

Gender Inequality and Roles In Guyana and the US

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Table of Content

Outline....	3
Introduction....	4
Background....	5
Gender Inequality and Roles In Guyana	7
Gender Inequalities and Roles in America....	9
Guyana And America....	11
Conclusion/Solution....	12
Annotated Bibliography	13
References Page....	16

Introduction

My topic for this final exam will be based on gender inequality and roles in American culture and also Guyana culture. Gender inequality is defined as differential treatment or views of individuals based on sex. A role is a collection of interconnected behaviors, rights, obligations, beliefs, and norms that people in a social setting perceive. It is a type of action that can be expected, voluntary and it can be related to a specific social position or position in life. In this paper, I chose to speak on both cultures in Guyana and America because I was born in America and both my parents were born in Guyana. With that being said, I wanted to write more on this topic because I could tell that both cultures share similarities but also have differences.

In addition, many cultures have different roles for both genders which isn't right and other cultures might not agree with it. These roles could lead up to gender inequality as well, especially for women. Both gender inequality and role playing still exist today in some cultures. I feel like in my parents' country Guyana, they still have both roles and gender inequality because I observed a lot when I first visited there. It was different from America and it was like a cultural shock because I didn't think that gender inequality existed in that country. Furthermore, I believed that they don't really have roles in their cultures and when I did, I thought it was roles that American cultures had.

Background

Gender inequality has been an issue for more than 2,500 years ago according to a recent study from Queens College in New York City (Kasulis 2017 pg.1). To add on, gender inequality is a big issue that needs to be put to an end. Everyone should be equal nomatter what gender you are. Both male and females should have the same opportunities, pay and shouldn't be put in different positions based on their sex; what I mean by that is any gender should be able to work or do what their interest profession without being harassed or receiving unequal treatment. According to Julie Wilson, gender inequality in aworkplace could be racism, unequal pay and sexual harassment. On the other hand, in Guyana they also have gender inequality as well. Women are most likely unemployed, impoverished and uneducated in Guyana (Viera, para.3) Gender inequality also leads towards role-playing in cultures. For instance, in Guyana's culture they have role-playing however it connects back to gender inequality as well. Caitlin Viera stated, "They are expected to be professional wives, mothers, caregivers, breadwinners and the backbone of every family. Their needs and wants also usually come last in the family.(para.5)"

When I visited Guyana and learned more about my culture there, I realized that this was relevant and accurate. Manyfemales there were already married at the age of 18 and sometimes even younger. This wasbecause they had roles as a female where they aren't supposed to be working or going to

school. Based on what I learned in my family, it sounds familiar to what my mom tells me about how life was back home and the roles they had as females. In the article Diversity and Inclusion, it states, "Gender roles in Guyana are markedly different from those in the United States, and you will need to understand these roles to be effective in your project and satisfied personally." Both females and males have roles to play in the culture of Guyana. In America, they have what's called an American dream which is defined as the traditional belief that the ideals of freedom, equality, and opportunity are available to all Americans; however, gender inequality still exists in America today.

In American society, the roles females have is to act and dress in a feminine way. In addition, males' role in American society is to "be bold, strong and aggressive" as stated in the article, "What are gender roles and stereotypes?" All in all, both males and females are assigned to act and behave a certain way they are supposed to based on their sex. Both America and Guyana have their own cultural roles for both males and females which also involves gender inequality as well.

Gender Inequality and Roles In Guyana

As I mentioned before, both my parents were born and raised in Guyana and they told me about the lifestyle they had to live. My mom told me a lot about the cultural roles they had for females which was like cooking and cleaning. Most females in Guyana didn't have the chance to go to school to get their education because they had to do chores at home. Some of the roles they did were cleaning, making meals for the family, taking care of the kids, doing laundry and just running things in the household. The role for men was to go to work, support their family and to run things on the farm if they had one. In the article, Diversity and Inclusion it states, "Men also have specific roles and "manliness" is very important. Men are expected to be dominant in almost all aspects of society: They are expected to smoke, drink, pursue women, be strong, and discipline their wives and children...If you do not drink, smoke, or like to pursue women openly, you may be kidded or chided for not being manly enough." The role of being a man in Guyana is unnatural but it does occur.

If a man wasn't working, then they are either smoking or sleeping and I observed that on my trip to Guyana. Additionally, in paragraph 7 it says, "Guyanese women have traditional roles, especially in rural areas, where they run the household, prepare meals, clean, and raise children." This role for the women in Guyana still remains today; I have family back home that still get married at such a young age and don't go to

school because they still follow the roles and norms that they were adjusted in their household. This also leads to gender inequality because women are only allowed to take care of the household, kids, and prepare meals and so on for their family. They have less opportunities to have jobs because they have a higher chance of being sexually harassed and receiving unfair treatment as well as low pay. Men, on the other hand, could work but they also could be harassed too. Lastly, because the women don't have as many opportunities as the men, then there is more heavy lifting and stress on the men as well; since they have to work enough to support their families.

Gender Inequalities and Roles in America

The idea of roles and gender inequalities still exist in America today. Women are under-represented in high-level, well-paid positions while being disproportionately represented in low-paying jobs in the United States and around the world. Women of color and transgender people face unfairly high rates of poverty, unemployment, and other financial struggles. Gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace play a significant role in reinforcing these economic divides. In addition, in "Gender Inequality, Work Hours, and the Future of Work", it mentions, "Gender differences in paid and unpaid time at work are an important aspect of gender inequality. Women tend to spend more time on unpaid household and family care work, and men spend more time in paid work. This unequal distribution of time creates barriers to women's advancement at work and reduces women's economic security." Work job, pay, household responsibilities and family care work shouldn't be for with either a female or male; it shouldn't matter what sex you are as long as you complete the task that you have to do.

Moreover, in the article, "Gender Identity & Roles | Feminine Traits & Stereotypes", it mentions, "For example, girls and women are generally expected to dress in typically feminine ways and be polite, accommodating, and nurturing."(para.1) This role for females is unbelievable because why do they have to always dress feminine. There are many people that are transgender and

might not want to dress in their gender that is their original sex that was assigned at birth. It also states, "Men are generally expected to be strong, aggressive, and bold." Men's role in being strong and aggressive shouldn't be in the category of a role or doesn't have to be only for men. To add on, in America both females and male share roles such as cleaning, cooking and running things in the household. In another article, "Family roles in the USA ", " Women and men share household chores. Both women and men take care of the children. Sometimes, men feel frustrated because they are not used to cleaning the house orcooking dinner. But in the USA, helping out in the house and with the children is seen as animportant part of being a man." Some children have divorced parents where they have to live with either their mother or father. Depending on which parent the kid lives with, they both have the same responsibility and role in the child's life of taking care of him/her.

Guyana and America

Both Guyana and America share the idea of having role plays in their culture and both have gender inequalities as well. As I mentioned before, Guyana's roles aren't the same as American roles. In Guyana, they have specific roles for both men and women as America have roles that both men and women share. In Guyana, house cleaning, cooking, and looking after the kids are things women should be doing instead of going to work or school. For men, they would have to work to support their family and take care of "manly" tasks that are only assigned to men in Guyana. On the other hand, in America both women and men share the same roles. Children have parents that aren't married to one another so whoever's house they live in is responsible to take care of their child.

It could either be the mother or the father that is running things in the house, taking care of the kids, cooking and cleaning. On to gender inequalities in Guyana, many females don't work because they get sexually harassed, unfair treatment and low pay. This also relates to role-playing because when they have to do house chores, taking care of the kids...etc that wouldn't have enough time for work. Anyhow, in America women do go to work and school but they also could receive low pays. Based on their gender, they could experience unfair treatment and be harassed. It's more convenient for Americans to work and take care of their household and families because they don't have role-playing that are similar to the ones in Guyana.

By means of this, the men or women in America could be doing the tasks of what a woman in Guyana has to do.

Conclusion / Solution to Gender Inequality In America And Guyana

As you can see, both America and Guyana have role-plays and gender inequality still exists. You would think that they wouldn't have that in common because of how much of a difference it is between them. Gender inequality is something that shouldn't even exist because why should anything be based on whether you're a female or male. Any opportunities should be open to any sex and nobody should be judged because of that. As for role playing, many cultures believe in it and still follow it. I have a family that moved from Guyana and came to New York and was still adjusted to how norms were back home. They don't expect the opportunities of working and being independent on their own. This was because they were used to having to follow the traditional roles and norms in Guyana which was house chores. Many of these role-playing connects back to gender inequality.

For example, why should women be the only ones who should be responsible for taking care of both her and the father's baby, and why can't the father have this responsibility? Same thing for women, why can't they get a job opportunity where they are receiving both good pay and treatment to support their family; why does it always have to be a male?

There are many reasons why gender inequalities should be stopped not only in America and Guyana but everywhere that it exists. Role-playing in some cultures are significant but

there shouldn't be any roles for specifically a male or female; it should not be based on their sex.

In conclusion, as I continue to do my research and learn more about the role plays and gender inequality in both America and Guyana, I realize the differences and similarities in between them.

Annotated Bibliography

Kasulis, Kelly. "The 2,500-Year-Old Roots of Gender Inequality." *The 2500-Year-Old Roots of Gender Inequality - The Boston Globe*, 4 Mar. 2017, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2017/03/04/the-year-old-roots-gender-inequality/7zE60rjYuOAHjFB8hEBq1N/story.html>.

In this article, the author talks about how gender inequality still exists around the world. The author includes how women especially still struggle and don't have their equal rights. Kelly Kasulis mentioned documents that were taken between both females and males and included research information and results.

Wilson, Julie. 5 Top Issues Fueling Gender Inequality in the Workplace, 25 Feb. 2019, <https://www.asyousow.org/blog/gender-equality-workplace-issues>

The author of this article presents the top five issues that arise in a job due to gender disparity. Julie Wilson outlines the key concerns for each issue and backs it up with charts and figures. She supplied links to other websites that back up her claims and explain why these are the top five workplace gender imbalance concerns.

Viera, Caitlin. "Gender Equality." *Guyana Chronicle*, 21 June 2020,

<https://guyanachronicle.com/2019/11/03/gender-equality-2/>.

The authors present a wealth of material on the subject of gender inequality and highlight that women are not the only ones attempting to attain greater power than males. Caitlin Viera explores further into why gender disparity affects both men and women. She demonstrates how, all around the world, men and women do not have equal access to opportunity.

"Diversity and Inclusion." Diversity and Inclusion,

<https://www.peacecorps.gov/guyana/preparing-to-volunteer/diversity-and-inclusion/>

[#:~:text=Guyanese%20women%20have%20traditional%20roles,do%20not%20live%20by%20themselves.](#)

This page discusses several themes such as "Cross-Cultural Considerations, Diversity and Inclusion at Your Site, Gender Roles," and others. In the Gender Role section, it speaks on about Guyana and some of the gender roles that are observed and the traditions.

Parenthood, Planned. "Gender Identity & Roles: Feminine Traits & Stereotypes."

Planned Parenthood, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/sex-gender-identity/what->

[are-gender-roles-and-stereotypes#:~:text=For%20example%2C%20girls%20and%20women,different%20from%20group%20to%20group.](#)

This article discusses subjects such as gender inequity, roles, and stereotypes, all of which may be related. You can see the roles that were assigned to either a man or a female in the paragraphs, as well as descriptions of what gender roles and stereotypes truly imply. Many stereotypes were discussed, as well as definitions and examples of certain gender discrimination.

“Family Roles in the USA.” USAHello, 25 July 2020,

<https://usahello.org/life-in-usa/family/family-roles/#gref>.

In this article, the author discussed various gender roles that are prevalent in the United States. However, the author stated that in the United States, both men and women play the same roles. The article goes into further detail on why both genders play the same role and attempts to provide an example from any point of view, such as an immigrant or a parent in the United States adjusting to life.

Hegewisch, Ariane, and Valerie Lacarte. “Gender Inequality, Work Hours, and the Future of Work.” IWPR, 26 Aug. 2020,

<https://iwpr.org/iwpr-issues/employment-and-earnings/gender-inequality-work-hours-and-the-future-of-work/>.

This article provides an overview of gender inequality and work hours. As you read, you'll see that both genders get paid differently, despite the fact

that they're meant to be equal. Finally, the paper notes that women spend more time on unpaid household and family care labor, while males spend more time at work where they are paid.

References

Kasulis, Kelly. "The 2,500-Year-Old Roots of Gender Inequality." *The 2500-Year-Old Roots of Gender Inequality - The Boston Globe*, 4 Mar. 2017,

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2017/03/04/the-year-old-roots-gender-inequality/7zE60rjYuOAHjFB8hEBq1N/story.html>.

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2019, <https://www.asyousow.org/blog/gender-equality-workplace-issues>

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[#:~:text=Guyanese%20women%20have%20traditional%20roles,do%20not%20live%20by%20themselves.](https://www.peacecorps.gov/guyana/preparing-to-volunteer/diversity-and-inclusion/#:~:text=Guyanese%20women%20have%20traditional%20roles,do%20not%20live%20by%20themselves.)

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Planned Parenthood, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/sex-gender-identity/what-are-gender-roles-and->

[sterotypes#:~:text=For%20example%2C%20girls%20and%](https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/sex-gender-identity/what-are-gender-roles-and-sterotypes#:~:text=For%20example%2C%20girls%20and%20women,different%20from%20group%20to%20group.)

[20women,different%20from%20group%20to%20group.](https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/sex-gender-identity/what-are-gender-roles-and-sterotypes#:~:text=For%20example%2C%20girls%20and%20women,different%20from%20group%20to%20group.)

“Family Roles in the USA.” USAHello, 25 July 2020,

<https://usahello.org/life-in-usa/family/family-roles/#gref>.

Hegewisch, Ariane, and Valerie Lacarte. “Gender Inequality, Work Hours, and theFuture of Work.” IWPR, 26 Aug. 2020,

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