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**The Extent of Contribution and Challenges of Women Council
Representatives Performance in Decision Making Process: The Case
of Gulu District Local Government (2016-2020)**



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The Extent of Contribution and Challenges of Women Council Representatives Performance in Decision Making Process: The Case of Gulu District Local Government (2016-2020)

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Abstract

Purpose: The study aimed at presenting the struggle of women councilors to remain active and relevant while participating at the Gulu district council politic and interrogates the challenges they face while exercising their legislative duties.

Methodology: The research deployed qualitative methods of data collection including key informant interviews, focus group discussions, document review like council minutes. The study used in-depth interviews, focus group discussion based on the research questions derived from the objectives of the study. Meanwhile some data were quantified just for easy presentation purposes of the study data.

Findings: This study argues that Women Councilors at local level are disadvantaged at the council decision making process and general council political participation compared to their male counterparts due to many factors that include biological, level of education plus the abstract environment already set by the patriarchy society. This study also adds that in the case of Gulu district, one of the post war conflict districts in Uganda, even the local media is hostile to the women councilors as they majorly report only negative things about them and not give them a positive projection in the press although beyond that, the study also notes that the media in question majorly rely on male councilors as their news sources and not the women councilors denying-female commiserate voices in their stories.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study recommended legislative training for women councilors and the use of local languages in extreme cases at the district council level to allow free expression of the group who could not comprehend English for council debates. The study also recommended gender mainstreaming in the local press to uphold deliberate gains by donors and the government on gender mainstreaming and inclusiveness at local level.

Keywords: *Women Council, Representatives, Council Decision-making, Local Government*

Introduction:

The National Resistance Movement Party (NRM) headed by President Yoweri Museveni Kaguta who became President of Uganda by 1986 is highly credited for having given women a green light in politics more than any government before him through the affirmative action lense both at Local and National level Politics of Uganda (Adi, 2009; Ahikire, 2013; Goetz, 2002; Tamale, 1999).

Women in Uganda join politics for so many reasons and Chemutai, (2023) argues that although cultural and personal motive drives women to join politics, still the personal motivation (Intrinsic) affects their performance than cultural (extrinsic) motives in joining politics, this entwined the legal provisions in the country that made women blatantly talk about their representations and motives of joining politics since the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda has been hailed in Africa as one of the most gender responsive legislation on the continent. Chapter Four of the Constitution (Bill of Rights) provides for affirmative action for women, not only in politics but also provides for their equitable representation in statutory bodies (Constitution of the Republic of Uganda: 1995).

The Uganda Local Government Act (1997) and the National Gender Policy (2007) further operationalise the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda regarding affirmative action for women in district council politics. The same Constitution establishes the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development which superintends matters of gender and development in the country. Women's equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women. It is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account (Ballington, 2008).

This paper argues that even with this stride, there are still challenges and glaring gaps that disfavor the participation of women in district council politics in Uganda. There seems to be a discrepancy between theory and practice when it comes to the participation of women in district council politics. Few studies focus on women participation at local council level hence this study assessed the extent of the contribution of Women Council Representatives in Gulu district council during decision making processes between the period of 2016 to 2020 and also discusses the challenges that prevents women from actively participating in Gulu District council political process.

Study Objectives

To assess the extent of the contribution of Women Council Representatives in Gulu district council during decision making processes between the period of 2016 to 2020

To Investigate the challenges that prevent women from actively participating in Gulu District council political process

Literature

Women's participation in local government politics has been seen to depend on factors such as statutory provisions, national policies and programmes, local government requirements, role of Non-Governmental Organizations, training, regional and international conferences, initiatives by women in local government and data collection (Ndlovu and Mutale 2013).

Women all over the world have historically been excluded from political participation and governance, with very low numbers in African Parliaments, women's exclusion continues despite the fact that their inclusion and equality in the democratic process has been recognized as a precondition for democracy, rather than as a consequence of democratic governance (Ibid).

In an attempt to right the above wrong, Article 9 of the African Women's Rights Protocol obliges African states to take specific positive action to ensure participation of women in governance and political life. The article provides as follows:

State parties shall take specific positive action to promote participative governance and the equal participation of women in the political life of their countries through affirmative action, enabling national legislation and other measures to ensure that: (a) women participate without any discrimination in all elections; (b) women are represented equally at all levels with men in all electoral processes; (c) women are equal partners with men at all levels of development and implementation of state policies and development programmes.

State parties shall ensure increased and effective representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making (Owiso and Sefah, 2017).

From the literature reviewed, there gaps relating to actual participation of women in district council politics. It is evident that most scholars centred around involvement of women in politics generally and did not delve much in exploring extent of involvement of women in district politics especially in Uganda.

Methodology

The research deployed qualitative methods of data collection including key informant interviews, focus group discussions, document review like council minutes. We used in-depth interviews, focus group discussion based on the research questions derived from the objectives of the study. Meanwhile some data were quantified just for easy presentation purposes of the study data.

The Period of 2016 to 2020 is desirable as it gives the record. The researcher used this data to present a debate based on other current studies and phenomenon.

Area of study

This study was conducted in Gulu district and in particular the Gulu District Local Council Five. This constituted the district council and is the highest political decision-making level in the district according to the decentralisation policy in Uganda (The Local Government Act, 1997). The researcher visited the two sub-counties of Unyama and Bungatira in Gulu district. The district is

located in Northern Uganda approximately 333 km north of Kampala; the capital city of Uganda. The district sits on coordinates 02^o49'50.0"N, 32^o19'13.0"E. Majority of the residents in the rural areas are peasant farmers while a handful practice commercial farming and petty trade for livelihood besides others being formally employed by the government at both local and central level governments while others serve in the private sector and non-governmental sector and some are unemployed.

Study population

The target population included local council leaders at the district level and women at the local council five. This is because they are part and parcel of Gulu district local council which is the district's highest decision-making organ as per the decentralisation policy of Uganda. The other participants in the study included, The Chief Administrative Officer, the Clerk to Council, the Speaker of Council and the District Chairman as well as communities in selected areas in Bungatira and Unyama Sub-counties in Gulu district. These are key stakeholders in the legislative processes in a District Local Government.

Sample size and sampling techniques

The researcher used a sample size of Twenty-six. The sample size of Twenty-six respondents formed part of the sample chosen from the different categories of respondents. The summary of the samples is shown below:

Table 1:

List of respondents

S/No.	Name/category	Number	Sampling technique	Data Collection Method
1	District Chairman	1	Purposive	Key Informant Interview/observation
2	Chief Administrative Officer	1	Purposive	Key Informant Interview
3	Speaker of Council	1	Purposive	Key Informant Interview
4	Clerk to Council	1	Purposive	Key Informant Interview
5.	Councilors	6	Purposive	Key informant interview
6.	Community members	16	Convenience	Focus Group Discussions

Purposive sampling was adopted during the study, in the first instance, based on an individual's relative understanding on the issues of women's participation in local government legislative processes. The study took on purposive sampling for the reason that respondents were deemed knowledgeable on the subject matter of the participation of women in politics at the local level.

The decision to employ purposive sampling was based on the premise that careful selecting of stakeholders in this study was a good criterion for matching interviews with respondents. This 'investigator responsiveness' to broader and specific contextual issues resulted in 'sampling adequacy', a strategy for good analysis and working with rigour (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). This refers to the fact that participants to be interviewed had knowledge of the research topic, their own experiences and understanding of women's participation in district council politics in Gulu district in northern Uganda.

Data collection methods and instruments

The research deployed qualitative methods of data collection including key informant interviews, focus group discussions, document review like council minutes. The researcher used key informant interview guide for key informant interviews, focus group discussion guide for focus group discussions base on the research questions derived from the objectives of the study.

Meanwhile some results were quantified for easy data presentation from the field study data.

Key informant interviews

The researchers used key informant interviews to collect data about the participation of women in district council politics in Gulu district council from respondents deemed to have adequate information in that aspect. The category of respondents interviewed included; the CAO, District Chairman, Speaker of Council, Clerk to Council, representative of CSO and selected women councilors in Gulu district. An interview guide was used as the major tool in this method.

Focus Group Discussion

Here, the researchers deployed focus group discussion guide as the data collection instrument. The researcher held two focus group discussions with women to establish their perspective on women's participation in the district council politics in Gulu district council. One was in the sub-county of Unyama and the other in Bungatira sub-county in Gulu district. Each of the focus group discussions consisted of eight (8) members and therefore a total of sixteen (16) community members formed part of the focus group discussions. The focus group discussions were useful because the researcher sought to understand the group perception, understanding and experiences with regards to an issue of interest (Odiya, 2009). A focus group discussion guide was the tool used.

Document review

Secondary data/ information was reviewed from various documents, which included; reports from various institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations at local, national and international levels, policy briefs/ statements from ministries as well as the local council minutes and reports.

Limitations and delimitations to the study

There were only two focus group discussions conducted (Bungatira and Unyama Sub-Counties) in the entire district. More focus group discussions in the other Sub-Counties of Gulu district would have provided a more comprehensive analysis of the situation. However, triangulating data collection using other methods like key informant interviews and document review helped to address this challenge. The study was limited to women Councilors representative participation in Gulu district council decision making process instead of the entire local government politics.

Findings

Response Rate

The 26 people response rate was achieved hence the study met its expectation 100%.

Findings on Contribution of women council representatives in Gulu District Council decision making processes

Political processes are often influenced by numbers. In any political contest, the party that controls the number is mostly likely to control the outcome of such processes/contest. In trying to establish Contribution the women council representatives in Gulu District Council decision making processes, we reviewed relevant documents (such as district council minutes, District Executive Committee and Committees of Council minutes) with the Speaker and Clerk to Council in Gulu District Council. Specific focus was on Council as the supreme decision-making body in the political processes in the district, the District Executive Committee which superintends over the day-to-day administration of the district and the standing committees of council whose recommendations are the bed rock of council decisions often.

Gender Composition of Council

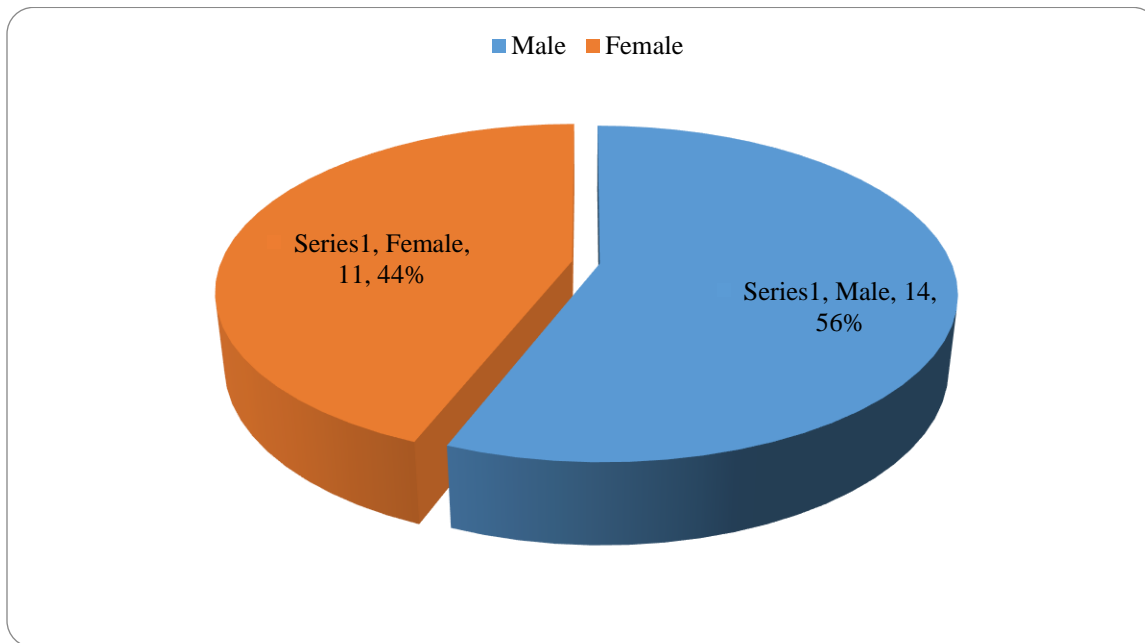
Council is the highest decision-making organ of the district. It is vested with the powers of; legislation, planning and resource mobilization (Uganda Local Government Act, 1997). According to documents reviewed (Minutes of Gulu District Local Council 2016-2017) the Gulu District Council consists of twenty-five (25) members who are elected by popular vote through universal adult suffrage, majority of the councilors were male. Of these twenty-five (25) councilors, eleven (11) are women; constituting a percentage of 44 of the current council of Gulu District.

The majority of the female members of council joined council through affirmative action, while the rest were representatives of special interest groups (youth, workers, older persons and persons

with disability). There was only one female councilor who joined council as a directly elected representative. Out of the 11 female members of council, six were elected under affirmative action (Sub-county women representatives), 4 were elected as representatives of special interest groups (youth, workers, older persons and persons with disability) and one is a directly elected councilor representing Paicho Sub- County.

Figure 1:

Gender Composition of Gulu District Council 2016-2020



According to figure above, the male councilors are the majority of legislators and therefore have an advantage over their female counterparts in Gulu District Council. This affects the participation of women in the decision-making process as alluded to by one of the woman councilors who was representing two sub counties.

“When matters that require voting come, we are often defeated by numbers”.

She went on to cite an incident in council in March 2018 adding,

“When we were debating a petition by women of Bungatira Sub-county and the Speaker put up the matter to vote, the motion was lost because our numbers were few, we were outnumbered by the men”.

In the record of Council, the male councilors unanimously voted against a motion to consider a petition by women in Bungatira Sub-county. The women had petitioned council over the

increasing cases of domestic violence and requested council to formulate an ordinance to stop the vice.

Gender Composition of the District Executive Committee:

The District Executive Committee (DEC) headed by the District Chairperson is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the district. The District Executive Committee is responsible for formulating bills and policies, budgets for consideration of Council. Members of the District Executive Committee are appointed by the District Chairperson. In terms of gender composition of the District Executive Committee, majority were male while only a few were female. Out of the six members of District Executive Committee, four (4) were male while two (2) were females. The two females in DEC occupied dockets that are seen to be critical for the advancement of women issues-the women occupied the portfolio of; i) Education, Health and Social Services and ii) Production, Marketing and Natural Resources. However, the most critical positions in terms of decision making in the District Executive Committee are occupied by men. The District Chairperson who is the head of District Executive Committee and the District Vice Chairperson who is the Leader of Government Business in Council are all men as well as the Secretary Finance who controls resource allocation in council.

Figure 2:

Gender Composition of the District Executive Committee of Gulu District

Source:

District Executive Committee Minutes, Financial Year 2016/2017

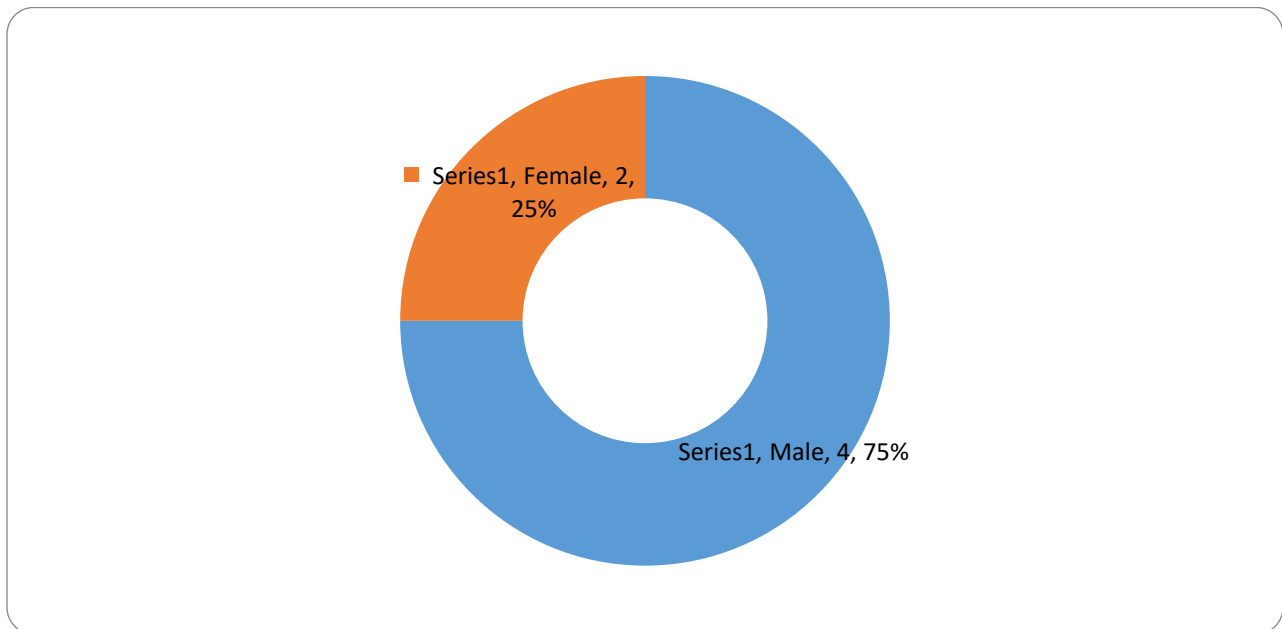


Figure 2 above reveals a huge numerical disparity between the male and female in the District Executive Committee. There were evidences to suggest that the numerical disparity negates the extent to which the women can contribute in the decision-making process in council. In an interview with one of the female secretaries, she noted.

“We are just two in the District Executive Committee and we are always overshadowed by the men; two women among four men-you will feel shy and just comply with what the men say”.

Committee Leadership

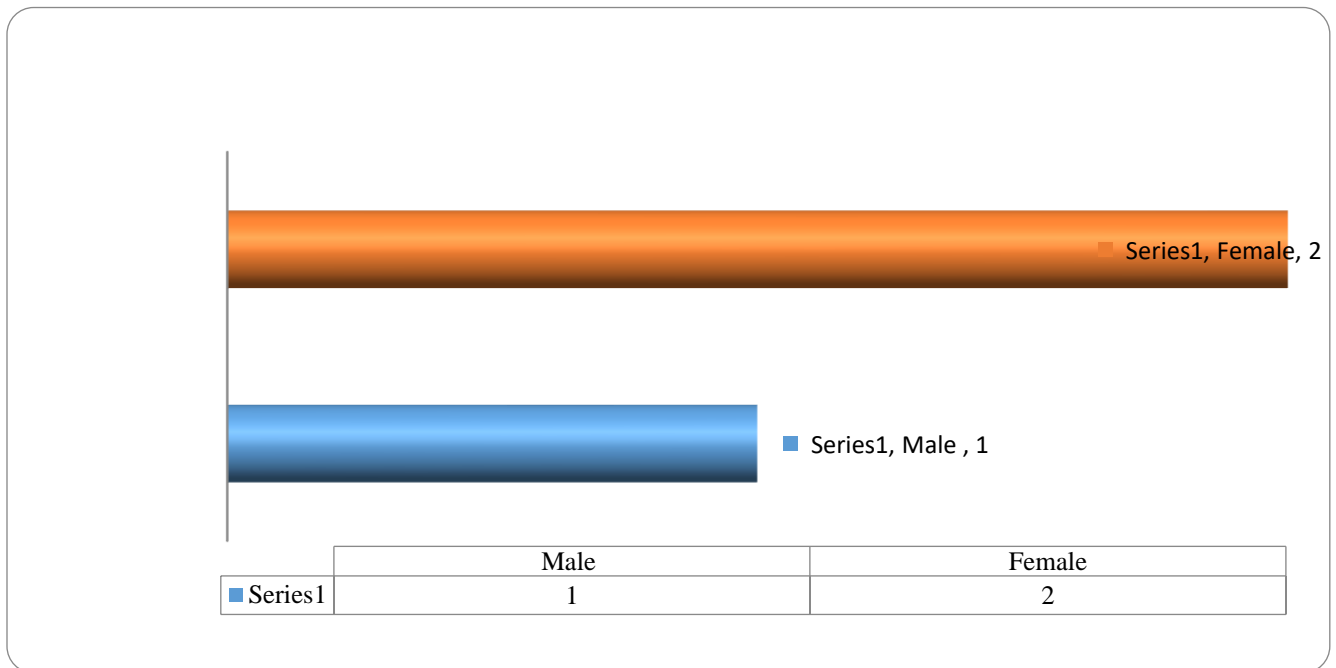
There are were three committees of council; i) Committee of Works, Technical Services, Production, Marketing and Natural Resources, ii) Committee of Finance, Planning, Administration and Investment and, iii) Committee of Social Services. These committees are critical in the legislative processes of council. They are responsible for, reviewing bills and motions presented in council, reviewing budgets and sector work plans and performing other functions referred to it by council.

Figure 3

Committee Chairpersons by Gender

Source:

Gulu District Council Committee Minutes, Financial Year 2016/2017



From the figure 3above, more women are in committee leadership compared to the men. The number of women in committee leadership corresponded to the extent of women’s participation at

the committee level. A review of the minutes of the committee's show that women debated more at a committee level compared to their male counterpart. When asked about this, the Chairperson of the Social Service Committee noted that;

“Women feel more comfortable debating at the committee level for two main reasons; one because the committees are chaired by fellow women and two because there are not so many members on the committee as compared to council”.

Decisions of council are arrived at through council resolutions and often involve a process that starts with moving a motion in council. A councillor can contribute to the decision-making process of the council through a multipronged approach such as; i) debating in council and committees, ii) moving motions in council, iii) petitioning council and, iv) holding feedback meetings with the electorates.

Levels of Debates in Council and Committees

An analysis of the records of council within the three years revealed the top five debaters in council were male councillors. The women debated more than the men at committee levels. In trying to understand the level of debates by women in council and committees, the researcher undertook a review of the Local Government Council Scorecard Assessment for FY 2016 /2017 which revealed a substantially low level of debate by the female councillors. The report stated that;

“There were fewer women who debated compared to the men. The top five debaters in council in the FY2016/2017 were male councillors”.

Council minutes of the subsequent financial years revealed the same trend of male domination in council debate while the women were more preoccupied with proposing for documents to be received and seconding motions. In an interview with one of the council leaders he noted that;

“It is true that men dominate debate in council, the women who are active during council session are about two or three- the two committee chairpersons and one other who represents one of the Divisions”.

The reason for the low level of debate by the women during council proceedings is often the fact that the society is highly patriarchal. The women councillors sometimes feel shy and bullied by their male counterpart while some lack the confidence of speaking in front of a large audience like that in council.

This was confirmed by one of the technical head of the district.

“You see council sometimes is full of bullish, sometimes you can be shot down by point of order and point of procedure. The women feel threatened by such points of order and they prefer not to debate. The men can handle such pressure”.

This point was supported by the Council leader who noted that women feel more free and comfortable debating in committees because the members are not so many as in the full council meetings.

“At the committee, there are only five or six members and there are no points of order or procedures like in council”.

Motions introduced by Women in Council

Councillors are mandated by the Local Government Act to present views, opinions and proposals to the council for discussion. In the period between 2016 and 2019, there were twenty-six motions presented in the Gulu District Council. Records of council shows that between (2016-2019) women moved more motions in council compared to their male counterparts-women moved 14 motions compared to 12 moved by their male counterparts

Table 2:

Records of Motion moved in Council between 2016 and 2019

Financial Year	Total Number of Motions	The Motions tabled by Women Councillors
2016/2017	09	02
2017/2018	08	05
2018/2019	09	07

Source:

Gulu District Council Minutes, Financial Years 2016/17,2017/18,2018/19

The fourteen motions moved by the female councillors were however shared among four councillors meaning that in the three years between 2016 and 2019 only four female councillors were recorded to have moved motion in council as opposed to eight men who moved 12 motions amongst them within the same period.

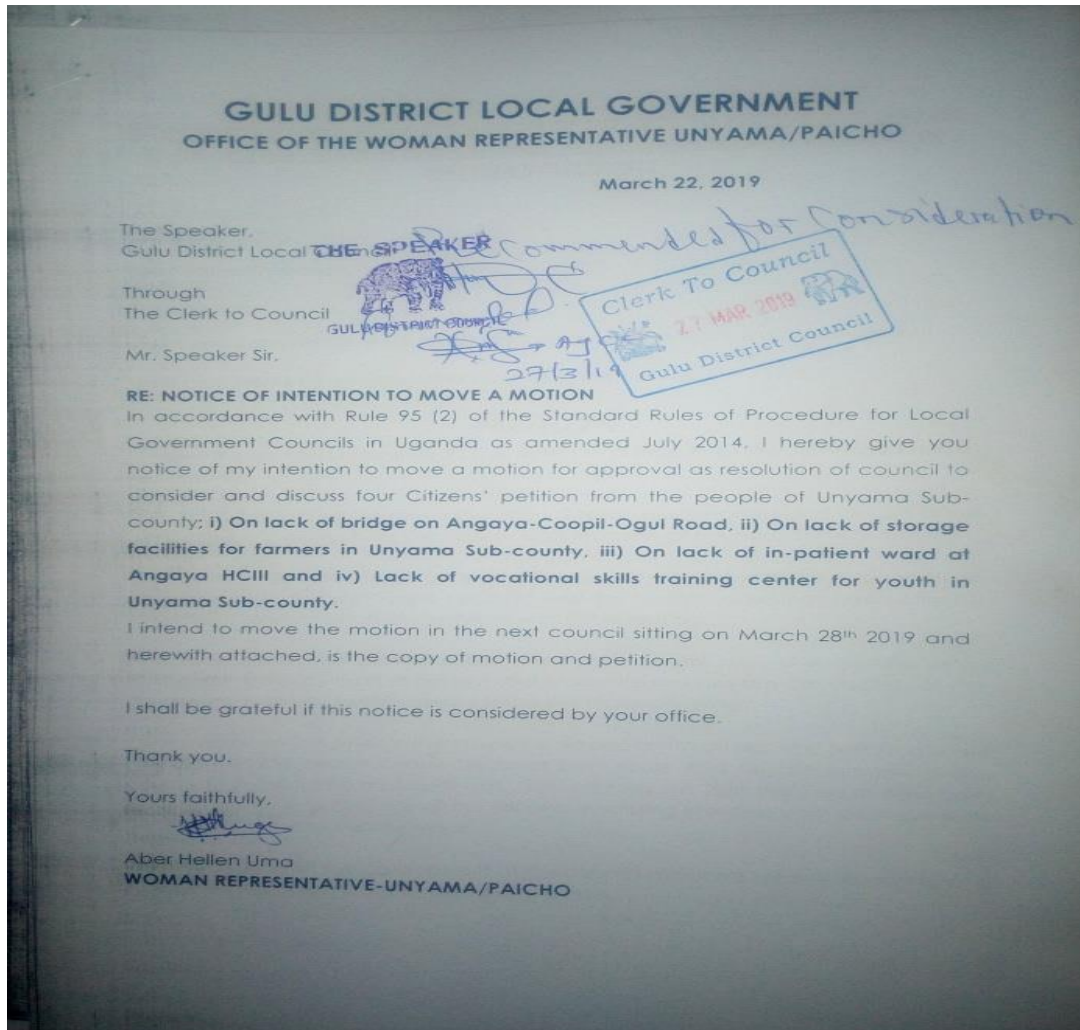
Suffice to note that whereas women councillors moved more motions within the three years, the number of women influencing decision making processes in Gulu District Council is substantially small. Analysis of council minutes revealed that women had a challenge defending the motions that they moved in council. Out of the fourteen motions moved by women councillors, only 10 were passed by council in the three years compared to their male counterparts who had all the 10 motions passed by council over the same period.

In an interview with one of the technical Council official of Gulu, noted that;

“Most of the motions moved by the female councillors were defeated on technical grounds because some were not drafted in accordance with the rules of procedures. This I think point to a gap in capacity on the part of the women councillors which should be addressed”.

Source:

Document Review 2019 –Office of the Speaker, Gulu District Local Government



Feedback Meetings.

Part 8 (a) of the third schedule of the Local Government Act enjoins councillors to; i) maintain close contact with the electoral area, and consult the people on issues to be discussed in the council, ii) report to the electorates the general decisions of the council and the actions it has taken to solve the problems raised by the residents in the electoral area. In so doing, councillors are required by

the Local Government Act to “appoint at least a day in a given period for meeting people in his or her electoral area”.

Within the four years between 2016 and 2020, women held more meetings at their constituencies compared to their male counterparts. In both the FGDs conducted in Unyama and Bungatira Sub-county, women were found to have held more feedback meetings compared to their male counterparts. A female participant during the FGD held in Unyama noted that;

“The woman council representative in this area at least comes whenever there is a serious problem or whenever there is a government program they want the community to know. She does not take more than a month without coming here”.

An analysis of the Local Government Scorecard Assessment for Gulu District Council in the FY 2016/2017 revealed that women performed better than their male counterparts in the parameter of contact with electorates as more women were found to have held meetings with their electorates. This is so because of the fact that women were easily organized around village savings and loan groups and thereby easily accessible by their representatives.

Findings on Challenges that prevent women from actively participating in council legislation in Gulu District Local Council.

Level of Education and literacy.

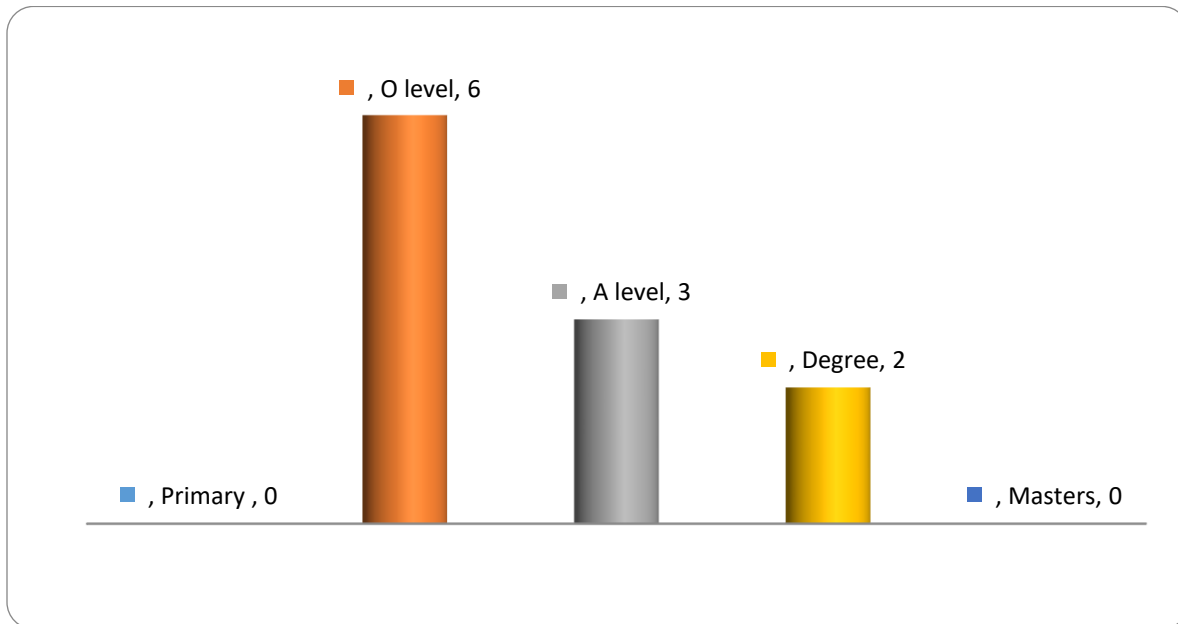
Performance of councillors is highly dependent on the level of education in so far as council debates are conducted in English and council record and documents are kept in English. Majority of the female councillor at the Gulu District Council are O-Level graduates, two of the female councillors are Degree holders while 3 are A-level graduates.

Figure 3:

Levels of Education of the Women Councillors

Source:

Gulu District Council Records 2016-2020



According to records of council, the average education level of the female councillor is Senior Two as compared to that of the men that stood at Senior 4. The relatively low level of education on the part of women councillors substantially affects their contribution in the decision-making processes of council. Women councillors had a low level of debates both in committees and council. Also, women councillors had more motion defeated on technical grounds as compared to the male councillors because the motions were not properly drafted.

Multiple Constituencies

On average, women councillors represent at least two constituencies as compared to their male counterparts who represent only one constituency. There are female councillors in Gulu District Council who represent as many as three constituencies (Example, the councillor representing Awach, Patiko, and Palaro). This increased the burdens on the women due to multiple constituencies in terms of logistics for meeting constituency obligations in the three Sub-counties. In an interview with one of such councillors had this to say.

“I represent a constituency almost the size of the district and yet I don’t have logistics to move through to the constituencies. That is my biggest challenge

Biological Roles of Women.

The biological role of a mother is a function of a woman's body and her ability to give birth. Unfortunately, this function does not diminish even with a woman's assumption of political offices. An analysis of council minutes over the three years between 2016 and 2020 shows that more women missed council meetings compared to their male counterparts-the major reason for women councillors missing council meetings was mainly related to biological functions.

In an interview with one of the Council officials it was noted.

“About Four women councillors sought for leave of Council to take care of their new born babies and subsequently missed council during these periods”.

Economic Barriers

Compared to their male counterparts, female councilors were more disadvantaged economically and relied heavily on their spouses for economic support. This constrained their entry and participation in legislative processes in council. In a focus group discussion in Bungatira, one respondent retorted thus,

“Women do not own resources but have access only...they cannot compete favorably with men in politics”.

Political Barriers

One of the challenges to effective participation of women in legislative processes was attributed to political barriers like their absence from effective participation in political parties which are seen and regarded as agents of political socialization. In one of the focus group discussions in Unyama, a respondent had this to say,

“Political parties in Gulu are not encouraging the entry of women in their structures. There is a lot of window dressing taking place. The few women in these positions do not effectively support other women leaders”.

Council Environment

The environment in council was also singled out a deterrent to participation of women in legislative process in Gulu District Council. In addition to being male dominated, the council environment is not conducive and favourable to enhance the participation of women in legislative processes in Gulu District Council. One of the key respondents had this to say,

“Politics at the level of council is regarded male business. Even infrastructure available does not favor women, for example available toilets and other facilities in place”.

Biased media Coverage against Women

From the interviews, it was apparent that the media was negatively portraying the role of women in legislative politics. It emerged from interviews that the media in Gulu still viewed women

councilors from the perspective of their domestic roles. This affected their objective coverage of progressive women in Gulu District Council. A key respondent had this to say,

“The media in Gulu is hostile to Women Councilors in Gulu District Local Council. They seldom report success stories of women at this level”.

General Discussions

According to the findings of the study, we found that women are still defeated in decision making because of the numbers and this study reports more men compared to women in the Gulu District Council including within the District Executive Committee headed by the District chairperson between the period of 2016 to 2020 and the Vice-District Chairperson’s role that is viewed as a strong scapegoat for enforcing gender equality in most Local Government in top political leadership space -was this time, according to the study given to a man. Secondly, level of education also contributes to poor performance of women councilors in council decision making and general participation as council business are conducted in English and these finding reports that averagely women were found to have stopped in senior two compared to men who were found to have finished senior four or senior six. This puts women at a very big disadvantageous stage since arguments in council on a motion is done using English and this partly also explains why according to this study many women fear debating in the floor of council due to language glitches. In addition, many motion brought by women were floored on technical grounds hence the study validates that indeed there is need to have women councilors study and learns basic literacy to support the crafting of their ideas, therefore the idea of adult learning need to be preached to the women councilors.

In the Four (4) parameters core to decision making in the district council which is a multipronged approach such as; debating in council and committees, ii) moving motions in council, iii) petitioning council and, iv) holding feedback meetings with the electorates, the women were found to be good in debating in council committee level because there is no application of full council legislative procedure guidelines like point of order, point of information among others which could be negatory and diversionary, especially to those with English language glitches .

The biological factor was found as destabilizing as women councilors after giving birth shall have to abscond council to focus on taking care of their new born children, this does not affect the men and the remaining ones (Women) keeps being challenged on numbers when there is a contentious issues affecting them and needs voting.

As a post war conflict region, the study recorded hostile media on women where there was complain that the media majorly report negative stories and don’t do positive profiling of the women councilors. Deeper, the media are not gender sensitive in their news reporting and moderation as the women councilors say the press normally only picks interview from their male counterparts but the study has deeply noted that majority of the news reporters and talk show hosts

of topical programs are men. This study argues that the hostile media is also because the media is also full with men who are driving the media agenda in the post war conflict northern Uganda.

The findings in the study relate to those from scholars like Tripp (2000) who found that women's participation in politics is widely affected by patriarchy. They are also in tandem with the findings of Ahikire (2001) which concluded that participatory democracy did not deliver equal participation of women without specific instruments to enable women to attain representative office, particularly at the local level. The findings also indicated that local cultures were both potential barriers to and resources for participation of women in politics as is noted by [Merry \(2006\)](#). She demonstrates that local contexts can be open to change.

Conclusion

The study concludes that at the local level, Women legislative abilities are being affected by number of factors such as biological, economic and political barriers among others that have been recurring in gender studies, secondly using English language is also still a big hinderance to women legislative performance upcountry, considering places where the patriarchy society favored male education to female education that northern Uganda was part of, hence majority of women councilors who are forty or over forty of age didn't study at bachelors level. The study also concludes that in the case of Gulu district local government, a post war conflict area, hostile media came out among unique issues during the study and it rings a bell that the interest of gender inclusiveness should not only focus at institutional level, like at Universities or local government but there must be a deliberate approach to ensure the media is sensitized on gender sensitive reporting and ensuring deliberate effort of gender-mainstreaming the press in post war conflict districts including encouraging editorial policies review towards gender inclusiveness at local level.

Recommendation

To enhance the capacity of women in participating in the legislative processes, the researcher makes the following recommendations.

There should be consultation on extreme cases of allowing local languages just for expression to give opportunity for women councilors who are incapacitated to talk in English air out their views without hindrances. This would enhance inclusivity and Central Government and donors should root for this because many vocal women are silenced on the floor of council just because of English glitches.

There should be more trainings and mentorship for women leaders conducted by both statutory and non-statutory bodies. The Ministry of Gender and Social Development should conduct periodic trainings for women leaders at different levels of local governance in Uganda. Similarly, Non Governmental Organisations mainly the women networks like Uganda Women Network and

Akina Mama Wa Afrika, Forum for Women Educationalist (FAWE) among others should deepen their training programmes to meet the challenges of women in district council politics.

Women leaders at the inception of office should be oriented in caucusing as a way to strengthen their bargaining positions. Organisations like Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) and donor agencies like UN Women as well as Uganda Local Government Association should spearhead this.

District Speakers and Councilors should be oriented in affirmative action policies to help address discrimination against women on the basis of culture and gender.

There is need for Parliament of Uganda to review existing laws that impact negatively against the participation of women in the public sphere. These include laws on inheritance, marriage and property rights. These have an indirect bearing on the participation of women in district council politics.

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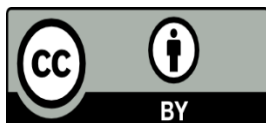
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