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Exploring Gender in Tiv Material Culture: Ethno-archaeology in the Katsina-Ala Valley

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INTRODUCTION

It should be admitted that archaeologists continue to be very versatile and innovative in the way they produce knowledge from their data. However, a quick survey of some literature on the subject of gender study in archaeology may not reveal anything extraordinarily different from what had been the practice in archaeology in the past. Probably what is different is the call for more emphasis on extricating data that deal with gender and also to state explicitly what had been stated in general terms in the past. This is not a critique of gender archaeology in itself but to simply acknowledge the fact that the study of gender in archaeology is not completely new. The current emphasis on gender in archaeology would not be unconnected with the recognition that is generally accorded gender studies in the Social Sciences.

The specific consideration of gender in the archaeology data should be taken seriously because it would enrich our understanding of the past. It had been the practice of many people to equate gender with sex. However, an understanding of gender studies would show that gender is not the same as sex. Sex is the biological classification of male and female while gender is socially constructed (Nelson 1997). Sex and gender are commonly used, rightly or wrongly, to define people, their relationships to others and their place in society. The distinction of the sexes is usually based on observable