

## Event Round-up: Unpacking Gender and Feminism in Contemporary Nigerian Society | Agora Thursday Feminist In Context 1/6

**Speaker:** Andrea Kwen | **Date:** 20th July, 2023

### Key Message

Feminism in Nigeria is diverse and formed by its history, culture, and demography. Therefore, its meaning varies from person to person. While no one-size-fits-all definition exists, feminism advocates for women's rights and gender equality. Gender is not a static or fixed concept; it is fluid and can be understood and expressed in diverse ways by individuals. While the traditional understanding of gender often classifies it as binary—male or female, many people identify and experience their gender outside of this binary framework. This understanding is essential to recognise and respect the complexities of gender diversity.

The path to feminism in Nigeria has been difficult. However, it is no longer considered a 'Western Concept' because it has developed over time, with many Nigerian men and women activists advocating for gender equality and women's rights and fighting patriarchal conventions. Some factors have been instrumental in driving feminist change in Nigeria in the last decade, and they have played a significant role:

1. Democratised conversations have been amplified
2. Social Media activism
3. The global #MeToo movement
4. Improved access to education for women and girls
5. More women in leadership roles and political participation
6. Legal reforms to protect women's rights
7. Collaboration with global movements and organisations

Feminists have remained tenacious in building a just society despite the obstacles to gender equality in Nigeria. Men's support is essential, and the perception that feminists are 'bitter individuals' is damaging and must be ignored by society. To advance feminism and make it understandable in Nigeria, it is necessary to educate the public, raise awareness, engage more men, localise the message, dispel myths, advocate, collaborate with organisations, be inclusive, use art and culture, promote media representation, initiate conversations in schools, and work towards societal transformation.

### Conclusion

While feminism primarily focuses on women's empowerment, feminism and gender equality are important for society because they promote fairness and equality for all people. When women and men have equal opportunities, it benefits everyone. Empowerment for women is empowerment for men.

### About YouPaD and Agora Thursdays

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**Agora Thursday** is the online version of YouPaD's Agora Public Policy Discussion Series. We exchange ideas, thoughts, and actions to improve Nigeria's policymaking process and practice. The current series TiDE is focused on equipping young development professionals with skills and knowledge to thrive in the development field. Join us in this 6-part series.

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