Special Issue

PATHWAYS TO AFRICAN FEMINISM AND DEVELOPMENT

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

African Women Studies Centre, UoN

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The focus of the Journal is on all aspects of African women's studies, both on the continent and in the Diaspora. This Journal promotes scholarship on African women in all spheres of life.

In this issue

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Affirmative Action
AAK	Action Aid Kenya
ADP	Annual Development Plan
AFRISA	Africa Institute for Strategic Animal Resource Services and Development
AGPO	Access to Government Procurement Opportunities
AMWIK	Association of Media Women in Kenya
ASF	Animal Source Foods
AVS	African Village Support
AWCFS	African Women and Children Feature Service
CBROP	County Budget Review and Outlook Paper
CBT	Community-Based Tourism
CCGD	Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development
CFSP	County Fiscal Strategic Paper
CGE	Commission on Gender Equality
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIDP `	County Integrated Development Plan
CKRC	Constitution of Kenya Review Commission
COK	Constitution of Kenya
COVAW	Coalition on Violence Against Women
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
CREAW	Centre for Rights Education and Awareness
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
ECWD	Education Centre for Women in Democracy
EPPP	Engendering Political Party Processes
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
5DE	Five Domains of Empowerment Index

FIDA	Federation of Women Lawyers - Kenya chapter
FOWODE	Forum for Women in Democracy
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GFK	Gender Financing in Kenya
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFP:	Gender Focal Point
GGP	Gender and Governance Programme
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HCD	Human-Centred Design
HDI	Human Development Index
HE	His Excellency
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HERS-EA	Higher Education Resource Services, East Africa
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IRB	Institutional Review Board
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KNDFF	Kenya National Drama and Film Festival
KOLA	Kenya Oral Literature Association
KWPC	Kenya Women Political Caucus
LICs	Low-income countries
LKW	League of Kenya Women Voters
LMIC	Low-and Middle-Income Countries
LMWK	League of Muslim Women in Kenya
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MHM	Menstrual Health and Managing
MICs	Middle-Income Countries

MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MSU	Mississippi State University
MYWO	Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organisation
NCC	National Constitutional Conference
NCEP	National Civic Education Programme
NCWK	National Council of Women of Kenya
NGAAF	National Government Affirmative Action Fund
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission
NGM	National Gender Machinery
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OSW	Office of Status of Women
PET	Participatory Educational Theatre
PFM	Programme and Finance Management
PMA	Performance Monitoring for Action
PMG	Parliamentary Monitor Group
PPT	People's Poplar Theatre
RIP	Rest in Peace
SASEWA	South African Self-Employed Women's Association
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SIG	Special Interest Groups
SDGs	Sustainable development goals
SSA	Sub Saharan Africa
TBL	Triple Bottom Line
ToC	Theory of Change
3Ps	Profit, People, Planet
UN	United Nations
UON	University of Nairobi
US	United States

UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WEF	Women Enterprise Fund
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WEPI	Women's Empowerment in Poultry Index
WOWESOK	Widows and Orphans Welfare Society of Kenya
WPA-K	Women Political Alliance – Kenya
WSF	Women small holder farmers
YEDF	Youth Enterprise Development Fund

FROM THE TECHNICAL EDITOR'S DESK

Anna Petkova – Mwangi

Welcome to the 2022 special issue of *Pathways to African Feminism and Development.* This is an international open access journal with a focus on all aspects of theories and practice in African women studies, both on the continent and in the Diaspora. It promotes scholarship on African women in all spheres of life. The Journal is a joint publication of the Women's Economic Empowerment Hub of the African Women's Studies Research Centre (AWSRC) and the African Women's Studies Program of the Department of Sociology, Social Work and African Women Studies, University of Nairobi, Kenya. In September 2020 the AWSRC entered into a five years' collaboration project with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) on Women's Economic Empowerment. We appreciate the financial support of the Foundation in the production of the current issue of the Journal.

All articles have been peer-reviewed, double blind. The draft journal has then undergone further quality control by a scholar who goes through its totality and checks for coherence; faithfulness to the topic; contribution to knowledge on the subject matter; and any issues related to the theoretical, methodological, philosophical or ideological approaches.

The current bumper issue is a fulfillment of a promise made in the previous issue that presentations made at the African Women's Studies Fourth Annual Conference, held from 23 to 24 November 2021 would be published in the next issue of the Journal. Thus, most of the twelve articles included here were presented at the 2021 Conference.

In the next regular issue of the Journal, we shall look at the devastating health and economic crisis that the COVID 19 caused. Women were disproportionately affected by this pandemic. We wish to engage scholars, researchers, students, professionals in the field of women's economic empowerment, especially during the pandemic, in a social dialogue to ddiscuss unpaid care work, women's health and wellness; highlight women's coping strategies such as self-mobilization and self-help; assess the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic on women's business and employment; debate the use of technology in marketing during pandemics; and review the policy challenges and stimulus

package opportunities for women's economic empowerment during the pandemic.

For the next regular issue of the Journal, we invite articles, case studies, book reviews and letters/ comments to the editor on the following theme.

Theme

Looking at the COVID 19 pandemic through women's economic empowerment lens.

Sub-Themes

1. Women employment, inequalities in labour market and unpaid care work.
2. Women and legal terrain; policy challenges and opportunities.
3. Women self-mobilization and self-help groups.
4. Digital technology and markets during the pandemic.
5. Women in businesses and in informal sector during the pandemic.

Case Studies should be based on real-life situations and highlight decisions taken that can be replicated in other similar situations.

Book Review corner: Book Reviews on recently published books on Women Economic Empowerment or other related issues are welcome.

Letters/comments to the editor should be responses/comments/ critique of articles published in this Journal.

Author's Guidelines

The material submitted for publication should be your own creative and/or well researched work which has not been published elsewhere. At all times the right of the Author to the intellectual copyright will be maintained.

Author's name; Institution of Affiliation; Email address; Current Tel. number.

An article should not exceed six thousand words.

Times New Roman; Font 12; Spacing 1.5; both sides justification; 1 inch margin, (both left and right side)

Paper Structure

- ***Title*** of the paper
- ***Abstract*** of 250 words
- ***Keywords*** below the abstract in alphabetical order and separated by commas
- ***Introduction:*** background and purpose of the paper.
- ***Body:*** Clearly discuss major message of your paper with clear line of thought, justification, problem statement and methodology (the approach you used to collect data for your paper); discussion and presentation of your findings, recommendations, and conclusion

- **Clarity and Consistency**: Please check your manuscript for headings and sub-headings; clarity of expression, repetition, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and consistency of references to minimize editorial changes
- ***References:*** Mandatory
- ***Appendices:*** Optional

Please submit an electronic copy of your papers in MS-WORD to awsckenya@uonbi.ac.ke copy: cmgakinyi@gmail.com

Note: *Please, note that after confirmation by the AWSC that your article has been accepted for publication, you will be requested to pay Kshs 6,000/- to facilitate the production process.*

INTRODUCTION

Elishiba Kimani, PhD

Chairperson, Editorial Board

In the 1960s, the discussion surrounding gender and empowerment discourse was on how to address practical and strategic women's needs, given the historical injustices surrounding their exclusion from the development arena at all levels. In the 1970s, through the1990s, the discourse went a notch higher to focus on strategic women's needs with a view of increasing women's participation in decision making processes at the household and community levels, as well as in all structures of public and private governance. Currently the focus is on the women's economic empowerment (WEE), defined as the transformative process that helps women and girls move from limited power, voice, and choice at home and in the economy to having the skills, resources, and opportunities needed to compete equitably in productive economy.

The ultimate goal of WEE agenda is for women to gain full access and control of all processes and structures driving improvement of the social, economic, and political agenda, nationally, regionally, and globally. To scale up and sustain strategies for women economic empowerment, a multi-sectoral approach is necessary whereby stakeholders work together, sharing and reinforcing each other. Key among the stakeholders are the scholars and researchers whose pivotal role is to provide knowledge and evidence-based research findings to drive and inform policies for WEE.

Analysis of the articles in this issue, as illustrated in the following table reveals that generally, the realization of WEE can be institutionally cascaded strategically and/or socially planned.

Areas of Focus	Specific Articles
Institutional	Feminist Finance: Connecting Women with Finance through Mobile Banking and Zakat
	Empowering Kenya Maasai Women through Cultural Bomas Tourism
	The Role of Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation lin Women's Economic Empowerment: Case of Abakhayo Women, Busia County (1978-2002), Kenya
	The South African Commission for Gender Equality Addressing Challenges of Rural Women
Strategic	Gender Responsive Budgeting as an Accelerator to Women's Economic Empowerment: Translating Theories into Practice
	Redesigning Reusable Sanitary Pads Using Human-Cantered Design Model and Triple Bottom Line Strategy

	Significance of Leadership in Women's Self-Mobilization for Policy Advocacy for Women's Economic Empowerment
	Use of Poultry Production to Empower Small-Holder Women Farmers in East Africa
	Gender, Theatre and Education: Reflections on Florence Okware's, "*The Ticking Clock"* In the Kenyan Schools and Colleges Drama and Film Festival
Societal	Indicators for Women Economic Empowerment in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Role of Social Norms
	Applied Theatre as a Social and Economic Agency in Deconstructing Gender Myths
Barriers	Sexual Harassment at Work as a Barrier for Women Economic Development: The Case of Domestic Workers in Maputo City in Mozambique

In this issue therefore, eleven out of the twelve articles are spread across the three areas, namely institutional, strategic and social. However, the twelfth article is on *Sexual Harassment,* discussed as a barrier to Women Economic Development. Although the article focuses on sexual harassment at work and specifically in Maputo city, the vice is a global phenomenon and a serious barrier to the full realization of most of the Sustainable Development Goals and Africa Agenda 2063.

This issue provides a very captivating reading. Firstly, as presented in the above table, among the institutions associated with scaling up WEE is the Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization, discussed in the first article which presents a reflection on its role in women's economic empowerment in the case of the Abakhayo Women in Busia County Kenya, (1978-2002). The second article is on South Africa's Commission for Gender Equality discussing the opportunities and setbacks to scale up the WEE for rural women. Equally important is the contribution of a third institution, namely the cultural bomas tourism in WEE as discussed in the third article which is very specific to the Maasai women in Kenya. Last in the category of institutions that cascade WEE is table banking, discussed in the fourth article. These institutions play an important role in enabling women to save money, as they increase their capacity to access and control means of production and resources.

The next five articles articulate important strategies known to accelerate the WEE. The strategies include gender responsive budgeting, redesigning reusable sanitary pads using human-cantered design model and triple bottom line, use of leadership in women's self-mobilization, poultry production and gender, theatre, and

education to sustain and scale up WEE. These strategies, if well nurtured, can be used to lobby for changes in policies for WEE. The two articles that follow, focus on the importance of the society as a change agent, while taking stock of the indicators in the change of social norms as well as the impact of gender theatre and education in deconstruction of the same. Last and by no means least in this issue is an article that raises awareness on a barrier for WEE, namely Sexual Harassment in Maputo City, Mozambique. The article makes specific reference to domestic workers, but with an observation that the vice is a global phenomenon, cutting across all categories of women, regardless of social-economic divides.

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Feminist Finance: Connecting Women with Finance through Mobile Banking and Zakat

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Abstract

This paper explores the use of the concept of 'zakat' to support the financial improvement of women from low-income households. It assesses the feasibility of remitting zakat over the M-PESA platform. M-PESA is a Kenyan mobile banking app that allows subscribers to send and receive money through their mobile phones without the use of the internet. The theory underpinning the paper's analysis of the use of zakat to support the economic improvement of women is based on tax justice and social extraction theories. Taken together, these theories suggest that redistribution can also be facilitated by non-state actors who apply their own norms in regulating how to spend their collective revenue towards improving the lives of women living in poverty. This paper, therefore, starts by highlighting the need for redistribution using taxes, extends the concept of conventional tax to include zakat and justifies this position by interrogating whether the Kenyan fiscal space and its constitution can recognise zakat as part of the tax system that supports the state to promote social and economic wellbeing. Whether zakat contributes to the social and economic improvement of people is examined by inquiring into a specific case study of Mama Riziki. The paper employs the discursive approach and is based on a mixed methods approach. The findings reveal that zakat based conscious financing can improve livelihoods at household level.

Key words: economic improvement, Kenya, non-state Muslim actors, women, zakat.

1.0 Introduction

Zakat is the Islamic form of tax on wealth that is paid annually by a Muslim at the rate of 2.5% on cash savings that exceed 260,000 Kenya Shillings (approximately USD2600). There are four other categories on which *zakat* is also due; gold, land, livestock, and agriculture assessed at different rates. The term *zakat* signifies two specific categories: *Zakat al fitr*; which is paid during the month of *Ramadhan* as charity to the poor by each Muslim who fasted, and *zakat al maal*, the tax on wealth, which is the subject of this Paper. Both categories of *zakat* are mandatory under the Islamic faith. *Zakat al fitr*, however, is normally given to the poor as food ration. *Zakat al maal* usually takes the form of money.

This Paper considers the extent to which *zakat* supports the financial improvement of women from low-income households. It assesses the feasibility of remitting *zakat* over the M-PESA mobile based platform. M-PESA is a Kenyan mobile banking app that allows subscribers to send and receive money through their mobile phones without the use of the internet. Mobile banking can help create a potential revenue stream for a crowd sourced pool of social finance to support health care expenditure and other public services. It can help redistribute wealth and income and mitigate socio-economic inequalities. Mobile banking can be used to receive and transfer zakat funds towards those purposes. However, discussions on redistribution have tended to focus more narrowly on the political assessment of the fiscal system that governs how a nation targets social spending to improve lives (Greer and Elliott, 2019; Boix, 2003). Such institutional determination of redistribution has resulted in national economic orders that generate inequalities preventing those at the lowest socio-economic position and women in holding the state, the market, and the financial system accountable (Bowles, 2012; Fraser and Honneth 2003).

The attitudes of these state actors towards redistribution determine their political, legal, and economic approaches to accessing capital and labour, and setting out the structure of property rights that explains what kind of things can be owned and by whom, how they can be acquired, transferred, or forfeited. These attitudes barricade against women's access to finance limiting what they get, when and how. The origin of this problem arises out of the asymmetrical traditional gender-role divisions where patriarchal norms are core to the social power hierarchy. Men dominate women in the decision-making process. Social practices such as marriage that result in gender division of labour, economic

dependency on men and unpaid work, enable men to capture supremacy over women and reduce their mobility and economic opportunities (Lerner 1986).

It is such gender socialisation practices that are constructed at household levels and are resonated across institutions, that have restricted and excluded women from accessing finance. This Paper argues that such challenges can potentially be mitigated if zakat can be transferred using mobile banking to these women to support their access to finance. Does mobile banking, then have the potential to redistribute zakat to mitigate gender inequality by helping women meet their socio-economic needs? This Paper conceptualises redistribution from a private finance perspective. Indeed, questions on redistribution have been and are largely addressed within the public finance literature (Mumford, 2019; Latif, 2016; Boix, 2003; Lambert, 2001; Nee, 1989). A departure from the public finance perspective that results in redistributive choices is necessary if the world is to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) target of *"leaving no one behind"*. Hence, the role of non-state Muslim actors also becomes crucial to address redistribution. In this regard, this Paper uses a Faith Based Organisation's (FBO) approach to providing funds through mobile banking to support women meet their development needs. This offers fresh insights on two important aspects. First, into the role of redistribution through private finance and second, construing as part of private finance, available religious funds to meet development needs. This is where the idea of *zakat* can be assessed as contributing towards bridging gender inequality and to foster redistribution.

Mobile banking, arguably the next iteration of development models, is focused around creating a societal impact. This can be achieved through a timely matched demand for income and its supply by Muslim *zakat* payers. This can have the potential to revolutionise redistribution as an overlap between public and private finance practices. By focusing on a case study of *'Zakat Kenya,'* a Nairobi based FBO that crowd sources Muslim funds for economic improvement of women, relying partly on mobile banking, this Paper discusses how Zakat Kenya supports feminist inspired redistribution to promote tax justice. Accordingly, the next sections are structured as follows.

The Paper highlights the research questions and theoretical assumptions. The theory underpinning the Paper's analysis on the use of *zakat* to support the economic improvement of women is based on tax justice and social extraction. Taken together, these theories suggest that redistribution can also be facilitated by non-state actors who apply their own norms in regulating how to spend their

collective revenue towards improving the lives of women living in poverty. The Paper starts by highlighting the need for redistribution using taxes, extends the concept of conventional tax to include *zakat* and justifies this position by interrogating whether the Kenyan fiscal space and its constitution can recognise *zakat* as part of a tax system that supports the state to promote social and economic wellbeing. The next section discusses the qualitative and empirical based analysis of the role the FBO has played in using mobile banking to redistribute *zakat* towards women led income generating activities. Whether *zakat* contributes to the social and economic improvement of people is examined by inquiring into a specific case study of Mama Riziki. The Paper employs the discursive approach. Its empirical evidence is gathered using mixed methods. Thereafter the Paper concludes the discussion commenting on how two independent fiscal regimes can coordinate their norms to achieve redistributive justice. The interviews with Zakat Kenya officers provided sufficient data that forms the basis of this Paper. The permission to carry out interviews in Nairobi was granted by the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation in Kenya under licence number NACOSTI/P/21/9445.

2.0 Framing the Argument: Tax and Redistribution in Fiscal Systems

Globally, in 89% of households, women provide unpaid care work (Rodriguez, 2021). In Kenya, women account for more than 50% of the working population in informal sectors (World Bank, 2020). These statistics indicate that unpaid care work and working in the informal sector restrict women's access to finance. These financial restrictions are partly because of cultural barriers framing gender roles, and institutions structured towards a service economy that is under the representative of women (Abraham, 2019; Enloe, 2017; Witz, 1992). Further, the market's emphasis on minimum state intervention and freedom of trade and capital has steered redistribution away from addressing gender related socio-economic inequalities. Redistribution has, instead, been fostered to stimulate the growth of private markets, and to provide to entrepreneurs a path for socio-economic mobility (Besley and Coate, 1991). It has created gendered wealth and income asymmetries and deepened gender inequalities in accessing finance.

Thus, whether mobile banking can bridge this inequality gap remains to be seen. This Paper attempts to explore how the concept of redistribution can be examined using *zakat*. It explains how Zakat Kenya in Nairobi matches *zakat* to meet development needs of women looking for financial access to improve their

economic well-being. The nexus between *zakat* and redistribution is advanced here by broadening the conventional understanding of tax to drawing in the Islamic funds purposively paid out for socio-economic improvements. The use of the word tax is usually understood by its coercive nature. Tax is an obligation based on the law. In Kenya, it is imposed under various statutes, the main law being the Income Tax Act, (revised edition, 2021). Under Islamic law, the *Quran* imposes the mandatory payment of *zakat* (Quran: Surah al Tawbah, verse 60). The payment of tax is secured by a functioning government operating within a legal system or by way of social extraction. The payment of *zakat* is made by taking God as a witness even in the absence of the revenue collecting authority. So, how does *zakat* relate to redistribution within the Kenyan constitutional legal system that does not recognise religious law as part of the norms establishing its tax system. This argument is established in the next section.

2.1 Societal Responsibility toward Redistribution

Every post-colonial state approaches its fiscal history in the context of the tax rules that were set out by the imperial power (Latif, 2022). This approach has not been challenged only because those tax rules gained international recognition as state practice in generating legal revenue through taxing income and profits. As a result, state formation following decolonisation adopted the imperial tax rules that were not reflective of indigenous practices in mobilising sources of revenues (Latif, 2020). The presence of Muslims in Kenya since the 7th century (Schoff, 1912; Huntingford, 1980) means that their contribution towards household economic improvement through *zakat* should be considered as part of the cognate forms of redistribution and as part of a fiscal system historically present as part of Kenya's indigenous social system. However, such analyses are rare. This is because tax is construed as bureaucratic and as a right of the state preserved under the social contract (Sheild Johannson 2020; Meagher 2018; Roitman 2007).

The social contract, western in its conceptualisation, omits religious funds to form part of the taxing state. Kenya had the opportunity to pick up on the practice of *zakat* as a source of domestic revenue but because of the law and religion divide, this consideration was never explored since independence. *Zakat*, therefore, remains excluded as part of public finance. Such exclusion also stripped its construction as a tax. Instead, analogies to the Christian tithe are made in reference to *zakat*, thereby removing it from forming part of the tax system of a constitutional state such as Kenya.

While the fiscal potential of the state is limited by the private economy's taxable capacity, which in turn determines state policy on redistribution, under

the Islamic fiscal system, redistribution responsibility lies within the social structure. The nexus between redistribution and social structure is the preserve of *zakat*. *Zakat*, in Kenya, is a social fact and as such plays a part in redistribution at household level. Just like the role of tax in development, *zakat* also fosters development (Powell, 2010; Kahf, 1995). While state taxes foster development at the national level, *zakat* fosters such development at individual or household level (Kahf 1995). As such, state taxes and *zakat* do have a potential to promote redistribution.

A *zakat*-based redistribution is the transfer of financial resources from private-to-private use and has the potential to achieve tax justice at the individual level. While at the state level, the government assumes that every citizen will be able to access public goods and services, the philosophy of *zakat* assumes that not every person will be able to access socio-economic goods and must, therefore, be supported individually. Being a tax imposed and governed under Islamic law, its distributive justice is prioritised for poor beneficiaries.

Relatedly, the role that mobile banking can play in redistribution should be examined in the context of *zakat*. Mobile banking, unless it is taxed by the state and the revenue matched to financing specific development goals, does not espouse tax justice. But when mobile banking is used by FBOs to provide access to finance to the unbanked and financially excluded persons from the financial system, its role in supporting redistribution becomes clear. FBOs govern social relations within a community and have the potential to generate revenue to provide development needs. Their role in social extraction and contribution to development, either independently or in coproduction with the state, is increasingly being recognised by scholars (Lust and Rakner, 2018; Beard, 2007; De Weerdt and Dercon, 2006; Besley, 1995; Fafchamps, 199; Udry, 1990; Platteau and Abraham, 1987). In the context of redistribution, faith-based contribution as part of social extraction for community development is critical to local development.

2.2 Social Extraction and Redistribution

Social extraction is influenced by social institutions, which include the rules that govern extraction (Lust and Rakner, 2018). With FBOs some of these rules include the obligation to pay *zakat* and the conditions around its use, which under Islamic law require *zakat* to be paid only to specific beneficiaries (the poor, needy, debtors, etc). Bhattamishra and Barrett (2008) relying on Ostrom (1990) convincingly argue that community (religious) norms, or local social institutions

have the potential to support political institutions to meet development needs. They can do this by determining how communities can support individual economic needs by soliciting community resources and redistributing them towards areas and people who need it the most. This theory of social extraction supporting redistribution has also been confirmed by Lust and Rakner (2018) as part of the development literature that highlights altruism and reciprocity.

Studies on altruism by Lust and Rakner (2018), Beard (2007), De Weerdt and Dercon (2006) and Besley (1995) often assume that only bilateral relations between individuals drive behaviour; for instance, that contributions to the elderly are an exchange only between the individual donor and the elderly recipient. However, if the community has a rule that the better endowed should aid the elderly (particularly when related to them) and punishes those who break that rule, then the threat of third-party punishment rather than altruism may explain the contributions. This Paper does not reject the notion that some individuals may contribute simply because they believe it is the right thing to do (Barkan et al, 1991) or because they feel close to the community (Fong and Luttmer, 2007), but expect that altruistic actions are conditioned on broader social and religious rules.

In FBOs there is a defined sense of community bound by religious norms, in which individuals view obligations and welfare in religious terms—akin to what Coleman (1990) calls a *"communitarian ideology"*—which facilitates the development and maintenance of social institutions. When this is present, individuals are more likely to view the demands on them as legitimate and to engage in third-party enforcement, hence the nexus between FBOs and redistribution. There is evidence, drawn from literature on both taxation and social extraction, that individuals hold such views. Bodea and LeBas (2016), Fafchamps (2003), Lieberman (2003), and Platteau (2000) note that people are willing to pay taxes that they see as benefiting the group they belong to, even if they themselves do not benefit.

State taxation also focuses on geographically defined communities (at the national, regional, or local level). As such, communities can also organise along the lines of religion to mobilise their available funds for development (Bhattamishra and Barrett 2008). FBOs are religion-focused institutions outside of the state that actors utilize to solicit resources. They are linked to communities, often defined by ethnicity, religion, occupation, or location, that may be overlapping. Relatedly social extraction by Zakat Kenya is linked to a clearly defined community – poor women, usually from low-income households.

The development of the post-colonial state into a modern tax state has suffused tax with development. This nexus has been strengthened through the logic of redistribution. It conceptualises the state as using taxes to intervene into the economic order by ensuring equitable provision and access to public goods and services. Arguably, the logic of redistribution seeks to ensure a justice-based integration of people within the economic, social, political, legal, and administrative structures of the state. Similar are the legal norms on *zakat* under Islamic law. Islam as a legal system itself lends normative quality to the conceptualisation of *zakat* as tax. As a fiscal system recognised under Article 2(4) of the Kenyan Constitution the analogy of *zakat* to taxation confirms the existence of a hybrid fiscal system; one operational at state level, and the other, as a social fact. Article 2 (4) recognise norms constructed outside the Constitution as long as the norms conform to the Constitution. Articles 169 and 170 which established the *kadhis* courts (Islamic courts), recognise Islamic sources of law. Such fiscal pluralism permits broadening our understanding of redistribution to result out of the two socio-legal systems.

Zakat, therefore, can improve representation and help make Muslim payers more responsive to the needs of their fellow citizens. It can create a potential revenue stream for a crowd-sourced pool of privately sourced finance to meet, for example, health care expenditure and other public services at community level. The use of *zakat*, when combined with appropriate public spending, can help redistribute wealth and income and mitigate socio-economic inequalities. Having set out these theoretical underpinnings related to tax justice in the context of *zakat*, the next section examines the role that a FBO has played in using mobile banking to redistribute *zakat* towards women led income generating activities.

3.0 M-PESA Led Tax Justice: From Financial Patriarchy to Financial Feminism with *Zakat*

The argument of fiscal systems approach to redistribution and conceptualising *zakat* as a tax practice by the Kenyan Muslims provides fresh insights into the idea of tax justice. The idea of tax justice negates gender discrimination. Hence, this section examines whether Zakat Kenya, a Nairobi based FBO, has had any impact in fostering redistribution using mobile banking to provide *zakat* to financially excluded poor women supporting their income generating activities.

This section analyses the empirical evidence gathered from interviews with Zakat Kenya officers and reviewing the official documents shared by them. Structured interview questionnaires were designed to ask the following questions. First, what sources of revenue did the FBO have access to, from whom and if

there were any conditions governing the distribution of the received funds. Second, to what extent did the FBO rely on mobile banking. Third, the role that the FBO played in meeting the development needs of women. Fourth, the methods used to collect and distribute the received funds. Fifth, to what extent does the FBO consider the role it plays in fostering redistribution. The discursive approach was utilised to understand and analyse the answers to these questions.

2.3 *Zakat* as Part of Tax Justice

Zakat has a socio-legal side to it. So often, locked out state tax measures, it is not present in the literature on fiscal sociology in spite of its important contribution with regards to the rights and obligations of *zakat* payers to promote social welfare. This is because *zakat* does not form part of a non-Islamic state's taxation laws. However, the theory of social extraction and its potential towards supporting redistribution, advances the reconstruction of tax justice to also be understood through the lens of Islamic fiscal law. Tax justice, seen as a function of social control, enables readjustment of economic power between social groups and combatting social abuses. Technology has shown its potential to aid in this. These aspects are discussed next in the context of the role of FBO in using mobile banking to promote redistribution towards poor women in Nairobi, thereby strengthening tax justice.

In the traditional Kenyan society where, patriarchal norms are core to the social power hierarchy, men dominate women in the decision-making process. Social practices such as marriage that result in gender division of labour, economic dependency on men and unpaid work enable men to capture supremacy over women and reduce their mobility and economic opportunities. Such gender socialisation practices that are constructed at household levels have restricted and excluded some women from accessing finance. Whether mobile banking provides an opportunity for a paradigm shift in gender relations and contributes to breaking apart the gender barriers to finance is the focus of this Paper.

Patriarchy has been described by Shepherd (2019) as a system of power in which male privilege and superiority over women are manifested, institutionalised, and self-reproducing across a society as a whole. Patriarchy has also been described as a historical creation which places the family as a core unit and basic foundation of social organisation by assembling gender roles for different sexes at households (Lerner, 1986). Financial decision making at household levels is usually guided through the patriarchal gender relations. This leads to economic discrimination and exploitation of women and is a major

impediment to their empowerment. The mobile banking's emancipatory financial approach is resulting in the transformation of the social norm in traditional societies that vests financial decision making as part of the family governance structure from the patriarchal system to a feminist one.

3.1 Mobile Banking and Redistribution

Mobile banking represents the combination of finance and technology. It is the resulting combination between the finance and technology sectors and relates to the whole plethora of technology that is used in finance to facilitate trade, business or interaction and services provided to the consumer. Mobile banking can be seen as an economic industry composed of companies that use technology to make financial systems more efficient (McAuley, 2015). It presents a form of integration of technology into the area of local and transnational financial services.

Kenya's M-PESA platform, developed through a public-private partnership between the Department for International Development (DFID) and Vodafone, and its partner in Kenya, Safaricom, is a bank tech innovation that allows mobile users with a Safaricom sim card to access the platform on their phones to store, send, receive, and borrow money. The development of the mobile phone from simple text messaging to the provision of mobile money accounts has brought in greater access to finance which previously was restricted by the financial industry to the formally banked population with the ability to offer security.

M-PESA, arguably, then provided the first shift against the gendered implications of the financial structure. Women with a mobile phone could access finance directly and secretly. Their husbands or male member of their household being unaware of the received funds would not be able to control it. Studies by Shohel et al (2021) examining the role of microfinance institutions in supporting women led projects revealed that women sometimes have little or no control over their loans, with the husband or male family member making all decisions. M-PESA, thus, provided women with greater control and decision making over their funds.

3.2 *Zakat* Kenya and Redistribution towards Women Economic Empowerment

Historically, women have faced multiple challenges, among them poverty, unemployment, limited access to land, legal and social discrimination in many forms, sexual abuse, and other forms of violence (Mikell, 1997; Lombard and

McMillan, 2013; Eastin and Dupuy, 2021). All these interlocking problems, alongside patriarchy, have contributed to their financial disempowerment and excluded them from planning and financing their own development projects. The idea behind forming Zakat Kenya in Nairobi was to help empower the poor by channelling funds to support their low-income, to purchase food and medical supplies for poor households and to support payment of their children's school related expenses. Zakat Kenya also specifically supports women and designs small informal projects for them after assessing their skills. In so doing, the FBO seeks to support their basic needs approach by coming up with income-generation strategies and skill development for women drawn upon the use of *zakat*.

Zakat Kenya is a registered FBO under the Kenyan law. Its office is situated on the first floor in Masjid Rahma in the Hurlingham area, in Nairobi County. Its primary objective is to use *zakat* towards socio-economic improvement. It is run by a group of youth, mainly men who are working professionals but have dedicated time to match the supply of *zakat* with the demand for funds from poor households. While the FBO accepts *zakat* in cash, the majority of the *zakat* payers remit the funds via the M-PESA platform. Zakat Kenya is not limited to only accepting *zakat*, but also receives *sadaqa* (financial charity), which is usually donated frequently. In comparison, *zakat* is paid annually, and is usually substantial in amount. For example, the minimum individual amount paid in *sadaqa* is Kenya Shillings 20 (USD 0.20 calculated at the rate of 1USD = 100Kshs) and KShs 5000 (USD 50) in *zakat*. The maximum individual amount paid in *sadaqa* is Kshs 1000 (USD10) and Kshs 250,000 (USD2500) in *zakat*. Having perused the accounting books of Zakat Kenya, the total *zakat* received in 2019 amounted to Kshs 1,908,500 (USD19085) collectively contributed by 280 Muslims.

3.3 Achieving Distributive Justice through Zakat

Zakat is based on the principle of distributive justice. It conceives social interaction as the basis for apportioning resources vertically among its members. Its aim is to distribute wealth across members of society in so far as it increases their welfare. Guided along this thinking, Zakat Kenya provides to poor households by supporting the household head (usually a male) to start a small sized, informal business enterprise. Women from poor, low-income households are also separately supported. Zakat Kenya has helped several women led households start a specific catering business, such as selling *'mahambri na baazi'* (type of doughnut with pea beans) for breakfast, *'maharagwe na chapati'* (kidney

beans and a type of local tortilla wrap) for lunch, and setting up small roadside kiosks to sell vegetables, milk, oil, and bread. The organisation has helped women secure business leases and pay rent on their behalf in advance for two or three months to support these women to start their businesses. The FBO seeks out *zakat* which is remitted to the organisation via its M-PESA platform and directly sent out to the women whose project is being supported. The example of Mama Riziki is used to explain the process.

3.4 Case Study: Mama Riziki

Mama Riziki is a 36-year-old mother with four (4) children. She lives in Kibera, the largest slum area in Nairobi County. Her husband is a *jiko* maker (charcoal stove) and sets out for work daily looking for customers. He sits by the roadside under a sign advertising his services at the entrance to the Kariokor market in Nairobi. Work is not *guaranteed*. Mama Riziki works as a house maid earning a daily wage of Kshs 200 (USD 2). They both support each other in meeting their household's basic needs. Mama Riziki approached Zakat Kenya for financial help. The organisation instead interviewed Mama Riziki to get an idea on how to help her secure a sustainable stream of income. After the interview, a decision was made to support Mama Riziki start a food business from home and deliver the food to Kirinyaga road near the bus station in Nairobi. The site was seen as an attractive location to target travellers. Mama Riziki would be selling *'maharagwe na chapati'* during lunch hours at a cost of Kshs 25 for the chapati and Kshs 60 for the maharagwe.

The costs of procuring an annual licence from the city council to sell food, the purchase of food items, cooking utensils, a gas cooker, a fridge, cutlery, takeaway food containers, 2 large hotpots to carry the food items in, and transport costs from Kibera to Kirinyaga road was initially covered by Zakat Kenya. Mama Riziki was trained on how to plan a budget and manage her accounts. An officer from Zakat Kenya would help her set up the food business and guide her until she was confident to run the business on her own and properly manage the funds. Mama Riziki was supported for two months, and all the income made during the two months was properly apportioned between meeting her daily needs and saving towards her business expenses. Mama Riziki was required to deposit all income received daily, after deducting her basic needs, to her M-PESA account. The total amount required to support Mama Riziki start up her food business was calculated at Kshs 51280 (USD513). The table below summarises these expenses.

Item	Cost in Kenya Shillings
House rent for 2 months	7,000
New gas cooker	8,000
A small fridge	7,000
Cooking utensils	12,000
Takeaway food containers	2,000
Hotpots	3,500
20kg flour	2,400
20kg kidney beans	3,500
10kg oil	2,500
6kg salt	180
Return transport costs for 2 months	3,200
Total	**51,280**

Mama Riziki's profile was shared by *Zakat* Kenya on its Facebook Page and website and zakat payers were asked to contribute towards her economic improvement. Four *zakat* payers contributed towards the targeted amount. The money was sent through M-PESA. In her first month she earned Kshs 17,925 (USD179) compared to Kshs 6000 (USD60) that she would have earned as a house maid. To continue supporting herself, Mama Riziki needs a monthly income of about Kshs 10,100 (USD 101). Her first earnings from zakat, show her potential to generate her required monthly income.

Saving money on her M-PESA account and transacting over her phone gave Mama Riziki full control over how she wanted to spend her money without seeking approval from her husband or giving him access to her savings. Her *zakat* financed food business resulted in reducing her household poverty, raising her income, enabling her to save funds for future investments and because she contributed significantly to the household expenses, it gave her power to make her own decisions.

Currently, in Kenya, transactions conducted over the mobile banking platform are taxed. For example, making payments using M-PESA attracts transaction fees. Smart phones have supported socio-economic development by permitting women, for example, to receive crowd sourced charity and simultaneously make payments using only their phones towards purchasing flour, rice, eggs, meat, milk, beans and make meals from these items for sale. The regulation of M-PESA and imposing transactions costs for making or sending payments facilitates government to achieve its socio-economic obligations. However, this obligation is not because of government's redistributive effect but

that of the private sector, as observed through the case study of Mama Riziki. In earning her income, Mama Riziki contributes to the development of the Kenyan economy. The transaction costs she pays to transact using her M-PESA account forms part of the pool of sources of revenue available to the government. This in turn empowers her to seek accountability from the state and hold the government responsible for the provision of social services. Mobile banking, being a convenient model for social extraction, connecting wealthy citizens with the poor to help them seek out income streams provides some insight into the nexus between tax and redistribution as understood in the Islamic sense.

3.0 Conclusion

The wealth of an economy and its distributive structures can be influenced by many factors relevant to economic growth. This can include *zakat*. The conservative approach which takes only state law to represent the epitome of tax law perpetuates the legal centralist beliefs about the pre-eminence of state law which fiscal pluralism is supposed to undermine. *Zakat*, governed by Islamic fiscal law is part of a fiscal system recognised under the constitution of Kenya in so far as it conforms to the Constitution.

The Kenyan society is filled up with a multiplicity of normative orders that justify social extraction, which should be explored as part of achieving redistribution. The findings here have revealed that *zakat* based conscious financing can improve livelihoods at a household level. The Paper has shown that *zakat* can achieve redistributive justice through financial inclusion. Zakat Kenya and the M-PESA platform have facilitated the potential for Mama Riziki to earn her living. This is one case showing a positive financial impact. It may not be sufficient to generalise, but it shows the potential of *zakat* to support income growth and access to finance.

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Empowering Kenyan Maasai Women Through Cultural Bomas Tourism

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Abstract

The focus of this article is on the empowerment of Maasai women through tourism. Using cultural bomas tourism as a case study, the article explores the different ways this form of tourism is contributing to the empowerment of Maasai women in the Amboseli region; a rural setting where tourism is a thriving industry. This article draws on data from a larger ethnographic study whose focus was Maasai involvement in tourism development. The data used in this article was gathered through primary sources such as participant observation; group and key informant interviews; as well as secondary sources. The results revealed that cultural bomas tourism was making positive contributions in empowering Maasai women in five realms namely: social, economic, psychological, political, and educational. The study concludes that, while to some extent tourism was empowering Maasai women, the benefits they accrued were not big enough to transform their livelihoods and improve their standards of living. However, it is suggested that if well managed, Maasai women's involvement in tourism can, in the long run, lead to their empowerment.

Key Words: Amboseli, Cultural bomas, Development, Empowerment, Maasai, Tourism, Women.

1.0 Introduction

Globally, women and girls make up slightly more than fifty percent of the total population (Boserup, 1970; Wallerstein, 2006; Ondicho, 2021). Despite their numerical strength, women are generally under-represented in all realms of life,

and many times are poorer than their male counterparts. Gender inequality was identified by Boserup (1970) in her pathbreaking seminal volume *Women's Role in Economic Development* and in the *Beijing Platform of Action* in 1995 as a key obstacle to women's advancement and development. Studies have shown that this is specifically the case for rural indigenous women who have lower access to productive resources and services, fewer livelihood choices, lower levels of education, and lower social status than urban women and men (Scheyvens, 2000; Irandu & Shah, 2014; Moswete & Lacey, 2015). While women play a vital role in economic development, unlike men, their contribution is undervalued in a deeply patriarchal society (Moswete & Lacey, 2015). However, recently gender equality has emerged as a top priority on the international development agenda. Subsequently, gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls was designated as Millennium Development Goal number three (MDG 3) Ampumuza et al, (2008) and currently as the fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5) (UNWTO, 2020). Empowering women has been acknowledged as a vital element in building stronger economies, poverty reduction, and for the success of the sustainable development goals. As a result, many countries around the globe have established policies, programmes, and ministries to address the problems facing women and empower them to participate fully in society.

Tourism has been widely acknowledged across the globe as a powerful potential tool for empowering women in multiple ways through income generating opportunities and provision of jobs in both small- and large-scale tourism related enterprises (Moswete & Lacey, 2015; UNWTO, 2020). This is especially possible because worldwide, women constitute a large majority of employees and entrepreneurs in the tourism sector. Tourism can unlock women's potential by fully engaging them which will result into poverty alleviation, sustainable development, and women empowerment because of its labour-intensive nature, wide geographical spread, and easily accessible opportunities for marginalized groups such as women (Makombe, 2007; World Bank, 2009; UNWTO, 2021). Furthermore, tourism has been shown to be an effective catalyst for gender equality and the empowerment of women because it offers destination communities' unrestricted opportunities to sell goods and services, to diversify and supplement their sources of income, employment opportunities for local people especially women, and enhance local economic growth (UNWTO, 2021).

In recent years many initiatives that seek to reduce the existing gender power imbalances and empower women through tourism have emerged globally. The UNWTO in its *2020 Global Report on Women in Tourism* advances the claim

that, in addition to tackling poverty and gender disparities, tourism can provide women with an easy access to opportunities for active participation in leadership, entrepreneurship, and in the workforce (UNWTO, 2020; McCall & Mearns, 2021). Compared to other economic activities, tourism, especially community-based tourism (CBT) is arguably one of the easiest and quite lucrative sectors for women without education to join. Community-based cultural tourism has been shown to be an ideal tool for empowering indigenous women in rural remote areas because it utilises locally available resources, offers flexible hours of work; allows women to combine work with domestic chores, and does not require formal education which normally would make it hard for women to be employed in the formal sector (Ondicho, 2017). This illustrates the potential value and significance of tourism towards empowering women to manage their lives.

The tourism industry is the second largest sector of the economy of Kenya. Since her independence in 1963 Kenya has relied on mass tourism revolving mostly around wildlife safaris to boost its foreign exchange reserves and create employment opportunities while reducing the adverse effects on the social and natural environment (Irandu & Shah, 2014; Ondicho, 2018). Unluckily, there is limited domestic capital to finance the development of the country's tourism infrastructure. As a result, foreign investors own and control much of the industry. Furthermore, wildlife tourism is concentrated on a few locations, predominantly in the Maasai Mara, Tsavo, and Amboseli regions in the country's south. While the game parks and reserves in these regions generate substantial amounts of benefits, local communities have not gained much from wildlife tourism (Stanonik, 2005; Ondicho, 2018). Much of the tourism revenues from these regions are shipped to the National Treasury for appropriate distribution. Unfortunately, wildlife tourism has had some negative effects; it has triggered substantial social disruption through dislocation of indigenous communities to create room for the conservation of wildlife, thus loss of access to critical livelihood resources and land. To add insult to injury, the communities are often side-lined from involvement in tourism development (Ondicho, 2010).

The government of Kenya has over the past decades implemented a policy of supporting and encouraging CBT around wildlife protected areas as means of sharing the benefits and environmental footprints of tourism more broadly. The Maasai represent one of the communities that have embraced a novel approach to harness their culture for the tourist dollars. They have started to invest in cultural bomas, also known as manyatta tourism, and assumed an entrepreneurial role (Ondicho, 2010; Ritsma & Ongaro, 2020). A cultural boma is a purpose-built

'model village' intended to attract tourists. Such villages offer tourists the opportunity to meet the Maasai on their own terms and to learn more about their exotic culture, purchase their handicrafts, take special photograph of the Maasai in their ritual dress, and experience other aspects of their exotic culture. Cultural bomas are an indigenously home-grown tourism initiative through which the Maasai seek to harness their culture for the tourist dollars, thus putting control in local hands which gets the tourists to spend their money directly into the hands of poor people. Mitchel and Ashley (2010) have argued that community based cultural tourism can play a critical role in stimulating economic development, complementing, and diversifying local sources of livelihood, improving the welfare and well-being of host communities, and in alleviating poverty.

Community based tourism ventures present Maasai women with a rare opportunity to actively participate in tourism, take ownership and exert closer local control over the industry. Studies suggest that CBT not only tackles poverty through income generation, but it also empowers the poor and marginalized groups, including women. The CBT is a relatively easy form of tourism to enter compared to a variety of other economic sectors. However, little research has been conducted to explore how Maasai women's involvement in cultural bomas tourism has empowered them. Thus, there is a paucity of empirical literature on the empowerment of women through tourism in Kenya as a case study in a developing country. This study, therefore, sought to establish the ways in which cultural bomas tourism, as one variant of community-based tourism, is fostering the empowerment of Maasai women so that they can contribute meaningfully to sustainable development in the Amboseli region of Kenya.

1.1 Women's Empowerment and Cultural Tourism

Empowerment according to the World Bank refers to *"the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes"* (World Bank, 2011: 1). In the same vein, Kabeer (2001) has defined the concept empowerment as *"the expansion of people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them".* These definitions imply that empowerment is a multidimensional and deeply contextual concept. It is a process and not just a state or an outcome (Moswete & Lacey, 2015). While there is little consensus on the exact definition, empowerment is understood as a multidimensional and deeply contextual concept which is widely understood to include equal access to productive resources and opportunities, same rights, and obligations for both

genders, self-determination, freedom, or the power to make independent decisions about one's life (Bishop & Bowman, 2014; Moswete and Lacey, 2015).

Empowerment of host communities has long been recognised as a precondition for sustainable tourism development (Joo et al., 2020). Research has shown that tourism makes very useful contributions to the empowerment of people and communities in different locations and cultural contexts (Maruyama & Woosnam, 2020; Scheyvens, 2000). Scholars Joo et al. (2020) and Maruyama & Woosnam (2020) have argued that empowerment is important in marginal areas and to marginalized groups, including women. However, different scholars have proposed different models to guide the academic analysis of women's empowerment (Joo et al., 2020; Kabeer, 2005; Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Scheyvens, 2000). This article will utilise the four domains of empowerment proposed by Scheyvens (1999, 2000) namely the economic, psychological, social, and political dimensions to analyse tourism-induced women empowerment (Kabeer, 2005; Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Scheyvens, 2000). Given that women, compared to men, often have lower access to education in a variety of contexts, coupled with the widely recognized positive impacts of education on the above four aspects of empowerment, educational empowerment is added to the proposed women's empowerment framework (Kabeer, 2005; Moswete & Lacey, 2015).

Economic empowerment has been defined by Timothy (2002: 152) as the *"long-term financial benefits spread throughout a destination community"*. (Joo et al. (2020) Kabeer (2005) and Scheyvens (2000) further state that tourism can promote economic empowerment through opening new markets for locally produced goods and when tourists spend directly into the hands of poor people, thus leading to improvements of women's power to own and exert control over productive resources, such as capital, land, employment, earnings, entrepreneurial opportunities, and economic competence in and outside the domestic spheres. Political empowerment mainly involves giving women a voice in the planning, organisation, and management of tourism enterprises; the inclusion of women in leadership positions; political representation and participation in the decision-making processes in the family, community, and wider society (Joo et al., 2020; Kabeer, 2005; Scheyvens, 1999). Social empowerment encompasses a complex array of factors, including improved family and social status, social networks and relations, safety in family and society, equality, freedom over marriage, social inclusion, and improvements in social institutions (Joo et al., 2020; Scheyvens, 2000). Psychological

empowerment emphasizes the 'power within', includes self-confidence, critical consciousness, respect of self and from others, fulfillment, leadership, and creativity (Joo et al., 2020; Scheyvens, 1999). A lack of psychological empowerment would hinder the realization of the other empowerment dimensions.

Education has been suggested as an additional dimension of empowerment due to its important linkages to the other dimensions (Kabeer, 2005; Moswete & Lacey, 2015). For example, improved access to education can significantly improve women's cognitive abilities which, in turn, enhances the capacity to reflect and act upon changing conditions; gain access to information; and develop new ideas (Kabeer, 2005). Educational empowerment usually includes women's initiation into education; enhanced recognition on the part of the self, family, community, and the wider society, of the importance of education to women; improved educational opportunities, including formal education and skill training and capacity improvement (Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Scheyvens, 1999).

The dimensions of empowerment that have been identified are not independent but interact and, at times, overlap (Scheyvens, 2000). For example, psychological empowerment might be enhanced by improved education, economic competence, enhanced social status and political enfranchisement (Boserup, 1970; Scheyvens, 2000). Moswete & Lacey (2015) have shown that social empowerment can be realised with or without political or economic empowerment. Furthermore, the empowerment dimensions exhibit different forms at different scales from the self, family, and community to the wider society (Kabeer, 2005). For example, educational empowerment can be seen as a higher educational pursuit for individuals, enhanced education opportunities for women in the family, community and wider society and recognition of its importance and efforts to improve access to education for women (Kabeer, 2005; Sha & Ma, 2012). Social empowerment may involve enhancement of women's status in the family, social status improvement in the community and greater recognition in the wider society.

1.2 The Amboseli Region

The Amboseli region is in the southern part of Kenya. The region is characterised as a semi-arid to arid zone with low and unreliable rainfall which makes water a key limitation to development (Reid et al., 1999). The area is, however, blessed with a rich diversity of flora and fauna, which also supports a flourishing tourism industry. Many of the inhabitants of the Amboseli region are the indigenous

Maasai pastoralists whose livelihoods are dependent on subsistence livestock herding. Many local communities in this region depend on the natural environment directly or indirectly for their survival (Ondicho, 2010). As a result, there is significant pressure on the environment leading to high levels of poverty, especially among women (Ondicho, 2018). Though international tourism generates significant amounts of revenue, a large majority of the Maasai people who coexist with wildlife and bear most of the costs of conservation which include human - wildlife conflicts, food insecurity, and natural resource depletion, have not benefited much from the tourism industry and are often sidelined from tourism development (Mwale, 2000).

The Maasai people living within the vicinity of the Amboseli National Park have formed groups which have invested in cultural bomas tourism and assumed an entrepreneurial role. While the Maasai were previously excluded from tourism, with the onset of cultural bomas tourism, an increasing number of local people, particularly women, are joining tourism not only to complement and expand the sources of their livelihoods but also to alleviate poverty and enhance economic advancement. Maasai women, therefore, present a superb case study for analysing the contribution of cultural bomas tourism to women's empowerment.

1.3 Methodology

This research endeavour employed many techniques in data collection and analysis. First, direct personal observations during interactions with men and women in the cultural bomas and key people in tourism, including those in the public private sector in the Amboseli region. The author has also lived and conducted consultancy and ethnographic research in the Amboseli region. Previous research by this author has focused on community power and political relations arising from Maasai involvement in tourism development. Consultancies by the author in this region took place in 2015, 2017, and 2019 during which intense observations were made yielding a veritable amount of data.

Secondly, primary data was collected from six Focus Group Discussions comprising 8 to 10 Maasai women directly involved in cultural bomas tourism. During the interviews the researcher tried to create a relaxed, casual, and comfortable environment for all the participants. This enabled all the interviewees to freely participate in the discussions of such issues as their personal attitudes and perceptions towards tourism and its impacts on the daily life of Maasai women, main constraints, and prospects, Maasai's women's involvement in tourism and changes to their lives, and their motivations for undertaking

entrepreneurial activities in tourism. In addition, the discussions also sought to get details on the role of women in cultural village tourism, the benefits that accrued to them, how these benefits were shared among the different stakeholders, and how tourism contributed to their empowerment. The interviewing stopped when no new information was being generated, suggesting that saturation was reached. The FGDs were facilitated by the author while a note taker took notes. However, each of the FGD sessions which lasted for about an hour were tape recorded as well.

Supplementary data was collected from individual interviews withs 8 key informants who included 22 women leaders, 2 development workers, 2 administrators (chiefs), and 2 staffers from the Kenya Wildlife Service. These people were included in this study because of their expert knowledge of tourism in Amboseli. All the key informant interviews were conversational discussions on the principal issues under examination. These conversations promoted a deeper understanding of the issues discussed in the group interviews. The data obtained from the interviews provided very useful backup data on women's empowerment through the cultural bomas tourism. Supplementary evidence was also taken from relevant published and unpublished documents. The available literature was also used to confirm and disconfirm the core findings.

The resultant data were largely qualitative, necessitating the use of thematic and content analysis techniques. Data obtained from individual and group interviews were transcribed and translated into the English language. The written transcripts were reviewed and coded, and emerging themes were broken down into categories and sub-categories which were interpretted interatively. Emerging and recurring themes were identified and grouped together. Interview transcripts were then analysed using content and thematic techniques. Major themes were identified and triangulated following the five dimensions of empowerment highlighted in the literature review above and used in the findings to describe how cultural bomas tourism was empowering women.

2.0 Results and Discussion

The article sought to investigate the contribution of cultural bomas tourism to the empowerment of Maasai women in the Amboseli region of Kenya. To do this, the article has used the five domains of empowerment, namely, political, economic, social, educational, and psychological as proposed by Scheyvens (2000) to analyse the ways cultural bomas empower Maasai women.

2.1 Economic Empowerment

One of the most important ways cultural bomas tourism is empowering Maasai women is through earning them income. For most women in this study tourism was their main source of income (Ritsma & Ongaro, 2002). All the women in this study agreed that their personal incomes from tourism had increased considerably, enabling them to spend more on food and other necessities, leading to improved living conditions at the individual and household levels. Much of the income Maasai women earned was from selling handcrafts and beadworks (curios) directly to tourists. These curios were manufactured by Maasai female entrepreneurs using locally available materials. However, it was difficult to obtain data on individual incomes because no records are kept by the female entrepreneurs. Through personal observations it was estimated that each female entrepreneur on average sold between US$ 100-200 worth of curios a week. The amount of income earned by each woman varies depending on whether it is low or high season. This income from tourism was a much welcome economic opportunity for unsalaried Maasai women without education and skills to secure formal employment. Cultural bomas tourism was basically empowering Maasai women through boosting production and creating a ready market for handicrafts manufactured by Maasai women and enabling them to sell slightly larger quantities at better prices.

Scholars Manyara (2006) and Mbaiwa (2015) suggest that tourism can generate additional income for poor [women] families and households which can contribute to economic diversification. Data from group interviews revealed that, without this extra-income, many Maasai women would not participate in cultural bomas tourism. Most participants stated that they perceived cultural bomas tourism as a viable means of earning income to diversify and supplement their livelihoods (Charnley, 2005; Mbaiwa, 2015). It can be argued that while the income from tourism was not huge, it was providing women and their families with a golden opportunity to increase their incomes, part of which they used to support community development projects and to provide social services that are available to all community members. Cultural bomas tourism can, therefore, be described as a strategy that can promote women's empowerment.

The other way tourism was economically empowering Maasai women was through self-employment. It was observed that nearly all of the tourism entrepreneurs in the cultural bomas are women. The study established that these women are drawn into the cultural bomas tourism because it offered flexible hours of work and schedules that are easy to combine with domestic duties.

Tourism has empowered Maasai women to become self-employed and supplement family income from the comfort of their homes. Most Maasai women in tourism entrepreneurship are without formal education and, therefore, cannot find employment in the formal tourism sectors. The flexibility of the source of income (the activity done at home, in their own time and with low inputs) made cultural bomas tourism particularly attractive to Maasai women. Many interviewees commented that tourism enabled them to earn extra income which they used according to their own priorities thus their enhancing economic independence.

> *I am glad that I have an income and do not need to ask for money from my husband. Now I can purchase anything that I would like without begging for money from my husband. With my income I can pay fees for our children, buy food for the family, and help my siblings and parents. I like it here because I work in the same place where I live so if someone is sick in the family, I can care for them during the day when I take a break from serving our guests unlike someone who works in the fields far from their homes. I am also able to attend other family and community social gatherings.*

The study established that while the income Maasai women earn from tourism is not huge, this was perceived by all the study participants as a good thing because the income has enabled them to take up additional roles both in the public and private realms. This has, in turn, enhanced Maasai women's status within the family and community levels. Furthermore, the participants stated that they invested the income earned from tourism in buying livestock, without consulting their husbands as custom dictates, thereby reducing their vulnerabilities, and increasing their capacities. Existing studies have shown that participation in community-based tourism gradually increases women's financial autonomy, which is a form of women's empowerment (Ondicho, 2010; Scheyvens, 2007). In this respect cultural bomas tourism becomes something that Maasai women can ill afford to ignore or live without because of the socio-economic benefits it engenders.

2.2 Social Empowerment

Traditionally Maasai women are considered inferior to men. However, their involvement in cultural bomas tourism has enhanced the Maasai women's

socioeconomic standing within the family and community. For the individual, recognition of their own value and their contribution to the family and community were frequently cited by interviewees. Even though the status of Maasai women in the family is still low, their involvement in tourism greatly enhanced their economic competence and self-recognition which were a manifestation of advancements in social standing and freedom at the family level. Most of the women in this study stated that they were happier because tourism has not only brought them into contact with foreign tourists but has also enhanced their English language and communication skills.

> *Generally, I get to intermingle with tourists from different parts of the world and through them, I benefit from cultural interactions and exchanges. When some are not in a hurry, they share stories from their countries with me. There is a cultural interaction with visitors.*

The participants of this study indicated that participation in cultural bomas tourism was viewed positively as being appropriate and in tandem with Maasai traditions at the community level. Cultural bomas tourism has given Maasai women an opportunity to expand their social networks without leaving home. Specifically, they had formed women groups, including merry-go-round, welfare and income generating groups within the cultural bomas to support each other, improve their family status, and social standing in the community. These women groups have not only promoted a sense of cohesion and integrity but they have also strengthened their self-worth through meetings, discussions, and doing beadwork. Maasai women have subsequently gained a certain level of social respect which has, in turn, elicited positive comments from the rest of the community because they recognize their contribution to bring benefits to the whole community through tourism activities.

Cultural bomas tourism grants Maasai women high flexibility in location and time which makes it easier for them to achieve an acceptable balance between business and domestic work. This is much appreciated by participants:

> *My family is very supportive to my entrepreneurship in tourism, as it is flexible. If there is domestic work to do, I can easily do it after tourists have left. Working in tourism fits my schedule very well. I enjoy coming doing beadworks and chatting with fellow women.*

This kind of job I do has helped me find friends. I mean, I have white people who used to purchase from me as friends.....when they were here, I taught them how to cook traditional bread and other dishes. I taught them about Maasai women and life. They are my friends now.

Interviewees talked about the happiness of intermingling with tourists from different backgrounds and sharing their cultural heritage and community lifestyles with them. The chance to look at and talk to tourists in a remote area like Amboseli was valuable for many Maasai women. Performing ritual song and dance and enlightening tourists about their culture not only confirms the Maasai's unique cultural identity but also presents Maasai women with an opportunity to share their visions with visitors about their future aspirations in tourism. Many interviewees stated that the exchange of ideas and experiences with tourists was a welcome aspect of tourism. Even though women still must maintain their traditional role in the family, the recognition of their ability to contribute to family and society is increasing.

2.3 Psychological Empowerment

The study established that Maasai women have gained self-confidence that they can achieve their dreams through entrepreneurship in cultural bomas tourism. Most women stated that they have built their confidence to handle their handcraft businesses alone, earn income, and make independent decisions on their expenditures. At the individual level, all interviewees agreed that participation in the cultural bomas tourism has enhanced their self-confidence and encouraged positive self-evaluation and recognition of personal ability and value. In addition, respect from family members and tourists or other visitors are pointed out and appreciated by interviewees:

There are different types of visitors and reporters coming to our working space in the cultural bomas to see us doing beadworks. They take many pictures and speak highly of our beads. It is good recognition for us. We feel very happy and proud to know that.

With life fully confined to the cultural bomas fellow women working together provide chances to chat, exchange and share ideas and feelings, enhancing their psychological and emotional state. Two Key Informants stated that most Maasai women working in tourism often demonstrated strong sense of self-confidence and self-recognition emanating from their feelings of achievements gained from starting and operating a business and bringing many Maasai women together. Creativity, self-consciousness, and self-motivation are important psychological attributes gained through the process of operating a handicraft business.

> *Of course, cultural bomas has opened the door for us to sell our beads! It is a meaningful career. Not only have I benefited from the women around me, but they have also benefited from me!.....If not for tourism, we would never have had a chance to leave scattered homes. Running a business is much more complicated that the making beads. It is not only about a goof quality product, but about management, organisation, sales and marketing and many other things. We are still learning.*

2.4 Political Empowerment

The political empowerment of Maasai women was also mentioned during the individual and group interviews. Interviewees revealed that most women in the cultural bomas tourism do not pursue political power or desire to get involved in political decisions. Their attention revolves around their family and close social networks. Therefore, at the individual level, most women in the cultural bomas do not exhibit higher political empowerment. Nevertheless, through participation in meetings, they have gained some level of political empowerment as they have increased their visibility and prominently featured in leaderships positions within the cultural bomas. Participation in meetings and other decision-making bodies has provided opportunities for Maasai women to make their voices heard and their concerns addressed. Although there is some small improvement in political empowerment, it is not substantial when compared to the other four aspects. However, even this is improving slowly at the community and society levels.

2.5 Education

While education is normally considered as a very important component of social, economic, and psychological empowerment, in this study it as an independent indicator of women empowerment and as a result, it is evaluated separately here.

Although the cultural bomas tourism had not influenced any of the women in this study to pursue formal education, most of the interviewees indicated that they used part of the income from tourism to pay fees and purchase school materials for their children and, sometimes, siblings. Additionally, they indicated that they had attended training seminars and workshops offered by different organisations within the community. Such training sessions have greatly enhanced the Maasai women's capacity to manage their businesses and to undertake joint actions in tourism development. In this respect, it can be argued that Maasai women have gained prominence in their community through the acquisition of new business management skills which have not only allowed them to define mutual objectives and aspirations but also to communicate more confidently with their clients. As one woman remarked:

> *In the past, we used to feel scared to communicate with tourists, but we attended trainings held in the community, we were encouraged and advised on how to conduct business with tourists. Now we are starting to confidently converse with tourists in English.*

Generally, Maasai women have gained extensive knowledge working with other stakeholders on a range of tourism development issues. This has not only strengthened Maasai women's relations with their neighbours but also has enhanced their organisational capacity to pro-actively work with outsiders.

3.0 Discussion and Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that cultural bomas tourism has great potential to empower women through entrepreneurship, income, and job creation. While the benefits that accrued to Maasai women were meagre, and not evenly distributed among all community members, they were playing role in empowering women in five key spheres of empowerment namely: economic, social, political, psychological, and educational. The study revealed that cultural bomas tourism has freed Maasai women from their previous burdens of dependency on men generally, and specifically husbands. Involvement in cultural bomas tourism has offered Maasai women a rare opportunity to earn direct income which they spent as they wished. This article confirms the findings of previous studies which suggest that cultural tourism has great potential to promote gender equality and women empowerment if women have unlimited opportunities to actively

participate in entrepreneurship, ownership, and control of this development process (Ondicho, 2010, Irandu and Shah, 2014).

As is the case in other developing countries, Maasai women had chosen to engage in cultural bomas tourism as a lucrative mechanism for earning income to supplement and diversify their livelihoods as well as attain self-sufficiency at the household level. The finding that the number of women involved in cultural bomas tourism was slightly higher than that of men indicates gradual empowerment. As a result, Maasai women were increasingly becoming more visible in virtually all spheres of community life, including leadership, political, and management positions. In much of the existing literature, tourism is said to be a service oriented, labour intensive, and multidimensional sector with linkages to many other sectors of the economy thus, providing larger opportunity for employment. Hence, it has a wider scope of empowering Maasai women not only through entrepreneurship and benefit sharing but also through granting women a chance to voice their concerns and achieve their aspirations in life

The cultural bomas tourism represents an ideal case study of an indigenously homegrown initiative with enormous potential for promoting gender equality and empowering women employed in their own small-scale handicraft businesses. Certainly, cultural bomas tourism afforded Maasai women a wide range of empowering experiences, including greater opportunities to make independent decisions and choices, engage in cross-cultural interactions and communications with foreign tourists, develop friendships, and to enhance business and language skills. While most Maasai women have traditionally been sidelined from tourism development and benefits, the cultural bomas provide new and welcome pathways to redress previous inequalities thus leading to the empowerment of women because of the relative ease for many poor and uneducated women to join (World Bank, 2009). Thus, it can be concluded that homegrown tourism initiatives have enormous potential to generate income for women, improve their status, contribute to poverty reduction, and achieve sustainable development goals.

Through their involvement in tourism Maasai women have experienced psychological empowerment. This was expressed in terms of increased entrepreneurial drive and belief that working in the cultural bomas tourism could empower them to improve their own living conditions and those of their families. Women in this study had gained the self-confidence not only to make individual and group decisions but also to determine their future destiny (see Hovorka, 2012). By and large, working alongside their husbands and their husbands

granting them the freedom to start their businesses and earn their own income made Maasai women feel supported and encouraged in their quest for empowerment. They regarded their husbands as potential partners in their empowerment which was a good thing.

In conclusion, cultural-bomas tourism is one of the important sources for empowering Maasai women. In Amboseli the cultural bomas tourism is increasingly contributing to women's empowerment albeit on a small scale and at a slow pace. However, there are some teething problems that need to be addressed before the Maasai women's empowerment could be fully realized. Maasai women need capacity building, greater educational opportunities, and financial support to enable them to engage in beneficial entrepreneurial activities, thereby experience greater levels of freedom, autonomy, and agency. Training and capacity building should include entrepreneurship, management, motivation/confidence (empowerment), and leadership skills. The government should put in place laws to regulate the operation of the cultural bomas tourism. The government should also initiate alternative forms of tourism such as ecotourism that have greater potential to deliver more benefits to the marginalized groups than does wildlife safari tourism.

For Maasai women to be empowered through cultural bomas tourism, it is imperative for them to be actively and meaningfully involved in the design, implementation, and review of the tourism policies in Kenya and beyond (Landorf, 2009; Scheyvens, 2000). Both men and women should be granted equal opportunities in the cultural bomas tourism. The study recommends further empirical research amongst other communities in the country to validate the findings of the current study and create new strategies for the further empowerment of Maasai women.

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Special Issue

The Role of the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization in Women's Economic Empowerment: Case of Abakhayo Women, Busia County (1978-2002)

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Abstract

One may be forgiven to assume that there are no women's movements in Kenya today. This is due to the trajectory that women's organizations have taken in the recent past. Apparently, women's movements presently appear to concentrate on the fight for/against issues which may be seen as less urgent such as women representation in leadership and politics; equal access to education and jobs; visibility in the media and literature; two thirds gender rule; etcetera. Seemingly, the expectation of the public is women's organizations that have a direct and tangible effect on the women concerned. Perhaps this is a carryover from the pioneer women's organizations such as the Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO), whose basic aim was to directly impact and lift the socio-economic status of women without having to inject in feministic, or competitive energies. The period 1978-2002 is considered the Golden Era of the organization, which, on realizing that it would be difficult to change the lives of women without economic independence, embarked on introducing income generating projects across the country. "How can women's organizations help foster women's economic empowerment?" The paper attempts to answer this question by exploring the role MYWO played in the economic empowerment of Abakhayo women in Busia County.

Key words: economic empowerment, economic mobilization, MYWO, women's movements.

1.0 Introduction

The concept of empowerment is a core construct in the contemporary world, punctuated by women empowerment, financial empowerment, political empowerment, community empowerment, group empowerment, among others (Tandon, 2016). Empowerment herein is a process or an act of giving authority/power to one or a group of people. It is bequeathing power/authority with a deliberate intention of begetting balance (Sharma, 2020).

Empowerment of women denotes that, women shall enjoy human rights in practice, regardless of gender, as normatively desired. This is instrumentally valuable in prompting agency and economic vibrancy among women to realize and develop their full potential as leaders, talented and productive workers, mothers, caregivers, and often more responsible managers of households (Kardam & Kardam, 2017). Economic empowerment of women refers to providing the necessary rights and responsibilities to women to make them self-reliant (Sharma, 2020).

This study draws from the five levels of the women's empowerment framework, namely, welfare, access, conscientization, mobilization and control where the welfare level denotes an improvement in socio-economic status such as improved nutritional status and income; access implies ability to reach resources and services and organization arising from increased access to resources and services; mobilization implies women pulling together resources for economic empowerment; and control implies women being able to take charge of their economic situation by venturing into various activities (Leder, 2016). But one needs to understand that these five levels of women's empowerment are not really a linear progression but helical and circular along with being inter-connected.

The above levels summarize the goals of the Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization, a countrywide organization with the aim of lifting the status of women. This study focuses on the impact of the Organization on women, in line with the fourth level, through a reflective study on the Abakhayo women of Busia County, Western Kenya. Although the Organization has had a long history, this study focuses on the period between 1978 and 2002, which was the most active period of the Organization as compared to later times when it became affiliated to and recognized by the KANU-run government led by Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, the second president of independent Kenya.

1.1 Problem Statement

Many studies reflect the history of the women of Kenya. Various studies historicize the position of the Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization in women empowerment in Kenya but very few studies interrogate the success or failure of the organization's activities on specific groups of women, a gap this study sought to fill by assessing the impact of the organization on Abakhayo women during the period 1978-2002.

1.2 Study Objective

This study intended to carry out a reflective study of the impact of the activities of the Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization on the Abakhayo women as a way of assessing the economic impact the organization had on women at its peak, that is, 1978-2002.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The study was based on the Agency Theory as propagated by Steven Ross and Barry Mitnic (1973). The Agency Theory attempts to explain relationships and self-interest. It describes the relationship between principals/agents and the delegation of control. It explains how best to organize relationships in which one party (principal) determines the work and which another party (agent) performs or makes decisions (Jensen and Meckling, 1976; Schroeder et al., 2011). To put this into context, David Anderson notes that African studies must always emphasize African agency to development (Anderson, 2002). Agency conservatively denotes acting on behalf of someone else or being a tool through which an agenda is achieved. Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization in this case was one of the agencies through which Abakhayo women were economically empowered.

1.4 Review of Related Literature

This study sought to discuss women's economic empowerment and the role of the Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization. The study, therefore, identified and reviewed empirical literature that discusses the main themes. The critical review outlined in this study is based on the history of women's empowerment in Kenya and the space women's organizations have taken to help empower women economically.

1.5 Methodology

Being qualitative research, this study used a historical research design that involves analysing past events and developing conclusions. The study adopted a critical analysis of available secondary data, heavily relying on archival sources and newspapers. Primary data was collected from oral interviews with eight persons, contemporaries of the selected period.

2.0 Economic State of Women in Kenya Up to 1963: An Overview

Since time immemorial, African women and the economy have been inextricable. Depending on the values of different African societies, women have had varying degrees of economic power and independence. The never-ending patriarchy in most systems has placed them under the authority of men (fathers and husbands) economically but the role of women in the economy is indissoluble. Boserup (1989), while trying to explain gender roles in economic development and division of labour around the world, gives a lot of importance to the role of women in the African society as that of sustainers of the community. According to Boserup, Africa is a region of female farming *par excellence*. Food production and tasks connected to food production were a monopoly of the women throughout African history. The United Nations Organization acknowledges this fact as it notes that 80% of agricultural production in the world is owed to women (UNDP, 2018).

As such, it is expected that due to this vital role bestowed on the women, they should be viewed highly in society. However, as Boserup notes, this is contrary to the reality of the African women, a concept supported by Ndeda (2019). Ndeda notes that although ownership of land and inheritance in the African society was exclusively a preserve of the males, women had free access to the land and food production was mainly by the women. This should have earned a status for the African women but antithetically, women were still seen as subordinate to men and their main role was reproduction for the continuity of the community (Ndeda, 2019).

When British colonialism arrived in Kenya in the late 19th century, its impact on the then existing state of women was unforetold. Although it would generally be assumed that colonialism and westernization would vindicate African women from the supposed ‘chains’ of economic subjugation, many scholars feel that colonialism worsened the state of women in Africa. It would then take years for Kenyan women to regain their position as key players in the

economy. Colonialism assumed that women in the traditional African society were disempowered economically, a concept that may not be entirely true. The colonialists would, therefore, continue this assumed subjugation of women but from a Victorian angle.

As Ndeda says, women in the African traditional society may not have been allowed to own means of production but were allowed to use the means of production to feed the communities. To the African women, being allowed to till the land and provide for their families, was enough economic empowerment. Women were allowed to do other economic activities such as trade, crafts, fishing, gathering, etcetera.

First, colonialism took away from women the right to access land. House-Midamba (1990) argues that the status of Kenyan women deteriorated further during the colonial era as the colonial government legalized patriarchy through measures such as the introduction of individual land ownership and acquisition of title deeds which allowed only the males to own and inherit the land. This denied the women free access to the land they had previously cultivated, being the producers.

Secondly, according to Onsongo (2011), colonial laws disrupted and displaced women's gender roles through the introduction of cash crops, formal education, and the introduction of a monetary economy. While some men secured employment, either on cash crop farms or as clerks in government offices, women remained in rural areas and reserves producing subsistence food. The colonialists grouped women together with the children and thus they put women's labour on the periphery. Alam (2007) argues that women's labour was deemed important on the cash crop farms only when the colonial administrators realized that many men had migrated to towns leaving women on the farms. This showed the colonialists thought the women were inferior to men and could only work as their assistants since women had nothing to contribute to the economy except in the absence of the men. In addition, women would be held back in the rural areas (being denied the chance to seek economic means in towns) as a way of ensuring that the men would come back to the rural areas and still supply labour to the colonialists. This portrayed women only as a tool or a means to an end.

Since the colonial government was mostly interested in male labour, concentrated strategies to improve the males into skilled and semi-skilled workers were put in place. The main strategy was the provision of education. This would equip the males with skills to fit into the available clerical jobs on farms, industries, mission stations and government offices (Oduol, 1993). Therefore, the

initial schools were meant for the boys. With time, the African fathers adopted the same mentality, thus, only educating the boys. The girls, on the other hand, were drawers of wealth through bride prize, which was then converted into school fees for the boys.

The role of the women would then be mostly to ensure there was enough male labour by giving birth to more males. The government would then take interest in the women's education to only ensure that women were taught basic home science which would enable them to bring up a healthy male labour force. They would, therefore, be taught hygiene and childcare to reduce the high mortality rate to guard against reduction of the much-coveted male labour force (Sheffield, 1973).

While a few girls (whose parents accepted conversion to Christianity) were allowed to pursue elementary education, many boys were excelling in education. After elementary school, boys then proceeded to secondary schools, as such schools were available for African boys by 1926 (Doroba, 2018). This excellence would later translate into economic empowerment for the males. The girls, on the other hand, were forced to wait until 1948 to access post-primary education when the first secondary school for African girls would be established – 22 years after the establishment of the first African boy-school. This difference led to a series of missed opportunities for the girls, and this delayed take-off for the females would haunt them for decades, with serious economic implications.

A good example of a missed opportunity was the *'Mboya Airlifts'* of 1959-1963 which saw many Kenyan students go to American and Canadian universities for further studies under the sponsorship of John F. Kennedy's administration. This was meant to produce an African elite class which would help in the Africanization of the soon-to-be independent Kenya (*The East African Standard*, Dec 2, 2016). Unfortunately, not many women benefitted from this lucrative opportunity due to low education or total lack of it as out of the first batch of 81 students, only 13 were female. The aftermath would be the birth of the post-independence working class that lacked female representation. The main consequence of this would be that the males would quickly take up early government jobs in the post-independence Kenya, thus their economic empowerment (Masinde, OI, Busia, 15/10/21). However, another question asked would be if the women who went to study abroad benefitted from the program. The simple answer is *'yes'* but with a notable concern. The women who were absorbed by the program went for *'lower'* courses thus accessed such jobs. Miriam Chege, for example, applied for a Food Science degree through the Nyeri

Catholic Diocese (*The East African Standard*, Dec 2, 2016). She landed at St Mary of the Woods College in Indiana State and on coming back, she couldn't fit in the highly paying government jobs as her course was irrelevant to the situation at the time. She completely failed to get a government job in 1965. She secured a non-governmental job later when the Catholic Church offered her an appointment as head of nutrition at Catholic Relief Services in Kenya. Ms. Chege notes that women graduates joining the public service faced a tougher climb to the top. *"Women got jobs as assistant secretaries, the lowest position of a public officer,"* says Ms. Chege (*The East African Standard*, Dec 2, 2016). The men, on the other hand, were absorbed into high cadre jobs. They became heads of ministries and the provincial administration as well as ambassadorial appointees. This gave the men a better economic footing. In summary, when women missed out on acquiring the main tool for empowerment – proper education, they would then miss out on economic empowerment. This called for a lot of drastic measures to salvage the sorry state of women at the time.

3.0 The Birth of the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization

Ndeda (2006) notes that by the early 1940s, the colonial government realized that the social welfare of the African was directly tied to the political success of the colony. The colonialists, therefore, began to show concern for African life and by extension, African women. They had to redress the situation of African women due to pressure from the international community as well as the European women in Kenya.

The only body fighting for African women at that time was the East African Women's League, which did not reach women at the grass roots (Ndeda, 2006). In 1945 Major H. Sharpe expressed his concern that women were not being mentioned in studies. He stated that unless the standard of African women was raised appreciably, the men would not improve and *"one could not expect a sense of responsibility in the African male unless and until the woman's side was improved"* (The *East African Standard* 12 June 1950).

There was, therefore, late realization that the African women *"so often maligned and so often misunderstood played a far greater role in the day-to-day life and behaviour of the Africans than was generally understood"* (*The East African Standard*, 12 June 1950). The temperament and ability of the housewife left the mark not only on the character and behaviour of the children but affected the actions of her husband. It is for this reason that the colonial government

responded to the European women's call to better the status of the African women in the colony.

European women understood the plight of the rural women who were confined by many children, daily farm chores and meagre cash resources and isolated from larger groups of women with similar interests (Ndeda, 2006). Part of the motivation to organize the groups was the realization that African women were lagging behind African men in development. Eleanor Grant, prominent in the East African Women's League, pointed out this discrepancy in 1952. She stated,

> *The backwardness of African women is a menace to the balance of East African Society, from reasons humane, economic, and hygienic; there are already signs that the advance of African women may come as rapidly and sporadically as has happened in the past decades with men, and it is abvious that European planning, direction, and sympathy must be forthcoming to meet the tide (Ndeda, 2006)*

It is, therefore, through the efforts of the European women within the colony that the Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization was birthed. This became the first organization to fully look at the African woman with a positive eye. The formation of this organization laid ground for the women's organizations that later championed the rights of women and fought for women empowerment in the social, political, and economic spheres. This, therefore, became the beginning of the women's movement in Kenya.

3.1 Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization: at the Grassroots

The Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization was established in 1952 at the height of the struggle for the independence of Kenya. It was formed as a non-political organization, charged with the duty of mobilizing all Kenyan women and promoting their welfare from different dimensions (KNA/REF: AMP/5/58). According to Audrey Wipper's *the Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organisation: The Co-optation of Leadership*, MYWO was the largest voluntary association in Kenya and the only one with a countrywide network of clubs. At the beginning it was organized by a small group of European women under the colonial government's Department of Community Development and Rehabilitation, to promote *"the advancement of African women"* and to raise African living standards (Wipper, 1975).

It started when Nancy Shepherd, Assistant Commissioner for Development and Rehabilitation and a daughter of one of Kenya's pioneer missionaries, the Venerable Archdeacon H. K. Binns, began to organize women's clubs with the aid of volunteers. Professional leadership was supplied by the Commission of Development personnel but the main motivating force came at the local level through volunteers. The wives of administrators, missionaries, technical advisors, and settlers organized branches (Wipper, 1975). African assistants were trained so that, in time, the branches could function under their leadership. From the outset, MYWO came under the patronage of upper-class colonial women, including Lady Mary Baring, the Governor's wife; Lady Eleanor Cole; Lady Worley; Mrs. A.J Beecher, wife of an Anglican Bishop; Mrs. C.H Williams, wife of a P.C; Mrs. T. Hughes, wife of a Provincial Agricultural Officer; the wives of the executives of Roster man Mines; and members of the East Africa Women League (a European voluntary association founded in 1917 for the advancement of women) (KNA/REF: AMP/5/58).

The main goals of MYWO were to improve the economic, social, and political status of women in Kenya by uplifting the standard of living of the rural communities to the level where they could help themselves to enhance their integral development and thus, the development of Kenya (KNA/REF: AMP/5/58). These goals were to be achieved through several objectives which included:

- promoting the qualities of integrity such as honesty, truthfulness, tolerance, service, and friendship as the foundation of all activities of the organization;
- developing the status and conditions of the life of women and girls of all communities in Kenya;
- stimulating discussions among its members on problems affecting women and children in Kenya and to take active steps to bring about solutions to these problems;
- encouraging and stimulating home industries by encouraging members to make, produce and create articles that were to be sold in a shop/s set up and run by the Organization for that purpose; and
- raising funds through subscriptions, gifts, loans, investments, and such other financial activities which can facilitate the achievements of the above aims (KNA/REF: AMP/5/58).

By 1954 there were more than three hundred MYWO clubs across the country and a membership of 37,000 women. That membership rose to 40,690 by 1955 with twelve European and two African Home craft Offices in charge. This rapid rise was attributed to the financial aid from the colonial government and the United Nations. By 1969, the membership was at 80,000 and 90,000 in 1970 (Wipper, 1975). The Organization had successfully penetrated the grassroots, connecting the Headquarters in Nairobi to the many women in the rural areas across the country. Activities would be discussed at the Headquarters in Nairobi and be funded and implemented at the grassroots among women, including such as the Abakhayo women in Busia District through their branches in the districts.

3.2 Maendeleo ya Wanawake in Western Kenya: A Case of the Abaluhya Women of Western Kenya

The Abakhayo, a sub-tribe of the Abaluhya community of Western Kenya, are found mainly in parts of Busia, Mundika, Matayos and Nambale. In addition to bordering other Luhya sub-tribes, namely, the Abasamia and Abamarachi, they also border the Teso to the north and the Baganda to the west (Gumo, 2018).

3.2.1 The Economic State of Abakhayo Women before 1978

Women's economic empowerment among the Abakhayo was never an issue of concern to the women themselves in the precolonial period because, according to Margaret Kunguru (OI, Mundika, 09/10/21), a retired Maendeleo ya Wanawake secretary for the then Busia District, Abakhayo women were freer as compared to other selected Luhya sub-tribes such as the Ababukusu where a woman was not even allowed to stand before men.

In precolonial times the Abakhayo women would engage in economic activities such as agriculture, trade, brewing of traditional beer and fishing. Agriculture was the most practised activity with women planting a variety of crops such as sorghum, millet, cassava, arrowroots, maize (though in small quantities), bananas, legumes, vegetables, etcetera (Gumo, 2018). This shows that although women did not own land, they could access it and till it by virtue of being a daughter or a wife. This was meant to ensure that the woman was able to provide for her family.

Trade would be practised mainly with the neighbouring Samia and Marachi sub-tribes as well as the Baganda and Teso tribes. The women would acquire types of food they didn't have, for example, specific types of bananas and beans from Baganda, pots and beadwork from the Abamarachi and baskets, brooms,

weaved fishing traps, mats and winnowing trays from the Abasamia. Fishing would mostly be done in River Sio and other small rivers scattered across the land (Aseka, 1989). Though not for sale, traditional brew was mainly for events and almost all women were taught how to brew it.

The onset of colonialism did not have a profound impact on the economies of the Abakhayo women at first. This was mainly because the western region was not hard-hit by issues related to land alienation, forced labour, severe taxation or drastic rural-urban migration of males as compared to the situation in Central Kenya. The introduction of cash crop farming and the money economy did little to change the state of Abakhayo women.

Cotton was the main cash crop introduced in the Busia region during the colonial period. While in other places women's labour was not valued, among the Abakhayo it was everyone's affair to work on the cotton farms – men, women, and children. Women even enjoyed to some extent receiving money from cotton proceeds (Kunguru, OI, Mundika, 09/10/21). It is, however, not a secret that the larger percentage of the proceeds would be left with the men. This may not have been an issue because at the time, women were not interested in the accumulation of wealth (savings) as they were mostly just in need of food. Many women were excited about the introduction of money as it improved trading activities (money was lighter). It was also easier to store it for future use (Kunguru, OI, Mundika, 09/10/21).

The status of the women remained the same until the introduction of a new land tenure system – private ownership of land, exclusively by males (Masinde, OI, Busia, 15/10/21). While initially women were allowed to till all land belonging to their fathers or husbands, this right would suddenly vanish when the colonial government began to divide land and issue title deeds. This began to restrict women's access to land thus reducing their empowerment. In addition, not everyone benefited from the new system. The colonialists would use the land as a reward system for the loyal Abakhayo men. First, they had to be Christian converts, yet they were not very familiar with the concept of conversion until sometime later. Second, they had to be proven to be loyal to the whiteman (Masinde, OI, Busia, 15/10/21). Therefore, catechists and colonial chiefs among the Abakhayo would be examples of categories of people who benefitted from the shift in the land tenure system. These were positions which women couldn't occupy at the time.

The introduction of western education was the other change that affected the Abaluhya women's economic empowerment during the colonial period. Since

the government opted to provide education mainly to the males to produce skilled labour, education would eventually become a serious tool for economic empowerment. However, this was not a privilege for all children. First, only children of converts were allowed into the mission schools. Secondly, the males were given priority in the provision of education. Girls' education was very scarce among the Abakhayo at the onset of colonialism, a phenomenon that would continue for years. This was made even worse by the fact that until the 1940s there was only one centre providing education to Africans in the entire Busia District – Nangina Mission (Masinde, OI, Busia, 15/10/21). Very few parents would allow their girls to walk such a long distance in search of education. This would then have a ripple effect that would be felt for decades. Therefore, just like in most other parts of the country, women among the Abakhayo would eventually lag behind as they couldn't access jobs both during the colonial and the postcolonial periods.

When eventually the colonial government realized the need to lift the status of the women and consequently established a women's organization, MYWO, the wives of the Provincial Commissioners would take up the mantle of putting in place the various activities to lift the status of the African women (Wipper, 1975). However, this would be concentrated in provincial headquarters and their environs. In the case of the Abaluhya women, the fact that Kakamega was the provincial headquarters for Western province disadvantaged them as they were a bit far from the centre. Therefore, the initial women empowerment efforts hardly reached them (Kunguru, OI, Mundika, 09/10/21).

The coming of independence did little for the Abakhayo women since the Kenyatta government maintained the status quo. As Ms. Kunguru notes, women hardly recognized that independence had come. She goes on to say that the biggest change the women would see was that girls would now access education regardless of the religious status of their parents. The independence government urged fathers to take their daughters to school so as to empower them, but the response was slow. However, the number of girls attending school would eventually increase over time.

Although MYWO was still in action, after independence its economic impact on the Abakhayo women was very little. At the time, it had concentrated on social goals such as improvement of the African family life through the reduction of diseases and the mortality rate, childcare, hygiene, food preparation, etcetera. The economic goals swung into action mainly in the period after 1978.

3.3.2 The Role of the Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization in the Economic Empowerment of the Abakhayo Women after 1978

When Daniel Toroitich arap Moi took over the presidency of Kenya in 1978, he immediately realized that unless he empowered the women and the youth, then he wouldn't achieve much growth in various spheres, especially the economic (Moi, 1982). However, at the time, *'vehicles'* through which to achieve empowerment for women and the youth were scarce. Women organizations had not been strengthened enough to be used as tools of empowerment for the women and the education system was not updated enough to deal with the ignorance among the youth. Therefore, the new President had a lot to do, including increasing the number of schools and institutions for children and the youth to access education, as well as finding appropriate channels to empower women. Luckily, he did both.

President Moi's choice of MYWO as the sole channel for women empowerment was what propelled the Organization into new heights. The government had already been funding activities of the giant organization to reach women at the grassroots, especially through income generating activities in a bid to eradicate poverty. Since government funding wasn't enough to cover for the many activities of the Organization, the government sought to source extra funds for the organization to run its activities. Therefore, foreign donors and non-governmental organizations were allowed to come in. According to Ms. Kunguru (OI, Mundika, 09/10/21), any governmental or nongovernmental organization which had wanted to reach the women during the Moi era was strictly supposed to go through MYWO as it was the only countrywide women's organization dealing with women at the grassroots. This idea was invented and emphasized by the President himself as at the time the Organization had already established offices at the grassroots. This is not to mean that there were no other countrywide women's organizations. The Kenya National Council of Women and the Women's Bureau, for example, were already in operation but were mostly associated with elitist women. Thus, they failed to attract the membership of the rural women, including the Abakhayo women who were largely uneducated. Therefore, the Abakhayo women only benefitted from the government supported MYWO.

However, many a times, Moi, who died in February 2020, was heavily criticized for turning the MYWO into a KANU women's wing and using it to mobilize women to vote for him at the time when he stayed at the helm of the

country's leadership for 23 years, a fact that the former Nambale Constituency Member of Parliament, Mzee Masinde agrees with.

The government's realization that it would be difficult to lift the status of women without lifting their economic status, led to the launching of various projects towards the women's economic empowerment through MYWO. This was done across the country. Each district had a branch with various officials such as a chairperson, a treasurer and a secretary who would run the affairs of the women in conjunction with the regional office, which received instructions from the national office in Nairobi (Wipper, 1975). The Abakhayo women, therefore, operated under the MYWO's Busia District branch, which operated under the Kakamega regional branch, which was the then provincial administrative headquarters.

The government's Department of Community Development worked hand in hand with the MYWO Headquarters to sensitize women on the establishment of self-help groups amongst themselves. Among the Abakhayo women, various initiatives were well received by the women who would quickly form self-help groups that would be used to channel money to the women (Kunguru, OI, Mundika, 09/10/21).

The Abakhayo women were already aware that they needed to work and so, when the MYWO brought farm inputs from the Kenya National Farmers Union (KNFU) in 1980, it was a relief for them. Commercial chicken rearing would become common as one of the projects introduced by the Organization. One of the biggest chicken projects in the area was established at Nakhomake, in Bukhayo West location (Nasirumbi, OI, Mundika, 11/10/21). Women were then given proper training on the care of the chicken to ensure the success of the project. This would see women keep thousands of chickens in various homes as a way of earning an income. Considering that the demand for chicken meat was high, the project was a big success for the various women groups as long as it lasted. Although the economic impact of the project was undeniable, sustainability was an issue leading to its collapse a few years later.

The women of Busibwabo in Busibwabo Sub-location received piglets for commercial purposes from KNFU through MYWO, Busia branch in 1984. The Organization facilitated the construction of good and modern pigsties which were able to accommodate hundreds of pigs. Mrs. Sarah Nasike would volunteer a section of her land for the project. Various members of the Busibwabo Women Group received training for the new project which went a long way in ensuring that there would be minimal wastage. The Project went on to benefit the women

group. From the proceeds of the pig farming, some were able to comfortably provide for their families and even pay fees for secondary education for their children (Nasike, OI, Busibwabo, 14/10/21). The Project would, however, collapse after about four years of operation and today, Ms. Nasike has converted the sties into rooms for her personal use. Other than pigs farming, dairy farming was also introduced at Mundika where grade cows were reared.

When the Lutheran World Relief programme, in conjunction with the Young Men Christian Association, decided to award women of Busia with fishponds, Ms. Nasirumbi of Mundika was lucky to be among the chosen few to host the Project as she had land adjacent to the river. MYWO quickly took up the training of the women of how to go about the business. A total of four ponds were constructed. The first harvest of fish generated a good income for the women. Nasirumbi would personally be able to pay fees for her son who was studying at Mundika Secondary School. However, after the first harvest of fish, the project dwindled. Today the ponds still exist but are not run by the women but the sons of Ms. Nasirumbi for personal gains. Other ponds were also located at Busende in Bukhayo East (Nasirumbi, OI, Mundika, 11/10/21).

Not only did the MYWO facilitate the keeping of animals but also the planting of various crops. A good example was the distribution of kale seedlings (commonly known as *'sukuma wiki'*) in various places, including Nambale and Nasira in the 1980s. Women living in wetlands or near a river were considered as it would ensure proper supply of water for the kales says Ms. Nelima a beneficiary. The project was successful and it generally introduced the tradition of eating kales in the region, which had initially been assumed to be a town practice. Although the MYWO kales scheme finally fizzled out, many women independently continued to plant kales in their kitchen gardens and also for sale.

Other than agricultural programmes, MYWO supported women through credit. As a way of empowering women, the organization would lend women some money to start profit-making ventures. The women groups which showed seriousness and ability to pay back the loans were given loans at zero percent interest and a reasonable period of time to pay back. The women of Mukwano Women's Group in Matayos sub-location received money in the year 2000 to purchase tents and chairs for hire (Kunguru, OI, Mundika, 09/10/21). This initiative would be a long-tern kind of initiative. Proceeds from the hired items would then be divided among the women for their various needs. Although the group collapsed before 2010, most women had benefitted from the venture.

Another example of a venture on credit was among the Pamoja Women Group in Buyofu who began catering services after buying items such as big cooking pots, plates, and cups. This was very beneficial once the public identified their ability to make work easier at events (OI, Ms. Kunguru). Women would better their living standards with the proceeds that came from the business. They would seek better healthcare and pay fees for their children. However, the items eventually remained in the hands of the custodian for private use when the group finally collapsed in 2012.

By the early 1990s, MYWO had already introduced the concept of table banking to its members. Women groups would start as a way of women supporting each other through merry-go-round pools. They would contribute money each month to the pool and then give it to the members in rotation. This helped the members to start private businesses, pay school fees or make savings for a rainy day. With time, the Organization began to encourage groups to start lending money to their members as a way of earning some extra money which they would then share at the end of the year, especially around Christmas or January to facilitate school fee payment (Sikali OI, Busidibu, 16/10/21). Some of the groups, which already had economic ventures, such as the Pamoja Women Group mentioned above, would use their proceeds as capital for their table banking. They would grow the money by lending to members at interest. Buna Women's Group which was formed in 1992 by teachers of Bukhayo West and Nasira, has maintained the practice of table banking till now, says the chairperson Mrs. Wilmina Sikali.

MYWO understood the struggles the women went through and so the Organization began fundraising for the education of the children of its members. In Mujuru, Busibwabo sub-location, Spotlight Women's Group went a long way in raising funds for its members to take their children to school (Kunguru, OI, Mundika, 09/10/21). In the process, the organization facilitated the education of many girls, thus opening the door to their future economic empowerment. The children who benefited from this scheme went on to acquire jobs after their studies. The Spotlight Women's Group, however, no longer exists.

Another similar step towards this was the introduction of the Mlolongo Initiative which engaged the Abakhayo women by 1994. It was an initiative whose main aim was to mobilize resources through bringing together various small women's groups (Nafula, OI, Buyofu, 19/10/21). The groups all over Busia would hold events where each member would have an empowerment partner, locally known as *Afwoto*. Once allocated a partner, the women would be required

to research on the needs of their partners and prepare to economically boost them. The partners would then boost each other in various ways from fee payment, to buying household items or starting a business. The rest of the members would then support the partners with a small token as they awaited their turn to be lifted by their partners as well. The events were big and full of pomp as Ms. Nafula explains. The wave of these activities declined in the early 2000s.

After maize became a serious crop to be planted in Western Kenya in the 1980s, it began to slowly replace the sorghum and millet that had been previously widely used for preparation of *ugali* (Muleka, OI, 18/10/21). MYWO saw a gap in the processing of maize and consequently introduced posho mills to some of the women groups. Muleka witnessed the organization of a posho mill plant being established in his own village of Khung'ungu in Bukhayo East. Thus, through this posho mill, the women generated some money as they charged their customers for processing the maize into flour. Management issues, however set in, leading to wrangles that saw the project collapse.

Another posho mill was established at Matayos. This one would be even better than the one at Khung'ungu as its objective was defined. It was to process and package blended and nutritious flour for porridge with the aim of boosting children's immunity. This generated a good income for the women for a pretty long time but eventually also collapsed.

In 1992, a rice processing machine was installed in Nambale. This was done through MYWO under the supervision of the late Mrs. Okemo whose husband eventually became the Member of Parliament for Nambale constituency in 1997 (Masinde, OI, Busia, 15/10/21). The machine would allow women to clean rice grown in the wetter parts of Nambale and package it for sale. At the time, Nambale was thriving because of the presence of a cotton ginnery and a sugar distribution plant in the area. Although the rice processing machine cannot be accounted for today, it helped women to process and sell their rice profitably.

While he was the Member of Parliament for Nambale constituency, Mr. Masinde funded in 1997 the MYWO to bring seven oil pressing machines. Women groups in Mayenje, Nasewa and parts of Bukhayo West benefitted (Masinde, OI, Busia, 15/10/21). The machines were used to extract oil from groundnuts and sunflower seeds. The oil was then packaged and sold locally as very healthy oil. Mr. Masinde, however, laments that the projects eventually collapsed and there is only one such machine still functioning today.

In addition to the oil pressing machines, as a Member of Parliament, he also worked with MYWO to introduce exotic goats to various women groups in

Bukhayo West. The goats were mainly for milk production. The women were trained in the rearing of goats and the projects picked up well. Goatmilk has always been seen as more nutritious than cow milk. It is even believed to be medicinal. These facts increased demand for goat milk leading to good profits for the groups that ventured into the projects. The projects, however, dwindled in less than five years after their launching.

Dambakana Water Project was another major project by the MYWO. Its main purpose was to help women on Bukhayo West location to get piped water into their homes. This was under the sponsorship of the government of Netherlands (Kunguru, OI, Mundika, 09/10/21). Water was a major problem as most women relied on water from rivers and streams. The Project would, therefore, not only reduce the time taken to search for water but also ensure access to clean and safe water for domestic consumption. While water was important for domestic use, it brought relief to the women who had thought of venturing into various projects such as growing of vegetables and rearing various animals. Although Dambakana Water Project eventually collapsed in early 2000, it would go into the record as being one of the longest surviving projects perhaps because it was run by Ms. Kunguru herself as opposed to other projects which were initiated and left to the groups. It was a big success as more than 300 homes would be connected to piped water.

Another project was a machine to make bricks which was introduced in Bukhayo South. This and many other projects were carried out among the women for their empowerment.

It is paramount to note that due to financial challenges, MYWO was not able to reach all grassroots women in the period between 1978-2002. The government was not able to fully subsidize the activities of the organization following its loss of donors when it was co-opted by KANU in 1987. However, there were some women who were taking the initiative to mobilize themselves and by 1991, there were 779 women groups in Busia District. Of these, 404 groups were dealing with agriculture/farming activities; 79 were dealing with sales and provision of various services; 84 were dealing in financial matters; 33 - in handicrafts; 30 in manufacturing; 46 in labour/construction; 42 in social welfare and one was dealing in real estate. There were no groups dealing in education or transport activities and in total, 38,455 women were members of MYWO. This was way lower as compared to neighbouring districts such as Kakamega which had 1,285 groups with 50, 157 members (Kabira and Nzioki, (1993, p.47-48). The difference in this number is so because as compared to Busia

women, those in Kakamega were more enlightened due to the missionary factor as well as the fact that Kakamega was the provincial headquarter.

3.3.3 Women's Response to Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization Projects on Abakhayo Women

Being that all women-oriented projects in the period between 1978-2002 were channelled through the MYWO, it is obvious that the organization had a positive impact on the women. However, as observed, most projects initiated by MYWO would collapse within 2-3 years of operation. One would wonder why it was so. According to Mr. Masinde, women did not take the projects seriously. Their commitment would, therefore, be at the very beginning but it would fizzle out over time an idea that Ms. Kunguru agrees to. This explanation makes sense.

Looking at it from another angle, it would be understandable that illiteracy among the women may have weighed the projects down. Many women lacked basic literacy and, therefore, had no idea about the modern concept of empowerment. This means that most of the women did not fully understand why the projects were being launched and the need for sustainability of the same. By 1978, not many women within the targeted groups could even write their names. Others still had the traditional mindset and they did not see the full picture of what the organization was trying to do. Another possible explanation for the collapse of the projects was group mentality. Women lacked a sense of ownership over the projects as they were launched to benefit many people – communalism. This may have led to lack of commitment towards the projects.

Euphoria may have been another problem. Between our study period, 1978-2002, it became fashionable to join women's groups. Therefore, some women joined for the sake of it. There were no intrinsic reasons for joining. Having a project being set up at your home was prestigious. However, the women did not understand fully what it takes to start such massive projects or what it takes to sustain them. In addition to the above speculative reasons, women groups may have lacked the support of the men. By the time MYWO was teaching about the concept of women empowerment, not many men understood it. As the society was still very patriarchal at the time, the men were sceptical of the concept of women empowerment and therefore, offered little support to their women even when a project was set up in their homes.

Wrangles among various groups would also cost the women their projects. Some projects would begin well but along the way, women would disagree on issues such as profit sharing or others would feel that the officials were benefiting

more thus, they would leave the groups. Finally, the women also lacked business acumen/skills to sustain the projects. Very few women were business oriented and the organization also didn't offer business studies to the women. Therefore, the projects would survive shortly as the women did not understand consistency in a business thus failed to reinvest after the initial returns from the business.

Despite the above-mentioned challenges, it is undeniable that Abakhayo women benefitted from MYWO's economic empowerment schemes. First, the women groups formed under MYWO brought about cohesion among women. Since they worked together on various projects, it gave them unity of purpose. This unity would enable sharing as well as exchange of ideas whenever they met, for example, they would exchange ideas on family planning. It was during these meetings that women would even share political ideas and mobilize fellow women to participate in political matters.

Women were empowered with knowledge and as the saying goes, *"knowledge is power"*. This knowledge, as Ms. Kunguru testified, was drawn from the numerous women's conferences and workshops hosted or facilitated by the MYWO. As the secretary of MYWO Busia District for over twenty years, she attended various conferences, including the Nairobi International Conference of 1985. She admits that the Conference enlightened the women about their situation at the time and helped them realize what they needed to do by benchmarking with the other women groups in attendance from across the world. The leaders of MYWO in attendance would in turn enlighten the women at the grassroots. Other than acquiring knowledge, the conferences and workshops would be avenues for women to seek support as well as funding for their projects.

Armed with such information, women would then embark on various activities such as taking care of their household. Children and husbands would receive better nutrition and healthcare. This would go a long way in reducing infant deaths. For those who went on to directly benefit from the business ventures introduced by the organization, their lives never remained the same. First, they were able to raise their living standards since they had some more money to access proper diet, shelter, clothes, and basic healthcare. In addition, the proceeds funded the education of the member's children, causing long term impacts on the various families. The activities of MYWO, therefore, impacted not only on the lives of the women but also impacted on future generations.

4.0 Conclusion

It is right for us to conclude that the MYWO empowered the Abakhayo women economically through the above-mentioned projects as long as they lasted. Many women completely changed their status and view towards life. Some may critique the Organization for failing to mobilize women into leadership positions which could have been a longer lasting solution to the idea of women empowerment. However, MYWO pushed for the betterment of women as it laid a foundation for the women's movement in Kenya. From its inception and through the colonial period and the early years of the post-independence period, MYWO may not have directly linked to mobilization of women to take leadership positions. However, this role inevitably emerged as evidenced by the role played by the women movement in influencing the governance and politics of this country, under the leadership of women such as Phoebe Asiyo, Prof Eddah Gachukia and the late Jane Kiano, among many others.

5.0 Recommendations

This study recommends that more attention is drawn towards studying the role of women's organizations in women empowerment. It also recommends that MYWO, which is the oldest women's grassroots organization be repackaged and marketed to the younger generation as it faces the threat of irrelevance. Lastly, the study recommends more studies on the impacts of women's organizations on specific groups of women to be intensified so as to get the real picture of the contributions of women's organizations to women in Kenya.

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Oral Interviews

Alice Nafula (71) at Buyofu – 19/10/2021
Benedictine Nelima (75) at Nambale – 16/10/2021
Joseph Muleka (66) at Khung'ungu – 19/10/2021
Margaret Kunguru (79) at Mundika – 9/10/2021
Phillip Masinde (85) at Busia – 15/10/2021
Sabina Nasirumbi (80) at Mundika – 11/10/2021
Sarah Nasike (70) at Busibwabo – 14/10/2021
Wilmina Sikali (63) at Busidibu – 16/10/2021

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The South African Commission for Gender Equality Addressing Challenges of Rural Women

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Abstract

Over the years, empowerment of women has increasingly attracted huge attention in the scholarly world. Most of the scholarly works on empowerment seem to focus on pro-women policies, which appear attractive only on paper without critically paying attention to how those policies translate into reality. In South Africa, rural women continue to suffer despite the nation having one of the best constitutions globally. The South African Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), among other roles, is man dated to advance the concerns for the rural women. The main aim of this study is to investigate setbacks but also opportunities that the CGE encounters in fulfilling its mandate of addressing strategic gender interests of rural women. The paper also interrogates the social cultural challenges that those women face in accessing their rights through the CGE. The main geographical scope for this study is KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape provinces because they are the areas populated with the Zulu and Xhosa communities who are the main targets of social cultural complexities highlighted in this paper. The study arrives at its findings through a qualitative study where data was analysed and corroborated with CGE operational documents, provisions in the Constitution, policy documents, monetary and evaluation reports, minutes of proceedings and paper publications. The study argues that the CGE cannot effectively empower rural women when the link with other statutory bodies and Civil Society Organizations nationally is weak. Also, the study argues that for CGE to effectively empower rural women, it must directly relate with local rural

women and consult them from the grassroots and not solely rely on "elitist women" who risk misrepresenting or even 'under-representing' women interests.

Key words: Commission for Gender Equality, Constitution, South Africa, Women, Women Interests.

1.0 Introduction

Due to a concentrated focus on eliminating racial segregation, before 1994 South Africa paid minimal attention to the gender equality agenda. The concerns about gender equality emerged only after a series of engagements by South African women who indefatigably pushed for gender equality to be listed among the significant agendas for the nation. Thus, buoyed by a ray of hope after Rolihlahla Mandela's ascendancy into power in 1994, South African women formulated a Charter that exhorted the nation to put the welfare of women to the fore. The document was presented to Mandela who made sure that gender concerns became a central subject in the negotiation process prior to the writing up of the Constitution. In order to ensure that women issues were not overlooked, the negotiators settled on avoiding a structure where there is a specific ministry/department of women. Thus, a NGM (National Gender Machinery) was instituted. The Machinery consisted of the civil society organizations, the executive, the legislature, and self-governing bodies (Rai, 2018; African Development Bank, 2009). The establishment of the NGM was for the advancement of the status of women. A number of international women's conferences such as the 1975 Mexico Convention, the Beijing Conference, the CEDAW had called for the national states to put gender concerns at the centre of the policy-making process. The necessity for a NGM was accentuated first during the Conference in Mexico City in 1975 (Rai, 2018).

The South African women constitute the highest share of underprivileged population in the country. This population is still affected by apartheid legacies (racism, sexism, authoritarianism, male chauvinism).The Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) aims at fixing those 'ghosts of the past' (as Ramphele, 2008 calls them) which are enmeshed in policies that engender marginalization of women. In spite of South Africa ratifying international protocols, I argue that the gender policy agenda is still far elusive as those neo-apartheid elements are still prevalent. Thus, this paper seeks to address these principal theoretical questions:

- What are the challenges that the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) encounters in fulfilling its mandate of addressing strategic interests of rural women?
- What opportunities does the CGE have in fulfilling its mandate of addressing strategic interests of rural women?
- What are the complexities that those women face in accessing their rights through the CGE?

The CGE is one of the national gender machineries authorized to ensure the realization of gender equality in the country (CGE, 2019). This organ was instituted in consonance with the Gender Equality Act[1] 39 of 1996. The Gender Equality Act of 1996 directs the Machinery to evaluate policies; monitor activities of statutory[2] bodies so as to advance gender equality and give recommendations wherever necessary. The CGE, also disseminates public information and educates the public on gender issues. The Machinery evaluates and proffers recommendations on prevailing or projected laws. These laws include indigenous norms that are likely to affect or that are already affecting the status of women. The Commission is also mandated to recommend new laws on gender equality or legislature governing the status of women within South Africa. It works in liaison with other bodies with similar goals of promoting gender equality. The CGE monitors and gives reports on how South Africa is complying with various international protocols on gender equality. The CGE is also mandated to research about gender issues (CGE, 2018).

The Gender Commission at provincial, parliamentary and national office levels ensures a good working relation with other institutions, especially the South African Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Public Protector (CGE, 2018; Mvimbi, 2009; South Africa.info, 2014). Despite its numerous intricacies, CGE collaborates with the House of Traditional Leaders, the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) both at provincial level and nationally. The CGE liaised with the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) and with CSOs, scholars and lawmakers to draft an institutional framework and National Gender Policy that offer a deeper understanding of gender equality issues promulgated through the gender commission (CGE, 2018). The OSW, situated in the Office of the President harmonizes activities on gender equality for the national machinery. In fact, the OSW could be viewed as the nerve centre that advances the gender

[1] Acts refers to an adopted and effective legislation.

[2] Statutory body: Refers to an organisation that has been created by the Parliament, such as the CGE.

concerns of the nation. The Office was also established so as to develop an action plan for gender mainstreaming within the government and to promote gender equality along with monitoring, implementation, and advancement of that equality (see The Office on the Status of Women Report 2006; Parliamentary Monitor Group, 2011).

The role of National Gender Machineries, agues Rai (2018), gained an international glance in Mexico City (1975) at the International Women's Year Conference. The Conference called on the nation states to establish these machineries nationally. There were two other women Conventions that were later held in Nairobi (1985) and Copenhagen (1980). The two advanced the impulse for the establishment of institutional machineries nationally so as to promote the status of women. By the end of the decade (1980 to 1990) 127 member states of the United Nations (UN) had come up with NGMs appropriate for the political conditions prevailing in those nations (Rai, 2018). The purpose of those machineries was commonly labelled as *inter alia*: facilitating effective women involvement in development; advancing the status of women in politics, decision-making roles, education, and health; fighting negative traditional practices and stereotypical media portrayal of women; enhancing research pertaining to the status of women derived from sex-disaggregated information (Rai, 2018). By the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, the discussion on the role of national machineries had begun to shift from its conceptual focus on woman-centric issues to gender equality. These national gender machineries support the governments in the gender mainstreaming within policies (Rai, 2018). The Platform for Action adopted at that Conference elaborated mechanisms, as well as offered recommendations, on strengthening national gender machineries in order to realize gender equality and the nation's democracy.

The institutional mechanisms meant to advance the affairs of women were itemized among the twelve crucial areas of international concern spelt out in the Platform for Action (Rai, 2018). The processes were designed to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the national gender machineries through: (1) realization of good coordinating strategies that connect the national gender machineries with CSOs nationally; (2) enhancing collaborations that are reliable, with various stakeholders, social partners and the National Assembly (3) adequate resources and good statutory support from the government and the parliament (4) facilitation of strong links with international organizations; (5) good interactions with other sister machineries regionally, globally and nationally (public and private sectors); and (6) local knowledge mobilization for efficient and effective

delivery of service. A perfect example of such gender machinery described above is the CGE which functions within the South African context.

As an independent organ, the establishment of the Commission on Gender Equality was guided by the Commission on Gender Equality Act 39 of 1996 that elucidates its roles. The CGE has power to hold accountable private as well as public institutions and is mandated to safeguard and promote the rights of women (CGE 2018; 2019). Though the Commission targets all citizens, its chief targets are those on the side-lines, such as women domestic workers, poor women from rural settings, unemployed women, or those from informal settlements (2000).

The South African Commission on Gender Equality is accountable to the Parliament and, therefore, it must present an annual report on its performance. The members in the Commission are appointees of the Head of State, on the recommendation of the Parliament. However, the CSOs nominate their members whom they deem fit to go through the parliamentary recruitment process (SouthAfrica.info, 2014).

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 Feminist Debates on the National Gender Machinery (NGM) in South Africa

The National Gender Machineries have not achieved much in Africa due to the institutionalized patriarchy that devalues the women's agenda. The state agents have co-opted women, a phenomenon that makes women-centric demands get overlooked. When women are co-opted, addressing their concerns is a Herculean task. This is because men tend to select pliable women who will willingly fall into male hegemony. In the scenario of CGE, for example, where the Head of State appoints a woman he trusts and works easily with her, women interests could be compromised. In this case, the interests of women become men interests.

Gouws (2010) asserts that, in South Africa, the NGM has little to show in terms of women's enfranchisement. She notes that these machineries are run by several egoistic individuals who cleverly marshal their interests with that of the governing party. This alignment with the ruling party ensures that those individuals maintain their positions. When women interests are overridden by alignment with the ruling party, the National Gender machinery becomes a disappointment to the disenfranchised population. The success of NGM, according to the state feminism theory of Stetson and Mazur is commensurate to the extent at which women interests are presented to the state. When the NGM

becomes partisan to the ruling regime, and compromised by those in the government, women's interests are simply devalued.

The National Gender Machinery in Africa doesn't seem to advance women interests effectively (Gouws & Madsen, 2021).They are constrained by inadequate government support, which is also inconsistent and, therefore, rely heavily on donor funding. The downside of this over-dependence on donor funding is that it could affect the credibility of executing what the NGM is mandated to do. Gouws & Madsen (2021) argue that the NGM must be careful about foreign support and that they need to ask the question about who pushes the agenda for the NGM. Though the donor funding could be a viable opportunity for NGM to subsidize their budget, it can easily affect the policies that it plans to actualize. In Africa, transnational interventions have produced ugly results, especially when foreign countries want to 'sandwich' their interests in between our policies. Thus, foreign funding should not entirely take over the responsibility of the state to fund NGM because of the risk to introduce foreign-driven ideas into their policies. The western-driven policies could conflict with African cultures. Contrastingly, if the National Gender Machinery turns down those donations, it risks failing to realize its mandate due to inadequate resources, especially when the NGM are not well sustained financially by the government. Though there have been intensive efforts to ensure that several establishments are available to advance gender equality, Mvimbi (2009) notes that the National Gender Machineries have minimal impact due to inadequate resources. Additionally, these NGM have limited understanding of their functions, and even their roles are normally duplicated. Inadequate resources, poor coordination and little communication are the leading causes of underperformance of those institutions (Mvimbi, 2009).

Funokwakhe Xulu (2013) argues that a good number of rural South African women cannot claim to enjoy South African democracy because they have inequitable access to resources and opportunities. Xulu argues that access to resources cannot be the ultimate solution to all of their complexities, but rather, acting towards changing gender relations that are based on hegemonic masculinity and women subservience to men. Gendered power structures have been the major hindrance that inhibit the progress of rural women. The realization of gender empowerment by the Gender Machinery would, therefore, be contingent on the intensity of engagement of the rural women in the policy making process, in order to understand gendered power structures in the local setting. South African rural women ought to personally make decisions about

their lives, and work towards raising their status. This cannot be realized when gendered power structures in rural areas go unchallenged.

Thaba-Nkadimene et al. (2019) claim that rural women are discriminated against in their household settings and local communities and denied access to property and other opportunities. They point out that women are subjected to early marriages and numerous instances of gender-based violence (rape, sexual harassment, femicide). The access to resources and opportunities could promote their access to knowledge about their rights, when subjected to gender-based violence.

1.1.2 Emancipation of the African Rural Women

Ngcongo (1993) elucidates the significance of emancipation of women in their rural settings. He argues that this emancipation does not simply mean women being in the same status as men. Emancipation is about elimination of all factors, laws, norms, attitudes, and rules which prevent women from enjoying their rights or attaining development. Similarly, the concept entails providing education, skills, employment opportunities and decent wages to the disenfranchised rural women.

Although the traditional norms conflict with the South African constitutional provisions, they still guarantee equality rights to the population. The South African government and the judiciary have constantly upheld women rights, while insisting on the constitutional supremacy over any given power, perceived to be superior. Rural women remain exposed to numerous harmful religious and culturally based practices prevalent in African societies. These women are extremely vulnerable to tribal authorities who ignore women concerns.

Although the South African Constitution is rated among the most progressive ones in Africa and globally in terms of guaranteeing women their rights and upholding citizens' equality, it is being undermined by various harmful practices that are cultural and religious. The existing androcentric environment thwarts women's struggle to access social, economic, and political opportunities in society.

In rural communities in South Africa, there is a need for gender balance among South African leaders, who are very influential, particularly in the decision-making process. The efforts to advance women interests can only have significant impact on the rural women if the national gender machineries cease to be run by a small elite group. During Apartheid, women were socially regarded as community nurturers and household labourers while men were naturally

regarded to be decision-makers and leaders. Those gendered roles were buttressed in the family setting and in the media portrayals, thus restricting women's freedoms, and limiting their social, economic, and political potential. The Apartheid system still replicates itself in South African societies which are sexist, dictatorial, and patriarchal (Thaba-Nkadimene et al. (2019; Segooa, 2012; Ramphele, 2008).

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The current paper applies the gender interest theory which catalogues interests of women into strategic gender interests and practical gender needs. Practical gender needs underline the women demands that are immediate, for instance safety at the workplace, childcare, equal access to opportunities and shelter (Hosein et al, 2020; Molyneux, 2002; Molyneux, 2005). In spite of women getting those practical needs, male power structures remain intact and unchallenged. This is so because their goals are not strategic, and not capable to emancipate women on the side-lines. In the case of practical gender needs, it is presumed that the existing policies are compliant with the interests of women and therefore, there is no need to challenge them. On the other hand, strategic gender interests are interests that involve challenging institutionalized gendered power systems. In order to realize a long-lasting enjoyment of women rights, and an improved status of women, dissecting those power structures is a *sine qua non*[3]. The gender-based solutions are oftentimes temporary because of the deeply entrenched patriarchal system in the context of South Africa. To achieve enduring gender resolutions equality rights legislation should be enacted, decision-making power for women should be facilitated and they should have easy access to reproductive rights (Molyneux, 2005; Hosein et al, 2020;). In respect to advancing the interests of women, Molyneux (2005) asserts that autonomous institutions do not automatically empower women due to the fact that institutionalized power structures can function autocratically whenever there are no procedural rules that would guarantee control for that power. The aforementioned challenge happens because autonomy has the likelihood of marginalizing or reducing the effectiveness of institutions mandated to empower women (Molyneux, 2005; Molyneux, 2002).

The framework adopted in this paper serves as the platform on which the researcher unpacks rural women's practical gender needs and strategic gender interests. The CGE is a statutory body established to enhance equality, but it

[3] *Sine qua non* is Latin saying that means an essential aspect that is indispensable.

cannot realize this equality if the political will to alter the prevalent hegemonic institutions is non-existent (Slamat, 2013; Matoo-Padayashie, 2011; Goetz, 2003). Strategic gender interests, observes Molyneux (2005) entail challenging and transforming the existing power relations. The gender interest framework guides the current research to investigate how the Commission addresses the strategic interests of South African rural women.

The paper was also guided by Social Relation Theory. The theory, pioneered by Kabeer (1994) demonstrates the manner in which inequalities are socially constructed in a society. The theory argues that social inequalities are constructed by institutions. Those institutions (family, community, and religious institutions), design regulations and policies that are male dominated. This theory is relevant to this paper because it shows that women's challenges are as a result of humanly constructed systems. The decision-making on cultural practices, land tenure issues and so on, are guided by institutions that are male dominated.

1.3 The Study Point of Entry

The reviewed scholarly works indicate that National Gender machinery is an area that needs more attention as it has not exhaustively been researched. Besides, there is scanty literature on National Gender Machineries that have focused on the rural women, who make a huge component of the marginalized African population. Therefore, this investigation will add to the studies on Gender machineries in relation to rural women. It could be of interest for the CGE and other National Gender Machinery in Africa (though done in South African context) such as the Kenyan NGEC (National Gender and Equality Commission) to consider he findings of this paper and compare notes with their South African counterparts. Additionally, this work could possibly assist CGE and other African Gender Machineries to inform their review of policies and operations restructuring in order to improve their efficiency in advancement of the status of rural women in South Africa and Africa at large.

1.4 Methodology

The paper espouses a qualitative non-empirical research design. A qualitative method describes and interprets a given social phenomenon (Busetto et al. 2020; Newman, 2011). The literature relied upon by the study was derived from CGE-related material such as the Commission's yearly reports, the Commission's strategic plans, documents from the Parliamentary Monitor Group, the CGE mission statements and legal documents. Although a review of documents in

social sciences is positioned at the side-line of consideration (Dalglish et al, 2020) and more emphasis given to interviews, Chapman and McNeill assert that (2005:147), a review of documents, in fact, aids in reflecting the norms and values of the particular society in which they are generated. Although these documents are reliable for data collection, it is the elites or people in offices who are the drafters of most such documents (Newman 2009). Thus, overlooking the perspectives of those marginalized, uneducated, or populations outside the official establishments is undeniable (Newman, 2009). The current work also relied on the secondary material such as conference proceeding papers, peer-reviewed journal articles and published books on Gender Machinery. This search of knowledge from the secondary material increases the dependability of the knowledge.

Challenges The Rural Women of South Africa Face

In South Africa, women from rural settings exist in realities that demand an all-rounded reconstruction of gendered power structures to enable them access rights and privileges spelt out in the South African Constitution. Weiringa (2008) argues that any empowerment or gender equality approach must begin with the accurate understanding of the women's experiences. The Commission collaborates with state organs from the Civil Society Organizations to the Parliament to enhance understanding of those underlying elements related to their strategic gender interests. Thus, the CGE, in fulfilling its mandates of litigation, educating, lobbying and policy reviews, engages the transformation of the power structures that impede women from participating actively in public and private spaces. The South African rural women experience a state marked by harmful cultural observances, forced marriages, land tenure issues that makes them see those rights as 'paper rights' that don't make any sense to the improvement of their conditions (Msuya, 2020; Akinola,2018).

2.1 Harmful Cultural Practices

The South African rural women face numerous harmful practices in spite of the well-spelt out Constitution that contains their rights (Haffejee, 2020; Mgidlana, 2020; Maluleke, 2012; Mntuyedwa, 2013). In spite of violation of human rights laws and the harmful nature of cultural practices, they continue to exist because they are hardly challenged or questioned (Haffejee, 2020; Mgidlana, 2020; Maluleke, 2012). This reality hampers rural women from gaining access to their privileges and rights guaranteed by the Constitution. This inaccessibility to their

rights is intensified by the prevalent traditional authorities that disfavour rural women's emancipation. The South Africa rural women experience the worst inequalities because of their unawareness of various advances pertaining to their status as women and the existence of traditional leaders who sustain male control (Mntunyedwa, 2013). The majority of these traditional leaders are still of the view that gender concerns are un-African and therefore, there is no need to waste time debating them (Haffejee, 2020; Mgidlana, 2020; Mntunyedwa, 2013; Thabiso, 2011). Moreover, most rural women are not aware of their rights as women as they have been socialized into taking gendered roles that are perceived to be of lesser value in development.

The CGE, in liaison with CSOs, has engaged actively in investigation and exposition of harmful cultural practices such as *Ukuthwala*[4] and *Ukuhlolwa Kwezintombi* that hampers advancement of their status. The Commission investigated how the South African government participated in reducing the *Ukuthwala* practice. The Commission discovered that the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial government had done very little pertaining to the protection of women rights. The CGE noted that the government of KwaZulu-Natal even lacked tangible statistics on how many women had been abducted. The rise of the women who had been abducted and later got into forced marriages was the reason for conducting the investigation. In the Province of Eastern Cape, the CGE reported that *Ukuthwala* and poverty are the pressing elements that principally affect rural women (CGE, 2021; Parliamentary Monitor Group, 2010; Mgidlana, 2020).

In Eastern Cape Province, it had a meeting with the House of Traditional Leaders and both of them drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Memorandum of Understanding was meant to forge cooperation among religious institutions, the House of Traditional Leaders, and the CGE to advance the gender equality concerns. The Memorandum accentuated the necessity to annihilate harmful cultural activities and embrace those practices that don't inhibit realization of gender empowerment. The approach has a huge possibility for rearrangement gendered power relations as long as the cultural leaders allowed the spirit of the Constitution to guide them with open mindedness, without clinging to their cultural belief systems that would ultimately violate the rights of rural women. Nevertheless, the customary laws have to be constitutionally aligned. The rift between the CGE and the House of Traditional Leaders has

[4]Ukuthwala is activity that involves a woman being abducted and hidden for some time. The practice is very common in rural settings (SaNgoNet, 2012).

elicited the violation of the rights of rural women and passing of bills such as the Traditional Courts Bill which abates achievements on the status of women (CGE, 2018).

In the Province of Eastern Cape, the CGE confronted those cultural practices by organizing a workshop aimed at educating the rural population on the necessity of rising above various traditional practices that sustain women's disenfranchisement. The workshop raised the awareness on the ramifications pertaining to cultural practices such as *Ukuthwala* (CGE, 2018). The workshop was also a platform on which several institutions/civil society organizations discussed issues related to those practices and proposed a number of policy changes aimed at reducing the practices.

The Commission has been vocal in raising awareness on harmful cultural practices on social media and mainstream media. One case where CGE plays its educative role is on radio Talk Shows where it does awareness raising to combat *Ukuthwala* and other harmful practices (CGE Annual Report, 2019). The rural women from Umzimkhulu received weekly coverage live talk show on Bush Radio, where they raised various gender complexities.

2.2 Forced Marriages, Rape and Misplaced Masculinity

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the only women and men that should get into marriage unions are those of full age (UDRC, 2014). The African Charter for the Rights and Welfare of the Child maintains that girls and boys' betrothal/marriage of minors shall be forbidden and a proper action taken against any offenders. Furthermore, the law stipulates eighteen years as the proper age of the union while making mandatory the recording of all marriages in the Registry. (ACERAW, 2014; Parliamentary Monitor Group, 2009). Besides, the South African Marriage Act (Act no 25 of 1961) describes marriage as a two person's union of *voluntary* nature. Therefore, any union that is forced does not qualify to be called marriage. Unfortunately, in South Africa, underage women are coerced into marriage unions, a phenomenon that inhibits their education opportunities. Due to lack of education the subjugation of women is prevalent in rural South Africa. Women from rural settings, who are less educated, have high likelihood of entering into marriages that are not voluntarily. Such women are denied power to negotiate for consensual and safe sex; relationships outside the household; or their own financial development (Haffejee, 2020; Mgidlana, 2020; Thabiso, 2011).

The *Ukuthwala Kwezintombi*, a practice in which young women are abducted with the aim of forcing the abductee's family to approve the union with the abductor, is an abuse of the law (Watt, 2012). The original Ukuthwala[5] was communitarian. The modern *Ukuthwala* is a distorted one whereby young women are subjected to sexual violence meant to serve egotistical interests (Watt, 2012). The Commission brands the practice of *Ukuthwala* as unlawful and camouflaged as part of South African culture (CGE, 2010; CGE, 2012; Haffejee, 2020; Mgidlana, 2020).

2.3 Virginity Testing (Ukuhlolwa Kwezintombi)

In KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape, among the Zulu and Xhosa communities, *Ukuhlolwa*[6] *Kwezintombi* is a common practice. The inspection entails examination of a woman's genitalia to determine the status of girls in terms of chastity (Ndebele,2020; Zayed et al. 2022). The ethnic communities that practice *Ukuhlolwa* observe virginity as a cultural heritage and due to the cultural pride and identity they preserve the testing practice (Mhlongo, 2009).In the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, *Ukuhlolwa Kwezintombi*[7] demonstrates the health and purity of the entire community (Ndebele,2020). *Ukuhlolwa Kwezintombi* has been treasured among the Zulu and Xhosa ethnic communities as a practice meant to restrain early pregnancies, and prevent HIV/Aids (Mhlongo, 2009). During this cultural event, young girls are trained on retaining chastity before securing a marriage partner.

The *Ukuhlolwa Kwezintombi* has been challenged by Civil rights movements and various schools of feminism as they regard the practice as a human right's contravention since it tampers with one's bodily integrity and their privacy, moreover, young girls may not even understand the meaning of this inspection of their genitalia (CGE 2018; Mccaffrey, 2012; Rakubu, 2019). Not only are their human rights violated, but while intruding into their privacy their dignity is stripped off, too, through this practice. Although the Children Act 2005 legalizes the practice, it states that the practices should be both for girls and boys, and only with an informed consent by both genders. This is not the case, however. It selectively targets girls without much of their consent. the parents give their

[5] *Ukuthwala* literally means carrying where one takes something on one's shoulder or hands.The traditional *Ukuthwala* was seen as an arranged "coupling", and the courts intervened in case the relationship was not working.

[6] *Ukuhlolwa* translates to check/inspect.

[7] *Ukuhlolwa kwezintombi* stands for checking of girl's genitalia (popularly called virginity testing).

consent in order to bring honour to the community. Thus, the *Ukuhlolwa Kwezintombi* is not at all voluntary as it should, but an activity whose symbolic value is to depict purity and health of the Zulu and Xhosa communities. The feminists have questioned why *Ukuhlolwa Kwezintombi*, a sexualized reaction to the HIV/AIDS pandemic is never applied to boys, yet their genitals could also require some inspection.

The Commission conducted consultative dialogues on *Ukuhlolwa kwezintombi* and *Ukuthwala* in the Umzimkhulu, Amazizi and Kwamafunze areas of KwaZulu-Natal Province, where the aforementioned cultural practices are performed (Parliamentary Monitor Group 2009). The dialogues intended to gather the opinions of rural women on those cultural practices, a strategy that would inform policy change on the elimination of virginity testing and *Ukuthwala* (CGE, 2021; Ndebele, 2020). These consultative dialogues revealed that the way *Ukuthwala* was originally conducted has been despoiled. *Ukuthwala* is practised by idle and vagrant men with selfish interests of self-gratification, unlike the original *Ukuthwala* where the abductor (*Umuntu othwalayo*) was a familiar face to the local community, and the abductee's family was part of the practice (CGE, 2021; Ndebele, 2020).

Ukuhlolwa kwezintombi was performed by women who never charged money or anything for their service. The CGE questioned the meaning of the belief that *Ukuhlolwa Kwezintombi* is a means to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, given that young girls engage in unnatural sex such as oral or anal sex, to preserve their virginity. Those unnatural sex methods expose them to sexually transmitted diseases (CGE, 2021; Zayed et al. 2022). The CGE noted that there was a myth existing among South African men, that HIV/AIDS could be cured through having a sexual intercourse with a virgin lady. This mythical belief accompanies *Ukuhlolwa Kwezintombi*, which consequently exposes those virgin girls to the sex predators who rape and even kill them.

2.4 Land Tenure Difficulties

In rural South Africa, land acquisition remains one of the main ways through which gender inequalities are glaringly manifested. The existing male hegemony that describes South African systems of land tenure hampers rural women from accessing land and property rights (Khuzwayo, et al, 2019; Segooa & Mhlongo, 2013; Segooa, 2012). According to (Teagle, 2021) women own 13 percent of the land in South Africa, which indicates that there is a very small change since the initial effort to address inequality in land distribution. The male power structures

are the greatest impendent to redressing equitable land redistribution. The voice of rural women regarding land ownership and use is never heard. In the event of the husband's death or a divorce the woman can never take land ownership or even rights to the use of the land (Khuzwayo, et al, 2019). The South African government started a tenure system known as Land Restitution and Land Reform (LRLR) with the primary objective of establishing more opportunities for rural women to acquire land and overcome the legacies of apartheid that reinforce land tenure discrimination based on the axis of gender and race. Although these programs are designed to facilitate women's access to tenure opportunities, many women are unaware of such opportunities. For instance, only a few women are cognizant of the fact that they can acquire land in polygamous unions if the families stand separately from their male counterpart (Khuzwayo, et al, 2019;Teagle, 2021;CGE, 2011; Segooa & Mhlongo, 2013). After the death of their partners, women are often ostracized and abandoned with nothing. Those women are cast out of the household with nothing and made to believe that property and land rights are 'reserved' only for men.

The South African rural women rely exclusively on subsistence farming for their living, particularly those with no other source of livelihood. This paper argues that land allocation is an uneven procedure meant to reward men due to their gender identity, a phenomenon that excludes women from development (Khuzwayo, et al, 2019; Teagle, 2021; Segooa, 2012). Inadequate distribution of land based on gender identity is among the most conspicuous inequalities in rural settings. Despite the existence of land legislation designed to enhance equal opportunities for everyone on acquisition of land, patriarchal mindset continues to manifest itself in the land policy reforms.

2.5 Health Related Issues

Women in rural South Africa have inadequate access to health due to the fact that they lack autonomy in decision making on their wellbeing (Signé, 2021; Duxbury 2020; Thabiso, 2011). On the other hand, pregnant women experience difficulties in accessing maternal healthcare because they are not within their reach (Signé, 2021; Duxbury 2020; Segooa, 2012; Thabiso, 2011). Those rural women lack transport money, considering that the majority of them earn meagre wages while others are not employed (Thabiso, 2011). The meagre wages, coupled with institutionalized patriarchy in their own households, deny them decision-making power regarding their maternal and family health (Bangani &Vyas-Doorgapersad 2019; Thabiso, 2011). Even when rural women may be able to access those health

facilities, those centres are under-funded. The child and women mortality rates are more prevalent in the rural areas and are mostly health related. The rural zones of Eastern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga Provinces lead in health-related mortality cases of women (Signé, 2021; Duxbury 2020; Segooa, 2012).

3.0 Challenges Facing The CGE In Relation to The State

3.1 Political Interference

The CGE is an independent institution. Nonetheless, that independence is not entirely guaranteed because the Head of State appoints the Chief Commissioner of the CGE and, therefore, compromises its independence. Additionally, the budget allocated to the Commission is disbursed through the Women's Ministry (that is fettered by the office of the President), which could control the CGE by releasing only a small allocation. One could thus deduce that the question of funds is primarily a political issue, since without a governance committed to gender issues, the funding of the gender machinery would undeniably be poor (Rai, 2018). During submissions done at the National Assembly, the independence issue has been raised several times without coming up with any tangible resolution. The lawmakers have constantly argued that the Commission's independence cannot be guaranteed if it was supposed to monitor the state departments while at the same time accounting to the same institution, even though it was only in relation to its budgetary allocations. The CGE's objectives and aspirations are restrained by inadequate resources and conflict of interests existing among government officials in the government ministries/departments.

3.2 Insufficient Financial Resources

In South Africa, the CGE is allocated a very skimpy budget that complicates its work in conducting gender-based research; lobbying, litigating, and monitoring (Ramparsad, 2019, Segooa, 2014; CGE, 2011). Although the Commission claims to be an autonomous institution, free from shackles of political intrusions, and only answerable to the Parliament, underfunding the CGE, however, is one way of trimming its powers, a rampant scenario in several other African nations where gender machineries are perceived as an economic burden or where political leaders are principally patriarchal (Rai, 2018; Ramparsad,2019,). Many governments in Africa frustrate such National Gender Machineries by underfunding them and disregarding their submissions. Therefore, being a

statutory body, granted powers by the Constitution, does not guarantee its effectiveness without suitable environment for its operation such as competent staff, vigilant communities, good leadership and liberal media and a democracy conscious government. The National Gender Machineries that get sufficient government funding have much higher prospects of success than the ones that are not funded that well. In spite of the several programs for poverty alleviation, there is little to show on mainstreaming gender within these programs. This reality results from the state's prioritization on other millennium targets, particularly of economic nature. Gender issues suffer as a result. Ramparsad (2019) affirms that CGE, like other African Gender Machineries, functions in an extremely bureaucratized form. This high level of bureaucratization and lack of political will hampers its access to sufficient resources, that consequently makes it unable to accomplish its mandates efficiently.

3.3 Religious and Cultural Constraints

The CGE stays in contact with traditional leaders who cling tightly to their traditional systems of beliefs, which are not in agreement with the provisions of the South African Constitution regarding equality. There are numerous occasions where these traditional authorities have remained firm on virginity testing, customary marriage, inheritance of property, leaning on traditions with intergenerational gender-biased tenets that act as an excuse for ignoring laws that uphold women's rights. In the area of Mpumalanga land allocation founded on patriarchal mind-set that women should not own land, and that allotting land to women would contravene traditional systems among Swati and Zulu communities still exists. These two communities dominate the province of Mpumalanga.

An example of constrictions of religious nature could be the position taken by some religious institutions on the use of contraceptives such as condoms in an era when HIV/AIDS continue to ravage the population. The government should take the stand that the Church has no room for compromise on such issues under the claim of protecting morality. The CGE should go ahead to act upon particular crucial decisions that could threaten the believer's wellbeing. The CGE, being a statutory institution must intelligently rise above sentiments, traditional and church belief systems and prioritize the rights and welfare of the South African citizens. Experience demonstrates that religious-based beliefs and doctrines have not entirety answered human issues; the religious institutions as well tacitly recognize that combining varying approaches to solve our daily intricacies is

inevitable. The fact that the possible key solutions to women issues would in most cases differ with church doctrines and beliefs.

Therefore, in most cases the aforesaid conservative church beliefs are conveyed through the written knowledge and spoken language that constitutes the human thoughts or behaviourist psychology; Nonetheless, much of the literature used by the Commission has not been interpreted into African languages that the South African women can comprehend (Parliamentary Monitor Group, 2010). Due to this lack of CGE translated literature, it becomes hard for the Commission to address the women because finding words equivalent to a Western language may not be possible and thus the original meaning may definitely be distorted. Similarly, it complicates the women's access to information disseminated by the Commission.

3.4 Poor Coordination between CGE and State Departments

Gender mainstreaming remains yet to be felt fully by the South African rural women because of inadequate engagement with the rural population at the grassroots. Moreover, the Commission has not shown much collaboration with other institutions (CGE, 2018, CGE, 2021). The tenuous coordination shows when the state officials fail to consider recommendations from the CGE, particularly at provincial level. The CGE could fruitfully address the issue of virginity testing and *Ukuthwala* if the Commission's officials worked together with local government officials in rural areas.

3.5 Poor Link between CGE and CSOs

Although the CGE networks with CSOs, its linkage with those institutions is weak. The NGOs which are within Civil Society Organizations continuously work with women in rural settings, and thus the Commission could make use of these organizations to connect with the rural population at the grassroots. This could facilitate the Commission to hear and understand more deeply the gender interests of rural women. The Commission has a chance to work together with the CSOs which are well acquainted with gender interests for rural populations. These include SONKE Gender Justice Network and the South African Self-Employed Women's Association (SASEWA).

The SASEWA, is a non-governmental organization whose mission is championing the rights of women engaged in the informal sector, such as street vendors, household workers. On the other hand, the SONKE gender justice Network is an organization that combats sexual and gender-based violence

(SGBV), for the prevention of HIV/AIDS. These organizations would be useful vehicles for the Commission to attend to the rural populations, especially where CGE lacks representatives.

Some rural environments in South Africa are far away from the CGE offices, and thus the Commission could subsidize some of the budget allocated to reach such population by using the CSOs. In collaborating with CSOs the Commission has a possibility of improving its *modus operandi* because Civil Society Organizations are not part of the government and, therefore, they could comfortably act as a watchdog for the Commission. The collaborative engagement of the Commission and that Civil Society Organizations has higher potential to capture more robust attention than the "walk alone voice" by the CGE. The Civil Society Organizations with skilled people in various fields, would be of great use to the Commission where it lacks such personnel (CGE, 2018).

4.0 Opportunities for CGE to Realise its Mandates among The Rural Women

The CGE is constitutionally mandated to monitor all state institutions on gender equality. This gives the Commission an opportunity to occupy a central place in the state architecture, in the context of the National Gender Machinery, with the opportunity to ensure that the state is accountable (CGE,2021; Hick, 2010). Additionally, the CGE ensures delivery of international protocols designed to uphold gender equality and promote the status of women (CGE, 2018). The South African Constitution assures the autonomy to the CGE and empowers the Commission to monitor whether or not the government and the private institutions are implementing the Constitutional provisions and conventional commitments on equality.

The government instituted gender desks/gender focal points in all government ministries at provincial level. These centres were established to ensure implementation of gender mainstreaming within the government ministries in all activities of the State. The gender desks are at a privileged position to mobilize agencies, research institutions, departments, ministries, institutions of Higher Learning to advance gender equality. The CGE has a chance of working together with those Gender desks.

The religious institutions can be another source of strength for CGE. South Africa is a pluralist society with numerous co-existing religions. The adherents of those religions congregate on special days for their sacred worship. In this

regard, those worshiping communities are viable platforms to discuss religious and cultural elements that sustain male domination such as chastisement of women in the name of religion. In these religious institutions where men and women worship, their thoughts could be shared for an African generated solutions on women issues in the context of South Africa such as forced marriage, gender-based violence, genital mutilation, feminization of poverty, especially in rural settings and so on. Similarly, the religious institutions that train religious leaders should have gender, peace and justice among the core modules offered in their curriculum. The clergy must be conversant and well informed on gender matters. The Commission can lobby for religious institutions to become agents of knowledge for the disenfranchised rural women.

The Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are crucial institutions towards supporting the functions of CGE. The small budgetary allocation to the CGE has negatively affected its performance within the rural population. The CGE has the opportunity of collaborating with the civil society organizations, and such joint effort could enable CGE subsidize its resources. However, most of the Civil Society Organizations obtain funding from abroad and those funds come with donor intentions and directives. Thus, collaboration with them would minimize penetration of Western ideologies meant to serve their interests, in the guise of rural women's empowerment.

Several committees in the South African National Assembly are tasked with different roles aimed at the attainment of equality and democracy. The Commission has an opportunity of collaborating with some of those authorities such as the National House of Traditional Leaders in an attempt to overcome cultural practices that impede rural women from accessing their rights. Those same traditional leaders hinder gender equality, and therefore, dialogue with those leaders and other partners should never be ignored.

The CGE, as an organ authorized to review policies and engender knowledge, is capable of coming up with effective knowledge production procedures that could boost its involvements at public education, policy advocacy and legislative issues (CGE, 2018). The reports and gender-based research conducted by the CGE members could be a means by which the gendered power relations could be challenged. However, most of those CGE generated reports contain no theoretical framework that could enable interpretation of the existing reality of the prevailing power relations within the rural communities. The CGE Policy brief for instance, specifies seven policy recommendations that could allow rural women's accessibility to land. The part on policy recommendation in

the text is quiet about the prevailing gendered power structure. Adopting a feminist framework could aid the work to unpack the various gendered structures that impede women access to land and other forms of property. The theory of gender interest differentiates practical needs and strategic interests. Rai (2018) argues that the national gender machinery should be able to not only engage in the clarification of the two aforementioned interests/needs but to strategize them within particular contexts which they function (Rai, 2018).

5.0 Conclusion

Rural women encounter numerous gender-based complexities in South Africa. Those complexities range from inadequate access to basic necessities of life to the male chauvinism sustained by cultural and religious authorities that impede rural women's emancipation. The CGE, in liaison with other state institutions has participated in addressing the women concerns through its parliamentary submissions, lobbying the government, and educating rural women.

The CGE has experienced several challenges that, if properly addressed, would achieve a lot in terms of rural women emancipation. Thus, among the significant complexities that the CGE should address are the lack of adequate resources, weak linkage with the Civil Society Organizations, inadequate collaboration of the Commission with the government, state interference, and the tribal establishments. Despite the fact that CGE can monitor the activities performed by the government, it's still answerable to the same authority that allocates the funding and appoints the CGE officials.

The CGE has not fully discharged its functions as mandated, due to a number of setbacks that frustrate its mission of highlighting the South African women interests. Gender mainstreaming does not mean only having the notion 'gender' amalgamated into government policies but principally, it is about releasing adequate resources for gender projects in order to actualize them. The South African government's support to the CGE has been inadequate in terms of budgetary allocations.

The paper argues that the Commission on Gender Equality could utilize its statutory powers, and work with Gender Focal Points and various CSOs located among local communities to effectively discharge its functions. Despite the fact that the CGE possesses subpoena powers, few people have been subpoenaed by the Commission to appear in court. Additionally, the Commission has also not been able to challenge the state, despite those powers. The CSOs, Gender Focal Points and Civil society organizations are among the many unexploited

opportunities that the Commission could use to access women in rural settings. The two institutions are directly connected to women in their local settings, and therefore, are much better attuned to their interests than the Commission.

6.0 Policy Recommendations

This work recommends CGE to exploit its constitutionally vested powers to execute its functions. Although the Commission has statutory powers to perform its duties, it has not been able to challenge the State, which is a huge failure to the population it is supposed to serve. The Commission possesses subpoena powers to order the offenders to appear in court. Despite these powers, there are numerous cases that have not been subpoenaed by the CGE. The CGE has received numerous criticisms for being passive or not being active enough to highlight issues related to rural women. Similarly, despite the fact that laws are vital in the rural women's emancipation, the Commission lacks participation in the write up of the legislation.

The CGE reports do not use any feminist theory to analyse women issues in spite of the Commission comprising women who are actively lobbying for the transformation of the structures that inhibit the access to women rights. This paper argues that, for the Commission to address the strategic interests of the rural women, members of the Commission must be conversant with the gender frameworks for analysis and be ready to adopt them in analysis and the report write up. The members appointed to serve in the Commission must have the capacity to make a distinction between the strategic interests and practical interests. In the submitted reports, it appears that the CGE commissioners focus predominantly on the practical needs, rather than strategic interests that pertain to power structures.

The existing link between the civil society organizations and CGE needs to be strengthened so that the Commission can successfully advance the welfare of the rural women. The Civil society organizations are familiar with the complexities that rural women encounter, and therefore, the Commission could collaborate with them so as to better understand the issues that rural women have to deal with. A strong connection between the two could also assist the CGE to supplement its small budget that thwarts the CGE from competently performing its functions.

This study found out that the majority of rural women are unaware of their rights. Thus, they do not access any rights they are entitled to such as health rights, education rights, property rights, customary rights, etc. The Civil society

organizations and the CGE must invest more on educating the South African rural women on human rights. Such education would demand organizing numerous workshops and using the teaching material translated into South African languages (Sesotho, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, etc.).

The establishment of once dynamic women groups into government institutions by creating OSW, CGE, and the Joint Committee of Parliament led to the weakening of the grassroots women organizations within rural areas. There was an assumption that the women in state offices would be able to promote women interests, but those assumptions have been proved wrong. This work argues that the revival of those once vibrant women organizations cannot be underrated since it is through them that women's interests will be understood.

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Gender Responsive Budgeting as an Accelerator to Women's Economic Empowerment

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Abstract

Budgets are universally considered influential for achieving developme objectives whether at the national or county level. Governments are depende on budgets to distribute resources amongst its citizens for their daily nee Repercussions of budget policies on men and women affect the two genders different ways due to the society expectation of the roles either gender shou play. Most marginalized women are confronted by poverty and lack incomes invest in their economic and social development. They also lack access education, services, and non-monetary resources, all of which traps them in vicious cycle of poverty. This paper seeks to demonstrate that GRB initiativ improve women's economic empowerment. It will use external desk research demonstrate the role of GRB as a tool for women empowerment. The resear design chosen for this paper widely avails statistical and document information related to the topic.

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the Human Developme theory based on an all-inclusive statistical measure (Human Developme Index) as an indicator of economic growth with human development. The H brought a paradigm shift as to how development was viewed. Other relat theories empowering women include the Empowerment Theory which promot creation of a responsive community which is dependent on the help of the larg society and political environment and the Institutional Design Theory whi focuses on the need to allow women to effectively take part in the politics of t country.

Key words: Gender, Responsive, Budget, Accelerate, Empowerment.

1.0 Introduction

"Women's economic empowerment is the process of achieving women's equal access to and control over economic resources and ensuring they can use them to exert increased control over other areas of their lives" (Taylor & Pereznieto, 2014). This process transforms the lives of women and girls from limited power and economic access to economic advancement. Drawing on Rowlands' typology (1997), VeneKlasen & Miller, (2002) report that when women and girls are transformed, their emancipation takes place in their manifesting power from within, where the knowledge, individual capabilities, sense of entitlement, self-esteem and self-belief to make changes in their lives manifests. Power to economic decision-making, power within areas regarded as men's domain, power over access to and control over assets and income generation activities are also enhanced.

Poverty in inequalities in Africa has a female face. Even though women perform 66% of the world's work, and produce 50% of the food, women earn only 10% of the income and own 1% of the property. According to Bill Clinton, (2009) improving education in the developing world, fighting climate change and other challenges we face are all key empowerment tools for women. *"A large number of women has entered in the labour force but not been treated as equals to men. They earn less than men and have less opportunity for growth"* (Goldin, C, 1990), a view supported by Duflo. E, (2011). However, according to Nallari & Griffith (2011) governments have majorly focused on expenditure, ignoring revenues. Cutbacks in expenditure continues to hurt important women services such as the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) programs The GRB, therefore, lacks effective advocates in the government thus the poor implementation. The number of budget documents made available to the public is very low. This also means transparency is low. With the budgeting timelines this study hopes to bring to the fore, there is hope for a more participatory budget making process in the future.

1.1. Factors Affecting Women's Economic Empowerment

A Women's Economic Empowerment Report by Hunt & Emma, (2016) indicates that there are six hindrances which directly affect women's financial development and ultimately impact their lives. These include education, skills development, and training; decent and reasonably remunerated job opportunities; reproductive roles; ownership of property and assets; support systems and leadership; and social protection and training, which ultimately dictates one's educational level, marital choices, economic status, and child reproduction. The stated hindrances

are key to breaking some of the negative cultural cycles. A well remunerated woman has a higher chance of bettering her wellbeing and can venture into the economic spaces of the male dominated spheres.

"The unpaid care and domestic work disproportionately carried out by women, plays a critical role in human well-being and maintaining the labour force, and therefore in economic growth," (Cook & Razavi, 2012). The two authors also maintain that reproductive roles are hardly rewarded in most budgets. Furthermore, unpaid work remains unrecognized in dominant economic and social approaches. On the other hand, Klugmanetal, (2014) stresses on the importance of equal distribution of resources traditionally considered as belonging to men as a booster to gender mainstreaming. Lack of team spirit can result to low labour production, unfavourable terms and conditions at work and inadequate welfare services which would not only lead to household developments but also increase a nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

1.2 Some Benefits and Suitability of GRB as a Women's Economic Accelerator

For the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and sustainable development, women empowerment is a prerequisite. A 2012, 2013 World Bank Report indicates that women's economic advancement has led to increased investments in children's education and health, and reduced household poverty. *"Gender parity for all has the potential to boost global gross domestic product (GDP) by between $12trillion and $28trillion between now and 2025"* (Woetzel et al., 2015). Golla et al, (2011) explains how inequitable competition increases loss in economies and realization of full potential remains a mirage.

According to the Society for International Development, (2012), budgets are considered to be influential tools in the achievement of development objectives, whether at the national or county level. They act as the guideline the government must adhere to when distributing resources with the aim of achieving the nation's objectives, according to the nation's Constitution or laws. They are a blueprint to achieving government policies. UNESCO (2010) indicates that budgets should not only ensure affirmative action as a key consideration during resource allocation but should also act as indicators of commitment to the set policies. They should reflect how the governments mobilize and allocate public resources. They are, therefore, a strategy for supporting gender mainstreaming in development processes. A gender responsive budget seeks to ensure there is an adherence before, during and after the budgeting process by looking at critical

areas such as gender mainstreaming in the implementation of all planned projects in the budget. It also ensures there is a balance in goals that contribute to human well-being. A gender responsive budget is an important mechanism for ensuring greater consistency between economic goals and social commitments. Marginalization is a major concern during GRB. Barnett & Grown, (2004) suggest an all- inclusive process during budgeting to avoid gender exclusion and insensitivity as this objective ensures women's economic equality stands out.

The fourth chapter of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 entails the Bill of Rights, which provides for equal rights and protection before the law. As this chapter forbids discrimination, the state is obligated to ensure that none is discriminated or victimized unfairly. Gender sensitivity calls for different and prioritized practical and strategic needs. According to SOCATT-K, (2018) more often than not, women's needs and priorities in public life are not adequately represented. Policies that appear gender neutral always work to the disadvantage of the women leading to gender disparities. For a long time, women were not entitled to state benefits and pensions as their reproductive roles did not allow them to work full time and they were casually employed in the informal sector.

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC, 2014) asserts that women's reproductive roles, some of which are extremely relevant and contribute to the GDP are unaccounted for due to unavailability of data. This means, they are left out when crucial policy decisions are being made. The GRB budget analysts are guided by finding out whether budget estimates are gender responsive/sensitive thereby helping in the linking with adequate budget allocations. These budgets also link women empowerment policies to available budgets towards activities that empower women and, end gender-based violence ensuring participation of men and women during the budget making process. They monitor the impact of expenditure with a gender lens as well as prioritize activities such as construction of marketplaces with running water, construction of toilets, street lighting that improves security which benefits both women and men but addresses the vulnerability of women towards sexual abuses that may happen (bottom-up approach) according to SOCATT-K, (2018).

As per Article 21(3) of the Bill of Rights GOK, (2010), the government of Kenya has introduced the Department of Gender to ensure institutionalization of gender mainstreaming in the ministries, county governments and the private sector. It has also committed itself to the upscaling of gender policies, sex disaggregated data, SGBV programs and women socio-economic empowerment across the board to the advantage of women and other marginalized persons. The

government has also committed to monitor and evaluate the programs to ensure compliance.

1.3 Examples of Disparity in Budgeting and Leadership in Kenya

Table 1 shows that investment was primarily on matters related to closing the gender inequalities in Kenya. However, these resources are too little as compared to the gender gap to be closed.

Table 1: Budget Allocations for FY2016/17-FY (Kshs, Millions)

Program	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Affirmative Action	2,130,000,000	2,130,000,000	2,447,000,000	2,536,000,000
Community Development	2,130,000,000	2,130,000,000	2,447,000,000	2,536,000,000
Gender Mainstreaming	1,051,280,266	548,895,501	551,712,884	561,770,698
Youth Development Scheme	695,001,938	-	-	-
Gender and Socio-Economic Empowerment	746,058,802	1,598,000,000	1,624,000,000	1,642,000,000
Gender Empowerment	2,492,341,006	2,146,895,501	2,175,712,884	2,203,770,698
General Administration and Planning Services	-	295,804,499	314,787,116	328,829,302
General Administration, Planning and Support Services	-	295,804,499	314,787,116	328,829,302

Source: National Government PBB2018/19

The Global Gender Gap Index 2018 ranks Kenya number 76 out of 144 countries while the economic empowerment and political representation of women were identified as the sectors with the highest gender gap to be closed and which would take more than 170 years to close. Most importantly, from the fiscal and program analysis of the State Department of Gender , it has been established that the Department has the opportunity to embrace new ideas of eliminating drivers of gender inequality not only through economic empowerment but also through other sectors-based empowerment such as social empowerment and greater investment in the demographic dividends presented by the youthful Kenyan Population.

The budget analysis and the context analysis undertaken here point out a number of limitations. For example, there is neither policy, nor legal framework to guide gender responsive budgeting in Kenya. The National Gender Responsive guidelines of 2014 have not been elevated to the level of a binding policy, which will ensure mandatory implementation of budgets that are gender

responsive. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) has not offered adequate guidance on what data and how to collect gender disaggregated data for use in budgeting and making other development related decisions. The approaches to budgeting did not have gender equality as a primary consideration to budget estimation and allocations.

Gender mainstreaming is not acknowledged and enforced as a key consideration on programming in Kenya even during the budget making processes. Budget practitioners do not have comprehensive understanding of GRB. Even through Kenya has GRB guidelines for use at county and national levels, these are neither known nor utilized. While public participation in the budget making process often considers gender issues, there is a lack of adequate skills among budget practitioners to include gender dimensions in the actual budgets. The officers lack checklists and guidelines to follow when making budgets to ascertain that gender inequality is progressively addressed.

The Kenya Constitution, 2010 provides for equality in all spheres. However, affirmative action remains unimplemented. There is no demonstrable evidence that the government commits to the implementation of the gender principle. This may explain why budgets are not gender responsive. County governments tend to allocate resources towards catalytic women empowerment and girls stand-alone projects without creating opportunities within budgets of the ministries to respond to the defined needs of women and men. There is an opportunity to ensure all county budgets practically integrate GRB principles to allow financing gender equality initiatives within all ministries and departments. The county governments' practitioners lack the skills to implement gender responsive budgets. The stakeholders doubt the extent to which their participation in budget making is meaningful. The gender equality needs identified during public participation are not included in the program-based budgets approved estimates. Gender Framework tools such as gender law, gender policy, and gender strategy are not available to programmers for guidance.

Table 2: Gender analysis of the 2017 Kenya General Elections

Table 1: General Election Results, 2017 By gender						
Position	***Elected***		***Nominated***			
	Men	***Women***	***Men***	***Women***	***Total***	***% Women (Elect+Nom.)***
President	*1*	*0*	--	--	***1***	*0%*

Deputy President	*1*	*0*	--	--	***1***	*0%*
Senator	*44*	*3*	*2*	*18*	***67***	*31%*
MNA	*267*	*23*	*7*	*5*	***302***	*9%*
WMNA	*0*	*47*	--	--	***47***	*100%*
Governor	*44*	*3*	--	--	***47***	*6%*
Deputy Governor	*40*	*7*	--	--	***47***	*15%*
MCA	*1334*	*96*	*97*	*650*	***2177***	*34%*
TOTAL	***1731***	***179***	***106***	***673***	***2689***	***32%***

Table source: *The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA Kenya) February 2018 in Gender analysis of the 2017 Kenya General Elections*[8]

According to the *Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission* (IEBC), a total of 1,862 persons were lawfully elected in the 2017 general elections, out of which 172 (9%) were women. The Table 2 indicates that only 23 women were elected as members of the National Assembly, compared to 267 men. The number of men elected as MCA was almost 14 times that of women elected for the same position. These results were, however, an improvement on the ones of 2002 and 2013 when only 4 and 16 women respectively were elected Members of Parliament. With effective voter education, these numbers are likely to rise in the coming years.

1.4 Key Processes and Dates for Women Participation in Budget Making in Kenya

Women must be involved in the budget making process at both national and county budgeting level. They should interact with documents that guide their county budgeting process and thereafter participate in the processes. A 2021 Report from *the Institute for Social Accountability* (TISA) *(Case of Nairobi City Council)* provides the names of the important documents, guidelines on key processes and the key priority areas for women participation in budget making as:

(i) Documents

These should include the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), the Annual Development Plan (ADP), the County Fiscal Strategic Paper (CFSP),

8 *https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Gender%20Analysis%20of%202017%20GeneralElections%20FINAL%20High%20Res%20for%20Printer%20-%20NEW%20COVER_small.pdf-Accessed on 9/5/22*

the County Budget Review and Outlook Paper (CBROP), the Budget circular, Budget estimates and Finance Bill. The Budget Circular is a guideline on processes and procedures on the budget preparation (Timetable for each step in the budget process, highlighting key priority areas).

(ii) Key Processes and Priority Areas

The key processes include:

- County Budget and Economic Forum: Give citizens an opportunity to make their views known during the preparation of all county plans e.g., integrated development plan and budget documents
- County Budget Process: Women presentation of views and participating in public hearings. They can also ensure they have access to the Annual Report given to the County Assemblies by the governors;
- Budget planning process: National and county budget committees allow women to give their views on the budget amendments at the County Assembly. They can manipulate the final budget before it is approved.

(iii) Key Dates and Activities

Table 3 tabulates a schedule for the key dates and activities to ensure the budget making process runs smoothly and on time.

Table 3: Key Dates and Activities

DATE	ACTIVITY
30/8	Start of budget processing
1/9	Tabling of County Development Plan
1/9-15/2	Prepare and give views on (CBROP)
1/1	Monitor and Submit (CRA), recommend on division of revenue
28/2	Table (CFSP) and participate
16/3	Prepare and submit budget estimates to the County assembly. Change budget proposal, lobby for funds accommodated.
May	Public hearings by budget & appropriation committee
30/6	Last day for passing County Appropriations Bill. Women can participa in public hearings by the Budget and Appropriation committee

Source: *A Popular Guide to County Planning and Budgeting (Case of Nairobi City Council)-The Institute for Social Accountability* (TISA), 2013[9]

[9] https://www.tisa.or.ke/images/uploads/A_Popular_Guide_to_County_Planning_and_Budgeting.pdf. Accessedon1/11/21

Kenyan women should also avail themselves for participation during supplementary budgets. Common venues for budget meetings take place in all acceptable meeting places such as churches, mosques, temples and public barazas. National and vernacular radio broadcasting stations can provide crucial information on budget making processes when tasked to. The SDG Kenya Forum in its book *Baseline Assessment on Gender-Responsive Budgeting in Kenya*, (2020) states other affirmative funds women can benefit from such as, Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) that provides micro-finance credit and other financial support for women; The Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) that provides credit for young men and women to enable them establish businesses to earn a living with the objective of reducing unemployment; The Uwezo fund (Kiswahili word for Ability) that empowers women, persons with disabilities and youth by giving seed money of up to US$ 5000 to special interest groups as start-up capital for business; The Social Protection Fund which is given as credit, and cash transfers to older members of a Society (of 65 members and above) and people with severe disability; 30% procurement reservation affirmative action to Special Interest Groups (SIG) that include women, persons with disabilities and the youth. Women also have access to 30 % of the value of all-public procurement tenders. The National Government Affirmative Action Fund, established in 2015 is administered through female members of Parliament to run programs targeting socio-empowerment of women, youth, persons with disabilities, children, and elderly persons.

1.5 Obstacles to GRB Implementation

Lack of data classification by sex, age or location, limits women ownership of the GRB process. Other obstacles are discriminatory social norms, unskilled technical capacity persons who carry out GRB in ministries, lack of adequate gendered data to support the budget empowerment processes, lack of political will and lack of sharing of experience and challenges among the key players in the GRB process. Participation has been manipulated by most politicians and persons of interest. This is because there is no clear definition of what constitutes citizens. It is a word that has been used to validate pre-determined results during the budget making process. *"A single consultation meeting of hundreds of people in award does not constitute participation neither does it inspire confidence in the citizens,"* (KLGRP, 2012). Citizens either intentionally or not, fail to participate in the budget making process as provided for in the Constitution thus losing the opportunity to influence budget allocation and decision making. Other

obstacles can be attributed to lack of civic education, disputes over different interests from citizens, mischief from those in charge of the process e.g. shifting dates meant for public participation, failure to maximize the use of ICT, sometimes deliberately, to pass information to citizens, failure to disclose budget related information to citizens for effective participation and ignoring gender concerns as well as the vulnerable and marginalized groups when planning for the budgeting process.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

The necessity to have a GRB approach to budgeting came about after a realization that governments did not consider budgeting for specific gender roles but, instead, planned for its citizen as a block. Barnett and Grown (2004) state that,

> *Emerging literature indicates that budgetary policies are likely to affect men and women differently, since they play different roles in the society and demonstrate different consume behaviour. There have been concerns worldwide that tax policy is biased against women because it tends to increase the incidence of taxation of the poorest women while failing to generate enough revenue to fund the programmes needed to improve these women's lives.*

This seriously negatively impacted its citizens in various ways. On the other hand, ILO (2006) notes,

> *These gender responsive budget (GRB) intiatives have been adopted as a strategic approach to the assessment of the role of budgets in promoting gender equality. They can help bridge persistent inequalities between women and men and facilitate development by integrating gender issues into macro policy and budgets.*

Narayan 2002 describes empowerment as enhanced power and control over resources and decision making that ultimately determines how people live their lives. According to Wallerstein (1992) the power acquired is mainly for the people to liberate themselves from injustices in society and therefore meets their needs. According to Sushama (1998), when women are given the opportunity to

participate fully in social, political, and economic spheres of life, they are deemed as empowered. They become self-reliant, able to generate income from projects and fight poverty. A study by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (2010), *Agenda 2010 - The Turning Point on Poverty: Background Paper on Gender* indicates that women economic empowerment increases their pays and decision-making powers. This improves investments, health and nutrition which ultimately leads to economic growth. It raises the GDP of a country as well as the agricultural outputs. It is also likely that there will be an increase in assets and service access for women. With the growth of female owned businesses, jobs are created which leads to poverty reduction.

GRB has developed over time. Severally developing countries have introduced GBV as a tool to measure growth. Australia was the first country

> *GRB seeks to create a direct linkage between social and economic policies through the use of a gender analysis lense on the formulation and implementation of government budgets. It ensures integrating a gender perspective into all steps of the budget process – planning, drafting, implementing, and evaluating – so as to guaranttee that budget policies take into consideration the gender issues in the society (UNESCO, 2010)*

to introduce GBV in 1984. India, Bangladesh, and Rwanda followed suit in the early 2000s. It is therefore a strategy for supporting gender mainstreaming in the development processes. Tangible development requires that there is a balance that exists between male and female which is what an authentic gender sensitive and inclusive budget should seek to address.

Today, many more countries have introduced GRB. They include Tanzania, Nigeria, Nepal, Rwanda, Morocco, and the list continues to grow. In the stated countries, GRB has enhanced improved resource allocation to narrow gender disparities. From 2014, Ghana for example, other than partnering with Oxfam to train domestic workers and women parliamentarians on GRB, the two entities have also collaborated to make all-inclusive gender friendly budgets. Bolivia has built a network of women organizations and strived to work together towards achieving goals deemed likely to benefit them. Moreover, since 2017 Oxfam and partners have embarked on a course towards GRB in Vietnam under UNIFEM. They confront cases touching on inequalities and gender gaps in social, political, and economic opportunities.

Kenya is one of the few countries in Africa that recognizes GRB as a powerful planning and budgeting tool, with the aim of reducing the gender inequalities and accelerating equitable development. Though Kenya has done well in raising awareness and pushing for the government's accountability, it has failed to achieve tangible success in pushing for change in the budget making process. Kenya is lagging behind in most of the gender equality indicators and measurements as compared to Rwanda, South Sudan, Namibia, Tanzania, and Uganda, among other countries in the region, yet GRB was first extensively recognized in the state in 2014. The country is yet to demonstrate robust application of the GRB tools or the impact they may have had in sectors where GRB has been fully utilized. Twelve out of the 17 SDGs have direct gender targets and hence the urgency of the need to be gender responsive in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Attempts have been made at the national level to introduce GRB but the same has not been institutionalized in Kenya. Both at the national and the county government level, gender responsiveness is not at the centre of the budgeting process. While budgets at the national and county levels have some gender indications, they are not entirely gender responsive. Despite the existence of a very progressive human rights based constitutional framework that promotes gender equality and other enabling legislative frameworks, GRB has remained at the periphery of the development agenda in Kenya. The most obvious outcome of gender budget initiatives is improving women's economic equality,

> *GRB initiatives seek to improve the results of budgets in general, and gender equality and women's empowerment in particula. They focus on key economic and social matters that are often overlooked or obscured in conventional budget and policy analysis, and decision making (Sharp & Elson, 2012)*

It is a strategy for supporting gender mainstreaming in development processes. It has been established that economic gains manifest in increased output and escalation of people's capacities. With GRB this can greatly be enhanced. Linking GRB to budgetary allocations ensures that policies put in place alleviate gender disparities and translates them into outputs. The top-down approach which has been traditionally used may not adequately address the needs of the various gender interest groups in society. Despite this critical need and realization, having an all-inclusive group has not been fully embraced in the past.

The GRB approach is synonymous to bottom-up approach which provides and strongly advocates for incorporation of the citizens' views and inputs of the diverse stakeholders at the critical stage, planning. It is demand-led. Without adequate resources, development remains a mirage.

Budgets are, therefore, crucial in framing policies in as much as the resources are limited. It, therefore, calls for the prioritization of the available resources. Women's empowerment is increasingly being embraced and appreciated, especially over the past couple of years as a crucial factor for any country's sustainable development. Governments are increasingly accommodating empowerment programs. Consistency between economic goals and social commitments are achievable by using GRB.

> *A gender budget initiative always involves a gender analysis of some dimension of the raising and use of public money. However, there is no single way of doing this and a number of analytical tools can be used (Elson, 1998; Budlender & Sharp, 1998)*
>
> *The impact of government budgets on the most disadvantaged groups of women is a focus of special attention (IDRC, 2001)*

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

For many years in the past, governments, NGOs, and civil societies have, with little success, used different approaches while budgeting in an effort to promote gender equality. Budlender (2005) attributes the low success rate to the fact that focus tends to be on allocation to women and girls which is usually a minimal proportion of national budgets. Several gaps are at play in the slow implementation of the success of GRB and WEE at large. The *National Gender and Equality Commission* (NGEC, 2019) *Guide for County Government Leadership* indicates that gender and age disaggregated data, which provides information on men's and women's as well as other special interest groups' situations and needs, is missing in most government structures. A study by Sohela & Nora (2018) also shows that GRB is normally implemented from the top. Most GRB actors are at the national level and have very little to show at the local levels due to the lack of political will. Governments have not provided adequate technical training and capacity building on data and knowledge management, thereby affecting the uptake of GRB practices. A Gender Financing in Kenya (GFK, 2021) study indicates that County governments have not adopted the

National Gender Equality Commission's *Integration of Gender Inclusion in County Government Guidelines.* Neither are budgets tagged nor is the performance of budget implementation measured. Most governments leave out gender advocates in the planning and discussion around collection analysis and publication of gender financing data. With good will and a well-structured system, GRB can yield great benefits.

3.0 Methodological Approach

External desk research was used to demonstrate the role GRB plays in enhancing women empowerment. This was informed by the fact that the approach provides a lot of information on the subject which is easily accessible as opposed to using primary data collection methods. Among the literature used was Chapter four of the Kenyan Constitution 2010 on the Bill of Rights and funds dedicated to women, persons with disabilities and the youth for development programs. Articles 10, 27 (1, 3, 4, 6 & 8) are on equality and equity in all spheres. The Kenya Vision 2030 social pillar blueprint was a reference point to the introduction of the Women Entrepreneur Fund. Relevant Issue papers and journals on Women's Economic Empowerment and GRB have also been used. Reports documented by The Global Gender Gap Report (2018) and a 2018 baseline survey by Development Initiatives, which conducted a study to assess the extent to which the national budget and the budgets for the period 2016 to 2019 of six counties (Kitui, Kajiado, Kisumu, Nakuru, Kilifi, and Bomet) were based on GRB principles were also key in this study. This research method also saves on time and cost. The research method has been used by eminent scientists such as Durkheim and Max Weber. In this research relevant information was used from trusted websites by looking for specific information on GRB. Data published by the government of Kenya and related information from other governments was also used. Information and data from The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA Kenya) February 2018 was also used to show gender disparities in national and county governments.

4.0 Findings and Discussions

From the findings of this study, it can be said that the majority of GRB programs are vague due to a lack of clear guidelines on what gender programmes should the budget provide for, and low understanding of the concept of gender. These concepts are neither fully nor clearly addressed. Organizations and governments only address specific budgetary allocations for financing such as provision of

sanitary towels for schoolgirls as was the case in the 2011/2012 financial year budget in Kenya. It is also clear that gender-responsive budgeting has been mixed (Nallari & Griffith 2011).

There is some evidence of positive impact, and some evidence of limited or no impact. In the Development Initiatives studies of Kitui, Kajiado, Kisumu, Nakuru, Kilifi, and Bomet, the respondents were able to identify projects within their counties that they proposed or advocated for. Challenges, however, included lack of gender audits, inadequate budget allocations and lack of coordination by the government, among others. Notably, there is no evidence of negative impact as the objective of gender responsive budgeting is inclusivity and accountability rather than separate budgets for females and males. Overall, Elson & Sharp (2010) argue that gender-responsive budgeting is unique in its ability to go beyond new laws and policies to focus on resources necessary for their implementation. Budlender (2009) suggests that gender-responsive budgeting should be used to assist, alongside other interventions, in promoting gender equality, and mitigating 'policy evaporation'. OECD (2010) argues that even if a GRB initiative does not meet its objective of changing budget allocations, it may *'succeed without success'* by initiating a process on gender equality, triggering engagement in budgetary transparency, and establishing that gender inequality does not make good economic sense. Elson & Sharp (2010,) note that an interesting aspect of gender-responsive budgeting is its frequent focus on poverty as well as on gender equality.

Regarding gender economic disparities and information related to it, the results indicate that GRB addresses GDP gender gaps through resource allocation. GRB also combines two sources of information which have been kept separate, knowledge of gender inequality and knowledge of public finance and public sector programs. GRB exposes and illustrates the existence of inequality in budgetary allocations to women as compared to men. GRB not only increases accountability of commitments to gender equality and human rights but also accelerates the implementation of the same. Governments can work more efficiently by including informed GRB savvy personnel during budgetary allocations. GRB application is likely to ensure transparency, accountability, and participation in the budget making process, which in turn, increases the effectiveness of both policies and programs.

Effective monitoring and evaluation will ensure stated objectives are achieved. Findings from a UNESCO (2010) study indicate that GRB continues to illustrate and create understanding of existing inequalities in budgetary impacts

between men and women. Creating awareness on GRB will increase accountability and accelerate the implementation of commitments to gender equality and human rights. Using personnel who are well informed on financial resource allocation will increase the efficiency of government budgets. Ignoring gender inequalities in budgetary allocations negatively affects the country in terms of productivity, quality of the labour force, economic growth, and health.

GRB can effectively be used by governments as a gender mainstreaming tool thus ensuring sustainable equity. Every gender sensitive government should have GRB in place as a policy. This will enhance transparency, accountability, predictability, and participation in the budget making process.

5.0 Policy Recommendations

Enhancement of more civic engagement with women by reaching out to them and asking them what challenges they face that prevent them from getting involved in public affairs will accelerate women's economic empowerment and ensure its sustainability. The women in the community must, therefore, demand access to knowledge, awareness and budget related information from the national and county governments, NGOs and other stakeholders involved in the budgeting process (community-centred approach). Information can be passed to them through holding workshops, barazas, religious gatherings, print and electronic media among other ways. All stakeholders should solicit the opinions of women on how they can work with the local government to assess community priorities and better resource allocation. There is also need to provide women with tools, knowledge, and resources necessary for them to effectively engage their government, allow them the freedom to mobilize their peers, and air their collective views according to their preferences directly during the budget allocation processes. County Governments should avail information on current existing women participation opportunities and cultivate gender equality commitments as per the Constitution and the international and regional instruments ratified by Kenya. This can be done by revising their social priorities as well as social justice. If the national government demonstrates its commitment to gender equality (political good will), this will influence the formulation of gender friendly policies, laws and procedures that will trickle down to the county governments, with budgeting process being key. This will generate increased trust between the government and the citizens.

Not only should the government include the marginalized in the gender mainstreaming plans, but it should also implement the policies concerning them. This will be an effective structured guide in the reduction of inequalities. The policies should aim at creating an enabling environment towards empowering women and overcoming gender stereotypes. NGEC needs to work with the government to ensure gender disparities are significantly reduced through emancipation of women. This will most likely lead to economic growth. The Government, the COGs Departments of Gender and other stakeholders need to work on reducing inequality between men and women for the achievement of SDG 5. According to Oxaal, & Baden, (1997) policy action and government responsibility have to be compulsory as this will most likely enhance gender equality, thereby starting a virtuous cycle ultimately increasing the power of women.

> *To increase opoortunities for women in economy, they must have access to better jobs, a business environment that supoorts them in doing business, access to financial sector that meets their needs, and job security in times of crises. Economic empowerment helps women in providing access to resources and opportunities in the economy (DAC Network on Gender Equality, 2011)*

GRB is a key tool in achieving this.

6.0 Conclusion

The analysis above shows that the process of budget making requires adequate expertise in gender analysis and project formulation for effective and efficient engagement of all stakeholders. It is a fact that societies that embrace women's potentials in their socio economic, cultural, and political power thrive, while those that ignore fail. This paper has revealed that there is a lot of ignorance regarding GRB issues which calls for sensitization and training in the same in order to bridge inequalities. There is need of sensitization of grassroots women champions on GRB principles and consideration for their meaningful participation in the county budget making processes to increase their bargaining power. Gender mainstreaming funds need to be increased as they are currently underfunded. This will help reduce gender inequalities. It is necessary for GRB to be enshrined in law or policy frameworks in order to allocate resources that will facilitate gender responsive programming. This study was unable to establish why most grass root

women still seem to be ignorant on GRB related matters despite the budget calendar providing for their participation in the budget making process to canvas for their issues. This is an area that will need more studies. So far, GRB has not yet yielded meaningful tangible results that impact on women. This calls for a thorough analysis of the budget using a gender lens.

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Special Issue

Redesigning Reusable Sanitary Pads Using The Human-Centered Design Model and Triple Bottom Line Strategy

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Abstract

Introduction: *In Sub-Saharan Africa, many women and girls lack access to adequate menstrual hygiene management (MHM) products, which negatively affects their participation in education, employment, and community development. Additionally, limited access to MHM products leads to diminished dignity and respect and increased discrimination and stigma.* **Objectives and Methodology:** *The Specific Objectives were to 1) Produce an improved, cost-effective reusable sanitary pad (HERS pad) using the Human-Centered Design (HCD) model, 2) Train women and girls in the production of the HERS pad as a sustainable social enterprise, using the Triple Bottom Line (Profit, People, Planet) Strategy, and 3) Evaluate the quality, cost and affordability, performance, and adoption of the HERS pad by target end-users. The study was conducted in two districts (Bulambuli and Butaleja) of Eastern Uganda. Four women groups were trained to produce the HERS pad, and 46 secondary schoolgirls assessed the quality, performance, and adoption of the HERS pad.* **Results:** *The HERS pad was developed from mostly sustainable, locally available, and affordable materials. This pad was cheaper, and it exhibited better properties in relation to comparable pads on the market in Uganda. Overall, there was a statistically significant difference in the favourable*

compared to the unfavourable rating of the quality and performance of the HERS pad. **Conclusion:** *The production of the HERS pad enabled participants to access an affordable, sustainable pad, to manage their menstrual hygiene with dignity in an environmentally friendly way. Despite the cultural barriers encountered in marketing the HERS pad, women were empowered to diversify into environmentally friendly production of an essential product and to reap some intangible social benefits.*

Key words: Human-centred design, menstrual hygiene management, reusable-pads, social entrepreneurship, triple bottom line, women empowerment

1.0 Introduction

In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), women and girls face challenges regarding their overall menstrual health and managing (MHM) their menstrual periods with dignity due to a lack of ready access to hygienic and cost-effective MHM products (Kuhlmann et al., 2017). Fundamental changes in access to menstrual hygiene management (MHM) products are needed to meet the needs of women and girls in this region. MHM products' key characteristics for women and girls include effectiveness, safety, discretion, sustainability, and affordability. Women and girls who use unhygienic alternatives for sanitary pads or tampons (such as newspapers, leaves, pieces of cloth, cow dung, and other materials) not only face health issues but also tend to miss work or school more frequently (World Bank Group, 2020).

Current literature suggests that women and girls in Low-and, Middle-Income Countries (LMIC), particularly in SSA, face significant MHM barriers (Bill and Melinda Gates, 2020). In Ethiopia, for example, only 28% of women and girls reported having "everything they need" to manage their menstruation. In 2020, data collected by Performance Monitoring for Action (PMA) from 8 countries estimated that 528 million women and girls lack what they need for basic MHM. Put differently, 72% of girls and women interviewed lacked basic needs for MHM. The physical, emotional, psychological, and socioeconomic impact of this problem on the advancement of girls and women who face this unavoidable cyclical plight is unimaginable. MHM challenges include but are not limited to social stigma, lack of clean water for basic hygiene, and ineffective, inadequate, or expensive products (Kuhlmann et al., 2017; Hennegan et al., 2019). Additionally, limited access to MHM products leads to diminished dignity

and respect and increased discrimination and stigma for many women and girls in LMIC throughout their reproductive life (Bill and Melinda Gates, 2020).

Previous faculty-led research in Uganda indicated that lack of access to MHM products negatively affected women and girls' ability to engage in educational, social, and economic activities (Lumutenga et al., 2017). Despite interventions applied through the low-skill production of reusable sanitary pads, MHM continued to negatively affect women and girls' participation in education and employment, community development, and, ultimately, society (World Bank Group, 2020; Tellier and Hyttel, 2018; Hennegan et al., 2021). Additionally, in 2019, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reported an association between inadequate access to MHM products and poorer physical and mental health outcomes. As a result, economic development in SSA countries where women are the primary producers lags far behind growth rates in other geographical regions (UNFPA, 2019). Therefore, placing women and girls at the centre of interventions for health and improved livelihoods significantly increases the chances of empowerment, with positive externalities and holistic socioeconomic development.

To mitigate the problem of access to MHM in East Africa, Higher Education Resource Services, East Africa (HERS-EA) (Khaitsa et al. 2017), a non-governmental organization advancing women in leadership and management, developed a reusable sanitary pad (Lumutenga et al., 2017). However, anecdotal data indicated that in comparison to existing products on the market, this pad was 1) more costly, 2) raised disposal challenges by filling up pit latrines, and 3) was stigmatized as being of a low quality. This study aimed to develop an appealing, affordable sanitary pad that is environmentally sustainable. **The specific objectives** were to: 1) Design an improved, ***cost-effective reusable sanitary pad*** (The HERS pad) using the Human-Centered Design (HCD), 2) Train women and girls in the production of the HERS pad as ***a sustainable social enterprise*** using the Triple Bottom Line Strategy and 3) Evaluate the *quality, affordability, performance, and adoption* of the HERS pad by target end-users.

Our conceptual framework was that the availability of a cost-effective reusable sanitary pad (the HERS pad) would increase access to pads for women and girls, thereby mitigating existing MHM problems. Additionally, training women and girls to produce sanitary pads as *a sustainable social enterprise* would improve their livelihood through increased income and other intangible benefits such as access to a social support system; and the *cost, quality, and performance* of the HERS pad would be comparable to existing pads in the market. The

Research questions were: 1) What is the role of HCD in establishing features of a profitable, sustainable, and scalable HERS pad? 2) What are the financial and social costs of producing a profitable HERS pad? and 3) Was the HERS pad cost, quality, and performance comparable to the alternative pads on the market?

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 Access to Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM)

Studies among far-to-reach rural communities where girls and women are isolated (for example, in pastoral homesteads, homeless women, and women and girls who are internally displaced) have shown that these women not only lack access to sanitary napkins and underwear but do not have access to water (Muyaka, 2018; Goodson, 2020; Ayanda, 2021). Limited access to `menstrual health and managing (MHM) products leads to diminished dignity and respect and increased discrimination and social stigma for many women and girls living in low-and middle-income countries (LMIC) throughout their reproductive life (Bill and Melinda Gates, 2020). In addition to the lack of clean water for basic hygiene, there are ineffective, inadequate, or expensive MHM products (Kuhlmann et al., 2017; Hennegan et al., 2019; & Jones, 2016). Furthermore, this lack of access to MHM negatively affects their participation in education and employment and, ultimately, society (World Bank Group, 2020; Tellier and Hyttel, 2018). For example, a study conducted in 2012 estimated that girls miss up to 13% of school time due to a lack of MHM products and eventually may drop out of school (Tamiru, 2021).

1.1.2 Human-Centred Design (HCD) Model

The human-centered design (HCD) model is a creative approach to problem solving. The process begins with the people affected and results in new solutions that best suit their needs (IDEO, 2017). HCD seeks to understand humans through a conceptual framework to meet the end-user's needs, desires, and aspirations (Uebernickel et al., 2019). HCD starts with building a deep empathy for the end-users of the product or service to find new tailor-made solutions to suit their needs (IDEO, 2017).

HCD locates the human at the centre of the design decisions and involves all stakeholders to understand human-system interactions around new product ideas (Nhinda, 2014). HCD aims to stimulate the people working on a problem to seek solutions through techniques to communicate, interact, and empathize (Giacomin, 2014). HCD is part of a growing body of knowledge known as design

thinking, design-led innovation, or design-driven innovation (Giacomin, 2014). It has been used to define problems, generate solutions, and test them to improve the services and products.

The Human-Centered Design idea is that the researcher will better understand the needs of end-users by engaging them, beginning with open communication, and producing more innovative solutions to issues. This aspect further enables the HCD model to gain traction as one that *'humanizes'* the innovation process. Additionally, when users are involved in the process, they are more likely to embrace the results (IDEO, 2017). It is a framework that situates challenges and then creates novel solutions to address them (Baker & Moukhliss, 2020). It seeks to understand humans through a conceptual framework to meet further the end-user's needs, desires, and aspirations (Uebernickel et al., 2019). The HCD approach also aims to stimulate the people working on a problem to seek solutions through techniques to communicate, interact, and empathize (Giacomin, 2014).

Those who create, inform, and influence policies are often not the same people whose lives will be most affected by the policy, hence the suitability of applying the HCD approach for this study. HCD has been used to define problems, generate solutions, and test them to improve the services and products. Specifically, HCD has been used:

- to develop tools and strategies to optimize the implementation of a sexual and reproductive health intervention for young women with depression (Shrier, L. A. et al., 2020);
- as a lead to innovative education policies that are more effective, efficient, and equitable (Weeby, 2018),
- as a flexible yet disciplined approach to global health equity (Holeman, I., & Kane, D., 2020);
- to address complex and recalcitrant social and organizational challenges (Nandan et al., 2020); promote malaria testing and treatment (Yan et al., 2021); and
- to co-design comprehensive women's health screening tool with community partners (Foley et al., 2019).

The HCD model comprises three phases: Inspiration, Ideation, and Implementation.

1.1.3 Triple Bottom Line (TBL) (Profit, People, Planet) Strategy

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) (Profit, People, Planet) Strategy was introduced by Elkington (1997), focusing on three performance indicators: economic (*profit)*, environmental (*planet*), and social (*people*). Elkington embedded intangible environmental and social costs into a product or a service's production process. The environmental cost refers to the use of natural resources, such as water and vegetation, with long-term impacts on people's livelihoods. This avoids negative impacts like pollution that can lead to diseases and reduce the well-being of communities.

Planet/Environmental: Research indicates that the textile and apparel industry is responsible for significant amounts of environmental hazards. Some researchers cite the textile and apparel industry as the greatest contributor to ecological harm, an estimated 80%-85% of textiles will end up in landfills (Kelley, 2017). It is estimated that the typical woman uses more than 11,000 feminine hygiene products in her lifetime (Global Health & Pharma, 2019). With increased global awareness of the production process's impacts, reusable pads keep many disposable products out of landfills. In a study by Van. et al. (2021) 4 to 25 reusable menstrual pads per period would be cheaper (170–417 US$) than 9–25 disposable pads, with waste savings of ~600–1600 single-use pads. Also, reusable pads do not contain the toxic chemicals that disposable pads seem to have that are not good for the body or the environment (Tiku, 2020).

Profit/Economic: The market for menstrual products was expected to be worth $42.7 billion by 2022 (Allied Market Research, 2016). It is expected that the women who make sanitary pads will continue to develop HERS pad as a social enterprise product with a sustainable financial profit. Their business and leadership skills, and financial literacy, are also expected to increase, supported by ongoing research in new areas, led by faculty in linked Higher Education Institutions and other collaborating partners.

People/Social: Social dimensions include equity, opportunity, and diversity and analyse how proceeds from a product or service are shared (Chaves et al., 2020). TBL offers a framework for organizations to develop their sustainable goals, which is critical in the textile industry. For instance, the UN’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Stone, 2017) can fall under the 3P's. An organization may not meet all SDGs but can create a competitive advantage by leveraging what works for them.

1.2 Methodology

The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, which involved the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data that was integrated to gain a deeper understanding of the research questions. The quantitative and qualitative data were combined in order to gain a richer understanding of the phenomenon being studied, as eluded by Thomson & Zhang (2020). Purposive sampling was used. This technique involves the researcher deliberately and purposefully selecting the study sample that they believe can be the most fruitful in answering the research question (Farrugia, 2019). Participants for this study lived nearby, so they were accessible and within the menstruation age group of (15-24) and willing to participate.

1.2.1 Study Area

The study area was Eastern Uganda, described in detail elsewhere (Lumutenga et al., 2017). Four women groups were trained to produce the HERS pad, and 46 secondary schoolgirls assessed the quality, performance, and adoption of the HERS pad.

1.2.2 Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to achieve three specific objectives:

- Objective 1: Design an improved, cost-effective reusable sanitary pad (The HERS pad), using the Human-Centred Design (HCD);
- Objective 2: Train women and girls in the production of the HERS pad as a sustainable social enterprise using the Triple Bottom Line Strategy (TBL);
- Objective 3: Evaluate the quality, performance, and adoption of the HERS pad by target end-users.

Objective 1: Design an improved, cost-effective reusable sanitary pad (The HERS pad) using the Human-Centered Design (HCD)

Objective 1 was addressed using the Human-Centered Design (HCD) framework, a creative approach to problem solving. The HCD was appropriate for this project because it engaged participants through four previously organized focus groups of women who served as co-creators of the sanitary pad. The study followed the three main phases of HCD: (a) Inspiration, (b) Ideation, and (c) Implementation (Figure 1).

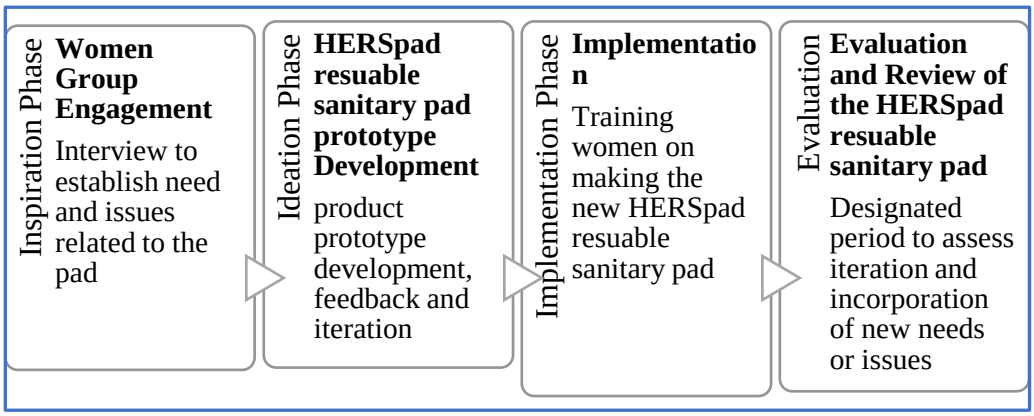

Figure 1: Human-Centered Design (HCD) Framework Adapted from the Human-Centered Design (HCD) available at www.designkit.org, n.d.

Inspiration phase*:* The Needs Assessment conducted previously by Lumutenga et al. (2017) had established that a group of women trained by a UK-based charity [African Village Support] had acquired skills in making affordable reusable sanitary pads. The women had also received organizational leadership training and seed money for initial equipment. However, there was a need to redesign and improve the pad's quality, performance, and packaging.

During the Inspiration phase, focus group interviews were conducted with the four women groups to identify the original pad's needs and issues. The interviews also evaluated other factors, including but not limited to family support and community support, that impacted the pad's use and sale.

Ideation phase: During the ideation phase a prototype of the HERS pad was developed based on results from the inspiration phase and available resources. The prototype was tested, revised, and refined through multiple iterations. Each of the four women groups had their leader trained on how to make the improved HERS pad. These trainers then trained the women in their groups on how to make the HERS pad.

Implementation phase: During the implementation phase, the prototype was provided to the women groups for mass production with technical oversight.

Objective 2: Train women and girls in the production of the HERS pad as a sustainable social enterprise using the Triple Bottom Line Strategy (TBL)

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) strategy is a sustainability construct that uses 3Ps (Profit, People, and the Planet) to measure an enterprise's economic, social, and environmental impact (Figure 2). The approach involved educating women and girls on framing HERS pad social enterprise around the 3P's (Profit, People, and the Planet). In the HERS pad case, designing a reusable sanitary pad

addressed not only MHM issues (social/people) but also planet (environmental) and economic (profit). The women and girls were educated to frame HERS pad as a social enterprise to provide a sustainable source of income. The social entrepreneurial skills acquired could be transferred to other activities or products.

Profit/Economic: Women were trained in record keeping and a simplified product development costing model to ensure profitability, sustainability, and scalability of the HERS pad as a social enterprise (Figure 2). This training was expected to provide transferable financial literacy, build livelihoods, and provide job opportunities for women, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to social change in their communities. The women were expected to use and sell the pads, thereby increasing income and empowering themselves financially.

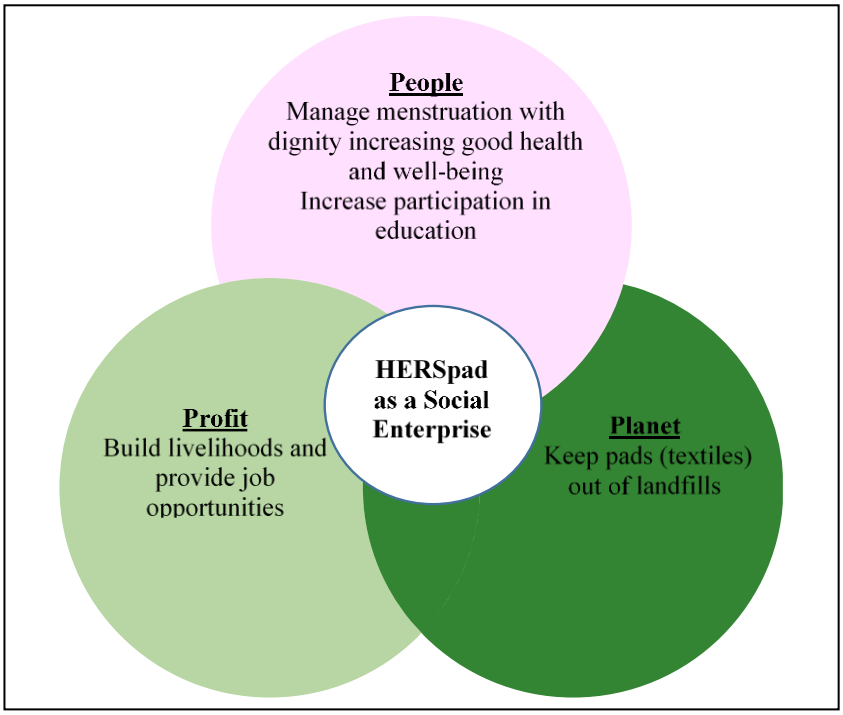

Figure 2: Triple Bottom Line (TBL) strategy

Source: Adapted from Triple Bottom Line Strategy

People/Social: The people in this study were the grassroots women and girls in rural communities that developed a reusable sanitary pad to manage their menstruation with dignity and in an affordable, sustainable, and environmentally friendly way. The HCD model provided a framework to redesign HERS pad with the women and girls in the communities and to understand deeply the actual rather than presumed needs as mentioned in the inspiration phase. Access to reusable sanitary pads was expected to contribute to keeping girls in school during

menstruation and enable women who were previously outside the market for unaffordable disposable pads to manage their menstrual periods with dignity.

Planet/Environmental: Women produced reusable pads from mainly cotton fabrics (washable up to one year), which helped keep the pads (textiles) from filling the pit latrines and landfills. Also, the HERS pad did not contain toxic chemicals that disposable pads have been reported to have (Tiku, 2020). By incorporating the planet/environmental initiatives into the production process, the women and girls thoughtfully considered the HERS pad product's life cycle, focusing on use and post-consumption (Aakko & Koskennurmi-Sivonen, 2013; Goworek et al., 2020). Waste disposal policies and guidelines for MHM products are limited in Low-and-Middle-income countries (LMIC) (Elledge et al., 2018). Disposal of pads in pit latrines causes the pit to fill up rapidly, exacerbating existing disposal challenges. Clogging pit latrines was a factor in resisting the use of some sanitary products. MHM products that are not biodegradable block drains and fill pit latrines. HERS pad is an ethical alternative that is reusable and that will evolve to keep textiles out of the landfill.

Objective 3: Evaluate the quality, performance, and adoption of the HERS pad by target end-users.

Questionnaire Development: A comprehensive review of literature provided information pertaining to the variables being studied. This information was used to develop a survey. A pilot study was conducted to ensure questions would better relate to HERS pad evaluation. The questions were grouped into five categories: Biographic data, Pad Quality, Reusability of the Pad, Cost of the Pad, and Comparison with current pads available on the market. An Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study.

Data Collection: A questionnaire was administered to 46 volunteer girls who were residents of a high school hostel located near one of the women groups making the HERS pad. These girls were selected based on the participant's proximity to their menstrual cycle and represented one category of HERS pad end-users. The leader (matron to the girls) administered the questionnaires to minimize bias. The inclusion criteria comprised any girl/woman at the target school who had started her menstrual cycle and was willing to participate in the study. Also, most of the girls had used the original HERS pad (donated to them by the matron) before it was refined.

Data Analysis: Data were transferred from questionnaires to an excel spreadsheet. Descriptive statistics of respondents and pad information were computed using SAS® 9.4. A Chi-square test of proportions was used to evaluate

if there was a significant difference in the proportion of girls who responded favourably compared to those who did not respond favourably to questions evaluating the HERS pad on quality, cost, performance, and comparison of the HERS pad to alternative pads available on the market.

1.2.3 Limitations of the Study

Whilst acknowledging the strides made by this study in developing a quality MHM product (the HERS pad) with good performance ratings, there were limitations. Firstly, a purposive sample was used to assess the quality performance and adoption of the HERS pad. Therefore, the study results should be interpreted with caution as they may not be generalized to all target end-users. Also, cultural taboos associated with menstruation, such as the stigma around promoting the pad were a limitation to developing the HERS pad as a profitable enterprise. It is necessary to address these cultural taboos to ensure broader adoption as the HERS pad offers a cost-effective, good quality, and environmentally friendly MHM option.

2.0 Results and Discussion

Data was obtained and collated for each stage in the achievement of the three objectives, which will be presented and discussed next.

2.1 Objective 1: Redesign an Improved Reusable Sanitary Pad (The HERS pad) Using the Human-Centered Design (HCD)

2.1.1 The Inspiration Phase

Results of the focus group interviews identified the following needs and issues of the original pad: 1) the pad was too short, less than eight inches long hence prone to leaks; 2) the pads were not thick enough, exacerbating leaking; 3) the pads used Velcro as a fastener, which picked lint and other particles risking lint build-up; 4) the pad had two parts, the pad and pad holder, which was inconvenient in terms of usability; 5) the waterproof material was weak hence it would tear after few washes; 6) the packaging was unattractive; 7) there were no use and care instructions; and, 8) the pad did not have a brand name hence it was difficult to market the product.

2.1.2 Ideation Phase

To develop understanding beyond statistical data, the women groups were engaged in a focus group discussion about the properties of the new HERS pad.

Based on feedback from the inspiration phase, the HERS pad was developed with the following features: 1) a longer size of 10 inches; 2) increased thickness by adding absorbent fabric; 3) snaps were used as fasteners instead of Velcro; 4) a single pad instead of the two-part pad that required a holder, was created; 5) a stronger waterproof material replaced the weaker material; 6) a more durable and aesthetically pleasing bag was developed for packaging; 7) A *Use and Care Instructions* sheet was created and added to every bag thereby also complying with The Uganda Bureau of Standards rule and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Care Labelling Rule and 8) The HERS pad brand name was created. Figure 3 illustrates the pad and bag.

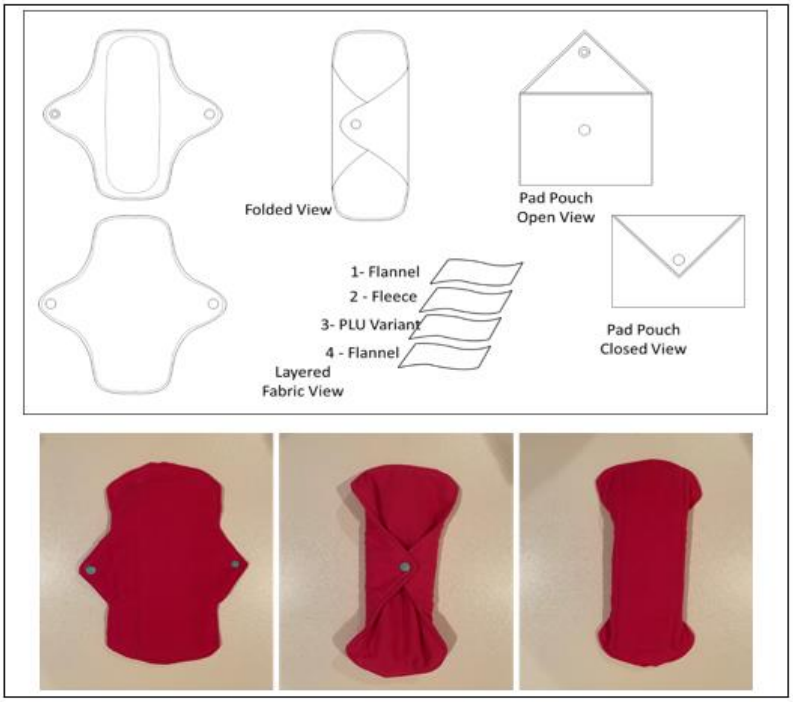

Figure 3: Photos of the HERS pad (Illustrated by Rachel Woodward, Mississippi State University)

Figure 3: Photos of the HERS pad

2.1.3 Implementation Phase

Four women leaders were selected from each group and trained to make the improved reusable HERS pad (Figure 4). These women trainers trained the rest of the women in their groups. Additionally, technical explanation was provided to help the women to understand why each fabric was used. Research was conducted on available reusable pads on the market, such as *Afripads*, *Cozy Cloth*, *SoSure*, and *Mariam Seba*, to assess competitiveness. Based on this research and

the ideation phase, the pad design and components were adapted to make the improved pad, using locally sourced materials:

1) *Topper Fabric:* This fabric goes against the skin. ***Flannel*** made out of cotton was used as it is soft, absorbent, cheap, and biodegradable;
2) *Core fabric:* This fabric provides the main absorbency of the pad. ***Fleece*** made from cotton was used as it is absorbent, cheap, and biodegradable;
3) *Waterproof fabric:* A variant ***PUL fabric*** available locally was used. Previously, a baby mat fabric had been used, however, it was much weaker and had fallen apart with a few washes;
4) *Backing fabric:* This fabric touches the underpants. ***Flannel,*** same as the topper fabric, was used;
5) *Fastening:* **Snaps** were used as they were easy to attach and more hygienic than Velcro.

Table 1: Care and Use Instructions for the HERS pad

Care and Use Instructions for the HERS pad	
Dos	**Don'ts**
Wear: Place the pad into the underwear and snap the wings around the pant. The stitched side should face up.	Don't **bleach** to clean the pads.
Soak: After using the pads, soak in cold water with soap or detergent for 10 minutes.	Don't use **hot water** as it will set stains.
Wash: After soaking, pour the dirty water and wash the pad in clean water with soap or detergent. Rinse with clean water. If you cannot wash the pad immediately, put it in the leak-proof bag.	Don't **iron** since this will harm the layers inside the pad.
Dry: Dry the pad in direct sunlight for about 2 hours, this will help sterilize and remove stains. Allow to dry completely before reusing.	Don't **share** your pad with anyone.

Figure 4: Photos of Women making the HERS pad

2.2 Objective 2: Train Women and Girls in the Production of the HERS pad as a Sustainable Social Enterprise Using the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Strategy

2.2.1 Profit/Economic

The women received two substantial orders for their pads. The first order, for 500 packets of sanitary pads, was made by the Uganda National Medical Stores for distribution to girls and women living in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. Landslides in the neighbouring district displaced these women. The second one was the sale of 200 packets distributed to women and girls during the International Women's Day celebration. However, in general, the women experienced difficulty selling pads, increasing their income, and running HERS pad as a profitable, sustainable enterprise, despite the training they had received.

The challenges experienced included: cultural taboos of discussing the need for pads and general MHM freely between women and male counterparts who hold the financial and decision-making power, lack of a marketing strategy, lack of scaling beyond personal use, and competing family priorities and demands on women's time. Some of the groups were stuck with an unsold stock of sanitary

pads, so they needed to become more versatile with their newly learned sewing skill.

Two groups diversified their products to include additional tailoring activities such as bags, bitengi (dresses), gomesi (traditional Ugandan dress), and school uniforms. New crafts were introduced to include weaving mats and crocheting tablecloths. They also engaged in rearing poultry and rabbits for food and income generation. Regardless of the challenges encountered in selling sanitary pads, the women felt empowered and energized by their achievements. Additionally, they were able to use the HERS pad for their MHM as indicated by the following testimonies: *(transcripts from video recording),*

1) ***Student aged 16,*** *'I used to really worry about getting to school when my periods were approaching, now it is nice to know that I can buy cheaper reusable pads (and some of my friends), which last a long time*.'

2) ***Student aged 17,*** *'These new pads are nice, I can wash and hang them outside to dry, and no one knows what they are; even the bag is nice, I can use it as a toilet bag*.'

2.2.2 Pad Production

Cost Analysis*:* The total cost of production for one HERS pad was approximately $1.00, and the bag was approximately $.40, as shown in Table1. The pads were sold as a pack of three to enable one to wear one pad while the second one was drying and the third serving as a spare, and the bag was reusable. The three pads' total cost was approximately $3.00, and they lasted at least a year. Generally, most women spent $3.50/ month for commercially available disposable pads, which amounted to about $42 per year. In comparison, the HERS pad was much cheaper than the cheapest disposable sanitary pads sold on the market.

People/Social: Results indicated that the HERS pad enterprise led to positive externalities by contributing to the empowerment of women belonging to these groups in other unanticipated social ways. For instance, participants in the HERS pad project supported each other in discussing and raising awareness of gender-based violence and emotional support during bereavement.

Planet/Environmental: Women used locally sourced materials to produce reusable pads (washable for up to one year), which helped keep the pads (textiles) from filling pit latrines and the landfills.

Table 2: Production Costs for One HERS pad and Packaging Bag

Details **Fabrics per meter (39.37 inches)**	**UGX**	**US $: $1US ~ UGX 3654**
HERS pad		
Fleece	14,000.00	3.83
Flannel	8,000.00	2.19
Waterproof PUL variant fabric locally available	16,000.00	4.38
Snaps	200.00	0.05
Total per meter	38,200.00	10.45
~ cost per pad (One meter makes ~13)	2,938.46	0.80
Labor at 20% of total cost	587.69	0.16
Total per pad	**3,526.15**	**0.97**
Bag		
Cotton	6,000.00	1.64
waterproof (light also referred to as baby mat)	5,000.00	1.37
Snaps	100.00	0.03
Total per meter	11,100.00	3.04
~ cost per bag (One meter makes ~10)	1,110.00	0.30
Labor at 20% of total cost	333.00	0.09
Total per bag	**1,443.00**	**0.39**

2.3 Objective 3: Evaluate the Quality, Performance and Adoption of the HERS pad by Target End-Users

2.3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 46 secondary schoolgirls in a residential high school participated in the survey to assess the quality, performance, and adoption of the HERS pad. Most of the girls, 34/46 (73.9%), were from Bulambuli district, while the rest 12/46 (26.1%) girls came from 5 neighbouring districts. One girl (1; 2.2%) did not indicate her district of origin. Most girls were aged between 15 and 18 years (32; 69.7%) while (13; 28.3%) were between 18 and 24. Most girls started their first menstrual periods (menarche), at 15 (21; 45.6%) and 14 (12; 26.1%). The rest started at 11 at 11 (1; 2.2%), 13 (4; 8.7%) and 16 (4; 8.7%). Four girls (4; 8.7%) did not respond.

2.3.2 Quality, Performance, and Adoption of the HERS pad

Quantitative responses about the pad characteristics (quality, cost, reusability, and comparison with pads on the market) are summarized in Table 3. Additionally, in response to the question of whether to recommend the pad or not (36; that is 78%

of the girls) gave a positive response; the reasons to recommend it included: "Comfort", "More secure, strong", "Safer", "Don't cause symptoms", "Soft", "long time use", "Leak proof", "Takes shorter time to dry", "Reusable", "Easy to use", "Easy to maintain", "They are good", "Easy to wash", "Alternative to expensive one", "Cheap, affordable", "They keep blood for a long time", "They are durable", "Saves money", "They are cheap", "They don't itch", "They don't cause rash", "Easy to handle", "You can play with friends", "Easy to change", "Good quantity in the package", "They are easy to fasten with snaps", "Good absorbance", "Heat free", "Fits". One participant stated, “you could play with a friend,” This indicated that they were comfortable enough to have the freedom to go about their business. Only 7 (15%) of the girls provided the reasons for not recommending the pad, and they ranged from: "Everyone had the same pad", "They cause rashes", "They cause itch" and are "Too big". A total of 31 girls (67%) provided advice on how to make the pad better; they include: "Improve on its absorbency", "Make pads of different sizes", "Increase the number", "Change the colour e.g., red", "Make them soft", and "Improve fastening".

A total of 31 girls (67%) said they could afford the pad while 11 (24%) said they could not. Nine of the 11 girls provided the following reasons why they could not afford the pads: "I am still a student", "It is a bit expensive", "I don't have a lot of money", "Low cost of living", "Conditions at home". Thirty-one girls (69%) of the girls did not feel disgusted washing the pad. However, the 9 girls (20%) reported disgust washing the pad due to the following reasons: "Takes time to clean", "Stains do not get off completely", "It smells", "It does not dry faster", "It takes a lot of soap", "It leads to vomiting", "I fear touching blood", "It needs a lot of water to clean", "It needs attention when drying", "Looks dirty".

A total of 30 girls (65%) provided advice on improving the packaging of the HERS pad; these included: "Use somehow bigger packages", "Change the colour e.g., pink", "Put handles", "Use perfumes in packaging", and "Pack in non-cloth material". The most important factors to consider when choosing a sanitary pad were quality (22; 48%), price (21; 46%), packaging (9; 20%), availability (6; 13%), brand (6; 13%) and friend’s recommendation (5; 11%).

Table 3: Development of HERS pad: Pad characteristics

QUALITY OF THE PAD			
Variable	Frequency % (N)	Variable	Frequency % (N)
Length of Time Pad worn before changing		*Pad Leakage*	
1. ≤ 2 hours	28.3 (13)	1. Yes	34.8 (16)
2. 2-4 hours	41.3 (19)	2. No	63.0 (29)
3. 4-6 hours	23.9 (11)	3. No Response	2.2 (1)
4. 6-8 hours	4.4 (2)		
5. No Response	2.2 (1)		
Recommend Pad to Friend		*Pad Change at Night*	
1. Yes	80.4 (37)	1. None	47.8 (22)
2. No	15.2 (7)	2. Once	43.5 (20)
3. No Response	1.4 (37)	3. Twice	4.4 (2)
		4. No Response	4.4 (2)
Pad Comfort		*Ease to Wash*	
1. Poor	6.5 (3)	1. Poor	19.6 (9)
2. Fair	23.9 (11)	2. Fair	15.2 (7)
3. Average/Good	34.8 (16)	3. Average/Good	41.3 (19)
4. Excellent	30.4 (14)	4. Excellent	10.9 (5)
5. No Response	4.4 (2)	5. No Response	13.0 (6)
Pad Absorbency		*Pad Width*	
1. Poor	4.35 (2)	1. Poor	13.0 (6)
2. Fair	15.2 (7)	2. Fair	13.0 (6)
3. Average/Good	32.6 (15)	3. Average/Good	41.2 (19)
4. Excellent	30.4 (14)	4. Excellent	21.7 (10)
5. No Response	17.4 (8)	5. No Response	10.9 (5)
Ease to Use		*Pad Length*	
1. Poor	4.35 (2)	1. Poor	8.7 (4)
2. Fair	15.2 (7)	2. Fair	13.0 (6)
3. Average/Good	43.5 (20)	3. Average/Good	47.7 (21)
4. Excellent	28.3 (13)	4. Excellent	19.6 (9)
5. No Response	8.7 (4)	5. No Response	13.0 (6)
Pad Fastening (Ease of Fastening)		Pad Look	
1. Poor	4.35 (2)	1. Poor	2.2 (1)
2. Fair	19.6 (9)	2. Fair	17.4 (8)
3. Average/Good	26.1 (12)	3. Average/Good	28.2 (13)
4. Excellent	43.8 (20)	4. Excellent	34.8 (16)
5. No Response	6.5 (3)	5. No Response	17.4 (8)
Leak-Proof		Packaging	
1. Poor	8.7 (4)	1. Poor	2.2 (1)

2. Fair	15.2 (7)	2. Fair	15.2 (7)
3. Average/Good	28.2 (13)	3. Average/Good	34.8 (16)
4. Excellent	24.0 (11)	4. Excellent	45.7 (21)
5. No Response	23.4 (11)	5. No Response	2.2 (1)
REUSABILITY OF THE PAD			
Water Source		*Where to Dry the Pad*	
1. The river/stream / spring	8.7 (4)	1. Outside in the sun	71.1 (32)
2. From rainwater	8.7 (4)	2. In the bathroom	13.3 (6)
3. Tap in the house/ yard	78.3 (36)	3. In the bedroom	15.6 (7)
4. No response	4.4 (2)	4. No response	2.2 (1)
Time to Dry the Pad		*Feel Disgusted Washing the Pad*	
1. 2 hours	30.4 (14)	1. Yes	28.9 (13)
2. Half a day	28.3 (13)	2. No	68.9 (31)
3. Full day	34.7(16)	3. No Response	4.4 (2)
4. More than a day	4.4 (2)		
5. No Response	2.2 (1)		
COST OF THE PAD			
Affordability of HERS pad		*Monthly Cost on Pads*	
1. Yes	67.4 (31)	1. UGX3500 and below	78.2 (36)
2. No	23.9 (11)	2. Above UGX3500	10.9 (5)
3. No Response	8.7 (4)	3. No response	10.9 (5)
ALTERNATIVE PAD OPTIONS			
What Do You Normally Use		*How Often You Switch*	
1. Cloth/Towel	23.9 (11)	Frequently	36.7 (17)
2. Purchased sanitary pad	67.4 (31)	Occasionally	26.0 (12)
3. No Response	8.7 (4)	Never	6.5 (3)
		No Response	30.4 (14)
Likelihood for Alternative Pads			
1. Likely	50.0 (23)		
2. Not very likely	41.3 (19)		
3. No Response	8.7 (4)		

2.3.3 Chi-square Test of Proportions

Results of the Chi-square test of proportions to evaluate if there was a significant difference in the proportion of girls and women who responded favourably compared to those who did not respond favourably to questions evaluating the HERS pad (quality, cost, performance, and comparison to alternatives on the market) are summarized in Table 4. Overall, there was a statistically significant difference (P<0.0001) in the proportion of girls who responded favourably compared to those who did not to the following qualities of the HERS pad (Comfort, absorbency, Easy to use, ease of fastening, leak-proof, length, width, look, and packaging quality).

Likewise, there was a statistically significant difference (P<0.0001) in the proportion of girls who said they would recommend the pad to a friend due to: *Easy to Use, Leak proof, and Secure* compared to those who did not (Table 4). Also, only 13; 28.3% of the girls said they felt disgusted using this pad compared to 31; 67.4% who said that they were not; and this difference was statistically significant (P<0.00015). The response to the following qualities of the pad were not favourable: Easy to wash; recommend the pad to a friend due to comfort, and long-term use. The difference in the proportion of girls who ranked the HERS pad as easy to wash (26; 65%) compared to those who did not (14; 35%) was not statistically significant (P= 0.0578). Likewise, the difference in the proportion of girls who said they'd recommend the HERS pad based on comfort (13; 28.3%) compared to those who did not (22; 47.8%) was not statistically significant (P=0.0159). Also, the difference in the proportion of girls who said they would recommend the HERS pad based on its long-term use (21; 45.7%) compared to those who did not (15; 32.6%) was not statistically significant (P = 0.1383) (Table 4).

Table 4: Characteristics of HERS pad: Chi-square Test of Proportions

Variable	Frequency % (N)	P-value
QUALITY OF THE PAD		
Length of Time Pad worn before changing		
≤ 4 hours	69.6 (32)	P<0.0001
≥ 4 hours	41.3(13)	
No Response	2.2 (1)	
Pad Leakage		
Yes	34.8 (16)	P<0.0001
No	63.0 (29)	
No Response	2.2 (1)	

Pad Change at Night		
None	47.8 (22)	P<0.0001
Once	43.5 (20)	
Twice	4.4 (2)	
No Response	4.4 (2)	
Recommend Pad to Friend		
Yes	80.4(37)	P<0.0001
No	15.2 (7)	
No Response	4.4 (2)	
Comfort listed as a reason to Recommend Pad		
Yes	28.3 (13)	P= 0.0876
No	47.8 (22)	
No Response	23.9 (11)	
Ease to Use listed as a reason to Recommend Pad		
Yes	23.9 (11)	P=0.0102
No	54.4 (25)	
No Response	21.7 (10)	
Ease to Wash listed as a reason to Recommend Pad		
Yes	15.2 (7))	P<0.0001
No	63.0 (29)	
No Response	21.7 (10)	
Leak Proof listed as a reason to Recommend Pad		
Yes	13.0 (6)	P<0.0001
No	65.2 (30)	
No Response	21.7 (10)	
Long-time Use listed as a reason to Recommend Pad		
Yes	45.7 (21)	P = 0.1383
No	32.6 (15)	
No Response	21.7 (10)	
'Secure' listed as a reason to Recommend Pad		
Yes	8.7 (4)	P< 0. 0001
No	69.6 (32)	
No Response	21.7 (10)	
Pad Comfort		
Poor/Fair	30.4 (14)	P=0.0159
Average/Good/Excellent	65.2 (30)	

No Response	4.4 (2)	
Pad Absorbency		
Poor/Fair	19.55 (9)	P< 0.0001
Average/Good/Excellent	63.0 (29)	
No Response	17.4 (8)	
Ease to Use		
Poor/Fair	19.55 (9)	P< 0.0001
Average/Good/Excellent	71.8 (33)	
No Response	8.7 (4)	
Ease to Wash		
Poor/Fair	34.8 (16)	P= 0.0578
Average/Good/Excellent	52.2 (24)	
No Response	13.0 (6)	
Pad Width		
Poor/Fair	26.0 (12)	P< 0.0001
Average/Good/Excellent	62.9 (29)	
No Response	10.9 (5)	
Pad Length		
Poor/Fair	21.7 (10)	P=0.0016
Average/Good/Excellent	67.3 (30)	
No Response	13.0 (6)	
Pad Fastening (Ease of Fastening)		
Poor/Fair	23.95 (11)	P=0.0014
Average/Good/Excellent	69.9 (32)	
No Response	6.5 (3)	
Pad Look		
Poor/Fair	19.6 (9)	P=0.0012
Average/Good/Excellent	63.0 (29)	
No Response	17.4 (8)	
Leak-Proof		
Poor/Fair	23.95 (11)	P=0.0164
Average/Good/Excellent	52.2 (24)	
No Response	23.95 (11)	
Packaging		
Poor/Fair	17.4 (8)	P< 0.0001
Average/Good/Excellent	63.0 (29)	
No Response	19.6 (9)	
REUSABILITY OF PAD		
Water Source		
River/stream/spring/rain	26.1 (12)	P< 0.0001

Tap water (in house/in yard)	78.3 (36)	
No response	4.4 (2)	
Time to Dry the Pad		
2 hours/ Half a day	58.7 (27)	P< 0.0001
Full day/ > a day	39.1 (18)	
No Response	2.2 (1)	
Where to Dry the Pad		
Outside house in the sun	71.1 (32)	P< 0.0001
In the bathroom/Bedroom	28.9 (13)	
No response	2.2 (1)	
Feel Disgusted Washing the Pad		
Yes	28.9 (13)	P< 0.0001
No	68.9 (31)	
No Response	4.4 (2)	
COST OF THE PAD		
Affordability of HERS pad		
Yes	67.4 (31)	P< 0.0001
No	23.9 (11)	
No Response	8.7 (4)	
ALTERNATIVE PAD OPTIONS		
What Do You Normally Use		
Cloth/Towel	23.9 (11)	P< 0.0001
Purchased sanitary pad	67.4 (31)	
No Response	8.7 (4)	
How Often You Switch Brands		
Frequently	30.4 (14)	P=0.0236
Occasionally /Never	62.7 (29)	
No Response	6.5 (3)	
Likelihood for Alternative Pads		
Likely	50.0 (23)	P=0.5371
Not very likely	41.3 (19)	
No Response	8.7 (4)	

2.4 Discussion of the Results

The HCD model provided a framework to redesign HERS pad with the women and girls in the communities and deeply to understand "actual" needs rather than their "assumed" needs. HCD has been gaining popularity as an approach towards tackling today's innovation challenges; it is part of a growing body of knowledge known as design thinking, design-led innovation, or design-driven innovation (Van der Bijl-Brouwer & Dorst, 2017). This project initially aimed at generating

ideas to address reasons why the original pad had not progressed, with sales grounding to a halt and the group of women close to abandoning the project. Mississippi State University (MSU) provided initial support through seed money for equipment and materials, since the women had prior sewing skills, supported by African Village Support (AVS). The HERS-EA team had been driven by the need to implement the multi-tier model (Khaitsa et al, 2017), in this case, by developing the leadership skills of women at grassroots level and intervening with returning learners, by addressing MHM to help keep girls in school. The HCD model was appropriate because, it engaged participants as co-creators of the product, an aspect that further enabled HCD to gain traction as a model that 'humanises' the innovation process (Van der Bijli-Brouwer & Dorst, 2017).

Data collected from participants suggest that their engagement helped generate and rate the product as more favourable. Overall, there was a statistically significant difference ($P<0.0001$) in the proportion of girls who responded favourably compared to those who did not, to the following qualities of the HERS pad (comfort, absorbency, easy to use, ease of fastening, leakproof; length, width look, and packaging quality) (Tables 2 and 3). Likewise, there was a statistically significant difference ($P<0.0001$) in the proportion of girls who said they would recommend the pad to a friend. Qualitative evaluation from testimonies further indicated that the women were empowered and felt valued, especially the group leaders who were subsequently trained to become trainers. The remainder became aspirational, with leaders to look up to.

The emerging organizational structures inspired shared responsibility for the production and sales processes, with record-keeping becoming the norm. Various members could talk about what they were making, and they developed the capacity to analyse what was working well (for example, sewing) and what needed better planning (for example, monitoring inputs and tracking sales by groups/individual schoolgirls and institutions with male compared to female leaders). HCD aims to produce useful, usable, pleasant, and meaningful products or services for people (Van der Bijl-Brouwer & Dorst, 2017). Participants spoke with pride about the new HERS pad, affirmed by the order received from a national institution, the Uganda Medical Stores. However, other problems emerged that required further design work. While the HERS pad was much improved, the women's skills remained rudimentary, thus unable to match the pristine products made by established companies like *Afripad*. There is a need to streamline the production process with embedded quality control to be consistent. The participants know what a pristine pad looks like, and they believe they have

the skills to make them, but the cost of new equipment and sustained source of inputs remain a challenge.

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) was adopted as a valuable social enterprise approach to alleviating women's poverty through the development of the HERS pad. In its most basic form, the term social enterprise reflects a model that is part *profit (economic)* and part *social (people)* (Alter, 2007). Elkington (1997) introduced the concept of TBL, focusing on three performance indicators: economic, environmental, and social. Building on traditional business models that focused on financial profitability, Elkington (1997) embedded intangible environmental and social costs into a product or a service's production process. The environmental cost refers to the use of natural resources, such as water and vegetation, with a long-term impact on other people's livelihoods, outside the business. Social costs include pollution that can lead to diseases and a reduction in the well-being of communities. Social dimensions include equity, opportunity, and diversity (Chaves et al., 2020). In 2018 Elkington revised his study and indicated that TBL could not be achieved without breakthrough change and disruption of existing models and scaling of next-generation markets. The HERS pad is evolving towards sustainability, applying the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) construct by exploring collaborative research with chemical engineers and companies that use large quantities of plant fibres to make textiles. Other avenues include research into using biodegradable papyrus and waste products from sugarcane and banana industries in East Africa. Inclusivity is catered for by employing women who are among the most marginalized groups in the community, especially those who head their households (Van de Walle et al., 2017).

A social enterprise is enveloped in ideas of innovation, creativity, and resourcefulness with the main objective to reduce poverty and social exclusion through the creation of jobs for those who are left out of the dominant economic system and by empowering marginalized people towards their own individual and community socioeconomic success (Noya & Clarence, 2007).

2.4.1 Profit/Economic

The market for menstrual products was expected to be worth $42.7 billion by 2022 (Allied Market Research, 2016). However, women who participated in this study experienced difficulty selling and distributing pads widely in their communities for various reasons. Although a pack of three HERS pads costs about $3 to produce, it is a sum that can be a choice between buying home basics like soap or kerosine for the lantern and buying sanitary pads. A recent study

conducted in a neighbouring [district] (Kennedy & Severe, 2020) concluded that period poverty remains a key barrier to accessing sanitary pads for school-age girls. Cultural barriers and taboos associated with menstruation, combined with an overall culture of silence around the topic, played a significant role, particularly regarding speaking openly about pads to men, many of whom dominated the local market. Gender inequality across developing and developed countries result in greater poverty among women, exacerbating rural SSA countries. When 2015 was crowned as "the year of the period," people started deeper conversations about gender equality and social change through women's periods (Jones, 2016). Also, challenging the harmful beliefs that menstruation is dirty and shameful will contribute towards eradicating "period poverty" (Weiss-Wolf, 2019; Mohammed & Larsen-Reindorf, 2020).

2.4.2 Planet/Environmental

By incorporating the planet/environmental initiatives into the production process, the women and girls thoughtfully considered the HERS pad product's life cycle, focusing on use and post-consumption (Aakko & Koskennurmi-Sivonen, 2013; Goworek et al., 2018). Waste disposal policies and guidelines for MHM products are quite limited in SSA (Kjellén et al., 2012).

2.4.3 People/Social

The production of HERS pad enabled these women to manage their menstrual hygiene with dignity and in an affordable, sustainable, and environmentally friendly way. Additionally, even if women encountered cultural barriers in selling the HERS pad, women were empowered to think outside the box and engage in diversified products.

The data in this study suggested that the cost, quality, and performance of the HERS pad was comparable to existing pads in the market. Overall, there was a statistically significant difference in the rating of the quality and performance of the HERS pad with 84% of the girls saying that they'd recommend the pad to a friend compared to 16% who said they would not. Of the top reasons for recommending the pad, long-time use was the only variable with a higher percentage of girls (46%) that cited it than those who did not (33%). Although this difference was not statistically significant, this finding was notable because long term use was a critical variable for the HERS pad. It is probable that more girls would have responded positively had we not phrased this question in an open-ended manner. Despite the existing taboo or shaming surrounding the issue of washing sanitary pads 52% of the girls said that the HERS pad was average,

good, or excellent regarding ease to wash. It is possible that this was because the majority (78%) of the girls had access to tap water (in house/in yard) at school. Access to water could have explained why most girls (69%) said they were not disgusted with washing the HERS pad. It is important to note that access to tap water is not widespread in many rural areas, so this finding may not apply to other target end users.

It was notable that the majority (71%) of the girls dried the pads outside the house in the sun and that most girls (59%) reported that the pads dried within 2 hours to half a day. This is a significant finding given the taboo around display of pads in public (Crofts & Fisher, 2012) It is possible that this was due to the fact that all respondents were from an all-girls' residential school hence the stigma was minimal. Also, although 63% of the girls reported that they occasionally or never switch pad brands, 30% said they frequently switch brands with 50% open to alternative pads. This implies that the market for HERS pad exists if promoted appropriately, given that most girls (67%) said they could afford the redesigned HERS pad, and 67% purchased sanitary pads for their MHM.

The testimonials and quantitative data generated suggested that there was a significant difference in the proportion of girls and women who responded favourably to most of the qualities of the design of the HERS pad that we assessed (quality, cost, performance, and comparison to alternative pads on the market) compared to those who did not. However, some results (such as easy to use, recommendation of the pad due to comfort, and long-time use) revealed the continuous need for MHM product development. Despite some achieved strides in addressing MHM issues, these results support previous studies that indicate that MHM is a critical issue in LMICs that still needs researchers and practitioners to continuously work collaboratively, to provide holistic solutions. For instance, Hennegan et al. (2019) undertook systematic searching to identify qualitative studies of women's and girls' menstruation experiences in 35 LMICs; results indicated sociocultural economic environment, and resource limitations underlay inadequate access to affordable menstrual materials. Additionally, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2019) suggests that millions of women and girls worldwide are denied the right to manage their monthly menstruation in a dignified, healthy way and suggests a holistic approach in the context of human rights and gender equality. Conclusions of this study, summed up in the next section suggest that being able to manage menstruation safely, hygienically, with confidence and dignity is critical not just for women and girls' health and education but for economic development and overall gender equality.

3.0 Conclusion

The pad's quality improved significantly, and most participants in the study valued the product quality. This research directly addressed the 3P's (People, Planet, and Profit). This addressed the first research question, what is the role of HCD in establishing features of a profitable, sustainable, and scalable HERS pad? In answering the question, what are the financial and social costs of producing a profitable HERS pad? More resources were needed to improve the enterprise's marketing and scaling up in more districts to produce and market the pad as a profitable, sustainable enterprise.

The majority of the girls rated the HERS pad performance as average, good, and excellent, and that they'd recommend the pad to a friend. Many girls liked the pad's several qualities, such as cost-effectiveness, reusability, and pad's longevity. However, several challenges remained including: 1) stigma from washing and drying of the pad, 2) affordability, and 3) versatility to address variable flows. This addressed the question, was the HERS pad cost, quality, and performance comparable to the alternative pads on the market?

HCD was critical in valuing and amplifying the voices, viewpoints, and varied backgrounds of the girls and women in the community. The HCD framework, in this case, aligned well with HERS-EA multi-tier model, that connects women researchers in the top tier, to their counterparts in other tiers. The researchers developed scholarly skills for teaching, and they produced publications to support their professional and institutional development. At the same time, women and girls in the community benefited from increased awareness of the plight of MHM.

4.0 Recommendations

- Further research into competitor products to understand their business models might provide some lessons for the HERS pad to be produced as a profitable social enterprise. Also, future research could be extended to include a wider age group and women and girls from other socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Future research could focus on developing an affordable MHH product that can be kept discreet in the absence of clean water supply and does not require immediate washing.
- Additionally, a wider network of fabric and trim manufacturers and vendors is needed for the HERS pad producer to source environmentally friendly

fabrics and trims. Currently, fabric manufacturers are trending toward producing environmentally friendly fabrics and trims (TEXFAD, 2021), increasing the supply of these fabrics for vendors to source.

- Future work could focus on developing a biodegradable pad made from mainly local cellulosic plants such as papyrus and waste products from sugarcane industries. This research could be conducted in collaboration with chemical engineers in partnership with private companies that use large quantities of plant fibres to make textiles. This adds to the dimension of engaged research and knowledge transfer, with reciprocal benefits. Companies will have a solution to waste disposal, while researchers will increase their scholarship in the development of a sustainable product. Eco-friendly MHM products are critical, hence the need for sustainability to meet innovation in MHM products.
- MHM is an under-researched issue in SSA and requires a commitment by Higher Education Institutions, to ongoing multidisciplinary research, to fully understand the extent of the issues and how they impact women and the wider community. Placing women and girls at the centre of interventions for health and improved livelihoods significantly increases the chances of empowerment, with positive externalities, and holistic socioeconomic development.

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Special Issue

Significance of Leadership in Women's Self-Mobilization for Policy Advocacy for Women's Economic Empowerment

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Abstract

The Constitution of Kenya 2010 has been hailed as the most women friendly constitution among the world's constitutions. It is the outcome of women's effective participation at all stages of the Constitution making process. In addition to the affirmative action provisions which contributed to quantitative representation of women in decision-making institutions at different levels, the Constitution has many provisions aimed at addressing women's practical and strategic gender needs. Women's constitutional gains have been ascribed to women's self-mobilization to influence the Constitution making process. The question this Paper is interrogating is whether the strategies women used to influence the Constitution making process could be replicated in influencing the formulation and implementation of economic policies so as to enhance women's economic empowerment with similar outcomes.

The Paper analyses some of the strategies that women used to ensure their concerns were entrenched in the Constitution and underscores the significance of committed and strategic leadership for the success of any of

the strategies women used during the Constitution making process. The Paper concludes that similar leadership would be crucial in influencing the economic policies. The Paper is based on secondary data gathered from internet sources and publications on women's participation in the Constitution making process in Kenya. The authors have also put in undocumented information based on her personal experiences in the Constitution making process.

Key words: Affirmative action, Constitution, Economic Empowerment, Leadership, self-mobilization, social capital

1.0 Introduction and Purpose of the Paper

Women organizing themselves in groups for various purposes is not a recent phenomenon. It is common at all levels of society - global, regional, and local. The unprecedented engagement of different women's groups, at different levels, is basically provoked by a need to combine consciousness raising with political and social action (Afolayan 2019). To raise the consciousness of the different women's groups on the 'perceived' need and mobilise them for targeted actions, requires committed, focused, and strategic leadership. To sustain the momentum over several decades, as it happened during the Constitution of Kenya Review Process, required visionary and very passionate and committed leaders as the carriers of the vision. Unfortunately, though there exists a vast body of scholarly works on 'women's movement,' they all suggest that 'women's movement' is a collection of different groups with diverse patterns of organisations and different goals (Abdullah, 2018; Tripp, 2004; Amadiume, 2000). There has been little attention on the role of the leadership in the women's movement.

Women's movement is not a new phenomenon in Kenya, either. Its origins lie in the precolonial period, when women formed self-help groups and work parties to assist one another during periods of economic or social stress (Oduol & Kabira, 1995). In recent times, such mobilization was demonstrated by the role women collectively played during the Constitution making process in Kenya. With a focused leadership women mobilized themselves around a common agenda to influence the creation of a more women friendly new Constitution. Kenyan women used collective forms of agency to tackle the structures of gender injustice (Kabeer, 2020). They employed diverse strategies that were devised by the leadership and diffused at all levels. The outcome of their collective action, effective strategies and strategic leadership was the Constitution of Kenya 2010,

which has been hailed as the most women friendly constitution among the world's constitutions. Women's constitutional gains have been ascribed to the effective women's self-mobilization to influence the Constitution making process. It is worth noting that the significance of women's leadership has not been given the significance it deserves in most of the literature focusing on women's self-mobilization during the Constitution making process. It is this gap that this Paper seeks to address. The argument is that committed, focused and strategic leadership will be more effective in influencing economic policies to promote women's economic empowerment in Kenya.

The Paper is based on information gathered from existing literature in published books, journals and website sources as well as personal experience of the first author who was actively involved in the Constitution making process. The Paper underscores the significance of committed, strategic and focused leadership for the success of the women's agenda as entrenched in the Kenyan Constitution.

1.1 Problem Statement

It is more than ten years since the promulgation on August 10th, 2010, of one of the most women friendly, among the existing constitutions around the world. The Kenya Constitution 2010 includes provisions for affirmative action for increased women's participation in decision-making institutions, including the national and county governments as well as other constitutional bodies. Unfortunately, the women of Kenya are yet to enjoy their rights and privileges enshrined in the new Constitution such as the right to opportunities in economic spheres (COK 27:3) and economic and social rights (COK 43:1). Due to the existing gender power dynamics, they lack ownership and/or control to productive resources as well as access to the more lucrative employment opportunities. They comprise the majority of an estimated 38.9% Kenyans living below the poverty line. This is despite the fact that since independence, poverty reduction has been one of the key government development agenda in Kenya.

According to Karanja, the High Commissioner for Kenya to the Commonwealth (1966),

> *The economic task that face us, and in fact faces most of the African countries, is rapid economic development. I believe that it is in this area that the effectiveness and success of all our governments will be judged, (p289)*

Subsequent Governments have had poverty reduction as a key agenda in their development agenda. It is during the Nyayo era that poverty reduction consultations took place; in the Kibaki era - the Vision 2030 Development Blueprint was designed; while in the Uhuru era - the Four Development Agenda was planned. Despite these initiatives spanning more than half a century, a significant proportion of Kenyans that is 38.9 per cent (KNBS, 2020), live below the poverty line according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI.

Throughout Kenyan independent history, women have comprised the majority of Kenyans living below the poverty line. According to (Kariuki, 2013), *"poverty develops a feminine face as it becomes more of a women issue than men's. Thus, men are less ravaged by poverty compared to women"* (p. 372). The situation was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic as *"most of the economic activities have so far been slowed down by restrictions resulting from containment and cessation of sections of the population, the nationwide curfew and stoppage of international passenger travel"*, (KNBS, 2020. p. 9) all of which affected the service sector where the majority of the women entrepreneurs are involved.

There have been various public and private initiatives towards women's economic empowerment and poverty reduction. For example, the Kenya Government has established several funds such as the Women's Enterprise Fund, the Uwezo Fund, the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF), the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO), among others, aimed at promoting women's economic empowerment. However, it is worth noting that such initiatives have been male driven and women have been on the periphery as a result of their marginalization in economic decision-making institutions and processes.

Though women have organised themselves into economic empowerment groups that are involved in diverse activities, such as table banking and merry-go-round, which are to be found throughout the country, they have not widely mobilized themselves for economic empowered as they had done during the Constitution making process. Consequently, most of their collective initiatives remain small, with limited impact towards women's economic empowerment and have not bridged the gender gap as women continue to bear the brunt of poverty. To mobilize themselves in the magnitude they did in influencing the Constitution making, there needs to emerge focused and strategic leadership committed to women's economic leadership. According to Kabira (2018),

> *Women have not yet made fundamental changes but there is room for moving forward to the destination which we keep defining and clarifying. We must continue to focus on how to think differently and from feminist theoretical standpoints. We must conceptualise our "utu" feminist alternatives and add politics, economy, social-cultural changes, and gender equality, among others (p. 4). Women must therefore embark on the journey towards the next season of harvest (p. 15)*

The journey towards the realization of a just and equitable society, including equitable distribution of resources has started. However, to realize this goal calls for a committed, focused, and strategic leadership within the women's movement.

1.2 Justification of the Study

Empowering women **e**conomically will not only be fundamental for gender equality but instrumental in realizing the sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly those linked to social transformation, among them, No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, Decent Work and Economic Growth and Reduced Inequality, among others**.** Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) comprises women's ability to participate equally in existing markets; have access to and control over productive resources; have access to decent work; control over their own time, life, and body; and increased voice, agency, and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels from the household to international institutions.

In addition, **e**mpowering women in the economy and bridging existing gender gaps is key to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as enabling women to effectively contribute to the GDP which will boost productivity*, "increases economic diversification and income equality in addition to other positive development outcomes"* (UN Women) as well as contribute towards women's participation in the political arena. This Paper will add to the existing literature on possible strategies and interventions for promoting women's economic empowerment.

1.3 Methodology

This Paper uses secondary data from research papers, journals and published books, research papers found in hard copies and on the website. The data collection included desk review of the research papers, journal articles and published books found in hard copies and on the website. The first author also uses information from personal experience as she was actively involved in the Constitution making process.

2.0 Background and Context

Human societies are characterized by a distinctive division of labour between males and females, leading to gender roles. Traditionally females dominated the reproductive roles that were critical for the sustainability of their families and communities. Men, on the other hand, dominated the lucrative decision-making roles. According to Mbugua, women's place in the traditional society was always defined by an unequal relationship between women and men in both private and public spaces. Maria Nzomo (2018) notes that *"human relations, including gender relations are fundamentally organized around power relations"* (p 45).

Since time immemorial women have been collectively mobilizing themselves to address concerns relating to these unequal gender power relations. According to Afolayan (2018), ""*the unprecedented engagement of different women's groups, is basically provoked by a need to combine consciousness raising with political and social action"* (p 2). This engagement towards a common agenda maybe at different levels. For example, at the global level women organized themselves to push their agenda during the United Nations World Conferences on women held in Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985, and Beijing in 1995. The outcome of the fourth conference, held in Beijing, China were the twelve critical areas of concern whose aim was to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The twelve critical areas are:

- Women and Poverty;
- Education and Training of Women;
- Women and Health;
- Violence against Women;
- Women and armed Conflict;
- Women and the Economy;
- Women in Power and Decision-Making;
- Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women;
- Human Rights of Women;
- Women and the Media;
- Women and the Environment;
- the Girl-Child.

After the Beijing Conference, women have come together every five years and held conferences at New York, the USA, to review the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Women have also engaged on regional levels to push for their agenda. Such were the Istanbul Convention European Union (2011) for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and the African Maputo Protocol (Bonini).

Women have also been mobilizing themselves at local levels. In Bangladesh, for example, the women's movement has been marked by the activism of poor women, who have not only raised their voices against subjugation concerns but have also fought domestic violence (Kabeer, 1988; Ahmed, 2004; Jahan, 2018). In the USA poor women, especially coloured women, have reconfigured the priorities of the women's movement and sustained it against all odds (Wolfe and Tucker, 2018) in South Africa women unified to resist the pass law through organized protests that lasted for days. In Cameroon, women resisted colonial rule and sanctioned male dominance through name shaming rituals of those who disrespected them. But these gains were progressively eroded as the new African states came into being. "*The gains made during the liberation struggles were quickly being clawed back, shrinking women's space and public roles in nation building"* (Mbugua, May 2017 p 2).

The origins of the women's movement in Kenya lie in the precolonial period, when women formed self-help groups and work parties to assist one another during periods of economic or social stress (Oduol & Kabira, 1995). It was a major strategy in their struggle against marginalization in leadership and decision-making at all levels. Their aim was to restructure the social order that condemned them to poverty, poor governance, corruption and poor leadership. According to Kabira (2018), "*in all our communities there are examples of women organizing to deal with their social-historic and economic situations"* (p14). Mbugua notes that "*women struggled for equal treatment with men during pre-colonial and post-colonial Africa"* (p 1). According to Aili Mari Trip (2001), "*the 1990s was a decade of beginnings for women in politics in Africa and all indications are that we will see even greater pressures for female political representation and participation in the decade ahead*", (p 1). The desire to improve their situation in society is what motived Kenyan women to become actively involved in the Constitution making process in their country with the aim of reclaiming their place as equal human beings where their experiences, knowledge and world view may find their way into shaping the destiny of their nation, our nation, for the benefit of all.

They were negotiating with a society which had for centuries not accorded them their place as equal members, delegating them to the margin when it came to power and decision-making and treating them like children of a lesser god. *"Women seized the Constitution making opportunity to change the mainstream that had been guided by patriarchal philosophies, systems and structures, a mainstream guided by the philosophy of male power that privileges male values while marginalizing female values and philosophies."* (Kabira, 2018 p2).

The Constitution review process provided an opportunity to address women's marginalization by entrenching the affirmative action that they had been agitating for since the 1990s. The struggle for affirmative action was driven by the popular critical mass theory at the time. After years of unsuccessful struggle to have Parliament legislate the affirmative action for women's increased leadership in decision-making, they seized the constitutional review route to realize this goal. Since women's leadership had already been mobilizing and sensitizing women countrywide to support the affirmative action, *"their collective action and agency became very instrumental in negotiating for a gender-progressive constitution"*, (Domingo, McCullough, Florence 2017 p8) during the Constitution making process whose outcome was a constitution that has been hailed as the most women friendly among the existing constitutions around the world's constitutions. This was as a result of a focused women's leadership, at all levels, throughout the review process. Kabira (2012) vividly presents the significance of women's leadership in the following excerpt, noting,

> *For many years, Kenyans were involved in the search for a new constitutional dispensation. For many of us women leader, our focus had been ensuring that women's interests were taken on board the process and in the body and soul of the new constitution. As we used to say during the constitutio making process, we breathed the constitution – the water and food had the taste of a draft constitution, and even roses smelt like the draft constitution. We were involved in negotiating the law for the review process, in collecting the views from the public, collating the views and in drafting of the new constitution (p. 1)*

She notes, "*the story of women and constitution making in Kenya is the story of women's struggle towards a new constitutional dispensation. It is the journey of thousands, of millions of Kenyan women. It is our collective story, the women's story"* (Kabira, 2012, p 3). According to Aili Mari Trip (2001), "*the 1990s was a decade of beginnings for women in politics in Africa and all*

indications are that we will see even greater pressures for female political representation and participation in the decade ahead" (p 1).

It is worth noting that focused and strategic leadership was very instrumental in mobilizing women to influence the outcome of the Constitution making process. Through focused and strategic leadership, Kenyan women mobilized themselves and actively and effectively participated in every stage of the Constitution making process. Their efforts to influence the Constitution making process were rewarded abundantly in the outcome of a constitution that has been hailed as the most women friendly among the existing constitutions around the world. In the words of Domingo, McCullough, Florence (2017) the Kenya Constitution 2010,

> *Is a progressive text that advances women's participation on political, social, and economic life and establishes important gains on women's rights and gender equality. In terms of the normative content, it establishes an ambitious Bill of Rights that contains specific gains in relation to women;s rights – as well as on the justifiability of rights. The Constitution also establishes a set of values and principles trumping any discriminatory law, practice, or action – including in relation to customary norms and tradition. Affirmative action measures compensate for historical inequality and discrimination – an especially important victory for women. It furthermore sets up an institutional framework of checks and balances, including through strengthening judicial review something women activists actively lobbied for. In sum, the Constitution potentially provides an enabling institutional architecture for the realisation and protection of women's rights and gender equality principles.*

Since the promulgation of the new Constitution on August 10, 2010, women's organizations returned to their individual agenda. This is despite the fact that Kenyan women are yet to enjoy the rights and privileges enshrined in the new Constitution such as the right to opportunities in economic spheres (COK 27:3) and economic and social rights (COK 43:1). Due to existing gender power dynamics, they lack ownership and control to productive resources as well as access to well-paid employment opportunities thus comprising the majority of an estimated 38.9% Kenyan's living below the poverty line. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated this situation with women being hit the most by the pandemic. This is despite the many initiatives by women themselves such as table banking and merry-go-round, which development public and private partners

have found to be a convenient entry to support women's economic empowerment by giving them seed funding in the form of grants and loans. This Paper argues that the continued feminization of poverty is due to lack of focused leadership for women's self-mobilization for economic empowerment. Learning from the Constitution making proccess a focused women's leadership will be able to mobilize women to influence economic policies for Women's Economic Empowerment at all levels.

3.0 Strategies that Worked for Women During the Constitution Making Process

To realize their goal in the Constitution making process, the women leaders ably led the women by coming up with key strategies. This section discusses some of the key strategies that worked for women and led to the resounding success in negotiating for the inclusion of women's issues in the Constitution of Kenya 2010. The strategies included unity of purpose among the Kenyan women leaders; collaborative resource mobilization; networking and collaboration; lobbying and advocacy; and targeting the gatekeepers in the process. The success of these strategies was dependent on the leadership that steered women towards the realization of the constitutional gains. Though there are different definitions of leadership, this study uses leadership to mean *the act to influence other people's behaviour so that they can be driven towards a certain goal* (Miftah Thoha, 2013; 121).

On the other hand, Iswahyuni (2021) refers to a leader as,

> *Someone that is capable and has the abilities to influence and guide others to work together towards a common goal. Someone who leads by initiating, ordering, moving, organizing, oand controlling others' action towards a common goal in the process of influencing the group by devising a plan for the common goal (p. 239)*

3.1 Unity of Purpose among the Kenyan Women Leaders

The 1990s saw the emergence of many women's organizations, among them the Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development (CCGD), the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Kenya chapter, *ABANTU for Development*, the League of Kenya Women Voters (LKWV), the Centre for Rights, Education and Awareness (CREAW), the Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW),

the Education Centre for Women in Democracy (*ECWD*), the Kenya Women Political Caucus (KWPC) and the Women Political Alliance – Kenya (WPA-K), the Green Belt Movement, the Business and Professional Women's Organization and the African Women and Children Feature Service (AWCFS), the League of Muslim Women in Kenya, the *Family* Support Institute (*FASI*), the Widows and Orphans Welfare Society of Kenya (WOWESOK), among others. The leadership of the women's organizations was united and focused on one common women's agenda: Affirmative Action (AA). Earlier women's CSOs such as Maendeleo ya Wanawake (MYWO), the National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK), media organizations, including the *Association of Media Women in Kenya* (*AMWIK*) were also looped into this great women's movement. According to Kabira (2012), *"thousands of women who had been in the struggle came together, walked on this path, hundreds of them, tens of thousands of women"* (p 4). According to Tripp, *"despite the many divisive factors and intersectionalities, the women's agenda trumped the imperative of ethnically based patronage"* (p7). The women leaders unified women from all walks of life to speak in one voice.

3.2 Research, Data Collection and Gender Analysis

Research was a critical aspect for women in an effort to equip themselves with evidence-based policy advocacy on issues of critical concern to African women. According to Kabira (2012), at a meeting organized by the Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development (CCGD) in January 1998, Prof Okoth Ogendo made women realize the need to prepare themselves with relevant knowledge in the process of reviewing the Constitution (p 31). In order to arm themselves with knowledge and articulate women's issues in the Constitution, women carried out a lot of research, using diverse research methods.

The research took the form of feminist research with the researchers holding the view that *"women have been subordinated through men's greater power, variously expressed in different arenas"* (Kabira & Maloyi, 2018, p 11) and they saw the constitutional moment as an opportunity to correct this situation. Literature review was key to understanding what was happening in other parts of Africa and the world on issues pertinent to women such as affirmative action for increased representation in decision-making institutions and processes and other fundamental rights for women and girls such as citizenship, land ownership, gender-based violence, among many others. This was done by feminist and social science researchers, both from the research institutions such as the University of Nairobi among them Prof Maria Nzomo and Prof Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira, Dr

Ruth Kibiti, Prof Shanysia A. Khasian and from women's organizations as well as consultants such as Mr. Wachira Maina and Billington Mwangi Gituto, among many others. There were also researchers from the women's civil society organisations such as the author, Mary Wambui Kanyi, Ayoo Odiko, Rosemary Mueni and Margaret Wanjiku Nguniri from the Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development (CCGD). Other women's organizations involved in the research included, FIDA Kenya, ABANTU and CREAW, among many others. The research findings were shared with women leaders and organizations from all walks of life at consultative meetings and national forums to enable women articulate and own up the issues. This empowered women with information that enabled them to confidently knock at any door and lobby for support for women's issues.

Kenyan women also learnt from what was happening in the region, particularly from the implementation of Affirmative Action in Uganda and Rwanda which had already entrenched the affirmative action principle for women's participation in Parliament in their constitutions. The Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development (CCGD) took the lead by organizing in 2001 a national workshop and invited the Hon Winnie Byanyima (Founder, Forum for Women in Democracy{FOWODE}, which champions women's equal participation in decision-making in Uganda[10]) to come and share with their Kenyan counterparts the experience of the Ugandan women with the District Affirmative Action mechanism. The Workshop was held at the Pan Africa Hotel, Nairobi at the height of the constitution consultations in Kenya.

In 2003, the CCGD sent three female National Constitutional Conference (NCC) delegates on a benchmarking tour to Rwanda, among them the author, Dr Ruth Kibiti (UON) and Caroline Wambui Nganga, chair of the NCC Committee on representation of the people. The three were commissioned to go and learn about how the Affirmative Action initiative was being implemented in Rwanda. Upon their return, they shared with the Kenyan women what they had heard, read, and seen in Rwanda, so as to enable them to make informed choices on the issue.

Research was, thus, a key strategy for Kenyan women as they strived to get facts on the women's constitutional agenda. Equipped with factual information gathered through research, women were able to confidently debate and present their agenda at any fora and lobby and advocate for it with anyone who could influence the review process in their favour. This contributed to their great

10 https://www.weforum.org/agenda/authors/winniebyanyima

success in entrenching the women's agenda in the making of the constitution of Kenya.

3.3 Remaining Vigilant

Furthermore, women remained vigilant and, under the able leadership particularly of academicians, such as Dr Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira and women leaders such as Martha Koome, the Hon Martha Karua, and the Hon Charity Ngilu, among many others, they monitored every step of the review process. Women in the different review organs would pass information to the leaders in the women's movement and they would agree on the appropriate action to ensure the women's agenda was protected at every stage. For example, while drafting the legislation on the review process, women parliamentarians would inform the women leaders and avail the draft law. Gender analysts by the women in the movement, would then quickly carry out a gender analysis of the proposed legislation and share the findings with the women parliamentarians as well as lobby other male parliamentarians to support the women's agenda.

When the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC) was putting in place the review structures or preparing their reports, the women commissioners became very handy in sharing the information with the women's movement. The women would quickly carry out a gender analysis of such materials. They identified any gender gaps and/or any gains and came up with recommendations to bridge the gaps and safeguard their gains. The findings were shared at the national women leaders' consensus building forums where they would agree on what position to take. The information was also packaged in simplified forms and circulated among the women leaders who cascaded it to their constituents at the different levels and in the different parts of the country. These recommendations would be shared, not just with the women commissioners but also with the male commissioners at lobbying sessions organized by the women lobbyists. This ensured that all the regulations and legislations and other documents linked to the constitutional review process emanating from Parliament and/or the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission took the women's agenda on board.

3.4 Consensus Building among Women

The women's movement for the Constitution review was very well coordinated at all levels. At the national level women leaders built consensus on the specific women's constitutional issues, among them citizenship, affirmative

action, right to own property including land, elimination of gender-based violence, social and economic rights (GoK, 43), including right to education, health, and food, among others. The leaders of the women's organizations put in place coordination units that would bring together the leadership for consultations as well as geographical mapping to prevent overlaps among the various organizations. The women leadership, drawn from different walks of life, including the Hon Phoebe Asiyo, the Hon Charity Ngilu, the Hon Martha Karua, the Hon Wangari Mathai, the Hon Julia Ojiambo, the Hon Tabitha Seii, Rukia Subow, Dr Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira, Martha Koome, the current Chief Justice of Kenya, Jane Kiano, Wanjiru Kihoro, among others, would come together and set the agenda. This would then be cascaded to the next level of institutional leadership, comprising Executive Directors and Program administrators such as Jane Ogot, Cecilia Kimemia, Deborah Okumu, Mary Njeri Gichuru, *Jane* Wambui *Thuo, Maimuna Mwidau, Wambui Kanyi, among many other women leaders. They* would then mobilize their networks, social capital members, affiliates and constituents, at all levels, on the common women's constitutional agenda. These organizations had their regional representatives who would get the information and sensitize women in their respective regions. For example, the CCGD had Alicen Chelaite in Central Rift Valley and Martha Rop in Moi's Bridge, Eldoret, Jane K. Kamwaga in Murang'a, Caroline Akinyi from Migori, Rhoda Maende from Makueni, Mumina Konso in Isiolo, Happy Gloria from Busia, Beatrice Mwaringa from Mombasa, among others. This ensured a national coverage and nationwide mobilization of women in support of their constitutional agenda, including the Affirmative Action, for women's participation in decision-making at all levels. It also ensured that women from all walks of life, NGOs leaders, Members of Parliament, the academia, executives and women leaders from grassroots organizations and groups, were part of the women's constitutional movement. It was a very inclusive process. It was a moment in the history of the women of Kenya when their diversity relating to skills, region of residence, ethnicity, religious and political affiliations and class, among other allegiances, became a source of strength for the movement. They identified each one's strengths and social capital amongst themselves and utilized them for the realization of the movement's goal and objectives.

Kabira (2012) notes that "*the struggle for women's liberation was a long and tedious and the concerted efforts and utilization of all available human resources, skills and expertise as well as financial resources from the various women NGOs and development partners was used*" (p338). Women at all levels

were thus equipped with the same message regarding the women's agenda in the Constitution. They were able to take a common stand on the women's constitutional agenda at any forum, whether at the national or grassroots level. This was critical in the lobbying and advocacy, as well as influencing the policies related to the constitutional review process.

3.5 Training and Capacity Building

Women came from different background and had diverse skills. The women leaders, therefore, coordinated and organized training workshops at both the national and regional levels to equip them with relevant skills for moving the women's agenda. Numerous training and capacity building workshops were held at national and regional levels to equip women leaders with relevant knowledge, skills and information related to their role during the process. For example, women lobbyists were equipped with lobbying and advocacy skills. This made them confident in lobbying support for the women's agenda with diverse stakeholders. Others were involved in conducting civic education at the community level and were similarly equipped with skills and an information pack, including civic education manuals, to effectively conduct civic education.

3.6 Mobilization of Women's Social Capital and other Resources

Women leaders volunteered their social capital, economic and other resources at the women's movement disposal. Coleman (1988) defines social capital by its function *"as a structure of relations between and among individuals"* (p. 98). The *'durable networks', 'social ties'* and *'structure of relations'* is important in understanding how social capital works.

Firstly, networks facilitate the flow of information. An individual with connections in strategic locations can gain information about opportunities otherwise unknown (or unseen). Allied to this is the second function of influence. Connections in high places can not only give access to information but also exert influence in favour of the individual. Finally, networks provide reinforcements of identity and recognition. Members of social groups with similar interests and resources derive identity from their membership and claim to resources of the group (Lin, 1999). The women leaders enabled the women lobbyists to access and lobby their colleagues in the political and other positions of influence. For example, the Hon Phoebe Asiyo would organize meetings with the former Prime Minister H.E Raila Odinga, the Hon Julia Ojiambo would organise meetings with the late Minister for Justice Hon Mutula Kilonzo while the late Jane Kiano would

enable women to access the former leader of the opposition, the Hon Uhuru Kenyatta. Prof Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira would organize meetings with commissioners of the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC), including the Chairman, Prof Yash Ghai, among other key personalities such as Members of Parliament. In addition to the social capital, women leaders, willingly volunteered their resources to facilitate women's participation in the Constitution making process. For example, when there were no external donor funds for women to hold consultative meetings in the hotels, the late Kamla Sikand would volunteer her homestead in Westlands for women to meet and brainstorm on strategic moves to protect their gains in the draft constitution. On sunny days meetings were held outdoors whiles during rainy days meetings would be held on her picturesque veranda. During such meetings she provided meals, including lunch and her sweet banana cakes thus volunteering both spatial and financial resources to the women's movement.

3.7 Lobbying and Advocacy

The women's leadership strategically identified the gate keepers at all levels of the Constitution making process, the community, the executive, and the legislature/Parliament. Women's intersectionalities of class, ethnicity became an important asset for the women's movement during the Constitution making process in Kenya. This is the area where women's intersectionalities came in handy as the social capital among them was useful in getting the gatekeepers everywhere and at every level. They established lobbying and advocacy committees. Through the able and focused leadership, the women identified influential individuals and institutions such as parliamentarians and the national executive as well as CKRC and organized sessions to market their agenda to various stakeholders. The women leaders employed various strategies to market women's constitutional agenda to the different stakeholders. They skilfully employed appropriate strategies for each stakeholder. They included consultative meetings, one-on-one physical meetings, or telephone calls. Whichever strategy was used, the objective was the same: market and lobby the stakeholder's support for the common women's agenda in the Constitution, using pre-prepared information kits.

3.8 Collaborative Resource Mobilization

For effective self-mobilization at national and grassroots levels, which included awareness creation, training, and capacity building, lobbying and advocacy,

aimed at mainstreaming women's agenda in the constitution, Kenyan women required massive human and financial resources. Under the able and focused leadership at the time, women's organizations developed common home-grown programmes such as the Engendering Political Party Processes (EPPP) which evolved into Gender and Governance Programme. They mobilized resources from the international donor community, mainly through fund raising. The EPPP

> *EPPP was implemented for 18 months leading tothe 2002 elections while GGP II was implemented in the period leading to the 2007 elections. The Programme and Finance Management (PFM) for the GGP II was by Action Aid Kenya (AAK) from 2002-2004 before management was transferred to UN Women in July 2006 following review reccommendations. The first phase of GGP II was funded by governments of Canada, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The second phase, which had a budget close to US$ 5 million, was funded by Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, the UK, and Sweden and had a total of 30 implementing partners. GGP II, a 3 year programme (2009-2011) was funded by the governments of Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Germany, Spain, United Kingdom, Sweden, and the Canadian International Agency (CIDA). The programme has a total funding of US$ 12.1 million supporting between 22-26 implementign partners. (p. 7)*

was coordinated by the then two broad women's networks comprising the Kenya Women Political Caucus (KWPC) and the Women Political Alliance, Kenya and was supported by several donors. Zimbizi, K'Opiyo and Owiti (2011) state,

Other donors, not is the funding basket, also continued to support the women's common agenda. Domingo, McCullough, Florence (2017) report,

Such collaborative programmes enabled the Kenyan women, through their national and grassroots leaders, to clearly articulate, programme and implement their collective agenda.

> *Some of this funding was flexible, which allowed women's groups and civil society groups to access funding for short term initiatives in the lead up to the 2010 Referendum on the Constitution (p. 9)*

3.9 Networking and Collaboration

Kenyans from diverse background who felt the need to entrench their rights in the Constitution were actively involved in the Constitution making process. The majority of them, were those, who, like the women, felt they were victims of marginalization in the Kenyan society. These groups included the Kenyan youths, marginalized communities, religious minorities and persons with disabilities, children's rights and human rights organizations. Others were groups from the media fraternity and the labour unions. The women identified these groups and forged strategic alliances and lobbied them to adopt and advance the women's constitutional agenda and vice versa. This, more particularly, was made possible because women constituted an indispensable component among those other stakeholders.

3.10 Challenges for Employing Similar Strategies to Influence Economic Policies

To think that employing the strategies women employed during the Constitution making process for the purpose of influencing economic policies will contribute to promoting women's economic empowerment may be a little simplistic. This is because it was easier for women to engage in organized collective action in the Constitution making process since the Constitution embodied the interests of their various intersectionalities. However, women are involved in diverse economic activities. For example, there are women employed in the private or public sectors, others are self-employed, and some are unemployed. There are women entrepreneurs of various enterprises and of various sizes, there are women farmers, there are women who are home managers. These different economic sectors require different economic policies and programmes.

A different set of challenges face women who are engaged in informal livelihood activities, running their own enterprises and farms or working as casual wage labourers. While they make up the majority of working women in the global South, there are few trade unions. Moreover, the dispersed nature of their activities, the irregularity of their earnings, their location at the intersection of multiple inequalities, the social and self-devaluation of their work and, very frequently, their lack of awareness of any rights they might enjoy, make the spontaneous emergence of self-organized collective action unlikely (Kabeer, p 5**)** if not impossible. Strategic, focused and committed leadership will, therefore, be required to mobilize women nationwide, to influence economic policies so as to promote women's economic empowerment.

The human society has been characterized by unequal power relations between men and women with the latter being the disempowered sex. In an effort to address various concerns relating to this unequal gender power relations**,** women have been collectively mobilizing themselves at the local, national, and global levels. The Kenyan women's efforts were abundantly rewarded with a women friendly constitution. However, though the women's constitutional gains have seen an increase of women in decision-making institutions and positions, there has been little impact on the transformation of the lives of most women as they continue to languish in abject poverty.

It is therefore of utmost importance to embark on a common agenda aimed at **e**mpowering women **e**conomically. This is not only fundamental for gender equality but instrumental in realizing the sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly those linked to social transformation, among them, No Poverty; Zero Hunger; Good Health and Well-being; Quality Education; Gender Equality; Clean Water and Sanitation; Affordable and Clean Energy; Decent Work and Economic Growth and Reduced Inequality, among others. As illustrated in this section, the success of the women's economic empowerment program requires broad ownership among the Kenyan women, as per Kabira's proverbial saying, it must be a *journey of thousands, of millions of Kenyan women* (Kabira, 2012, p1) with their leaders marching together showing the way to women's economic empowerment. It will also require the collaborative support of both local and international donor agencies willing to walk with the Kenyan women's movement leaders and offer both economic and technical support in their economic empowerment journey until their collective dream is realized. Enormous resources will be required to conduct research, training, and capacity building; to strengthen women's self-mobilization; policy advocacy for WEE; strategic targeting and lobbying opinion shapers; and as Kenyan women learnt from the Constitution making process, it is doable.

4.0 Recommendations and Conclusion

4.1 Recommendations

- Conduct research and identify economic sectors where the majority stakeholders are women and design strategic interventions, including policies and programmes, for promoting women's economic empowerment. Through a consultative process with the women leaders in the selected sectors, build consensus and mobilize women to own and

support the agenda. Market the concept of women's economic empowerment (WEE) and the identified interventions as common women's agenda among women civil society leaders; women politicians, among others, and mobilize their support.

- Leadership is critical for the realization of women's collective gains. Therefore, there is need for a committed, strategic, focused and passionate women leaders within the women's movement for women to realize their collective economic empowerment. The women leaders from the identified sectors, must therefore, be united in the struggle for women's economic empowerment. They must mobilize their followers or constituents to own and support the common women's economic empowerment agenda.
- The National and County Governments must prioritize gender-sensitive budgeting and allocate adequate resources towards advancing women and girls rights (The Hunger Project, 2021, p6).
- Women's economic empowerment must take a multisectoral collaboration approach involving the different stakeholders such as women's organizations; the media fraternity; local and external donors, as well as the County and National Governments. Implementation of the strategies women employed will require a lot of resources both human and financial. Therefore, both local and international donors, must be willing to invest in programmes aimed at women's economic empowerment. The donors should increase *"the quality and quantity of funding available to support women in public life through the creation and financing of specific funds that prioritize direct funding to women's organizations and feminist movements",* (The Hunger Project, 2021, p7).
- C*onscientization* and capacity building of women leaders, women's organizations and groups at all levels to ensure they are speaking in a common voice or women's collective voice in matters relating to economic policies and programmes.
- Educate and create awareness among the various stakeholders on the impact of women economic empowerment, and vice versa, at the family, community and national levels
- Collaborative monitoring of the implementation of women friendly economic policies and programs relating to poverty reduction and women's economic empowerment at all levels.

- Conduct a needs assessment of women's NGOs, CBOs and groups to identify strategies for strengthening them in an effort to ensure their sustainability including adequate funding
- Mainstream women in all economic and development policies at both the County and National Governments.
- Develop tools for gender responsive budgeting, including monitoring and evaluating county and national governments budgets.
- Technology is very important for economic empowerment in this day and age. Therefore, there is need to develop policies on training women, including women entrepreneurs, in the use of technology to promote their economic empowerment.
- Finally, identify strategic partnerships, including strengthening collaboration between women's NGOs, CBOs and groups with other stakeholders, including the media, local and external donors and the County and National Governments

4.2 Conclusion

Kenyan women have demonstrated that, with committed, focused, and strategic leadership, it is possible to rise above the various intersectionalities that divide them and join their forces for a common agenda, as they did during the Constitution making process. However, though they realized the constitutional gains, more than ten years since the promulgation of a very women friendly constitution in August 2010, the majority of them are still languishing in poverty. It is, therefore, important for the women leaders and organizations concerned about women's empowerment to once again mobilize the women to set on another journey for women's economic liberation. However, it will be important to take into consideration the fact that women are involved in diverse economic activities, and it may be important to conduct a baseline survey to identify economic activities and sectors where the majority of women are involved and that may have a greater impact in promoting WEE. This information will be important in strategically identifying, through a consultative process, the economic policies and programs that will have the greatest impact in promoting WEE.

It will also be important to identify women leaders and organizations/groups involved in the identified sectors to be part of the drivers of WEE. A strong, committed, focused and strategic women's leadership should be

established around the selected sectors. Through a consultative process the women leaders can set the common agenda, sensitization, training, and capacity building. The women leadership should own up the agenda and take lead in mobilizing women as well as lobbying support for the agenda at all levels. This will result in a formidable women's force to influence policy makers and society at large on the significance of women's economic empowerment in promoting development and poverty reduction at the family, the community, and the society at large. This will require massive resources, both financial and human. To cater for this, women leaders must be willing to mobilize resources from local and international donors to enable them implement targeted activities to realize their goal. This will contribute to the transformation of economic policies at the county and national levels and to the promotion of women's economic empowerment. This will greatly contribute not only to women's economic empowerment but also to the overall national development and poverty reduction and the realization of the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

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Use of Poultry Production to Empower Small Holder Women Farmers in East Africa

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Abstract

Animal agriculture within developing countries, particularly in Africa, is important and plays a significant role in improving people's livelihoods, particularly of women. The poultry sector in these countries is largely based on traditional production systems, with women responsible for most of the day-to-day activities. In spite of that, women do not control the income that comes from the sale of their birds or eggs. The specific objectives of this study were to: 1) Improve the livelihood of women smallholder farmers (WSF) through increased poultry production and income and access to resources and decision making, and 2) Evaluate the empowerment of smallholder poultry farmers using the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI). Sixty-nine smallholder farmers in two districts in Eastern Uganda were trained on best practices for poultry production. A questionnaire was administered immediately after the training (phase 1)

and one year later (phase 2) to collect data on the five Domains of Empowerment (5DE) These data were used to compute the 5DE index and a modified WEAI.

The findings showed that there was improved livelihood through increased poultry production, improved marketing, and access to resources through a cooperative, and increased income leading to acquisition of assets such as land. WSF were empowered with ownership of the birds and assets, engagement in domestic and local decision making, and leadership in the community. The 5DE score was 65.8% before and 82.4% one year after the establishment of the poultry enterprises. The modified WEAI was 74. 25%. Therefore, equipping WSF with necessary tools (such as training in poultry production) and resources can lead to empowerment, and improved livelihood as was demonstrated by WSF in this study.

Key words: Aggregate index; Agro entrepreneurship; food security, poultry production, relative inequality; women empowerment.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Role of Animal Agriculture in Developing Countries

Animal agriculture in developing countries, particularly in Africa, is important and can play a significant role in improving people's livelihoods, particularly of women (Ahmed et al 2021; Van et al., 2020; Dumas et al, 2016). Globally, poultry production is forecast to reach 134.5M metric tons by 2023, overtaking pork at 16.7M metric tons (Hedman et al., 2020). In East Africa poultry production is popular in many villages and communities because of its potential as a significant source of income and quality protein. Various scholars have reported the socio-economic importance and benefits of smallholder poultry production to several communities, including improved food security and gender equity (Guèye, 2000; Guèye, 2002; Alders and Pym, 2009; Mottet and Tempio, 2017; Wong et al., 2017). For instance, every household in the rural North Rift region of Kenya keeps 5-20 chicken (Okitoi, et al (2007). There is further evidence showing that when women manage assets and family income, there is improvement in nutrition and education of their children. The family also gains access to health services, all of which enable women to be in a more privileged position in the family and in their community (Ahmed, et al 2021). Based on these studies, targeting, and improving poultry production would reach and impact women and families quickly and directly. It would increase the quantity and quality of the birds by

equipping the women who are the primary producers with experiential knowledge and transferable skills. Poultry, which most households are engaged in, would be a measurable way of providing a higher sustainable source of protein, income, and subsequently, empower the women to engage in decision-making. This paper starts with an articulation of the problem statement and progresses to an analysis of relevant literature that guided the objectives and research questions.

1.2 The Problem

Despite the acknowledged current and potential benefits of poultry as an accessible sustainable source of income for women and for gender parity, ownership of resources (including poultry) is male dominated. Women and children are responsible for the day-to-day poultry keeping chores of feeding and cleaning sheds, but they do not control the income from the sale of the birds or eggs (Galiè et al, 2015; Otieno Onyalo, 2019). Moreover, in addition to the time-consuming poultry keeping activities, there are numerous constraints associated with local smallholder farmer poultry systems that render the income inadequate and unsustainable. They include shortage of extension staff, low productivity of village chickens, a lack of knowledge on best management practices, lack of access to financial services and a proper marketing strategy (Njuki et al., 2011; Wong et al., 2017) and inadequate poultry nutrition programs. Thus, rural communities, especially women whose livelihoods are dependent on poultry production, remain trapped in abject poverty.

1.3 Goal and Objectives of the Study

The goal of the study was to contribute to gender parity through improving the quality and quantity of poultry production and marketability. It is anticipated that increased poultry production will lead to economic empowerment through higher sustainable income that will lead to significant improvement in all the five domains of Women Empowerment (5DE), namely, agricultural production, resources, income, leadership, and time (Table 1). Indicators tracked under each domain include:

1) Production: Sole or joint decision making over food and cash-crop farming, livestock, and fisheries as well as autonomy in agricultural production;
2) Resources: Ownership, access to, and decision- making power over productive resources such as land, livestock, agricultural equipment, consumer durables, and credit;

3) Income: Sole or joint control over income and expenditures;

4) Leadership: Membership in economic or social groups and comfort in speaking in public;

5) Time: Allocation of time to productive and domestic tasks and satisfaction with the available time for leisure activities.

The overall aim of this study was to assess if equipping small holder poultry farmers (particularly women) with knowledge and skills in best practices in poultry production could serve as a practical intervention tool that translates into increased poultry production and improvement in all five domains of women economic empowerment (5DE) (Figure 1).

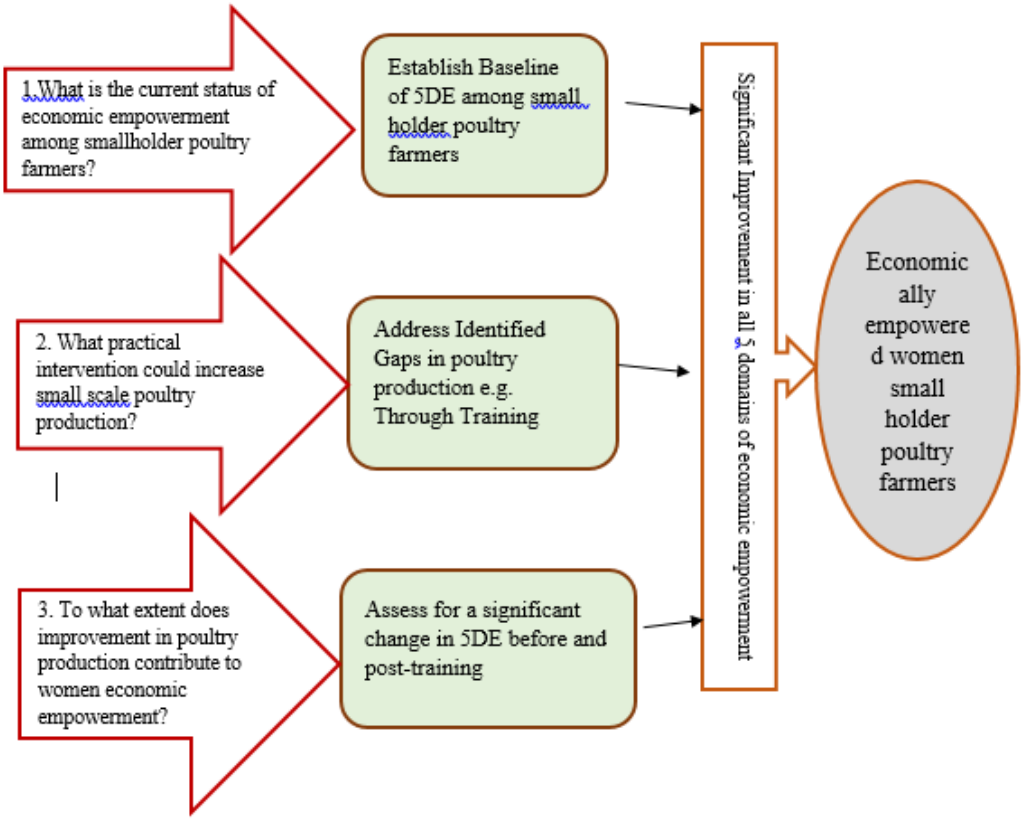


Figure 1: Theory of change for economic empowerment of smallholder poultry farmers

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1) Establish a baseline of the five domains of Women Empowerment (5DE) in agriculture among 69 smallholder households engaged in poultry production in Eastern Uganda;

2) Provide training on gaps identified in the 5DE, particularly on knowledge and skills in best practices for poultry production; and

3) Assess the impact of the training on poultry production and economic empowerment through significant improvement in all five domains of Women Empowerment (5DE).

There were three research questions:

1) What is the current status of economic empowerment among smallholder poultry farmers (particularly women) in Uganda?

2) Does direct intervention to smallholder farmers' practices such as training increase small scale poultry production?

3) To what extent does improvement in poultry production contribute to women economic empowerment?

1.4 The Theory of Change (ToC)

Our theory of change (Figure 1) is rooted in the socio-economic research (Ahmed et al, 2021) conducted on small holder farmers in LICs and MICs that indicates that family poultry ownership for women is a source of cash for basic family needs, can open access to credit for women, and is increasing women's decision-making and economic power within the household and in the community (Ahmed et al, 2021). This research informed our hypothesis that training WSF (particularly women) in Uganda and providing them with the resources and knowledge on best practices for poultry production would economically empower them in all the five domains of empowerment: 1) improving productivity and marketing of their birds and eggs, 2) increasing their household income and assets, and 3) improving their participation in control of expenditure of household income, and ownership of assets, 4) participation in social groups and comfort in taking on leadership positions, and 5) satisfaction with allocation and use of available time.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Global Food Consumption Trends Shifting Towards Livestock Products

Globally, as the standard of living improves and the middle-income class grows, there has been a notable shift in food consumption patterns away from crop-based diets towards animal source foods. This change has especially aligned with a global increase in consumption of poultry meat (Hedman et al., 2020). For

developing countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), one contributing factor to the growth in chicken consumption is that indigenous chicken is prevalent in most rural households (Ngeywo et al, 2021) and these chickens provide cheap animal protein in the form of meat and eggs. Also, the African continent has one of the fastest growing populations globally and chickens adapt well to climate change as compared to other livestock (Thornton et al., 2009; Mengesha, 2011; Thornton and Herrero, 2015).

2.2 The Importance of Poultry in Developing Countries

According to Baltenweck et al (2020) in African contexts, in addition to providing cheap animal protein, livestock play other functions such as serving as an asset, acting as a store of wealth for resilience and playing a role as a contributing factor to mixed farming. A study by (Gueye, 2009) reported that in Africa, the poultry sector is dominated by indigenous chicken. Also, chicken production is a comparatively more efficient production system than other livestock sectors (Mengesha, 2011). The indigenous poultry in Africa are, therefore, critical in addressing food security challenges, particularly in the face of climate change and the fast human population growth (Pius et al, 2021). Furthermore, data from various studies show that livestock contribute to women empowerment and gender equality in communities of many low- and middle-income countries (Alders and Pym, 2009; Ahmed et al., 2021). Culturally, many women in these countries do not own many assets and livestock are one of the few assets that women can own and use in their empowerment. Also, livestock improve women's income, access to information through leveraging social networks and help provide nutritious food to their families (Alders et al 2018).

2.3 The Need for Increased Extension Presence and Training on Best Agricultural Practices

According to Liverpool-Tasie et al (2019), there is a need for training poultry farmers in particular smallholder producers. Available statistics show that only 4%, 30% and 30% of small, medium, and large poultry producers have received some training in poultry production best practices (Liverpool-Tasie et al, 2019). Smallholders are, therefore, not in a position to utilize available technologies, thereby leading to low productivity. Efficient use of technology would substantially increase production. Also, in general, there is a shortage of extension personnel, particularly women. This issue greatly disadvantages women farmers who are more comfortable with women extension staff.

2.4 Gender Issues in Poultry Production in Rural Households

In general, more women and children care for chickens compared to men (Dessie et al. 2003; Mapiye and Sibanda 2008). Men may assist to perform duties such as construction of poultry houses and marketing of birds and eggs. However, women perform most of the day-to-day duties such as feeding, watering, and applying treatments to the birds (Dessie et al. 2003; Mapiye and Sibanda 2008). However, women do not control the income that comes from the sale of the birds or eggs (Galiè et al, 2015; Otieno Onyalo, 2019). However, other socio-economic research studies on small holder farming in low-income countries (LICs) and middle-income countries (MICs) around small holder farming indicate that women are the primary owners of family poultry (Ahmed et al-2021). A recent study from Bangladesh shows that family poultry ownership is increasing women's decision-making and economic power within the household and in the community (Ahmed et al-2021). The study shows that poultry production is also a source of cash for basic family needs and can open access to credit for the women (Ahmed et al-2021).

This study will draw on evidence from such studies to assess if equipping small holder poultry farmers (particularly women) in a LIC such as Uganda with knowledge and skills in best practices in poultry production could translate into increased poultry production and improvement in the five domains of women economic empowerment (5DE).

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Study Area

The study area comprised two districts: District A and District B, both located in Eastern Uganda. Uganda is a landlocked country with an area of 241,038 km². Kampala is its largest city as well as the capital with a population of 1.2 million. The country is divided into four regions: Northern, Central, Eastern, and Western which are subdivided into 111 districts (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2014). In 2014 the population of Uganda was estimated to be 34, 634, 650 of which 27% in Central, 26% in Western, 25% in Eastern, and 22% in Northern region. The study districts population was 174, 508 and 244,158 for district A and B, respectively (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Lumutenga et al. (2017) offer a more detailed description of the study area and women groups.

3.2 Training

A team of trainers from the Africa Institute for Strategic Animal Resource Services and Development (AFRISA), College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity, Makerere University, Uganda provided 6 months three-phased training to 69 families located in the two districts. The women had been identified by Higher Education Resource Services, East Africa (HERS-EA) a non-governmental organization advancing women empowerment in East Africa (Khaitsa et al, 2017). The training was in best practices for poultry production (local and exotic breeds) including, but not limited to housing, nutrition, biosecurity, disease management, and agro entrepreneurship. During the six months of training the farmers raised the birds on their own with close supervision. However, they were provided with continued training and mentorship for an additional six- months post training. One year after the training, summative and formative evaluations were conducted to assess the knowledge and competence of the farmers in the areas trained. The evaluation was expanded to assess improvement in indicators of the five domains of women economic empowerment (5DE).

3.3 Empowerment Assessment Methods

Two sub-indexes were used in this study: 1) Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) and 2) Gender Parity Index (GPI), both of which are described in detail elsewhere (IFPRI, 2012). Briefly, the WEAI assesses whether women are empowered across the five domains listed in Table 1. In addition to tracking empowerment in the 5DE, the WEAI determines the gender empowerment gap. The ten indicators of the WEAI in the 5DE are used to build individual empowerment profiles (USAID, 2012). An empowered individual is one who achieves *'adequacy'* in 80% or more of the weighted indicators (USAID, 2012). This Index also shows areas of disempowerment which can then be improved. The decision makers can, therefore, give priority to improving areas of need among disempowered women.

3.4 Calculating the WEAI

Calculating the WEAI involves calculating 5DE and GPI. Thus:

$$\mathbf{5DE = H_e + H_n (A_a)}$$

H_e = % of women who are empowered

H_n = % of women who are not empowered (1- H_e)

A_a = % of dimensions in which disempowered women have adequate

achievements

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) = 1-H_w (R_p)

H_p = % women with gender parity

H_w = % women *without* gender parity

R_p = average empowerment gap between women compared with men in their household.

WEAI = 0.9(5DE) + 0.1(GPI) or

WEAI = 0.9{He+ (H_n x A_a)} + 0.1{1 - (H_w x R_p)}

3.5 Data Collection Methods

A questionnaire was administered to 69 respondents twice. The first time was at the beginning of the training, in June 2018 and was administered by AFRISA as a Baseline Survey on best practices in poultry production (Phase one). The second one was done one year after the training, in July 2019 (Phase two). The questions were grouped into six categories according to biographic data and the 5DE as follows: production, resources, income, leadership, and time. The variables ranged from age, gender, marital status, level of education, family size and composition *(Biography);* ownership of animals, types and number of animals owned *(agricultural production);* ownership of land, ownership of other assets such as trees, perennial crops, phones and bicycles *(resources);* income earned, who decides on how to spend money at home, *(income);* ability to talk in public, membership in social groups or community groups, and leadership position held in the community *(leadership);* the work load and how they spend their time - work and leisure time balance *(time).*

3.6 Data Analysis

Data were transferred from the questionnaires to an excel spreadsheet. A unit of identification was the individual respondent. Descriptive statistics of respondents were computed using "R" Software. A Chi-square test of proportions was used to evaluate if there was a significant change in the proportion of respondents with a certain indicator within the 5DE in phase one and two. This comparison was to assess the impact of the training in poultry production on the indicators within the 5DE. Also, the 5DE sub-index (agricultural production, resources, income, leadership, and time) was computed. The 5DE Index and its subindexes were estimated as described in the original WEAI (Alkire et al. 2013) and pro-WEAI (Malapit et al, 2019).

3.7 Computing the 5DE Index

A detailed methodology and algebraic equations for computing 5DE Index and its subindexes is described elsewhere (Alkire et al. 2013; Malapit et al. 2019). This study used a custom R-code that wraps models for computing the 5DE Index and its components. Ten measurable indicators carefully gathered from the questionnaire were equally weighted (1/10) and assigned to the primary domains (Table 1). These indicators and weights were proposed having considered the nature of the data collected and the local context (social and cultural) of the study area. The indicators and weights were modified slightly from those provided in the original WEAI. Estimation of 5DE Index was based on a cut-off characterized as adequate or inadequate achievement, with respect to the responses to the survey questions (Table 1). An individual was considered empowered if she or he had 80% adequate achievement and disempowered respondents experienced adequate achievements in some indicators. Table 1 shows a summary of indicators and weights used to assess women empowerment in this study. It is worth mentioning that the 5DE Index does not provide details of the indicators that may need attention. We, therefore, disaggregated the Index (Decomposition of 5DE) by computing the individual contribution of each of the ten indicators.

Table 1: Domains, indicators, weights, & achievement thresholds used in the study

Domains	Indicator	Weight
Production	Poultry Production	1/10
	Livestock Production	
Resources	Land Ownership	1/10
	Assets on Land	1/10
Income	Earn Income	1/10
	Sell or Buy Items	1/10
Leadership	In Social Group	1/10
	Leadership Position	1/10
Time	Working Time	1/10
	Leisure Time	1/10

Source: The weights and cut-off were constructed by the authors, table modified from IFPRI (2012).

4.0 Results

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The majority (73%) of the respondents owned < 1 acre of land which is consistent with the definition of smallholder farmers by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2010) had limited educational opportunities and depended on agriculture for their livelihoods. Of the 69 respondents, 36% (n=25) were from District A while 64% (n=44) from district B. Most participants (62%, n=43) were women while 38% (n=26) were men. Most of them (70%, n=49/69) had spouses while 23% (n=16/69) did not have and were single or widowed); 4 (5.7%) did not respond.

During Phase one, the distribution of livestock kept by the 69 study participants was as follows: poultry (46.4%, n=32). The number of birds kept ranged from 1 to 100 with a median of 7 birds. A total of (43.5%, n=30) owned goats; the numbers ranged from 1 to 25, with a median of 4 goats. There were (57.1 %, n=39) respondents who owned cattle, the range was 1 to 17 with a median of 7 cows. Only 4 out of 69 respondents (5.7%) owned pigs, with a range of 1 to 4 pigs, and a median of 2 pigs. In phase two, the number of respondents dropped from 69 to 53, and Table 3 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the variables in the five domains of empowerment. Most poultry houses were constructed out of mud with iron roofs with wood shavings serving as poultry litter. The main component of feed was corn (commonly known as maize bran) supplemented with silver fish or *Haplochromis spp.* (*mukene*) as the main protein source. The brooding equipment that supplied heat to poultry chicks comprised clay pots with charcoal and watering utensils comprised plastic containers. Figure 2 summarizes the distribution of the respondents' age and level of education. The respondents were between 18 and 81 years of age with a median age of 44. The majority (56%, n=38) had completed primary and secondary education and only four (5.8%) had never attended school. The level of education ranged from none (4/69, 5.8%) to primary level (16, 24%), Ordinary level (22, 32%), advanced level (8, 12%), and university level (4/69, 5.8%)

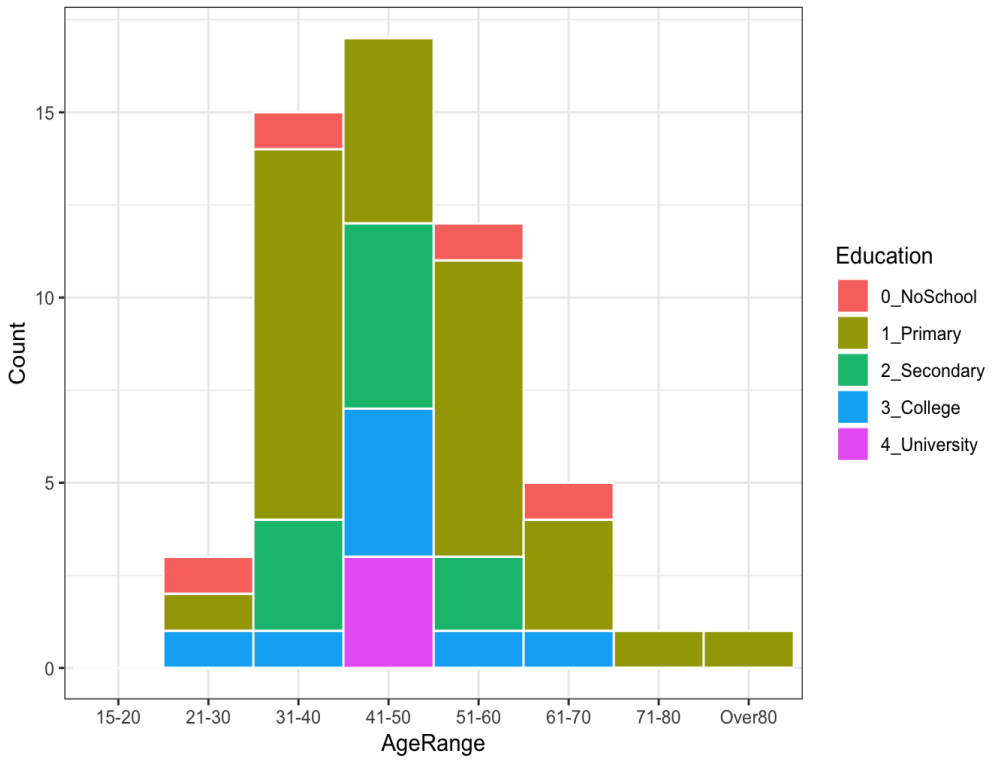


Figure 2: *Distribution of respondents' age and level of education (N=69, Response =54)*

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Select variables of the study population in the five

Domain/Variable	Frequency% (n) Phase 1	Frequency % (n) Phase 2	Test of proportions (Chi-square P-value)
Production			
Chicken			P=0.026
Yes	46.4(32)	92.45(49)	
No response	52.86(37)	7.55(4)	
Cattle			P=0.337
Yes	57.1(39)	60.38(32)	
No response	42.86(30)	39.62(21)	
Goats			P=0.746
Yes	43.5(30)	64.15(34)	
No response	55.71(39)	35.85(19)	
Pigs			P=0.082
Yes	5.7(4)	18.87(10)	

No response	94.2(65)	81.13(43)	
Resources			
Own Land			P≤0.001
Yes	54.43(43)	59.49(47)	
No	32.91(26)	7.59(6)	
No response	12.66(10)	32.91(26)	
Land size			P=0.037
≤1 acre	39.24(31)	18.99(15)	
2-5 acres	34.18(27)	36.71(29)	
5-10 acres	20.25(16)	36.71(29)	
>10 acres	3.8(3)	6.33(5)	
No response	2.53(2)	1.27(1)	
Assets on land			P=0.026
Perennial Crops	51.9(41)	29.11(23)	
Trees	21.52(17)	25.32(20)	
Animals	20.25(16)	34.18(27)	
No response	6.33(5)	11.39(9)	

Table 2 (cont'd): Descriptive Statistics of Select variables of the study population in the five domains of empowerment (5DE) during Phase 1 (N=69) and Phase 2 (N=69)

Domain/Variable	Frequency % (n) Phase 1	Frequency % (n) Phase 2	Test of proportions (Chi-square P-value)
Income			
Earn Income			P=0.028
Yes	73.42(58)	53.16(42)	
No	20.25(16)	37.97(30)	
No response	6.33(5)	8.86(7)	
Source of Income			P=0.001
Homework	58.23(46)	29.11(23)	
Sell produce	16.46(13)	11.39(9)	
Home-based Business	16.46(13)	32.91(26)	
Salary	6.33(5)	16.46(13)	
No response	2.53(2)	10.13(8)	
Who buys items at home			P=0.103
Me	36.71(29)	26.58(21)	

Both on Consultation	26.58(21)	17.72(14)	
My spouse	20.25(16)	39.24(31)	
Other (sponsor, children, etc.)	12.66(10)	13.92(11)	
No response	3.8(3)	2.53(2)	
Allowed to sell or buy			P=0.002
Me	62.03(49)	36.71(29)	
Both on Consultation	24.05(19)	27.85(22)	
No response	13.92(11)	35.44(28)	
Who decides how to spend			P=0.001
Me	56.96(45)	34.18(27)	
Other	16.46(13)	8.86(7)	
My spouse	12.66(10)	13.92(11)	
No response	12.66(10)	35.44(28)	
Both on Consultation	1.27(1)	7.59(6)	

Table 2 (cont'd): Descriptive Statistics of Select variables of the study population in the five domains of empowerment (5DE) during Phase 1 (N=69) and Phase 2 (N=69)

Domain/Variable	Frequency % (n) Phase 1	Frequency % (n) Phase 2	Test of proportions (Chi-square P-value)
Leadership			
Allowed to speak in public			P=0.016
Yes	81.01(64)	64.56(51)	
No response	13.92(11)	32.91(26)	
No	5.06(4)	2.53(2)	
Ever spoken in public			P=0.002
Yes	63.29(50)	62.03(49)	
No	18.99(15)	3.80(3)	
No response	17.72(14)	34.18(27)	
Held Leadership position			P=0.002
Yes	49.37(39)	50.63(40)	
No	36.71(29)	16.46(13)	
No response	13.92(11)	32.91(26)	
Belong to social groups			P≤0.001

Yes	64.56(51)	65.82(52)	
No	21.52(17)	1.27(1)	
No response	13.92(11)	32.91(26)	
Time			
Type of work or job			P=0.001
Homework	58.23(46)	29.11(23)	
Sell produce	16.46(13)	11.39(9)	
Home-based Business	16.46(13)	32.91(26)	
Salary	6.33(5)	16.46(13)	
No response	2.53(2)	10.13(8)	
Working time			P=0.102
Morning to midday	53.16(42)	41.77(33)	
Morning to evening	26.58(21)	20.25(16)	
No response	18.99(15)	36.71(29)	
Other	1.27(1)	1.27(1)	
Belong to social groups			P≤0.001
Yes	64.56(51)	65.82(52)	
No	21.52(17)	1.27(1)	
No response	13.92(11)	32.91(26)	
Leisure time			P≤0.001
≥ 3 hours/day	27.85(22)	16.46(13)	
≤ 1 hour/day	26.58(21)	8.86(7)	
2 hours/day	22.78(18)	10.13(8)	
No response	22.78(18)	64.56(51)	

4.2 Results of a Chi-square Test of Proportions

The results of the Chi-square test of proportions which assessed whether there was a statistically significant change among the indicators within the five domains of empowerment between Phase 1 and Phase 2 are summarized in Table 2. Overall, most indicators showed a significant change (P<0.05) between Phase 1 and 2. Among the indicators under agricultural production, there was a significant increase in poultry production between Phase 1 and 2 (P=0.026) but

not with cattle, goats, or pigs. In phase one, 46.4%, (32/69) kept poultry (range 1:100, median 7) while in phase two, 75.5% (40/53) kept poultry (range 1:70, median 10). Within the domain of who controls resources, and time, there was a significant change for most indicators except for "*Who buys items at home*" (P=0.103) and "*Working time"* (P=0.102), respectively. It is notable that the following indicators were improved significantly after training: ownership of chicken, ownership of assets such as land; income earned, ability to talk in public, membership in social groups or community groups, and leadership position held in the community (leadership) (Table 2).

Table 3 summarizes results of the disempowerment indexes of the indicators used in the study. These disempowerment indexes are uncensored and the distribution by gender (between men and women) and by phase (one and two) are shown. Data from the five domains were used to compute the 5DE index, using the formulae provided earlier. The WSF were empowered as indicated by the 5DE score of 65.8% in phase one and 82.4% in phase two after the establishment of poultry enterprises (a 15.2% increase). The male respondents showed a much smaller increase in empowerment with 5DE score of 82.4% in Phase 1 to 83.5% in Phase 2 (only 1.1% increase).

We computed a *Modified Gender Parity Index (GPI) and WEAI* of 0.009 and 0.7425, respectively, based on the formula below:

4.3 The Gender Parity Index (GPI) = 1-H_w (R_p)

H_p = % women with gender parity (82.4% in phase 2)

H_w = % women *without* gender parity (100% - 82.4% = 18.6%)

R_p = average empowerment gap between women compared with men in their household.

(83.5% (men)-82.4% (women) in phase 2 = 1.1%

WEAI = 0.9(5DE) + 0.1(GPI) or 0.9(0.824) + 0.1(GPI)

GPI = 1- 0.186 (0.011) = 0.009; WEAI = 0.9(0.824) + 0.1(0.009)

GPI was 0.009 and WEAI = 0.7416 + 0.0009 = 0.7425

The GPI sub-index reflects the percentage of women who are as empowered as the men *living in the same households*. Our study group did not have enough dual-adult households. We, therefore, calculated a modified GPI and WEAI using

aggregate data for the men and women in the study population, including those who were not living in the same households.

Table 3: The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index

Indicator	Female Phase 1	Male Phase 1	Female Phase 2	Male Phase 2
Uncensored inadequacy headcount ratio				
Poultry Production	0.069	0.065	0.024	0.030
Livestock Production	0.044	0.038	0.033	0.025
Land Ownership	0.031	0.008	0.003	0.000
Assets on Land	0.011	0.000	0.000	0.000
Earn Income	0.022	0.000	0.012	0.015
Allowed to Sell or Buy Items	0.040	0.004	0.042	0.020
Belong to Social Group	0.038	0.015	0.012	0.005
Held Leadership Position	0.020	0.015	0.000	0.000
Working Time	0.016	0.000	0.006	0.005
Leisure Time	0.051	0.031	0.058	0.065
Disempowerment Score (M0)	**0.342**	**0.176**	**0.190**	**0.165**
Empowerment score (5DE)	**0.658**	**0.824**	**0.810**	**0.835**

Table 4 shows the absolute and relative contribution of different indicators within the five domains of empowerment to the 5DE Index for women and men during phases 1 and 2. Results of uncensored indicators are shown, and for women in Phase 1, the contribution by different indicators ranged from 0.011 (for assets on land) to 0.069 (poultry production). In Phase 2, the contribution by different indicators for women ranged from 0.000 (for assets on land; and holding leadership position) to 0.058 (leisure time).

Table 4: Uncensored disempowerment indexes of the indicators

Feature ID	Indicator Name	UncensoredP1F	UncensoredP1M	UncensoredP2F	UncensoredP2M
D01	Poultry Production	0.069	0.065	0.024	0.030
D02	Livestock Production	0.044	0.038	0.033	0.025
D03	Land Ownership	0.031	0.008	0.003	0.000
D04	Assets on Land	0.011	0.000	0.000	0.000
D05	Earn Income	0.022	0.000	0.012	0.015

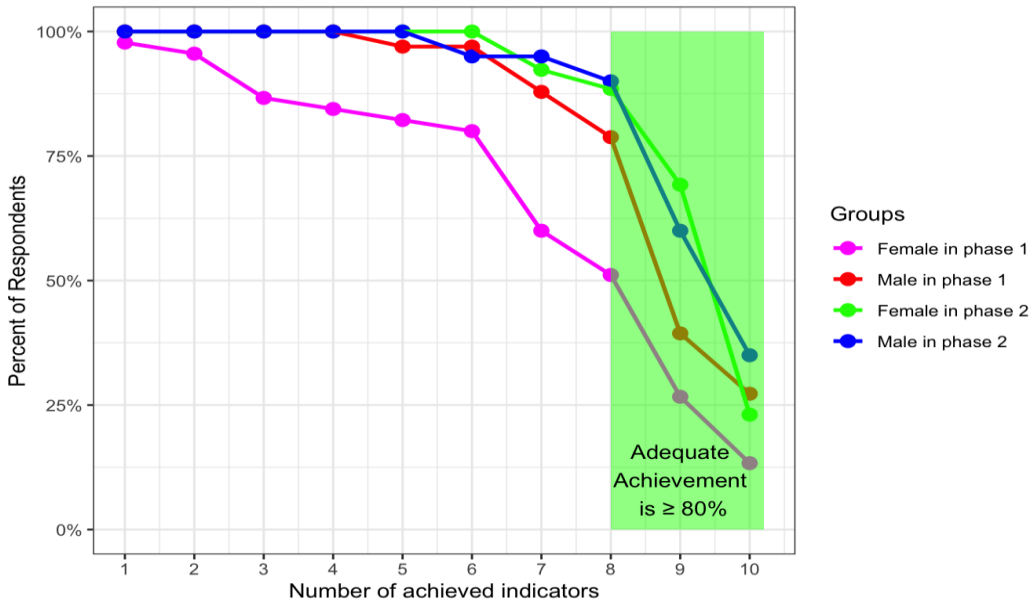
Table 4: Uncensored disempowerment indexes of the indicators

Feature ID	Indicator Name	Uncensored P1F	Uncensored P1M	Uncensored P2F	Uncensored P2M
D06	Allowed to Sell or Buy Items	0.040	0.004	0.042	0.020
D07	Belong to Social Group	0.038	0.015	0.012	0.005
D08	Held Leadership Position	0.020	0.015	0.000	0.000
D09	Working Time	0.016	0.000	0.006	0.005
D10	Leisure Time	0.051	0.031	0.058	0.065
M0	M0	0.342	0.176	0.190	0.165
5DE	**5DE**	**0.658**	**0.824**	**0.810**	**0.835**

P1=Phase 1; P2=Phase 2; F =Female; M = Male

Figure 3 summarizes results of the percent of respondents who were empowered (achieved 80% adequacy) of indicators distributed by gender (male and female) and by phase (one and two). In phase one, there was a larger difference (> 25%) between percent of respondents who reached empowerment (at 80% adequacy) among females compared to males. However, in Phase 2, the women had closed the gap and the percent of respondents that reached empowerment (at 80% adequacy) among females and males differed only by 2.5%. The area shaded green comprises percent of respondents that achieved 80% adequacy (were empowered). An individual was deemed empowered if they had adequate achievement of 80%.

Figure 3: Percent of respondents that were empowered (achieved 80% of indicators)



5.0 Discussion

This study highlighted indicators that were most associated with disempowerment within the five domains of empowerment (5DE). For instance, for women these were whether women were allowed to sell or buy items and how they utilized their time. Also, the modified WEAI obtained (0.7425) showed the gap in empowerment between the women relative to men in the study. Yet increasing women's control over agricultural production and resources has been reported to facilitate better access to animal source foods (ASF) for women and children (Okitoi et al, 2007). In rural Uganda, a study by Azzazi et al (2015) reported that owning small livestock showed potential for improving human nutrition. However, according to FAO (2016), this is still difficult for women to achieve due to the limited access women have to educational training opportunities in general, even though poultry farming has an important role for women smallholder farmers.

In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), social entrepreneurship projects, particularly in agriculture, could facilitate women emancipation (Otieno Onyalo, 2019). Poultry is an appropriate commodity for poverty alleviation for women smallholders as evidenced by growth rates in the sector outpacing growth in other livestock commodity sectors (Hedman et al, 2020). Furthermore, because of low

capital cost required for start-up, poultry production is a readily accessible enterprise for many marginalized groups. As such, deliberate and focused interventions are required in the sector for income generation and food security in developing countries. Furthermore, since most rural households in developing countries keep poultry, and women predominate in poultry production, interventions in this sector promise to produce far-reaching, socially beneficial outcomes in the community. While women are the cornerstone for agricultural production, women face challenges related to their accessing production factors in the wider context of gender-based constraints and institutional barriers. Capacity development activities for market-driven poultry production will catalyse upstream value chain activities for sustainable agricultural production for women.

Constructing an index capable of measuring unbiased empowerment in agriculture is a strategy that furnishes policymakers with means to prioritize and make well-informed decisions. For nearly a decade, the WEAI has been used as a quantitative model for measuring women's achievement in agricultural indicators in the five dimensions of empowerment (5DE) described in the original WEAI. However, when measuring gender indicators, there are challenges that one needs to consider, including taking into consideration the local context. That way, the policies being developed or assessed will be meaningful and benefit the local people that are targeted. This is because gender inequalities play out in different ways depending on the social, cultural, or political context.

6.0 Conclusion

This study reported an improvement in the level of empowerment of women small holder farmers in Eastern Uganda after training in best practices in poultry production. Participants reported improved engagement in decision making at household level and participation in community groups, including taking on leadership roles. However, the study computed community 5DE and WEAI that showed the gender empowerment gap between the women and men participants in aggregate but not within the same household. Many of the respondents were widowed or not married and without male adults in their households, leaving many households as single gender, and making it impossible to calculate indexes by household. This made it difficult to compare empowerment of women in this study with those of men as was done in other areas where WEAI have been previously computed. This issue underscores the importance of considering the local context when proposing indicators to use in measuring women

empowerment. There is need to consult with local people in order to develop meaningful indicators that would apply to their particular situation. That is when the policies developed or assessed will be meaningful and benefit the local people targeted.

5.0 Recommendations and Further Work

- It may be beneficial to adapt the WEAI and develop an easier strategy to compute and more specifically the Women's Empowerment in Poultry Index (WEPI) that is more specific in computing empowerment among women small holder farmers. Also, replicating the WEPI among small-scale poultry farmers in other countries in SSA would shed light on the status of gender empowerment across different countries and communities. For instance, Ragsdale et al, (2022) developed a Women's Empowerment in Fisheries Index (WEFI), among men and women fisheries value chain actors in Zambia. The WEFI was adapted from the original WEAI.
- Evaluation tools developed globally need to be flexible enough to consider the cultural context in which the index will be applied when using the tool to analyse and interpret the data. This applies to indicators to use in measuring women empowerment.
- Best practices for indigenous chicken production, including breeding and genetic improvement need to be included in the pursuit of food security in Africa.
- Much of the work done by women, especially rural women who function in non-cash informal micro-economies, is unaccounted for in the computation of a country's gross domestic product (GDP), especially in LICs. There is need to review the rigid methods of computing GDP, to be more inclusive of unpaid work done by women.

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Gender, Theatre and Education: Reflections on Florence Okware's The Ticking Clock in The Kenyan Schools and Colleges Drama and Film Festival

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Abstract

Using a feminist lens this paper examines the text and context of 'The Ticking Clock', a play by Florence Okware, with a view to understand the articulation of gender in the Kenya National Drama and Film Festival (KNDFF). It unravels the articulation of gender equity in the text as a window into understanding drama festival theatre scripts and screenplays by women writers. In an exegesis of the history of the writers, the paper posits varied contexts as presented in 'The Ticking Clock' and what implication they hold for the larger picture of gender (in)equality in the Kenyan society. In its analysis, it reveals that Okware confesses that her writing was never from the gender perspective but a close reading of 'The Ticking Clock' demarcates her concern for the position of women in a patriarchal society.In its conclusion, confronting and evaluating, patriarchy becomes a core concern in the drama festival play that provides direction towards the reality of a relatively gender equal society and that the drama festival hence is an invaluable platform for the youth to interrogate critical gender issues with its various manifestations in exploitation, discrimination, and social prejudice in Kenya.

Key words: Kenya drama festival, play, women theatre writers, women directors in Kenya.

1.0 Introduction

The Kenya Schools and Colleges Drama and Film Festival was first initiated in 1959. According to Mumma (1994), initially the plays were based on published western drama texts. However, the indigenous teachers began trying their hand at producing local plays and in 1971 the play titled *Olkirkenyi* in Maasai Language from Olkejuado High School in Kajiado county won the first prize at the Kenyan National Theatre (p.216). The play was written and directed by one Mr. Wasambo Were, a new graduate teacher posted to that school, who worked with the students. From 1971 to the late 1990s many plays that made a memorable impact at the festival were written and directed by male teachers and artistes. The situation has not changed much today although a few women have come forward to add their names to the list of renowned writers and directors over time, especially since the introduction of film as a genre at the festival. This lack of women writers and directors in theatre is reflective of the African context. Lauretta Ngcobo (1985) laments that it is not because women cannot write but it is the oppressive patriarchy that makes them lack the confidence to confront the world. She observes,

> *For many, the African woman writercreature does not exists. One shudders to think what appens to all those born artists among African women – what bottled lives they must suffer, and what talents lie wasting within. In some cases, of course, they lie collecting dust in some kitchen cupboard. Many of our women lack the confidence to confront the world. For us, nothing in oursocial life encourages the inner strengths required to develop in the changing cultural patterns. In our male dominated societies, our oral traditions extolled the virtues of humility, silent endurance, and self-effacing patterns of behaviour for our girls, while young boys received all the encouragement to go out there and triumph and survive. On top of the traditional patterns, the schools that our girls attend or do not attend make it hard for them to express themselves in writing.*

Although this blame may be substantive, the context of theatre or film production in schools is a difficult venture plagued by challenges ranging from lack of adequate funding, limited training for teacher-directors, parents who don't want to see their children get involved in a non-examinable school activity, difficult non-drama teachers who feel the children are wasting their time in drama and principals who are suspicious of drama teachers. These challenges may not

encourage a woman teacher to write or direct a play for her school. The institutions that excel in the drama and film festival have supportive head-teachers and passionate drama teachers who will do all in their power to see the children succeed in theatre or film production. Since the inception of the film festival in 2012 for instance it has seen more women principals support their students as producers than their male counterparts. In the nine years the film genre has been on, the boys' schools have only managed to win the top awards twice. The winners have been Chogoria Girls High School (2012), Rwathia Girls High School (2013), Kangubiri Girls High School (2014 and 2016), Kamandura Girls High School (2015 and 2017) among others. The domination by female principals is difficult to understand in the film genre as in the theatre, there appears to be an even distribution of male and female principals as producers.

1.1 The Kenya Schools and Colleges Drama and Film Festival

The festival is a forum of learning that involves thousands of youths who participate right from the sub-county level to the national festival. It begins at the sub-county level where the winners will represent the sub-county at the county level. The winners at the county level will represent the county at the regional level beyond which the winners subsequently represent the region at the national level. At each level, only three plays proceed to the next stage alongside other winning genres of creative cultural dance, dramatized poetry, spoken word, mime and the narrative. The national level is the epitome or climax of the festival. At each level thousands of learners participate, either as actors or spectators, which qualifies the festival as a potential ground for the exchange of ideas and learning. The lack of consistent audiences plagues many theatres in Africa. Patrick Ebewo and Ofonime Inyang note that African theatre, unlike its counterparts in Europe and America, or African film and television plays, is a '*poor'* theatre in terms of patronage from dedicated African audiences (p.72).

The availability of an annual consistent audience is a motivating aspect for the directors and actors to not only polish their act but to do it in a memorable fashion. It, thus, turns into a cut-throat competition that has seen participants weep if they do not make it to the next level, with occasional claims of bias judgement. Very few women directors have featured in this rat-race to the national level in the play category. Some names that featured over time between 1971 to date include Felix Osodo, Otumba Ouko, Fred Kayondo, Barnabas Kasigwa, Peter Barasa, Oliver Minishi, Joseph Murungu, Cleophas Malala, Irungu Kibiru and Florence Okware, among other male directors. Okware, the

only woman to write and direct plays that would end at the national level, came into the list when she was posted to St. Mary's High School, Yala in 1988. Later in the mid-nineties she was joined in this list by Lillian Madigo (Lions Primary School) who is still vibrant to date. This research will reflect on Florence Okware and her theatre style with a critical focus on her gender-themed play The Ticking Clock (1994) which also marked her quitting as director for the school drama festival altogether.

1.2 Florence Okware, First Female Play Director at the Festival

A graduate of Makerere University in Uganda, Okware is a musician, writer and director who came to work in Kenya directing award winning plays while a teacher at Lugulu Girls' High School and St. Mary's High School, Yala in Western and Nyanza regions, respectively. At St. Mary's High School, Yala Okware wrote *The Production* (1991), *Why?* (1992), *Memories* (1993) and *The Ticking Clock* (1994). She also directed a rendition of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Coat* (1993) outside the framework of the Festival which her students performed both at school and at Butere Girls' High School. Of all these plays only *The Ticking Clock* is available on video.

1.3 Methodology

Using a feminist lens, this Paper will examine the text and context of *The Ticking Clock* with a view to understand the articulation of gender in the Kenya National Drama and Film Festival (KNDFF). In using a feminist perspective in research, Olufemi Taiwo observes that in studying the issue of feminism and Africa, using theory to refer to the conceptual tools with which to identify patterns of determination in social phenomena regarding women and their place in society, is helpful (2003). He correctly notes that finding out the whats, hows, and whys of the situation of women, the causes, courses, and consequences of regularities discernible in the social phenomena concerning women, facilitates an understanding of the realities of African women, a fundamental precondition for the more arduous task of changing for the better those realities that require transformation. Feminist theory will help unravel the articulation of gender equity in the drama festival plays by women writers. The study examines the varied contexts as presented in *The Ticking Clock* and what implication they hold for the larger picture of gender (in)equality.

1.4 Male Directors of Theatre Plays on Gender Inequality in the Kenyan Society

It is worth noting that there are male directors who have also presented plays that evaluate the gender inequality in the Kenyan society. Perhaps one of the most memorable playwrights is Oliver Minishi with the play titled *Metamorphosis* depicting Mary, a girl who gets pregnant in form two and is expelled from school while the boy responsible for the pregnancy, Joseph, goes on with his schooling. She manages to enrol in another school after a successful delivery of the baby and becomes a judge later in life. Joseph, the boy responsible for her pregnancy, is employed as Mary's driver. As he drives her to work, Joseph hears Mary tell her son that his father is abroad. This bothers Joseph since he knows the boy is his son. An inner struggle plays out in his conscience which helps to develop the story towards its ultimate conclusion where the girl wins the day. The play won accolades at the Festival and was acclaimed as the winning production of 1996. The win demonstrated that the Festival judges appreciated the theme of gender-equity as current and relevant in the productions at the Festival. *Metamorphosis* came two years after Okware's play *The Ticking Clock* had caused a stir at the national festival. The gender-themed productions have since featured at the Festival in the varied genres.

2.0 Analysis of Florence Okware's Play the Ticking Clock

Florence Okware confesses that she is not a feminist and was not necessarily thinking about feminism when she wrote her plays. Despite this, her works resonate with feminism, inviting a conversation on the position and relevance of women in the Kenyan society. Elain Aston (2006) observes that feminism has always been concerned with creating a more progressive, democratic society for future generations of women and that in the 1970s, a generation of feminist women demanded their liberation from biological and social *'destinies'*, advocating equality of opportunity and better employment prospects. *The Ticking Clock* demonstrates this aptly. A teacher, Rita Sede, is promoted to be a principal of a high school but her husband, Nimrod Sede, is not happy about it. Rita is torn between her family chores and those of her new position as principal of a high school. A tug of war between the two parents ensues which involves a battle for the love of their two children, Patrick Sede and Milly Sede. They each try to entice the children to their side of the struggle; the father tries giving the children money and portrays his wife as being an uncaring absentee parent. Aston articulates the struggle between the two genders that women writers and practitioners

contributed to the idea of progressive, '*feminist futures'* through, for example, staging resistance to marriage as the only '*career'* available to women (p.71).

Nimrod, who is a financial auditor, is desperate to put Rita in *'her place'* so he organizes a scheme to discredit Rita's financial management at her school. He precipitates a financial scandal which he believes will sink Rita back to her kitchen. This scheming gives a credible patriarchal mirror of Kenyan society. Nimrod is scared of the success of Rita as a principal which threatens his position as head of the house. When the plan fails, he finds himself in jail; his worst fears realised. Rita is left to run the family as the gender imbalance is tilted. Holly L. Derr (2021) observes that the feminist theatre theory identified ways to disrupt the male gaze and avoid objectifying women by making the female characters subjects rather than objects and that in order for the audience to see the world from their point of view, women characters have to act rather than simply be acted upon. Rita persists and wins at the end of the day when Nimrod sees *'the light'* and apologises for the scheme he had mooted against her. Rather radical in evaluating male domination is the jailing of Nimrod. It takes jail for men to understand that gender equality is here. At the end of the story, inequality between the genders is reversed. Nimrod even misses Rita's promotion celebration. The celebration extends beyond just the celebration of the promotion as it places the 'defeat' of Nimrod, or the male gender for our purposes, at the centre. Derr observes that the feminist agenda is aimed at dismantling the binary of man vs. woman itself as well as the associated binaries of masculine/feminine and hence acknowledging, instead, that there are more than two possible identities.

The patriarchal mentality of Nimrod is embedded in the history of the context. Kenya is a patriarchal society where gender inequality has been the norm for decades. Maria Nzomo (1997, p.232), in a paper titled *Kenyan Women in Politics and Public Decision Making,* observes that ordinary women in the traditional society were often perceived as subordinate to men, but they frequently demonstrated economic leadership. Because of the history embedded in the Kenyan society, Nimrod fails to see the advantages his family may reap if his wife became a principal of a high school. However, if the promotion comes with a higher salary, it threatens his own position as a man of the house as his salary will be lower than his wife's. *The Ticking Clock* carefully avoids grounding the family of Nimrod and Rita in any particular culture. The visible culture, if any, is the culture of the learned Kenyan. It, therefore, falls within the reach of Kenyan diverse cultures questioning the value of education in a progressive society where

both genders have some schooling and do not necessarily adhere to traditional patriarchy.

In her perception and determination, Rita in the play, conjures up the image of powerful women on the global stage at the time such as Winnie Mandela, Margaret Thatcher, Benazir Bhutto and Indira Gandhi. Indira Gandhi *says "The people of India are not going to lift an arm against the British. Two wrongs do not make a right".* In the context of the play and its feminist outlook, the message conveyed is that it is futile for the female gender to raise a hand against the inequality meted by the men because it would be another wrong. However, at the end of the play that is exactly what happens when Nimrod is jailed. Gender roles in the perceived inequality are reversed. However, the re-visitation of women who stand tall in history becomes a useful strategy for the play. It places Rita as the embodiment of the women's struggle for equality within the context of the family, which by extension, is reflected on the world stage in Indira Gandhi's, Benazir Bhutto's, Thatcher's, and Winnie Mandela's personalities. Aoife Monks (2006) in *Predicting the Past: Histories and Futures in the Work of Women Directors,* notes as follows:

> *Theatre has a peculiar effect on time. In its practice of making the past present, of embodying texts and performance styles hundreds of years old, theatre introduces fragments of history into the present: constructing, creating, and imagining pasts that are distinctively theatrical. (p. 88)*

The play promotes the agenda of women empowerment effectively, albeit radically. To emphasize this Monks further reiterates that the ability of theatre to evoke the past in ways that signify to the present, explains its attraction to feminist practitioners. She further observes that re-presenting the past has been key to a feminist engagement with the future offering a sense of multiple pasts, by activating the silent voices of history and thus suggesting new possibilities for change, for the social transformation of gender relations. Moreover, Monks notes that the ability of theatre to make the past immediate is a means for feminist practitioners to offer an imaginary future that can work to critique present gendered hierarchies (p.88).

The title of *The Ticking Clock* projects that it is only a matter of time before the equal opportunities for all the genders is fully and effectively realized. In the play, the song *The Grandfather Clock* by Henry Clay Work (1876) is consistently

used at the beginning, middle and at the end. The selected section of the song goes as follows:

My grandfather's clock was too tall for the shelf
So it stood ninety years on the floor
It was taller by half than the old man himself
But it weighed not a pennyweight more

It was bought on the morn on the day that he was born
It was always his treasure and pride
But it stopped, short, never to go again
When the old man died

Ninety years without slumbering
Tic toc tic toc
His life's seconds numbering
Tic toc tic toc

It stopped, short, never to go again
When the old man died.
In watching its pendulum swing to and fro
Many hours he had spent when a boy
And through childhood and manhood, the clock seemed to know
And to share both his grief and his joy

For it struck 24 when he entered at the door
With a blooming and beautiful bride,
But it stopped, short, never to go again
When the old man died

The song was composed by Clay after visiting a quaint country lodge known as the George hotel in Piercebridge, North Yorkshire in England. The story goes that the clock which had been accurate when its owners (who were brothers) were alive suddenly started losing time when one of the brothers died and stopped altogether when the remaining owner died, too. The clock was, therefore, part and parcel of the lives of the brothers and hence ceased keeping time when they died. This could signify that the tradition of gender imbalance will die with time, no matter how long it takes. It is a subtle warning projecting that the time to reckon with gender equity is fast approaching, as the cast sang in

the background during the performance. Although derived from English history and culture, the song demonstrates the passing of time, habits, and traditions.

Gwendolyn Mikell (1997) in the paper titled *Conclusions: Theorizing and Strategizing about African Women and State Crisis,* observes that because of the pressures that African women experience, they now seek to bring their domestic and public roles into some coherent alignment and that this alignment emphasizes cultural approaches that they anticipate may empower women (p.333). Empowering the women within the contexts of their struggles in providing equal opportunities but not making the men any lesser would be the perceived message. Of particular interest is Okware's assertion that she was not writing with feminism in mind. Do we qualify then to term *The Ticking Clock* a feminist theatre? We should remind ourselves, too, that it was acted by boys. Monks asks the same qualifying the context question a little further:

> *The representation of history on the stage must be a key way in which we understand theatre performance as 'feminist'. Nevertheless, this notion poses a series of problematic questions. For example, what if the past is represented on stage without offering the possibility of change in the future? Can this be clased as feminist theatre?On the other hand, even if a production does challenge gendered histories, can this work be considered feminist when the artists involved actively disvow any relationship with feminist theory and practice? In other words, can theatre be feminist when it's not intended as such? (p. 88)*

She effectively answers her own question when she states that the intention of the director is only one small part of how a theatre piece might be understood as feminist and that gender identity often occupies a deeply complex and conflicted terrain in the work of these women that produces fascinating, if not always entirely *'feminist'* effects, through their engagement with the past. Mikell further elaborates that the same applies to the African context. Case studies show the African women's perceptions of the myriad issues that confront them and reveal women's understanding that these problems derive not just from patriarchal positions taken by men, but partially from a nationalist stance taken by state leaders faced with hegemonic global demands (p.334). What's even more, for the play to be acted by boys is a vivid statement that the actors would learn much from the feminist politics of equity. They presented the performance as a statement confronting inequality in society and won the hearts of the judges and the audience.

3.0 Florence Okware's Other Literary Works

Okware also wrote and directed other plays which do not necessarily reveal gender inequality as boldly as *The Ticking Clock. The Production,* another one of her plays, examines the tribulations of a teacher who works very hard with his students to produce a play only for the play to be dismissed as useless by adjudicators at the Festival. It examines the difficult circumstances that teachers of drama encounter in schools. Okware notes that when she wrote this play, she was looking at what drama teachers, irrespective of gender, go through at the festival. She suffered what she terms as biased adjudication a number of times. A couple of years after *The Production* spoke of biased judges, *The Ticking Clock* was dropped by adjudicators at the district level (county level) because it was not among the top three plays. Although she does not believe it was to stop her, as a woman writer, or because of the *gender-equality* theme in the play, the action speaks much to a gender-based bias. The theme could have offended the judges. This comes to the fore because when the play was allowed to proceed to the next level after an appeal was launched with the drama officials, it won all the top accolades at the regional level and was rated third best in the country at the national festival held in Meru High School in 1994.

She had written a few political poems before which did not have as strong impact as 'The Ticking Clock". She however came face to face with State fury because of an incident involving the props used in 'The Ticking Clock'. The play marked the dramatic end of Okware's engagement with her students at St. Mary's Yala when she was sent to the police cells for nine days. She believes that the incident was not incited by her political write-ups but by the creative imagination of her students. In the Moi era, it was common for the best performing students to go and entertain the then president Toroitich Arap Moi at State House Lodge in what was termed the state gala. Students looked forward to this event because the president would always give monetary handouts to schools that visited him. In 1994 the gala was to be held in Nakuru state lodge. The paper props of money that the children are given in the play formed the source of this traumatic experience. One of the students had in his creative pastime drawn the head of the then opposition leader Jaramogi Oginga Odinga on one of the papers in the place where President Moi's head was to be. There was the writing 'FORD', the fiery opposition outfit at the time, next to the head. The student then put the paper in his pocket and forgot about it. On entering state house, the students would be searched. The security personnel at the gate ransacked the pocket of the boy and saw this bunch of ruffled papers and on opening them saw the one with the

drawing. ‘Is this what your teachers are teaching you?’ asked the security personnel. Two student drama officials of the St Mary’s High School and Mrs. Okware were picked by the ‘special branch’ of the police. After the gala in the evening, Okware’s husband (who had accompanied her all along) frantically visited the police stations in and around Nakuru town in search of her and the students. Attempts by the then Nyanza provincial drama chairman yielded no fruit in Nakuru after the gala. He sought the help of the Nyanza provincial commissioner at the time, who confirmed to him that Okware and her students were already at the Nyanza Provincial Police Headquarters in Kisumu. Her husband was later picked too. Then followed a harrowing nine days in police cells and consequently an interdiction for herself and her husband. Although she and her husband were later reinstated Okware never wrote or directed drama for the school drama festival again. Today she is happy to be a principal (like Rita) of a high school in the rift valley where she occasionally writes church plays.

Okware, though not necessarily overtly political in her play encountered a government that had a history of clamping down on theatre for the fear that it had potent power to awaken the people politically. Peter Ukpokodu in a paper titled ‘Plays, Possession and Rock and Roll’ notes that the then president, Moi, while quashing theatre by Ngugi Wa Thiong’o with the people at Kamirithu stated that theatre was culpable for teaching politics under the guise of culture (1992, p.29). Within the school festival itself government scrutiny and interference is documented by Opiyo Mumma while citing two political plays that thrilled the audience at the national festival as follows:

> *Visiki and Kilio caused a stir at the festival and there was no doubt in the audience’s minds that their daily experiences were being addressed in the plays. The adjudicators gave their verdict that the two were among the winning performances, but they were asked to withdraw the two plays form the gala night by officials from the Ministry of Education on instructions from higher political authorities. This, the adjudicators refused to do, which resulted in two of them fleeing to exile after threats of imprisonment and their lives. (1994, p. 233)*

Mumma further notes that the autonomy that the festival enjoyed was endangered by this move of political patronage stating that it amounted to festival transforming performances into arts that paid homage and pledged loyalty to the presidency and party ideology, exulting the presidential personage. Further on he

observes that suspicious rewards to teachers and performances that had visited state house that year watered down the freedom of expression among the teachers. Okware's experience, therefore, was a continuation of a discernible pattern by the Moi government of theatre repression. Significantly Mumma observes that political patronage had the effect of further alienating the Kenyan artist from the rest of society and shifting the power base in the arts from some educational institutions and communities back to the politicians.

Okware wrote several political poems which were performed at the festival but did not get the accolades The Ticking Clock managed. 'The Winds' was a poem that explored the influence of western ideology on African cultures. More political was 'The Rare Gem' which presented Oginga Odinga (one of the heads of the opposition at the time) as a rare talent in the Kenyan political scene. It glorified the object of hate that propelled the Moi regime to clamp down on her and her students. She believes that her experience at state house Nakuru had nothing to do with these political pieces or her gender. As a woman writer and director, she needed to make her students understand local and global politics and invested in scripting and directing relevant themes that spoke not only to politics of gender but the wider social scene. Monks notes that:

> *Female directors working in the mainstream and in establishment instituions....often support the status of the canon in their work, and do not challenge a male-centred version of history, or necessarily overly engage with the question of gender. If gender is negotiated in their work, this exploration generally tales place within the auspices of the 'greatness' of the canon. (p. 90)*

Okware was not interested in attacking patriarchy for the sake of it but what appeared to her as a social concern in society. The canon of the drama festival text was her guide as she explored the varied themes. Not many women teachers venture into writing and directing for the school drama festival. This makes the experience of Okware rather sad as she is subdued to silently practice her theatre in a smaller space denying the wider context of the school drama her expertise. Africa Theatre Magazine notes that:

> *In most parts of traditional Africa, theatre was a prerogative of the woman. Women were the storytellers, the humour-artists, the word-spinners whose grease moved the wheels of society. Men from hunting or war would return to the song singnig and dance dancing of women; the alulations and bosom shaking of the girls in the arena were the spiritual energy that flexed the muscles of young wrestlers; through old women's dirges at funeral, family loved ones would be given a befitting farewll. The woman crafted the story that kept the family, the clan, the nation, together. (2021)*

Why then do we have so few women getting engaged in creating stories, writing, and directing for the school festival? Apart from the identified obstacles like little or no funding and clamour for teachers to achieve a targeted mean-score leaving them little time to practice theatre, it is a gap that further research may contextualise and analyse for us to understand.

4.0 Conclusion

Mojubaohi OIufunke Okome poses an interesting question in her paper titled 'What Women, Whose Development? A Critical Analysis of Reformist Feminist Evangelism on African Women'. In terms of gender equality and involvement of women in development, she asks:

> *What women? Whose development? Are pertinent questions when one considers the myriad studies which have emerged to argue for the inclusion of African women in development process. (2003, p. 89)*

Okware confesses that her writing was never from the gender perspective. She perceives problems as social problems but as has been revealed, a close reading of The Ticking Clock demarcates her concern for the position of women in a patriarchal society. The play qualifies the context as that of a learned couple grappling with gender identities and roles in a predefined context. However ambitious the play cannot but achieve so much in the agenda of gender disparity. Confronting and evaluating patriarchy becomes a core concern that will provide direction as the clock ticks towards the predicted reality of a gender equal society. Olufemi Taiwo in 'Feminism and Africa: Reflections on the Poverty of Theory' reiterates that:

> *....according to socialist feminists, whereas Marxism can explain the exploitation of women as workers, capitalists, and so on, it cannot explain the explotation of women as women. For it is not capitalism which is responsible for the oppression of women; rather it is patriachy. According to Heidi Hartmann, patrichy is defined "as a set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women"..... Patriarchy is seen as constituting a separate and autonomous totality of relations independence of the economic relations of production rooted in capitalism. (2003, p. 48)*

Ciarunji Chesaina's observation captures the status quo upon which the conception of The Ticking Clock was founded when she notes that in spite of African women's contributions to their societies, they are not given the credit they deserve and are often victims of oppression in its various manifestations in exploitation, discrimination, and social prejudice (1987). She further writes that where women occupy prestigious positions or have gained significant autonomy, they have had to struggle much harder than the men in order to move from inferior positions to gain independence. This underscores the significance of the school's drama festival in educating the youths on the significance of gender equity. Okware went a mile further by negotiating with her boys to act a play that addresses gender equity. The actors learn to empathize and understand the dynamics of negative effects of patriarchy and in the performance share that too with fellow students and the drama festival participants in general.

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Special Issue

Indicators for Women's Economic Empowerment in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Role of Social Norms

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Abstract

Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) speaks directly to at least four of the 2030 SDGs: gender equality; no poverty; decent work and economic growth; and reduced inequalities (United Nations Statistics Division). Few studies have exclusively studied the role of social norms in connection with WEE, despite the tacit acknowledgement among scholars of its potency in delivering or hindering WEE. This Paper highlights the pivotal role those social norms play in the fight for the economic empowerment of women and proposes that transformation of social and gender norms is foundational to achieving WEE. It specifically addresses the way social norms represent subtle power dynamics within the communities which may either facilitate or undermine efforts to attaining WEE. The Paper provides an elaboration of this theme, using three broad indicators: access to gainful employment opportunities; property ownership rights; and economic leadership and strength of collaborative action. Literature reviewed found that Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is lagging significantly in these three areas, with the most potent hindrance being traditional social norms. Leaning on statistics provided by relevant bodies, particularly the United Nations Women, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the World Bank, with a contextualization to SSA, it argues that program and policy interventions must be designed with the lens of gender and social norms squarely in place in order to ensure that effective, sustainable strategic actions are taken. The role of different players, including the community, government, and

international institutions in advancing WEE in these three areas is also brought into view.

Key words: power, social norms, sub-Saharan Africa, women economic empowerment

1.0 Introduction

Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) is a global movement that is aimed at bringing women on a par with men in matters concerning economic liberties and capabilities. The fourth world conference on women held in Beijing in 1995 was pivotal for this agenda on gender and equity. Though it was the third world conference on women, it was significant in that it became the basis upon which progress in this endeavour was measured. The meeting adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which set out 12 key strategies to further the purposes of women advancement including: women and poverty; education and training of women; women in power and decision-making; and women and the economy. Two decades later, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals which set out 17 goals. Linking these goals to the women empowerment agenda, the United Nations Women notes that:

> *Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is integral to each of the 17 goals. Only by ensuring the rights of women and girls across all the goals will we get to justice and inclusion, economies that work for all, and sustaining our shared environment now and for future generations. (United Nations Women, 2022-b, par. 4)*

According to Pereznieto and Taylor (2014), WEE offers economic advancement as well as a transformation in power and agency for women. Batliwala (1994, as cited in VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002) asserts that empowerment addresses the *contextual* systemic forces of marginalisation against women. Therefore, WEE aims to transform unfair power dynamics and provide women with resources and opportunities to succeed economically. The benefits of empowering women are well documented, and they range from reducing poverty, building healthy and safe economies, to reducing poverty and improving gross domestic product of countries (Pluess, 2016).

Most of the literature reviewed defines WEE as a process, implying that it is ongoing, progressive, and multistage. It is imperative that progress in this

process is monitored, and the marking of indicators is a useful way of tracking the said progress. WEE is multi-dimensional and so are its indicators; they provide a measure of outputs, outcomes, and short-term, and long-term impacts at individual, community, country, regional, and global levels (Golla, Malhotra, Nanda, & Mehra, 2011). They can be viewed along objective lines (economic achievement) and subjective lines (economic empowerment) (Buvinic, O'Donell, Knowles, & Bourgalt, 2020). The objective indicators visualise WEE as a product of economic achievement which can be measured empirically in terms of resources controlled by women. Subjective indicators, on the other hand, relate to the degree of economic empowerment and agency exercised by women in the different contexts within which they operate, starting from the household to the community, nationally, and even internationally.

Relatedly, Golla et al, (2011) categorize these indicators into three: reach and process (United Nations Women, 2022) indicators which assesses aspects such as participation of women in different activities and their challenges, success and outcomes; power and agency indicators which look at aspects like control over assets, gender norms, autonomy, and self-efficacy; and economic advancement indicators which consider, among others, productivity and skills, income, work environments, and prosperity. This Paper highlights the role played by social norms in the fight for WEE. It specifically addresses the way social norms represent subtle power dynamics within the communities which may either facilitate or undermine efforts to achieve WEE. It discusses three broad indicators: access to gainful employment opportunities and property ownership rights on an objective level, and economic leadership and strength of collaborative action on a subjective level.

A discussion of WEE indicators in the form of statistics provided by relevant bodies, particularly the UN Women, the ILO, and the World Bank is offered, with a contextualization to SSA. The power dynamics at play within the community, government, and international institutions that hinder or advance WEE in these three areas is brought into view. The Paper examines the role of social norms as revealed by these indicators and finds that inasmuch as there is little empirical evidence connecting social norms to WEE, the impact of social norms in the quest for WEE is indisputable.

2.0 Theoretical Grounding

The push for WEE arose from the extant gender inequalities that plague the majority of the nations of the world. Gender inequality is fuelled by imbalanced

power relations within the communities, which make up the political, social, and economic systems. In turn, social divisions such as age, caste, race, ethnicity, and gender sustain and perpetuate these power imbalances, thereby creating a vicious cycle (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002). Power can be understood as the degree of control over material, human, intellectual, and financial resources exercised by different sections of society (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002). An understanding of power dynamics within communities, therefore, provides a firm foundation for conceptualising the WEE indicators.

Scholars generally agree on four basic forms of power: power over, power to, power with, and power within (Pansardi & Bindi, 2021; Pereznieto & Taylor, 2014; VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002), though Galiè and Farnworth (2019) as cited in Pansardi & Bindi (2021) present another form of power, power through. The forms of power were first popularized by Mary Parker Follet (1868-1933), while studying power processes within organizations (Mele & Rosanas, 2003). Follet claimed that the most dominant form of power in organisations, as in general society, was *power over*, a concept closely associated with control, and which commonly engendered resistance and negativity. She advocated for the exercise of *power with*, which she considered a higher form of power since it was coactive rather than coercive, stating:

> *Genuine power can only be grown, it will slip from every arbitrary hand that grasps it; for genuine power is not coercive control, but coactive control. Coercive power is the curse of the universe; coactive power, the enrichment and advancement of every human soul. (Mele & Rosanas, 2003, p. 39)*

We now turn to a basic definition of the forms of power as explicated in literature. According to Pereznieto and Taylor (2014), women exercise *power over* when they can access and control financial, physical, and knowledge-based assets, in addition to employment and income generating activities. This begs the question: by what means is such access and control engendered to begin with? While policies and political activism may provide access to resources, control over them and sustainability of action will hang on what is allowed or disallowed by extant power dynamics in the community. *Power over* has been associated with repression, force, coercion, discrimination, corruption and abuse (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002). When the prevalent form of power in the community is *power over*, VeneKlasen and Miller assert that inequality, injustice, and poverty are likely to be perpetuated. In fact, Pansardi and Bindi (2021) go so

far as to claim that *power over* represents the actual patriarchal and illegitimate distribution of power in the society. Such power, evident in male-dominated society, stifles efforts towards WEE.

Power with, power to, and *power within* have been fronted as alternatives to *power ove*r in the quest for a more equitable society. *Power to* has been defined as *"the unique potential of every person to shape his or her life and world "* (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002, p. 39). With reference to WEE, *power to* manifests as the economic decision-making power of a woman within her household, community, and local economy in areas traditionally considered as women's realm as well as in those traditionally considered as men's realm (Pereznieto & Taylor, 2014). Therefore, *power to* relates to both the desire to act and the ability to do so. Such desire and capacity can only be facilitated within an enabling community, hence the need for social and cultural norms that support WEE.

Collectivism and collaboration have been identified as powerful forces for change and development. Hence, *power with* has been propounded as a potent driver of WEE. VeneKlasen and Miller (2002) conceptualised *power with* as the collective strength drawn from a unification of interests, talents, and knowledge of different people. Follet referred to *power with* as "coactive" power in which compromise and integration, rather than domination, were the primary tools of solving conflicts within a community (Mele & Rosanas, 2003). While this may seem rather utopian, it is worth considering that domination struggles within society along gender lines can be greatly reduced by promoting *power with*in this sense. The principle of *power with* promotes collaboration and equity and promises to reduce oppression.

The fourth form of power, *power within,* is somewhat subjective and personal but is the well-spring from which *power with, power over, and power to* emerge. Pansardi and Bindi (2021) conceptualise *power from within* as an individual's awareness of her own capacities which motivate the action. Similarly, VeneKlasen and Miller (2002) postulate that *power within* relates to a person's sense of self-worth and self-knowledge. It may, therefore, be argued that, unless an individual has a robust sense of self-worth and esteem, their ability to take advantage of the many opportunities afforded by policies and programs promoting WEE is severely curtailed. This is commonly seen in households with strong religious and cultural beliefs that place women lower and subordinate to men. The hardest part is often to inculcate a *power within* in the women before any other kind of power may be groomed. It is important to inculcate a *power*

within in the women and allow it to provide a foundation for the other forms of power.

The power dynamic that is prevalent within any given community is strengthened by the ideologies held and perpetuated therein. According to VeneKlasen and Miller (2002), ideology is a complex structure of beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of perceiving and analysing social reality which are disseminated and enforced through the family, education system, religion, and the media, among other social, economic, political and religious institutions. For instance, when the male or father figure within the home is considered the head and the sole provider, women and girls are conditioned as domesticate rather than being able to venture out to engage in economic activities. Such ideologies present a significant threat to WEE and must be addressed accordingly. However, as VeneKlasen and Miller (2002) note, progressively, there is growing resistance and challenge to such ideologies by the marginalised sections of the society, especially by women, which has seen a gradual change in the prevailing structures of power.

There is much work to be done in tackling negative manifestations of power, such as *power over*, and promoting more productive forms such as *power with, power to, and power within* in the quest for a more equitable society. When leaders at all levels fail to acknowledge and tackle the complexities of power inherent within the community, it may result in poor strategic choices in terms of policy and resource allocation, and missed opportunities to consolidate WEE (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002). Since negative power dynamics are deeply nested in social norms and cultural beliefs, it is imperative that proponents of WEE tackle them, as well as the ideologies that perpetuate them. As such, therefore, the degree of positive transformation of social norms could well be the foundational indicator of progress towards WEE.

3.0 Conceptual Framework

The framework in Figure 1 shows the relationship between the indicators of WEE and their facilitating factors, which in and of themselves may act as indicators of reach and process, and power and agency. It postulates that, through transformation of negative social norms and traditional restrictive mindsets, social and legal protections can be strengthened to achieve the intended impact. Thereby, girls and women will have greater access to quality education and financial resourcing, thereby bringing sub-Saharan women and girls closer to the goal of economic empowerment as measured by the three indicators.

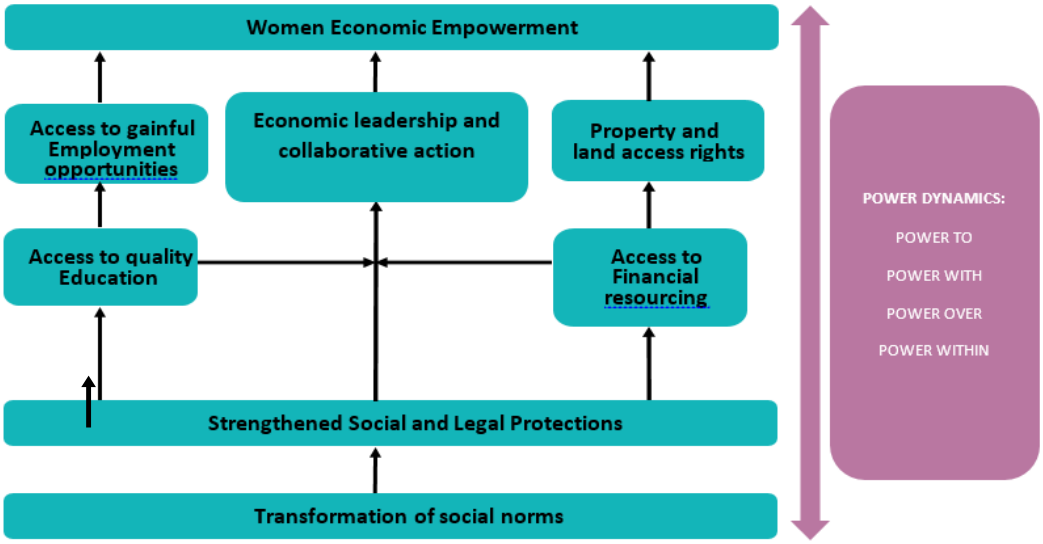

Figure 1: *A conceptual framework illustrating the interconnectedness of the indicators of WEE*

It also shows that economic leadership is more effective with quality education, and that collaborative action is buffered by access to financial resources. Gendered power dynamics weave all through the scheme, thereby facilitating, or hindering WEE. Ultimately, therefore, WEE will be achieved based on how communities and societies address social norms and the gendered power dynamics that sustain them.

3.1 The Pivotal Role of Social Norms in Securing WEE

The thread of social norms weaves through actions and efforts by community agencies, governments, and non-governmental organisations, enabling or disabling WEE. Moreover, policies and programs do not suffice in bringing about WEE. The role of social norms must be acknowledged for its pivotal capacity. WEE may be facilitated by several factors, including growth or decline of economies, increased access to education, greater access to information and communications technology (Marcus & Harper, 2014 as cited in Marcus, 2021, p. 148) and supportive policies and programs. Regardless, the effect of all these is often undermined by extant social norms that hold societies captive.

Social norms may be understood as *"collective definitions of socially approved conduct, stating rules or ideals"* (Pearse & Connell, 2016 as cited in Marcus, 2021, p. 147). They are perpetuated by empirical expectations, that is, beliefs concerning the actions of others, and normative expectations: the beliefs

about what actions are deemed by others as appropriate; and enforced by social sanctions, including ostracization, and in some cases, violence (Marcus, 2021; Singh et al., 2018). Social norms are not just limited to communities but are also widely held in institutions such as companies and economic sectors. Institutionalised social norms determine how men and women are treated. Evidence from literature suggests that institutionalised social norms have contributed to gendered workplace and market inequalities, leading to categorisations such as 'jobs for women' and 'jobs for men' (Singh et al., 2018).

The role of social norms in WEE has not been widely explored in literature, despite the tacit acknowledgement among scholars of its potency in delivering or hindering WEE (Singh et al., 2018). Much of scholarly work has focused on the role of policies, and programs, as well as economic development on promoting WEE. For instance, Duflo (2012), argues that in addition to economic development, there is a need to continuously take policy actions that favour women at the expense of men. A good example of such a policy is the affirmative action in Uganda which is targeted at increasing girl child enrolment at higher levels of education by giving them an advantage. This policy has, indeed, delivered its target (Ntale, 2019), however, there is little evidence to show that there is a concurrent equitable representation of women in the higher echelons of economic spaces; women remain highly represented in underpaid or informal work. This, therefore, begs the question: how effective/sustainable is policy in the absence of political will, especially when actors have not bought into the rationale or are inhibited by cultural norms and beliefs?

Economic empowerment for women must be supported and sustained by strategies to tackle inhibiting social norms. Economic development must go hand in hand with social development if WEE is to be realised on a sustainable level (Ntale, 2019). Social development encompasses the non-economic processes and outcomes of development including, reduced vulnerability, inclusion, wellbeing, accountability, people-centred approaches, and freedom from violence (Browne & Millington, 2015). Additionally, they assert that social drivers of development, including gender equality, power relations, and human rights must be addressed lest gains made in human development be undermined. Browne and Millington (p. 3) outline four key reasons why barriers to achieving social development arise, including:

1) the difficulty in increasing gender equity and shifting power relations in society,

2) ii) the rigidity of cultural norms which are thus difficult to change, coupled with the reluctance of donors to engage an overtly political approach to address them,

3) lack of expertise in specific areas such as gender, and

4) the apparent subjection of would-be change agents to the very socio-cultural norms and prejudices. Such barriers are significant because they perpetuate circumstances that undermine WEE efforts.

The pivotal role of social norms in determining the success of WEE efforts was well demonstrated by Ambler et al. (2020). Ambler and colleagues conducted a study of the uptake of an intervention designed to increase WEE among sugarcane farmers in Uganda. In the study, households in rural Uganda were offered an empowerment initiative which aimed to increase the participation of women in the marketing and sale aspects of sugarcane farming. To begin with, a workshop was organised along the themes of gender equity, household balance in responsibilities, and access to resources. Couples were randomly assigned to attend the workshop and thereafter encouraged to register a sugarcane block in the name of the wife. This meant, in essence, that an asset was being transferred from the husband to the wife.

The study found that 30% of households that were invited to take up the intervention refused the offer. Only 3% of those were attributed to a lack of interest on the part of the wife (Ambler et al., 2020, p. 10). This was a clear demonstration of the power over dynamic in which the husband maintained controlling interests over financial and intellectual resources in the household, exercising domination despite the potential benefits of the intervention. However, it was found that the rates of refusal were reduced by 7% as a result of attendance to the workshop (p. 10). This indicates that economic interventions aimed at women can be greatly aided by such workshops.

The study also found that the likelihood of refusal of the intervention was predicted by factors related to division of labour in the household, gender norms, and lower socioeconomic status. The workshop was found to be most effective in addressing inequities arising from division of labour in the household and gender norms. In terms of power dynamics, the workshop opened the women in these households up to their *power within,* helped husbands to open up to the idea of power *with,* and allowed women some *power over* household assets and finances.

Thus, addressing social and gender norms makes a significant difference to the uptake of WEE interventions.

The social protections program in Tanzania provides further evidence that social and gender norms are critical to the success of WEE initiatives. Myamba (2020) acknowledges that despite numerous efforts by the government towards WEE and gender equality, prevailing cultural and social norms continue to present significant barriers. The Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) programme exemplifies an effective remedy to this challenge and has been found to be historically significant in addressing gender equality and WEE. Since its inception in 2012, Myamba notes, PSSN has worked through conditional cash transfers, supporting a public works programme, and initiatives that have enhanced the livelihood of at least 1.1 million households.

The program's intentions were initially thwarted by negative power dynamics, including instances where male recipients of cash funds were reported to have spent it inappropriately. This situation was rectified by disbursing funds to the women instead. However, this was insufficient to empower women as it was noted the household gendered power dynamics determined who spent the income and how (Bastagli et al, as cited in Myamba, 2020). Consequently, gender and social norms must inform the design of social protection programs if they are to be sustainable (Newton, 2016). Among the key action points for the PSSN program are:

1) gender training for all PSSN personnel,
2) the enhancement of women's rights, increased control over household resources, and active decision-making in the household and in the community, and
3) developing a grievance system which responds to the needs of women (Myamba, 2020).

Therefore, lessons from the PSSN programme reinforce the argument that WEE can be made most effective and sustainable by starting at the foundation with the transformation of social norms.

In Kenya, Kariuki and Birner, (2021) conducted a study that evaluated the role of gender dynamics in an ecological restoration scheme at the Mara North Conservancy, Kenya, known as the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES). Their findings indicated that the outcomes of the PES scheme were significantly affected by gendered power imbalances which reinforced historical inequities in land tenure. Moreover, regarding the women's role in the scheme, they found that

governance structures often excluded women from decision-making and from the direct benefits of PES. The authors encouraged a critical reflection on the complex social dimensions that on the one hand contribute to land degradation and, on the other, may affect ecological restoration efforts.

Another study by Githukia et al., (2020) analysed the gender roles and constraints at play in the aquaculture value chain in Western Kenya by surveying 384 farmers. They found that while both men and women were involved in the value chain, women representation was lower than that of men (32% against 68% respectively). Discriminatory gender norms were found to be key among the factors that limited the ability of women to participate in and prosper in this economic arena. Other constraints women faced included: limited access to factors of production, limited control over their income, and mobility. The authors recommended that limiting gender norms should be abolished, along with addressing the accompanying constraints in order to promote the participation of women, thereby assuring their economic wellbeing, along with that of their households and communities.

These studies highlight key indicators that reveal the state of WEE in SSA and the role those social norms play in supporting or undermining it. The following sections discuss three key WEE indicators, viewing them through the lens of power dynamics and highlighting the impact of social norms and beliefs on each.

3.2 Property and Land Ownership Rights

In Sub-Saharan Africa rights to land and property ownership are traditionally the exclusive reserve of the male fraternity in the community. Property and land are passed down to the male descendants of the family through inheritance and marriage. For the intents of this Paper, property ownership shall include ownership rights to economic enterprises such as businesses, and agricultural farms.

According to UN Women (2022) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (2020), property ownership rights encompass the rights of women to land tenure and the ability of women to make decisions concerning land and property as well as own, use, access, control, transfer, and inherit it. Access to property ownership rights for women is essential for their economic independence and autonomy, however, this has been long challenged by gender inequality and discriminatory practices in society (UN Women & OHCHR, 2020). Some of the benefits that accrue from securing land

rights for women include: an increased assurance of food security for their households, and access to capital for investments and wealth creation through leveraging the land as an asset (African Development Bank, 2016).

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reports that equal access to productive resources by women in developing countries has the potential to increase farm yields by 20 to 30%, leading to an increase in agricultural output, thereby reducing hunger by 16 to 17% (Pluess, 2016, p. 17). On a more subjective level, access to property control and ownership for women goes a long way to increase their self-esteem, and respect from other family members (Hunt & Samman, 2016). Potentially, this could increase the agency of women in the area of economic empowerment by promoting their *power within* and securing their *power over* capacity.

Universal land and property ownership for women is still an elusive proposition for the most part. Indeed, a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Report on women's land rights declares that 40% of the economies in the world limit the property rights of women (USAID, 2021). Hindrances to the acquisition of land and property by women in SSA range from traditional views on inheritance, which exclude women from family lineages, high costs of purchasing land on the open market, expensive land leasing, and restrictive land titling formalization programs (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2019). Figure 2 illustrates that the highest level of insecurity of access to land for women across different regions in the world is found in SSA. This is a testament to the conservative beliefs held across SSA about land and property ownership as regards women. Unfortunately, there is scarce literature that documents actual gender gaps when it comes to property and land ownership, nonetheless, it is acknowledged as a fact that substantial gaps exist within and across most countries, with women on the disadvantaged side (International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), 2005).

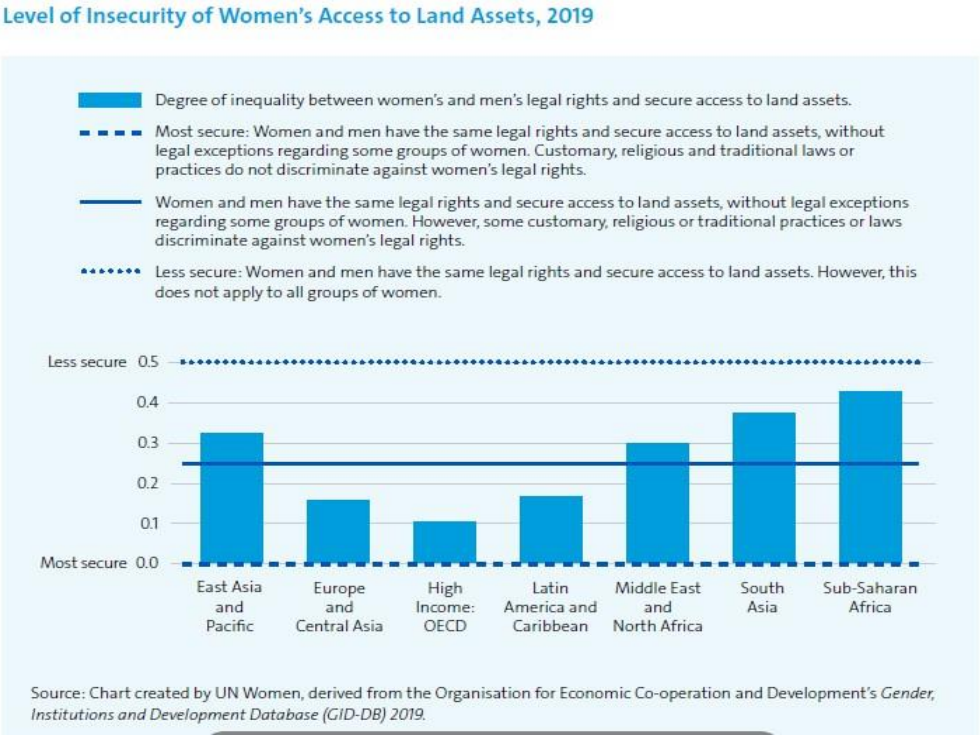

Figure 2: *A comparison of levels of insecurity of women's access to land assets across Global Regions* **(**UN Women & OHCHR, 2020, p. 10)

Looking Forward

While strides have been made in a few sub-Saharan countries to remedy this situation, much still needs to be done. Interventions have come in several forms including: government policy reforms, gender integration in land documentation, change in gender and social norms, and private sector engagement (USAID, 2021).

Government policy reform is arguably one of the most powerful interventions to secure women property and land ownership rights in SSA. In parts of SSA, this has seen statutory and customary laws amended and customized, as in the national land policy reform in Rwanda that resulted in land tenure regularization that allowed 81% percent of land to be jointly owned by men and women (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2019). This has also been exemplified by the Matrimonial Property Law in Kenya that has given women the right to exercise ownership over property in marriage (Africa Development Bank, 2016).

International actions have gone a long way in supporting sub-Saharan countries to implement land reform policies that give women a more equitable

place. One such effort, specifically geared towards securing the rights of women to property and inheritance, is the joint advocacy effort by the Huairou Commission, the UN-HABITAT, the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), and the Food and Agricultural Organization (ICRW, 2005). The Maputo Protocol of 2005, which the majority of sub-Saharan countries have signed and ratified, is an important measure to keep governments accountable in issues pertaining to women's property rights (African Union, 2003). This issue is specifically addressed by articles: 7 (d), 15 (a), 19 (c), and 21 (African Union, 2019). The African Union member states do well to adhere to the promises made in this Protocol to enhance women's property rights.

3.3 Women Economic Leadership and Strength of Collaborative Action

Women's economic leadership and collaborative action is a powerful testament to economic empowerment. These aspects embody the tenets of WEE power and agency, by which women make economic decisions and exercise control over resources and profits. The indicators of women power and agency at community and institutional level include: their participation in community groups, networks and associations, inclusion in decision-making processes, and exercise of leadership in community (Golla, Malhotra, Nanda, & Mehra, 2011). When women take on leadership roles on economic platforms, they communicate their unequivocal ability to participate in and substantially contribute to economic development. It also opens doors for more women to enter the workforce and ascend to leadership positions by, if nothing else, discounting stereotypical tendencies.

The Little Data Book of the World Bank reports that in SSA firms with female participation in ownership stand at only 31% while firms with a top female manager stand at only 16% (World Bank Group, 2019, p. 9). This portends a significant lag in the economic leadership of women as opposed to men. In addition, statistics reported by Gallup indicate that in SSA, only 12% of women possess a bank account compared to 17% of men (Hunt & Samman, 2016). It also means that fewer women than men have access to economic growth opportunities. This narrative can change with collaborative action, especially in the form of women savings and credit cooperatives, which also provide women with meaningful leadership platforms.

The UN Secretary-General's high-level panel on WEE has identified seven key drivers of WEE, among which was strengthening visibility, collective voice, and representation (UN Women, 2022). It is notable that the panel identified the

need to tackle adverse norms as key to delivering on WEE. Women economic leadership and collaborative action can only find room for impact in a community or institution when negative gender norms are transformed. Hunt and Samman (2016) assert that collective action has a strong correlation with positive effects on women's empowerment, including improved productivity, income, and working conditions.

Looking Forward

Collaborative action and economic leadership are clear demonstrations of a power with dynamic, which has great promise for efforts towards WEE. Illustrative of this is the exposition by Kiamba (2019) of women's savings groups, which she asserts, are actually powerful tools for economic empowerment. Kiamba identifies three intervention types through which their impact can be diversified. These include:

1) savings group only interventions, which focus solely on enabling members to access financial services from financial institutions, and expand their social and support networks,
2) savings group in combination with other development activities such as financial education, vocational training, and other specific income generating activities which foster economic independence, self-worth, and improved decision-making, and
3) savings groups within other integrated programming aimed at tackling harmful social norms and inequalities- these provide capacity building for members, as well as whole community gender dialogue sessions. With this kind of collaborative action, real gains can be witnessed and consolidated in WEE.

3.4 Access to Equitable Gainful Employment Opportunities

In recent years there has been a remarkable surge in participation of women in labour markets in SSA. Kabeer (2009) chalks this up to factors such as increasing access to education for girls and women, declining fertility and hence smaller family sizes, a shift in aspirations by women for themselves and their families, declining agricultural production, and economic recession, leading to an increased cost of living. Most notably, in sub-Saharan countries, the gender gap in labour market participation is generally below 20% (ILO, 2018).

This is good news. However, it raises a few questions such as: what are the types of paid work that women engage in? How much income does it engender?

Do men and women who do the same type of job experience equity in pay? Are there available opportunities for advancement? The ILO elaborates that decent work:

> *Involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men. (Hunt & Samman, 2016, p. 13)*

Literature reveals two major descriptions of labour force participation: formal and informal employment. Formal employment is that which offers various covering in terms of legal contracts, social protections, benefits, access to financial institutions, and a predictable, stable source of income, while informal employment offers little or no protections in terms of legal contracts, is not subject to labour market regulations, and offers few or no benefits (Kabeer, 2012, as cited in Hunt & Samman, 2016, p. 13). Economic independence is more likely to be realized by women who engage in salaried or wage work, and less by those who are own-account workers or contributing family workers (ILO, 2010). This is because informal employment is unregulated, and more often than not, tied to exploitative practices, including physical abuse, and poor, irregular pay, not to mention limited agency. Bonnet, Vanek, and Chen (2019) assert that there is a significant overlap between poverty and informal employment. Unfortunately, statistics reveal that up till 2016, in sub-Saharan Africa, more women than men were engaged in the different forms of informal employment. This is illustrated in Table 1, highlighting statistics for the SSA region.

Table 1*: Percentage of informal employment in total and non-agricultural employment by sex and geographical region, excluding developed countries* (Bonnet et al, 2019, p. 10)

	Total employment			**Non-Agricultural employment**		
	Total	**Men**	**Women**	**Total**	**Men**	**Women**
Asia and the Pacific	71	74	67	63	65	58
Southern Asia	88	87	91	78	78	77
East and South-Eastern Asia (including China)	61	63	59	56	58	54
East and South-Eastern Asia (including China)	77	77	77	66	67	65
Sub-Saharan Africa	89	86	92	77	72	83
Southern Africa	40	38	42	36	34	38
Rest of sub-Saharan Africa	92	89	95	82	76	88
Latin America and the Caribbean	54	53	55	50	47	52
Middle East and North Africa	68	69	62	59	62	44
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	37	38	36	30	32	27

Factors that contribute to this disparity in employment opportunities between men and women include levels and quality of education and skills attained by girls and women, restrictive social norms, and limiting care-giving responsibilities. Hunt and Samman (2016) further expound on hindrances, mentioning limits on mobility due to poor infrastructure and unsafe transportation options, unpaid care work, including domestic work, and legal restrictions preventing women from taking on certain jobs or economic activities.

The importance of quality education for economic empowerment cannot be understated. Through quality education, a girl child is afforded a competing chance for gainful workplace participation, especially full-time formal employment opportunities. Fox and Romero (2017) note that studies show a strong correlation between secondary school education for women and formal

wage employment, greater decision-making power within the household, a drop in cases of gender-based violence, and improvement in economic outcomes.

Indeed, with education, skills training and life-long learning, women are more likely to sport greater self-confidence and take more advantage of opportunities for employment (Grantham, Dowie, & de Haan, 2021). This is exemplified by the fact that women with higher education are more likely to formalize their businesses by registering them (Grantham, Dowie, & de Haan, 2021). Therefore, the vicious cycles in societal norms that hinder women from accessing quality education need to be broken by fighting against teenage pregnancy, ending girl child labour in domestic care, and doing away with discriminatory practices at the family level.

Looking Forward

The ILO enumerates three major interventions in achieving women economic empowerment through access to equitable employment: achieving equal pay, tackling occupational segregation, and eliminating discrimination (ILO, 2018). These factors are key to levelling the ground in the world of work in a bid to promote women economic empowerment. Statistics from UN Women indicate that the gender wage gap globally is estimated at 23%, with developing countries exhibiting even wider gaps (UN Women, 2018). This is in spite of SDG 8 which advocates productive employment and decent work for men and women alike. In Uganda, for instance the pay gap stands at 36%, while in Rwanda, it stands at 32% (ILO, 2019).

Gender pay gaps represent institutional social norms that are skewed along gender lines. They can be narrowed with intentional, well targeted, and consistently taken measures. ILO (2019) recommends, among other things: offering equitable salaries to men and women for the same kind of work, basing the salary on the job rather than the previous pay of the employee, encouraging greater flexibility in jobs to allow women to access higher paying jobs despite their responsibilities at home, tackling gender bias in the workplace and conducting frequent gender pay reviews.

4.0 Conclusions

Significant strides in women economic empowerment have been made the world over and specifically in Sub-Saharan Africa. This has been assured through a combination of factors, including ratification of international gender and trade policies such as the Maputo Protocol, changing global economic landscapes that have compelled shifts in the way women participate in the economy, and shifts in

socio-cultural norms that are allowing women greater freedoms. However, there is still a long way to go as so strongly indicated by the numerous gaps in gender equity dynamics in research and literature.

While there are numerous indicators that can be used to measure and analyse women economic empowerment, this Paper analysed three broad indicators, at country and region level: access to equitable, gainful employment opportunities, property and land ownership rights, and economic leadership and collaborative action. These indicators were analysed in light of the impact of social norms on attempts at progress in these areas.

The Paper noted that there has been a surge in labour market participation by women in SSA in recent years, which is both positive and negative. It is negative in the sense that a disproportionate number of women are engaged in informal employment, which is not regulated by the Government and is subject to exploitative practices. This does not further the cause of women economic empowerment. The Paper also noted that more girls have been able to access quality education at higher levels. In some countries, this has led to greater opportunities for gainful employment in the formal sector. However, the gender pay gap across SSA is still a matter of concern that needs to be addressed.

Access to land and property, as well as the accompanying rights, is an important indicator of WEE as it has been shown to assure economic independence and autonomy, promote food security in the community, and allow women access to capital investments and wealth creation opportunities through leveraging property. It has also been shown to increase self-esteem and social standing, factors which support agency in economic matters. Unfortunately, rights and access to land and property by women in SSA has been severely hampered by traditional perceptions, restrictive legislation and land titling procedures, and high costs of purchasing land off the market. In fact, literature has shown that SSA has the highest levels of insecurity of access to land assets in the world. Several African countries have taken steps to remedy this situation, for instance, by ratifying the Maputo Protocol, and introducing policies that support women to acquire or inherit land.

Economic leadership and collaborative action are powerful indicators of women economic empowerment as identified by the UN secretary-general's high-level panel on the key drivers of economic empowerment for WEE. Through collaborative action, women have voice, opportunities to ascend to leadership, access to financial information and credit services. It offers platforms for community-wide discussions to transform limiting social and cultural norms.

Data reviewed revealed that women are still lagging behind men in economic leadership. Literature also elucidated on the diversity of roles that savings groups can serve besides offering financial services. For instance, they foster WEE by offering education and training opportunities, and partnering with institutions and communities to tackle harmful social norms.

5.0 Recommendations

The common thread running through this discussion of the indicators of women economic empowerment is social norms surrounding gender. These social norms more often than not prevail despite excellent legislation, policies, and resources expended to promote women economic empowerment. They represent the various power dynamics extant in communities as well as institutions. Unfortunately, there is scarce empirical evidence of the impact of social and gender norms, whether positive or negative, on WEE per se. There is, therefore, a great need to conduct further research on the impact of gendered social norms on WEE in specific sub-Saharan contexts.

Program and policy interventions must also be designed with the lens of gender and social norms squarely in place in order to ensure that effective, sustainable strategic actions are taken. At a very practical level, community and institution members should be encouraged to evaluate and adjust their personal ideologies and beliefs concerning WEE as these eventually shape the direction that social and gender norms take. As aptly stated by the Asia South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE) in VeneKlasen and Miller (2002, p. 41),

> *Neither power, ideology, nor the state are static or monolithic. There is a continous process of resistance and challenge. When challenges become strong and extensive enough, they can result in the total transformation of a power structure.*

Transformation of social norms, and the power dynamics they represent, to facilitate WEE is within the realms of possibility. However, it must be duly attended to through research, rigorous dialogue on the same and consistent action to work against harmful social norms.

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Applied Theatre as A Social and Economic agency In Deconstructing Gender Myths

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Abstract

Patriarchal structures (social, political, and economic) in the community are entrenched and sustained by, among other things, the oral literature. Oral literature, like a mirror, reflects both the values that the community espouses as well as the hegemonic ideology of the time. In patriarchal communities, myths and other forms of narratives seek to establish and maintain hegemonic masculinity and sustain economic dominance of male over female. To change this state of affairs artists, through their works, seek for advocacy-oriented performance to create and initiate agency for social and economic change. Through applied theatre, the arts endeavour to give a reflective and deconstructive view of what is otherwise seen as normal. This paper aims to demonstrate how some of the very well-known Kenyan oral narrative myths and legends were used to present a counter narrative, challenging the gender (social and economic) hierarchies and dimensions in different communities through applied theatre. It will reflect on three common narratives in Kenya namely: the Lwanda Magere story from Luo culture, the Wangu wa Makeri legend from the Kikuyu community and a Maasai myth on women and cattle ownership, in so far as they portray the place of a woman in social and economic activities in those communities. The Lwanda Magere narrative is a mythical legend which by nature falls outside the memorable historical time but falls within a genre that allows the narrator to aesthetically embellish it and control its vision. Wangu wa Makeri is a historical legend which, however, has been embedded with mythical elements to make it appear sacred in the eyes of the Kikuyu

community. While the Maasai myth of Why Women Do Not Own Cattle share attributes of both aetiological (why stories) elements and myth.

Key words: activism, applied theatre, economy, feminism, gender, myths, oral literature

1.0 Introduction

The study focuses on the activities of the People's Poplar Theatre (PPT) group, who together with the Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development (CCGD), the Kenya Oral Literature Association (KOLA) and in conjunction with other like-minded gender-based organizations were involved in a campaign for gender awareness. The activities were organized around the National Civic Education Programme (NCEP) that ran between 2000 and 2002. As part of the awareness project geared towards constitution reforms, the gender consortium brought together organizations focused on ensuring that gender equity was enshrined in the Constitution. Though the overall programme with a slogan '*making an informed choice'* was geared towards citizens making meaningful contribution from a knowledgeable position, the gender consortium, as a subset of the program, sought to ensure that all aspects of the Constitution were gender inclusive. The Paper examines narratives performed during those civic education activities by the People's Popular Theatre (PPT) while also reflecting on their role within traditional setting.

The organizations in gender movements, who worked alongside the People's Popular Theatre (PPT) group, sought to correct historical, social, economic, and cultural injustices by using popular theatre as a tool to ignite debate on gender issues in Kenya. The injustices of social and economic gender inequalities, brought about by the patriarchal systems within many Kenyan communities, have been to a certain extent perpetuated through oral narratives. The Paper echoes Harold Laswell's (1936) title: *Politics Is Who Gets What, When and How*, arguing that those with political powers in a patriarchal society allocate resources to the male gender to the detriment to the female gender. Women, as victims of patriarchy, needed a form of agency to liberate themselves alongside the struggle for the second liberation in Kenya. Freire (1970) argues that popular education is aimed at empowering traditionally excluded, marginalized, or subordinated sectors of society. With political intention of collective social change towards a more equitable and democratic society, through raised awareness and collaborative actions and popular education practices the learner

lived experiences in both humanizing and oppressive dimensions women will finally liberate themselves from oppressive patriarchal practices.

The People's Popular Theatre (PPT) utilized theatre to deal with a societal injustice that had been ingrained in the community through the socialization process. The appropriateness of theatre as a tool for social change in the context of human rights is central to our discussion. As Nicholson, referencing Richard Wilson, has suggested that theatre offers the potential to turn the idealistic intentions of an international human rights framework to social action by recognising the cultural contradictions inherent in particular local contexts. Cultures are continually reformulated through creative practice, leading to optimistic encounters between the specificity of local cultures and normative vocabulary of human rights. Drama has the potential to trouble absolutes, and, at best, the aesthetics of production can encourage a reflexivity and a sharing of experience that can contribute to the process of unfixing habitual patterns of thought and behaviour (148).

Theatre offers a creative critique of the society by casting a reflective mirror upon it. It allows the community to see the performances anew and provokes a self-reflection on basis characters so like them. Dobie (2011) argues that,

> *The belief that the social organisation has denied equal treatment to all its segments, and that literature is a means of revealing and resisting that social order....art and lifer are fused entities, making the duty of the critique top work against stereotyping in literature, media, and public awareness, to raise the consciousness of those who are oppressed and to bring about radical changes in the power balance between the oppressors and the oppressed. (p. 117)*

The Paper engages in a feminist deconstruction which criticizes the purity of gender as hierarchy of gender stratification. Eagleton (2011) argues that in a patriarchal society, men as the owners of the economic base ensure that the literature of the community supports their very continued role as the controllers of the economic resources. She asserts that *"… for male dominated society, man is the founding principle and the excluded opposite. This, as long as such a distinction tightly held in place the whole system can function effectively."*

The Paper engages in revisionist approach in countering the normative history that defines economic ownership in the communities. Using narratives that define social and economic structure in some Kenyan communities, it seeks

to illustrate how the very same narrative may carry a counter argument. McPherson (2003) notes that,

> *History is a continuing dialogue between the present and the past. Interpretations of the past are subject to change in response to new evidence. New questions asked of the evidence, new perspective gained by the passage of time. There is no single eternal or immutable 'truth' about the past events and their meaning. The unending quest of historians for understanding the past i.e., revisionism is what makes history vital and meaningful.*

2.0 The Narratives and Traditional Context

Each of the three narratives, *Lwanda Magere*, *Wangu wa Makeri*, and *Why Women Do Not Own Cattle*, partly account for the patriarchal structures within the Luo, Kikuyu and Maasai communities, respectively. As Roland Barthes argues *"…Myth has in fact a double function; it points out and it notifies, and it makes us understand something and it imposes on us"* (117). Oral literature, as the main tool of socialization, drills and brainwashes the young into accepting the social, economic, and political status as given, unchangeable and ordained. For those growing up in the community, once they hear the story, it becomes a confirmation and reinforcement of what they have seen. In Marxism terms those who control the economic base manipulate all other elements of the super structure to sustain and maintain the status quo.

The *Lwanda Magere* narrative, is named after the hero who was sent by the gods to save the Luo community from the rampant raids of the Kalenjin (referred to as Lang'o in the narrative). With his arrival, as a warrior whose body cannot be pierced by a spear, (because his name translated literally means built of stone), the Kalenjin's lost the upper hand in the war. They were defeated many times by the Luo and they had to resort to offering Lwanda Magere a wife who eventually discovered the secret of the great warrior's weakness: that if you wanted to kill him, you had to strike his shadow. Thus, through the Lang'o queen, the Kalenjins managed to defeat the Luos. The story, like the biblical Samson story, warns men to be wary of women because women have always been a source of their downfall. This story is used to deny women a chance to participate in important decision-making processes in social, political, and economic matters. They are not elected in the Council of Elders or advisers. The general community narrative goes that if a leader is surrounded by women, it will be detrimental to the progress

of that community. The same applies to when a woman is a leader, that such leadership will bring calamity to the communities.

In the two narratives, Lwanda Magere and Samson and Delilah, the loss of one community is a win for another community. The communities that chose to use women as frontline soldiers to gather intelligence reports, won. The Philistines, through Delilah, brought down the great warrior Samson. The Kalenjin, through Nyalang'o, brought down the Luo. Again, in each of the defeated community, there was a legendary warrior with supernatural powers. A warrior, who by conventional means could not be defeated, yet despite the great strengths of the great warriors, they were brought down by a woman. The women did not use brutal force to fight their enemies. The men with supernatural powers were brought down by ordinary intelligent women. The women did not need supernatural powers to defeat the men.

The Biblical narrative and the Luo legend promote the traditionally held view that women are sacrificial lambs. In many Kenyan narratives, when the community faces great danger, it is quite common to sacrifice a woman, as a symbol of purity, to save the community. In this case, women are not viewed as brave warriors, but as humble symbol of purity that can appease the Gods. They are also given to the victorious communities or, in the event of peace negotiation when any member of the community is killed outside the battle front. This role carries ambiguity in interpretation. Women are portrayed not as the movers of action or decision makers. They only come into action not out of their own volition but at the behest of the community. They are then thrown out to be at the mercy of the rival community. They are characters that can be dispensed with. This is in contrast to the positive image of women as cementers of peace or being symbols of peace since they restore love and harmony when there is war. It is on this basis that many Kenyan communities are not allowed to kill women during war. They would harm any male members but spare all the female members of the enemy community. This tradition accounts for forced cross cultural marriages and naming. One would find among the Kikuyus someone named Maathai or Nyokabi meaning they are of Maasai origin. So once warriors conquered a community, they would kill the male members since they are a potential threat. They would spare women and leave the aged ones behind with young girls. The young girls would be '*trophies*' for the warriors but they would not be swallowed by the community without a reminder of where they came from. There was humanism in all by ensuring the whole community is not annihilated.

The second story is from the Maasai community explaining *Why Women do not Own Cattle*. The women are said to have gone to look after cattle, and while at it, they slaughtered a cow for meat. Treasured in the cow is the kidney which is eaten even before an animal is fully skinned. As it was the tradition, women looked after the cattle with their children. On this day, while herding the cattle and skinning a cow, only the children were taking turns to bring back the cattle any time they strayed. However, when they were just about to take out the kidney, none of the mothers would allow their children to bring back the straying cattle. They all surrounded the cow for the kidney. When the eating of meat was over, the cattle had strayed so far and disappeared in the wilderness. The narrative concludes by saying that all the zebras you see in the wilderness were women's donkeys, all the antelopes were women's goats, and all the buffaloes were the women's cows and that is why women do not own any cattle.

The Maasai are a pastoralist community whose social and economic survival relies on cattle. Their whole definition of what counts as wealth and value is interpreted in terms of cattle. The number of cattle one owns determines the political and economic influence in the Maasai community. It also determines how large your family can be. The Maasai practise polygamy and ones' ability to marry is determined by the ability to pay bride price. Those who own a big herd of cattle have big families. The bigger the family, as warrior community, the more security it enjoys. Given the central importance of cattle, the patriarchal system has placed it within the purview of men. The narrative of *Why Women do not Own Cattle* is a classic example of how patriarchy has manipulated the literature of the community to achieve male economic control. As demonstrated by deconstructionists, *"... out of this play of signifiers, certain meanings are elevated by social ideologies to a privileged position or made the centre around which other meanings are forced to turn."*

From our field research in Maasai community, they value cattle highly. The herds boy must report to the 'man of the homestead' every morning and every evening on the status of the cattle. Once a man wakes up, he sits at the entrance of his homestead where he is served and receives reports. Upon finishing this exercise, he can go and meet fellow elders. In the evening when all the cattle have been taken back into the kraal, he again sits in the same sport to receive reports while enjoying his evening meal. These structures define who the worker is and who the boss is. The man's work is seen as supervisory. He makes decisions as to which cattle should be sold, slaughtered, exchanged, or given out. However, the daily care of these animals is left to the woman.

When a newly married wife comes into a home, she is assigned (not given) the animal that would be under her watch. A polygamous Maasai man with five wives will divide all his cattle among them. The role of his wives would be to take good care of the cattle under their watch. They would not physically go to the grazing field, work left to young men, but ensure the Kraal, and heifers are taken care of. When the cattle come back from the field, the wives go out to confirm that all cattle under their care are safe and then duly report to the man of the compound. However, when a man decides to sell any of the cattle, regardless of how many years the woman has taken care of them, he has the sole prerogative to make the decision. He has a basis in the narrative W*hy Women do not Own Cattle.* Because women lost all their cattle into the wilderness, they do not have any say on the domesticated ones whose true owners are men. The dominant narrative is that women were careless to have lost their cattle and cannot be trusted anymore with the same responsibility. This is so even though they are the ones to ensure the daily wellbeing of the said animals. Furthermore, even if a woman was to acquire cattle through her own efforts, she would only be a nominal owner, but the substantive owner remains the man. Outside the modern influence, Maasai land is communally owned. Even up to now, a substantial amount of land is communally owned. It is only the cattle that is said to be individually owned. Thus, this leaves women without any major resource under their control.

The Kikuyu myth of creation is centred on Gikuyu and Mumbi and their nine daughters. The Kikuyu tribes are named after their nine daughters. The union that created tribes was defined around women while the men remained anonymous. The myth only explains that Gikuyu and Mumbi found nine men to marry their daughters and the daughters became founders of the Kikuyu clans. This myth marks out the Gikuyu community as a matriarchal society with women being the heads of the clans. Little is said of this authority bestowed on women in subsequent narratives but the meaning of the name Mumbi - the creator or moulder - seems to suggest that human life is ascribed to women -the creators. They are melders of the family and the clan. In the name Mumbi lay the creativeness. She is Mumbi, who out of nothing, creates life. The major story that follows the myth, is *Wangu Wa Mak*eri, a historical legend.

In the story of *Wangu wa Makeri*, a female ruler and the main character in the story, she is portrayed as a ruthless leader. It is said during her reign, women determined the economic activities that were carried by the community and which member of the community would exercise the different duties. Wangu wa Makeri, the story says, terrorized men by sitting on their backs and eating food from their

backs. She was the one who allocated duties to men and it is alleged gave all the hard work to men while women had very little to do. To deal with her, men conspired and made all the women pregnant and during this moment of weakness, they overthrew them and took over the leadership. The story would then conclude by saying, *"Since then, the Kikuyu community has lived happily thereafter"*. The story implies that there is an underlying danger in entrusting power with women and they use this as an excuse to exclude women from leadership position. Equally, the story is used as a scare and as an anti-women campaign tool, always reminding people to never go back to *"the tough times under another Wangu Wa Makeri"* and that good leadership is only provided by men.

3.0 The Deconstructive Nature of Oral Performances

Nicholson (2014) provides an interesting perspective on the deconstructive nature of drama/theatre by arguing that,

> *Applied drama/drama is concerned with how narratives are constructed and how they might be deconstructed or challenged. Drama as narrative is good place to exlore selfhood, culture, and community and that many practitioners in applied drama have a particular commitment to ensure that dominant social narratives are disrupted. Thus, drama provides a powerful opportunity to ask questions about whose stories have been customarily told, whose have been accepted as truth, and to redress the balance by telling alternative stories or stories from different perspectives. It is this understanding that narratives can be changed that lies at the heart of practice in applied drama.*

The oral performances are open to deconstruction because of their very nature. Eagleton, citing Derrida, points out that,

> *There is a sense in which we can never quite close our fists over meaning which arises from the fact that language is a temporal process.... The meaning is always somehow suspended something deferred or still to come; one signifier relays meaning to another and that tp another, earlier meanings are modified by later ones.... (p. 128)*

One defining element of oral performance is verbal variability. The reliance on oral text and the ability of the narrator to remember the exact oral text in every

performance is not guaranteed. Further, since there is no original text for reference to show how far one has veered off, makes the variability acceptable. Each performance comes with different wording and phrasing. The story relies on the memory of the narrator to be brought to life. Human beings' memory can be very selective, and the narrator ends up selecting only those parts that excite them. The verbal variability gives the performers the freedom of choosing the words and phrases that suit their purpose in every performance. They retain the basic structure of the narrative but infuse the idiosyncratic elements that define them as performers.

The second attribute of the oral performance is that it is directly dependent on the performer. The text relies on the performer to be available. Without the performer, there is no text. It defies Barthes' (1968) assertion of *'death of the author'* as it applies to no written text. Barthes claims that once writers put down their texts, they are no longer needed, the text acquires autonomy, and thus they (authors) die because the text acquires its own life and is open to different interpretation by readers, without reference to the author. In oral narration, one cannot separate the text from the performer, they are ever intertwined. Each performer produces a text as an event, defined by the setting in which it is performed and with no guarantee of reproduction. Unlike the novelists, the performers can change the text to suit the different audiences depending on the circumstances. They can play to the whims of the audiences or propagate new ideas. The text, to a large extent is at the mercy of the performer. The performer is the text and the text - the performer. They are Siamese twins joined at the hip and wherever one goes, the other one follows. This gives the oral narrator a greater role in the control of messaging under different conditions. Perhaps Okot P'Bitek (1968) recognized this when he said the artist is the ruler because of his or her power and ability to control events during a performance.

The oral performances as events carry another attribute of having both the performer and the audience in the same space. It is a live event that is witnessed as it happens. It lives in the now, in the ever-present tense. This means that the performers interact directly with their audiences and thereby receive feedback immediately. The feedback can determine the direction of the performance. These reactions can be both positive and negative. The performer and the audience feed on each other. The audience cheers and applauds all that they like and jeer and boo what they disagree with. They can, therefore, push the narrator to have certain biases in the narration going by the general mood and response by the audience.

The narrators, in different contexts and settings, will anchor their narratives relative to the kind of audience they are performing to.

Messages mean different things to people relative to their social and cultural upbringing. Therefore, narrators create, reinforce, or portray characters in conformity with the goals of a narration which sometimes are not individual but communal. Nicholson (2014) asserts,

> *All stories are read and created through the lens of social and cultural experience, and this means that narratives are inevitable interpreted in many different ways. Recognising that stories have multiple interpretations involves identifying the limits of one's own horizons, and an interes in seeing alternative perspectives. However, alongside the official community narrative, there lies a parallel narrative that challenges it depending on the lenses through which ones views the narrative (p. 65)*

The Paper engages with the process of deconstructing communal myths and legends from a feminist revisionist perspective. The reflections emanate from data collected from civic education performances by the People's Popular Theatre (PPT) and personal participation in Civic Education in Kenya through local theatre groups.

4.0 Performing Oral Narratives in Civic Education

The National Civic Education Program (NCEP) Project, organized around the Gender Consortium, had individual organizations, each one of which was running the civic education program with unique methodologies of delivery. In addition to other tools used, the Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development (CCGD) employed the Participatory Educational Theatre (PET) methodology for the delivery of their civic education messages. Working in different locations in the then Nairobi Province (renamed Nairobi County under the new Constitution) and mainly focusing on the low income and informal sectors, they had three community mobilizers for different regions. Each of the community mobilizers worked with different women groups in their respective areas to organize a variety of civic education activities. Occasionally, the Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development would organize a leaders' meeting with women organizations to chart out the way forward for women movements and the constitutional review process. During all these sessions, the People's Popular Theatre would work together with community mobilizers and the Collaborative

Centre for Gender and Development to identify specific issues associated with the particular area, map out themes and come up with skits for performance (mainly oral narratives) for performance. The performances would start with the People's Popular Theatre explaining the format of the meeting, setting the rules for the participants. This would then be followed by the performances which would be stopped at crucial points to facilitate discussion. Nicholson notes,

> *In places where human rights are violated, forms of popular theatre that bring together information and entertainment are seen as effective ways of reaching large audiences, particularly where performances are accompanied by discussion or other forms of community participation. (p. 131)*

The project was meant to create an enabling and provocative atmosphere that would allow for discussion among participants through participatory theatre. Fischer-lichte (2008) defines participatory performance *as "a form where the audience is able to affect material change in the work in a way that goes beyond the inherent interactivity in all live performances"*. And as White (2013) intones,

> *this form of performance (participatory) offers a level of agency through the opportunity to creatively contribute the work, meaning that the experience off making choices, whether they lead to directly desired outcome or not, or having choices taken away, makes one part of the aesthetic participation. (p. 64)*

The role of theatre is to *"make social structures, power relations, and individual habitus visible, and at the same time provide tools to facilitate change"* (Österlind 2008: 71). Snyder-Young (2013) views applied theatre as,

> *referring to a wide range of practices in which participatory dramatic activities and/or theatre performances are used for a broad set of purposes, including education, community building, rehabilitation, conflict resolution, and advocacy… for its focus on collaborative, artistic intervention. Theatre is live, performative, collaborative storytelling. It requires that participants work together to find aesthetic solutions to creative problems emerging in the production process.*

> *Applied theatre orients this process towards a particular goal or set of goals. It operates as dialogue – an artist or team of artists with expertise in theatre-making collaborate with participants and/or audiences with expertise in their own experiences, lives, and concerns to create theatrical events. (p. 4)*

This Paper highlights the peak moments during performance and the audience reactions to the narrative. After the performance of the *Lwanda Magere* narrative, the audience were always asked what they thought would be the most appropriate title to the narrative. The reactions varied depending on who was watching. At the women fora where they were to present views to the Constitutions Review Commission, the attention of the participants was focused on the need to consult women on all matters of society. The story was seen to be strongly linked to the Constitution review agenda and the need to engage women in the process and ensure that the Constitution reflected a diverse cultural base but was gender inclusive for it to be successful. The participants noted that the defeat of the Lang'o people arose from the fact that they did not involve women in any of their war strategies. The Council of Elders did not consider the participation of women crucial, and therefore, neglected a large section of their population. As a result, they were consequently beaten by their foes. Those who involved women were the ones to win the war.

The spirit of the forum was that women views should be strongly taken into consideration in reviewing the Kenyan Constitution. Many of the participants settled on either *'why women should always be consulted'* or *'without women involvement, any community initiative will fail'* as appropriate title of the *Lwanda Magere* story. They argued that the original story had been skewed against women despite the prominent role played by women. This bias was traced to the fact the legends are told by men and not women and equally, since the origin of the story was Luo, they were concerned more with presentation of their pride and identity as opposed to the facts presented in the story. The more radical participants suggested that the most appropriate title for the story should be '*how one woman brought down the whole army*'.

Breel (2015) argues that the *"participants' action and their agency directly impact on the performance"* (371) meaning that a better understanding of the participants experience is vital to understanding how the performance operates. And since, as she adds,

> *agency is concerned with intention and choice, for the participants to have agency, they should intentionally perform an action (however small) that causes something to happen or change within the performance as a result (p. 375)*

Whereas the narrative is framed as anti-women, the participants sought to locate a fresh way of looking at it as a feminist story.

Whist the Maasai narrative always ends with *'that is why women do not own any cattle,'* the preceding statement says that the wild animals that you see today, were cattle that belonged to women. Thus, the dominant narrative is that because of carelessness of women, they lost their cattle to the wilderness. When this story was performed without the last statement many of those in the audience assumed that it is a story that explains why the Maasai live/stay in the same environment with wild animals. They argued that any environment, natural or artificial, is fit for women who by nature are 'free spirits'. They leave their homes and they fit anywhere in society. The general idea from the debate was that women felt that domesticating animals was a form of imprisonment and they let them into the wilderness to free them and offer the rest of the world a chance to view them. Therefore, one of titles suggested was, '*why there are so many wild animals in Kenya'*. Thus, the presence of wild animals in Kenya was credited to women.

There was a clear discernible irony in the performance of Wangu wa Makeri story given the context of the performance. This story was performed during the clamour for what is known in Kenya as the second liberation. The proponents of the second liberation argued that, although we achieved independence from the colonizers, the leadership inherited all the oppressive structures. The leadership found it safe to enforce the colonial laws for their own benefit. There was need, therefore, to overhaul the whole system through new Constitution dispensation. Coincidentally, Kenya as a country had three male presidents in that whole period. So, every time PPT would end the narrative by saying that "*women were overthrown and the men took over and since then people have lived in peace and harmony thereafter'*, everyone would burst out and laugh. Our first question to the audience was *"why are laughing?"* They were all in agreement that the Constitution outcry arose from the bad male leadership. That the said peace and harmony was a far cry from the reality on the ground. This was strictly when the original story was performed. The variant of the story would end with; *'since*

women were removed from the throne, the world has never known peace'. When it came to choosing the title, the audience thought the appropriate title should be '*why there is so much suffering in world'* or *'how men robbed women of leadership'.*

The Lwanda Magere narrative raises questions as to who a hero is. Traditional tragedies demand that the hero has to be of royal lineage or of high standing in the community. Both Nyar Lang'o and Lwanda Magere qualify in this respect. Lwanda Magere is sent by the gods to defend the Luo community which eventually relies on him for their survival. His life and survival make him central to the Luo community. Nyar Lang'o, on the other hand, is a princess, therefore, of the royal blood. The traditional tragedy also presumes that the loss of such individual is of dire consequences to the whole community. The death of Lwanda Magere would mean collapse of the security systems in the Luo community. Their first defence is Lwanda Magere as a warrior whose body cannot be pierced. The loss of the princess is a direct challenge to the leader and, if there is no appropriate action in retaliation, then the king's authority is eroded. They both risk their lives in defence of their community. Unlike the antagonist that we are used to in other narratives, Nyar Lang'o, as depicted in the story takes greater risk and invites more sympathy and support. Lwanda Magere has missing attributes that distance him as an object of sympathy. His arrogance, though seen as hamartia in the context of tragedy, projects him as someone more concerned about self-importance than the community welfare. Ursulla LeGuin (1993) notes that heroes are traditionally male and the hero myth inscribes male dominance and the primacy of male enterprises.

> *The hero typically makes any significant sexual involvement for such a relationship would compromise his dedication to his mission, and one of the attributes of maleness....(p. 67)*

In so far as their narrative structure implies that the actions of real consequence and those understated by men, hero stories resemble the historical record from which women are also obliterated.

The narrative denies a woman a special mention by only referring to her via her community of origin. Nyar Lang'o is not a real name but instead, she is referred to as the one who came from the Lang'o. Within the patriarchal societies such naming is meant to deny one the opportunity for inheritance or ownership of family property. The name alone denies you identity of belonging to the

community since it marks you out as a foreigner. Worse still, Kalenjins as enemies of the Luo, such naming is to alert everybody of the foe within who should be treated with suspicion. Thus, the woman carries the title of a foreigner no matter how long she has been among the communities in which she is married. The naming is a constant reminder of the lack of acceptance into the fold of the community. Whereas everyone is identified by titles that indicate one belongs to the community, branding one as a foreigner is a form of disenfranchising her of her rights. Branding brainwashes people into stripping others off their rightful position. In the mind of the population, such a person loses the right to own property since they are foreigners.

The woman, therefore, has a right only by association because she doesn't have a name of her own. She is defined by association. In this case defined first by where she comes from – Lang'o and secondly to whom she is married to, Lwanda Magere. She is either wife of Lwanda Magere and in this case not the only one, and therefore, one has to say second wife of Lwanda Magere or the one who comes from the land of Lang'o. Personal identity which is important in defining one is lost. She is only known or identified in reference to others. Perhaps we should ask the old Shakespearean question, *"What is in a name?"* This is what one is confronted with *'when you are, only because of others'* and defined only by relationship without a personal tag on your individuality.

In the actual performance, however, the name acquired extra value. Participants argued that whereas other characters have names that define their individualism, Nyar Lang'o's name defines communal representation. It implied she carries the weight of the whole community. To the audience, her name alone suggests that she was the central character in the story. They argued that right from the beginning, they expected that all her actions would be in the interest of the community and that they would be selfless actions meant to protect the community. They noted that she was a hero right from the onset; her decision to go to the enemy land and live with their greatest foe - the Luo, knowing she was under scrutiny every night and day and away from the protection of her community. Her sacrifice in carrying the safety of the whole community on her shoulders makes her the hero of the community and deserving the name Nyarlang'o. In discussing Bhabha, Nicolson points out,

> *emphasis on narrative and contextuality is important here, as it shows that human rights are not experienced solely as social 'issues' but are played out*

> *played out in the dialogic space of everyday existence. That the practice of the arts enables experiences to be framed and, that practicing Drama has the potential to bring life into sharp relief by inviting participants to step outside themselves, to embody the narratives of others. (p. 510)*

5.0 Conclusion

This Paper has examined three oral narratives that range from historical and mythical legends to etiological myths that set to establish patriarchal social and economic hegemony in selected Kenyan communities: Luo, Kalenjin Kikuyu and Maasai. The Paper has demonstrated the traditional contextual interpretation of the narratives (in which men are heroes and the protagonist of the story) as seen from the perspective of a patriarchal society that projected men as owners of the economic base and thus controlling the social and political spheres. Based on the applied theatre project done by the People's Popular Theatre, in collaboration with other like-minded organizations, the Paper has illustrated how the very same oral narratives deconstruct the traditional held views by providing an alternative interpretation through participatory engagement with the community. The Paper is in line with what Nicholson refers to as Derrida's concept of a poetics of human rights that recognizes that there is an aesthetic dimension to ethical social interactions, and that human rights are practised only when the dialectic between self and the other is troubled, and the fixed polarity is challenged. A poetics of human rights is, as he points out, about taking collective responsibility for the performance of rights, and recognizing the creative opportunities afforded by envisioning social change. Through the applied theatre, therefore, the Paper demonstrates and recommends theatre as an advocacy tool and a human rights agency in transforming the ways of thinking and re-evaluating narratives that have served to entrench patriarchy and male economic domination in our society by re-looking at the role of women through a feminist lens.

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Sexual Harrasment at Work as A Barrier for Women Economic Development: The Case of Domestic Workers in Maputo City

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Abstract

This research aims to analyse the impact of sexual harassment at work, more specifically on domestic workers and on women's economic empowerment. The target group was selected based on the qualitative methodology, using the proportional sampling and with the snowball technique, where out of 50 maids, who were interviewed, 20 maids were found to have suffered sexual harassment. According to the Standpoint theory, sexual harassment constitutes an obstacle for women's economic empowerment, as it not only puts women employed in the domestic sector in a situation of being racially discriminated, but also at the social status level. At the racial level this happens because of the conception that white employers pay better salaries, and for fear of losing that salary, they submitted themselves to situations of harassment. At the level of social status, they are treated as people without dignity, as if the work they do is irrelevant, as it is not formally considered work like other jobs under the Mozambican law. Women domestic workers are forced to become sexually involved with their employers to guarantee their work, fearing that they will lose their jobs, and consequently will not be able to support their families.

Key words: domestic work, sexual harassment, women empowerment

1.0 Introduction

In this research, the main objective is to debate how sexual harassment becomes a barrier to the economic empowerment of women who work in the domestic sector in Maputo. The specific objective is to describe the actions of female

domestic workers in Maputo city; describe the situations of sexual harassment that happen in the domestic work sector with women in Maputo city; and analyse the perspectives that influence women working in the domestic sector, in Maputo city, all of which make it difficult to achieve economic empowerment.

In 2008, the *Domestic Work Regulation* was approved through Decree No. 40/2008, which was the result of demands by the union and the feminist movement at national and international levels. The Decree provides the extension of labour and social rights to this historically marginalized sector, including: the right to a fixed working day; to daily, weekly, and annual rest; enrolment in the compulsory social security system; adequate occupational health and safety conditions; and compensation for work accidents.

In this context domestic work is referred to as historically marginalized, according to the Workers Organization of Mozambique *(Organização dos Trabalhadores de Moçabique - OTM)*, this profession was never considered work. Cconsidering the high unemployment rate and the lack of employment opportunities, there was a need to create conditions for domestic workers to have their work situation formalized, having rights and duties like other workers. Thus, the Decree 40/2008 of 26 November in Mozambique was created, with the aim of reducing existing criticisms about the fact that domestic work is connoted as a form of modern slavery.

The focus of this research is on women, unions and associations linked to domestic work in Maputo city. During the interviews with the domestic workers, it was possible to see that, in fact, there are many women who see domestic work as a way to achieve self-support; to support their families; to be able to guarantee their studies and other personal needs. However, female workers in this sector declare that it is still in the consciousness of many employers that they must serve their employers in all the ways that are required by them, even without considering the formalities stipulated by the law, that is, doing the personal wishes of the employers. Their employers, regardless of professional ethics in the relationship between worker and employer, feel free to choose the lines of this relationship, and the employee is only being obliged to obey.

This article will bring up a debate on how the relationship between a female domestic worker and her employer can contribute to the empowerment of women working in this sector. During the interview with the representative of the Workers' Organization of Mozambique (September 2021), I found that more than 60% of domestic workers are women, working within homes.

2.0 Domestic Work as a Form of Empowerment in Maputo City

Domestic work in Mozambique is considered to be subordinate service, provided on a regular basis, to a household or similar, comprising preparation of meals; washing and treatment of clothes; cleaning and tidying the house; surveillance and assistance to children, the elderly, and the sick; treatment and care of pets; gardening work; and other coordinated activities in the domestic environment. (Decree 40/2008 of 26 November)

Domestic work represents the main source of paid employment for women and is the third largest activity after peasant farming and informal trade. However, even salaried workers find it difficult to meet their basic needs, as sectorial minimum wages are meagre (R. Castel-Branco and Isaacs 2017). According to the latest data presented by the Organization of Workers of Mozambique (OTM), the lowest sectorial minimum wage corresponds to a quarter of the basic food basket. This demonstrates that domestic work cannot guarantee the minimum conditions that can treat with dignity the human beings who work in this area.

According to the National Union of Domestic Employees, domestic work should not be legal, as this work is continuation of slavery, where the settlers determined the domestic chores the slaves should take care of. In the same spirit, no person should do household chores for another person, as it is each one's responsibility to take care of their household chores. However, due to poverty, and consequently, the lack of employment in Mozambique, it was decided to legalize domestic work as formal work. However, due to the nature of this work, the law has not yet managed to define rights and duties in the same way as other work performed in formal institutions. One of the domestic workers interviewed revealed:

> *I didn't sign a contract when I started working... We didn't discuss how much I'm going to get; they just told me that, this is your salary... Sometimes I work from 7 am to 6 pm and sometimes I leave at 5 pm, but I never had a full vacation for a month, I only go out for a week, then I arrange other times to complete the holidays. (Domestic Worker 13, September 2021)*

The representative of the National Union of Domestic Workers mentioned that the fragility of the law makes domestic workers continue to work informally and without the coverage of important rights, such as access to a 13th salary, holidays, and lack of legal or documented contracts that can protect domestic employees from possible situations of insecurity.

Without a legally drawn up contract, it is difficult for the working day to be limited to eight hours a day. In addition, a legally established contract can prevent domestic workers from being subjected to various types of violence, such as racism, moral and sexual harassment, devaluation of their activities by society, stigmatization, and low wages.

The law of domestic work in Mozambique already has weaknesses that place domestic workers in a situation of insecurity, since the law itself, in its Article 6, clearly states that the domestic work contract is not subject to written form. This issue means that domestic servants do not have material to defend themselves in case something happens. It will just be the employee's word against the employer's. The clauses of their talks cannot prove that at the beginning of the conclusion of the contract certain elements were agreed upon. With regard, for example, to employee's rights, there is no question of working hours, because normally are 8 hours, but for domestic workers they put 9 hours, minimum wage issue, and the issue of social security is under the exclusive responsibility of the employee herself. Another interviewee stated,

> *When we did a lot of activisms to have the rights of domestic workers guaranteed, it was a very difficult process... There was a lot of denial at the time, because domestic work could not be considered work, I mean, because it was work that was done by slaves, and slavery ended. but as there was no way to end domestic work, since there are serious employment problems in Mozambique, we ended up getting a specific law for domestic workers, but what we wanted was for them to be in the labour law, because the Decree is also a form of discrimination... that is to say, domestic workers are not like others in the normal private sector. (Interviewee 2, OTM, 2021)*

With these aspects, we observed that the lack of supervision and the precariousness of work are the main factors that contribute to the susceptibility of the category, today. Domestic work can only exist due to one condition, that of social inequality, since the remuneration of these workers is paid by people who have a higher income.

The women employed as domestic workers, in general, are poor, with low education, who undertake to do the domestic work of wealthier families, The outsourcing of domestic work, therefore, creates an opposition of class and race among the women themselves, at the same time that it configures a private solution to a public problem, being, therefore, accessible only to those families with more income.

When we talk about empowerment, studies on gender by Mageste at all (2008) show that attention is more focused on well-being, issues of salary and equal treatment in relation to men, but currently the discussion broadens and starts to consider the relations between the sexes, which bring embedded power relations, which is unequally distributed, with women having a subordinate position in social organization. Not so long ago, the tasks that feminist movements were engaged in primarily involved the effort to achieve better and fairer treatment for women.

The focus was more on well-being, but the goals gradually evolved and expanded to emphasize the active role of women's agent status (SEN apud Mageste at all, 2008). These researchers emphasize that this expansion is neuralgic, since if, on the one hand, the search for female empowerment cannot ignore the importance of solving many inequalities that ruin women's well-being, on the other hand, any practical experience of increasing well-being, being feminine cannot ignore the condition of women's own agents to bring about such a change. Thus, the aspect of well-being and the aspect of being an agent present a substantial crossover.

However, although these two aspects complement each other, they are different in essence since the role of a person as an '*agent'* is fundamentally different from that of the same person as a '*patient'*. For the author, seeing women as people in need of well-being is important, but restricting oneself to this implies a restricted conception of them as subjects. Therefore, understanding the role of the '*agent'* condition is fundamental to recognize individuals as responsible subjects, who can act or refuse to act, or choose to act in one way and not another and who need to take responsibility for doing or not doing things.

In this respect, the change in the point of view of feminist movements from a vision that is extremely focused on well-being to a vision that defends the condition of women as active *'agents'* constitutes a crucial expansion of previous concerns, without implying a denial of these concerns. The relative lack of well-being of women was, and is, present in the world we live in and has visible importance for social justice, in addition, the limited role of women's '*active agent'* condition affects the lives of all people: men and women, children and adults. Still from the same source, it is also argued that focusing on the condition of women as '*agent*' is of great importance because it what will eventually lead to the elimination of injustices that harm women's well-being. Moreover, there is evidence which shows that respect and consideration of women's well-being are influenced by issues such as women's potential to earn an independent income,

gain employment outside the home, have property rights, be literate, and participate in decision making within and outside the family. While these aspects of the female situation seem varied and disparate, they have in common a positive contribution to strengthening women's voice and agency through independence and empowerment. Thus, they are no longer just passive recipients of help to improve their well-being and are seen as active agents of social transformation that can change the lives of women and men.

During the interviews, when we asked the Maputo city domestic workers about what it means to them to work in the domestic sector, they respond that domestic work is not a job that can be considered decent, since most employers behave as if their domestic workers are slaves. Among other mistreatments, the most frequent are insults, lack of regularization of vacations, low wages, lack of food, and sexual harassment issues. However, they see domestic workers as a way of guaranteeing their livelihood, as they do not have the required level of education to be able to get a job in the formal sector.

During the focus groups discussions with the same workers, they claim that working as domestic workers has enabled them to build their houses, support their families and guarantee their children's education. That is why they do everything they can to keep themselves in their jobs, regardless of the inhumane treatment.

Thus, according to Blétière (2014), it can be said that the devaluation associated with domestic work poses obstacles to the necessary institutional monitoring in promoting this activity within the sphere of the labour market. Furthermore, gender inequality intrinsic to domestic work persists and accentuates the i*nvisibility* of the domestic worker in the sphere of the labour market despite the growing importance she has acquired over the years, with the externalization of domestic work.

Therefore, housework would be a way that women find proportional to the time devoted to the family's well-being, and it would be a way to maximize their social utility (Becker in Blétière, 2014). Thus, the important contribution of domestic work in the production of human goods was underlined, as it provides essential conditions for the promotion of the workforce in the public sphere. (Anderson in Gomes, 2009).

Domestic work facilitates women's participation in the labour market, creating employment for some, and doubling down on productive and reproductive work for other women working in the formal sector. In our context, where basic social services are fragile, the provision of care for children, the elderly, the sick, etc. depends mainly on women's unpaid work. Thus, middle and

upper-class women have the option to outsource these responsibilities to less privileged workers, and thus gain time to invest in other productive and leisure activities (Castel-Branco 2017).

Another huge challenge is the ambiguous working parameters. It is common for a worker to be hired to perform a task, and over time, to be pressured to perform additional tasks. Another common complaint is the absence of health and safety measures at work. Employers often invent strict rules and processes to control workers' bodies, goods, and movements in the name of hygiene. However, they rarely guarantee occupational health and safety conditions. For example, domestic workers are forced to carry out life-threatening tasks, such as sanitation issues, using toxic products, and carrying heavy goods without adequate work tools and protection.

Associated with this, domestic workers work six days a week, with Sunday being their only weekly rest day. Not everyone enjoys paid vacations, holidays as employers insist that workers identify a replacement, effectively subcontracting their job. As a result, domestic workers not only do not enjoy the right to paid holidays, but they also run the risk of losing their jobs. Finally, domestic workers are subject to discrimination, harassment, and violence. Their bodies are tested for HIV, tuberculosis, hepatitis, and vaccinations; their privacy is violated; their personal property is treated as contaminated; their emotional and physical integrity are violated; and their trivialized personal responsibilities. Despite, or perhaps because of, the intimate nature of this sector, power relations between domestic workers and employers are extremely unequal.

> *They do not give me all work materials... even gloves to clean the bathroom, they only buy them when I complain a lot, but I often work without gloves. Sometimes even when the lady is on those women's days and dirty her underwear, she tells me to wash her things... They don't give masks for cleaning days, because of dust... and when I say I'm sick, she thinks I'm lie to not come to work ... (Domestic worker 9, September 2021)*

The entry of women into the labour market was undoubtedly an important event that triggered a series of important social changes to be considered in the analysis of domestic work and in the way it is perceived. This change resulted from constant social struggles in an attempt to overcome, day after day, the gender inequality installed through a sexual division of labour. These struggles did not take place without the additional effort of women to reconcile the rights and

responsibilities that they would now be allowed to do. The normative practices instituted by the sexual division of labour still remain, demanding an increased effort on their part.

Domestic work is family work, which consists of intimate activities, performed in private spaces, in physical proximity to employers. Despite the intimate nature of this work, power relations are extremely unequal. Despite exploitative working conditions, many domestic workers take pride in the work they do. Some derive pleasure from the activities themselves including cleaning the house, cooking, and taking care of children. They feel good watching children grow up and become adults. They feel satisfied when employers come home, happy to find a clean space, and praise them; when they are respected and given the autonomy to decide how to carry out their work; when they are valued and remunerated enough to be able to support their own households. But the most important thing is that maids feel that having a salary makes them feel independent and to some extent freer to express their opinions and fight against domestic violence against women.

3.0 Sexual Harassment in the Domestic Work

Firstly, it is necessary to develop the definition of sexual harassment, a context and information necessary for understanding the evil that sexual harassment is.

According to Silva (2020), harassment consists of an insistent and inconvenient persecution that targets a specific person or group, affecting their peace, dignity, and freedom. There are different types of harassment, such as moral, sexual, psychological, virtual, judicial, among others. However, they are all based on the principle of persecuting and forcing someone to do something against their will in exchange for favours or for some coercion. Sexual harassment is a type of violence that is characterized by the insistence of a certain person in insinuating himself sexually to another, causing discomfort in the latter. Sexual harassment at work is unwanted behaviour practiced with some degree of reiteration by a person in a higher category than the harassed person, and with the objective or effect of affecting the dignity of the person or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or destabilizing environment, where he negotiates the exchange of sexual favours in exchange for labour benefits.

Thus, if any of these acts described above are committed against a worker, he must be penalized. However, how can sexual harassment be controlled in a domestic setting, where there are no witnesses or other forms of evidence?

Domestic workers are among the most vulnerable when it comes to abuse in the workplace. Due to their isolation (working alone in a household) and the nature of the work (unskilled), domestic workers are subject to many types of unfair treatment and exploitation ranging from long working hours to substandard wages.

Sexual harassment may consist of the employer or member of the household making sexual jokes or comments, commenting on the domestic worker's clothing or figure, making rude noises such as whistling or laughing noises, touching, or caressing the domestic worker, demanding sexual favours so that the worker can keep his job and even rape. It is very difficult for domestic workers to report such cases, as they work in isolation and it is their word against the abuser, with rarely any sympathetic witnesses. Domestic workers also fear being fired if they report any sexual harassment, because they are repressed with fear of losing their jobs, which are the only guarantee of being able to satisfy their household needs. Interviewee 14 said,

> *That's right because I'm afraid of losing my job. Sometimes when I wake up to go to work, I get lazy because I don't know how to prevent my boss from wanting to have something with me. I'm only safe when my lady is at home... (October 2021)*

During the focus groups discussions sensitive information was revealed by women domestic workers regarding the fact that they sometimes have to submit themselves and deal with situations of sexual harassment if they were to guarantee their employment. Some women said that they had to change jobs several times in order to avoid harassment. In some cases, they even suffer physical attacks perpetrated by their employers' wives, because of their jealousy that their husbands like the maid. Thus, they end up losing their jobs, without the right to compensation and forfeiting their salaries.

The complexity of harassment causes several consequences in the human psyche, especially for women, and can lead to chronic diseases, incurable trauma and so many different consequences that can even prevent an individual from leading a normal life.

According to Freitas in Silva (2020) there are actual consequences in the life of the victim of crime, so it is not only a legal issue. These consequences are included in psychological, medical, and even in sociological studies. Sexual harassment is, in fact, an action that disguises itself as an option for the victim,

who may be compelled to accept giving sexual favours because of a proposal for a raise or a threat of unemployment if the sexual harassment is rejected.

Sexual harassment is a situation that negatively affects the victim when her only choice is either to be fired or have her honour violated. It is worth mentioning that in addition, there is also the possibility of even physical violence. Sexual harassment triggers a series of psychological problems for the victim that can last for long periods. Furthermore, it will cause problems in the work environment and in the general life of the person.

Ximexes in Silva (2020) demonstrates that sexual harassment in work relationships can trigger unproductivity, putting the survival of the company or workspace at risk; it can also cause the victim to be unable to work due to the trauma, thus destroying a promising career and allowing the loss of libido in the face of other traumas. In the case of domestic workers, it would have even more consequences for them, as domestic workers in the city of Maputo are in a situation of constant risk of losing their jobs, since, even with so many complaints regarding domestic work, there is a lot of competition due to the serious fact of lack of employment and constant economic crisis and their low educational background.

Therefore, according to the interviewees, they often change jobs for fear of submitting to harassment, and they say that other colleagues prefer to submit, running the risk of being beaten by their employers' wives or girlfriends, and when they decide to leave their jobs return to a situation of uncertainty for not knowing when they will have the opportunity to get another job again, and this destabilizes their development process.

4.0 Racism Issues in the Domestic Work

Over the ages there have been two viewpoints to discuss the concept of racism and race from. The first, between the 18th and 20th centuries, explained the inequalities between human peoples through nature. It was '*scientific racism*', which justified slavery by legitimizing the racial hierarchy. In the viewpoint, which took place after the Second World War, inequalities between peoples were explained through culture: the emphasis on cultural differences was offered as a justification for exclusion Portela (2017). In this way, human groups that until then were racially categorized began to form ethnic groups, to include cultural characteristics in the global understanding of the term and no longer just hereditary as in biological racism.

According to Frederickson in Portela (2017), the term racism appears in the 1920s as a product of the West, dethroning '*race'* as the dominant concept in that debate. For him, the word racism manifests itself associated with ideologies that made offensive distinctions between divisions of the *'white'* or Caucasian race, to show that Aryans or Nordics were superior to other people normally considered '*white'* or *Caucasian'*. In turn, racial discrimination can be considered as the practice of racism and the realization of prejudice. While racism and prejudice are within the scope of doctrines and judgments, worldviews and beliefs, discrimination is the adoption of practices that make them effective. Racial discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably and may be placed in a group on the basis of skin colour, '*race'*, national or ethnic origin and social class.

The United Nations says that racial discrimination means any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, which has the objective of nullifying or restricting the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise on the same level (in equal conditions) of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

However, when talking about racial discrimination at work, Portela (2017) argues that it is a type of mechanism among a complex set of racist practices, whose cumulative effects reproduce the inferior social positions of black people, perpetuating racial stratification within social spheres such as the labour market. This mechanism of discrimination occurs through the racial division of labour; unequal unemployment among social groups; among racial groups; the differential at work between black and white workers and the precarious (physical and intellectual) reproduction of the black workforce.

The problem of slavery left a look at domestic work, as if those who performed it were in an inferior and servitude situation. Even after the abolition of slavery, people who are in a superior financial situation, who hire the services of domestic workers, still feel superior, and even though they are people of the same colour, as Fanon in Lewis (2014) avers "*the will of black is to be like white. For the Negro there is but one destiny. And he is white. The Negro has long since admitted the indisputable superiority of the white, and all his efforts tend to achieve a white existence"*. Thus, the question of domestic work arising from slavery, in the relationship between workers and employers, it is felt not only an economic inequality, but also a racial inequality.

The devaluation of manual work is directly related to who, in the beginning of colonial society, practised this work, *'black work', 'slave work'*. The maids were responsible for reproductive work, from cooking and cleaning the house to raising children and satisfying their masters' sexual needs. Hence, there is also a peer perception or a sense of belonging that employers have in relation to their employees, which makes the practice of harassment frequent. The maids freed the white ladies from taking care of their own homes and their families, which marks the identity of domestic work, which today still has the roots of women's subordination in its characteristics.

According to Lewis (2014), reproductive work, which is the emotional, manual, routine work of taking care of those who cannot self-care, clean and tidy, cook and feed, is not socially valued nor recognized in the social organization of work, because it does not constitute a production activity and does not produce surplus value, therefore, it does not produce profit. In a capitalist society it does not constitute valid time. The value of domestic work has to be faced from the intersection of social cuts in which gender, race and class are fundamental. Intersectionality allows us a look that goes beyond the one-sidedness of an analysis that does not outline the type of subordination experienced by these workers.

Since women who work in the domestic sector are seen as if they still continued to serve their bosses, just like slave women, their bodies were always used, both reproductive during slavery, object of male satisfaction, of milk for the masters' children and capable of performing any and all domestic service. These representations have instilled in the cultural imagination that women are just bodies, without minds, incapable of ascending socially because they are seen as disabled, incompetent, and inferior, but also as not worthy of changing their social situation. Housework is one of the many forms of work that reflect racist and patriarchal cultural thinking, which massacres the daily lives of these women who, in their daily lives, are seen as domestic servants, and this is their profession that they deserve to stay in, with no prospect of development. However, this thought must be overcome, creating laws that consider domestic work as any work, which is legally considered to be at the same level of coverage as the labour law.

According to Eurico (2018) it is necessary to question the absence of institutional debate on the impacts of racism in the country as well as on the importance of collecting information on race or colour; as this issue has not yet been well examined. Promotion of measures against racism requires a broad debate and awareness of the impacts that more than three centuries of slavery have on the lives of men and women in the different generational cycles. Undoubtedly, this is an important initiative, but the collection of data cannot be understood as an end in itself. The mere filling of the data as a protocol requirement, without articulation and regard to the socio-historical determinations that contribute to the maintenance of generational poverty cannot encompass the multiplicity of factors that make this part of the working class more vulnerable. In the words of informant 15,

> *Sometimes I feel discriminated against… if I were black like me maybe I wouldn't treat myself like this… even when it's with a black boss they treat us badly, but when we go to complain the matter is usually resolved, but when it's a problem with a white boss it's difficult he is called... We are even afraid to go to Quaixar when he is white... we know that nothing will happen... here in white Mozambique they just want to ask you for money... just pay..." (Interviewed 15, October 2021)*

The difficulty of understanding racism as a perverse mark of social relations in Maputo and in Mozambique is entrenched in the entire socio-historical construction which is structured based on the comparison they make in relation to the days of slavery; thus, the issue of servitude, domestic work and poverty are linked to racial issues. One can notice that in a number of speeches reference is made to '*the poor or ignorant black people'*, even though the person who speaks is black. In this case, the word black is attributed to the stigma of inferiority, disqualification, naturalized violence, among many other adjectives.

Racial equality presupposes fair treatment and social protection within the scope of labour relations, through affirmative action. Such actions should aim to curb situations such as the historical lack of protection of domestic workers, day workers, nannies, caregivers of the elderly or sick and those who, throughout their lives have not benefitted from social security. Thus, it is necessary that the racial issue be discussed in the context of domestic work in Mozambique to make the population aware of the need to think in a way that promotes equality, avoiding stigmas regarding race, financial status, work, or any other form of inequality.

When it comes to domestic work, it is impossible not to highlight the elements of the racial and sexual division of work, which relegates to women the almost exclusive responsibility for cleaning and caring for the family. However, one finds in these women the hope of making their work the source to guarantee their economic security.

Since generally white-race employers pay better wages, many women hope that they will be able to secure the best livelihoods if they worked for them. However, some workers tell that, in addition to being harassed by their employers, they are seen as mere slaves and servants, having to obey their masters because they pay better wages. At one of the interviews held in Maputo, Domestic Worker 3 shared,

> *I used to work for markets, but it didn't take me long. I used to get paid better with them, especially Europeans, because the monhé (name used to designate people of Indian or Arab origin) don't pay well. But Europeans pay good wages... it's just that they treat us badly, and my boss already wanted forcing me to have sex with him, that's why I stopped working... it's hard to denounce because as he has a lot of money, he never gives anything. (Domestic Worker 3, August 2021)*

Therefore, as we can see, all actions are focused on the need that women have to empower themselves, earn their livelihood and that of their families, a fact that is used to oppress and harass women, jeopardizing the realization of their dreams. The issue of racism is very important to be brought up in a discussion forum in our context, not only because it is a subject that is still little discussed due to the fears that I believe the Mozambican people have, due to our financial dependence and other political fears. The fact is that this issue exists and is very much linked to the way female workers feel they are treated by their employers when they are of one race or another.

5.0 Conclusions

The data collected in this research demonstrate how difficult it is to address the issue of sexual harassment of domestic workers. Indeed, this experience of violence is characterized by the overlapping of class, race, and gender discrimination. It is gender-related violence that cannot be isolated from other forms of oppression, such as poverty and racism. Besides the difficulty of domestic workers in naming and denouncing sexual harassment, it is necessary

to recognize the broader social context, which, at the individual and collective level, denies and delegitimizes their experiences of structural oppression.

With regard to sexual harassment, there is still much to discover, as it is a sensitive issue, which domestic workers themselves do not feel liberated enough to address. The fear of losing their jobs or of creating situations of distrust by their employers makes the subject of harassment little discussed and little reported. Allied to this, there is the racial issue that constrains domestic workers, due to the political and social reality that is lived in Mozambique, specifically in Maputo.

In this case, it can be concluded that domestic work is still regarded as work where employees must only fulfil duties, without being covered by their rights. Their employers put themselves in a position where they take their female workers as their instruments, not only to tirelessly take care of domestic chores, but also to serve as sexual servant. Given this, we clearly see that, for the reasons mentioned above, domestic workers find themselves in a compromising situation which forces them to give up their job, thus failing to progress financially and achieve their economic freedom. Since there is the belief that those white employers pay higher wages, domestic servants try to get work with them, but the harassment and mistreatment are even worse, due to the existence of post-colonial thinking, which puts the domestic servants as retainers in the same mould as in colonial times.

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