

Gender Discrimination and Women Identity in Effiong Johnson's *Install the Princess*: A Psycho-Analysis

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Abstract

From ancient till present, gender discrimination, mostly against the female sex by their male counterparts, has ironically positioned as a serious menace plaguing the Nigerian creative industry, thereby ridiculing development in the society. This menace is visible when the socio-political cum economical fronts of the nation is being controlled by the men, while the women are left with little or nothing. This is vividly portrayed in Effiong Johnson's *Install the Princess*. Due to the ineffectiveness of the men towards managing these strata as a result of corruption, nepotism, favouratism, greed, and divide and rule, the country is today faced with issues which have unequivocally affected its fronts. These issues range from poverty, hunger, sickness, and pain, thus have created death to the people and under-development to the country. The resultant effect of these is manifested in acts which include kidnapping, illegal oil bunkering, incessant killings, assassination, lethal car bombing, and total breakdown of law and order. Among the major findings is that this situation has provided impetus for creative punches in dramatic and theatrical representations by notable playwrights. Thus, with content analytical approach, this study investigates how Effiong Johnson attempts to establish the effect of gender discrimination on the Nigerian creative industry using the instrument of drama. The effect of it will create positive change amongst Nigerians, thereby effectuating change around societies. The study therefore recommends immediate abolishment of gender discrimination from the Nigerian society as that would increase the level of nation building.

Keywords: *Gender, Discrimination, Women Identity, Psycho-Analysis*

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Background to the Study

According to Rukhshanda, Muneera, and Waheed (2017), gender discrimination as the name suggests is the unfair treatment of women and denial of opportunities and violation of their right. It is the unequal treatments of people on the basis of characteristics that differentiate those factors such as stereotypes, prejudice and/or racism motivate a person to discriminate. Gender on its own refers to the social roles men and women play and the power relations between them, which usually has a profound effect on the use and management of natural resources.

More so, gender is shaped by culture, social relations, and natural environments. It is as a result of this that the 20th century has been marked by a widespread movement towards gender equality/discrimination (Linda, 2016). It is a primary marker of social and economic stratification and, as a result, of exclusion. Regardless one's socio-economic status, there were systemic gender differences in material well-being, although the degree of inequality varies across countries and over time (Gaelle, 2011).

Notwithstanding, discrimination occurs in various forms in human life. For example, Mathias and Christian noted, quoting Iro (2003), that “any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity and treatment in employment or occupation, is discriminatory”. On the same plain, they also aver that Ilo distinguishes between direct and indirect discrimination. The first form according to them arises if, without being less qualified, certain groups of society are explicitly excluded or disadvantaged by the legal framework due to characteristics such as gender. They went further to assert that “indirect discrimination occurs if intrinsically neutral rules or laws negatively affect certain groups, e.g. female workers. Linda (2016) concluded this platinum assertion by stating categorically that “discrimination of part-time workers against full-time employees is still present in nearly every country. This form of discrimination is not perpetuated through differential access to and control over material resource (Udry, 1996).

This assertion is globally plausible such as its practices are not farfetched. For example, Rukhshanda et al (2017) noted that “even in advanced countries that claim to be champions of women's right gender discrimination is present in one form or the other especially in the field of economics. They clarified by stating that women are not compensated fairly for their efforts and contributions at workplace and are often overlooked when it comes to promotions. Extensively, the glass ceiling effect according to Rukhshanda, et al (2017), quoting Baxter and Wright is more prevalent in developed countries. Extensively, they posited that obstacles for women promotion became intense at higher levels of authority.

On the social sphere, discrimination against women is rampant in almost every field. In many developed and developing countries of the world, women are not considered worthy of education, and better medical treatment (Rukhshanda, et al, 2017). Rukhshanda et al went on to assert that “they have no rights over property and although

they may be more capable than men, they are not allowed to use their potentials and talents. Women according to them are generally treated as second class citizens and their needs are fulfilled only after the men have had their fill. This is often fathomed or envisaged in developing countries, of which, Pakistan is an exemplar (Nair, 2015). This defines the fact that it was ranked as the second worst country in the world by the World Economic Forum in the gender inequality index (Baxter, 2000).

Furthermore, in traditional African societies like Nigeria, culture has a pervasive influence on how women are treated (Julie, 2012). The Culture Policy of Nigeria (1988), the official document regulating the administration of cultural matters, according to Julie, lends credence to the fact that culture represents the totality of the way of life of a given society. It is therefore no surprise that all discrimination against women tend to seek justification in cultural moves, beliefs and practices. To this, Julie further stated that “for any society to develop and progress it must embrace change and objectivity, thus the Nigerian society cannot afford to lag behind”. She concludes by noting that “the transformation agenda of the Federal Government of Nigeria should be holistic and inclusive of the need to liberate the kinetic energy of all citizens without any discrimination to seek self actualization and contribute to national development.”

It is to the crusade targeted at abolishing gender discrimination through identifying its effects on the Nigerian development, as portrayed in Effiong Johnson's *Install the Princess* that form the hitch to which this study is based. To achieve this aim, the Radical Feminism Theory is employed.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The Aim of this study is to interrogate the cause of gender discrimination and its effects on women identity in Nigeria, as portrayed in Effiong Johnson's *Install the Princess*. The major objectives include:

1. To identify the major causes of gender discrimination in Nigeria as portrayed in the selected Nigerian play.
2. To identify the effects of gender discrimination on women identity in Nigeria as portrayed in Nigeria as portrayed in the selected Nigerian play.
3. To identify the roles of women in the fight against gender discrimination in Nigeria as portrayed in Nigeria as portrayed in the selected Nigerian play.

Research Questions

1. What are the causes of gender discrimination in Nigeria as portrayed as portrayed in the selected Nigerian play?
2. What are the effects of gender discrimination on women identity in Nigeria as portrayed in the selected Nigerian play?
3. What are the roles of women in the fight against gender discrimination as portrayed in the selected Nigerian play?

Significance of the Study

In recent times, gender discrimination in Nigeria has been on the increase, women participation in politics had been narrowly minded, as they show little or no interest in the corridor of power. It is the intention of the researcher that these works provide solution to this and serve as a base for further research work to be conducted on gender discrimination and effect on the Nation. This study is important as it would also aims at enlightening the public on the need to eradicate the menace of gender discrimination in Nigeria, to promote productivity and equity.

Scope of the Study

Gender discrimination is a broad and wide scope to be stretched. However this study interrogates gender discrimination in Nigeria and how it has affected the Nigerian state in recent times, it will also look at the causes of gender discrimination in Nigeria and recommends ways of eliminating them. Other areas which are new will basically serve as a reference point under which gender discrimination will be examined. It will be worthy to note that this work is limited to Nigeria.

Causes of Gender Discrimination in Nigeria

The fundamental causes of gender discrimination in Nigeria, which is a microcosm of the macrocosm of gender discrimination in other countries of the world, are many such as it has pragmatically and unequivocally prevented the female sex towards attaining magnificent heights either in clandestine fronts ranging from politics, social, economical, religious, cultural, family, and otherwise. The causes are many, thus manifesting in ironical ways, such as it has instead metamorphosed or diffused, asserting pervasive, albeit negative influence on the women gender. It is against this backdrop that Zakari et al (2017) writes that illiteracy is one of the prime causes of gender discrimination in Quetta city, which is also synonymous to the Nigerian experience in the 21st century. According to them, parents who are illiterate and those belonging to the low socio-economic economic group, are not in favour of educating their daughters because it brings them no returns. According to them, girls leave their parents house and get married while the boys are the breadwinners of the family. In such cases, investing the education of the girl child is considered a waste of resources whereas investing in the boy child education brings fruitful outcomes in the form of money that he earns in future.

On a neutral note, rigid culture and tradition according to Zakari et al (2017) quoting (Manchanda and Boss, 2015) are often major contributors towards gender discrimination in most African countries. To further buttress this assertion, Garima et al (2018) quoting Gbrevbie et al (2014) writes that “there is an effect of cultural belief where female child is taken as second fiddle and does not have the cultural right to compete with male counterparts. Garima et al further noted that “male child enjoys the birth right of females as per the cultural and family norms of Nigerian societies. A family according to them gives primary focus to male instead of the female. Such as Zarkari, et al (2017), Garima (2018) writes, distinctly, thus, quoting Shastri (2014) that “female role is to look after the household and major factor behind this is our beliefs which were also influenced by lack of education”. This is fathomed in such a way that women are meticulously considered inferior to men (Zakari, et al, 2017).

The birth of a son is considered a blessing and is believed to be a method of keeping women under control. Daughters are married off at an early age to men much older than them. Hence, they are generally considered weak, not only physically, also mentally. Positive attitudes such as intelligence, smartness, and strength are associated with men. Extensively and most concisely, Linda (2016) writes, itemizing the causes of gender discrimination in the Nigerian space, which are “culture and norms, education, economic, and politics”. On the cultural and norm factor, Linda such as Zarkari, et al (2017) agrees by quoting Agbalajobi (2010) that “the culture of many societies is based by subjugating women to men, and undermining their self-esteem. Linda also noted by quoting Abiola in Lanre (2003) that “women are typically associated with domestic works; thus, gender discrimination remains pervasive in many dimensions of life, and the nature and extent of the discrimination vary considerably across countries and regions. According to Linda, in Nigeria Women are discriminated, even in the family. This is fathomed when the male children are ironically prevented from doing miniature duties at their respective homes. Such duties include cooking, sweeping, fetching of water, washing, and firewood. These enshrined are exclusively reserved for every African woman in such a manner that any woman who eventually partakes in politics or any social organization is pragmatically referred to as rebel and prostitute. This unequivocally deprives women, mostly the married women to participate in politics (Anne, and Carrie, 2007).

On the educational perspective, Linda (2017) writes that “another constraint that hampers women from equal access to politics or encounter restricting their quest to participate in active politics is education”. To further buttress this notion, Linda writes quoting Afolabi (2003) that “regardless of the vital role the women perform in the society; mother, producer, home manager, community organizer, social-cultural, and political activities, they are mostly stacked illiterates”. This notion therefore justifies the notion posited by the United Nation that women constitute 70% of the world's illiterate (Anne, and Carrie, 2007). Furthermore, Linda writes that “achieving literacy education is the most crucial step to enable literate women to take control over their lives to participate as equals in society”.

Notwithstanding, and on the economic factor, Linda undoubtedly averred that “lack of economic incentives are one of the factors preventing women from participating to active politics in Nigeria”. He also asserts that “historically, women experienced discrimination that put them at a disadvantage economically. By quoting Agbalajobi (2009), Linda writes that “lack of finance brings hindrance to effective female participation in Nigeria politics. This ironically defines the notion why women can't participate fully in politics when compared to their male counterparts because of their low financial statuses (Linda, 2017; Frank and George, 2019).

Lastly, on political factor and rule of law, Linda (2017) writes, quoting Anifowose (2004) that “the perception that democracy would automatically boast gender equality in political participation has not been vindicated after years of return to civilian rule in Nigeria”. The role embodied with democracy defines equality in all fronts such as it

affects both sexes. Painfully, women according to Linda (2017) quoting Kira (2003) are unjustifiably discriminated irrespective of the fact that world over today democracy has become a vital tool to attaining sustainable development. Impact of democracy according to Linda remains elusive for women inasmuch as they are not verse in understanding that political participation, which is a sine-quantum of democracy allows for diversity of opinion and participation of both men and women into political gatherings.

Conclusively, women are also partially responsible for the discrimination against them, though they are aware that the constitution may propose equal right, yet they do not protest when their rights may usurp (Zakari, 2017). Women according to them accept discrimination as a norm of the society and parts of their lives.

Effects of Gender Discrimination in Nigeria

Gender discrimination, as a cankerworm which from prehistory till date has been ravaging the Nigerian space in fronts which unequivocally and unarguably includes political, economical, social, religious, cultural, and the family, is largely responsible for the sagacious increase in the level of poverty, suffering, pain, and death in the Nigerian space. This notion is plausible because in today's world, economic progress is only possible when men and women work side by side (Zakari, et al, 2017). They further buttressed this assertion by positing that “women constitute approximately half of the population of Baluchistan – a microcosm of the Nigerian statistical measure and by denying them education, the possibility of progress is reduced by half. As half of the population is not allowed to make use of their talent, Nigeria has not been able to progress compared with other developing nations in the world”.

The discrimination against the female gender is so fathomed and prevalent in the Nigerian space most especially on occasions where the women are ironically seen as second filial, thus are most often denied of adequate medical attention which ironically affects their children. This menace has meticulously increased the level of sickness and diseases in the society (Zakari et al, 2017). Furthermore, the notion that women education is not beneficial to the family and the society at large is ironically misinterpreted as profound contributions by the educated in their respective families and societies are versatile. For example, an educated woman can take care of her immediate family in a way that her children would grow and become profound and industrious citizens in the society. The opposite is meticulously seen on the daily manifestation of terrorism in forms of youth restiveness, prostitution, armed robbery, drug abuse, incessant killings, cultism, militancy, insurgencies, negative clashes, suicide bombing, lethal car bombing, and other forms of menaces which negatively affect the people, thus propounding the audacity that instigates or questions the Nigerian nation as a unified entity. These unholy and malicious acts are often perpetrated or masterminded by uncultured youths whom are believed to have been bred by uneducated parents, mostly their mothers.

This expressively explains that the pervasive upheavals in the Nigerian society are sprouted and defined, thus armed due to the temerity that women are not properly educated and thereafter positioned in fronts such as politics, social, economical, military,

religion, and so on. This would unequivocally result to abuse of power by their male counterparts, thus increasing the issue of corruption, nepotism, favouritism, and divide and rule system which has pragmatically eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian space in the 21st century. This automatically hampers the development of the nation and increases the level of poverty, suffering, hunger, and starvation of the people as a result of constant diversion of public resources for personal gains by the corrupt politicians who daily oppress and repress the people.

Radical Feminism Theory

Radical feminism theory is the breeding ground for many of the ideas arising from feminism. Radical feminism was the cutting edge of feminist theory from approximately 1967-1975, and it is no longer as universally accepted as it was, thus it no longer serves to solely define the term, "feminism". On the same note, radical feminism is the origin of patriarchy and the subordination of women therein, as seen by radical feminists to rest in male aggression and control of women's sexuality (Philip, 1987, quoted by Jelena, 2017). This explains how men are inherently more aggressive than women, who, because of their relative size disadvantages and dependency on men during child bearing years, are easy to dominate and control. This group of feminists views the oppression of women as the most fundamental form of oppression, one that cuts across boundaries of race, culture, and economic class; a movement intent on social change, change of rather revolutionary proportion (Jelena, 2017). Radical feminism according to Julie is a feminist theory course that starts from the idea of conflict between the sexes as a fundamental conflict, and oppression against women as a direct implication of patriarchy. This theory according to Julie rests on the assumption that all social system contains specific forms of interactive constraints; they do not have to cause repression.

Conclusively, and considering the fact that the study aims at closing the bridge that prompted the issue of gender discrimination in Nigerian space, this study employs the radical feminism theory. This is so because the radical feminism theory questions why women must adopt certain roles based on their biology, just as it questions why men adopt certain other roles based on gender. On the other hand, it tends to draw lines between biological-determined behaviour and cultural-determined behaviour in order to free both men and women as much as possible from their previous narrow gender roles.

Nature and Sources of Data

Data for this study were gathered through primary and secondary sources. The primary source includes Effiong Johnson's *Install the Princess* and the researcher's personal has also aided in putting the work together. Supports were also gathered from books, journals, handbooks, and the internet.

Population of the Study

The population of this study is Effiong Johnson's *Install the Princess* which interrogates gender discrimination in Nigeria society.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instruments used for this study were constructive analysis of gender discrimination as portrayed in Effiong Johnson's *Install the Princess*.

Validation of the Instrument

The validation of the instrument was established via simple conventional methods of analysis of the selected play as well as the analysis of relevant text and criticism of theatre practitioners. This endure the eradication of any irrelevant statement, ambiguities, questions or whatever that may prove inconsequential to the aim and objective of the study; hence the entire process is redefined and improved upon to cover the Challenges associated with gender discrimination in order to enhance validity and make the study generally acceptable.

Reliability of the Data Instrument

Reliability suggests consistency and dependability of the data. It further means that any instruments adopted should provide similar result if applied repeatedly. The consistency of the information gathered in this study through repeated application of same measuring instruments for the play validate the reliability of the data instruments employed in this study.

Synopsis of *Install the Princess*

The play *Install the Princess* revolves around Obong Nkenang, a sixty (60) years old king, who sacrificed himself and his two sons to bring everlasting peace to the people of Ekondo and Ekuku and to change the statuesque which deprives the female gender of equal right with the male gender. He believes that for a community to attain the level of greatness and development, the women's interest must be respected, thus he demanded that a woman representative should be among the council. Before his demise, he performed a ritual dance, which ultimately made him place princess, his only daughter, on the royal throne of a Ekondo community, thereby declaring to the gods to accept his choice of an heir to the ancestral stool since his two sons Ubokudom (first son) and Uko (second son) have refused to come back home from abroad where they went for further studies.

After his demise, news was brought to the palace that the Mediterranean airline the two princes boarded from the United Kingdom to Nigeria disappeared and was later reported by cable news that the aircraft crashed into the pacific. The demise of the two princes became a problem to the people as to whom to take over the king of Ekondo, because Etiowo, the only surviving son of the royal blood is deaf and dump, which, according to the requirement of becoming a king in the land, is a taboo, thereby leaving the princess, a woman as the only choice, which is also a taboo to install her. To curtail this, Ukarakoa, Upkotio, and Nkakat, the member of the royal executive counsel of Ekondo suggest that a choice of kinship be made in another family. The idea is thwarted by Ufokiban, the only woman in the executive council. For, according to the tradition, a king must emerge from the royal family. Therefore, she suggested that the princess be installed as the king and ruler of Ekondo community.

However, the idea was attacked by the men in council, reasons being that a woman had never been crowned king or ruler of Ekondo community judging from the past. Rather, the men insisted that Etiowo be crowned despite his abnormalities; an idea which Ufokiban kicked against. The meeting was inconclusive and was later taken to the community youth to deliberate and come up with an idea. They later received the opinion from the youth that the decision of the executive council in the case will be accepted by all. Led by Nne Mmatim, the women rushed in requesting that the princess must be installed. They threatened to go nude around the market square and the shrine of Ekondo, supposing their right to install the princess as the king and ruler of Ekondo is not granted. Afraid of this, the executive council decided to send Nkakat to Utim Ekiko, the seer of Ekondo, in order to know the decision of the gods. At the shrine, a female goat was given to Nkakat to take to the palace, which means that the gods have decided that whoever they choose from the royal family is qualified being the king and ruler of the land.

At the end, Etiowo was dressed in king's regalia and taken to the throne by the men-in-council. However, along the line, Etiowo himself declined and insisted that Princess should act and rule in his behalf. The Princess was crowned as the king and ruler of Ekondo. In effect, equity, development, and transparency were restored in the land of Ekondo. She married a man called Udobong from the same land.

Install the Princess and the Theme of Gender Discrimination in Nigerian

From the forgoing, it is pertinent to deduce pragmatically and unequivocally that the Nigerian state, as creative industry is yet to attain greatness in many fronts-economically, politically, socially and otherwise. This is as a result of the prevalent gender discrimination against the female sex as portrayed in Effiong Johnson's *Install the Princess*.

Lucidly, the play, as microcosm to the macrocosm of the Nigerian state in the 21st century, though meticulously hilarious, unravels trending issues ranging from greed, corruption, discrimination, segregation, nepotism, divide and rule system and the clandestine quest for equality. For example, in the play, the playwright distinctively attributes these cankerworms to characters like Ukarakpa, Ukpotio and Nkakat who are members of the royal executive council in Ekondo community. They maliciously resorted into insisting that Princess should not be crowned king and ruler of Ekondo. Instead, they obliged that an alternative choice should be made by choosing a leader from another family outside the royal family; when it was obvious that Princess, a female, was the only eligible person in the royal lineage to be crowned king.

This was as a result of the fact that Etiowo, the only surviving son of late King Obong Nkenang was deaf and dumb and the other elder sons had been killed in an air crashed. They insisted that Princes would never be a King and ruler of Ekondo owing to the fact that women's job were mainly for household chores and bearing children for their husbands. That idea was presently prevalent in Nigerian society where the women gender is maliciously regarded fillers, thus deprived of all political and economical obligations, rather are placed to be under the command and supervision of the men. This is visible in the play where the men believe that the highest position that a woman is as queen.

Disregarding this idea or philosophy, the women agitate and demand that Princess be installed as the king and ruler of Ekondo. Once the Princess was installed as regent, all traditional obligations that place the men as superior over the women was overcome. For example, in the tradition of Ekondo, women were not supposed to ask for the hand of a man in marriage; rather, it behooves the man to do so, even though Princess changed the statuesque by asking for the hand of Udobong in marriage.

Moreover, it was fathomed in the play that one of the reasons that the men vowed not to allow the Princess to be crowned king and ruler of Ekondo was because of greed and corruption. They obviously understood that such an oblivion and malicious habit of theirs could never be achieved if Princess, a woman, is installed as the king. Instead, they insisted that Etiowo, a dumb and deaf princess, be crowned king and ruler, despite the knowledge that it was against the custom and tradition of Ekondo. The statement of Ukpotio below clarifies it:

Ukpotio: You don't seem to see that you have easily ruled Ekondo through Etiowo as his closest aid? (p.84)

This was meticulously expressed when they tried to buy Inim, the most trusted servant and praise singer to late king Ubong into supporting Etiowo to be crowned as king. They tagged Inim insane, because of his refusal to accept their egocentric obligation. This act is visible in the Nigerian space, especially in the 21st century where the women gender is only allowed to occupy positions that appear as shadows under the supervision or superiority of the male gender. Placing them at the helm of affairs like the president of the nation, the senate president, governors, speakers of House of Representatives, and judicial head, is to jeopardize their negative activities due to the transparent nature.

The men in the Nigerian society like the members of the royal executive council in the play, prefers to place a deformed and inability men as president, governor, national executive leaders, head of the judiciary, head of military, etc, rather than a woman, so as to control the activities of the nation in the background and to protect their malicious and dubious identity. These are the major menaces that are plaguing the creative industry of the Nigerian scenario, thus presenting itself as cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the Nigerian state. The ineffectiveness of the robotic representation at the helm of affairs in the Nigerian society has therefore increased nepotism, favouritism, greed, embezzlement, and divide-and-rule system, which, on the other hand, increased the issues of poverty, underdevelopment, unemployment, hunger, sickness, general sufferings, and death of the people.

The above deficiencies prompted king Ubong to perform a ritual dance to the princess, which drew the attention of the gods to witness his choice of leader on the throne of Ekondo. Understanding the mischievous nature of the men, king Ubong requested that a woman should be chosen to represent the women in the royal executive council, as much as to speak for the women especially in matters that mostly concern them. The decision is hardly envisaged in the Nigerian state; rather, the men in their massive number would team up to disassociate the women in their midst.

Conclusively, the playwright posits that the women gender should, as a matter of urgency, be given the opportunity to sit at the helm of political and economic affairs, which sums the creative Nigerian industry for change. He believes that gender equality should be granted to all, as that would distinctively resolve the precarious issues of corruption in the Nigerian state. This malicious dichotomy has unequivocally increased at the level of social disorderliness, ranging from kidnapping, arm robbery, lethal car bombing, assassination, drug abuse, and other forms of social vices that disrupt the smooth running of the Nigerian creative industry.

Conclusion

From the study, it is established that the Nigerian creative industry is at the benchmark due to increase in corruption, which manifests through greed, favouritism, as well as nepotism, as a result of deprivation and disassociation of the women gender in terms of equity, right, and transparency in ruler ship and governance, as portrayed in Effiong Johnson's "Install the Princess."

Using drama as a mechanism for evangelism, the playwright obliged that the issue of gender inequality and discrimination against the women in the Nigerian space is alarming, and has instead metamorphosed into malicious acrimonies that might ridicule the existence of the Nigerian state in the nearest future.

Recommendations

To tackle the issue of gender inequality and discrimination that has abruptly affected the Nigerian creative industry in the 21st century, the following recommendations are therefore established:

1. The women gender should be given the opportunity to attain the helm of affairs in strata such as politics, economy, military, paramilitary, etc., in order to bestow their creative ability for the development of the Nigerian creative industry.
2. There should be an act in the Nigerian constitution that would instill equal right amongst the male and the female gender.
3. The study also suggests that there should be an established agency that would supervise and ensure that equity amongst the genders is maintained and anyone who tries to violate the law of equity should be punished.

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