never a change in trends. In Nigeria, men are seen as the head of their homes, this means that they provide and cater to the financial needs of their family. The mentality of men being the head of their homes has been registered into a lot of Nigerians from the time of our great grandparents, this mentality still exists today in our society and there is no change which shows that this is going to change any time soon because no

stand or preventative measures are being put in place to enforce or influence this change.

My mother once told me, the man is the head of the household and the man is the head off the house, while the woman is to maintain the household and look after the man and the children. In most African countries and around the world, the woman is seen as just a wife and mother and essentially she belongs to the man. A woman should be able to express herself freely without feeling society's backlash and without being seen as less than what she is. Despite living in an entirely different country and time from my parents. As a Nigerian woman, I still feel the pressure to act in accordance with the idea of what a Nigerian woman should be. In the Nigerian culture, parents teach their female children how to behave so they can make good wives to their husbands one day. Parents often says things like, " you should prepare your husband food before he gets back from work" or " you should kneel down when serving your husbands food". Women are meant to be portrayed as benevolent and altruistic

Nigeria has been a patriarchal dominated society for centuries, this is a major feature of a traditional society. This is a a society which grants men the liberation to dominate women. " The word " patriarchy" has been recreated in the past two decades to analyze the origins and conditions of men's oppression of women" (Kamarae, 1992). The term has been defined as a system of male authority which oppresses women through its social, political and economic institutions. Women in Nigeria are looked down upon and often discriminated upon from, in most cases as we see, acquiring

formal education, mistreated and perpetually kept as housewives or stay at home mums; the average Nigerian woman is seen as an object of prostitution and is seen on the street hawking or in a forced marriage or as an instrument of wide trafficking

“ Education is said to be a vehicle that breakS the shackles of poverty thereby leading to transformation, development and progress” (Ikoni , 2009). If you take a good look at schools in Nigeria you will always figure out that the ratio of a boy to girl is either 3: 1 or 5: 2 because women never get sent to school but instead they are at home learning how to be a hairstylist or learning how to cater for their headless and impassive husband. With the 2005 MDGs’ first deadline for attainment of gender parity in primary and secondary schools’ enrolment already missed, the ability of women and girls to empower themselves economically and socially by going to school, or by engaging in productive and civic activities is still being constrained by their responsibility for everyday tasks in the household division of labour (CEC Report 2007). Educational facilities in Nigeria are known to be inadequate and insufficient with limited access for , mostly girls and women. According to the United Nations Human Development Report (2005), Nigeria was classified as a low development country in respect of equality in educational accessibility. Women and girls are discriminated in all aspects including the educational sectors, the female adult literacy rate in Nigeria is low compared to that of the mens which is as a result of discrimination in the educational sector. Poverty is a disease which hit women in Nigeria harder than men due to the disregard of female education and widespread presence of early marriage throughout the country which tend to reduce women and girls to

penury, and subject them to discrimination. Lack of education often serves as a barrier to female participation in the formal sector, there are a lot of social pressures on females which are some of the causes of high illiteracy in Nigeria. Women aren't given the opportunity to be independent, education gives women the opportunity to be less dependent on men and have more control on themselves. Women are given the chance to take control of themselves and their bodies with education resulting in better family planning .

For the most part, the young lady youngster instructive open doors have a tendency to be encompassed by male centric mentalities about sex parts, which result in a few guardians appending more prominent significance to the training of young men than young ladies. This is dependably the probability when the guardians need assets to enlist all youngsters in school. In a few families, putting resources into young ladies' training is viewed as contributing for the advantage of the family she will in the end wed into, not at all like on account of young men. This contention holds specifically for advanced education, which includes more noteworthy consumption and apparently is less essential for females whose principle part will be in home keeping and tyke bearing."

The occupational scope available to women in Nigeria aren't as strong in relation to men. Women are always at a drawback in access to employment opportunities as well as conditions of work in contrast to men. Men engage in occupations such as nursing and culinary arts which are often considered feminine without opposition. However, women are still restricted from

occupations such as engineering or manual labour and are always associated with jobs like nursing, baby sitting, cleaning and culinary arts. A great deal of Nigerian women forgo employment because of family responsibilities and are often seen as physically weak and not fit for work. This is an issue that the women of Nigeria have been facing for centuries, measures and steps to eradicate this issues have been taken. Despite the progress and encouraging development in the earlier days, gender gap still exists and remains in Nigeria today.

“ The evacuation of impediments and imbalances that ladies look concerning business is a stage towards understanding ladies’ potential in the economy and improving their commitment to financial and social improvement. The Beijing Declaration attests national pledge to the unavoidable privileges of ladies and young ladies and their strengthening and equivalent cooperation in all circles of life including the financial domain⁷. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), recognizes ladies’ part in the economy as a basic region of concern and points out the need to advance and encourage ladies’ equivalent access to business and assets and in addition the harmonization of work and family obligations regarding ladies and men.

Besides, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) focuses on the accomplishment of full and beneficial business and not too bad work for all including ladies and youngsters as a major aspect of MDG 1 to destroy extraordinary destitution and appetite. Some advance has been made towards these finishes, yet the additions are uneven”

Role of feminism in all of this is to ensure equality and prove that men and women can be on the same wave length socially, economically, politically and in other walks of life in general and nobody should be seen as less because of whatever gender they belong to . Also, the majority of the public already believes in the equality of “ ALL genders,” we just want to make sure people understand that, that is exactly what Feminism is and that is the motive behind this monumental movement and it should never be seen as a thing that brings burden but be accepted by everybody and if they do not accept it they have to respect it the way they feel that men should be respected in this patriarchy dominated society . Feminism isn't and has never been a movement against men, women need men in whatever capacity, just as men need women, feminism has never been to oppress men but to liberate women. Women empowerment programs such as Forum of Nigerian Women in Politics to address inequality and oppression of women in Nigeria have been introduced and many more should follow suit and introduce more intellectual and enlightening programs as such. Its main purpose is to “ promote women empowerment and eradication of all forms of violence and discrimination against women”. It supports women decision making in both public and private sector. the group also organizes seminars on empowerment and inequality among other things. In conclusion, women should never be seen as less and furthermore should not be seen as materials at mens disposal, thus, they should be allowed to live life the way they feel they should and should never be under the wing of a man.