

# NATURE OF CHANGING GENDER ROLES IN IGALA HOUSEHOLDS IN KOGI EAST SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

<https://doi.org/10.57233/gujos.v4i3.1>

<sup>1</sup>Maryam Umar MOHAMMED, <sup>2</sup>Prof. Ahmadu Seidu MALIKI, <sup>3</sup>Prof. John Emmanuel GYONG and <sup>4</sup>Prof. Bosede Folashade OKESHOLA

<sup>1</sup>Department of Sociology, Kaduna State University, Kaduna

<sup>2, 3, 4</sup>Department of Sociology, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

<sup>1</sup>08035886617 (atayimuhd@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>08028524162 (malikiahmadu2@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>08034533701 (gyongemma@yahoo.com)

<sup>4</sup>08036499929 (shadeoys@yahoo.com)

## Abstract

The protection of the members of the household is the role of the head of the Igala household. However, many female spouses and children no longer get this protection. Such female spouses participate in or solely provide food, pay house rents, pay medical bills, etc., in addition to their female gender roles of domestic, caregiving and reproduction roles. The changing role-taking outstretch their energy, causing role strain among them. This situation attracted the researchers' attention into examining the nature of the changing gender roles in Igala households in Kogi East Senatorial district of Kogi State, Nigeria. . A body of related literature was reviewed while liberal feminism was used to explain the phenomenon as the theory is suitable in explaining inequality in changing gender roles. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative research designs. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 268 respondents; while the 4 IDI informants and 24 discussants were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Questionnaire, IDI and FGD guides and documentary search pro-former were used to gather data from the field. Findings reveal that while the authority aspect of the family protection role is minimally changing, other aspects such as security; public relation; liaison; discipline; provision and male gender role modeling are fast changing. Furthermore, the study revealed that the domestic and caregiving aspects of procreants' roles are minimally changing as few men partake in domestic and caregiving roles whereas majority of women perform security, disciplinary and provider roles. This creates imbalance and unequal role taking. The research therefore concludes that there is inequality in changing gender roles among the Igala ethnic group of Kogi State. There is therefore, the need for the socialisation of the populace into accepting husbands sharing domestic and caregiving roles. Efforts should be made by relevant bodies to ensure that formal and informal education contents should include gender role sharing among couples to mitigate the identified challenges.

**Keywords:** Gender; Gender role; Household; Procreant; Reproduction.

## **Introduction**

Men and women perform different but complimentary roles in the household. The gender roles in the household vary considerably with time. Carreiro (2021), confirms that there is a societal shift from a traditional marital household composition of breadwinner and housewife to a contemporary, dual-earner composition. Despite the changing gender roles in which both spouses work full-time, women continue to complete the majority of household chores. Changing gender roles in the household is unbalanced. Similar to Carreiro (2021), Fetterolf and Rudman (2014)'s survey across the United States, Beam et al's., (2018)'s national survey of midlife development in the same United States reveal that there is a shift from traditional marital household composition of provider and caregiver to a highly-dual-provider and minimally-dual-caregiver composition. Meaning that domestic and caregiving roles remain the roles of women in many US households and provider roles became a shared roles of both couples in many US households.

Furthermore, Watson et al (2023), in secondary qualitative analysis of 10 focus group discussions with 76 men in Burkina Faso, Ghana and South Africa explore men's perceptions of maternal and child health and nutrition and found that, generally, care giving including maternal and child health and nutritional care remain female gender roles, many men wish to be more involved with maternal and child health and nutrition care but have been limited by stigma.

Mohammed (2023), conceptualises gender roles in the household as the different but complimentary roles of male and female spouses in the household. The commander, provider and security roles of the male spouse, compliment the procreant, domestic and caregiving roles of the female spouse to fulfill the major role of the family institution in the society which is reproduction of the members of the society. Furthermore, Mohammed (2023), reveals that as time passes by, roles in the household are not clearly specified along gender line and not clearly complimentary. The flexible roles taking in the household is what is called changing gender roles in the household. The changing gender roles have become a common phenomenon across the globe. Female couples take provider and security roles in addition to procreant, domestic and care giving roles in the household. There are also few male couples participating in domestic and care giving roles. Male couples taking domestic and care-giving roles are rare, thus creating an unbalanced changing gender roles in the household.

Research studies have produced conflicting results on whether an unbalanced division of household labour correlates with overall marital satisfaction. However, no study or probably, fewer studies have examined the beneficiaries of changing gender roles in the household. This paper ascertains the beneficiaries of changing gender roles in Igala households.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Gestation and delivery are equated to war victory, so is defense. Neither procreant role nor security role is more important than the other. The equality in gender roles reigned in the pre-colonial Igala households. However, as the society changes from pre-colonial through colonial to post-colonial systems, many female couples and children do not get the expected protection from the head of their respective households. Quite a number of the male couples are unaware of public relations and liaison as husband and father roles. Some of these male couples abandon disciplinary roles. Among the changing society systems is the monetisation of many household role performances on an expensive rate. Provision of shelter became monetised and comfortable accommodation in which members of the families should not be overpopulated becomes expensive for many male couples to afford, therefore many of them give up on providing personal and/or comfortable shelter for the members of their households. This made some of the female couples to take part in the provision of shelter or solely provide shelter for household members. Many female couples today participate in or solely provide food for the household. They pay house rents, medical bills, school fee, buy books for school children, and so on. Many female couples play tripartite roles in Igala households which obviously outweigh their energy, causing role strain among them, hindering their participation in politics and concentrating them in low pay occupations.

It has also been observed that there are few male couples in Igala households who assist working-wives in domestic and care-giving roles (cleaning house, cooking for the family, bathing children, etc.). They do these to help partners cope with the tripartite (modern women or changing female gender) roles without stress. However, such men face rejection by their extended families and ridicule in their communities. It is on this basis that this paper examines the nature of changing gender roles in Igala households in Kogi State, Nigeria.

## **Research Objectives**

The aim of this paper is to examine the nature of changing gender roles in Igala households in Kogi State Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Ascertain gender roles in pre-colonial Igala households;
- ii. Identify changes in gender roles in Igala households during the colonial period; and
- iii. Determine the changing gender roles in Igala households in the contemporary period

## **Literature Review**

The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2023) defines gender as the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. The socially constructed characteristics include 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. Shannon, Minckas, Tan, Haghparast-Bidgoli, Batura and Mannell (2019) conceptualise gender as the socially constructed norms that impose and determine roles, relationships and positional power for all people across their lifetime. Shannon et al (2019) noted further that gender interacts with sex, the biological and physical characteristics that define women, men and those with intersex identities. The authors define gender as a system of social stratification that determines interpersonal interactions and shapes access to resources and power.

For this paper gender is a socially constructed principle for organising society. Although gender is different from sex but it interacts with sex such that chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs to some extent, influence and determine the functions of an individual member of the society. Sex refers to the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males and intersex persons, such as chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs, whereas gender is the recognition of sexual difference in the allocation of positions and roles among members of society.

In the study 'The New Roles of Men and Women and Implications for Families and Societies' in Europe, Oláh, Kotowska and Richter (2018) trace gender roles in the household through history. In the major role of the household which is the reproduction of the members of the society, female couples take procreant and care giving roles. The birth rate was high and at relatively young ages. Care giving was also at relatively young age. Meaning child bearing and child rearing were not at old age. Male couples make decisions for the household, and were the major providers for their respective households. However, there are two phases of transformation of gender roles. The first phase of the gender revolution is

characterised by a strong rise in women's labour force participation and transition from male breadwinner model to modernised male breadwinner or dual earner-women's double burden model. The second phase of the gender revolution starts with increasing involvement of men in family chores, marking the transition towards the dual-earner—dual-career model. That is, there are changes in gender roles, especially an expansion of the female role to an economic provider for a family, and lately, also transformation of men's role with more extensive involvement in family responsibilities, mainly care for children. In addition, fertility rates have declined below the level sufficient for the replacement of the population and childbearing occurs later and more often outside marriage.

Khosa-Nkatini, Buqa, and Machimana, (2023), observe that gender roles in South-African households are changing. The article discussed the factors contributing to black men's gender role changing in the household from a theological and psychological perspective. According to the Constitution of the supreme law of the Republic of South Africa 1996:1, everyone has a right to work in a safe, healthy and conducive environment. The constitution gave liberty to women like men to work outside the home. It brings about more women in executive positions which often require time away from home with the implication that their conversations with family and relatives are limited. Gone are the days when women were told that they belong in the kitchen. More women step forward in the corporate world by taking up key leadership roles. Some women earn more than their husbands, compared to the past when men were the breadwinners of the household, particularly in black communities. As time changes, the role of men too changes in the family context.

According to Lammers et al. (2011:1191), in the Khosa-Nkatini, Buqa, and Machimana, (2023), there are wives who earn more than their husbands so different than in the past. Such women significantly share in the provision for the household or solely provide for the household members. In addition, the study shows that in the traditional households of the black communities, the norm of husbands being the provider and protector of the wives applied, however, in the present black communities, there is a myth that the more a woman earns or the more educated she gets, the slighter her chances of finding herself a husband, because men would not want to marry women who earn more than they do or who are more educated than themselves. This creates single person female household where the woman's provisions are not the responsibility of a husband. The study further explains that

other belief among African men is that the more a woman earns, the more defying they become towards their husbands as they practice dominant behaviour both at work and home.

Harper, Marcus, George, D'Angelo, and Samman (2020), examine how gender norms have changed since the UN's Beijing Platform for Action on women's rights was set out in 1995. The study identifies four key areas critical to shifting gender norms: education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, paid and unpaid work and care, and political voice and representation. In terms of education, the level of education that is most likely to catalyse shifts in gender roles in the household has increased substantially over the past years worldwide. Sexual and reproductive health and rights enable women to make their own choices around childbearing, this is contrary to traditional female gender role of procreant. This norm changes since the Beijing Declaration can be seen in greater access to, and use of, contraception, as well as a falling global fertility rate: down from 2.9 to 2.4 births per woman between 1995 and 2018.

Fair paid and unpaid work can boost women's autonomy in many areas and shift norms within families and communities about power and control. Contrary to common belief, paid work does not automatically empower women – particularly if working conditions are oppressive and exploitative. However, it often underpins greater autonomy for women and their greater influence in the family and in society, as well as widening their horizons more than unpaid work at home. Women gain personal autonomy and legal rights to vote and stand for political office of their choice and not the choice of their husbands.

Olawoye, Omololu, Aderinto, Adeyefa, Adeyemo, and Osotimehin (2004), explain that, right from inception, fathers/husbands are the authority in every Nigerian household. Meaning the husband/father is the major provider, the chief security, the final decision maker, role model to male children and so on, in Nigerian households. Olawoye, et al (2004) further reveal that gender relationships and the social prescriptions for the roles of males and females are not static, however. Even in traditional cultural settings, gender roles have witnessed changes. The decreasing standards of living have forced many traditionally single (male) earner / provider families to become 'two-earner' families. This trend has caused a power shift in many households from the former patriarchal arrangement to a more egalitarian decision-making unit.

Odunaike (2012) maintains that in history, child rearing and services to husbands are roles of wives in Nigeria. A woman in Nigeria is expected to raise children (that is, giving moral instructions and guidance that make them useful to the society) and provide

emotional support for her husband. She is guidance of the family health, teachers of sanitation (hygiene roles and disease prevention). Presently, Nigerian women take additional tasks in the household. Many wives take provider roles in addition to procreant, domestic, caregiving and socialisation roles.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Ann Oakley does not align herself strongly with a particular feminist perspective. However, her analysis of gender roles fits most closely with the liberal feminist tradition because it suggests that women's oppression is not universal but is historically variable. Therefore, liberal feminism is the analytical tool of this paper. Oakley (1974) recognises change in gender roles and posits that, in the pre-industrial British household; women supervise unmarried children in domestic and care activities. The preindustrial gender system prevented female household roles from conflicting with female economic roles. However, industrialism and its series of Factory Acts from 1819, restricted child labour, and in turn, manufactured conflicting female household and economic roles, which consequently established mother-housewife role in Britain.

From 1914 to 1950, women received many legal and political rights to employment but with retention of housewifery. Oakley (1974) argues that the received legal and political rights to employment with retention of housewifery by women is a changing gender system with unequal roles taking among spouses and conflicting role overload among female spouses. She (Oakley, 1974) further argues that inequality in changing gender roles is not fashioned to benefit any of the gender. But the inequality is most harmful to the female gender. To control inequality against women in the division of labour in the household, there is need for system modification. This is based on the finding that few middle class households applying equality in allocation of domestic tasks among spouses have low cases of role overload and role conflict among women.

Oakley (1974)'s positions on changing gender roles explain the nature of changing gender roles in Igala households. Like Series of Factory Acts from 1819, that restricted child labour and established mother-housewife role in Britain, exposure to external values introduces active fatherhood, female major provider, highly monetised provider roles etc., in Igala household. Active fatherhood is an uncommon phenomenon whereas female major provider is a common phenomenon in almost all Igala households. In other words, many female couples share or solely take provider roles whereas their partners do not share in

domestic and care giving roles: a changing role and an unbalanced role in Igala households. The unbalanced changing gender roles in the household are not fashioned to benefit any of the gender and it is most harmful to the female couple. This is because changing gender roles in the households are overloads and conflicting, causing stress; distress and role strain. It is most harmful to women because women bear more conflicting overload than men in the household. Oakley's position that unequal division of domestic roles needs modification of the gender roles allocation system in the household can be applied to correct changing gender roles in Igala households. There is need for modification in the system of allocation of domestic tasks among Igala spouses.

### **Methodology**

The location of the study is Kogi East Senatorial District. It is the largest of the three senatorial districts in Kogi State with nine Local Government Areas (Ankpa, Bassa, Dekina, Ibaji, Idah, Igalamela/Odolu, Ofu, Olamaboro, Omala Local Government Areas) respectively. The inhabitants are predominantly Igala but there are other ethnic groups such as Bassa, Igbo, Idoma, Fulani, Hausa, Yoruba, Ebira, and so on. Among them are Muslims, Christians and traditional worshippers (Kogi State Ministry of Information and Communication, 2024). The socio-economic activities predominant in the study area include farming, palm-oil processing, cassava-flour and garri processing, cashew merchandise, etc. Like any other society, households are the smallest units in Igala society. Gender is the guiding principle in the allocation of household roles to the spouses. The gender roles in Igala household are changing with the passage of time. It has been observed that the changing gender roles in the household are heavier and conflicting compared with the traditional gender roles. This needs to be understood through the use of sociological perspective (Mohammed, 2023).

The study population consisted of adults (20 years old & above) men and women in Igala households in Kogi East Senatorial District, Kogi State, Nigeria. The sample size for the study was drawn from the year 2021 field work in Mohammed (2023:93-106). The sample size for the survey is 268. The researcher drew the sample size using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of sample size determination. Multistage cluster sampling technique was adopted to select 68 respondents from Emere in Ankpa I Ward in Ankpa LGA, 68 respondents from Enagbede in Enjema I Ward in Ankpa LGA, 68 respondents in Adumu in Ugwoda Ward in Idah LGA, and 64 respondents from Old GRA in Igecheba Ward in Idah

LGA respectively. Secondly, purposive sampling technique was used to sample four (4) IDI informants from Emere, Enagbede, Adumu and Old GRA. A smaller number of the old/frail-old (75years and above) are needed to get a comprehensive, detailed and thorough data on gender roles in the pre-colonial and colonial Igala, society. Purposive sampling technique was also used to sample four (4) groups for Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Archival records on gender roles in pre-colonial Igala households were sourced from Weise (2013).

Therefore the study used three types of primary data and a type (documentary data: archival records) of secondary data. The survey data were computer processed and analysed.. The analysis was executed at Univariate and bivariate levels where the respondents and their views were discussed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and cross tabulation. The IDI and FGD data were processed and analysed qualitatively. First, the data recorded on electronic devices were transcribed into written form. Thereafter, the transcribed data and the field notes were read several times with a view to identifying patterns and inferences through guided content analysis. Furthermore, tables were created to hold each of the several patterns and inferences. Lastly, conflicting explanations were carefully weighed and balanced before decisions on the line of analysis. The archival data were analysed through content analysis.

## Results

The nature of gender roles in Igala households has been analysed in the following realms: gender roles in pre-colonial Igala households, changes in gender roles in Igala households during the colonial period; and changing gender roles in Igala households in contemporary times.

### Gender Roles in Pre-Colonial Igala Households

**Table 1: Gender Roles in the Pre-Colonial Igala Households**

Gender	Household Tasks	
	Protection	Gestation, Natal and Care-Giving
Male	268(100%)	0(0.0%)
Female	0(0.0%)	268 (100%)
Total	268 (100%)	268 (100%)

**Source: Survey Data, 2021**

Findings in table 1 reveal that the major function of the family in pre-colonial Igala society was reproduction of the members of the society. All the respondents indicate that women were the procreant: they gestate, give birth and provide physical and emotional care

to the members reproduced. Men on the other hand, protect the reproduced members including the procreant. The protector roles include: authority (command and decision-making), security, provision of food; shelter; clothing, male gender role modeling, disciplining children, liability to household members' misconduct in the society, public relation, and liaison. IDI, FGD and archival findings tally with the survey findings. The following paragraphs present the details:

Fathers/husbands were the leaders in all homes. The leadership roles involve decision-making for households and the implementation, family policy making and the implementations; disciplining family members. Wives participated indirectly in the decision making by raising opinion and making temporary decisions for the home in the absence of the men. An IDI informant (an old man) narrated that "pure feminine decision making roles in the household were in daily food menu for the household". Furthermore, male couples were central to the security of their homes assisted by the male children and they protected and safeguarded members of their households from all forms of dangers and molestations. In addition to authority and security roles, husbands and fathers liaise between their immediate families and their extended families and also communities during the pre-colonial era.

The picture of the family members portrayed by husband/father determines whether his extended family views his family members as good mannered members or bad/evil mannered members. It was also the role of husband and father to relay information about the home that the extended families and the public needed to know. They also kept their family members informed of events in the community. Since male parents were held liable for the misconducts of their wives and wards in the society, they ensured that they guided their wives and disciplined their children. Wives assisted husbands in disciplining children to mold their characters and behaviours to conform to the expected standards of the society.

Provisions for members of the household's needs were essentially husbands and fathers' role. Mothers supported voluntarily. Provision of shelter and its maintenance was the sole responsibility of husbands/fathers and it was not monetary. The husband raised the building and his wife did the plastering of the walls and cementing of the floor. Included in the maintenance of shelter was cutting grasses around the house. Male children assisted in the cutting of grasses. FGD sessions among Enyo dugbo Ojo Women Group (ages 20-40) of Emere in Ankpa I Ward, Ankpa LGA of Kogi State Nigeria, revealed that raising a

building in traditional Igala society was not with monetary means. One of the discussants says:

Building a house then was not with monetary means. Instead, there were organisations (age grades cooperative called Oja-Egwu) in charge of raising building structures for its members. It was a system in which age grades form cooperative. Including the owner of the building, they dedicate some days to fetch thatch, fan palm woods, ropes, two branch headed wood (akanaba), and processed underground soil. They collectively erect the building in the owner's desired shape whether square, rectangle or round shape. Weeding around the house was his responsibility assisted by his male children (FGD Discussant/Emere Ankpa/2021).

A 75years old male IDI informant from Adumu in Ugwuoda Ward, Idah LGA, narrates the following:

With the influx of the Whites' culture, houses and the materials for raising houses gradually changed in form, structure and involve finance with women participation in house building work. Women take part by moving mixed cement, sand and sometimes gravels in building sites (IDI Informant/ Adumu in Ugwuoda Ward, Idah /2021).

All women had garden where they grow pepper, leafy vegetables and cocoyam to assist in the food provision of the household. Provision of medicine for household members was the responsibility of the male couple. Boiling and/or administering the medicine to the ill were the responsibility of the female couple. Men were expected to give quality provider care to their household members, and failure to do that, elders in the community and his extended family raise alarm. This was due to the belief that a woman that is not well fed, not protected and/or prone to thinking (depressed) could give birth to malformed and/or ugly offspring. This was why hard works were for men (activities beyond the strength of women) to avoid implications. Splitting firewood was believed to result to miscarriage or placenta detachment. Certain beliefs like these made hard works male gender activities in the household and society at large. A discussant among Enyo dugbo Ojo Women Group of Emere says:

It was the moral responsibility of the men to maintain their wives and children in terms of good look, good health status, superior status, good emotional status etc. this moral value was born out of the belief that a woman that is not well fed and/or prone to thinking (depressed) give birth to malformed and/or ugly offspring. Another discussant added: that is why hard works were for men to avoid some implications. Splitting firewood was believed to result to miscarriage or placenta detaching from foetus, thus pregnant women were not expected to split firewood. Certain beliefs like

this made hard works male gender activities in the household and society. As such, men or children split firewood for pregnant women to cook, men farm to provide food for the household, agriculture was mainly subsidiary (FGD Discussant/Emere Ankpa/2021).

Provisions of non-basics (luxuries) for household members were the secondary role of the men. Provision of jewelries (especially coral beads) for wives was voluntary and the provision was used to measure the high level of a man's love and value for his wife.

There were two major teaching methods: modeling and instruction. Male parents served as role models to male children in provider roles, security roles, male productive roles, leadership roles and so on. They also gave verbal instructions to the children in some cases. That is, the socialisation of boys by male parents was basically practical, while female parents were the teachers of the theoretical aspects of socialisation into male gender roles. Female parents verbally tell male children what to do as boy child and what not to do. Female children learn while assisting mothers in sweeping, cooking, food processing, female crafts etc. The socialisation of female children was by female parents and was both practical and theoretical. Children also learnt unisex roles from parents and other adults.

Domestic chores and caregiving were the essential roles of the married females. These include cooking, sweeping, washing cloths/dishes/pots, procurement of groceries, fetching water, bathing small children, nursing babies, care of children/the-ill/the-aged, food processing for household consumption and commercial purposes, service to husband, beautification of female children. It is gathered from an old man (An Igala old man born during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War) in Emere, Ankpa I Ward, Ankpa LGA, Kogi State, Nigeria in an IDI that:

Women, assisted by female children cook, wash dishes and pots, wash cloths, maintain cleanliness, sweep, fetch water, fetch firewood (men also fetch on their way from farm), mend some properties like cloths, process food for the household (IDI Informant/Emere Ankpa/2021).

Included in the domestic and caregiving activities was beautification of female children by Igala mothers. An elderly woman (an IDI respondent) in Enagbede, Enjema I Ward, Ankpa LGA, narrated that:

Beautification of female children was among caregiving activities. Reproduction, domestic and caregiving were primary activities of women in the household. Any other activity in the household or the community is secondary to reproduction, domestic and caregiving activities. Mothers provided cosmetics and ornaments for female children. They provided utensils, they provided some vegetables for the household use. The utensils

included: pots (ucha), trencher or call it wooden tray and plate (okpa ujenwu) and (calabash) bowls, bottles, spoons, scoops (ade, ugba, ocha, echicha, uko, uko-oje). The number one female couple's role is giving birth to children unless if the female couple is not gifted by god (IDI Informant/Emere Ankpa/2021).

Child bearing therefore, was a natural and compulsory role of female couples except the ones with reproductive health problems. Mothers were the female children beauticians. Mothers provided the cosmetics and ornaments needed for the make-up. Mothers provided utensils and some vegetables for the household.

### Gender Roles in Colonial Igala Households

**Table 2: Gender Roles in Colonial Igala Households**

Gender	Household Tasks	
	Protection	Care-Giving
Male	168(62.7%)	0(0.0%)
Female	0(0.0%)	168 (62.7%)
Unisex	100(37.3%)	100(37.3%)
Total	268 (100%)	268 (100%)

**Source: Survey Data, 2021**

Table 2 shows the changing gender roles in Igala households during the colonial period. Some (100/37.3%) of the respondents indicated that protection roles as well as care giving roles became unisex roles in some households during the colonial period. A discussant among Enyo dugbo Ojo Women Group (ages 20-40) of Emere in Ankpa I Ward, Ankpa LGA noted as follows:

The influence of formal education made some few men to participate in grocery procurement, bath small children, baby sit. This happened in Igala households in urban centres during the colonial era. In some of the urban homes, both parents cared for babies, even cooking for the household (FGD Discussant/Emere Ankpa/2021).

Regarding socialisation, findings show that schools were made part of the agents of socialization during the colonial Igala society. In terms of security, survey findings show some men work in far-flung places outside of their homes and were not available for the physical security of the home. An IDI informant attested to this finding thus:

Men that relocate to urban centre without family were not available to protect and defend members of their households from attacks either by wild animals or enemies (IDI informant/Old-GRA Idah/2021).

Findings reveal that the absence of men from home erases public relations and liaison roles. Furthermore, findings show that many provisions for the household gradually got monetized during colonialism. A 75years old male IDI informant from Adumu in Ugwuoda Ward, Idah LGA, had this to say:

With the influx of the Whites’ culture, houses and the materials for raising houses gradually changed in form, structure and involve finance with women participation in house building work. Women take part by moving mixed cement, sand and sometimes gravels in building sites (IDI Informant/Adumu in Ugwuoda Ward, Idah/2021)

History of the women as major providers in the household is traced to colonial time, when many women in the rural areas went into subsistence farming to fill the vacuum created by the absence of husbands who were jailed for opposing exploitative colonial relationships. A discussant among male youths (ages 20-40) recounted how grandmothers took up major provider roles in the absence of grandfathers who relocated to the emerging urban centres or were either imprisoned or detained. Household authority shifted to such women. Findings further revealed that many illiterate women who followed working husbands to the urban centre were rendered jobless, and it took many of them time to adapt to the emerging urban system. Many of those women lived in ghettos and did not get vegetable garden and thus could not render their traditional gender contributions to the provisions for the family. Educated men lost interest in farming and had to purchase all the provisional needs of the home.

### Gender Roles in Post-Colonial Igala Households

**Table 3: Changing Gender Roles in the Post-Colonial Igala Households**

Gender roles	Household Roles		
	Provision, house maintenance, discipline children, cut grasses around compound	Domestic & caregiving	Authority and final decision making
Essentially Male	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	268 (100%)
Unisex	196(73.1%)	13 (4.9%)	0(0.0%)
Essentially Female	72 (26.9%)	255(95.1%)	0(0.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>268 (100%)</b>	<b>268 (100%)</b>	<b>268 (100%)</b>

**Source: Survey Data, 2021**

Table 3 shows that 13 (4.9%) respondents reported that male couples now share in domestic and care giving activities with their women (wives). This change can be attributed to the level of acceptance of foreign civilisation. IDI and FGD findings further show that

there are few men now who help their wives to wash cloths. Some of them are ‘stay at home’ fathers, especially the under/unemployed. A discussant (among old women aged 61-75years FGD in Adumu, Ugwuoda Ward, Idah LGA), attested to these findings. She says:

Husband and also boy-children did not sweep nor fetch water in the traditional Igala households but both men and women and boy/girl children sweep and fetch water in some Igala households today (FGD Discussant/Adumu in Ugwuoda Ward, Idah/2021)

While 196(73.1%) respondents noted that women now share in provider roles; house maintenance; disciplining children; cutting grasses around compound, 72 (26.9%) respondents indicated that there are women (wives) who solely take those roles. Data in table 3 show that all respondents reported that household authority and final decision-making remain essentially male gender roles in Igala households. IDI and FGD findings reveal that authority in the household is minimally changing: many wives lost the role of adviser and opinion raising to the husband in decision making. The loss is as a result of the negative change in value for the wife among some male couples. A discussant reveals that:

Modern civilization, that is, the emergence of free women has a negative effect on how much value some husbands have for their wife. Many husbands no longer direct major interest in their family members but misdirect it towards sidepiece (side partner). Sidepiece is a woman who has a continuing sexual relationship with a man who has a wife (IDI Informant/Enagbede, Enjema I Ward, Ankpa/2021).

The finding is evidence that over the period of time, there is change in the values husband attach to wife in Igala households. Wives are viewed by many husbands as burden, meaning many husbands are not so much interested in taking husband and father roles. There is no longer pride in taking husband and father roles. They view husband and father roles as heavy load. Like a heavy load that is uncomfortable for the bearer; men drag husband and father roles. Furthermore, IDI and FGD findings reveal that the upsurge of economic crises made many men to abandone the provider roles. Most wives have to share or solely take provider roles in addition to domestic and caregiving roles. The study also discovered that in traditional society, as there was no unemployment, there were no cases of bachelors incapable of provision but seeking marriage. Today, there are men who cannot provide yet go ahead to marry, some of the men hide under the cover of fake or false riches. Igala society was a productive economy in pre-colonial time. This study further noted that schools, television, phone, house-helps, etc. altogether with the parents, socialise children into roles in present time. Many women are not really physically present in their children’s live during

the day time as they go out to source for means of livelihood. Further findings show that changing gender roles are cumbersome and lopsided and female workloads are heavier when compared with males’.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The primary focus of this paper is to examine the nature of changing gender roles in Igala households in Kogi State Nigeria. To achieve this, objectives of the study were: to ascertain gender roles in pre-colonial Igala households; to identify changes in gender roles in Igala households during the colonial period; and to determine the changing gender roles in Igala households in contemporary times. The study revealed that wives and mothers carried out roles that were complimentary to the roles of husbands and fathers in pre-colonial societies. Wives reproduced members of the household, while husbands protected the household members. Husband fetched herbs for the household, and the wife/wives boiled the herbs for the household. Husband provided food; wife/wives cooked the food. The primary roles of wives were domestic and caregiving roles, while the primary roles of husbands were provider roles. However, some household roles changed from male or female roles to unisex roles during colonialism. It is becoming an established norm for both male and female couples to play provider roles in the present post-colonial Igala households. Virtually all household roles are either minimally or highly unisex roles in the post-colonial period. The Changing gender roles are cumbersome and lopsided. Female spouses bear more workload than the males.

The above finding coheres with the outcome of similar studies. Carreiro (2021), found that there is a societal shift from a traditional marital household composition of breadwinner and housewife to a contemporary, dual-earner composition. Despite the changing gender roles in which both spouses work full-time, women continue to complete the majority of household chores. Therefore, changing gender roles in the household is unbalanced. Oláh, Kotowska and Richter (2018), explain that the family can no longer be described simply as a set of well-defined roles; it is negotiated on a daily basis, constructed by interactions between partners at the micro-level, and influenced by macro structures of the political and economic spheres. Work and family lives are increasingly influencing each other as both women and men engage in earning as well as caring activities, often reinforced by the labour market developments with specific skill demands, together with increasing employment instability and precariousness.

Oakley (1974) posits that there is inequality against women in changing gender roles. The inequality in changing gender roles is not fashioned to benefit any of the genders. But the inequality is most harmful to the female gender. To control inequality against women in the changing division of labour in the household, there is need for system modification. Like Series of Factory Acts from 1819, that restricted child labour and established mother-housewife role in Britain, exposure to external values introduces active fatherhood, female major provider in Igala households. Active fatherhood is an uncommon phenomenon whereas female major provider is a common phenomenon with almost all Igala households. The unbalanced changing gender roles in the household are not fashioned to benefit any of the gender and it is most harmful to the female couple. This is because changing gender roles in the households are overloads and conflicting, causing stress; distress and role strain. It is most harmful to women because women bear more conflicting overload than men in the household. Oakley's position that there is need for modification of roles allocation system in the household can be applied to correct changing gender roles in Igala households. There is need for modification in the system of allocation of changing tasks among Igala spouses.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that change in religion, education, government, economy, family and legal system influence role allocations in Igala households. Provider roles are highly accepted unisex roles whereas authority, domestic and care giving roles are minimally accepted unisex roles. Therefore, the changing gender roles are unbalanced. The inequality is not beneficial to either of the spouse but it is more stressful to the female spouse. This study thereby established that women's economic independence is both beneficial and harmful. Women are overburdened, stressed up and experience stress related diseases. Changing gender roles is a mechanism for draining wealth away from the Igala society by the manufacturers of sophisticated foreign products. To control the harmful consequences, the socialisation (education) process, which is the process of allocating changing gender roles to members of the society, must be reviewed.

## Recommendations

The study recommends that the government of Kogi State should adopt the following measures:

- i. Revival of productive economy with zero-unemployment as in the pre-colonial time and abolition of labour services economy with underemployment. Meaning, establishment of the type of economy that benefits members of Igala society (both male and females). This can be achieved through the adoption of a functioning method of inculcation into improved local production and productivities, and the consumption of the local products.
- ii. Full acceptance of flexible (unisex) pattern of role performance to curb or eliminate unbalanced gender roles performance in the households, including the consequent role overload; role conflict; role strain among the women on one hand, ridicule among active fathers, and role strain or role abandonment among many fathers on the other hand. This can be achieved through the establishment of a functioning method of inculcation into accepting flexible (unisex) pattern of role performance in all the institutions.
- iii. Short term functioning method of inculcation into improved local production and productivities, the consumption of the local products and the acceptance of flexible (unisex) pattern of role performance in all institutions by the Igala people, is the establishment and implementation of flexible roles performance policy, quality production policy and consumption of local products policy.
- iv. Long term functioning method of inculcation into improved local production and productivities, the consumption of the local products and the acceptance of flexible (unisex) pattern of role performance in all institutions by the Igala people, is teaching of all roles to both genders in formal and informal socialization settings.
- v. Kogi State Education Board should develop and implement primary and secondary school curricula that would accommodate teaching of improved/modernised traditional technical skills, encouragement of vocations, good morals, unity and good governance.
- vi. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), National Universities Commission (NUC), and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should also develop and implement curricula that teach improved/modernised traditional technical skills, as well as encouragement of vocations, good morals, unity and good governance.
- vii. The curricula should include smiting/metal-work (blacksmith prototypes), wood carving, and electromagnetic wiring and so on.

- viii. Instead of the importation of ferryboat, our traditional/local wood carvers and smiths can be employed to teach traditional male gender role of wood carving into canoe plus prototype engine to both sexes to begin the production of Nigerian made water transport vehicles.

## References

- Beam, C., Marcus, K., Turkheimer, E., & Emery, R. (2018) Gender differences in the structure of marital quality Behavior Genetics. 48(3), 209-223. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10519-018-9892-4>.
- Carreiro, J. (2021) Gender role beliefs, household chores, and modern marriages <https://aura.antioch.edu/etds/707>
- Fetterolf, J., & Rudman, L. (2014) Gender inequality in the home: The roles of relative income, support for traditional gender roles, and perceived entitlement. Gender (31), 219- 237. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-014-9126-x>.
- Harper, C.; Marcus, R.; George, R.; D'Angelo, S.M.; and Samman E. (2020) Gender, power and progress: how norms change. Published by: ALIGN <https://www.alignplatform.org/gender-power-progress>
- Khosa-Nkatini, H.P., Buqa, W. & Machimana, N., 2023, Gender role changes in African households: A challenge to theology and psychology, in die Skriflig 57(1), a2893. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v57i1.2893>
- Knapp, J. et al (2009) Women, men, and the changing role of gender in immigration, Student Research Series. *Institute for Latino Studies, University of Notre Dame* (3)3.
- Kogi State Ministry of Information and Communication (2024) "Structure" Kogi State Government Available at [kogistate.gov.ng](http://kogistate.gov.ng).
- Krejcie, R.V., & Morgan, D.W., (1970) Determining sample size for research activities: *Educational and Psychological Measurement* <https://www.kenpro.org/sample-size-determination-using-krejcie-and-morgan-table/>
- Mohammed, M. U. (2023) Analysis of changing gender roles among the three major ethnic groups in Kogi State, Nigeria' a PhD Thesis submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
- Moss, P. (2014) International review of leave policies and research 2014. [http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp\\_and\\_r\\_reports/](http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports/).
- Oakley, A. (1974) *Housewife*, Allen Lane, London.

- Odunaike, A. B. (2012) Role conflict among women in intercontinental bank Plc, Lagos State. *Global Journal of Human Social Science Sociology, Economics & Political Science*. (12)9 1.0. Type: Double blind peer reviewed international research journal. Publisher: global journals inc. (USA) Online ISSN: 2249-460x & print ISSN: 0975-587x.
- Ogletree, S.M. (2015). Gender role attitudes and expectations for marriage. *Journal of Research on Women and Gender* [www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net).
- Oláh L.S., Kotowska I.E. and Richter R. (2018). The new roles of men and women and implications for families and societies. In G. Doblhammer and J. Gumà (eds.), *A Demographic perspective on gender, family and health in Europe*, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-72356-3\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-72356-3_1)
- Olawoye, J. E. et al (2004). Social construction of manhood in Nigeria: Implications for male responsibility in reproductive health. *Union for African population studies* ISSN: 0850-5780 (19)2, 1-20 <http://www.bioline.org.br/request?ep040100>
- Shannon G. et al. (2019). Feminisation of the health workforce and wage conditions of health professions: an exploratory analysis. *Human Resources for Health* <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12960-019-0406-0>
- Watson D., Chatio S., Barker M., Buoa P.R., Compaore A., Dalaba M., Erzse A., Godfrey K., hofman k., kehoe s., mcgrath n., mukoma g., nonterah e.a., norris s.a., sorgho h., ward k.a. and hardy-johnson p. (2023) ‘men’s motivations, barriers to and aspirations for their families’ health in the first 1000 days in sub-saharan africa: *A secondary qualitative analysis*’ *bmj nutr prev health* 6(1): 39–45. doi: [10.1136/bmjnph-2022-000423](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjnph-2022-000423) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10359544/>
- WHO (2023) ‘Gender and Health’ [https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab_1)