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Gendered Innovations, and Skills for Societal Sustainability: Reflections on Today's Women and Women in the Bible

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Abstract

The issue of gender involves a range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity, and religion, a system of beliefs and practices followed by a community, share a multifaceted relationship that influences both individual and collective identities. This research on Gender pertains to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed – including norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. This study on gender and innovative skills for societal sustainability touches on the realms of religious background alongside the Bible plus what it offers to the society. Several women in the bible and even in modern times have played great roles worth noting which the study showcased. After several compiled researches, the study highlighted some socially constructed norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. Other gender innovations and skills of women in the bible and today's women were presented in the study.

Keywords: Africa, Bible, Culture, Education, Sustainable Development, Society, Women

Introduction

In the past two decades gender issues have been discussed widely in the academia in more distinct ways than ever. There are several key interests like the church and other religious organisations who have keen interest in gender matters. According to Lantaffi (2017); Knudson-Martin and Mahoney (2009), the social sciences have a branch devoted to gender studies. Other sciences, such as psychology, sociology, sexology and neuroscience, are interested in the subject. Lantaffi et al explained that social sciences sometimes approach gender as a social construct, and gender studies particularly do, while research in the natural sciences investigates whether biological differences in females and males influence the development of gender in humans; both inform the debate about how far biological differences influence the formation of gender identity and gendered behavior. In addition, Lantaffi et al mentioned Biopsychosocial approaches to gender to include biological, psychological, and social/cultural aspects.

Thus, gender issues involve males and females which have been in existence since the past centuries. The concept of gender, in the modern sense, is a recent invention in human history (Holmes, 2012). According to Holmes the ancient world had no basis of understanding gender as it has been understood in the humanities and social sciences for the past few decades. The

term *gender* as portrayed by Haig (2004) had been associated with grammar for most of history and only started to move towards it being a malleable cultural construct in the 1950s and 1960s. Thus, gender includes the social, psychological, cultural and behavioral aspects of being a man, woman, or other gender identity (Haig, 2004; World Health Organization – WHO, 2017). Depending on the context, this may include sex-based social structures (i.e. gender roles) and gender expression (Udry, 1994; *Lindqvist;* Sendén, Renström, *2021* & National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, & Medicine (2022).

Most cultures use a gender binary, in which gender is divided into two categories, and people are considered part of one or the other (boys/men and girls/women) (Sigelman & Rider, 2017; Maddux & Winstead, 2019; Kevin, 2017) those who are outside these groups may fall under the umbrella term *non-binary*. Some societies have specific genders besides "man" and "woman", such as the hijras of South Asia; these are often referred to as *third genders* (and *fourth genders*, etc.). Most scholars agree that gender is a central characteristic for social organization (Heinemann, 2012). The major task of this paper, is to hold a discourse on the essence of recognizing the female gender in Christianity especially as we reflect on the need for gender faith innovations for all nations as we pursue serving the Lord for eternity. And for us to achieve this feat on gender, we shall take a cursory look at the aspects of gender and Gender education in the society. This discussion hinges on the Liberal Feminist theory which Emphasizes the rights of the individual women and aims to grant equal rights and representation through legislation Liberal feminism focuses on issues such as the workplace, education, and political rights. It argues that equality for women can be achieved through legal means and social reform reasoning.

Approaches to Gender and Gender Education

Gender, according to international researchers is defined as the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity, and religion, a system of beliefs and practices followed by a community, share a multifaceted relationship that influences both individual and collective identities. Gender also refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. Research portrays gender as being hierarchical and produces inequalities that intersect with other social and economic inequalities.

The World dictionaries gave succinct definitions accordingly: *Gender*

1. *Either of the two sexes (male and female), especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones. The term is also used more broadly to denote a range of identities that do not correspond to established ideas of male and female:*

"a condition that affects people of both genders" · "someone of the opposite gender" · "everyone always asks which gender I identify as" members of a particular gender considered as a group: "social interaction between the genders" · "encouraging women and girls to join fields traditionally dominated by the male gender"

2. *the fact or condition of belonging to or identifying with a particular gender:*

"video ads will target users based only on age and gender" · "traditional concepts of gender" · "I'm a strong believer that gender is fluid"

(in languages such as Latin, French, and German) each of the classes (typically masculine, feminine, common, neuter) of nouns and pronouns distinguished by the different inflections which they have and which they require in words syntactically associated with them. Grammatical gender is only very loosely associated with natural distinctions of sex

When we look at gender issues, there are qualitative analyses that explore and present the representations of gender; however, feminists challenge these dominant ideologies concerning gender roles and biological sex. One's biological sex is often times tied to specific social roles and expectations. Judith Butler considers the concept of being a woman to have more challenges, owing not only to society's viewing women as a social category but also as a felt sense of self, a culturally conditioned or constructed subjective identity (Butler, 1990).
The manner in which individuals express and experience their religious convictions is profoundly shaped by gender. Experts from diverse disciplines such as theology, sociology, anthropology, and gender studies have delved into the effects of gender on religious politics and societal standards. In Christianity, God is traditionally described in masculine terms and the Church has historically been described in feminine terms.
On the other hand, Christian theology in many churches distinguishes between the masculine images used of God (Father, King, God the Son) and the reality they signify, which transcends gender, embodies all the virtues of both men and women perfectly, which may be seen through the doctrine of Imago Dei.

In the New Testament, Jesus at several times mentions the Holy Spirit with the masculine pronoun i.e. John 15:26 among other verses. Hence, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (i.e. Trinity) are all mentioned with the masculine pronoun; though the exact meaning of the masculinity of the Christian triune God is contended (Tompkins, 2015).
This calls for the society to apply gender responsive approaches to issues of gender for the sake of humanity. The society should be going beyond acknowledging and raising awareness of gender gaps, to make sure women's and men's concerns and experiences are equally integrated in the design of innovative products or services and that due consideration is given to gender norms, roles and relations (i.e Gender-Responsive Approach) (UN Women, 2021).

Among the United Nations principles include adopting a gender-responsive approach to innovation means going beyond acknowledging the need for gender equality in innovation and acting throughout the innovation cycle to ensure that women play a key role at every phase. The primary objective of the principles is to create a space where members can share tools, lessons learned and rapidly push forward innovative practices.

They are encouraged to set their own specific targets to:
1. Make a high-level corporate commitment to adopt a gender-responsive approach to innovation
2. Design innovations that include women as end users
3. Adapt implementation approaches to ensure innovations meet the needs of women
4. Evaluate gender-responsive impacts by using a data-driven approach
5. Scale innovations that provide sustainable solutions to meet the needs of women and girls (UN Women, 2021).

The process of these approaches include use of digital, block chain technology and using behavioral insights to combat violence against any gender, especially women. Behavioral Insight

(BI) is a methodology that combines cognitive science, psychology and social science with empirically tested results to uncover how people make choices and how it is possible to nudge them towards better decisions. These are definitive ways to create better local, national and international decisions, efforts, supports and contributions to gender empowerment in this 21st century.

What is Gender Education?

According to UNICEF (2021), education has massive transformational power. Yet, the potential of education systems to achieve gender equality and equity has not been fully harnessed in any country. Furthermore, UNICEF disclosed that huge progress has been made. It reported that over the 25 years, gender parity in education around the world has skyrocketed. But parity is only a surface measure. It should be noted that gender discrimination still persists where the females are concerned. Thus, girls are excluded and discriminated against simply because they are girls and women. Boys too are restricted by harmful norms of masculinity. Children and young people who do not identify themselves within traditional gender and sexual orientation norms face the difficult task of fitting in. It is my utmost belief that applying proper and quality education and our Christian doctrines, all these gender challenges in our society would be reduced to the barest minimum.

Furthermore, gender education is a broad term that encompasses several fields of study and practice. It focuses on the ways gender identity and sexual orientation shape behaviors and feelings, and it investigates power dynamics that relate to sex (Kowaski, 2021). Gender-equitable education systems empower girls and boys and promote the development of life skills (UNICEF, 2022).

In addition, UNICEF highlighted and clarified the term Gender Transformative Education which seeks to utilize all parts of an education system to transform stereotypes, attitudes, norms and practices by challenging power relations, rethinking gender norms and binaries, and raising critical consciousness about the root causes of inequality and systems of oppression.

In gender education, stressed Kowarski (2021) it can equally be called Gender studies which according to Deborah Cohan, a sociology professor at the University of South Carolina—Beaufort, wrote in an email; “gives language and voice to social inequalities, processes, conditions, arrangements, and rituals that can otherwise go unspoken and unnamed," It focuses on the ways gender identity and sexual orientation shape behaviors and feelings, and it investigates power dynamics that relate to sex. This field includes men’s studies, women’s studies and queer studies, and occasionally addresses widespread social concerns such as domestic violence. The academic discipline also investigates causes of sex-based discrimination and harassment and solutions to the problem. "Research tells us that we learn what our culture considers 'appropriate' gender and sex roles by the age of two or three," E. Michele Ramsey, an associate professor of women's, gender and sexuality studies at Pennsylvania State University's Berks campus, wrote in an email. "Thus, children feel pressure at a very young age to conform to expectations based on their perceived sex (or) gender and may limit themselves as a result of these expectations" (kowarski, 2021).

In essence, competing theories about gender and sexuality underlie many debates on hot-button issues like abortion, pay equity and transgender identity. Gender studies programs impart knowledge and skills that help in navigating gender-related controversies. Therefore, gender faith innovations become imperative at this juncture for the lecture.

Gender Faith and Innovations

Gendered Innovations employs methods of sex, gender and intersectional analysis to create new knowledge – UNWomen. Researchers refers Gender faith as to the belief systems, practices, and traditions that are associated with gender identity and expression within various cultural, religious, and spiritual contexts. It encompasses the ways in which gender is understood, valued, and integrated into religious and spiritual beliefs, as well as the roles and expectations placed on individuals based on their gender. Gender faith can vary significantly across different societies and religious traditions, influencing social norms, rituals, and individual experiences.

In many religious and cultural traditions, gender plays a central role in shaping social structures, familial relationships, and individual identities. The concept of gender faith is deeply intertwined with these traditions, influencing how individuals perceive themselves and others within the context of their faith. For example, in some belief systems, there are specific roles and responsibilities assigned to individuals based on their gender. These roles may be reflected in religious texts, teachings, and rituals.

Thus, many religious and spiritual traditions have specific teachings or interpretations related to gender identity and expression. These teachings can impact the lived experiences of individuals who identify with diverse gender identities. Moreover, the inclusion or exclusion of certain genders from particular religious practices or leadership roles can have profound implications for individuals' spiritual lives.

Challenges and Opportunities

Gender faith also raises important questions about inclusivity, equality, and social justice within religious and cultural communities. As societies evolve and become more aware of diverse gender identities, there is an increasing call for religious institutions to reexamine their teachings and practices related to gender. This has led to discussions about creating more inclusive spaces for individuals of all genders within religious communities.

Furthermore, the concept of gender faith presents opportunities for dialogue, education, and advocacy within religious and cultural contexts. It encourages critical reflection on how gender is understood within different belief systems and how these understandings can be reinterpreted to promote greater acceptance and understanding of diverse gender identities.

In conclusion, gender faith encompasses the intricate relationship between gender identity, expression, culture, spirituality, and religious beliefs. It reflects the ways in which individuals navigate their identities within the framework of their faith traditions while also prompting conversations about inclusivity and equality within religious communities.

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Skills for Societal Sustainability

> "The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is anything but 'business as usual'. We need not incrementally change, but bold change. We need an earthquake that will tilt the system altogether, because little and incremental steps will not give us the world that we want." Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women

Sustainability is a social goal for people to co-exist on Earth over a long time. Specific definitions of this term are disputed and have varied with literature, context, and time (Purvis, Mao & Robinson, 2019; Ramsey, 2015). Describing sustainability according to analysts could be seen in three dimensions, namely: environmental, economic, and social, (Purvis, Mao & Robinson,

2019), and many publications emphasize the environmental dimension according to *Kotzé; et al (2022) and* Bosselmann, 2010).

According to Berg (2020) the idea of sustainability can guide decisions at the global, national, and individual levels (e.g. sustainable living). It is of essence to understand that the term "sustainable development" is utilized often to mean the same thing. UNESCO distinguishes the two like this: "*Sustainability* is often thought of as a long-term goal (i.e. a more sustainable world), while *sustainable development* refers to the many processes and pathways to achieve it (UNESCO, 2015).

In line with the United Nations Women argument, achieving the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – and notably the goal on gender equality and women's empowerment – requires transformative shifts, integrated approaches and new solutions. Based on current trajectories, existing efforts will not suffice to achieve a planet 50-50 by 2030. However, innovations in policies, management, finance, science and technology that disrupt "business as usual" are increasingly recognized as a way to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs for all. From mobile banking ventures that facilitate women's entrepreneurship to e-learning platforms that take classrooms to individuals, social innovations have the potential to serve as powerful tools to break trends and increase awareness, access and the availability of opportunities. This is particularly true for women experiencing marginalization due to their age, ethnicity, education, income, disability, location or migratory status.

Furthermore, sustainability is a critical concept that focuses on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. To achieve sustainability, individuals, organizations, and societies need to develop specific skills that enable them to address environmental, social, and economic challenges effectively.
Here are some key skills for sustainability according to detailed on Sustainability by three different global organizations namely; the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs**):** the World Economic Forum (WEF); and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) (2024):

1. Systems Thinking: One of the fundamental skills for sustainability is systems thinking. This skill involves understanding the interconnectedness of various components within a system and how changes in one part can impact the entire system. By applying systems thinking, individuals can identify leverage points for positive change and develop holistic solutions to complex sustainability issues.
2. Interdisciplinary Knowledge: Sustainability issues are multifaceted and require a broad understanding of various disciplines, including environmental science, economics, social sciences, and technology. Having interdisciplinary knowledge allows individuals to approach sustainability challenges from different perspectives and develop innovative solutions that consider the interplay between environmental, social, and economic factors.
3. Critical Thinking: Critical thinking is essential for evaluating information, analyzing complex problems, and making informed decisions in the context of sustainability. Individuals with strong critical thinking skills can assess the validity of arguments, identify biases, and propose evidence-based solutions to sustainability challenges.
4. Collaboration and Communication: Collaboration and communication skills are crucial for driving collective action towards sustainability goals. Effective collaboration involves working

with diverse stakeholders, building partnerships, and fostering dialogue to reach consensus on sustainable solutions. Strong communication skills help in conveying complex sustainability concepts clearly and persuasively to different audiences.

5. Adaptability and Resilience: In a rapidly changing world facing environmental uncertainties, adaptability and resilience are key skills for sustainability practitioners. Being able to adjust strategies in response to new information or unexpected events and bouncing back from setbacks are essential qualities for promoting long-term sustainability.

6. Innovation and Creativity: Sustainable development requires innovative thinking and creative problem-solving approaches. Individuals with a knack for innovation can develop new technologies, business models, or policies that promote sustainable practices and drive positive change in society.

7. Ethical Leadership: Ethical leadership is crucial for guiding sustainable decision-making processes and inspiring others to act in ways that uphold ethical principles and values. Leaders in sustainability need to demonstrate integrity, transparency, and a commitment to social responsibility in their actions.

In conclusion, developing a diverse set of skills is essential for promoting sustainability across various sectors and levels of society. By cultivating these skills, individuals can contribute effectively to creating a more sustainable future for all.

Reflections and celebrating today's Women and Women in the Bible

The primary source for information about the women in the Bible in the lecture emanates from my research and the text itself from the Bible which provides detailed accounts of women lives, actions, and interactions with others. Other sources are the Biblical Archaeology Society and Christianity Today**.** These sources were instrumental in providing us with great details for easy understanding of the subject matter. Permit me, scholars and researchers, ladies and gentlemen to present them as culled online.

The women in the Bible play significant roles and their stories continue to inspire and resonate with people today. Their experiences, actions, and relationships with God offer valuable insights and reflections on various aspects of womanhood, faith, and resilience.

Eve:

The First Woman *Eve is often regarded as the first woman in the Bible. Her story in the book of Genesis serves as a reflection on the complexities of human nature, temptation, and the consequences of choices. Despite her role in the fall of humanity, Eve's story also highlights themes of forgiveness, redemption, and the enduring strength of women.*

Sarah:

The Matriarch of Faith *Sarah, the wife of Abraham, is celebrated for her unwavering faith and resilience. Her journey through infertility, motherhood at an advanced age, and the challenges she faced as a matriarch offer reflections on perseverance, trust in God's promises, and the power of hope.*

Ruth:

Loyalty and Redemption *The story of Ruth showcases loyalty, love, and redemption. Her commitment to her mother-in-law Naomi and her eventual marriage to Boaz reflect themes of compassion, determination, and the rewards of steadfastness. Ruth's narrative resonates with contemporary discussions on family bonds, kindness, and the pursuit of a meaningful life.*

Esther:

Courage and Advocacy *Esther's narrative illustrates courage, strategic thinking, and advocacy. Her bravery in approaching King Xerxes to save her people from destruction serves as a reflection on leadership, standing up for justice, and using one's voice for the greater good. Esther's story continues to inspire discussions on empowerment and social change.*

Mary:

The Mother of Jesus *Mary holds a central role in Christianity as the mother of Jesus. Her humility, obedience to God's will, and strength in facing societal challenges offer reflections on motherhood, faithfulness, and grace. Mary's example continues to be revered by many as a symbol of devotion and spiritual fortitude.*

Priscilla:

Partner in Ministry *Priscilla is depicted as a partner in ministry alongside her husband Aquila. Their collaborative work with the apostle Paul reflects equality in service, shared leadership, and the contributions of women to early Christian communities. Priscilla's story prompts discussions on gender equality within religious contexts and the importance of inclusive leadership.*

Since the arrival of Christianity in Africa, the Bible has been well-received by Africans, especially the African women. It has become the canon in most spheres of life. For women, especially, the Bible was and still is the book of hope and courage. It is the source of hope and courage in whatever situations women experience. Women find the message of Jesus appealing because it provides them with equal status with men and new avenues of religious service. They sense that the Gospel allows women and men to participate fully in the community of God's new people. Since the Bible carries the good news, expected to transform the cultures of believers and enhance gender equality in church leadership and other spheres of life.

Reflections on Today's Women

In this 21st century women have made so much strides in the society especially since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 (Beijing Declaration Platform for Action), the most visionary agenda for empowering women and girls, developed at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, became the foundation for gender equality and issues was established; as traced in Menakaya (2023).

Here are some historical facts and achievements of some of today's women from different parts of the globe who excelled in church, politics, education, civil society, among others.

Nancy Pelosi (1940 –)

Nancy Pelosi is the US Democrat politician, and twice elected speaker of the House of Representatives. She served as one of the prominent opposition voices to the Presidency of Donald Trump. As a leader of the House, she helped to pass.

Mary Robinson (1944 –)

Mary Robinson was the first female President of the Irish •the Affordable Care Act, the economic stimulus of 2010, and the Wall Street Reform Act. Republic (1990-97). Robinson brought a higher profile to the post. During her tenure, she oversaw economic growth and social change as Ireland liberalized its religious traditions within the political realm. She also served as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Madam Mary Okezie (1906 – 1999)

Madam Mary Okezie was the first Ngwa woman•(1997-2002). That received Western education. She taught at the Anglican school, Umuocham, in 1929. She was the only one who wrote a memo to the Aba Commission of Inquiry that ended the Aba women's riot in 1930. She emerged as the founder of the Ngwa Women's Association and supported the right of women in Nigeria until she died in 1999.

Angela Merkel (1954 –)

Angela Merkel has been the chancellor of Germany since 2005• and the de facto Leader of the European Union during the European financial crisis and also increasing the role of Germany in foreign affairs.

Jacinda Ardern (1980 –)

Jacinda Ardern is New Zealand Prime Minister since October•have given Merkel the label 'Leader of the free world' 2017. She led a minority government, becoming her country's youngest female Leader of her country at age 37. In March 2019, she was honored by the community for the way she led the country in the aftermath of the Christchurch Mosque terrorist attack, which left 51 persons dead.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (1989 -)

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is a Democratic•dead. Congresswoman. A leading figurehead for a socialist, progressive agenda including the "Green New Deal," universal health care, and higher taxes on the rich. She is unofficially the Leader of the new wave of progressive Democrats who come from outside the party.

Theresa May (1956 –)

Theresa May was Britain's second female Prime Minister. She•hierarchy and wish the party to move in a more radical direction. was elected after the EU referendum of 2016 and sought to negotiate a deal to leave the

Margaret Thatcher (1925–2013)

Margaret Thatcher was the first female prime minister•EU. She announced she would step down when the value failed to pass Parliament. of Great Britain. She governed for over ten years, emphasizing individual responsibility and a belief in free markets. Her leadership was characterized by uncompromising stances.

Queen Victoria (1819–1901)

Queen Victoria was a British Queen. Presiding over one of•strength and conviction. The largest empires everseen, Queen Victoria was the head of state from 1837 – 1901. Queen Victoria sought to gain influence in British politics while remaining aloof from party politics. She came to symbolize a whole era of Victorian values and a figurehead

Madam Nwanyeruwa:

Madam Nwanyeruwa's contribution to the women's war left a•for the British Empire. She has a lasting legacy. She was, and remains the name that comes up when bringing up the history of women's militancy in Nigeria and has been said to be linked to the emergence of African Nationalism. She played a significant role in keeping the protests non-violent. She was advanced in age compared to many who led the march. Under her advice, the women protested in song and dance, sitting on the Warrant Chiefs until they surrendered their symbol of the office and resigned.

As the revolt spread, other groups followed this pattern, making the women's protest peaceful. Other groups came to her to get in writing the inspirational results of the demonstrations, which, as she saw them, were that 'women will not pay tax till the world ends and chiefs were not to exist anymore. Women from Oloko and elsewhere brought money contributions to Madam Nwanyeruwa to help them avoid paying taxes. Unfortunately, many women rioted and attacked Chiefs, destroying things.

Wangari Maathai (1940-2011)

Wangari Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement in•their homes and causing the revolt to be seen as violent. The 1970s to promote environmental conservation in Kenya and Africa. She became the first African woman to receive the Noble Prize in 2004 for contributing to sustainable development, democracy, and peace. In 1969, she returned to Nairobi, where she became a radical.

Malala Yousafzai:

Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani education advocate who, at 17 in 2014, became the youngest fellow to win the Noble Peace Prize after surviving an assassination•the first East African woman to receive a Ph.D. 13 attempts by the Taliban. Yousafzai became an advocate for girls' education when she was still a child, which resulted in the Taliban issuing a death threat against her. On October 9, 2012, a gunshot was fired at her when she was traveling home from school. She survived it and has continued to speak out on the importance of education.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton:

Elizabeth Cady was an American writer and activist who led the•speech to the United Nations and published her first book,' I Am Malala.' Women's rights movement in the US during the mid to late 1800s. She was born on Hillary Clinton: Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton is an American politician, diplomat, lawyer, writer, and public speaker who served as the 67th United States Secretary of State•November 12, 1815, in Johnstown, New York, United States and died on October 26, 1902, New York, United States. from 2009 to 2013, as a United. She was born on October 26, 1947 (age 73 years), Edgewater Hospital, Chicago. Her spouse is Bill Clinton, and their child is Chelsea Clinton. Previous she worked as the US Secretary of State (2009–2013).

Mitchell Obama:

Former First lady of the United States of Amaerica, Mitchell Obama whose role as the first lady has evolved over the centuries. Mitchell•vocal advocate protecting women's rights and fighting for equality. Obama is the first and foremost hostess of the White House. She organizes and attends official ceremonies and functions of the state either with or in place of the president. She played a significant role in girls' education by going from one girls' school to another, encouraging them to further their studies.

Twenty-five years after the Beijing Platform for Action, efforts have been made towards removing the systemic barriers holding women back from equal participation in all areas of life, whether in public or private; religious or education. More actions and initiatives are enacted. UN Women has stood firmly to ensure that women and gender issues are tackled adequately by 2030. The Office of Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women, UN Women, had continued to ignite action on gender issues through the United Nations General Assembly of World Leaders, Commission on Status of Women Session, enacting campaigns and global activism, and establishing centers

across regions. Generation Equality Forum, an ambitious effort to achieve a global inflection point on gender equality, recognized that over twenty-five years after the historic Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, implementation of gender equality has been slow. According to UN Women, the forum brought together global leaders to drive concrete actions to accelerate progress. The forum reaffirmed the value of multilateralism and brought together the leadership and participation of various stakeholders - civil society, governments, youth-led organizations, the private sector, international organizations, cities, trade unions, media, and more focusing on intergenerational and multi-stakeholder partnerships. Generation Equality Forum also fueled a powerful and lasting coalition for gender equality to ensure action and accountability. It presented a vital moment for activists, feminists, youth, and allies to ensure that gender is at the center of the post-COVID agenda and achieve transformative change for future generations.

Despite these progresses, real change has been agonizingly slow for the majority of women and girls in the world. Nevertheless, women exhibited excellent performance in leadership roles and positions. Successes recorded that in the heat of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, only countries with women as leadership noted successful records on positive management of COVID-19 to human life. 16 Today, not a single country can claim to have achieved gender equality. Multiple obstacles remain unchanged in law and culture. As a result, women remain undervalued; they continue to work more, earn less, have fewer choices, and experience multiple forms of violence at home and in public spaces (Menakaya, 2023).

Implications to the Mission of CICA International University and Women in Ministry

The 1st Inaugural Lecture on *Gendered Innovations and Skills for Societal Sustainability: Reflections on Today's Women and Women in the Bible* is intended to advance the mission and vision of CICA International University and Seminary towards women in Ministry, Female Peace Ambassadors, and global agenda on women rooted on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the purpose of UN Women on advancing of Gender equality.

2. **Sustainability:** Recognizing the underlying need for a gendered innovation advancing skills for societal sustainability, this research study recommends a center for women and leadership education to advance the academic work of the university and the department of leadership and Women Department

3. **Gender-Faith Executive Course:** With the global efforts and commitment of the United Nations towards SDGs successes by 2030, the commitment of world leaders on Generation Equality and efforts of UN Women to ensure a sustainable world for all women as well as the ECOSOC Status of CICIA International University and Seminary, Gender-faith Executive course should be implemented to focus on in-depth executive programs along the United Nations Agenda on gender equality, the Commission on Status of Women Sessions, and the 2030 Development Agenda.

4. **Gender Priority Strategy:** Since the Beijing Women Conference and the overriding outcome that brought out the twelve tenets on women and girls, tangible efforts have continued to address various forms and issues on women, girls, and gender concerns. Gender advocates, stakeholders, organizations, and the government have opened avenues for gender streamlining, touching on pertinent issues concerning women and girls. Gender Priority Strategy is a navigation tool developed to direct the operation of gender issues and concerns about gender equality. It will drive

issues on PEAR: Policy, Education, Advocacy, and Research to pull together all aspects of action taken on women and girls across the world, especially concerning the 17 SDGs and Targets with strong emphasis on Generation Equality, SDG 5 and Target and SDG 16 and Targets. The Gender Priority Strategy tool will be considered. Examples are issues of Gender Imbalance/Balancingλ Gender Characterλ Gender Generationλ

Gender Therapy. Emotions and World

5. CICA International University and Seminary to establish Academic Professors Forum to encourage academic research, education and journal publications on the vision of the CICA International University and Seminary, the United Nations Agenda and the Faith-Based issues in advancing the gospel.
6. CICA International University and Seminary Governing Council to approve "CICA University Education Journal", academic publication of CICA International University and Seminary with the purpose of encouraging research and education among the fast-growing members of the University academia and professors.

Conclusion

Gender is a complex and multifaceted aspect of human identity that has been the subject of extensive research, debate, and reflection. It encompasses not only biological differences between males and females but also the social, cultural, and psychological dimensions of being male, female, or non-binary. The understanding of gender has evolved significantly over time, challenging traditional binary notions and highlighting the diversity and fluidity of gender identities. This reflection on gender will explore its historical context, social construction, impact on individuals and society, and contemporary debates.

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Top Authoritative Sources Used:

These sources were utilized to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and comprehensiveness of information presented in this work on Gender.

1. **American Psychological Association (APA) -** The APA provides comprehensive research articles and publications on various aspects of psychology including gender identity development and related social issues.
2. **World Health Organization (WHO) -** The WHO offers authoritative reports on global health disparities related to gender as well as guidelines for addressing gender-based health inequities.
3. **Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy** - This online academic resource provides in-depth philosophical analyses on topics related to gender including feminist theory and critical perspectives on gender identity.
4. **The Pew Research Center**: The Pew Research Center provides comprehensive studies on religion, culture, and society. It offers valuable insights into how different religious groups perceive issues related to gender identity.
5. **Harvard Divinity School's Religious Literacy Project**: This source provides scholarly perspectives on the intersection of religion, culture, and identity. It offers in-depth analyses of how various faith traditions engage with issues of gender.

6. **The Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion**: This academic journal publishes research on feminist perspectives within various religious traditions. It offers critical insights into the relationship between gender identity and spirituality.
7. **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs):** The UN SDGs provide a comprehensive framework for addressing global sustainability challenges and offer valuable insights into the skills needed to achieve sustainable development.
8. **World Economic Forum (WEF):** The WEF is a leading platform for shaping global agendas on economic, environmental, social, and technological issues. Their reports and publications often highlight key skills required for promoting sustainability in the business world.
9. **International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD):** The IISD is a reputable organization dedicated to advancing sustainable development through research, analysis, and policy recommendations. Their work often emphasizes the importance of specific skills for achieving sustainability goals at local, national, and international levels.

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Ambassador Professor Adaeze Chinwe JUNI Menakaya (UNESCOcforge@gmail.com) is an educator, capacity development, content developer and knowledge management expert, who develops programs, strategies; and organizes education and training. She is the Executive Director for the Center for SDG Global Education USA where she conducts research, and ensures successful implementation of initiatives on peace, women, education, **United Nations (UN)** Sustainable Development Goals, and school support programs. She is the first inaugural lecturer at the CICA University and Seminary, Florida, USA.