

# The Moral Duty to Struggle for Gender Equality for Women

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## **Abstract:**

Despite the many international human rights declarations affirming the equality of men and women, and the techno-scientific accomplishments of humanity, in many non-Western societies and indigenous cultures there are still much discrimination against women. The discrimination and violence against women on the basis of their sex and their being perceived as subservient to men by some cultures, societies and persons are morally unacceptable. Discrimination and violence against women are wrong for they offend against the ontological status of women as human beings; violate their human dignity/ rights as persons. The arguments that some persons have used to treat women as unequal to men are flawed. It is an issue of morality for it speaks of how human beings should act. This paper uses a critical analytic, hermeneutics and evaluative methods to examine the issues. The issues of gender equality will be dissected and interrogated. The value in gender equality through all these methods will be highlighted. The paper finds that there are gender inequalities still prevalent in some parts of the world. The paper concludes that all societies, cultures and persons have a moral duty to struggle against gender inequalities. This will help to create a more harmonious world.

**Keywords:** Morality, Duty, Gender, Gender equality, Women, Feminism

## **Introduction**

Despite the many international and regional human rights declarations, and other documents that endorse vividly equality of men and women and the need to protect women from discrimination; in still many places in the world, especially in indigenous traditional cultures, the global South and non-western societies women are still seen as the lesser/weaker sex. They are treated as subservient to men. The United Nations Children Education Fund notes that there have been some gains in achieving gender equality such as more girls being able to access primary education, child marriage declining; and national health, education, water, and sanitation systems are being more responsive to

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girls and women (United Nations Children Education Fund, 2019). Despite all these:

Even now, 1 in 3 adolescent girls will experience female genital mutilation (FGM), and 1 in 5 will be married while they are still children. Worldwide, 1 in 4 girls aged 15-19 are in neither education, employment nor training, compared with 1 in 10 boys. Moreover, adolescent girls still account for 3 out of 4 new HIV infections among adolescents aged 10-19 and nearly 4 out of 10 girls think wife-beating is justified (United Nations Children Education Fund, 2019).

The United Nations declared the decade running from 1975 to 1985 as the international decade for women. One of the sustainable development goals is achievement of gender equality. The reality of gender inequalities and disequilibrium informed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (United Nations, 1995), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (United Nations General Assembly, 1979), Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (United Nations General Assembly, 1967), and Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (United Nations General Assembly, 1993). Ayodele states that:

The societal structures of gender insensitivity, inequality, oppression, marginalization and discrimination are still universally pronounced. Gender issues, in spite of recent debates and discourse, still remain largely unfavourable and discriminatory to feminine sex (2004: 1).

For much of human history, women have suffered from a great deal of discrimination, violence and dehumanizing practices against them arising from the fact that they are seen as unequal to men (Aina, 1998: 65; Akorede, 2012:20; Owhovorirole, 2012: 213). Because they are seen as unequal to men they are often treated in a hostile manner, excluded from men's assembly, political participation and blamed for childlessness in marriage. The statistics on global gender inequalities are troubling. Of the world's girls 33,000 are forced into marriage as child bride daily; 40 billions' hours are spent annually by girls collecting water in rural Africa depriving them of opportunities for other activities like education; only 6 countries in the entire world have given women equal legal rights like their male counterparts; only 22% of Artificial Intelligence professionals are women; men are twice more to be film characters than women; in car clashes women are more likely to suffer severe injuries as the safety features are designed for men (Whiting 2019). Of the parliamentary seats in the world only 24% are held by

women, among the about 193 heads of government only 24% are women, women receive less payment than men in the labour market, and the number of women who are CEOs in S&P companies is less than 6% (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). The whole international movement of feminism, feminist thoughts, feminist philosophy, and feminist theory; are a sign that women have suffered various forms of oppression and inequalities from ancient times. The fact that there is gender inequality is indisputable.

This paper argues that gender equality should not be an illusion, a utopia or something unattainable. With the globalization of knowledge all societies should accept and protect gender equality. The rights to human dignity, life, happiness and many other rights cannot be fully enjoyed by women if they are treated as unequal to their men counterparts. This paper shall examine this phenomenon of gender inequalities especially as it pertains to and affects women with a view of proffering some ideas to help in fostering gender equality. Critical analysis, evaluation and hermeneutics are adopted in this paper. The issues will be dissected and examined to see the value and worth in gender equality. The key words and concepts in the paper will also be interpreted along the way.

### **Factors Precipitating Gender Inequalities**

It is imperative first to define gender equality before examining the factors that inhibit it and cause gender inequalities. Gender is the social perception and construction of the roles played by males and females within a given society (Igube, 2004: 19). Oyekanmi argues that in many societies the roles played by the male folk are assigned higher value than those played by females (2004: 41). Even when the male and the female perform similar roles and functions in the workplace, economic, and social life; that of the male is more valued and even receives a higher salary than the female. Kendal says that gender is the “culturally and socially constructed differences between females and males found in the meanings, beliefs and practices associated with ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’” (Obi, 2018: 1). Another definition of gender sees it as:

... a human invention, like language, kinship, religion and technology, like them, gender organizes human social lives in culturally patterned ways. Gender organizes social relations in everyday life as well as in the major social structures, such as social class and the hierarchies of bureaucratic organizations (Lorber, 1994:6).

As generally understood in much of the literature today, gender is more than one's physical sex, rather it has to do with how a particular culture or society describes and understands the roles of the sexes (Obi, 2018: 1). Gender perceptions are different from culture to culture. But one thing that is clear is that for much of history the female sex has been perceived to be lesser than the male sex and they have been treated as such. Gender equality is concerned with equal rights to both males and females in the enjoyment of socio-economic opportunities, resources and welfare; and that none is discriminate against (Díaz-Morales, 2017). Gender inequality is a serious global problem. Gender inequality means that men and women are not perceived and treated as equal human persons. It is also "discrimination against women based on their sex" as they are considered to be weaker and placed on a subordinate role (Arinze and Ugochukwu, 2018: 19).

Cultural perceptions and attitudes to males and females are key factors that cause gender inequalities. In some African and Asian cultures the male (boys and men) are more valued than females (girls and women) and the males are even seen as superior to the females (Oyekanmi, 2004: 41). The preference in some Indian cultures is for males and parents try to ensure that they get a male child. The United Nations Children Education Fund reveals that all countries in South Asia have patriarchal values and socio-cultural norms inhibiting gender equality; and discriminatory practices predate birth of children (2020). There are cases of parents who continue to give birth even after having many girls in the hope of getting a male child. Some parents become sad if it is a female child that comes at childhood (Olomjobi, 2013: 24). Thus even before a child is born parents have rejected the girl child in preference for the male. There are still some places where the girl-child is deprived of formal education (Edewor, 2001: 36-37). Some parents will not just border to send their girl-child to school on the excuse that the girl-child will be married out. Male chauvinistic beliefs that see women as intellectually inferior to men, as sexual objects for satisfaction of men and domestic keepers have also enforced these cultural norms and continue to impede the progress of women in society (Sperber, 1974: 131). There are also sexist beliefs and ideologies which are aspects of most cultures in the world. Perceptions about women matter a lot and can be great obstacles to achieving gender equality. The United Nations Development Programme reported that almost 90% of women and men are biased against women and this has posed an obstacle to breaking the Glass Ceiling (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). The Gender Social Norms Index shows that of the women and men in the globe, almost half feel men are better political

leaders, and 40% think men are better in business leadership than women and also that men should have more right to jobs than women, and 28% think that there is nothing wrong if men beat their wives (United Nations Development Programme, 2020).

Traditional cultural practices that continue to re-enforce negative perception of women are a major contributor to perpetuating gender inequalities. Socio-cultural ideologies that see the role of the woman as simply child-bearing/rearing and home management have resulted in many females not receiving formal education and made some remain illiterate thus lacking skills for high paying jobs (Okeke, 2004: 33). Till today in some rural communities and hinterlands in Africa and other regions of the world some fathers still believe that the woman's place is in the kitchen, the girl is to be prepared for marriage so they don't need formal education (Akomolafe, 2005: 47). The practice of patriarchy grounds much of the negative actions meted to women. Though there are various definitions of patriarchy it is generally understood as social systems in which the father or man rules and dominates the household members both in the house and outside the house in the public square. Patriarchy has been practised all through history and still prevalent in many non-western societies. It is a given in a patriarchal culture that women are not equal to men. Not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present time, many people born into patriarchal systems follow up in treating women as lesser than men.

Religion which is a powerful aspect of culture and a crucial institution has also played a role in perpetuating gender inequalities. For much of history, many religions both western and indigenous perceive women as the weaker sex, inferior, impure and sinful. In some Muslim societies women are to remain in Purdah and their place is at home, so public functions is not expected of them (Akomolafe, 2005: 47). For many indigenous and traditional religions there are many taboos, sanctions, and rituals such as widowhood rituals that continue to keep women in bondage (Ebiringa, 2010: 275). In the Christian religion, some people have misused passages from the Pauline epistles (1 Corinthians 11: 5-12, 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35, 2 Timothy 2: 8-15) to justify discrimination against women.

Early childhood socialization has a great role to play in gender differentiation that often leads to gender discrimination. In many societies the male child is socialized into how to be a man with certain roles reserved for him, and the female-child is socialized into how to be a woman. The female-child is most often restricted to domestic chores at home, while the male-child is socialized into many of the duties outside the home. When children see their mothers doing household chores like

cooking, washing the dishes, sweeping the house, fetching water from the stream, and mending the clothes; they are made to believe that those chores are for females, and when they see their fathers engaging in more difficult work like fixing the car and electronic equipment their perception is that the more difficult works are for men thereby thinking men are necessarily stronger than women (Obi, 2018: 2). Children who grow up with stereotypes of what the male and female are expected to do or not do are likely to live following those stereotypes.

Theories and ideologies matter a great deal. Many of the social thinkers of humanity were people of their age and time. When it comes to gender equality they could not think ahead of their times. The enunciations of some thinkers through history have informed people's disposition to women. For Aristotle, women are inferior to men in everything, are to be confined to the home, and men are to rule over them (350). Rousseau though a philosopher of the French enlightenment advocated gender inequality in the education of the sexes. Men and women are to be educated differently. The whole purpose of a woman's education is to serve and satisfy men. He opined thus:

To please men, to be useful to them, to raise them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to console them, to make their lives agreeable and sweet-these are the duties of women at all times, and they ought to be taught from childhood (1979:365).

Women are to make themselves attractive and charming to men. They are to be modest and live in subordination to men. Women are not to study the arts, sciences and philosophy.

There are cultures in various parts of the world who may not have heard of Rousseau's teaching but have the same mentality as him. The notion that nature has created women to adorn the lives of men; and that women are weak is unacceptable. From a creationist perspective as found in the book of Genesis, man and woman share in the same ontological essence in being created in the *Imago Dei* (God's image and likeness). Attributing gender inequalities to divine prescription as some religious persons do is fundamentally flawed. Discriminatory religious texts were written within particular cultural milieus. They should not be transported and transposed into contemporary situations without proper critical hermeneutics and re-imagining. For Plato, women lack souls and are not directly created by the gods [360]. Weber theorized that women are inferior and weak (Sydie, 1987: 183-185). Even the great philosopher Marx fails to take adequate cognizance of the contribution of women to social life in labour value theory, argued Johari (2012: 672). Until the rise of feminism and the women's movement most if not

all theories in the social sciences rarely take women into consideration as equal agents of human destiny (Johari, 2012: 672). Some scholars and persons have used the issue of biological differences between the sexes to argue that women are weak and lesser in status to men. Randall opines that women's physique makes them vulnerable to male domination (Randall, 1982).

In closing this section, it is imperative to critically challenge the viewpoints above that perceive women as not equal to men. As some feminist thinkers have argued, biological differentiation between the sexes does not imply intellectual inferiority. Biological differences between men and women do not amount to women's weakness. The United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have rightly averred that both boys and girls are entitled to the same advantages and disadvantages in schooling. They are to be treated equally with access to equal benefits in education (UNESCO, 2015). Women education must be extended beyond conventional informal training to embrace formal issues in public and social life (Maduabuchi, 2018: 34). Biological differentiation should not amount to weakness, inferiority, defect or subordination of women for biological differences are indication that women are a separate sex (Enrenreich, 1999; Johari, 2012: 671).

### **The Consequences of Gender Inequalities**

There are many consequences of gender inequalities in society. Rights and access to some political positions are denied women as they are erroneously perceived to be not capable or unworthy of those positions. There is the wrong belief in some cultures that women cannot be trusted with key positions. For women to participate in politics in some regions of the world they have to get permission from their husbands who often are likely to refuse as the husbands don't like assertive women; and because women are burdened with the responsibility of taking care of all the domestic chores they have little or no time to engage in politics (Odebowale, 2012: 203).

It negatively impacts socio-economic development. Women can suffer from lack of good self-esteem and image of themselves as a result of verbal abuse from men. This can affect their psychological health and wellbeing. Because women are treated as "inferior" and unequal to men they are often subjected to being suppressed and beaten down. They are not to be seen unless with the permission of men and they are not to be heard.

There are many women who have suffered from many forced marriages. In some cultures the woman has no say even in the marriage affecting them. Their objection is not taken into consideration in

negotiating the marriage contract. It is simply done between her family and that of the suitor. Whether she likes the man or not is out of the question. She has no role in determining who to marry. In societies where polygamy is practiced a man can go and marry more wives without telling his already existing wife. The likely acrimony and negative impact on the already existing wife is not even given consideration by the man.

Society is deprived of a lot of gifts and resources when women are denied equal opportunities with men. The wisdom and insights of women that could be fully tapped into for the betterment of society are lost. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women affirms that gender inequality “is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity” (United Nations General Assembly, 1979). The world cannot experience full and total development, full global wellbeing and genuine peace if it is deprived of the maximum contributions of women in all fields of human endeavours (United Nations General Assembly, 1967). Ebiringa rightly notes that: “Women are agents of change and development, therefore denying them equal rights with their male counterparts, is reducing the economic and intellectual developments of any country” (2010: 278).

The failure to recognize women as equal to men has often made many men to see them as inferior and subjected women to violence. Violence against women can take various forms such as sexual abuse, verbal abuse, wife battery, etc. It can also be psychological violence, dowry related violence, rape, trafficking in women, forced prostitution, and so forth (Obioma and Ogbenna, 2010:328-329). Violence against women can negatively affect their educational and psychological development. It can cause health problems, contribute to low self-esteem, shame, guilt, depression, and create dysfunctional relationships (Obioma and Ogbenna, 2010:336). There are many cases of women who have been beaten to death by their male partners. Some have suffered bodily injury and have their reproductive systems damaged. In many countries in the world women continue to experience physical and sexual violence and have their basic rights denied (O’Connell, 1993: 12).

### **Some Actions to Eradicate Gender Inequalities**

One vital action that can be taken to struggle for gender equality is transformative and transgressive education to reform and change the



minds and hearts of those who endorse gender inequalities. Women are as trustworthy and capable of key positions in life as men. In many cultures all over the world women have played and carried out enormous leadership functions both in peace and war times. The position that women cannot be trusted with leadership positions is not theoretically and empirically sound.

The law and public policy remain powerful instruments to eradicate gender inequalities and imbalance. Every society should make laws and create policies that promote equal access to all socio-economic and political opportunities to all sexes. Discriminatory laws such as those that perpetuate barbaric widowhood practices on women, disenfranchise women from inheriting properties, etc should be abrogated. Unjust and discriminatory laws that give no inheritance to women have to be legally abolished. In a place like Nigeria even if there are laws in place for female inheritance, the laws favour the male child more than the female and the laws promoting inheritance for females are not even enforced; and in a place like Igboland in Nigeria the brother of the deceased can forcefully take away all the properties of his brother (Akomolafe, 2005: 48). Law and social policy is crucial in remedying the situation of discrimination against women. There are persons who will never act for justice for women unless they are compelled by the law. Customary and legal constraints that have been used to subjugate women have to be redirected to facilitate the release of their potentials (Tong, 1989: 2). Recognizing the role that legislation can play in promoting gender equality, Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women affirms that women's right to vote in election, be voted for, hold public office and play public functions should be guaranteed by national laws. This document states: "All appropriate measures shall be taken to educate public opinion and to direct national aspirations towards the eradication of prejudice and the abolition of customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women" (United Nations General Assembly, 1967).

Critical hermeneutics of religious texts is also necessary in the struggle against gender inequalities (Umoren, 2005: 57-87; Uchem, 2005: 43-57). Since some persons and religions have used religious texts to support some forms of discrimination against women, it is also important to re-assess those texts. Religious language is crucial in re-asserting the dignity of women. Religious texts and language that are hostile to human rights and flourishing and the wellbeing of women are culturally conditioned. Within every religion there are critical progressive voices that have advocated for the rights and empowerment of women. These voices should not be ignored. Ruether has argued that

central to feminist theology is advancement of the full humanity of women and anything in religious texts that denies or degrades the full humanity of women is not redemptive and does not reflect the divine nature of God (1983: 18-19).

The transformation of minds and hearts especially of men is vital in reconstructing gender relations. People's beliefs matter a great deal and inform their behaviours and actions. The struggle for gender equality requires mental revolution and psychological re-setting in which females separate themselves from complacency, passivity, and self-induced inferiority complex; while on the other hand the males shun egocentric thinking and give support to the female folks in their struggle for gender equality (Ayodele, 2004: 10). In this regard, to struggle against gender inequalities there should be programmes, events, conferences, seminars and other enlightenment opportunities to promote women empowerment. The annual celebration of the International Women's Day is of vital importance. The role of women who have made significant and giant strides in all endeavours of life should be highlighted and celebrated to inspire other women. These women include Professor Dora Akunyili in the health sector in Nigeria, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala at the World Bank, Hilary Clinton and Madeleine Albright (both former US Secretaries of State), Margaret Thatcher and Theresa May and many others. Okeke rightly notes that the accomplishment of women should open the eyes of other women, inspire them to know that they can achieve like their male counterpart if not better (2005: 34). They should never abandon the spirit and the determination to struggle to improve their lots. No doubt, the lives of millions of females who are working to sustain their families and promote the local economies of their nations should also be celebrated in a manner that positively value their contributions.

The following recommendations can also be helpful in fighting gender inequalities and disparities: (1) gender sensitivity in recognition of the equal dignity and rights of women should feature in the educational curriculum from the earliest stages, (2) men and women should take it as their duties to fight against gender inequalities, (3) national governments should end all forms of gender-based discriminatory policies in all education, social, political, and health sectors of society, (4) there should be creative affirmative action to ensure there are equal representation for women in decision making processes of society, (5) verbal abuse of women for sexual wrongs of which men are equally guilty should be stopped, (6) domestic responsibilities should be mutually shared to allow women have time for public life, (7) society should guarantee the equal access to qualitative

education of the girl child, (8) there should be empowerment programmes for women to enable them realize their opportunities, (9) sex stereotyping of women should be stopped, (10) parents are to guide against early marriage of their children (Ebiringa, 2010: 277).

Arising from the above it is vital to promote authentic feminist values. Feminism as understood here advocates for subversion of sexist practices, correct all evils, injustice and discrimination against women, while affirming that women are disadvantaged compared with their men counterpart (Johari, 2012: 671). All societies at the local, national, and international levels should galvanize to struggle for and ensure gender equality.

### **Struggling for Gender Equality as a Moral Duty**

A word on what a moral duty is will be helpful here before arguing for struggling for gender equality as a moral duty. A duty is a moral commitment and implies strong feeling in doing something (Prabhat, 2018). The citizen of a country for instance has a duty to obey the constitutions and the laws of the land. Frazier explains that a duty is a normative and binding requirement that someone has to satisfy in carrying out an action (1999).

There are various kinds of duty such as political duty, moral duty, religious duty, professional duty, family duty, etc. It can also be classified in different manners depending on the perspective taken. For instance, Chaturvedi writes that there are moral and legal duties; legal duties are those required of the human being by law and have penalties attached to them for non-compliance, while moral duties arise from moral grounds (2006:4). A moral duty is an obligation to act ethically for what is right and good in carrying out responsibilities required of you. For instance you have a moral duty as a human being to act in a humane manner and not harm your neighbour or a fellow human being. Duties have justification backing them for the duty to be carried out though there can be a higher justification for not carrying out a duty (Frazier, 1999). A soldier for instance may have a duty to obey his commander but if his/her commander requires him/her to kill innocent civilians then that command is troubling and unjustified. A duty is an obligation that should be carried out. Something is moral when it is good and right.

A moral duty is a requirement emanating from moral reality. The New World Encyclopedia argues that duty is connected with “ought” and “obligation” and implies a moral action that is required (2020). Kant has opined that there is a moral duty to obey and follow the categorical imperative to treat each human being as an end not a means (1959). For Christians, morality is based on duty. The duty is to obey

what Christianity asserts as divine precepts from the sacred book. Duty is living in accord with conscience that is informed with human rational nature grounded in divine order (Fox, 1909). Fox arguing from a religious perspective says that human beings have three kinds of duties; to God, to oneself and to others. Duties to others are rooted in the golden rule to enhance the wellbeing and welfare of others and not harm them.

Acting for gender equality is a good thing. It is the right human behaviour to undertake for it enhances the wellbeing and health of human persons. Harming women in any form such as discrimination and violence against women are social evils and offends against the wellbeing of women. Women are human beings like men. To deprive them of their rights is to harm humanity. Crimes against women are crimes against humanity.

With regard to struggling for gender equality, it is a natural duty as distinguished from acquired duty. It is a natural duty for as moral agents it is implied in acting in accord with being a human being to accord respect to every human being without discrimination. Natural duties for instance include not harming a fellow human being, helping others, doing justice and mutual respect for others (New World Encyclopedia, 2020). The cited Encyclopedia avers that natural duties derive from one's role in the human community of moral agents and all moral agents are bound by natural duties (2020). Fostering gender equality arises from that fact of a common humanity and personhood. It should be realized that: "One of the central characteristics of civilized states is that freedom from discrimination is a hallmark of social equality" (Olomjobi, 2015:24). Joseph and Sumption write that "A system founded on inequality is against nature" (1979: 83).

The rights of women are human rights also (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2014: 3-4). Women's rights to life, happiness, freedom of speech and association, health, etc cannot be fully fulfilled or obtained if they are denied equal status as men, if they are denied their dignity as full human beings. Every human right implies duties that are to be upheld by society for that right to be achieved. Women's right to life and freedom from discrimination necessarily mean that all persons in society have a duty to enhance the right to life of women. This is the moral thing to do. This is the right thing to do. From various human rights declarations the state is obliged to treat every human being irrespective of their sex with equal concern and respect and ensure that inequalities in opportunities and goods are abolished (Donnelly, 2003: 46). What the state is obligated to do, the citizens of the state equally are obliged to do for the state is made up of persons and these persons are not to live in violations of the goals of the

state. Rights without duties (obligations) will amount to lawlessness (Johari, 2012: 216). Citizens have an obligation or duty to obey the laws of the state. Today most states have recognized the need for gender equality and have made laws to enforce it. There are reasons to obey these laws on moral, legal, natural and rational ground.

Struggling for gender equality for women is a moral duty on many levels. One fundamental moral rationale to strive for gender equality for women is that women are human beings like men. A human being is a human being no matter the sex, ethnicity, race, etc of the person. Every human being is entitled to some fundamental human rights and these rights have been well acknowledged (United Nations, 1948). Human rights are inalienable, apply regardless of your status in life, and are moral norms specifying standards of human behaviour that should be accorded to the persons due those rights (Arinze and Ugochukwu, 2018: 18). Fundamental human rights subsist in every human being and these rights are not given by society rather they are recognized by society. The fundamental human rights have been proclaimed by international and various human rights instruments and all states are obligated to ensure they are safeguarded. To fail to protect fundamental human rights is to fail in a duty. The foundation of all human rights is the right to human dignity and personhood. Every human being is entitled to be treated with dignity, male or female. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights is also clear that there is a right to equality. All human beings are equal no matter their sexes. Treating women as not equal to men is unethical and amounts to a failure in a moral duty. Realize that: “discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity” (United Nations General Assembly, 1979).

### **Conclusion**

Struggling for gender equality is a moral duty for it is a fundamental requirement grounded in the moral norm of respect for each human being and dignity, international norms, and state legislation. The human rights instruments are clear in putting an obligation on states and societies to foster gender equality. Gender equality is vital for the good of every society. Humanity cannot fully attain its potentials without full realization of gender equality.

This paper argued forcefully for the need to work on realizing this issue of gender equality. The paper revealed that women have suffered from various forms of oppression and discrimination. Some of the factors that lead to gender inequalities were examined. Some of the grave consequences and solutions to gender equality were also

discussed. In the light of the above the paper showed that struggling for gender equality is a moral duty for societies and all members of society for it is the right thing to do. With full gender equality achieved a better and more harmonious human society will be achieved.

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