

Hindrances to Gender Parity between Men and Women in Political and Economic Leadership: A Zimbabwe Case Study in Harare Metropolitan Province

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Abstract: *This study was apprehended by gender inequalities happening in political and economic leadership. Gender inequality is a persuasive issue of concern globally. Beside advocacy and national frameworks for equality, women are still alienated from political and economic leadership. The case study was done in Harare Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe. The study has adopted liberal feminism theory that postulates that men and women should not be treated differently when opportunities arise. The study was anchored on qualitative research methods which is interpretative in nature. Ground work was done and data were gathered. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality to the evidence provided. The study instruments were interviews, films, a focus group and participant observation. Data was analysed using thematic analysis. Key findings were that most women are frustrated of waiting for promotional grading into leadership. Most women have decided to become cross borders. Some women are asked to exchange sex for a promotion and re - grading to a higher post. Women gets frustrated and decide to look for other means for survival to cater for their needs and family. Furthermore, the study revealed that men have higher qualifications than women at academic level. There is therefore need to educate women about gender inequality issues at an early stage as they grow up. Present policies should also have follow - ups to make sure that they are being applied accordingly.*

Keywords: Gender disparity, gender imbalance, gender awareness, gender mainstreaming and gender equity

1. Introduction

The research study focused on gender inequalities taking place in political and economic leadership and has used Harare Metropolitan Province in Zimbabwe as a case study. The International Development Department (2009) states that we cannot separate the two, as economic activities generates resources needed to support political activities. The study hoped to improve the gender disparities between men and women to enhance development in Zimbabwe and elsewhere, globally. According to this research, removing the obstacles which are blocking women's lively contribution to political and economic leadership would increase productivity in organisations such as parastatals, government institutions, private sectors and NGOs. If women are included in decision making table, this would enhance development, as women knows issues that affects them most, rather than basing on their male counterparts.

It is also a concern for nations to achieve gender equality in decision making processes as a human right issue. Several international agreements were signed as allowance to include women into political and economic leadership. These agreements includes the (1995) Beijing Declaration Platform for Action and Peace and security (2000). Amongst these, others have been signed internationally, continentally, regionally and nationally. In Africa, there is the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Protocol on Women's Rights) and Solemn Declaration signed in 2004. In SADC region Southern African Development Community (SADC) was formed in 2008, in the 28th SADC Summit, held in Johannesburg, South Africa. This led into signing of

the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development by the SADC Heads of States and Government. Nationally Zimbabwe has endorsed the Domestic Violence Act of 2007 and the Education Act of 2004, as well as the Maintenance Act (1999), the Administration of Estates Act (1997), the Labour Act (Chapter 28.01), among others, to cater for women inclusion in decision making processes.

Denying women's inclusion to leadership is denying their right to enjoy their state of their lives as women comprise more than half of the population, globally. According to Zimbabwe statistics, there are more women than men in Zimbabwe. Women make up 52% of Zimbabwe's total population, (Madziyire and Mapolisa 2012). According to UN Secretary - General asserts, 'gender equality is an unfinished business'. Gender parity has been overshadowed. It is yet a gap to close. An extension to achieve gender equality by certain years is still an ongoing process. It is the quest for women that the gender gap between men and women in political and economic leadership would close. This would pave a way to promote women's sense of selfless and also influences their social change. The gap in political and economic leadership has been well stated by the following literature which was surveyed in this study.

2. Literature Survey

The report by the Guardian News and media Limited (2019) stated that no country is near achieving gender equality on a global scale by 2030. There are only 22.8% women holding leadership positions in politics and business arena, (United Nations Women 2013). Global gender gap report (2015) asserts it is going to take 118 years for countries to close the

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gender gap. As narrated by Global Gender Gap (2018), internationally, Western Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean gender gap is below 30%. In Africa, very few leadership positions are allocated to women, according to AttiWorku. The statistics of women in Africa on leadership positions as directors and cabinet members tally with statistics from United States with only 5% women appointed as chief executive officers and 27% as cabinet members, MvKinsey's Women Matter (2016). According to McKinsey's Women Matter (2016), there are only 24% of parliamentarians, 22% of cabinet members and 5% of chief executive officers (CEOs) women in Africa.

According to SADC Gender Monitor 2017) in SADC region, there are few women included in political and economic leadership. Taking into account all SADC members, there was 26.6% in 2005, 20.6% in 2011 and 23% in 2011 women in political and economic leadership. At domestic level, by 2015 Zimbabwe had only 25% representation of women in public service organisation (United Nations 2015). According to Measuring Differences on Board of Directors (2005) there are only 15 women appointed as chief executive officers out of the 103 chief executive officers of state owned businesses. The Inter - Parliamentary Union (2009) reiterates SADC has not reached the desired level. The average percentage of women in SADC parliaments in 2013 was 25.8%, signalling that the number of women in leadership roles is still very low.

According to Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender and Development barometer women in political sector in Zimbabwe is still below established benchmarks. Fewer women ran for seats in the National Assembly in the elections. In 2013 there were 90 and in 2008 there were 105, Dziva and Zvobgo (2017). According to United Nations (2015) Zimbabwe holds an average of 25% representation in public service organizations. The gap between men and women in political and economic leadership has necessitated the researcher to partake this study. There is need for solutions to end the need for women inclusion in political and economic leadership to build the nation of Zimbabwe and elsewhere.

Problem Definition

Despite that policies, declarations and agreements were endorsed to include women into political and economic leadership, Zimbabwe has not yet achieved the 50: 50% gender ratio in political and economic leadership, among other countries internationally.

3. Methodology

The research have used qualitative methods methodology to reveal and to find solution to the causes of social realities that are causing women's quest for parity in political and economic leadership. The social reality in this research is that women want to participate in political and economic leadership, which is male dominated, as reviewed by the literature review of this study. Qualitative research was used to unveil the lived experience and emotions of individuals, to understand meanings attached to men and women

Qualitative Research

The research has used qualitative research method to interpret data that cannot be quantified, as stated by Kalof et. al. (2008) that qualitative research methodology relies on understanding and interpreting narrations in form of words to comprehend aspects of social world. Data of the research was collected from primarily (audios, written transcripts and interviews) and secondary research (published documentation, public records and newspapers), Cooper and schindler (2006). The research also used the ethnography method. According to Freeman (1998) ethnography is a research process in qualitative that allows researcher to examine patterns of meanings which emerge from the data collected from participants. The researcher have used participant observation and film for data collection.

The population was drawn from women and men of all races living in Harare Metropolitan Province, in Zimbabwe. The research have used convenience sampling to select participants. The sample contained 100 participants. One on one interviews were conducted, observations were taken and one focus group was chosen for data collection. The research data was collected from willing participants and was analysed to produce results. This research has also considered the ethical principles which includes honest, integrity, openness, respect and confidentiality.

4. Results and Discussion

The study was carried out to develop a socio - economy matrix that will enhance the inclusion of women in political and economic leadership. This study was limited to government, parastatals, private organisation and the general public chosen as a sample of this research. It was also taken as a revelatory research, to support gender parity in all other sectors that were not chosen in the sample of the research. The beneficiary aimed at were political parties, NGOs, parastatals, private sectors and the society itself. Major findings of this study lies on gender disparities happening in Harare Metropolitan Province as elsewhere. Data was gathered from ethnography observations, interviews and a focus group. The themes that merged from the study were glass ceiling, biological factors, personal bias, institutional mind set and job dissatisfaction. The researcher believes that if the number of the sample under study is increased it will present results different from this research.

Demographic characteristics of the respondent

The researcher did not use any criteria to select respondents. The age group of the participants ranged from 20 - 65 years. The age group was grouped into three (20 - 35 years, 36 - 45 years, and 46 - 65). The participants were given pseudonyms. The age group of the participants revealed that the old age group was phasing out with the young youths emerging. The results showed that more men are emerging in employment sector than women. As the age increases the number of women at employment decreases. This signals a job dissatisfaction in women sector.

Educational Qualifications

Participants were asked to state their qualifications. The participants indicated that eight men had master's degree, one had a first degree and other seven had unspecified

qualifications. Two women revealed that they had master's degree, seven had first degree and seven had unspecified qualifications. The outcome tally with ILO (2019) who says 'women have overtaken men in terms of tertiary education. Despite that women has overtaken men in tertiary education, men had higher qualifications than women. Indicating men had acquired higher education than women. According to the findings of this study, Manager (2) posited that apart from the education women and men have acquired, women should be educated from grass roots. Men and women should be educated about gender parity from primary level and throughout to their academics. Manager (2) suggests that there should be equal ratio in leadership.

Manifestation of gender parity in political and economic leadership

The participants were given pseudonyms. Matha indicates that both men and women are allowed to participate in political campaigns. This indicates that policies to accommodate women in politics do exist, globally, internationally, regionally and at national level, as indicated in the literature review of this study. Jim indicates that women are being discriminated. This tally with Guardian News (2019) that no country in the world is near achieving gender parity. John asserts that gender parity can only manifest, if only success is acknowledged. If women are educated they should be given chance to participate in politics and the economy of the country as leaders, indicating that there is need for fairness in higher posts allocation between men and women. Marita indicates equal distributions of opportunities. Jack says there is much improvement in inclusion of women into political and economic leadership. This indicated that the participants were knowledgeable about the topic under study. The themes which emerged were bias and prejudice.

5. Observations

The research has done observations in one government institution. The observations revealed that there were only two (2) women on leadership against 14 men (including the parastatals of that institution). The researcher observed them as they take their daily activities.

Characteristics

The research observed that all the women were bold and hard working. This tally with ILO (2019) that women have become engines for economic growth. These women were allocated budgetary sections i. e. finance and audit section. In these sections men are allocated as deputies. This tally with Mutingwende (2017) there were few women appointed as Chief Executive Officers. He states out of the 103 chief executive officers of State – owned - entity, there are only 15 female CEOs.

On male side, the researcher observed that men use commands on their subordinates. Men are allocated on authoritative post such as Human resources and policy planning. Men uses their subordinates to attain their achievements than women. At ministerial level, the minister's post was occupied with a man and the deputy was a man too.

Meetings

Senior management of the organisation contained two (2) women who were appointed as directors. The meeting was chaired by a man. During the meetings, every manager was given a chance to present the outcomes of their departments. Indicating that everyone in the meeting has a chance to air the progress and challenges of his/her department. The themes that merged from the study are hyper masculinity, institutional mind - set and gender bias.

Ethnography observations

Culture

The researcher used ethnography research design to study the behaviours, patens and beliefs of men and women chosen as a sample for the study. The researcher studied the culture of the Shona people. The research chose a sample from the central business area from those in the free market and shops. Most women dominate in this areas. The researcher observed that women are very hard workers. The researcher observed women carrying heavy loads everyday as the business hours commences. The study also observed that women are negotiators. One could be seen convincing a customer to buy, and being successful. From the interviews that the researcher had with these women, it was observed that women has job disaffection as they have to wait longer or never get a higher position in an organisation. Women end up in informal sector to cater for their needs.

At home it was revealed that women does all domestic jobs i. e. cooking, sweeping, washing clothes, looking after the children among others. Indicating that women are hard workers. The above stated findings also indicates that women are care givers. This tally with chabaya, Rembe and Wasesango (2009) who states social background has contributed to exclusion of women in political and economic leadership. Women are seen as a care taker to the family. The themes that merged were personal bias, biological factor and historical background.

As a way forward to cater for these uneven sharing of leadership positions, the empirical studies of this research recommended that there should be implementation of gender mainstreaming, training, staff development and adoption of economies of scale in study abroad programs for capacity building.

6. Conclusion

From the results revealed by this study, the researcher concluded that gender disparities can be dealt with in various ways. According to the interviews, quester views distributed, focus group conducted, it has been revealed that, there are numerous ways that can lead to achievement of gender parity between men and women in political and economic leadership. A sample was chosen using various techniques, which helped the researcher to gather different views about the subject matter and necessitated the accomplishment of this research.

The researcher aimed at identifying to what extent women are involved on decision making table in political and economic leadership, to examine the exigencies in

Zimbabwe's political and economic leadership, to examine why 52% of the population, who are women voting for 49% who are men and to find solutions to end gender disparities in political and economic leadership.

The study concluded that women are appointed as deputies in political and economic leadership. Women are enslaved as they are defined as care givers and mostly employed in informal sector where they carry heavy loads. Women are also defined as sexual instruments to satisfy men when they want promotion. Other reasons which are blocking women from participating in political and economic leadership are that, women are not campaigning for political leadership posts.

The relevance of the study is to impact motivation to workers, to establish indistinguishable working environment between the two counterparts and to enhance development in Zimbabwe and other countries, globally. It is also relevant to other countries who are seeking ways to end gender disparities as a commitment to millennium goals. This research can also be reviewed by other scholars for further research purposes.

7. Future Scope

This research could not include all organisations in Zimbabwe, but can be taken as a revelatory research in promoting of gender parity in all other institutions, which were not chosen in the sample of this study. The samples can be enlarged and the outcomes might be improved from this study, to expand the scope of this subject.

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