

A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF GENDER ISSUES IN AFRICAN CULTURE.

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Abstract

This work is essentially a critical analysis of gender issues in Africa. Gender issue has been the defining factor throughout history of mankind, throughout all ages and even this our present age. How these issues have been addressed over the years, and how has gender as a concept being defined?, how the different Genders have addressed themselves or allowed themselves to be defined. This are all fundamental questions which bothers on the analysis of gender and the issues associated with it. This paper using the philosophical method of analysis looked into the conception of Gender and addressed some of the issues associated it with conceptual Gender discourse.

Keywords: Culture, Gender, Africa, Discourse, Philosophy.

Introduction

Philosophy is interested in everything and in everyone. Everyone is a “philosopher”, but not all practice philosophy. The world would have been a better place if everyone practices philosophy. Philosophers are not saints, but their great in-depth study of the world around them can help in solving the worlds many problem. They are critical thinkers and this is what the world needs at this present time. Many have questioned on the inclusion of Gender studies in philosophical inquiry as its subject matter is mostly seen in the social sciences maybe out of ignorance. Philosophy has evolved from the study of the ultimate cause of the universe to studying man in his environment. Studying man in his environment opens the door to many unforeseen problems not evident in the metaphysical world but evident in man's physical world. Gender discourse is at the forefront of one of the problems beguiling mankind and which philosophical inquiry has delved into. We are in the milieu of global crisis and we Africans are at the centre of it all because our development is at risk. The idea behind this work is that the world in which we live in is filled with chaos and gender issues seem to be at the middle of it all. Gender has been the defining factor of every other factor bothering on human existence, progress and sustainability of its productive resources. One could as well ask how gender can be defined so as to know what its relations will entail. Africa as a continent is in the midst of these entire global crisis because of the circumstances surrounding our emergence as a continent of its own amidst the influence of our colonial masters. How can we achieve minimum development and be able to compete with others in global economy rush if the main defining factors or agents (male and female) are not working together in unity. How can we relate freely as equals and work together for the progress of our continent and then

bring it home to our own country Nigeria. This paper broke down into simpler components all the gender issues which if not tackled well will hinder our growth as a continent and equally as a nation.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Africa as a continent is one of the world largest continent with a population estimated at about 1.3 billion people. It is surrounded by the Mediterranean sea, Indian Ocean and Atlantic ocean. Africa as a continent was colonized in the 19th century by European countries and there was a great mix-up of culture and cultural values. African conception of Gender is not the same thing as the European conception of Gender and this misconception has generated great conflict over the years. Gender to the African man is seen with the eyes of patriarchy which in turn culminates into subordination, oppression, domination etc. In the developed countries, gender is seen mainly as duty one performs in his immediate society in which he finds himself in. There is every need for us to understand that these two worlds are miles apart and even though there is a mix-up of culture, it will never be the same. African Gender issues is deeply embedded in their culture, deeply rooted in their personhood, deeply rooted in that which makes them Africa and African. Hence, Gender and problems associated with it has become a global phenomenon and nothing to be dealt with a mere swipe of the arm. It is embedded in our culture and seen in our day living. The idea behind researching and articulating this research work which is based primarily on Gender issues stems from the fact that people seem to be neglecting the issues surrounding Gender and are more concerned with globalization of normal. With Gender issues on the increase and the problem associated with it close on its trail, there is every need that they should be addressed and recommendations proffered. Africans are not like other countries as circumstance surrounding our culture has created a huge gap between both Genders and which western culture and civilization has not been able to address.

Our primary aim is that Africans should survive as a continent and all round development should be evidence of our survival. In order to do that, Africans must first of all need to wiggle out of our present predicament imposed on us by our culture. This predicament stems from the fact that a demarcation has been created among the Genders. These should be curbed and men and women should be allowed to speak freely and interact with each other without any invisible force separating them. This paper will show us how far or near we are as a people and as a nation with regard to gender balance Gender cannot be abolished because we are Gender and Gender is us. It takes down to the 'ubuntu' ideology which says, 'I am because we are'.

Culture lacks a universally acceptable definition. According to Taylor (1971 :21), culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society. Kneller (1971:49) says that 'culture is the totality of ways of life that has evolved through history'. Rodney (1982: 49) defined culture 'as a total way of life'. It embraces what people ate and what they wore, the way they walk and the way they talked; the manner in which they treat their dead and greeted the new born' Culture according to Igwilo and Ogbo is 'the social behaviors and norms found in different human societies'(Igwilo and Ogbo 29). It has to do

with traditions, conventions, behavioral pattern etc transmitted from one generation to the other. A times people's behavior is been attributed to their culture. No wonder the Igbo people use the adage that says 'Odinana di be ndi'. Odinana in this context has to do with the peoples way of life and their beliefs which is believed to be within the peoples culture as it is been handed over to them from one generation to the other. Aziza(2001) clearly points out that

Culture refers to the totality of the pattern of behavior of a particular Group of people. It includes everything that makes them distinct from Any other group of people; for instance , their greeting, habits, dressing, Social norms and taboos, food, songs and dance patterns, rites of passage From birth-through marriage-to death, traditional occupations ,religious as Well as philosophical beliefs.

We cannot exhaust the definition(s) of culture but we can see that it embraces every aspect of the individual's life from conception ad infinitum. Every African person is born into a particular culture and it affects the person's behavior one way or the other.

Africans still preserve their culture even with the mad global rush which seems to be gaining momentum in the last decade. Global rush has slowly crept into our society and has began to question our old acceptable ways of behavior. It has introduced new concepts which are eating away our tradition and conventions and which has equally brought in gender issues in philosophical discourse because our old ways of gender relations has been crumbled and the remaining pieces barely finding it difficult to survive.

Gender on the other hand has entertained several definitions and also several meanings too. Andrew Heywood (1992) defined gender as a 'cultural term; it refers to the different roles that society ascribes to men and women'. He went further to note that gender differences are typically imposed through contrasting stereotypes of 'Masculinity' and 'Femininity'. Simone de Beauvoir (247) pointed out that "one is not born but becomes a 'woman' it means that one's sex does not define who that person is but becomes that particular sex according to the role one plays in the society. Judith Butler argued that 'gender is the process of embodiment which results from the repeated performance of acts of gendering'(1990). One of Butlers innovations was to suggest that...

Gender is constituted by action and speech-by behavior in which general Traits and dispositions are exhibited or acted out. In particular, gender is Not an underlying essence or nature of which gendered behavior is the product it is a series of acts whose constant repetition creates the illusion that an Underlying Nature exists, gender according to butler is per formatively constituted.

Sex and gender are deceptive and can be used interchangeably with each other, but the reality is that they do not mean the same thing. To the ordinary person, the two can be used interchangeably one for the other and vice versa. Example is some of our professional documents which give us space to fill in either our sex or gender. People believe that gender is a more sophisticated way of saying sex. At birth , one asks the gender of the baby. Sex has to do with biological components of an individual. It has to do with the biological aspect of one being a male or a female. Hence we have the male sex and the female sex.

Academically as a field of study, 'it is a means of analyzing gender identity and gendered

representation' When we are talking of gender identity, we are talking of one been aware of the construction of his person and representing it as well. Each gender has a specific role that is given to it based on their sex. In gender roles, the individual sees himself reacting to his environment. Gender roles are normally based on societal cultural practices, its norms and values, its tradition and heritage. Simone De Beauvoir in the second sex said 'one is not born but rather becomes a woman'. A person may be representing attitudes, lifestyles that is contrary to one's gender roles is what Beauvoir meant in the second sex. That you were born a female with female sexual organs does not qualify you to be a woman. it is only when your role as a woman conforms to societal norms on how a woman should behave have you successfully ascribed to yourself the term 'I am a woman' Each culture or society has a set of its written down cultural roles that has been assigned to each gender. A times some of these roles overlap because of lack of representation on both parts. Not only has gender roles been overlapped, also disparities between gender has been created by different African cultures. If we are to follow Tina Chanter (2016) as she said it, one can foresee the end of gender at hand. Science has so made everything possible that transgender has quietly crept into our societies from the western world but that is issue for another paper (the end of gender). For the purpose of this discourse our main focus is on the female gender in an African traditional setting and also critical analysis of some of the cultural practices that is against her gender. Discourse has to do with a formal and orderly expression of thought on a subject. In this paper we are doing a well detailed and orderly arrangement of thoughts and ideas on the concept of gender issues which for some time has been growing here in Africa at an alarming rate. Philosophical discourse cuts across every discipline. It cuts across medicine, sociology, psychology, engineering etc. Philosophy is the mother of all disciplines and every discipline gets its root from philosophy. Philosophical discourse also covers every aspect of human existence as its interest bothers on the essence of things and offers solution (s) to life beguiling questions. No wonder, the concept of gender is been discussed in a philosophical study.

Gender Issues in African Discourse

Gender remains the cardinal point in all human discourse and the issues associated with it cannot be swept under the rug or treated as an unserious matter. It has raised so much dust in the past and even presently. We grew up in an African society as girls and boys in a community and right from the time of our birth, our destinies were already fashioned out. We were taught from infancy the supremacy of one gender over another. We were not taught that for one gender to develop in its full capacity that it needed the other gender to survive. This should have helped complementarities of the Genders to thrive. Had it been we were taught issues like sexism denigration and subjugation will not come up. These issues look like something occasioned and made by man himself no wonder they conspicuously omitted that in our trainings as we were growing up. We can see that the issue surrounding gender has always been a perennial issue and has always been a subject of discourse. Here in this paper, we tried to carefully list out some of those gender based issues that have been a subject of concern in our society. They include:

Patriarchy

Women's problem has always been men, no wonder Acker and Barry (1991) assert ...

Almost all those who rule and manage are male: interesting and important Phenomena are identified from a male perspective as well as from the perspective of those who manage and control. Women are largely absent from this world, the Female domain of production and reproduction that provides necessary Infrastructure for the male world is, despite its importance invisible, uninteresting to many scientists, and largely unconceptualised.

Historically, power struggle between the male gender and the female gender has been manifesting itself in various ways especially through patriarchal influence. Women has been agitating for freedom and it has led to so many groups springing up to curb it. Patriarchy has presented itself as the foremost problem that associates itself with Gender discourse.

Simone De Beauvoir in her famous text 'The Second Sex' noted that Patriarchy is a great hindrance to women liberation. In her own words...

Humanity is male and male defines woman not in herself but as relative to him. Man can think of himself without a woman, but woman cannot think herself way-out a man. She is simply what he decrees, thus she is sex, absolute sex, no less

The concept of patriarchy and its influence has been at the fore front of feminists and gender agitations. It is assumed to be the earliest form of domination among the genders especially the male gender. It is assumed or proven that the basis of women's clamor for freedom is as a result of the influence of patriarchy domination establishing that patriarchy is the world historical defeat of the female gender". Patriarchy started the unequal distribution of powers between men and women, where the men claim superiority over the female. The Royal Academy of Spanish Dictionary, defines Patriarchy, 'As primitive social organization in which authority which was exercised by a male head of the family, extending such power even to distant relatives of the same lineage'. It also defined patriarchy as

A form of mental, social, spiritual, economic and political organization or structuring of society produced by the gradual institutionalization of sex Based political relations created and maintained and reinforced by different Institutions linked closely together to achieve consensus on the lesser Value of women and their roles. These institutions interconnect not only with each Other to strengthen the structures of domination of men over women, but also with Other systems of exclusion oppression and /or domination based on real or perceived Differences between humans, creating states that respond only to the needs and Interests of a few powerful men

Patriarchy puts men in charge of all the affairs of the female sex or gender with the sole aim of controlling every aspect of her life. Patriarchal influences are synonymous with words like, Domination, Subjugation, Maltreatment, Discrimination, and Oppression etc.

These words when discussed in details show the various ways the male gender takes absolute control of the life of the female gender.

In African culture, the general notion is that we live in a man's world. This goes on to show that even when we know that there are two genders, one is already acknowledging the fact that the other does not exist or that the other is inconsequential. When we talk of patriarchy we are talking about one gender claiming superiority over the other. In most African cultures, the male gender has claimed superiority over the female gender and this has resulted in a lot of other gender based issues. The fore words in front of every women issue today is 'LIBERATION, INDPENDECE', this goes on to show the existence of a problem which women are fighting

to be free from. Simone de Beauvoir (1949) in her work titled *The Second Sex*, aptly captured and highlighted men's notion and their view of women. She was able to posit that women have been so enslaved and brainwashed that one cannot think of herself in the absence of a man.

Man thinks himself without woman. Woman does not think herself without man.” And she is nothing other than what man decides; she is thus called “the sex,” meaning that the male sees her essentially as a sexed being; for him she is sex, so she is it in the absolute. She is determined and differentiated in relation to man, while he is not in relation to her; she is the inessential in front of the essential. He is the Subject; he is the Absolute. She is the 'Other'.

When faced with this type of conception, a woman begins to loose herself, she begins to loose that which really makes her human , her value begins to depreciate. She is gradually imprisoned against her will. She doesn't even have a choice. She becomes a prisoner in her own home. This patriarchal influence leads to female suffocation. When we talk of female suffocation, it is aptly captured in Clara Ijeoma Osuji (2019) thus:

Female suffocation as deployed in this paper refers
To the smoldering of female productivity, skills and talents
And innovative drive which often results as females attempt
To Conform strict conformity to patriarchal ideals of normative
femininity. Thus overtime the individual female talent becomes
completely stifled Their creative energies dissipated and they
seem to resign themselves .To the impression that they are
lesser than their male counterpart. Consequently, they internalize
the notion that their position in the family does not count much.

Lived in experiences as married women are nothing to write home about. This is where patriarchal influence is embedded in before taking root in the society at large. Inside the home, the man expects his woman to conform to all his ideas while he does as he wishes as the man of the house. He sees himself as her lord and master and she his slave. This was rightly pointed out in *The Second Sex* by Simon de Beauvoir (1949)

Now, woman has always been, if not man 'slave at least his vassal;
the two sexes have never divided the world up equally; and still

today, even though her condition is changing, woman is heavily Handicapped. In no country is her legal status identical to man's, and often it puts her at a considerable disadvantage. Even when her rights are recognized abstractly, long-standing habit keeps them from being concretely manifested in customs

It is injustice of the highest order and there is every need that it should be re-addressed.

Gender Based Violence

When we talk of gender based violence we are talking of one gender using a brutal force against another gender. Gender based violence is usually targeted at women and children. They are the ones who are always at the receiving end. Violence against girls, women and children has gained momentum in this present age and time, seen in the ugly menace ravaging our society these days. Violence has metamorphosed into something more dreadful eating deep into the fabrics of our societal norms and values which is the sum total of what our culture reflects. It's ugly effect will be seen and felt in years to come. Women and our young girls are now victims of money rituals and massacred on daily basis. Rape has metamorphosed to people now committing abominations by raping underage children, incest and all many of abominable acts. All in the quest for wealth. A woman can be the victim of physical or psychological violence all targeted at stripping her off her dignity and reducing her to the '*Other*' or to *Nothing*. The female gender has always been regarded as being inferior to the male gender and as such subject to his caprices and whims. To him, she is just an object of sex. She cannot be equated in the same category with him and as such cannot be equated with him. Some of the violent acts been meted at the female gender are, physical banter, rape, abuse, female genital mutilation, child marriage and teenage pregnancy etc. mostly seen among married couples. Many African families live in perpetual open conflict between the father and the mother even to the glare of the children. These conflicts often turn to deep hatred for each other which might end up in divorce or in death as recent case studies happening here in Nigeria have shown. Today African woman is standing up for herself and leaving the position of the other that she has been in all her life

African culture so structured it that a woman is not only '*The Other*' to her husband but to her in-laws as well. She is the stranger in the home whose whole duty is to rear children and serve the whole family. The Igbo's call her '*Nwunye Anyi*,' meaning wife for all. In her husband's home, she is been subjected to humiliation and degradation even from her fellow women who is either her mother in-law or her sister in-law. Marriage in most African homes and culture is another form of imprisonment for the woman and in this case against her will. If she comes out, she is labeled a wayward person and if she revolts, she has become stubborn. What is expected of her is to become comfortable in her prison till she dies. She endures physical and psychological torture from her family, her spouse and the society at large. Her value when compared with the amount of hard work she puts in for the progress of her home amounts to nothing. Our society encourages the woman to endure her pain in silence without saying anything. It is not so in other developed countries like America and other parts of Europe that respects the rights of the woman and the child. This encouragement to endure her pain in silence has resulted in many deaths in

our society today. Had it been she spoke up, she wouldn't have died comes at the end of it all. The blame of the untimely end of physically abused women that led to her untimely death should go to their family and also to their society. Gender based violence has eaten deep into the fabrics of our society and all the volumes of literatures on the said subject matter has not curbed it why because the lack of respect for our women seem to be embedded in our cultures. Gender based violence can occur in so many ways but the most commonly seen on a daily basis in our culture is Domestic Violence.

Domestic violence as an act of violence occurs within the family circle. It could be physical, psychological, emotional, verbal etc. It is mostly seen among intimate partners either past or present. Domestic violence is the most common violence and is on the increase in our society. The victims of this type of violence are usually women and children and in rare cases men. It is not usually noticeable until it becomes too late because it usually occurs within the confines of the home. 80% of murder cases we witness today are usually victims of domestic violence. Initially it was only women that their lives are being cut short but these days, women agitation ageist male maltreatment has now degenerated to violence. Women now see it as a means of getting away from an unwanted affiliation or as a means of exerting revenge for injustices meted out on them.

Molestation is an act of violence too and is also on the increase in our society today. Almost on a daily basis we hear case of molestations which comes in the form of *Rape*. Women, girls and even children has fallen victims of these almost on a daily basis. It is only in rare cases that you hear of men been raped or molested. It does happen and within the confines of secluded places like all male boarding schools and monasteries. Study has shown that our boarding schools are no longer a safe haven for our kids as 90% of our kids return back to us worse than we knew them. Cases of incest are also on the increase. It is as if the world is operating on another plane. Could one attribute all these anomalies as been caused by technology.? It is a question which will constitute the content of another research work. Recent happening's in the country attest to the fact that the issue of violence has gone to another level entirely and the victims don't live to tell their stories.

Smith, D.E (2000) recommended in her paper' enhancing the quality of survey data on the violence against women 'some standard questions that the researcher should ask which will equally aid in the researchers work. The questions are

- a. Since you were 16 years of age has any male stranger abused you, or tried to abuse you in public.
- b. Are men the only set of people that push, grab, punch, slap, kick, beat up, attack with a weapon or physically attack in any other way.

One can assume that the reason why all these questions came up was because study has shown or proven that women equally abuse their fellow women and also equally abuse younger boys.

Isaac Olawele Albert contributing to the paper critical gender discourse in Africa noted that various American scholars who were contributing to the book naming the violence: speaking out about women battery edited by lobel (1986) discussed their findings on

violence on women by other women. The papers according to Isaac O.A reported that lesbians beat themselves up and subjected each other to all kinds of indignities which were initially thought to be preserved for the patriarchs. The lesson we learn here according to Isaac is that men do not have monopoly of violence, women too could be involved in violent acts too. The paper revealed too that the women were not just subjected to emotional and psychological abuse, they were threatened with or physically assaulted with guns, knives and other dangerous weapons. Some the paper noted were raped by fellow women and forced to have sex with other women or subjected to prostitution. Women in some cases behave worse than men, this is what can be termed Poor Gender Relation. What kind of society do we hope to create for our future generations unborn, with all gender issues springing up almost on a daily basis? These and so many other questions will be looked into in this work.

Gender and Transgender Issues

Gender has already been accepted as different roles played by men and women in the society. It is a social construct and identifies with nature. One can only perform roles when one identifies with his or her gender. It is called 'Gender Identity'. Gender identity is referred to as ones internal knowledge of oneself as either a male or a female. The term gender has a long etymological history. . Despite the fact that society and nature has so structured it, issues still arise when nature is been altered and it affects society as well. Gender identity disorders are discordances between one's felt gender and one's assigned gender. One's felt identity is the identity one later assumes in life with the aid of medical science. When you are a transgender, ones gender identity now differs from the sex one was assigned to at the time of birth. These day's men morph from male to female and vice versa with the aid of science. Once this takes place it becomes difficult to assign gender roles because conflict is at variance with nature.

Transgendered identities if not brought to a halt, will breed more trouble in the society when it comes to assigning gender roles. It is becoming problematic already on how gender roles should be assigned according to our assigned gender identity according to nature. Tina chanter in 'Gender key concepts' in philosophy' noted

The line between fiction and reality seem to be increasingly fuzzy now that We can present ourselves as whatever gender we want through intern Personas. The Profrations of gender identity clinics, which enable female to Male and Male- female operations also suggests that sex/gender is much More malleable than we might have once thought. Even the process of in-vitro Fertilization have rendered unstable what used to be central, defining features of what it means to be a man or a woman. With the increase in test-tube babies and frozen sperm banks, reproductive process are no longer what they were.

We are in an age where everything is made possible by the aid of science. An age where age long traditions tested and trusted to be reliable are no longer looked upon. This scenario makes it very difficult to ascribe gender roles to individual as gender roles has

been equated with societal role. Transgendered identities are causing a hitch in assigning of these roles. A case whereby a man who used to play the role of a mother figure now changes her gender and assumes that of a man, what role will the society now ascribe to him?. Initially such a thing was never heard of in African culture but influx of culture and globalization now makes everything possible. We have the case of our Nigerian Bobrisky who is a transgendered male to female and he takes pride in that. Society even supports his cause and he makes a lot of cash from his displays.

Transgendered identities are challenging the age long feminist theory that equates gender with societal roles as Tina Chanter(2006) noted

Transgendered identities, including intersexuality, transexuality and other Crossover terms, are challenging tried and trusted feminist formulae, Which Equate with society (or culture, or history) and sex with biology (or Physiology or nature).

One question that keeps coming up on my mind is 'what is the role of God in all these?'. Does it mean God no longer exist? .If he does still exist, did he assign the role of creation to humans?, is science undermining the power of God. These and many more questions are brought to light and often times left the soul wondering. This is where the role of the philosopher is highly needed.

Gender Equality

Gender equality also known as equality of the sexes. The popular opinion according to Victoria (2014) among Gender activists is that women have been discriminated all through the ages. Governments, donor agents, private individuals have funded researches meant to eradicate Gender bias and also provide interventions where necessary. A lot of literary works has been put in place and they are meant to address Gender mainstreaming, Gender parity and other related issues. Equality has remained a source of worry throughout all ages. Women constitute more than 70% of the worlds population by the virtues of their God given talents as care givers, yet they are the most marginalized in history. It is unrealistic that despite so much ink been chunked out on the marginalization of women, the story still remains the same in many African country. We are said to be living in a Man's world maybe that is the reason everything revolves round him. Men should see women not as inferior being as was defined by Aristotle, but as being who have been sent to complement them.

Female Labor

Female labor has been a neglected theme in Nigeria's socio economic history and as such excluded from many Gender discourse. It seem to be creating no problem at all but as a salient problem, it generates more issues when not handled properly. Over the years, there has been a lot of moves by various Government agencies to tackle the issue because it is a time bomb waiting to explode. Women form one half of the world's entire population. In the traditional African setting, the female Gender was restricted at home basically as care giver. They were restricted ostensibly in the kitchen. All these were done for the selfish

interest of the man. Then polygamy came up and with it man has need to increase his work force because he now has more mouths to feed. Who else to do that if not women?. Our women were now forced to leave the kitchen and take their hoe to the farm. She plants her own agricultural product alongside her husband's own. Proceeds from the farm were left for her so she can take care of herself and also members of her immediate family. They do three fourth of the world's work, receive one tenth of the world's salary (some even have their salaries taken by the men in their lives), cultivate one hundredth of the world's land, yet their dependency ratio is on the increase when you add the children to their figure.

Nigeria's economic situation has seen many women as the main bread winners of their family. They do this alongside their main primary functions of care givers and sex beings. Taking up such roles did not make her value in men's eyes to increase, for many it increased their problems.

Recommendations and Conclusion

This paper will be concluded by once again looking at the question of one of our foremost feminist advocate, the French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir. Beauvoir was a well known feminist /advocate and whose book 'The Second Sex' served as an eye opener to the injustice meted out to the female gender by the male gender advocated at the tail end of her work that there is need if possible for both genders to see each other as equal. She went further to say that men realization of his relationship to woman is the onset of man realizing himself and relishing his human given nature or essence by God. Beauvoir (1949) wrote at the last paragraph of her Second Sex thus:

This could not be better said. Within the given world, it is up to man to
Make the reign of freedom triumph; to carry off this supreme victory, men and
Women must among other things and beyond their natural differentiations,
Unequivocally affirm their brotherhood.

If there will ever be a reconciliation of gender, there is need for us to go back to our traditional African society and grab a leaf or two from their gender relations where cut out gender roles were spelt out and with each gender fulfilling its role judiciously. Women were not always seen as being inferior to men but as their equals complementing them in all ramifications. What brought about all these disparities was the onset of modernization bringing with it 'the global fever or the global rush'. Our women in the past held political offices just like their male counterparts and equally contributed their quota economically. There were no rush for freedom and independence as we have these days where every married person sees marriage as a form of slavery. Then it was the pride of every woman because their husbands accord them all due respect and treats them well. No wonder the Igbo

adage says 'ugwu nwaanyi bu di'. This is translated to mean that the pride of every woman is her husband. Today women will challenge the above assertion with every reason in the world.

Let there be unity which will start from going back to our roots and understand what gender relation in traditional African setting was all about.

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