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Editorial

In this issue of *Gender and Behaviour*, we are presented with a sweeping yet incisive body of research that not only interrogates gendered experiences but also critiques the layered systems of inequality that underpin them. From the intimate lens of individual psychological resilience to the wider social frameworks that perpetuate systemic injustice, these contributions converge around a central theme: the need to understand and dismantle structural barriers to gender equity in African contexts. Adichie's *Zikora*, examined through the lens of transitivity analysis, offers a powerful literary entry point into understanding how language encodes power, agency, and emotional labour in the lives of women. Through the protagonist's voice, readers are invited to see how grammatical structures in storytelling reveal deeper ideological positions on motherhood, autonomy, and relational conflict. Literature, in this context, is not merely art, it is activism. Equally compelling are the lived experiences of caregivers of individuals with mental illness in Emfuleni, South Africa. Food insecurity among women in Savelugu-Nanton District, Ghana, unearths another dimension of gendered vulnerability. Risk is not merely ecological or economic. It is deeply gendered, compounded by sociocultural norms that prioritize male access to resources. Women's resilience strategies in this context ranging from communal support to small-scale entrepreneurship demonstrate agency in the face of structural neglect. The discussion of sex stokvels (Mavuso) in South African townships reframes sexual objectification as a form of structural violence. These spaces, cloaked in transactional desire, expose how Black women's bodies are commodified within a culture that masquerades economic desperation as consensual pleasure. The socio-economic dimensions of sexual agency demand a critical interrogation that goes beyond morality politics. Pregnancy-specific stress and its impact on health-related quality of life offers yet another intersection between biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors. The nuanced consideration of coping styles in this study points to the urgent need for more holistic maternal health interventions that centre women's emotional and mental wellness alongside physical care. From Nigeria's Internally Displaced Persons' camps to educational inequities in Tanzanian districts, girls and disabled children remain at the frontline of gendered marginalization. These studies are not just statistics; they are stories of thwarted potential, reminding us that rights to safety, education, and autonomy are still unequally distributed. This feminist analysis resituates the pandemic not as an equalizer, but as an amplifier of existing gender disparities. Finally, whether it's adolescent HIV risk in Uganda, mental health prevalence across Africa, or unintended pregnancy among Nigerian women, the underlying message remains consistent: gender is not a variable but a determinant, a lens through which every behavioural, health, and socio-economic outcome must be re-examined. This collection challenges us not only to understand the mechanics of inequality but to reimagine systems rooted in justice, equity, and care. As researchers, policymakers, and activists, the call to action is clear: centre gender, dismantle harm, and build futures where behaviour is shaped by choice, not constraint.

I wish you happy reading!

Sincerely,



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