

Beyond Longevity: How Gender Roles Shape the Ageing Experience of Women in Nigeria

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Longevity is often celebrated as a marker of progress in global ageing discourse. Yet for many Nigerian women, a longer lifespan does not necessarily translate into security, dignity, or empowerment in later life.

This presentation examines how gender roles and social expectations across the life course come together to shape the lived realities of older women in Nigeria.

Key themes include economic insecurity due to limited access to formal employment and pension schemes, health disparities related to lifelong caregiving burdens, and cultural practices that marginalize widows and elderly women. At the same time, attention is given to the resilience and adaptive strategies women employ, from community networks to faith-based support systems, which provide social and emotional support in the absence of formal ones.

By moving beyond longevity as the sole measure of ageing, this presentation argues for a gender-sensitive approach to gerontology in Nigeria. It promotes policies and practices that recognize women's unique struggles while also building on their strengths, leading to broader conversations on ageing, gender equity, and social justice in African contexts.

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