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A Southeast Nigerian Discourse on Sex-Role Gender Stereotypes as a Human Rights Violation

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CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFRN	Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
CP	Contact Person
CSO	Civil Society
FIDA	International Federation of Women Lawyers
FRN	Federal Republic of Nigeria
GBS	Gender Based Stereotype(ing)
HRBA	Human Rights Best Approach
ISS	International Institute of Social Studies
KI	Key Informant
LFN	Laws of Federation Nigeria
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (United Nations)
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
WACOL	Women's Aid Collective
WHO	World Health Organisation

Dedication

This work is dedicated to Mary Queen of all Hearts, the Trinitarum and Host of Heaven where my strength lies. It is also dedicated to my resilient mum V.U. Ugwu and to every female who continues to challenge and break biases. Equally, this research is dedicated to male allies with whom the journey to a free society would be hunky-dory.

Acknowledgement

Abstract

Women in Nigeria continue to be subject to gender-based violence, inequality, and discrimination, even though the law in Nigeria generally provides for equality. This research paper explores how gender stereotyping causes and contributes to the oppression of women. The emergence of Gender-based stereotyping (GBS) as a human rights concern considers that stereotypes designate specific features or functions for a group. For example, a notion that women are slothful while men are hardworking can profoundly impact the compliance of human rights by reinforcing discrimination as well as inequality. Also, patronising stereotypes (like women are warm, homemakers, nurturing and caring) serve to vindicate a system of patriarchy where men play pivotal roles and women marginal ones. Over the years the United Nations (UN) has strived to make visible stereotyping based on gender, disability, and ethnicity among others. This study reviews gender relations, social realities, and experiences of the Nigerian people. It finds that gender stereotypes are the cause as well as the manifestation of structural disadvantages, gender issues, and violations of women's rights. The analysis is based on anti-stereotyping literature that adopts a transformative approach to stereotypes as the underlying mechanism for rights violations. The study identifies and names gender stereotypes most manifest in the southeast Nigerian context. Several sources are used to gather data, like personal/primary and secondary sources. The examples and arguments are built on the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) materials as well as relevant examples from Nigerian political history. It reveals specific human rights violations like the right to an adequate standard of living, freedom of expression, and right to equality, that arise from GBS. The analysis shows the essence of naming and contesting stereotypes. This paper proposes a lens that readers should adopt to adequately address the harmfulness and wrongfulness of stereotypes.

Relevance to Development Studies

This research builds on the knowledge and understanding of gender-based stereotypes as a human rights violation. More so, gendered experiences of women are social justice concern, as women make up a wholesome part of the population. Of the 7.8 billion inhabitants of the earth, the majority are female. This study identifies the root cause of persisting gender issues and violations of human rights as gender stereotypes. It opposes the naturalistic view that accepts stereotypes as innate, normal, and inevitable. It proposes that approaching gender stereotypes as wrongful, and harmful will result in gender emancipation. Gender parity is acknowledged as vital for achieving national objectives and sustainable development. Put differently, as Desmond Tutu reminded us all, providing the same performance ground for men and women is key to social justice. Hence, there is a need for continuous academic activism and lobbying in this regard. If we are going to see real development in the world then our best investment is in women's liberation from stereotypes.

Keywords

Gender-based stereotypes, women, men, social, human rights, sex/gender roles, Nigeria

CHAPTER 1
MY POINT OF DEPARTURE: THEORISING ANTI-STEREOTYPING

"Stereotypes tend to fixate gender identities and gender roles to make them appear as real, universal, eternal, natural, essential and or unchangeable"

(Holtmaat and Naber 2011: 57).

1.1 The Genesis of my Research

Reminiscing on growing up as a female in Nigeria, I was exposed to an enshrined social structure that placed men over women. Intriguingly in the southeast, the youngest male baby is entrusted with key roles over the oldest and most responsible female as in the case of leadership, inheritance, and breaking of kola[1] among other obligations. I socialised comfortably through gender[2] prejudices in roles both within the family and wider society, without thinking of these as problematic. It was generally considered a normal way of life for the good and stability of individuals, homes, and society. The normalisation of these preconceptions is what anti-stereotyping scholars find grossly problematic (Timmer, 2015: 725, 737).

Upon maturity[3], I began to view gender roles as imposed. As I perceived that stereotypes based on gender roles are not justifiable based on individual capacity or preference. I observed from school and family life that even higher education and international exposure did not erode norms of male dominance. A closer look reveals how this cripples and deprives Nigerian females of exploring their potential. Remarkably, my mother counts her achievements starting from how she started her career as an educator against my father's will. He believed in fulfilling his ascribed roles as a sole provider, protector, and leader. However, my mum subsequently got credence in difficult times, when she came through for the family. In normal times, my mother remained the 'deviant wife' for choosing to put her certificate to use by working, instead of being the stay-at-home wife and mother. From a narrow perspective, sex-role gender stereotyping focuses on;

> "…roles including the behaviours of women and men…assigns them distinct yet mutually reinforcing roles and behaviours...assigning women roles mainly associated with the private sphere and men roles usually associated with the public sphere" (OHCHR, 2013: 13).

As a result of such experiences, I have spent a significant part of my life questioning gender norms, including in past academic studies. Viewing my daily encounters through a gender lens

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[1] Breaking kola (iwa oji) is a traditional rite in Igbo society where by a kola nut is blessed and dissected. This role is reserved for males of any age.
[2] I am aware that the term gender has evolved beyond male and female to include vast sexualities which keep evolving. However, my reference to gender in this research stays within the confines of biological sexes of male and or female, although more attention will be given to the female gender due to the history of Nigerian patriarchy.
[3] From mid to late adolescent.

became both personally and academically important to me. This study delves into the actual causes of persistent gender issues, going beyond my previous studies on marginalisation, sexual exploitation, and women in politics. For an MA in developmental studies, I will explore the role of gender stereotypes in the reinforcement of gender inequalities and injustices. Gender-based "stereotyping is the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men" (Cook and Cusack, 2010: 20).

1.2 Identifying the Research Problem

This research argument is buttressed by sharing and analysing lived experiences. How women have been compelled to abandon or put their careers on hold, for fear of emasculating their husbands, other male relatives, or being judged by society. Gender discrimination persists, despite gender equality before the law and the role of gender stereotyping in this is under-studied. There are indicators from the literature and reports used in this study that Gender-based stereotyping (GBS) places women at a tight end. Such that if a woman in Nigeria decides to work based on the high economic demand, she does so at her peril, as her obligations to provide care (food, clothing, and household cleaning) to her family remains. Such gender stereotypes breed inequality and discrimination. According to Timmer;

> "…when stereotypes are at play, we tend not to ask further questions as stereotypes make gender patterns seem self-evident. Stereotypes make us lazy, it blinds us to gender inequality" (Timmer, 2015: 715).

It is this ability of stereotypes to 'naturalise' gender inequalities that I find most problematic and important for the Nigerian case study. The problem with approaching gender stereotypes as a way of thought, as done by many researchers, is that this blocks investigation into context and consequentiality (Cook and Cusack, 2011). In this study, I contextualise how gender stereotypes are used (and abused) in Nigeria and how they can be contested and changed for greater gender justice.

Human rights scholars in Nigeria have so far given little consideration to the concept of gender stereotypes. Rather than viewing GBS as a human rights violation in themselves, and a root cause of other gender inequalities and rights abuses, GBS is generally viewed as familiar, and a normal occurrence, by most men and women. The concept of stereotyping is markedly developed in the area of gender discrimination and inequality, consequently posing querries about how well the concept travels on diverse grounds (Brems and Timmer, 2016: 4). There is a gap in information available to the domestic community on sex-role gender stereotypes as a human rights infringement causing varied gendered problems. Translation should be "more than merely transplanting contents of a global legal role into a national legal system; it requires engagement in the local-cultural context where human rights obligations are neglected or where a remedy to make a rights-based claim is sought" (Handmaker and Matthews, 2019: 6). Unless gender stereotypes are thoroughly examined, conceptualised and challenged, taking informed action to change GBS and end the justification of stereotypes, human rights will remain grossly violated.

This study examines how GBS affects everyone; male or female, and in turn, the economy. Women as victims of stereotyping are both cajoled and coerced out of their desired life goals or

hindered from attaining their full capacity as human beings (Ezeilo, 2008). According to the World Economic Forum, Nigeria ranked 128 among 153 countries surveyed for the gender gap reduction in 2020. This survey also reveals how women's continuous relegation to the back of the queue impedes their attaining higher growth in the economy, reducing their productivity and greater economic stability, and impedes their access to positions of political authority in the country (Archibong, 2018).

From the inception of Nigeria as a state, it promised to protect the rights of its citizens. However, shadow reports to CEDAW from Nigerian NGOs suggest the effectiveness and applicability of the promise are limited. Thirty-six years ago, Nigeria as a state party signed and ratified the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Article 5a CEDAW expressly condemns gender stereotyping and thus obligates State Parties to take;

> "…all appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, to achieve the elimination of prejudices, customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or stereotyped roles for men and women" (as cited in OHCHR, 2013: 22).

Asides from the State's obligation to modify and or eradicate both gender stereotypes that are based on a view of women as being inferior to men and sex-role stereotypes, article 5b further states how to conquer this through the right education.

> "…to ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, is understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases" (as cited in OHCHR, 2013: 22).

Unfortunately to date, Nigeria has failed to domesticate CEDAW and the MAPUTO protocol, which covers non-discrimination in Article 1. There is no effective domestic legal instrument that addresses women's rights violations or gender-stereotypical concerns in Nigeria (Ezeilo, 2008; LFN, 2004). Although some of the Nigerian body of laws emanates from treaties, it is a dualist system. This means that even though Nigeria has signed and ratified a treaty, the provisions of that law cannot be applicable or enforceable unless enacted into domestic law by the National Assembly (CFRN, 1999: 21). Therefore, no specific legal protection is available to women against stereotype(ing) in Nigeria. I noticed limited knowledge of the harm and wrong done mostly to women's human rights by state and non-state actors in Nigeria through role prescription (stereotyping). The research problem is founded on the observation that vast physical and academic activism neglects the underlying gender stereotypes that makes rights violation persist, like the right to self-determination. Thus treating the symptoms but not the disease (Timmer, 2015). From the provision of Article 5 CEDAW, GBS tend to expose women to gross harm and wrong. GBS violates vast generations of rights (Cook and Cusack, 2011).

The absence of operational domestic law is a clog on the ability of the people of Nigeria to make sense of their experiences through legal categories and concepts. Contestation/mobilisation of the law is necessary for change as "stereotypes become problematic when they operate to cause violence/conflict or deny individuals their human rights" (Cook and

Cusack, 2011). Therefore, it impedes the possibility of legally mobilising based on the consciousness of international best practices on anti-stereotyping. This study considers how the adoption of international best practices could aid in promoting and protecting human rights in practice via countering all negative impacts of GBS. Put differently, since states and people have entered into formal relationships with each other, therefore rights should be demanded and not looked at as a form of reward or charity. In the case of Nigeria, there should be a domestic law and platform available for the people to legitimately mobilise.

> "…when states retreat from fervently meeting their human rights obligations it leaves the primal duty to enforce rights claims on individuals…legal mobilisation has the potential to secure progressive structural change like equal access to socioeconomic justice" (Handmaker and Arts, 2018: 3-8; Handmaker and Matthews, 2019: 1, 2).

This study is based on a consciousness that such GBS are wrong and harmful and need challenging, modification and transformation. Naming stereotypes make them visible which is needful for changing them (Cook and Cusack, 2011: 39-70). Cook and Cusack (2011: 40), further state that "courts treat the symptoms, but not the disease" as the state has no formal duty to positively influence societal attitudes (and dismantle stereotypes). The consequence can include impunity for crimes of violence against women, marginalisation, and violation of other rights. Put differently, Brems and Timmer (2016) state that correctly naming and contesting gender stereotyping will remain challenging if society stays uninformed while the state is unpressured. This study seeks to throw light on that problem in the southeast Nigerian context.

1.3 Justification and Relevance of this Research

As illustrated in the preceding sections, gender stereotypes often refer to a specified group rather than humans as a whole (OHCHR, 2013: 16). For instance, working women, women of childbearing age, and women of a country, religion, or ethnic group as in this study. Scholars, Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) committee reports, and Women's Aid Collective (WACOL) reports have reiterated the need to challenge and change the status quo of gender stereotyping to eradicate all forms of human rights violations.

Specifically, this paper is inspired by articles 2f, 5 and 10 of CEDAW, CEDAW committee reports, social realities and international scholarly works on gender stereotyping. This research charges not just state or courts but individuals, formal and informal institutions to challenge gender stereotypes. Considering the limited words and time frame for this research, the research focus is on sex-role Gender-based stereotypes. My choice to research sex roles over other forms of GBS is influenced by the overarching pointer on its implication on the development and stability of women and in turn nations. Hence the need to study how to adequately identify and tackle the systemic stereotype that not only affects women's rights but clogs the wheels of development.

Importantly, most Nigerian women have encountered sex-role stereotypes at different points of personal development and career path. Instead of retaining feminine attributes while shattering glass ceilings, conformity is expected else you are labelled loose, unserious or dumb (Adichie, 2012: 21.12-23.00). In a Ted talk show, Adichie went beyond her career experience in Nigeria to share the challenges of several Nigerian women. I relate with Adichie's stereotypical

proposition and experiences as narrated throughout the talk and subsequent book 'We should all be feminist'. She proposes that in the movement for a free, equal and progressive society, there is a need for male allies, else the struggle will be endless.

As an indigenous Nigerian woman primarily trained as a lawyer, called to practice legal services in the thirty-six states and a capital city of the federal republic of Nigeria and later appointed a judge, I am aware of the masculine yardsticks the profession is built on. Becoming a female legal practitioner is considered the submission of self to a historically stereotyped profession. While to progress as a lawyer means mastery of or immunity from the stereotype encountered daily in the profession (Ugwu, 2018). The Legal profession like some other professions was traditionally set out for males until times evolved and resilient females now saturate them. I chose to focus on my immediate community (southeast Nigeria) because I have spent most years there, my heart remains there and I would want to witness a drastic change in the orientation of gender roles.

Commendably several international courts and human rights treaties like CEDAW, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR), and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) tops the campaign against stereotyping. By naming, identifying and insisting that states should refrain from enforcing harmful stereotypes, which they are under an obligation to combat (Brems and Timmer, 2016). Anti-stereotyping scholars and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) have shown that sex-role gender stereotyping hinders the development and enjoyment of rights. Such as "the right to health (including reproductive health), an adequate standard of living (unpaid care work & unfair pay gap)…education (marriage and family relations), freedom of expression, freedom of movement, political participation and representation, effective remedy as well as freedom from gender-based violence…" (Cook and Cusack, 2011: 42, OHCHR, 2014, 2021). The in-depth analysis established by these institutions and scholars forms the core of my study as it brings alive my encounters as a female in a patriarchal society.

Although, "it is ultimately up to states, and not UN human rights mechanisms, to tailor and implement solutions through their laws, policies, programmes, and practices; an expanded discourse on gender stereotyping, intends to apply pressure on, and help to motivate states to take the steps needed to safeguard human rights against harmful gender stereotypes and wrongful gender stereotyping" (Cook and Cusack, 2011: 33). Hence there is a call for researchers, government, domestic human rights institutions, and non-governmental organisations, to gather information to enable best practices in challenging stereotype(ing).

This research has adopted an innovative Nigerian perspective on human rights angle to gender-based stereotyping, zooming in on sex-role forms of GBS to "build momentum towards change" (Brems and Timmer, 2016: 11). As a social construct, the transformation of gender relations to become more equitable can be achieved over time. Therefore, it is paramount to study the nature, scope, and effects of sex-role gender stereotyping on women by investigating their professional and private lives. This research is a resource for a wide and non-specialist readership. Also, it serves as a positive motivation for Nigerian women to question the non-existence of a gender protective instrument, challenge stereotypes and promote activism on sex-role gender-

based stereotypes as a human rights violation. That is, it is a gateway to reorienting, modifying and or eradicating stereotyping.

Furthermore, after a cursory search, I noticed studies undertaken in the area of gender stereotyping in Nigeria were either generalised naturalistic views or limited to education, movies, and sexuality like the works/reports from Alade, (2012) among others. I saw numerous works on inequality, marginalisation, and exploitation of women. However, a focus on sex-role gender-based stereotyping in Nigeria addressed through a human rights perspective, is yet to be explored. This study offers a socio-legal gaze into sex-role gender stereotypes in the Eastern part of Nigeria, which is wholly an Igbo indigenous community. It is an attempt to address the gap in the literature and domestic laws by awakening the consciousness of participants and readers on gender stereotyping while encouraging all to tow the path to an anti-stereotype approach.

1.4 Research objectives and question

This study examined the role of GBS in gender-based issues and developmental problems. Also, it explored the role of stereotyping in women's oppression in Nigeria. Therefore it contributes to understanding, identifying and making stereotyping more visible as a human rights violation. This aims to strengthen the protection of human rights and starts to tackle several gender and economic problems. In doing so, the study takes an intersectional and transformative approach. Therefore, the questions this study addresses are:

How does GBS play a role in the creation and reproduction of women's inequality and as a human rights violation in southeast Nigeria?

There are also 2 sub-questions:
1. To what extent does GBS influence the lives and freedoms of the people of southeast Nigeria?
2. When can the anti-stereotyping approach help to modify the effects and or eradicate GBS in southeast Nigeria?

1.5 Representing Gender Stereotypes

This section attempts to resolve the central question and subquestions of this research. Like the act of stereotyping, stereotypes themselves are human rights violations and have been differentiated by scholars for a better understanding and identification. The concept is a growing area of interest for feminists, human rights activists, anti-stereotype and transformative researchers like Brems, Cook, Cusack, Holmaat and Timmer.

> "…gender stereotypes are generalized views or preconceptions of attributes or characteristics possessed by or the roles that should be performed by, members of a particular group…on the other hand, gender stereotyping is the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men" (Cook and Cusack, 2011: 9, 18).

The weight of traditional feminine roles can impede a work-life balance for women, obliging them to remain in the home as primary unpaid caregivers. This comes from the generalised view that women's 'primary' roles are related to private life and should revolve around

her family and not public life, work or wider social networks. Therefore, no matter the level of education she attains, she remains at the beck and call of the male members of her family as a single or as a married woman.

Though the focus of this study is on sex-role gender stereotypes, some contexts may reflect a compounded form of gender stereotype to include sexual characteristics and sexuality. This is known as a compound gender-based stereotype (GBS). In other words, a case may constitute more than one form of GBS at the same time, but our focus will remain mainly on the sex-role stereotypes. This can also be seen in UN official documents. An example follows;

> "…self-exclusion may occur where the work proposed under the public works programmes is considered too demanding physically (more suitable for men) or violates certain cultural norms as to which tasks are suitable for women" (Olivier De Schutter, as cited in OHCHR, 2013: 11).

The above 'report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food' refers to widespread gender stereotypes that can compound inequality between men and women. Such sex stereotypes (of physical, and biological attributes) influence sex-role (work abilities) and sexual stereotypes thus compounded stereotypes. It dictates how both sexes should behave in the family as well as in society. Biological (sex) assumptions, for example, that men are more sexually promiscuous than women, and have a higher libido can influence how the public and law enforcement agencies react to sexual exploitation at workplaces, suggesting 'men cannot help' harassing women. This can embolden male perpetrators while silencing female survivors of sexual exploitation and harassment. Hence making it seem normal and an acceptable way of life. Emboldens perpetrators to further commit crimes and rights violations. Like human rights that are interconnected, many gender stereotypes are likely compounded. This will be further explored from media cases in chapter 3.

Brems and Timmer (2016), posit that gender stereotypes whether harmful or wrongful, positive, or negative can breed inequality and discrimination. Women are known to be disproportionately affected in such situations. In Nigeria, women in the service industry are more likely to be employed as administrative staff, airline staff, hospitality staff, service attendants, and health or social workers. Also, women are grossly affected by unemployment and layoffs when economic activities decline (Akpan, 2020). For instance, the COVID 19 lockdown situation like other seasons and holidays that confines individuals to the same space at home reinforce the sex-role form of gender stereotype. Women as prescribed caregivers focus on domestic work without pay, unlike their male counterparts who consider COVID lockdown as an avenue for rest or flexible/alternative means of income (Power of Parity, 2020). Participation in Nigeria's labour force is influenced by stereotypical beliefs and practices. Such disproportionate experience of limitation violates the right to personal, social and economic development. Gender stereotyping influences the distribution of roles in society (family, church, school, and other institutions). For instance, women are more likely to take up a career as a chef, nurse, receptionist, beautician or makeup artist than there would be men. Likewise, fewer women are likely to engage in certain works like commercial transporting without being considered deviant as seen in the case of a female welder:

> "I am a university graduate and the only female welder in my state. I couldn't get a job hence I started one. Men get intimidated by the nature of my work and

the level of my productivity. They presume I won't make a good home…" (BBC News, 31.09.2021).

As Heilman explains (2001: 657), "gender stereotypes and the expectations they produce about what women are like (descriptive) and how they should behave (prescriptive) can result in devaluation of their performance, and denial of credit to them for their successes, or their penalization for being competent"

Figure 1: Sex-role Gender Stereotypes Exemplified
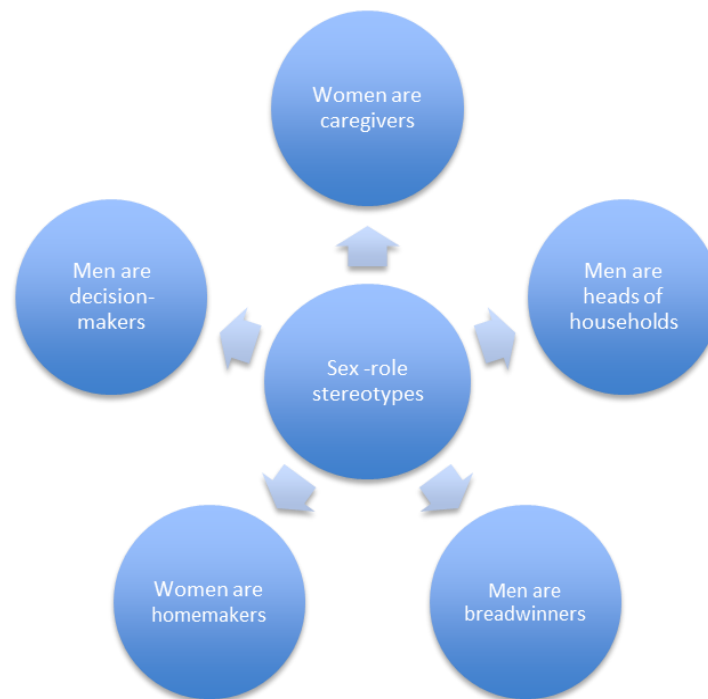
Source: OHCHR, 2013: 13

1.6 Structure of this Paper

This research paper is divided into 4 chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the concept and nature of the research problem backed by lived experiences, literature, and reports. The justification for the research choice and approach is also stated in line with the representation of the concept, objectives and questions addressed by this paper. In chapter 2, the data collection process is explained. While theories are analysed in the context of the research terrain and set out objectives. Chapter 3 unpacks the topic with respect to the research question and methodology. Lastly, an overview of the research is stated, revealing further insights from the study while making recommendations in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 2
FROM METHODOLOGY FOR DATA COLLECTION TO ANALYSIS

2.1 Preamble

This section unpacks the research design and sources of data adopted in addressing the research objectives and questions. It explores the methods, methodology, and theory applied in conducting the research. Therefore revealing strategies and rationale deployed for the research, to understand the lens through which the analysis is undertaken and the conclusion drawn. Importantly, sections 2.4 to 2.5 is a further attempt to unpack the questions of this research.

2.2 Methodology and Sources of Data

This study adopts the legal methodology to aid the effective naming and contesting of gender stereotyping (Cook and Cusack, 2010: 42, Franklin, 2010, Timmer, 2015: 709). The three methodology themes used in this study are expatiated in chapter 3.2 as the conception, the scope, and the role of legal instruments in addressing stereotypes and bringing about change. While Timmer calls this methodology an anti-stereotype approach, Franklin, Cook and Cusack call it legal methodology. It is aimed at uncovering and challenging patterns that breed structural gender issues. Thereby, arousing the reasoning of readers to adequately safeguard disadvantageous groups from stereotyping. It is pertinent to note that these methodological themes also form the basis of the research question and overall argument.

The use of primarily collected data accounts for lived experiences and media reports of encounters will be used to substantiate the way GBS operates in the Nigerian context. The experiences of southeast people within the working age of 15-64 and contexts from news and blogs that are shared herein are fundamental to the understanding of the concept of sex-role gender stereotypes. The qualitative approach generates "rich data" and "thick descriptions" which is favourable for an under-researched area like sex-role gender stereotype (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 84).

Concurrently, in writing this paper I based my arguments on information gathered from secondary sources like the Cook's and Timmer's textbooks from the ISS library. Also, relevant official documents and reports from IGOs, INGOs, NGOs, the Nigerian government, conferences, and court proceedings. As well as google scholar blogs, News Papers, and press releases were explored. These secondary sources were adopted in this Research Paper to analyse previous data and literature on gender-based stereotypes while addressing the research question. The methodological approach involves the systematic analysis of statutory provisions and legal principles using statutory materials, reports of committees, socio-legal history, and case law to draw logical conclusions.

2.3 Design and Method

A qualitative method was picked for this study as it is advantageous in analysing the qualities of a large group from a small group of persons (Creswell, 2009: 146). This can be seen through collected reports and literature used herein. A study into lived experiences of southeast Nigerian people and their relations is not best quantified. Hence a qualitative approach is most fit for this research. I employed multiple qualitative data sources to gather evidence. Therefore, both primary and secondary data were collected. More so, in socio-legal research, it is essential to have a sound contextual analysis and external informants to observe operational and lived legal situations (ePG-Pathshala, 2014: 6). This is applied in this paper to unpack the research objectives and questions.

Socio-legal research involves an interdisciplinary approach to analysing the law and legal phenomenon as related to wider society, involving theoretical and empirical work in tandem (ePG-Pathshala, 2014: 4). This is achieved herein using diverse textual sources, and disciplinary and cultural perspectives. This convergence of methods, theory, and data in triangulation is aimed at providing a strong validity to the research by securing multiple measures of the same phenomenon (Yin, 2014). In triangulation, the representation and assemblage of broad gender scope/dimension are permitted for knowledge development. Sex-role gender stereotypes (gender relations) and how they intersect with other attributes (social relations) influence power, age, and religion, to determine the place of people's human rights, is complex. Thus studying through varied methods and establishing a nexus between gathered data is a good methodological strategy for studying gender-based stereotypes.

From an outsider's view, I collected the fieldwork data through research assistants as a result of being prevented from conducting field research in person, not only due to limited funds but also COVID restrictions. I was not only an observer, I actively partook in the online interview and workshop. From an insider point, I was born in the southeast, and I have lived, schooled, and worked there over the past two decades. Therefore, I understand the dynamics of my people with regards to approach on such a sensitive topic. Knowing their sentiments on feminism and women's victimhood stance, helped me position myself better as an indigene studying in diaspora, with an open mind to understand in order to impact transformation. In the same vein, I shared my career experience at the Nigerian Bar and Bench with my audience to build a deep connection of trust and alliance. Being someone that could be accessed, trusted, or looked up to affords a good flow in the entire process. My relationship with the research team was flexible, formal, and informal, my people love to support/identify with development and progress.

2.4 Ethics of HRBA: An Intersectional Perspective

"Law always has two main faces: the face of justice and the face of power" (Handmaker and Arts, 2018: 1). The Nigeria situation is an outright disregard for international law, despite a wide array of actors like the International Federation of Female Lawyers (FIDA), and Women's Aid Collective (WACOL) persistently mobilising to counter powers preventing the realisation of rights and domestication of CEDAW and MAPUTO protocol. This is possible due to the age-long stereotyping of women (the disease) that has led to unequal power relations with men and low-status representation globally (the symptom). Stereotyping as a contested human rights topic needs more global allies to prompt visibility that births social change. HRBA approach is a socio-legal interaction founded on the principles of universality, equality, participation, accountability, and indivisibility of rights.

> "HRBA is based on human developments and international human rights best practices…it cuts across social actions and social movements… 'rights-based approach aims for the promotion and protection of human rights in practice…HRBA states that society has an obligation to uphold human rights…it empowers the people to demand rights…" (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi, 2004: 1418, 1430).

HRBA recognizes that rights can only be attained when people are empowered to claim their rights on their terms. The rights-based approach upholds beneficiaries as rights holders thereby creating an avenue for voices to be heard while the duty bearers are state or non-state actors that are accountable for respecting, protecting, promoting, and fulfilling the human rights of rights-holders (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi, 2004). Sex-role gender stereotype/stereotyping is a human rights concern that violates myriads of rights hence the need to protect and address it. "CEDAW's preamble acknowledges that the achievement of substantive equality will require States Parties to change the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and the family" (OHCHR, 2013: 21).

> "Article 5b CEDAW requires States Parties to take 'all appropriate measures' to ensure that maternity is recognised as a social function in family education, and care for children is recognised as a common responsibility of women and men. A textual and contextual reading appears to suggest that article 5(a&b) seeks to modify and transform the stereotypical view that women (and not men) are carers. While article 2(f) reinforces article 5 by requiring States Parties to take 'all appropriate measures' to 'modify or abolish'…laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women" (OHCHR, 2013: 22).

In the case of Karen Tayag Vertido v. The Philippines, CEDAW interpreted these provisions by distinguishing the duty of States Parties concerning gender stereotypes from gender stereotyping. That is, the duty to modify and transform stereotypes against the duty to eradicate and prosecute stereotyping. This important distinction has been introduced in chapter one page six. Specifically, it "recognises conflicts with the freedom of expression that there are difficulties in requiring States Parties to eliminate a (stereotypical) belief, but it is equally important to modify and transform beliefs that are harmful to women. It also recognises that States Parties must eradicate the practice of applying stereotypical beliefs to individual women and men in ways that violate their human rights" (OHCHR, 2013: 23, OHCHR, 2021). Furthermore, article 10(c) of CEDAW requires States Parties to take "all appropriate measures to ensure the elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging … education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods" (OHCHR, 2013: 33). Commendably CEDAW has continuously expanded these provisions against stereotypes through several programmes and campaigns.

Legal translation is concerned with social means of making human rights obligations effective (as cited in Handmaker and Matthews, 2019: 6). Adequate translation of texts is important as it may lead to war or hold peace (Sarcevic, 1997). In exploring the difference human rights make in societies when it travels, specific care should be given to the historically marginalised or disadvantaged like women, children, the disabled or in third-world countries (Merry, 2006). In this research, therefore, it is paramount to examine the consciousness of right holders against the

conscientiousness of duty bearers in the Nigerian community. "Gender stereotyping is regularly overlooked as the cause of human rights violations, gender stereotypes are frequently misidentified if they are identified at all, and there is a little in-depth discussion of the myriad ways in which gender stereotypes and gender stereotyping harm women" (OHCHR, 2013: 28). This is so considering how gender norms travel from global to regional, then in locals, culturally inclined positionality reveals translation challenge. There is a need to explore Nigerian laws and for CSO to understand the extent of transnationalism.

The multi-dimensional ways in which southeast women experience stereotype is adopted to provide a more intersectional outlook of women across different institutional class and beyond identities of victimhood. Kimberle Crenshaw coined the term Intersectionality in 1993 while evaluating the interrelatedness of social identities like gender and job encounters (Hopkins et al., 2007). The intersectional approach views gender through various dimensions of social structure and social identity thus enforcing gender and its symbol (Shields, 2008). Intersectionality as portrayed by Shields is adopted to look at the background of southeast women. This aids the understanding of gender identity formation and operationalisation of the same leading to stereotyping. In other words, it enables the reassessment of the social placement of men and women reflecting the involvement of both sexes in the making and remaking of such relations (Lutz et al., 2011).

Intersectionality helps to examine links and interrelatedness between sex role formation, identities, and stereotyping, which in combination impede women's human rights. Lutz et al., (2011) intersectionality help to understand how the intersecting of social and power structures with class, age, and gender role contribute to lived experiences at home and work. Intersectionality tool is adopted by feminists to understand gender in relation to some social identities like age, class, race, and sexual orientation (Shields, 2008). For instance, this research intersects religion, culture, sex role, class, power, and gender. It explores the balance of relations in gender roles using the lived experiences of different classes in Nigeria. In the past, Dwyer (1999) successfully studied the intersection of identities using religion, gender, ethnicity, and age to highlight the impact of ethnicity and religion on family honour (Hopkins et al., 2007). Cultural attitudes and local institutions may promote harm along gender lines:

> "…thus protecting women requires substantial shifts in beliefs about gender as
> well as changes in the institutions that govern women's lives such as marriage,
> divorce, education, and work opportunities" (Merry 2006: 45).

Radtke and Stam (1994: 5) have opined that gender relations reflect gendered perspectives and constitute power relations. The use of power relations when analysing gender brings to bare the construction of gender by class and power conventions. Power relations are rooted in social identities that are connected by yardsticks and beliefs (as cited in Shields, 2008: 301). Power relations conspicuously or not exist in daily realities and interactions of humanity. Gendered ideologies (stereotype) are sustained by actions (stereotyping) that reproduce specific gender relations like domination and subordination of sexes. Stereotypes can powerfully be oppressive by creating or constraining gender social practices embedded in norms or laws. Interestingly humans can resist such oppression through social transformative actions, anti-stereotype learning, feminist resolute, or HRBA. According to Foucault's theory: the dynamics may be in forms of resistance

(Lewis, 1996: 19). Therefore, I choose to resist stereotypes and stereotyping impeding my personal, social, economic, and political advancement.

2.4.1 Legal and regulatory systems in Nigeria

Nigeria operates about four legal systems: Statutory law, the English common law, customary law which is commonly found in the states in southern Nigeria, and Sharia or Islamic law which is practised mostly in Muslim-dominated northern Nigeria. The colonial, religious and cultural imports into Nigeria's laws are not left out as the labour law and institutional mode of operation are largely stereotypical even the ones set out to protect (patronising stereotypes).

> "…despite the provision of section 42 that prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex, women are still discriminated against in many spheres of life in Nigeria due to patriarchy and cultural practices… there is a huge gap in the generalised formal guarantee of equality of sexes as reflected in the Constitution. It makes the realization of rights in practice a hassle…Stereotyped gender roles which reinforce discrimination in law and practice remain prevalent. This includes the dichotomy of public and private spheres and the restriction of women's roles in the domestic sphere…this results in the denial of voice for women even in the making of laws that affect them…" (Ezeilo, 2008: 19-22).

Section 127 of the Nigerian Police Act 2004 stipulates that falling pregnant as an officer while unmarried attracts dismissal (Okongwu, 2020). Also, a woman needs approval before she can be married while the male counterpart only requires approval if he is getting married to someone outside the force. Such stereotyping policy places women as subordinate to men, the epitome of morality and prone to irrational decisions (Cook and Cusack, 2011, Timmer, 2015, Ezeilo, 2008). These provisions have done a lot of damage to policewomen and women in other employment who uphold the same standards though it may not be formally expressed. Although, it is arguable that the rationale behind pregnancy control is to enable fit and agile persons in the force. "The notions that women are slow and weak, men combative and powerful do not only limit one's ability in exercising their fundamental human rights but also reinforce gender-based violence, inequality, and discrimination. Likewise, patronising stereotypes (like women are homemakers, nurturing, warm and caring, serve to justify a system of patriarchy where men perform the leading roles and women the supportive ones" (Brems and Timmer, 2016: 60).

2.5 Gender Politics in Nigeria

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) as a vast country is grouped into six geopolitical zones (Appendix, 1.1). States with similar ethnic groups, and or common political history are classified in the same zone for efficient management, although people of other tribes and states reside among states. The fieldwork focused on the people of the southeast which constitutes $3/5^{th}$ of the indigenous Igbo community in Nigeria (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo state). While the remaining $2/5^{th}$ of indigenous Igbo communities are formed by parts of Akwa Ibom, Benue, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Kogi, and Rivers states (south-south).

FRN is a state with several religious beliefs, approximately four hundred ethnic groups, and languages respectively (Wikipedia, 2020). One of the factors that embolden stereotyping stems from customary and Islamic religions. Southeast Nigeria is a highly religious community and

everyone belongs to a group, in the form of African traditional religion, or Christian religion, and very few practice the Islamic religion. The religious books of different groups sets standards which prescribe roles and these standards are maintained by the followers.

> "Nigerian society has been patriarchal, which is a major feature of a traditional society…It is a structure of a set of social relations with a material base that enables men to dominate women" (Aina, 1998, Stacey, 1993; Kramarae, 1992, Lerner, 1986).

For instance, a woman's value is attributed to her marital status and how well she can manage a home (marital, maiden, or communal home). Such stereotyping culture is evident in the statistics of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2015: 5) which reveals Nigeria is the domain for the most number of child brides in Africa with over 23 million girls married in childhood (Alonge, 2016). The Northern part of Nigeria is at a high prevalence girl child marriage (Alonge, 2016, Male and Wodon, 2016: 3, Premium times, 2016). The Traditional, Islamic and Christian religious beliefs also form a basis for stereotyping men and women through their teachings and expectation, thereby limiting them.

The gender division of labour has been around for a long time, in primitive societies as well as under more complex socioeconomic conditions (Eagly, 1987, 1997, Koenig and Eagly, 2014). Gender stereotypes lead to the exclusion of women from leadership positions, there has been no female governor, president, or vice president in Nigeria. There is a negatively downward trajectory in the inclusion of women in government in the present Nigerian administration (The Africa Report, 2019). Sex role gender stereotyping is endemic in Nigerian society; and lack of political will, power play, and conflicts of cultural and religious norms explain the painfully slow progress made so far to curb it. One researcher described the situation of the Nigerian woman:

> "In Nigeria, it is observed that womanhood is reduced to a mere infidel and a second-class citizen, hence, there is the commonality of the general belief system that the best place for women is in the 'Kitchen'. This trend has brought about the tremendous misrepresentation of women's rights at the level of the family down to the circular society. The Nigerian society is patriarchal which a major feature of a traditional society is. It is a structure of a set of social relations with a material base that enables men to dominate women" (Makama 2013: 115).

Anti-stereotype feminists have argued and shown that the way to gender parity is by raising consciousness towards modification and or eradication of age-long stereotypical issues. "Female leaders face a paradox: If they emulate a masculine leadership style, their male subordinates will dislike them. If they adopt a stereotypically warm and nurturing feminine style, they will be liked, but not respected" (Kawakami, White, and Langer, 2000: 49). In Nigeria, women are known to play static roles in society as mothers, producers, organizers, managers, and other caregiving-related roles. They could contribute enormously to the socio-economic development of the nation, yet according to Makama:

> "…the social stratification and differentiation on the grounds of sex limits women's participation in the structures and processes where decisions regarding resources generated by both sexes are made, such a system provides material advantages to men while placing severe constraints on women's roles and activities" (2013: 116).

Although women's participation in the labour/job market is on a positive trajectory and has been rising in both rural and urban areas … it remains lower than that of men (Olowa & Adeoti, 2014: 73). Women in Nigeria face a lot of cultural barriers that affect their active and progressive participation in the labour market despite having saturated the labour force. Also, the difference in the job description and pay remains problematic. Little wonder the narrative that the higher you go the fewer women there are. Nevertheless, an increase in the modern Nigerian woman's job market participation does not change the stereotyping narrative as most women still maintain their traditional roles while stepping into roles that were traditionally proscribed for men. This research reveals that women are weighed down, stressed, and over-laboured due to such dynamics. Career women in Nigeria are cajoled to suffer in silence to prove strength. It gets worse for women from poor backgrounds who have to shoulder domestic or family responsibilities and employment. As such, many women end up with more struggles than men in their careers, therefore not making desired progress therein. This also affects individual health and wellness.

There is a perception that every money owned by women comes from men, this is because men have been in control of work, and power over the years … also as a woman you can aspire to earn but not too much else you emasculate the men (Adichie, 2012). Little wonder the 2020 poverty threshold of Nigerian women is over 40% of the women's population (World Bank Group, 2021: no page), this representation means that a large number of women are poor and below the standard of living.

The Table below indicates the disproportionate representation of women in Nigeria as documented by the World Bank. In modern Nigerian society, educating a woman has improved though still below the percentage of men. The problem lies in the reason behind female education. Women's education stems from the point of stereotype. A woman is educated because of the role she is put to play in the family, she is educated for the benefit of her children and family at large rather than for herself. This can be observed in the drastic reduction of the percentage of women that participate in the active labour market and the kind/nature of her participation. Little wonder the saying women's education ends in the kitchen. No matter the level of a woman's exposure or education, she is taught to conceal it before a man, in order to be desirable.

Table 1: Statistics Showing the Effect of Gender Stereotypes in Nigeria

Collected From World Bank Group Data 2021			
Indicators	Total of working age	Female	Male
Labour force (working age between 15-64 years)	62,242,961 million	43.134% of total LF	66% of total LF
Active Labour participation	56.66% of total working-age	49.34% of females working age	63.84% of males of working age
LF with advanced education	78.6% of the total working-age	75.78% of females of working age	79.62% of males of working age

While a few people are devoted to challenging these political, economic, social, and cultural GBS; some are blind to their existence, and others see them but simply choose not to challenge them. It is beneficial to the rest (male and female) who choose to uphold them as a shift from

today's gender norm will mean a shift of power control. There has been active resistance to human rights claims by elite men who fear the loss of power and some local women who see no fault in being controlled, prescribed, or described (Merry, 2006: 38).

2.6 Conclusion

Insights, facts, and figures on the setting and surroundings of the research terrain in southeast Nigeria show the prevalence of gender-based stereotypes (GBS) and their manifestations. Most of which have been done in the introductory chapters (chapter one) and the analysis continues in chapter three. The content of this chapter works together for a better understanding of the research context and the enabling environment of GBS. The triangulation of data sources, design, methods, and methodology as mapped out in this chapter is used to substantiate the understanding of GBS as a human rights violation within the context of southeast Nigeria. Thereby enabling visibility and proper identification of GBS as the root cause of gender-based issues. This research provides verifiable data that can be adopted for further research into gender-based stereotypes.

CHAPTER 3
GENDER-BASED STEREOTYPE(ING): CONCEPTION, SCOPE, ROLE

3.1 Preamble

In chapters 1.5, 2.4 and 2.5 attempts have been made to address the research questions. This chapter is a comprehensive examination of the research objectives and questions. This is done by using the anti-stereotype or legal methodology as stated in chapter 2.2. It identifies and names stereotypes manifest in media reports. Also, the report and analyses of the fieldwork data are unpacked to encourage contestation, change, and eradication.

3.2 Three Components for Analysing (Anti-) Stereotyping

To establish GBS as a human rights issue, gender stereotyping is looked at from three pertinent cross-cutting themes that this research paper adopts. This has been put into consideration from start to finish of this paper. The three main elements identified by anti-stereotype scholars are:

1. the conception,
2. the scope and,
3. the role of legal instruments in addressing stereotypes and bringing about change

The role of state parties was also affirmed by the CEDAW Committee in its General Recommendation No. 25 that one of three categories of obligations central to the achievement of substantive equality is to "address prevailing gender relations and the persistence of gender-based stereotypes" (as cited OHCHR, 2013: 21, OHCHR, 2021). That is the number three listed component.

The essence of conceptualisation helps individuals to know how stereotype(ing) creates as well as reproduces women's inequality and human rights violations. It also elucidates the importance of adopting an anti-stereotyping approach in all structures of society to modify the effects and or eradicate GBS. According to Brems and Timmer, (2016: 2). The socio-psychology literature on this topic is plentiful, but there is still doubt as to which conceptualisation of stereotyping is most useful in social science and human rights context. For clarity, concepts are juxtaposed in the following lines.

> "…while Gender-based 'stereotyping' is the 'practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men. Gender 'stereotype' has been defined as 'a generalised view or preconception about attributes or characteristics' that are or ought to be possessed by or the roles that are or should be performed by, men and women" (Cook and Cusack, 2010: 9, 20).

The latter definition is classified by Brems and Timmer as having positive and negative preconceptions (neutral). They admit that:

> "…though Perlin stresses that stereotypes typify in negative ways, it would be a mistake to think, that only negative stereotypes of the variety 'women are weak' or 'Roma are thieves' have negative consequences. Positive stereotypes can be malignant too. Salient examples are the many benevolent yet patronising stereotypes about women: when women are held to be nurturing, warm and caring, this serves to justify a system of patriarchy…" (2016: 2).

This brings us to the second cross-cutting theme, the scope of GBS as a human rights violation. When a concept is formed, then knowing the scope of GBS as a human rights violation is proportional to defeating stereotypes. This component also cuts across two research questions; to what extent does GBS influence the lives and freedoms of the people of southeast Nigeria and how does GBS play a role in the creation and reproduction of women's inequality and as a human rights?

Identifying the harm and distinguishing dangers of GBS exposes and makes them visible to all. Verónica Undurraga called this process "separating the wheat from the chaff" (Undurraga, ch 4 as cited in Brems and Timmer, 2016: 83). For the understanding and contestation of most wrongs or offences, it is expected that there is a context that explains such a situation to enable easy and effective identification of the same. Timmer (2015) agreed that identifying harmful/wrongful stereotypes requires contextual analysis to show cause although its forms may vary according to jurisdiction.

> "Identifying harmful stereotyping requires identifying whether the application of a stereotype constitutes a human rights violation in itself… whether the application of a stereotype is a contributing factor in a human rights violation. An example of the first scenario is when a state does not accord fathers parental leave, because mothers are supped to take care of children. This scenario was at issue in the ECtHR case of Konstantin Markin v Russia. An example of the second scenario can be found in the ECtHR case of V.C. v Slovakia, concerning the forced sterilisation of a Roma woman as the physician of V.C. had noted in her medical file patient is of Roma origin. Stereotypes about the high birth rate of Roma women, coupled with the stereotype that Roma want to live off social benefits, might have influenced the doctor in performing the forced sterilisation which in turn is a violation of the prohibition of degrading treatment and the right to private and family life, Articles 3 and 8 ECHR" (Brems and Timmer, 2016: 4).

"Wrongful/harmful gender stereotyping is a pervasive human rights violation. It is a frequent cause of discrimination against women. A contributing factor in violations of rights ranging from the right to an adequate standard of living to the freedom from gender-based violence. Yet, despite the substantial harm they have caused, gender stereotypes and gender stereotyping are often misunderstood in human rights discourses" (Cook and Cusack, 2010, OHCHR, 2013). This field of study is further nuanced by OHCHR (2013: 18-19):

> "Harmful gender stereotype' is a generalised view or preconception about attributes or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by or the roles that are or should be performed by women and men, which, inter alia, limits their ability to develop potential, pursue…professional careers and make choices about their lives and life plans. Harmful stereotypes can be both hostile/negative (e.g., women are irrational) or seemingly benign (e.g., women are nurturing)…Whereas 'wrongful gender stereotyping' is the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or

roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men, which results in a violation or violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Harm is caused by the application of a stereotypical belief to an individual (e.g., through a state enforcing a gender stereotype into law) in such a way as to negatively affect the recognition, exercise or enjoyment of their rights and freedoms" (2013: 18-19).

The last theme to aid the visibility of GBS as a human rights violation, answers the two sub-questions. In a planned development of society, law plays the role of a catalyst to help in the process of social change (Banakar and Travers, 2005). Legal instruments should continuously and correctly name stereotypes in every given situation to make them visible (Cook and Cusack, 2010). Perlin underscores the importance of law as a therapeutic instrument in this field, yet this potential is too often wasted (Brems and Timmer, 2016:7).

> "Naming entails identifying what beliefs about groups of people are at play in cases, and it also entails exposing what harms these beliefs do. Naming stereotypes is a prerequisite for changing them. The second step is that courts and treaty bodies should clarify as much as possible the state's obligations as regards stereotyping. In the first place, state obligations are negative: states ought to refrain from legislating or acting based on harmful stereotypes. States have also a more proactive role to play. States' positive obligation to address stereotypes regards the question of what role states can play in preventing officials and individuals from relying on harmful stereotypes or stereotyping each other in harmful ways" (Brems and Timmer, 2016: 4).

In agreement with the scholars, I state that you cannot conquer what you do not contest, and for an overhaul contest, you must identify these stereotypes manifest in daily interactions. International human rights law framework/mechanisms have shown that the focus is on stereotypes together with stereotyping affecting recognised rights and fundamental freedoms. For instance, the CEDAW Committee through conceptualisation has nuanced gender stereotype by specifying state obligations to being a requirement to modify and transform harmful gender stereotypes as well as eliminate wrongful gender stereotyping (R.K.B. v. Turkey, 2012 para. 8.8, V.V.P. v. Bulgaria, 2012 para. 9.6 as cited in OHCHR, 2013). In so doing, it distinguished state duties concerning stereotypes i.e. 'the belief', on one part, from, those duties concerning stereotyping i.e. 'the practice of application of the belief to persons', on the other part (Brems and Timmer, 2016: 26).

It is so even though several human rights treaty bodies have acknowledged the rights to non-discrimination as well as equality; and through them, an implied duty to address harmful stereotypes and wrongful stereotyping is contained in other rights and freedoms (Cook and Cusack, 2010, OHCHR, 2013). There is an obligation to adopt a more nuanced approach to stereotyping. At this point, it is pertinent to unpack the distinct and overlapped forms of gender-based stereotype(ing) like sex-role stereotypes, sex stereotypes, sexual stereotypes, and compound stereotypes.

> "…while a sexual stereotype is a generalised view or preconception about the sexual characteristics or behaviours that women and men are believed or expected to possess…a sex stereotype is a generalised view or preconception about the physical, including biological, emotional, and cognitive attributes or characteristics that are or should be possessed by women and men…a sex-role stereotype is a generalised view or preconception about the roles that women

and men do or are expected to perform, and the types of behaviours that they possess or to which they are expected to conform…a compounded stereotype is a generalised view or preconception about groups that result from the ascription of attributes, characteristics or roles based on one or more other traits… there is surprisingly limited awareness of the full extent and breadth of international human rights obligations related to stereotypes and stereotyping…" (OHCHR, 2013: 10-16)

A gender-produced prototype is a social construct that is unnatural, artificial, and unnecessary (West et al., 1987). In recent times, role theory scholars have used the term gender role in place of the term sex roles while analysing how roles are cultivated and instituted. For a generally agreed definition of gender to exist is difficult, expressions such as feminine or masculine are from different experiences awakened over time. Lorber emphasises that life encounters, as well as unequal power relations, sway the making and reconstruction of gender to frame yardsticks and beliefs in existence thus affecting rights (Lorber, 1994). Social role theorist opines that gender stereotypes within and outside families result from a discrepancy in the allocation of roles to men and women. An example of gender relations of subordination includes a portrayal of men as the breadwinner and women as domestic workers like housecare and child care. Gender results from fluid human interactions. Therefore, for this research gender would represent male and or female intersecting different stereotyped structures of society disproportionally. The term sex-role helps evaluate the lived experiences of the southeast people of Nigeria, the balance and intersection within the family, work, or society.

3.3 GBS Illustration: cases from the Media

Like previous sections have approached the research question, this section focuses on the second sub-question; when can the anti-stereotyping approach help to modify the effects and or eradicate GBS in southeast Nigeria? Let me buttress the problem of gender stereotyping as a violation of freedom of expression, association, and political participation (section 39, 40, and 42 CFRN), the right to equality, and emancipation as enshrined in CEDAW and the Maputo protocol which Nigeria is a signatory to. In a 2016 conference with the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, Nigeria's president, Muhammadu Buhari was reminded of his wife's criticism of his poor governance: Mr. Buhari assertively stated that Nigeria's First Lady, Aisha Buhari, had no place in government/politics and knows her place is in his kitchen, in his living room and the other room of the house (Alonge, 2016, BBC, 2016). According to Alonge:

> "While Buhari's statement was swiftly excused by his spokesman as a joke, the issue of a woman's place in contemporary society hardly seems comedy material for a president. Besides, in a later interview, Buhari boldly reiterated his stance, saying his wife's most important duty was to look after him and the home even if she is working. The sad truth is that while the Nigerian president's comments could be dismissed as the rantings of a 73-year-old with outdated views, in reality, his statements accurately reflect widely held beliefs in a stubbornly patriarchal society" (Alonge, 2016: no page).

Aisha Buhari is known to be an active businesswoman, politician, and activist. She has her share of supporters and active followers. However, a follow-up on President Buhari's dehumanizing remarks about his wife showed how she was silenced (or silenced herself) on all work, social platforms, and news media after that. The first time was upon the commencement of

Buhari's first term (BBC, 2016, Wikipedia, 2021). This reveals the internal battles that many women in prominent positions go through for daring to have a political opinion that differs from their husbands or other dominant men around them. Gender stereotypes create diverse problems like pressure to conform, can reinforce male impunity for gender-based violence, and can cause psychological harm and underperformance (Timmer, 2015: 716,721). The Nigerian president's statements as reported above were an open endorsement of gender stereotyping that condemned women to take a backseat in society. This example again shows how GBS can set back the struggle for gender-based equality and gender justice.

Another effect of gender stereotypes is the need to cover to prevent further humiliation caused by the stereotyped identity (Timmer, 2015: 716). If due to affinity, she was unable to sue him for defamation or show damages caused to her person, then she should have rebutted his misrepresenting and derogatory statements of her publicly. At least, she should have resumed work more vigorously than she used to before his reign. Thereby, indirectly communicating to the public that she remains a working woman in business, activism, and governance. Not a slave under forced labour as depicted by Mr Buhari's quoted statement above. Implying that he owns her, she owes him to serve as a chef, as a masseuse to suit his ego and relax him in the living room, and as an object to meet his sexual needs in the other room. As the number one family in Nigeria, when such a huge and influential platform of the presidency is misused, it reflects on her follower's ideology.

His statement propagates the violation of freedom of expression, freedom from slavery, and forced labour. That statement re-echoes the thoughts of the patriarch, by using the bully pulpit of the presidency to infuse more life into the idea. When the President of Nigeria who is the chief law enforcement officer in the land openly, and unapologetically makes such statements, then neither gender emancipation nor an approach of anti-stereotyping is a priority of the Nigerian leadership or the Nigerian state (Alonge, 2016). Therefore, the implication is that they should not be encouraged to take on major leadership roles in society and can be treated as less-than-men (Ezeilo, 2008: 4).

> "The CEDAW Committee has clarified the link between the obligation to address gender stereotypes and the problem of structural discrimination. In General Recommendation No 25 the Committee observes: that States parties should address prevailing gender relations and the persistence of gender-based stereotypes that affect women not only through individual acts by individuals but also in law, and legal and societal structures and institutions" (as cited in Timmer, 2015: 717).

The prevalence of gender stereotypes in Nigeria reveals "a dearth of national laws to protect women and girls from violence and discrimination emanating from gender roles and stereotypes" (Ezeilo, 2008: 32). Perpetrators often than not question if any laws are protecting women. For instance, the murder case of Iniobong Hiny Umoren was caused by gender stereotypes that depict "women as objects for men's pleasure, feminization of poverty, weakness, and silence" (Timmer, 2015: 733). In Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, in April 2021, Iniobong went missing during a so-called job interview. Some Nigerians were quick to blame the deceased for being opportunistic. Overwhelming evidence and corroboration in her support led women to lament while narrating several other horrible and exploitative experiences of loved ones seeing work. The accused confessed to having lured several other 'ambitious victims' (only females), to his house in

the guise of giving them a job, but were then sexually and physically abusing them, some to death as with Iniobong (Abel et al., 2021: no page).

Timmer, (2015: 730-734) like other anti-stereotyping scholars has described acts like that of the perpetrator Frank Akpan on Iniobong, and the initial dismissal by the public to be rooted in gender stereotypes. They further encourage courts to approach gender issues through an anti-stereotyping spectrum to expose, change or eradicate such causative stereotypes. To further elucidate the above gender-based violence as rooted in GBS, we have to understand the context, motive, or justification. The perpetrator targets female job seekers by placing fake adverts. He considers women desirous to make a living as overly ambitious and ready to pay in cash or kind. He is not alone on this line of thought as the public was initially quick to dismiss the case as involving an opportunistic or loose girl. He sways power/dominance over them by subjecting his victims to different forms of gender-based violence. Gender stereotyping is vastly translated and or manifested as cases of unpaid care work, defamation, discrimination, unfair pay gap, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence (Brems and Timmer, 2016, Cook and Cusack, 2011, CEDAW Committee, General Recommendation No 19, 1993). Hence the need to eradicate and or change stereotypes. It operates at the motive behind a right violation and or justification for a right violation.

In the same vein, the article 'Female Lawyers in a Man's World by J.I. Ugwu, 2018' depicts how the training, practice, and expectation of the legal profession stereotypes Nigerian women. It states that the yardstick of a lawyer remains male and successful women who progress in the profession must align with it. Therefore I agree with anti-stereotype researchers that there's a need to first address stereotypes for an equal society.

3.4 Fieldwork Experience

All data were collected and verified between the 12th of October and to 27th of October 2021 from the key informants (KI) listed below:

3 teachers and 2 lecturers, 65 students = KI group 1

3 legal practitioners from the Ministry of Justice (2 female and 1 male), Private legal practitioners (1 female and 1 male), 1 male customary court Judge, and magistrates (2 female and 1 male) = KI group 2

3 officers from the law enforcement agencies (2 female and 1 male) = KI group 3

3 medical doctors (2 female and 1 male), 1 female nurse = KI group 4

3 bankers (2 female and 1 male) = KI group 5

3 business owners = KI group 6

3 unemployed indigenous people of southeast = KI group 7

An intersectional approach is adopted to analyse individualistic and similar encounters across the focus gender, age, and class. Although interviews are an effective mode of gaining needed information they can come with surprises. It can be flexible and cause a shift from the researcher's questioning plan, thus enabling conversations to flow naturally (O'Leary, 2014: 218). Admittedly, the model of interview questions I prepared regarding my order of research questions where not strictly followed. Though they served as my guide for the interviews and workshop, all

vital data were strategically collected without distorting conversational flows. For this study, data was collected majorly by open-ended questions posed to interviewees (Appendix, 1.4).

I looked out for volunteers from family, past classmates, and colleagues residing in the southeast. In every choice, it was pertinent to find a research assistant conversant and domiciled within the terrain. This would not only reduce cost but impact the efficacy of social, and cultural relations. I groomed my assistants on their roles and limitation, to prevent undue interference and mutation of data. I worked with seven research assistants. Each assistant proceeded to follow up with a contact person in the seven selected groups whom I already briefed when I had a pre-research interview. The process was interestingly seamless as my mother was there to chair the assistants. She became the contact person (CP1) for the teachers and lecturers. During an online meeting with CP1 in preparation for the interview with the three key informants (KI) of group 1, she suggested the use of a workshop to enable a joint and open conversation. Hence we worked towards the online workshop. It enabled the engagement of three KIs, one CP, one RA and sixty-five more participants as the audience was mainly students from the university that CP 1 lectures.

The CP 2-7 were within my network. The seven CPs served as a gateway to meet key informants from their respective institutions that formed each group. KIs of groups 2-7 were interviewed individually via skype and WhatsApp call. The interviews were conducted by me with the help of a research assistant assigned to each group. While KIs in group 1 were jointly interviewed by CP1 during the workshop held on zoom, I took part as an active participant and analyst. The online workshop was held on a Monday. The choice of the day ensured the undivided availability of the KIs and student participants as Mondays are compulsorily a sit-at-home protest day in the southeast of Nigeria. The theme of the workshop was Safe Space, Wo(men) want to talk: Women's Education Ends in the kitchen and the Other Room. The choice of workshop topic was not only geared to be catchy for more audience participation but to enable an identifiable entry point to a less marketed concept (stereotyping). The process with 7groups was recorded and notes were taken down by myself and the research assistant, to prevent loss of information in the coding process. Also, questionnaires were used to clarify/compare workshop and interview data. English is the lingua franca of Nigeria, it was also the major language of communication among the research team and participants during the workshop. Some participants freely mixed Igbo with English during the privately scheduled meetings. Only one participant (trader) opted to speak in pigeon English (street broken language) when asked the preferred language of communication.

Table 2 Fieldwork Plan

Category	No. of Participants	Tool of Data collection	Age group
KI group 1 ,,	5 65	Zoom, Email	45-62 16-25
KI group 2	9	Email, Skype, and WhatsApp call	25-40

KI group 3	3	Email, WhatsApp call	31, 40, and 61
KI group 4	4	Email, WhatsApp call	25, 31, 35 and 40
KI group 5	3	Email, WhatsApp call	36, 42 and 49
KI group 6	3	Email, WhatsApp call	24, 30 and 55
KI group 7	3	Email, WhatsApp call	19, 25 and 40

The selection of fieldwork participants used in this study is based on available individuals within the statutory age of independence to work and think. This age is recognised to be between 15-64. There is no preference for a particular KI group over the other as this research does not focus on a given career, profession, or labour force but the focus is on the people of southeast Nigeria whose right to self-development may be hindered due to stereotypical practices. The process of selection was based on availability and voluntary participation. The snowball approach was necessary due to the sensitiveness of the subject matter as the participants form part of a working environment, family, and community they are interviewed. (O'Leary, Z. 2017: 502-504). Although this research reflects a combination of subjective and objective perspectives. My training and practice as a judge enabled me to stay reasonably objective and unbiased during the two weeks of the interview and workshop till the interpretation of the information. The research assistants helped to uphold an objective position in the conduct of the interviews as our data were compared. Additionally, the reconfirmation of data obtained from the key informants (KI) helped keep out any personal opinion or bias.

3.4.1 Ethical Considerations and Challenges

To substantiate this research, there was a need to identify the nature of sex-role stereotypes as encountered by the people of the southeast. Therefore, while approaching the field I took certain caution given COVID, security, and conflict situations in the southeast.

My institution formally approved this fieldwork to be conducted with the aid of a research assistant given the ongoing COVID situation. The current position of the pandemic in Nigeria was sourced using reports from the World Health Organisation (WHO) revealing the current situation of the pandemic in Nigeria were also provided (Appendix, 1.2). With the WHO report and my institution's COVID protocol mandate, I was able to equip and keep everyone involved in COVID alert. Resultantly, safety gear like; face masks and hand sanitisers were made available for the research team. Although incentives weren't demanded, I made provision for a different range of souvenirs for participants at the first physical meeting in appreciation for the time invested

and as a motivation for the workshop. They were indeed very resourceful all through my research process.

Written and oral consent of participants was sought and obtained before starting the interview and further confirmation was gotten to record the discussions both during the interview and workshop (Appendix, 1.3). Although some research participants gave the leverage of being quoted, the fieldwork data is largely reported anonymously for safety and privacy. Lastly, the pandemic situation caused inflation of goods and services, including transportation. Hence, lack of funding posed huge challenges with logistics associated with fieldwork (recruiting research assistants and sustaining them). Especially, within the two weeks of contact with the participants. Be that as it may, the outcome has proven satisfactory with regard to its set out objectives.

3.5 GBS Illustration: cases from the people of southeast Nigeria

Several experiences shared herein address the second theme from section 3.2 in line with the first research question. Gender-based stereotypes (GBS) have been defined to mean "a normative view or preconception regarding appropriate roles or behaviour for male or female" (Cook and Cusack, 2010: 45). Also, GBS should be changed and or eradicated when policies, laws, and practices deny the realisation of rights or foster gender issues. To achieve this, there has to be identification, naming, and understanding of the concept and scope by the people, this has been commenced in previous chapters. Gender stereotypes that perceive women as inadequate and difficult hinders women's zeal to pursue tasks. Some recurring quotes from the field:

> "Women do anything for name and power hence men do not promote women without more…women's promotion and resources come from men…" (Interview with research participants, 12-27.10.2021).

These insights reveal the generalised perception that affects the psychology of how women are received. Further quotes from the southeast people are unpacked in line with the objectives and research question.

> "There is a cultural belief among the Igbos that the higher a woman goes in her career the more men (potential suitors) distance themselves from her, society negatively questions her means…as unmarried young women or women generally hardly occupy certain positions... The reverse is the case with unmarried men, as a man is never ugly… Men are recruited regardless of their marital status or age…" (Interview with research participants 12-27.10.2021).

However, the research participants also agree that in recent times, women have built strong resistance to cultural expectations and barriers. During the fieldwork, it was noted that 98 out of 98 of the research participants were in positive agreement when asked does law, Policy, or practice, stereotype women, more than men of southeast Nigeria. Although they had different reasons for making the affirmation, either from a stereotyped mindset, personal experience, or national structure. For instance, one of the KIs said women are always complaining and are considered vulnerable so he has no choice but to agree because he doesn't want trouble. Some KIs referred to the disproportionate representation of Nigerian women in politics and economic positions to back this argument. Hence an affirmation of the need to focus the research on women. 77 out of the overall 98 participants agreed to experience GBS at work, at home, and in their daily lives.

While the remaining 21 who haven't been stereotyped agreed to know people who have faced GBS.

While conducting the preliminary literature review and preparatory interview sessions with some contact persons (CP) in my locality, I realized that they have not considered gender issues through the concept of stereotyping. Hence there was a need to introduce the concept according to the definitions in Cook and Cusack, 2010 and as adopted by the CEDAW committee. This process brought the participants abreast with the research aim and scope, GBS as a human rights violation. Different key informant (KI) groups shared their encounter reflective of resilience, struggles, and limitations they and other females have to go through due to company policies and practices. For instance, one of the KI from group 5 confirmed to have served with the banking sector in Enugu for 20 years had this to say:

> "I am not aware of any policy promulgating bias in the banking sector. Promotion and placements are based on the employee's zeal to beat assigned targets. The ability to be innovative and general hard work pays off, it is about the digital know-how. Sex-role stereotypes may have been possible to control employment when things were analogue, but now nobody has such time, the market competition is high, and the best fit wears the crown" (interview with KI from group 5, 19.10.2021).

She said that what would stop a woman from rising in the bank is herself. However, she went on to state that other personal/family responsibilities may hinder her target focus. Admittedly she stated:

> "As women, we face more obstacles due to our primary roles in the family, it is not easy, but my partner and family were supportive. If I could cope with four kids every woman can, women are steadily making it to top operations and marketing positions. Career women need to meet and talk more about their fears. We should be able to learn from each other. During my early years in the bank, my source of strength was my family who made me not feel bad for not giving adequate time to family affairs as a woman should" (interview with KI from group 5, 19.10.2021).

The other two KIs from group 5 who have served in a banking industry located in Okija, Anambra for 10-12 years, respectively affirmed that there is a general internal control unit for addressing bank-service-related issues. Cases of fraud, transaction delays, inappropriate behaviours and gender-based complaints can be made there. They also stated that there is no specific bank policy to address gender-stereotypical issues, however, banks are governed by the general Labour Act and civil services laws to that effect. The male banker emphatically stated that he would not allow his wife to work in a bank as it gives her undue exposure to exploitative clients also there has to be someone available for the family. "We cannot both have such a demanding job, she has to get something that compliments mine. There are so many delinquents terrorising society, they obviously lack a mother's care".

A mid-career female medical doctor who works in a private hospital located in the Ebonyi community had this to say when asked what her working experience in the community is with regards to the research focus on the anti-stereotyping approach. She said it is normal for patients to have more confidence consulting her male counterparts. She goes on to state:

> "…because I am a young female doctor, I am undermined by some patients. I don't let that bother me anymore, so long as it doesn't affect my performance and pay. When I am the only one on duty, some of these patients would ask why the doctor is not available as though I was a toy doctor or maybe it's because I look small compared to my male colleagues at work. It is normal in Nigeria, that a female medical doctor is first seen as a nurse than an actual medical doctor because society sees a woman's place in the medical field as that of a nurse and the more serious job of a doctor is reserved for men; likewise, it's perceived abnormal to be a male nurse in Nigeria" (interview with KI from group 4, 25.10.2021).

The female nurse in Enugu from KI group 4 stated that in her class of 52 students, there were only 3 males, while in some classes you have no males. She further stated that it is hilarious to hear patients call male nurses doctors during ward round despite countless introductions and corrections. The remaining two doctors were interviewed from the same hospital in Abia. They stated that no female has headed their department, and there are no policies internally protecting women's rights. When asked about the stereotype attached to the department Dr. Uche stated: "it is a general attitude in the medical field in Nigeria, women shouldn't be surgeons because it's demanding, difficult and suits men better".

Two KIs out of the three KIs of group 3 who work with different law enforcement agencies confirm that asides from the restrictions in the Act the female officers are treated more like male subordinates and this affects task assignment and promotional opportunities. Lastly, as Makama stated in the earlier chapters, the projection of womanhood in the southeast is like that of a second-class citizen. The preconception of a woman's mental weakness and role in family affairs is seen from different depositions above like 'they always complain', 'as a woman should', 'obviously lack a mother care', among others. Stereotypes can be spotted further in residency and public service rights and opportunities.

> "I am originally from Ebonyi and during my final year in university, I got married to my lovely husband who is from Anambra state. For over 15 years I have not been able to get a state government job, I run my business. I was also told I can't run in public offices as such positions are reserved for their indigenes by birth. I can't also make demands from my birth state Ebonyi as I am no more from there. The system makes women lose everything for nothing but motherhood" (interview with KI from group 3, 17.10.2021).

Many accounts of the KI groups stated how GBS influenced their perception of rights and wrongs about roles. The data results are saturated. To the extent that some admitted to unconsciously applying the same measures of boxing or role ascribing on others based on their sexes and not on abilities. KI group 1 had this to state:

> "There is a clear distinction between men and women, and their roles are also different. These roles can be traced to the traditional/informal education boys and girls receive. For girls, domestic duties were and are emphasised, for boys skills like hunting and herding" (interview with KI from group 1, 18.10.2021).

Relationships and roles like this show the nature of participation opportunities women were allowed in community affairs. The 65 student participants were engaged in an exercise during the workshop to make a list of 10 roles each that they consider masculine and feminine. Some of the Female gender roles in the family as gathered from them includes shopping, cooking,

dishwashing, house upkeep, laundry and wardrobe management, child upbringing, and family rearing. Concurrently, female gender roles outside the family or the larger society reflect the notions and characters already formed at the family levels. Stanley KI group 4 had this to say during his interview:

> "Shared gender roles or responsibilities are not equal in modern society, I respect my mum and sisters. I hope to be a better-aware husband when I get married. I feel like women should be given more credit whether or not they work from home, for offices, or for their families. We take credence for everything good in family and society" (interview with KI from group 4, 19.10.2021).

Among the Igbo of Nigeria, it is customarily taboo for a man to do certain feminine works be it in the house or outside. Men who assist women with house chores are considered weak. Even if they have all the time (on off days), it is honourable for a man to rest than to assist in feminine chores. One of the KI group 2 had this to say:

> "My wife does most of the house chores after work, despite having two jobs as a trader and civil servant. She is like a superwoman. I am very open-minded, and I try to do part of her chores before she gets back. At first, it was confusing and tiring to the extent that I didn't know what to do first" (interview with KI from group 2, 23.10.2021).

The sentiments of Uzo as shared above showing his inability to help with house chores as he gets confused was similar to the situations of most men who have participated in this research. Some participants stated that their women do not allow them to help out with chores while others admitted to never encroaching the feminine work line. They don't bother. It is also observed that irrespective of men's poor or non-poor status, they are prescribed above the woman in domestic roles and professional lives. They continue to wield power in the affairs of the home management, deciding who does what regardless of the economic status or stability of a man. When a woman is more enabled than them, she is forced to reach unfavourable compromises in private or professional life. More so, as revealed by the anti-stereotype scholars, stereotypes have grossly affected the feeling, self-worth, and performance of southeast women distinctly. They willingly leave the social, political, and economic platforms for the men; and hardly do they support their kind (the women) to shatter the glass ceiling. All the research participants agreed that stereotypes affect psychological wellbeing. One of the KI of group 7 stated:

> "I rather remain a housewife[4] and manage my family well. I am okay with what I get from my husband for upkeep. I can't imagine taking up house roles and office work. It's too much. My husband doesn't eat out and no one can serve him better not even my house helps. My kids and everything will suffer loss from extra office work fatigue" (interview with KI from group 7, 12.10.2021).

When asked if she would work if she had not married or had the present responsibilities, she had passionately prioritised, she said:

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[4] Women in traditional Igbo society are for the service of men and his estate. 'Wife' represent a man's wealth and capacity to enjoy men's wealth (oriaku), 'mother' the ability to hold a man's estate/wealth together, bearing male children for linage continuity (odoziaku) and the ability to serve as a man's pleasure and entertainment, being submissive and serviceable (efele oji)

"…no one is stopping me from working now, it's my happy choice. My mother served my father and raised us well in a stable family, I am doing the same and more for my husband and children. The church teaches this, every woman aspires to stabilise her maiden or marital home. My brother's wife manages work and family affairs fine, but I think poverty is causing a lot of things. Some men have no choice but to let their women work" (interview with KI from group 7, 12.10.2021).

During the interview participants at different intervals referred to the teachings of religion and Igbo tradition. It was inevitable to hear a joke or an argument referring to them, even from those with a neutral perception of stereotyped sex roles. Some pointed out that the anti-stereotype activism is western like feminism, and we Africans have lost our identity. "From an anti-stereotyping perspective, arguments like, we need to preserve our culture or tradition are suspects, as they appeal to the popularity of stereotypes" (Timmer 2015: 725). On the opposite side of the experience, a 29-year-old KI from group 7 lamented how time and resources were wasted in her becoming a lawyer.

"I married after being called to Nigerian Bar at 21. My husband insists I would not do litigation law, for our good. He is proud that I am a lawyer and announces it to everyone. He says if I must work I should manage his company with him, in that way I can have more time for the family. My marriage almost broke down in our second year because of this. No one understands me. My father agrees with my husband. My mother wanted to take me to FIDA but people discouraged her saying she would ruin my marriage. I'm over it, though I still hope he changes his stand. I recently brought up the issue of practising law, he said once the children are grown I am free. I am the registered legal adviser to his company but I don't know what happens there, as he doesn't consult me. We only talk about family affairs and management. My marriage is 8 years now and I know he loves me but is overly protective" (interview with KI from group 7, 10.2021).

All interviews reported herein are geared towards addressing the research question. On how practices, law, and policy stereotype southeast women, a member of KI group 2 had this to say:

"Section 42(3) of CFRN invalidates 42(1) which guarantees freedom from discrimination…section 12 of the CFRN limits the implementation of international treaties…except if such treaty is enacted into law by the National Assembly. Until we make a constitutional amendment or have a clear definition of women's rights, we can only force gender interpretation into blind laws or gamble with undomesticated international laws both of which can be overruled upon a strong appeal as seen in the case of Mojekwu v Mojekwu. Many hearts remain unschooled until radicalism is indulged" (interview with KI from group 2, 23.10.2021).

In Mojekwu's case referred to in the above statement, an erudite court of appeal judge in an inheritance dispute rightly held that any customary practice that prevents a woman from owning property is repugnant to natural justice, equity, and good conscience. However, on further appeal to the Supreme Court, the justices disagreed with the court of appeals ruling on this issue stating that the condemnation of Ili-Ekpe and other customs that privilege men over women is wrong. On the basis that there is freedom of cultural/religious practices in section 38 which contradicts whatever section 42(1) and undomesticated CEDAW purports. This discrepancy happened

because there is no statutory law to affect women's rights protection. Reliance on case law from judicial decisions to build international best practices gives room for counter debates like when a bill is about to be passed by the legislature. The implication of section 12 is that though CEDAW is signed and ratified by Nigeria, it has not been transformed into a domestic law capable of enforcement. A domesticated provision would have made up for the lapses in the Constitution with regards to stereotyping, and the absence of an equal protection/opportunity clause. The mantle lies on judges to bravely imbibe HRBA into Nigeria through stare decisis as Justice Niki Tobi did in Mojekwu v Mojekwu despite the criticism his ruling brought. Some other policies and laws that were made reference to by KIs group 2 as promoting GBS are sections 127, and 124 of police regulations and Act respectively.

> "Police Regulation 127 requires that a female police officer desirous of marrying must first apply in writing to the commissioner requesting permission to marry and giving details of the person she intends to marry, which does not apply to male officers. While Section 124 of the Nigeria Police Force Act requires that an unmarried police officer who becomes pregnant shall be discharged from the force, and shall not be re-enlisted except with the approval of the Inspector General. Marriage Act requires a mother's consent only when the father of the child is dead or of unsound mind or out of the country. Policies in banks and other private corporations, in Nigeria also discriminate against women. Section 26 gives Nigerian men the right to acquire citizenship for their foreign wives by registration. Nigerian women, however, cannot legally extend the same right to their foreign husbands. Nigerian women who marry into a different state in Nigeria other than their state of origin face the challenge of acceptance in public service" (interview with KI from groups 2 and 3, 10.2021).

In the argument among the interviewed officers of law from KI groups 2 and group 3 some stated that the rationale behind pregnancy control is to enable fit and agile persons in the force. If that were the case I asked why are married women who fall pregnant, not dismissed. Or what happens to an unmarried male counterpart who falls a woman pregnant, why is his dismissal not up for conversation in the laws? It takes two opposite cells for pregnancy to occur likewise the responsibility of the pregnancy or child requires the two of them. Since falling pregnant outside marriage is considered illegal or unethical, shouldn't the consequences also be on the male partner who falls a woman pregnant whether or not the pregnant female is part of the force? Further analysis of data from the participants of the fieldwork reveals that asides, from human rights violations, and economic impediments, GBS affects the sexual, psychological, and mental wellness of men and women.

3.6 Anti-Stereotyping: Some Grounds for Hope

The goal of the anti-stereotype analysis is to expose, contest and eliminate the patterns that lead to vast gender issues and structural human rights violations like discrimination. Such analysis is aimed at rendering explicit and problematic what society and psychologists regard as natural or unchanging (Timmer, 2015: 725). Anti-stereotype transformative theory can help contribute to the improved mindfulness of our perception of a group thus keeping stereotyping in check and preventing rights violations. While a thesis alone cannot create the full extent of change needed to achieve human rights protection. A continuous application of the anti-stereotype theory will

inform and introduce alternative ways of thinking to replace harmful as well as oppressive traditional practices or beliefs that limit a group's choices/participation.

By using examples mainly from southeast domestic and professional context stereotypes at work are made identifiable to both participants and readers. The analysis reveals the harm inflicted on the dignity of persons. It is a reorientation of the need to focus on changing and eradicating gender stereotypes to speedily achieve a balanced world. This implies that gender-based violence, ineffective state responses, and inequality can only be addressed once gender stereotypes on which they are based start to be uprooted. Human rights defenders should adopt the anti-stereotype approach by uncovering gender stereotypes in legal and legislative processes as done in this research. In other words, those combatting gender injustices should refrain from reiterating narratives of vulnerability without fact-checking cases distinctively, to avoid reconfirming harmful gender stereotypes (Cook and Cusack, 2011). Rather it should be taken from facts, individual circumstances of the case, and given ability.

The research argument shows that although gender stereotype has never been taken as seriously with reference to human rights violation or "therapeutic jurisprudence" (Brems and Timmer, 2016: 114), there is a glimmer of hope. This can be drawn from the specific and continuous publications and inquiry into this field in human rights best practice and law, like the works of the Istanbul Convention and the CEDAW Committee. Remarkably, on the 29th of September 2021, the Nigerian government approved paid paternity leave for civil servants. This comes after years of activism in that regard as paid maternity leave was instituted many years ago. Although this is yet to be implemented by institutions, this change of a stereotyping policy that presumes women as caregivers and solely saddled with the responsibility of nurturing and homemaking is commendable (Cook and Cusack, 2011: 42,108). Nigerians can only hope that when implemented, men utilize it to render meaningful service to the family and not as a self-relaxation time.

This research accounts for the voices and encounters/lived experiences of the participants who we have walked through their experiences with an anti-stereotype lens, with the hope that they can replicate the same. Then mobilise human rights international best practices to demand remedy or transformation of social norms. As well as challenge law and test rights in courts without fear or favour. How gender roles are perceived and constructed in specific social structures enables one to grasp the implications in line with international best practices.

3.7 Conclusion

Chapter three explored the national representation of GBS as reported by the media. It further examines how GBS is reflected (or not) in policy and practice. Also, the research data from qualitative interviews conducted with stipulated participants were analysed. Having applied the anti-stereotype approach by naming/identifying gender stereotypes from the shared encounters of the participants and the media reports, it reorients the participant and readers to strengthen the efforts towards change or elimination. The vast encounters reported herein contextualise the concept of stereotypes as a human rights violation. At this point, it is safe to say that the objectives and three questions set out in chapter one have been addressed in this paper.

CHAPTER 4
MY LANDING POINT

4.1 An Overview

The Vienna Convention of 1993 recognizes the indivisibility, universality, interdependency, and interrelatedness of human rights. Therefore, it is difficult not to find several rights violations in a case of sex-role stereotyping as portrayed in this paper. Put differently, the actualisation of socio-economic rights in turn guarantees the fulfilment of civil-political rights. Hence the duty of the Nigerian state to implement CEDAW and the African Charter is immediate. Gender-based stereotypes impede the enjoyment of socio-economic and civil-political human rights like self-development, the right to life, and a quality standard of living. It breeds conflicts, inequality, discrimination, and domestic violence among others. Both sexes are stereotyped, but men are less often than women. This work does not uphold the dichotomy of women as victims and men as villains because addressing such masculine stereotypes consequently fixes women's overriding subjugation.

In fulfilling the research objectives pertinent questions were also addressed to enable the understanding of GBS among the people of southeast Nigeria in line with international best practices. Also, through the transformative anti-stereotype approach, GBS operative in reported media cases and southeast cases shared herein were identified and named for the contestation, change, and or elimination. Relying on the HRBA further recommendations are made for Nigeria to create an enabling environment for the challenge of GBS. The theory of intersectionality helped transmit the understanding of different variables at play. Thus I drew from the experience of obstacles that stereotypes tossed on southeast women who desire to explore their potential, like my mother, the first lady of Nigeria, and women across different classes of society in buttressing the harm done by stereotype(ing). This study shows that despite the hurdles, women stay resilient and leap across mountains while many play the role of 'breadwinners' in silence.

From my observation during the research period, each time I joined Nigerian religious spaces online or in person, the teachings grossly and ignorantly uphold patriarchy. Such teachings which are held sacred can water down the efforts toward the eradication of GBS. Also, the fieldwork process got me baffled by how much women rely on society to define their path. They justify their choices based on societal expectations of them. Further informal conversations with peers on this topic led me to accept that gender parity will not happen overnight and one has to be patient and consistently walk the talk with the hope that others will form a queue in solidarity. These encounters during the research prompt further, on how best to bring about the desired religious, social, and structural transformation. The answer to this is continuous academic and physical activism. Thereby influencing as many as can be around you and leading daily lives free from GBS. The struggle to build a more inclusive society around the world needs close and continuous monitoring. This is to enable accurate translation and implementation in the locals.

Although I understand that we are all victims of socialisation, I also know that we have the power to change the patriarchal narrative. The choice of position (unlearning) remains ours to

make. Concretely, this anti-stereotype project, which was conducted and written between May 2021 till November 2021 shows the import of huge/international platforms in the wide transmission of women's rights to the locals. Through advocacy and enlightenment campaigns, civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) will empower Nigerian society to become agents of social and developmental transformation by speaking up against gender stereotypes, inequality and discrimination. CSOs and NGOs can achieve collective reorientation of the Nigerian populace by redefining the people's gender constructions of men and women. The problems found in this research include how stereotypes still operate in the job market, to produce discriminatory practices that result in the non-entry of women into some professions which are traditionally male-dominated or male-only. Although there is a huge milestone to be covered with regard to the achievement of gender parity for sustainable development in Nigeria, it is attainable. Through advocacy campaigns, these cultural practices that oppress women, uphold gender stereotypes in the upbringing of the boy and girl child, and stereotypes in the media or religious organisations will be eradicated.

4.2 Further Insights from this Study

Findings from this study are consistent with the findings of anti-stereotype reviewed literature. This shows that women are more affected by gender-based stereotypes (GBS) disproportionately than men. It reveals the poor awareness of the severity and inherent dangers of GBS in southeast Nigeria, hence the need for more physical and academic activism. Through the development of this research, I understood that there is a practice of silence when rights are violated this comes from either ignorance of what has happened, what to do, whether to speak, who to speak to, or fear of stereotyping. Also, when rights are violated there exists a high level of ignorance on the cause of such right violation or the possibility that they fell prey due to existing stereotypes at play and not knowing how to address or prevent a reoccurrence.

The discussion in this research found that stereotype is prevalent against Nigerian women in different areas of society including family, employment facilities, education, and politics among others. Nigerian women experience these stereotypes largely because of societal beliefs about them. However, in spite of the inequalities caused by gender stereotyping in Nigeria, the right forms of information and consciousness have been found to have the capacity to equip women to challenge traditional and religious values which subsume them in different facets of society. With the right education and information, women will not be limited to playing 'followership roles' in Nigeria. Rather, they can seize more opportunities and leadership positions while owning their wins without fear of emasculating men.

This research further concludes that the Nigerian media platform has a huge role to play in transforming gender stereotypes. For example, the gender stereotypes presented through the Nigerian media, including Nigerian movies serve as a representation of the most common but overlooked gender-stereotypical portrayals in the country. As such, gender-stereotypical representation of Nigerian women is highly persistent in the media, (including Nollywood films) where women are often portrayed in roles that present them as weak, dependent, caregivers, sex objects, submissive, forgiving, subordinate, husband snatchers, hater of her kind and victims of domestic violence among other narratives has to be censored. On the other hand, men are often portrayed in roles that present them as breadwinners, loyal, independent, lovers of his kind,

successful, and strong. Portraying women in domesticated and traditional roles, while portraying men in professional and leadership roles does not dismiss the patriarchal culture of the Nigerian society. There should be a more balanced representation of women in the media. As a means of changing the narrative, women should be portrayed in positive lights, in professional and leadership roles to move society away from the existing negative stereotypes that hinder its development.

4.3 Recommendations

Since right education is important for the creation of a balanced society, this research recommends that to transform GBS, the anti-stereotype approach be incorporated into school curricula and be made mandatory for male and female students from primary to tertiary institutions. Cook states that to change and eliminate the habit of stereotyping people should be taught what to think and say. Put differently by Timmer, strict measures should be incorporated by states to stop individuals from defining each other by general presumptions and start relating based on individual proven abilities and actions. In addition, it is recommended that more academic discourse is undertaken in the field of human rights as an agent of transformation.

This research also recommends that more civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should continuously use their platform capacity to build momentum around this concept in Nigeria as established by CEDAW and promoted by feminists and anti-stereotype scholars. Such physical community advocacy against gender stereotypes adds flesh to the efforts of researchers to saturate existing knowledge on GBS with ink. It also applies pressure to perform on courts and states. Nigerian courts, through their interpretation of the largely marketed gendered issues before them, can incorporate international best practices into domestic law to address the root causes of rights violations (Timmer, 2015, Brems and Timmer, 2016). More so, sufficient powers to initiate investigations should be granted to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Nigeria. This would make it possible for the NHRC to carry out its duties more effectively, enhancing the promotion and protection of women's human rights. To be free of GBS we need the consciousness of every individual, male and female; in institutions, formal and informal in order to avoid the developmental impediments it brings to society. Therefore, necessary tools and resources should be put in place to ensure that individuals make life choices pertaining to their social and physical well-being. It is long due for Nigeria to domesticate the CEDAW, thereby making available a legal tool (legal instruments) upon which the citizen can make demands.

In addition, there is a need to adopt international best practices by the National Assembly. Thereby repealing stereotypical laws and domesticating the various international Conventions that protect women's rights to make them visible and enforceable in Nigeria. However, instead of being passive beneficiaries of policies; women should participate in making policies; that way, they will easily identify the existing gaps regarding the rights of women and resolve them timeously (Ajayi 2019: 2). Also, this research recommends that gender protective laws and anti-stereotypical laws should be passed in Nigeria. For example, the laws can take the form of the Anti Stereotyping Act or Equal Opportunities Act. If such laws are fully implemented and enforced, the interests of women will be safeguarded. The study finding proposes the adoption of the strategy and approach of the Kenyan court which declared being a Housewife payable employment job (Mutuko, 2021).

It will be a commendable step to be taken by Nigerian courts to alleviate and balance the plight of women.

It is opined that courts should use their power to monitor States' observance of anti-stereotype directives in constitutional transparency, inclusive democracy, together with socio-economic equity. Also, to balance the rights to culture, religion, and freedom from discrimination, courts should refrain from justifying customary practices or laws that are repugnant to natural justice, equity, and good conscience. Nigerian Court is further challenged to develop its doctrine on stereotyping and clearly define the aim of its interventions. It should adapt its language and reparatory measures accordingly. Mobilisation of human rights to transform beliefs and practices is paramount for a stereotype-aware and free world

In conclusion, the struggle towards sustaining a stereotype-free society is best attained in alliance with the global, regional, political, and religious communities. Every mind must be awake to unmask stereotypes embedded in social structures and make conscious steps towards welcoming as well as applying an anti-stereotype mindset in daily encounters.

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Appendices

1.1   Map of Nigeria showing southeast of Nigeria (Ndi Igbo):

NIGERIA GEO-POLITICAL ZONES

ZONES
- South West Zone
- South East Zone
- North West Zone
- North East Zone
- North Central Zone
- South South Zone

Source: Bakare, 2015

1.2 Fieldwork Protocol

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT AN IN-PERSON FIELDWORK AND FOR GRANT OF OTHER MATERIAL/OTHERWISE SUPPORT THAT MIGHT BE AVAILABLE TO HELP MY PROPOSED INTERSTATE LOGISTICS.

BACKGROUND:

The essence of fieldwork cannot be overemphasised given the scope of my research which includes my personal experiences, it is necessary to collect recent data to establish or debunk my claims. Also, during my preparatory research investigations, I was able to reach out to contact persons who highlighted the preference for in-person contact with the targeted groups. I was made to understand that given the technical and/or network inconveniencies that this might pose on the participants it is best to work with a proxy even if I would join in virtually, in that way, the proxy organises meetings and other contingencies. This also prevents the distraction of participants and ensures more commitment. Lastly, I come from a cultural country that is big on respect, so to secure a physical meeting is considered respectful, even if the process will be hybrid.

DOES THE FIELDWORK REQUIRE THE MA STUDENT TO LEAVE THE NETHERLANDS?

No, I would groom and deploy a research assistant for the data collection since I won't be going home.

DESCRIBE THE COVID-19 CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE PROPOSED PLACE OF RESEARCH; THE MEASURES/RESTRICTIONS/HEALTH AND OTHER ADVICE REGARDING COVID-19 IN PLACE IN THE PROPOSED PLACE OF RESEARCH.
(In case the proposed research will take place outside of the Netherlands, compare the COVID-19 situation there with the situation in the Netherlands. Present information on the differences, (extra) risks and any other relevant information).

NIGERIA TO NETHERLANDS COVID DATA COMPARISON FOR 2020-2021

COUNTRY	NEW CASES IN THE PAST 24 HOURS	CUMULATIVE CASES	CUMULATIVE DEATHS	VACCINE DOSES
NIGERIA	649	207,210	2,742	6,852,590
NETHERLANDS	2,760	2,016,171	18,200	22,425,859

The above data shows that the COVID-19 suspected cases, deaths and vaccination from January 2020 till October 2021 in Nigeria are minimal compared to that of the Netherlands. Therefore since the rate of the spread is low there is a low risk of contraction, though the very low compliance with vaccination may influence the spread rate at any time.

'DO-NO HARM' OPERATIVE MEASURES:

Since I will be joining remotely via Whatsapp or skype when possible, I will ensure that I equip my research assistant with the necessary tools (sanitisers and facemask) to carry along for himself and distribute to the participants as safe-kit souvenirs, in addition to directing them to maintain other basics like:

- Daily monitoring of the COVID chart and report will be adopted before setting out for the day.
- Staying 1.5 metres away from other people.
- Reminding them, 'If you have symptoms, stay at home and get tested as soon as possible.
- Ensuring a good flow of fresh air.

There is no inter-state COVID ban/curfew in Nigeria presently except for bans/curfew occasioned by political and security unrest. However, this fieldwork is targeted to comb southeastern states and the logistics will be duly managed.

Given my limited research time and the availability of my focus group, my research assistant is to spend an estimated time of seven working days in the field. Also following the data in the table above there is no indication of a new outbreak or upsurge of COVID-19 in Nigeria. However, if that happens, the fieldwork will be immediately terminated, and I may have to work on a different topic or methods that will permit a resort being made to online questionnaire distribution and desktop research.

Thanks in advance for your kind consideration.

1.3 Consent Form

Safe Space, Wo(men) want to talk: Women's Education Ends in the kitchen and the Other Room.

You are invited to participate in a research study on gender stereotypes as a human rights violation. This study is conducted by Jennifer Ifunanya Ugwu, a post-graduate candidate from the International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands. I studying to major in Human rights, Gender and Conflict Studies and with the approval of my Institution, I conduct this study with the condition that all COVID protocols are maintained while ensuring that no harm befalls the participants.

You were selected as a possible participant using the snowball approach, also due to your association with the contact person's institution/network. Please carefully read this form and ask questions now for clarity, then you may respond accordingly. If in a later event, you have questions about your participation in this study, you may also contact me or my Institution.

This study focuses on Southeast Nigeria which is an Igbo community. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the reality of women on Sex-Role Gender Stereotypes. It sets to know how stereotypes impede emancipation and the actualisation of gender equality with regards to securing career advancement opportunities. Upon your acceptance to participate in this study, you will be further briefed and an invitation to an interview scheduled subject to your availability. The oral interview will be conducted by the researcher online, with the help research assistant who will meet with you physically. Kindly note that this procedure may be audio recorded. Subsequently, a confirmation questionnaire will be sent at the end of the interview to clarify ambiguity.

Also, note that participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your present or future relations with the contact person or anyone involved in this research. More so, you are free to withdraw participation at any time without affecting those relationships. In the event that you experience stress or anxiety during your participation in the study, you may terminate your participation at any time. You may refuse to answer any questions you consider invasive or stressful.

There are no risks or benefits associated with participating in this study. Also, there will be no compensation provided for your participation in this study. Participation in the workshop to be held on 18th October affords you the opportunity to listen to and learn from people's stories. Attached herein are more details about the event.

Research records will be kept safe and private only the researcher and her assistants will have access to the records. The researcher will ensure that any part of the report from this study that might be published will not include any information that will make it traceable to you.

For Inquiries contact the researcher:

Name:…………………………………………………….
Email:…………………………………………………
Number:…………………………………………………
(This contact is available on direct call, skype, WhatsApp and signal).

Statement of Consent:

☐ I have voluntarily read and understand the statement of invitation.   ☐ I have asked questions and I received answers.   ☐ I consent to participate in this study voluntarily.
Name:
Email:
Signature:
Date:

Signature of Researcher: Date:

1.4 Sample Questions

1. Can you please give us your biography? Your name, age, origin, religion, marital status, academic and professional background, among others?
2. Why did you choose your course/training/job?
3. Do you think gender affected your life choices? How?
4. How long have you worked?
5. How were you recruited?
6. Can you describe your role in the work? Is it different from that of your male/female colleague?
7. Does everyone have equal and equitable access to work? Explain?
8. Does age or sex matter in your workplace? What other general or individual characteristics matter?
9. Are you seeking opportunities to improve yourself? Details?
10. Are you self-employed? Why so?
11. How were you able to sponsor your business?
12. What factors contribute to gender inequality and discrimination? Explain.
13. Are you familiar with the term GBS? Please share your thoughts.
14. In your opinion, do gender stereotypes influence women's professional development? Can you elaborate?
15. Using your own family or work situation, explain how local culture may favour gender stereotypes.
16. Does law, Policy or practice, stereotype women, more than men of southeast Nigeria.
17. Are you aware of any practice/policy that the GBS stereotype thrives on?
18. Why are women disproportionately affected by GBS?
19. Have you experienced GBS at work, at home and in your daily lives? How?
20. Are you aware of someone/people whose abilities are hindered due to gender stereotypes?
21. Have you experienced undue control, influence and or denial of opportunity based on your gender? Explain?
22. Were you/they able to complain about stereotypes? To whom? What was the response?
23. Do you agree that GBS is a cause of inequality, GBV and violations of human rights? Why?
24. What do you think are the reasons for the prevalence of GBS?
25. If married, at what age did you marry?
26. If single, do you intend to marry? At what age?
27. Do you have a gender curfew? What are your working hours? Who placed it and why?
28. What do you do to survive in gender-limiting situations?
29. Would your actions be different if you were a male/female?
30. What kind of training do you/are you receiving?
31. What strategies and reforms could improve the perception and attitudes based on gender?
32. Kindly identify any gender-based justice/invention in your field of work.

33. Do you think the Nigerian legal system maintains HRBA? What can the law/government do?
34. Does GBS play a role in the creation and reproduction of women's inequality and as a human rights violation in southeast Nigeria? Explain.
35. How can GBS influence the lives and freedoms of the people of southeast Nigeria?
36. How can HRBA help to modify and or eradicate GBS in southeast Nigeria?
37. With what we now know, why do you think the anti-stereotype approach to human rights violations is important?
38. Who is the breadwinner in your family (maiden and matrimonial)? why? How do they feel about it?
39. Are your parents distinctive on career/educational paths based on gender?
40. Will you act differently from your family experience? why
41. What games, activities and chores did you engage in growing up? Were they different from the opposite sex? Why?
42. Do you have additional responsibilities peculiar to you due to gender? If yes, how does that make you feel/ affect you?
43. How are decisions reached in the family (maiden/matrimonial home)? Is your advice or consent sort? How does that make you feel?
44. What motivates you daily?