WOMEN IN POLITICS AND THE RISE OF FEMINISM IN AFRICA:
A CASE STUDY OF RWANDA

BY

SHOO WINNIE DAVID

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY – AFRICA

SUMMER 2017
WOMEN IN POLITICS AND THE RISE OF FEMINISM IN AFRICA:
A CASE STUDY OF RWANDA

BY

SHOO WINNIE DAVID

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Humanities & Social Sciences in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Masters of Arts in International Relations

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY – AFRICA

SUMMER 2017
DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college, institution or university other than the United States International University in Nairobi for academic credit.

Signature ______________________________     Date ______________________

Shoo Winnie David (634467)

This thesis has been presented for examination with my approval as the appointed supervisor.

Signed: ______________________________     Date: ______________________

Mr. Weldon Ngeno

Signed: ______________________________     Date: ______________________

Dr. Tom Onditi

Dean, School of Humanities & Sciences

Signed: ______________________________     Date: ______________________

Prof. Amb. Ruthie. C. Rono

Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs
COPYRIGHT

All the rights reserved. No part of this research project may be photocopied, recorded or otherwise reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any electronic or mechanical means without prior permission of the copyright owner.

Winnie Shoo. Copyright © 2017
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis was to analyze the rise of feminism in Africa, particularly Rwanda. The study examined the effect of feminism towards gender and political inclusivity in Rwanda. Also, it focused in understanding the role of Rwandan government, NGOs and civil society in championing women rights in Rwanda and their contribution to feminism agenda and ideology towards empowering and promoting women rights and freedoms.

The research study used a qualitative research methodology because it was an exploratory research. It aimed to analyze the research objectives and questions providing references and approaches as well as theories used to explain and understand the thesis topic.

The major findings indicate that women participation in politics is gradually increasing in Africa, as different policy measures are introduced to reach gender balance in political institutions. Women have for the longest time possible seen as inferior to their male counterparts in different scenarios across the board.

The study recommends that there should be feminism agenda in Rwanda to include government support towards feminist agenda, women involvement in reconstruction and transformation of Rwanda after the genocide, women protection by the constitution, application of legislated candidate quotas, sanctions for non-compliance, reserved seats in parliament and financial support for women in politics.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to appreciate my supervisor, Mr. Weldon Ngeno, for his guidance, support and expertise in critiquing my thesis; his valuable research experience has taught me a lot.

Secondly, I would like to thank Mr. Joseph Njuguna for proof reading and correcting my thesis. I also want to thank my friends and colleagues for their encouragement when conducting the research.

Lastly I want to thank my family especially my parents for their financial and moral support throughout my academic life.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Allan Mafuwe, their support made my life easy during my studies at United States International University. I also dedicate this thesis to my relatives Herman Allan Mafuwe, David Allan Mafuwe and Alfin Allan Mafuwe for their motivation and inspirations from my friends such as Benjamin Daniel Mshana and Mussa Chache. They all inspired, encouraged and played different roles in supporting my dreams of finishing my Masters program.
### LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSO’s</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMO</td>
<td>Gender Monitoring Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNU</td>
<td>Government of National Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTR</td>
<td>International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIGEPROF</td>
<td>Ministry of Gender and Family promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGP</td>
<td>National Gender Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDGEA</td>
<td>Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>United Nations Development Fund for Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nation Security Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSCR</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council Resolution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION................................................................................................................. ii
COPYRIGHT ......................................................................................................................... iii
ABSTRACT.............................................................................................................................. iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENT ............................................................................................................ v
DEDICATION....................................................................................................................... vi
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS ...................................................................... vii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION....................................................................................... 1
  1.1 Background of the Study .......................................................................................... 1
  1.2 Statement of the problem ....................................................................................... 4
  1.3 Objectives of the study .......................................................................................... 5
  1.4 Research Questions ............................................................................................... 5
  1.5 Justification and significance of the study .............................................................. 6

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW............................................................................. 8
  2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 8
  2.2 The rise of feminism .............................................................................................. 9
  2.3. Feminism in Rwanda ............................................................................................ 12
  2.4. Role of Rwanda government in promoting feminism ........................................... 19
  2.5. Summary and Gaps to be filled by the Study ....................................................... 27
  2.6. Disagreement with feminism .............................................................................. 28

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY ............................................................................... 30
  3.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 30
  3.2 Research design ..................................................................................................... 30
  3.3 Data collection Methods ...................................................................................... 31
  3.4 Data Analysis ........................................................................................................ 31
  3.5 Limitations of the Study ....................................................................................... 32

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION................................................ 33
  4.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 33
  4.2 Women in Politics ................................................................................................. 35
4.2.1 Promote change in social perception ..........................................................35
4.2.2 Raise issues of violence against women and social welfare .........................35
4.2.3 Women become part of social and economic restoration and reform agenda in Rwanda .........................................................................................36
4.3 Challenges towards women empowerment and participation in politics ............40
  4.3.1 Harassment of the girl child in schools ......................................................40
  4.3.2 Teenage pregnancies ..................................................................................40
  4.3.3 Lack or limited access to employment and economic resources ..................40
  4.3.4 Gender roles ..............................................................................................41
4.4 Discussion of Findings ....................................................................................41
  4.4.1 Promotes democracy and allow stronger democratic space .......................41
  4.4.2 Opportunity to utilize unique talents and perspective ..................................42
  4.4.3 Engage in decision-making process on issues affecting women .................42
  4.4.4 A catalyst for change on behalf of other women ........................................42
  4.4.5 Promotes access to resources ....................................................................43

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .................................................................44
5.1 Summary of findings ......................................................................................44
  5.1.1 Government supports feminine agenda .....................................................44
  5.1.2 Women have a numerical strength in Rwanda ...........................................44
  5.1.3 Women best articulate feminism agenda .................................................45
  5.1.4 Protection by the constitution ....................................................................45
  5.1.5 Reconstruction and transformation of Rwanda after the genocide ............46
5.2 Conclusion ......................................................................................................46
5.3 Recommendations ..........................................................................................49
  5.3.1 Application of legislated candidate quotas .................................................49
  5.3.2 Sanctions for Non-Compliance ..................................................................49
  5.3.3 Reserved Seats in parliament .....................................................................50
  5.3.4 Financial support for women in politics .....................................................50
5.4 Calls for follow-up studies on feminism ..........................................................50

REFERENCES........................................................................................................52
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Brill (2005) explain that the United Nations reaffirms its faith in the equal rights of men and women. Brill argues that there has been a rapid progress over the years since the United Nations was established with one being the political rights of women. For example they are recognized from the point in 1945 when they were the omission rather than the rule concludes (Brill, 2005).

Women were considered inferior in many cultures especially in developing countries in Africa a factor that has long occupied the concerns of the international community. According to Karen (2010), the United Nations statistics disclose that women are the majority of the world is poor and illiterate; they tend to earn considerably less money than their male counterparts do. These are as a result of the inferiority bargain put on women who make them not engage wholesomely towards their development and growth.

Many international initiatives have set objectives and aims at remedying this disparity with projects meant at educating young women and encouraging self-reliance (Karen, 2010). These initiatives include employment, education, health education such as reproductive health, empowerment through initiatives that promote self-reliance and job creation in Africa etc. These are some of the feminists agenda that has taken root with many feminists organizations striving to better the lives of women asserts (Karen, 2010).

Gordon (1996), argues that African feminism started gaining importance in the 20th century where women like Adelaide Casely-hayford, Charlotte Maxeke and Huda Sharawi contributed widely to both pan-African and feminist goals. This is not to say that
back we did not have women who were feminists and eventually found ways of opposing
patriarchy, it just not called feminism back then (Gordon, 1996).

One of the most fascinating developments in African politics is the increase in women’s
political participation since the mid-1990s as mentioned by Gordon, (1996) and that
women are becoming engaged in a variety of institutions from local government, to
legislatures, and even the executive. Africa leads in women’s parliamentary
representation globally acknowledge Strochlic (2014), as Rwanda claimed the world’s
highest ratio of women in parliament in 2003 and Rwandan women hold 64% of the
country’s legislative seats as clarified by Strochlic (2014).

In Senegal, Seychelles and South Africa, Strochlic (2014), explains that women hold 40% of
parliamentary seats, while in Angola, Tanzania and Uganda over 35% of seats
occupied by women. By contrast, women in the US hold 18% of the seats in the House
and 20% in the Senate clearly showing how women in Africa through feminism have
expanded their representation through politics and political engagements that drive policy
change towards women equity and gender.

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf became the first elected woman president in Africa in 2005, and
after her Joyce Banda took over as president in Malawi cites Angrist, (2010). Feminism
has greatly encouraged and empowered women to advance in political offices with nine
female genders ascending to become prime ministers in Africa, including Luisa Diongo in
Mozambique, who served for six years cites Angrist, (2010).

There are 12 vice president positions in Africa held by women like Wandira Speciosa
Kazibwe in Uganda, female vice presidents in Mauritius, Zimbabwe, Gambia and
Djibouti observes Angrist, (2010). We find that women are also taking over key
ministerial positions in defense, finance and foreign affairs, which is a break from the past when women principally held ministerial positions in the so-called ‘softer’ ministries of education, community development, sports and youth affairs concludes Angrist, (2010).

In regional organizations in Africa, women are visible holding 50% of the African Union (AU) parliamentary seats claims Strochlic, (2014). Recently the foreign affairs cabinet secretary in Kenya Amina Mohammed vied for the position of the African Union Chairperson a position previously held by a woman from South Africa Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. However, she did not get the position, her effort supported by the Kenyan government and other African countries clearly showing their intention and corporation towards women leadership in Africa (Strochlic, 2014).

When it comes to the judicial system both locally, regionally and internationally women are making advancements as judges at all levels for example, Fatou Bensouda from Gambia holding the post of Chief Prosecutor in the International Criminal Court a very important and significant court in tackling crimes against humanity in the international world (Strochlic, 2014). These are signs that women are taking their rightful place in the development of the society and contributing adequately as a result.

It is important to note that Rwanda as the case study of this research paper is currently standing tall among countries in Africa and all over the world as the only country, whose women have achieved to hold 64% of the parliamentary seats asserts Nzomo, (2014). Rwanda has gone to fulfil the MDG 3, which calls for gender equality and empowerment as well as the AU’s solemn declaration of 50-50 representation which the heads of states committed themselves to asserts Nzomo, (2014).
Feminism is a theory of the political, economic and social equality of the sexes claims Offen, (1988). She believes feminism involves the process of seeking to establish equal opportunities for women in all aspects of the society (Offen, 1988). This definition will be utilized in relation to the role played by women in politics in Africa and how that has led to the rise of feminism in Africa in this research.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The role of women in politics and the rise of feminism in Africa are given emphasis by various African governments but the implementation of the same remains a tall order for full participation of women in politics as they face numerous challenges. The impact of feminism towards gender and political inclusivity in Rwanda is a major milestone that the research is bound to identify on the best practices that implemented towards achieving gender balance and women participation in politics.

The role of feminism in the advancement of women leadership and participation in local, regional and global politics and decision-making is very commendable. The challenges and obstacles towards feminisms is what ought to be addressed in the continuity of achieving such growth in regards to promoting feminism agenda in Rwanda. The emergence of women activists and champions of feminism primarily aimed at changing social and humanitarian conditions.

Focus will be on the role of NGOs and civil society in championing women rights in Africa and their contribution to feminism. A role that if appropriately spearheaded will definitely contribute positively towards the achievements of feminism ideology and agenda and create an environment where women are able to participate, contribute and
engage their male counterparts in the development and growth of the society without intimidation, fear or criticism in regards to their female gender.

The role of feminism in politics is critical in this study as it clearly indicates the extent in which women participation in politics received negatively or positively. In regards to feminism agenda, the role of women in politics is productive and creates equity while their male counterparts see this as competition and dominance in their territorial gender roles. Women have come strong to defend women rights and freedom and this has increased their participation in politics to an extent of creating disharmony between both male and female gender roles.

1.3 Objectives of the study

i. To identify the rise of feminism in Rwanda and how it contributes towards women participation in politics.

ii. To analyze the effects of feminism towards gender and political inclusivity in Rwanda.

iii. To discuss the role of Rwandan’s government, non-governmental organizations and civil society towards promoting feminism agenda in Rwanda.

1.4 Research Questions

This research explored the following research questions.

i. What is the history of feminism in Rwanda and its contribution towards women participation in politics?

ii. What are the effects of feminism towards women participation in politics in Rwanda?
iii. What is the role of Rwandan government, NGOs and civil society in championing feminism in Rwanda?

1.5 Justification and significance of the study

Part of the indicators of the political maturity of a state is the level of women’s participation in legislative authority. Increased political participation is often an indicator of an open political culture of a people that endorse women’s rights not only to vote but also to vie for elective positions. The executive is the arm of government whose sole responsibility is the administration of the state. This branch mainly executes the law. While the president is head of this arm of government, majority of the positions that fall under the executive arm require presidential appointment. For this reason, the attainment of a gender balance in the executive is more viable than it is with elective positions, as is the case with the legislature.

The above-mentioned arms of government form the main channels used to perpetrate gender discrimination in the African societies. This research is important as it tries to establish the importance of inclusion of women in the institutions used to make and execute laws within and outside the state. The presence of women in these institutions without a doubt ensures to some extent that the laws passed are favorable to women as opposed to when those said men pass laws only.

It is important for women to participate in politics as their inclusion brings on board issues that seen to be feminine in nature and promote the feminine agenda. Women participation in legislation is important as issues such as of land ownership; women best articulate marriage laws and child laws, as they are the ones who feel the burden that come with being sidelines in terms of inheritance and sharing of resources in the family
and marriage. This study is therefore significant because it brings out the benefits and advantages that women are able to gain as they engage in politics in Rwanda.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In history, women movements educate communities by holding rallies and quickly distribute messages. However, nowadays feminists mostly use the online material, and feminist bloggers have many websites, which are springing up seemingly daily and without a forum or formal site for discussion. This makes it difficult for women to participate in such forums, as some are not able to access these forums especially those in marginalized communities as compared to early days when communities held rallies (Hooks, 2000).

How do feminist bloggers create an online community using literacy practices? How do their process of online reading and writing work hand in hand with other peoples’ ways to create the same community? Before answering these questions, we must define “feminism.” Feminism has gone through changes since women started the fights for equal rights. Many women volunteer force, which includes as indicated by Hooks, (2000), activists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, theorists and authors such as Simone de Beauvoir to feminist leaders such as Jane Addams, feminism, produces several theories as it has many definitions for the term. In fact, feminism has many definitions than the number of feminists argues Hooks, (2000).

Hooks (2000), who is one of the well know feminist theorists of this century, discusses the issues about feminists in her paper “Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression.” In the paper, Hooks states that the main issue within feminist discourse is our inability to either accept definitions, which serve the point of unification or arrive at the solution of views on feminism. Without agreeing on definitions, we lack a foundation
sound which can help us to construct the theory or engage take part in overall important praxis, this is the main issue feminist bloggers try to solve every time. Every author has a different definition of feminism, and this causes arguments and discrepancies within the feminist community, which require solidarity for survival (Hooks, 2000).

2.2 The rise of feminism

Many feminist writers try to define feminism; among these feminists are Amy Richards and Jennifer Baumgardner. Baumgardner and Richards (2000), in their book, “Manifest: young women, feminism, and the future, they have a chapter called “What is Feminism?” they define feminism in many ways in their chapter. In addition, they state that basically, the dictionary definition of feminism that it is the movement for economic, social, and political equality of men and women is perfect. In essence Baumgardner and Richards (2000), defines feminism the availability of equal representation, acceptance, equal freedom and rights between men and women in the society.

Even though the dictionary definition is basic, it covers just a few issues feminists need to address in their activism. Furthermore, Baumgardner and Richards (2000), say that feminism is a movement or a group working towards the same goals. The goals are political and social which implies that one must engage with the government and legislations, as well as with beliefs and social practices. Moreover, the success of these goals depends on the access to enough information to enable women make good choices (Baumgardner and Richards 2000).

Additionally, description of feminism can be by what it is not than by what it is: it is not criticism; it is not rejecting women that love design clothes and makeup or those who stay home with their children. Moreover, it is not about “accusing men,” the list is long, but
the clear information is feminism defined by what it is and not what it is not for the creation of a radical movement necessary for change (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000).

As illustrated by Baumgardner and Richards (2000), many theorists and researchers agree that feminism definitions exist on a spectrum. Silvo and Joan, (1996), in their study “I Am Not a Feminist, ‘but…’: College Women, Feminism, and Negative Experiences,” made a finding that college ladies aged eighteen to twenty-two believes in equal rights for women and the benefits of “non-traditional” gender roles. Additionally, the young women in their interview do not necessarily identify as feminists. In their study, they discovered that varying levels of group consciousness regarding feminism were present (Baumgardner & Richards 2000).

Women that identify themselves as feminist make up seventeen percent of the interviewees, and are the strongest proponents of gender rights and equality. The society Buschman and Lenart (2000), calls Post-Feminists make-up thirty-five percent of the population, and they might witness the fight for equality as a victory than a struggle. Overall, both women interviewed agree on the agenda of feminism and that male dominance in the society has contributed negatively towards achievement of feminism in the society especially in the African continent.

The women status at that time did not satisfy the interviewees, but they believe that personal activism is necessary for change and not the group activism. Buschman and Lenart (2000) also discovered that a mother bringing up a girl in a “non-traditional” role does not make a woman a feminist. Lessons that contribute to positivity towards feminism are acts of violence women face, like rape, sexual harassment, or other forms of abuse and infringement of their rights and freedom in the society.

Aronson (2003) takes feminism in another level in her study “Feminist of Post-Feminist?” Young Women’s Attitudes toward Feminism and Gender Relations” Aronson notes that, in 1990s, at the completion of the study by Buschman and Lenart, mass media was referring to feminist movement as “dead.” She interviewed women in her research just like Buschman and Lenart, but grouped the results basing on class, race, and life experiences. Aronson, (2003), definition of post-feminists is the same as Buschman’s and Lenart’s, which is women’s rights, are important but are inactive in urging for additional change.

Aronson (2003) also observes negative feminism images throughout the media, how they could or contribute to association of women with feminists. However, this brought changes in women who grew up in the 1990s, and the women began to make up “Third Wave” feminism. Therefore, the generation Aronson (2003) interviews in her study are the “Third Wave,” which makes her discover almost the same meaning of feminism as Buschman and Lenart (2000) found out.

In their findings, they discover that one-fourth of women in their studies relate themselves with feminists, nineteen percent are in the category of doubting if they are feminists, and about one-third of the interviewees are not sure if they are anti-feminists. The final
quarter of their research population was not sure of their feelings about feminism or never thinks about feminism. Unfortunately, in their research did not find any part of the population with anti-feminist statements because in their findings there are women who are unsure if they are not feminists who actively associate with more privileged class and racial backgrounds. The women that identify themselves as feminists in their study are the ones with college education or have a course in women’s studies.

In another study, Eagleton (2010) in his book “Feminist literacy theory” supports Buschman’s and Lenart’s argument that the women who qualify their feminist identities and those that never think about feminism are from less privileged class and racial background. Eaglets add that working-class women, ladies who have college education or they are colored women are in feminism because of their assumptions of equality during their childhood. It suggests that, even though women in modern community support feminism and agree with feminist principles, a good part of the population have no thoughts about feminism (Eagleton, 2010).

Additionally, Hooks (2002) in his article “Feminist Theory from Margin to Center” feels exclusion by the predominantly white, higher- or Middle-class, college-educated feminism. It is as if “feminism” can never get a perfect definition, although it is good to permit the description of the term to be free by allowing a feminist to define it in her way. Apparently, the Second Wave feminists say that the personal is political.

2.3. Feminism in Rwanda

Orjinta (2014) in his book “Liberation literature and liberation feminism for Africa” discusses different types of African feminist activism, which originates from participation of women in nationalist struggles in the 1960s. Women’s involvement in the activism and
armed struggles encourage them to take part in higher positions in the society. The early twentieth-century feminist struggles for agency and autonomy embeds in anti-colonial struggles.

After neo-imperialist, independence and the patriarchal character of post-colonial reign led radical women to become disaffected with the party and state politics (Orjinta, 2014). Additionally, some women’s organizations and movements that existed during the anti-colonial struggle incorporate into official nation-building and governing parties: the radical ones developed alongside independent lines. Forming organizations and movements in civil society is because of the affiliation with influential sites of feminist intellectual knowledge and activism production (Orjinta, 2014).

Currently, there are growing ideological contradictions between feminists about appropriate action in the post-colonial context. Liberation organizations and reformist aligns themselves with agendas like Western donor funding and the state of feminism while other more radical organizations struggles to retain their autonomy. According to Mwangi (2009) in his book “Africa writes back to self: Meta-fiction, gender, sexuality,” he agrees with Orjinta and argues that the politics of the latter echoes the perspective of feminist researchers seeking to define independent strategies to challenge gendered and other forms of social inequalities in the post-colonial period.

The African universities institutionalizing of feminist began with the setting up of women’s and gender studies faculty from early 1990s which draws on Western countries’ expertise and donor funding for the establishment of the academic sites (Stock, 2013). These were important in creating an avenue for women to become empowered through education and gaining critical information that would help them in championing
their rights and freedom. Issues of women violence, rape, women abuse etc brought on board and addressed appropriately.

According to Juan (2008), the few insightful book-length anthologies and studies deal with feminists or feminist theorizing throughout Africa, Rwanda in particular, though they only show how feminist activism responds to the country and regional-specific challenges or some fields within the continent’s fast changing cultural, social, and economic landscape. In reflecting the tendency of scholarship and activism to deal with specific issues in particular contexts, authors during the 1990s raised the theoretical implication of gendered knowledge of areas like public participation, labor, or power sites access, including the state, cultural production and literacy, and education.

Recently, studies are deepening the analysis of resistance in a range of cultural, political, and social spheres, agencies, and gendered subjectivities. The most beneficial general overviews are those that explicitly raise the epistemological and conceptual implications of analyzing gender within particular region and fields. Because they synthesize writings from different contexts and discipline, anthologies provide illuminating sources for both established researchers and the new ones in the field of African gender studies (Juang, 2008).

Canter and Faibrain (2006) with their book “Becoming an Author: advice for academics and other professionals” discusses the obstacles which hinder the writing career and propose the qualities to adopt to be successful in the career. They show a complete lack of programmed opportunities, lack of training or any real guide to help acquire sufficient knowledge, and doubts about the idea and authority to write anything worth writing an essential issue. However, the solution Canter and Faibrain propose lies within the spirit of
perseverance before steady will, fear of criticism, style, knowing the readership, the material, and medium.

Although the book does not specifically point to Rwandan women, it gives us a proposal on the clues to follow to detect the reason why Rwandan women are not active in print. Rwandans do not have many publications, but women publish less work as compared to men. The challenge cannot be pinpointed but with more empowerment programs and information availability, many Rwandan women will be able to public their writings on feminism ideals.

Coates (2013), in her research collection called “Women, Men, and Everyday Talk” provides an explanation of the language difference between Rwandan men and women. What interests people the most is not the evidence based on dialectology, anthropology, social psychology, or sociolinguistics, but the reason there is a linguistic difference between men and women. These cases involve lack of education on Rwandan women, gender roles ascription and communication competence, and social networks as a reason to linguistic differences between both two sexes. Muller (2005), with her book “The Making of Elite Women: Revolution and Nation Building in Eritrea” emphasizes that education is the main tool for women’s emancipation and modernization.

Kolakowski (1990), in his book “Modernity on endless trial” backs up Muller by saying for modernization is the hope for a better world which will come with the technical development, moral improvement, and the growth of education. Muller adds that a significant emancipation occurs in the psychological section. The heightened sense of human dignity and belief in new social values of feminists in Rwanda may produce the transformation of a mentality that may forebode a fundamental transition of society. The
mental forces women release through the revolution can embody its important effects on the community, this derives from Kolakowsi’s assertion that the barriers to Rwandan women getting their power are lack formal education or gender-based education they get.

Muller’s work may be thought to fit only the Eritrean context, which it does in a certain extent, but the conditions are similar to Rwandan women’s. The Eritrean citizens, as well as Rwandan suffer the consequences of war. It is not a surprise to find out that in the two countries most of the women share conditions such as poverty, overconfidence, widowhood, and bereavement. Moreover, women lack of self-confidence (as they are of the weak condition of their men so as to help them with their duties), which is a puzzlement of the future.

Although Muller does not mention the word “Literature,” her stand of finding modernization and emancipation of women in psychological and education sector will show one solution people can propose; writing and reading literature can be a tool, of course, it is through education that women will get freedom from their life problems explains Kolakowski (1990).It is also through education that will be able share their experiences and come up with adequate solutions to address issues affecting them in society.

As per the discussion by Eagleton (2010) in his book “Feminist literary theory,” the psychological ideas Marx, Lachan, and Freud were to prevail in the journals, reunions, and women’s meetings. After Eagleton’s brief description of the book, the reader wonders whether Rwandan women need to lead strikes to reserve an exclusive place to solve their problems. People’s concern will be to reorient the way the Rwandan woman has to improve the society and becoming familiar with and aware of the literature (Eagleton,
Ruhaniaka (1997) with her article “L’inscription féminine: le roman de Sony Labou Tansi” displays how the struggle of women in developed countries influences their sisters from the developing countries like Rwanda. Ruhaniaka defends the position of the modern woman by giving her new responsibilities.

In her essay, “Doing time: Feminist theory and post-modern culture,” Felski (2003), discusses the social and functional meanings of literature as it depicts in a distinctive and large body of women’s writing. Taking Feminist fiction for a product of a form of critical opposition and existing social conditions, Felski grades the women’s literary texts, since the advent of the second wave of feminism as reflection of female identity. She brings out the impossibility of a feminist aesthetics by making controversial and abstracts the theories of aesthetics of textuality, and feminine writing. Additionally, Felski advices individuals not to base on a feminine feature in the formal analysis of texts, but to do an investigation of their social functions, in the content, or what she terms as Moi’s instrumental theory of the literary text (Felski, 2003).

However, Felski (2003) considers literature as the bearer of ideologies instead of being an ideology by itself. People’s concern will not be criticism about what Feminism Literature is as Felski, but they will refer to her criticism and use it to understand Rwandan woman’s context. Therefore, the theory will merely help the community to gain knowledge on why it should have recourse to literature and make it work on Rwandan women’s condition argues Felski (2003).

Paludi (2010), in his book “Feminism and women's rights worldwide” discusses that Rwanda has a high degree of gender equality because life in these nations is almost same for everyone. In Rwanda, the life expectancy of women is fifty-six years as compared to
the United Kingdom, which is seventy-two years. The findings show the differences in access to diet, sanitation, medicines, doctors, and many other economic development benefits, which make life to be not only long enough but worth living.

Although most developed countries are better off than Rwanda, they have a poor score for economic participation. The participation is a measure that focuses on the number of women in the gender pay gap, the proportion of women in the workforce, and the women who are in senior roles (Morojele & Barbara, 2016). Further, the life expectancy age is driven by the harsh economic conditions and lack of better living standards which if were well addressed by feminists would change for the better.

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, (2003), in their article “Rwanda Leads World Ranking of Women in Parliament,” the Rwandan parliamentary elections shows that women now have almost sixty-four percent of the seats. After the 1994 genocide, the figure was only eighteen percent. In Africa in general, women have significance, for example, the most successful African social movement currently is the women’s movement, particularly legislation, and policy. Liberia and Malawi have female presidents, and Aminata Toure is the prime minister of Senegal. Additionally, the chairperson of the African Union is female for the first time in history. The female leadership legacy in Africa is strong thus displays a positive statement about the direction of the continent (Levine, 2004).

In agreement with Walby (2011) statement, the international bodies and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) address the changes in Rwanda, which is a good thing, but as a result, without the feminist motion, they discuss Rwanda’s gender equality relating to 1994 genocide. The genocide killed eight hundred thousand people, which is
estimated to be one-tenth of the population, most of them were men. Also, the organizations attribute gender parity to the quota system of the country, which holds some meaning, though it only allocates twenty-four of the forty-five seats women hold.

The worse scenario the motion has, in Eurocentric fashion, it implies that the Rwandan women progress is a result of adopting western values and that local women are getting “help” from Westerners to achieve their success. The statement is not true because the Rwandan women MPs find themselves in the majority because of the women movement organizations. For example, women like the late Judith Kanakuze, who was the feminist champion, together with the organization she led, Twese Hamme (Pro-Femmes), which ensures through active mobilization that equality has to be a top priority in the post-conflict constitution (Pottier, 2002).

Xinhua News Agency, (2003) in his paper “Rwandan President urges women to stand for public office” states that the female activists make a big effort to include women in the reconstruction of the nation after the genocide. In other words, what we observe is neither big-hearted male leaders handing over nor seats to women nor simply a consequence of the conflict (Tandon, 2008).

2.4. Role of Rwanda government in promoting feminism

The Rwandan feminism stories have lessons for people all over the world, although the western feminist movements are yet to understand the significance of Africa’s achievements. For instance, comparing Rwanda to Australia or Iceland, where triumphs of the women’s movement are common topics of debate, only a few feminists’ names an African. The Western, as well as African, feminism is naturally diverse, but the feminist movement from the West is still disengaged from the struggles women in other parts of
the globe try to fight and win. The current world should start listening to voices of women and most importantly, rejecting the treatment that cripples the development of women worldwide (Hooks, 2000).

Xinhua News Agency, (2003) adds that regarding feminism in Rwanda, the call for equality is not only a woman thing but also men like President Paul Kagame, who has led the country since his army stopped the genocide, supports it fully. President Kagame’s decision that Rwanda was so broken, demolished, and could not rebuild with men’s labor alone influences feminism. Kagame’s decision led to passing of the Rwandan new constitution in 2003, which states that thirty-percent of parliamentary seats belong to women. Moreover, the government encouraging girls’ education and women empowerment by appointing women to leadership roles such as police chiefs and government ministers. Kagame’s vow is not merely catching up to the West but jumping ahead of the western countries (Morojele & Barbara, 2016).

In Elizabeth (2003), book “Strengthening Governance: The Role of Women in Rwanda’s Transition.” She backs up the Xinhua News Agency that Indeed, Kagame’s positive stance on feminism is one of the main factors that secure his ‘darling dictator’ status in the West. Because of what he learns from Uganda, Kagame recognizes the inherent as well as the instrumental value of pursuing gender rights. The president’s willingness to discuss with the women’s groups in Rwanda together with the prominence women gains within his movement secures legislative progress on women’s problems.

In 1996, the sexual torture and rape upgraded to ‘category one’ crimes in the guidelines of the post-genocide prosecution (equal to murder) from ‘category three’ crimes (same as property damage). Additionally, in 2001 the lawmakers passed the laws, which protect
children from violence. Also, in 2003, the law that gives women the permission to inherit land was passed (though they still face restrictions). These progresses play an important role in helping Rwandan women to thrive and survive because nothing can pass in parliament without the political freedom (Elizabeth, 2003).

Elizabeth (2003) also states that the autonomy of citizens and the parliament is crucial if there is any plan to achieve women liberation. Therefore, when feminists fight for gender equality, they are not fighting for their rights of oppression. Ultimately, equality and freedom that people are after, they require following Paul Kagame’s footsteps, and equally taking a more critical move towards women representation in parliament. Despite their tough struggles and their victories, individuals need to realize that the women not only serve the Rwanda’s politic system, but they help in its creation by overlooking or fostering practices, laws, and policies that close democratic space in the nation.

According to ARD (2005) report “Rwanda Parliamentary Support Project Final Report,” Rwanda is the leading nation in the number of women participation in politics. In 2007, President Paul Kagame won the African Gender Award, and in 2013, Rwanda won the international ‘Women in Parliament’ award for its efforts of empowering women in politics. The number of women who participate in politics is impressive, for example, the Chamber of Deputies of Rwanda is one of the two chambers globally in which women are more than men are.

The other Chamber is Bolivia where fifty-three percent of parliamentarians are women. In the global field, Rwanda leads with sixty-four percent in comparison with a worldwide average of twenty-three percent. Moreover, seven out of fourteen judges in the Supreme Court are women; the councils of women exist at the cell, sector, district and provincial
level. Also, the Rwandan Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) has a task of ensuring that the government represents women’s needs at the national level (ARD, 2005).

The New York Women’s Commission (1997) in its essay “Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, Rwanda’s Women and Children: The Long Road to Reconciliation” asserts gender scholars show two, interrelated benefits of increasing the number of women in Rwandan parliament. The first is the symbolic effect that the role models can have on women’s expectations and aspirations. These impacts are hard to measure and isolate, but findings of some studies depict that Rwandan women are taking politics and leadership as legitimate ambitions more than before.

In other words, women have a transition in the collective cultural imagination that shapes the possibilities of “daughters” (abakobwa) and “wives” (abagore). Although they have the shift of mind, the crucial question is whether all Rwandan women discover something of themselves in the political representatives. Critics state that the drift between marginalized who wants empowerment and those who are in political seats is vast and growing; this is because opportunities for women in remote areas get a political seat at a district or local level appears minimal (Morojele & Barbara, 2016).

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in its report “Women in Parliament: World and Regional Averages” supports The New York Women’s Commission (1997) and adds that the second benefits are the substantive benefits of women’s representation. They involve important action on women’s problems and a broader emergence of “gendered perspective’ in the legislature. The description of ‘women’s issues’ is in serious debates in Rwandan parliament, but political leaders usefully explore the issue by basing on three
things: formulating laws designed to expand women’s autonomy; recognizing gender inequality; and acknowledging ‘women’ as a ‘social category.’ Broadly, women must be willing and able to gain power in the legislative, and in turn, the legislative should wield power in polity, for the effectiveness of the substantive representation.

Rwanda is doing well as compared to other nations where marginalization of women exists. A good number of Rwandan women are in prominent and diverse portfolios, this is because of the role women played in the history of the RPF. Scholars argue that the patriarchal culture of the Constitution is eroding and women’s professional relationship with men is improving (Elizabeth, 2003). During and after the Rwandan genocide women were seen to take a critical role and participation especially in regards to caring for the families, offering emotional support and engaging in the transformation and rebuilding of the Rwandan nation and this has made them to be recognized as critical in the growth and development of Rwanda as indicated by President Kagame.

Furthermore, Franceschet, et al. (2012) in their book “The impact of gender quotas” discuss that Rwanda seems to avoid pitfalls of gender quotas. Research in Uganda and Tanzania suggest that women elected through different electoral colleges are like second-class leaders without the advantage and legitimacy of the ones elected by geographical constituencies. The fact poses a possible double threat, as the women will be unable to effectively act as their presence seems to distract others from solving women’s issues in their region. However, in Rwanda, signs of solidarity are present among women in the quota and the non-quota division.

The women’s movements in the civil society protect their leadership position. Ironically, the movements suffer as some of their influential leaders at some point enter the
legislature (Franceschet et al., 2012). However, this does not deter more women from participating in civil society but only fuels and inspires them to get involved and contribute towards the achievements of their predecessors.

Altogether, Rwandan women seem to be in the powerful position within the Chamber of Deputies. The question is, are they able and willing to get the power in practice? Looking at the nation’s legislative history since 2003, they have a mixed verdict. The most crucial breakthrough was in 2006 when women played a big role in the writing and passing of a bill on controlling gender-based violence. However, Rwandan women still left with a lot of work to accomplish on the front: the government estimates that four in ten women goes through violence before the age of fifteen. Nonetheless, this was a good move and highlights the capacity of women caucuses in the legislative to push women’s issues ahead asserts Franceschet et al, (2012).

In Spring (2006) report “Member of Parliament Speciose Mukandutiye, interview” shows that Rwandan women political leader are from different backgrounds like doctors, businesswomen, former teachers, and many others who claim that their lessons as mothers are their motivation for joining politics. For example, Speciose Mukandutiye, who is a Member of Parliament, explains that in every day’s family life, we can find that women prioritize their children. When one of her child gets sick, it leads her into suffering thus when women fight for equality, it is not for their benefit, but for that little girl.

Mukandutiye also adds that there were things they could not afford because they were ladies, so they do not want the history to repeat on their children, girls. Fortunately, both male and female leaders support women’s experiences as mothers as crucial to not only
their motivation, but also their parliamentary duties (Haussman, *et al.*, 2010). As a result, girls in schools are other rural places are provided freely with ‘sanitary pads’ which is vital for girl child a critical legislation that Mukandutiye and her fellow women legislatures have put in place.

Additionally, Member of Parliament Thacienne Dusabeyesu says the as they are mothers and they have characteristics of love, care, and tenderness towards their children. Dusabeyesu further argues that women in the parliament performs their roles according to the “nature” and because of this, the more the number of women in parliament, the better it is for the children, especially girls. Regarding the statements by the two lawmakers, it is evident that feminism has a positive impact on the politic atmosphere of Rwanda especially regarding children and the entire nation (Spring, 2006).

In another study by the New York Women’s Commission (1997) “Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, Rwanda’s Women and Children: The Long Road to Reconciliation,” about Rwanda. It states that women in political seats not only want to be recognized for more than achieving high office, but known for what they achieve in the offices. The fact is evident in the recent planning committee session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. In the session, a member of the FFRP executive committee stressed the benefits of communicating with constituents, and not just be mentors. The member adds that they have to discuss their work, priorities, and activities with people they represent, and not just help them (Spring, 2006).

Additionally, Rwandan women parliamentarians view an advocacy duty for themselves within their leadership and feel they have a responsibility to hold the executive answerable on crucial issues to children and women. For example, the Forum of Women
Parliamentarians intervened on the problem of Tanzania expelling Rwandans who are currently back to the eastern Rwanda. The FFRP representatives had to travel to the region to meet with leaders of the displaced individuals, investigate the living conditions of children and kids, provide humanitarian support, and then plan an advocacy strategy asserts (Xinhua News Agency, 2003). This form of practical feminist actions expected in a bid to realize the aspirations of historical feminists all over the world.

The New York Women’s Commission (1997), study also argues that the representatives intend to raise the issues of separation of Rwandan wives from their Tanzanian husbands, the disruption of health services and education for children, and gender-based violence. They will discuss the issues with the international organizations, the Rwandan government, and the United Nations. Furthermore, the talks going on between Tanzania and Rwanda are crucial, and the international bodies dispute calling these individuals “refugees.” However, the women political leaders are working to ensure that in the discussions about the living conditions and the status of these people, there will be inclusion of the rights and needs of women and children. From the situation, we can see that feminism has an impact on solving the problems related to women and children, and to the issues of national concern (Haussman, 2010).

In support of the New York Women’s Commission (1997), Elizabeth (2003) states that although Rwandan men think they are better leaders than women, women parliamentarians handles some issues better than their male counterparts because of their experience as mothers. The fact that women are in high office positions makes them mentors to young girls by showing them they can be what they want to be just like men. Moreover, they encourage a male child to practice equality and treat women with the respect they deserve because they are both special.
In Rwanda today, many girls are getting their education because of the feminist movements that give them a high opportunity to access good education. The presence of women in higher positions is transforming Rwandan economy because of the caring, tenderness, and love they naturally possess, which makes them honest to their duties. Issues regarding women and children, who are vulnerable in the society now adequately addressed with legislations in place to protect, provide and promote them towards achieving their goals and aspirations.

Most of the institutions governed by female leaders run well with transparency and strictness they offer to achieve greatness. Women with their caring and tenderness are not greedy but want fairness and transparency in regards to issues affecting both men and women. Moreover, women place a major role in the reconstruction of post-genocide Rwanda because most of the men were either crippled or killed during the fights between Hutus and Tutsis (Elizabeth, 2003).

2.5. Summary and Gaps to be filled by the Study

While going through the equality literature, there are gaps noticed, which it discloses. Although feminists make important contributions to the community, they are yet to change the basic concepts of the field. Women’s participation in politics is still subject to harassment and discrimination especially in African countries. The concepts of science in regards to gender roles are a major gap derailing the feminists’ agenda towards participation in politics, which forms a barrier especially in the African continent.

It is not possible to ignore the fact that feminists identify sciences as both a source and a locus of gender inequalities (Elizabeth, 2003). Feminists in their argument state that institutions of science for a very long time have excluded women as practitioners and
those issues of feminism and feminist agenda including sex and gender minorities marginalized and subjected to scientific inquiries agrees Elizabeth, (2003). This form of scientific inquiry is a gap that ought to be filled and adequately addressed in subsequent research papers to understand the motive and role behind such marginalization.

2.6. Disagreement with feminism

According to Tandon (2008), Feminist is just a label at the end of the day thus we can disagree with some feminists. The disagreement does not change the fact that someone is a feminist or not, in fact, when people disagree they research on why to reject which makes them stronger feminists. When you disagree with feminists, make sure it is because you have a different approach for their actions, but not just because you want to disagree (Tandon, 2008). The study discusses the feminism problem across the globe, give history, theories, and several authors’ points of view towards the topic. Moreover, in the discussion there is the analysis of the feminism issue, which includes the views of feminists and Anti-feminists. The study limits itself to Rwandan feminism and gives light on the main issues about feminism in their country. From the review, although Africa, especially Rwanda has a lower GPD than western countries, they value equality more than those well off nation, this is because women holds leadership positions thus are respectable (Tandon, 2008).

Moreover, Rwandan women’s success is not by chance or because men are big-hearted, but it is because they work hard for it through women movements. Contrary to other nations, Rwandan men supports feminism and are proud of their women, for example, President Paul Kagame supports female leadership and empowerment that is why he passed a bill that statesmen alone cannot reconstruct Rwanda thus women need to step up.
The government agencies also support girl child education and women participation in the leadership especially by reserving thirty parliamentary seats for women and allowing them to head higher posts like, police chief.

My dissertation is just but one of the few that address feminists issues and agenda and tries to understand the role women play in politics and how important that role is. More studies ought to be done in regards to gaps in this field to suggest more recommendations and make certain issues of feminism clear. The paper also shows the gaps in the feminism research and the reasons why some people disagree with feminists or other feminism. The international community with the help of international organizations must now draft policies and treaties that help in fostering and promoting feminism in Africa. Rwanda is doing a good job in promoting feminism locally and regional and international bodies must support this by creating more funding and clear structures towards attaining feminism in Africa using Rwanda as an example.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the different research methods and designs used in the collection of data to identify and address issues in regards to women in politics and the rise of feminism in Africa. The research puts emphasis on Rwanda as a case study. This chapter started by addressing the research design used followed by the population and sampling technique, collection of data, research procedure and data analysis.

3.2 Research design

A research design according to Kothari (2008) is the strategy or approach used by the researcher to be able to identify critically the research problem and articulately answer the research questions and objectives appropriately. This study employed a qualitative research which is desirable in this study because it primarily an exploratory research. It aims to analyze the research objectives and questions providing references and approaches as well as theories used to explain and understand the research topic. In justifying the research design used, the study used reference books on feminism and addressed issues in regards to feminism and how it affects both negatively and positively the Rwanda women.

The study is important in addressing the issue of feminism in Africa and in particular Rwanda as a case study. This research strived to understand the concept of feminism drawing information from various actors and writers who have studied feminism as well as gaining information that is relevant from journals and other academic books and resources. This was important because the research dwelled on secondary data from
books and articles and it was only prudent for the study to analyze their views, opinions and contents in regards to the topic in question and inculcate it with the Rwanda case in terms of feminism in Africa.

3.3 Data collection Methods

Data collection is an important aspect in regards to addressing the research study. According to Kothari (2008), primary data is the data collected straight from people while secondary data is the data that one obtained from the online resources, books and articles done by different writers and authors. The data collection in this study took a secondary data approach through research previously done and provided in books and journals that have addressed and tackled the issue of feminisms in Rwanda. The information drawn from these books and articles cited accordingly in the study paper to show adequately where obtained from to avoid plagiarism and unethical use of other writers and authors work.

Secondary data is important in data collection because it provides critical and relevant information on the research topic. These information on the “how” and “why” have been tackled by many scholars will rely on those information and critically analyze them in discussing the objectives of the research topic.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data collected during the research study was analyzed and processed information gathered to come up with credible and appropriate data that is critical in answering the research objectives and research question. The study was able to answer the history of feminism in Rwanda and its contribution towards women participation in politics, the
impacts of feminism towards women participation in politics in Rwanda, and the role of Rwandan government, NGOs and civil society in championing feminism in Rwanda.

This study used a qualitative approach of research design and therefore the analysis is through an essay format that addresses the research questions providing references and approaches as well as theories used to explain and understand the research topic that is women in politics and the rise of feminism in Africa Rwanda as a case study.

3.5 Limitations of the Study

The study limitations include the lack of application of a quantitative research design method that provides for getting first hand or primary information. For effective research outcome, it would have been appropriate to travel to Rwanda to get firsthand information through interviews and using questionnaires delivered to the Rwandan people especially women leaders towards understanding and addressing the research topic.

Traveling to Rwanda entailed expenses such as travelling and accommodation, which are not cheap and requires time and financial resources to apply as a result. Further, it also requires for women physical participation in through interviews, questionnaires fillings and forums for discussions on women issues by women political leaders and feminists activists’ a process that was going to be tiresome and expensive.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

Rwanda known for its 1994 genocide killed millions of people and brought with it numerous challenges affecting its development and growth. The ethnic based conflict between the Hutus and the Tutsis. Rwanda in its post genocide development has been critical in encouraging women participation in politics as a result Bouta, and Bannon, (2005), observes women occupy 48.8% parliamentary seats in Rwanda. This has made Rwanda to become one of the few nations that has a higher percentage of women in political representation a fact that promotes feminism (Bouta, and Bannon, 2005).

From the analysis it is identifies that as much as Rwanda commands a higher percentage in regards to the number of women holding political office, and this is towards promoting gender equality and also promoting feminine inclusion and agenda in the political space. What feminists in Rwanda ought to address currently as indicated by Rao, (2016), is the convergence of two opposing trends in Rwanda’s post-conflict environment. First, the government of Rwanda under the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) continuously promotes women inclusion in politics but at the same time excludes any form of difference and dispute promoted by these women led political figures. This makes it difficult for women actively participate in politics especially in regards to creating change through dissenting views and opinions (Rao, 2016).

Women not guaranteed a different perspective on approach when it comes to political participation. Yes women involvement in politics create room for gender balanced argument and representation of women issues and views but politics of dissent and opposition in regards to various policies is at play even towards women parliamentarians
and politicians. The issue is how far women are able to contain and promote their dissent towards varied issues affecting women in the society and how far they are willing and able to fight and raise their voices towards achieving change that will promote those issues and views they raise in society.

Women participation in male dominated society is limited unlike when they are part of the decision makers in matters politics, social, economic development and growth of a country. This is what feminism strives to achieve by giving women a collective voice and an avenue to champion their interests in male dominated society. Most activists and feminists movements have settled on a 30% as the minimum percentage for women representation required in almost every institution whether public or private (Holmes, 2014).

Holmes, (2014), asserts the women participation at 30% representation was made in United Nations Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which many countries and international institutions and bodies have only implemented theoretically but the practice and actual implementation is still lacking in most of the countries. In my case study Rwanda, not only have they managed to fulfill this representation, but also succeeded to achieve 48.8% of women parliamentarians asserts Holmes, (2014), this surpasses the set target of 30% giving a clear indication that feminists activists in Rwanda have done a good job in pushing for feminism ideas, policies and agenda.

The new constitution of Rwanda adopted in 2003, Bouta, and Bannon, (2005), quotes the representation of women is a fundamental principle and commits that “Rwanda is a state governed by the rule of law, a pluralistic democratic government of equality of all Rwandans between women and men. This to be reflected by ensuring that women are
granted at least thirty per cent of posts in decision making organs,” concludes Bouta, and Bannon, (2005). This constitution not only protects women from men dominated environment provides participation in decision-making processes in both political and social avenues in Rwanda. Issues of gender based violence, discrimination among others towards women successfully managed and promoted by the new constitution providing women room to advance and achieve their full potential in Rwanda.

4.2 Women in Politics

4.2.1 Promote change in social perception

Women participation in politics Rao (2016), argued changes a great deal the social perceptions in the political arena. This form of participation provides room to put force their concerns, ideas and issues affecting women in the society. It is able to reduce discrimination in terms of women participation in leadership, and encourage women led policies and agendas that can take a positive turn in regards to policy making within and without parliament (Rao, 2016).

4.2.2 Raise issues of violence against women and social welfare

Women in legislature best raise issues of violence against women, social welfare and others where critical policymaking occurs. Rao (2016), asserts are fundamental and can be addressed well by women in leadership and decision making positions within government. It is clear that the presence of 48.8% of women parliamentarians in Rwanda has allowed and created room for such social welfare issues pushed forwards and critical policies created and implemented. Further, the women parliamentarians have created
according to Rao, (2016), a gender caucus or a cross-party alliance to advocate for issues linked to women’s rights argued Bouta and Bannon (2005).

Ferguson, (2010), indicated in his book that research on community and local government forums in developing nations including Rwanda, shows women have a greater voice and impact when it comes to championing issues dealing with child care, access to water and food, access to health care especially maternity healthcare for women, discrimination against women etc. This is because women are the most affected by such issues that not only make their lives difficult but also prevent women from achieving the goals and making their lives easier.

4.2.3 Women become part of social and economic restoration and reform agenda in Rwanda

Rao (2016) observes that women in Rwanda were the most affected by the genocide and therefore their shared experience of the genocide makes them vulnerable and wants to be part of the change and reforms in Rwanda. It is clear that in terms of victimization, women felt the impact of the genocide more compared to their male counterparts in terms of sexual victimization and therefore women are critical in spearheading Rwanda’s social and economic restoration (Ferguson, 2010).

The effects of the genocide that killed millions of people have a lasting effect on the population in terms of gender where women in Rwanda constitute a demographic majority at 54% states Rao, (2016), of the population therefore giving women an upper hand in addressing and creating more social and economic change that they want in Rwanda. In short, it is the women who felt the consequences and impact of the genocide
more than the men did as it left most of them widows, displaced and emotionally handicapped as a result.

The higher percentage of women in Rwanda and a further acknowledgement by Ferguson (2010), that women head 35% of households in Rwanda is critical indication that women are responsible for breeding and rearing the next generation of Rwandans population. Women in Rwanda produce majority of agricultural output and other critical sectors where they are taking lead and engaging vigorously in healing a country affected by loss and despair culminating from the genocide (Rao, 2016).

In agreement with Ferguson (2010), the essence of pushing feminism ideas and policy in Rwanda is critical especially in regards to politics of ethnicity. Women are able to push away the politics of ethnicity by forming together and creating a women identity that promotes feminism ideas of equality and eliminates discrimination, further eliminate the competition of politics in, regards ethnicity, which is a recipe of war and conflict. Ethnicity can only be fought if women come together from different ethnic backgrounds and champion an agenda that is non-ethical such as discrimination, gender based violence, inclusion in critical decisions making organs of the government that is all inclusive and not only promote one specific ethnic group agenda (Ferguson, 2010).

The genocide and its aftermath created a position for women to lead households and become the providers for their children and families. During the framing of the 2003 constitution, women organization were able to lobby for women political inclusion and representation and with their government acknowledgement of their efforts during and after the genocide culminating to women being give room to participate in politics and
help in the construction and rebuilding of Rwanda which women rights being enshrined in the Rwanda constitution.

Kumar (2001), gender equality and empowerment of women is one area that the Rwandan constitution strongly protects. This form of social policy inclusion has made women to become empowered eliminating various forms of discrimination such as domestic violence, which are punishable by law etc. Most international and domestic laws protecting and promoting women rights approved as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Rao, 2016).

For example, The Matrimonial Regimes, Liberties and Successions Law (Law No 22/99 of 1999) and the Land Law of 2013 (Law No 43/2013 of 16/06/2013) give progressive inheritance and land laws give women equal rights with men to own and inherit property, including land, and to the joint ownership of property in legal marriage. In the land law, Kumar, (2001), most Rwandans are married under community of property, such couples only register their land in the joint name of both spouses, and all their legitimate children require their interest documented in the land title.

Rao (2016), mentions another domestic law supporting gender equality and empowerment, The 2008 Law on Gender Based Violence (Law No59/2008) and the 2009 Labour Law (Law No 10/2009). In the labor law, it advocates for equal pay vs. equal work value, sets the age of employment minimum age for both men and women, which is 16 years, protects pregnant mother’s rights in regards to labour and employment schedules such as maturity leave for professional women in formal industries.

Rao (2016) acknowledges that Rwanda has made essential progress towards empowering and protecting women rights. Regardless of the efforts, it is important to note that the
outcome of these efforts can only be achieve with the good will of the government and the availability of room for women participation through feminists activists and women advocacy groups that can help in the implementation of such laws when and as they occur. The law can be there but no implementation makes it useless and worthless. Real improvements and achievements will go a long way in creating effects on the lives of many women in Rwanda (Ferguson, 2010).

According to Bouta, and Bannon, (2005), education and training has contributed enormously in regards to empowerment of women and the girl child in regards to eliminating gender discrimination as championed by feminist activists. Today, girls enrolled in schools at all levels including primary and junior secondary levels compared to the passed cultural discrimination eliminated the girl child from education and training to achieve their full potential. Many girls in the past were subjected to domestic chores and activities in the home and were not allowed to attend school and gain education to achieve their full potential (Bouta & Bannon, 2005).

There has been a great improvement among girls attending school and doing well in their studies. Many girls have enrolled to become doctors, lawyers, teachers and accountants after completing their secondary education. This is a trend that many feminists’ activists admire and attribute to their continuous engagements with the government and other non-governmental organizations. These engagements have greatly helped and promoted the importance of education and training to the girl child as a way of eliminating inequality, promoting social justice and inclusion and making women achieving their dreams and live a better future (Bouta & Bannon, 2005).
4.3 Challenges towards women empowerment and participation in politics

4.3.1 Harassment of the girl child in schools

An obstacle that needs serious attention and legislation is the continuous harassment of the girl child in school from male counterparts and teachers. This trend has become common not only in Rwanda but in other African countries, as well where girls are raped and sexually abused. These obstacles negatively affect feminism ideals and achievements that require urgent and immediate attention by Rwandan government through women in legislature and leadership in Rwanda (Kumar, 2001).

4.3.2 Teenage pregnancies

Issues of teenage pregnancies, sugar daddies using young girls as sex toys are some of the challenges that deter girls from attending schools and completing their education. As girls drop from school because of such challenges, their male counterparts continue with the education to the end and this is what creates the difference in regards to empowerment and knowledge achievement which require urgent attention towards curbing and eliminating them (Kumar, 2001).

4.3.3 Lack or limited access to employment and economic resources

Access to employment and economic resources is another area seen as a challenge towards women empowerment. Kumar, (2001), asserts women benefit less compared to their male counterparts from the formation of non-farm employment. Commercialization of farming and agriculture has made it difficult for rural women to become competitive and generate adequate output from their farms. Gender roles has also made women work
more hours in childcare and domestic labor further complicating their hours meant for employment and working in their farms.

4.3.4 Gender roles

Women specifically in regards to gender roles find it difficult to achieve their full potential. According to Rao, (2016), two thirds of community health workers are women, and finding time to juggle between domestic roles and occupational jobs becomes a critical challenge. This is where the men have been able to surpass women in terms of occupational profession because they have all the time to concentrate in their studies and eventually get employment.

Women participation in greater political representation and empowerment will eventually increase feminist’s ideals and policies. An increase in women representation in critical decision-making organs and that more women have the opportunity to engage and participate in both national and local parliaments, it is likely that more feminists decisions taken with women rights being promoted as a result. This is the only avenue that women have towards making a mark in the male dominated society creating an environment of equality to both gender and eliminating discrimination and other forms of negativity ideals towards women.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

4.4.1 Promotes democracy and allow stronger democratic space

Democracy thrives when every member of the society is given a chance to participate in politics without discrimination regardless of being male or female. Democracy promotes better leadership that brings forth effective policies and strategies that better the lives of
citizens. Rwanda women through the help of feminist activists and the government encourage Rwanda women to participate in politics by creating appropriate space and avenues that make it easy for their participation (Deckman & Swers, 2015).

4.4.2 Opportunity to utilize unique talents and perspective

Women known to have unique talents that given an opportunity to display these talents in the field of politics can be very useful. Women can therefore come up with unique policies and strategies of political, social and economic nature that can better not only the lives of women but every member of the society. Rwanda women through the unique talent and perspectives can adequately address issues of job creation and self-empowerment.

4.4.3 Engage in decision-making process on issues affecting women

Rwandan women are encouraged to engage in politics for it’s the only way they are able to participate and make changes towards issues that affect them from achieving their goals and potentials. Decision-making process on matters that affect the family economically, socially and politically are better handled by women and therefore taking part in politics will give them a better opportunity to make decisions on such issues towards promoting the feminine agenda (Deckman & Swers, 2015).

4.4.4 A catalyst for change on behalf of other women

Women understand women problems and challenges better likewise to men. Therefore, women when given an opportunity in politics are able to understand and adequately formulate better policies on issues that affect women and are able to make the lives of women. It is women who can champion the woman agenda and not men. Giving women
an opportunity therefore will create room for feminist agenda to thrive and promote
growth and development in all areas among women towards making their lives better
(Ford, 2011).

4.4.5 Promotes access to resources

Access to resources is a major challenge women have contented with for a very long time. Access to resources is what creates employment and wealth and therefore lack of it makes one vulnerable in the society. Gaining access therefore means that women must participate in politics and draft policies that will champion their rights in regards to resource allocation.

Access to important resources such as water, land, employment opportunities, training and information by women will go a long way in promoting and providing development and change among the Rwandan women (Ford, 2011).

When women are able to access vital resources, they are able to find it easy in implementing various projects and programs that are vital for their survival. Women who have been able to access resources seen as good entrepreneurs and business people, running big companies and projects thereby employing many youths and contributing enormously towards the development of their country and state. In Rwanda, women own many companies that have recorded tremendous growth and this is how important and critical empowering a women is in the society (Ford, 2011).
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of findings

5.1.1 Government supports feminine agenda

In Rwanda the rise and growth of feminism has been adequate and said to be one of the best countries that has witnessed feminism ideologies and agenda grow. This is informed by the approach the government has taken in promoting and enhancing feminism ideologies with the President taking a center stage in this process. The government of Rwanda under president Kagame has put in place mechanism that promote feminism agenda where the number of women in parliament has been effectively legislated to coincide with the UN requirements of 2/3 gender rule in all legislative and appointing posts in different institutions of the government. Apart from the president, Rwandan men seen to support their women and contribute as well towards the achievements of feminism goals and objective and this has helped the women in championing their agenda and making their lives better.

5.1.2 Women have a numerical strength in Rwanda

During the genocide, many men killed and other crippled, this devastating effect of the genocide in Rwanda changed the numerical statistics of men and women where women became many in numbers compared to men. This numerical strength has given women leverage in advancing the feminists agenda and the government as well as civil society realizing this has also maintained and contributed to advancing women feminist agenda. As a result, women in Rwanda now enjoy various freedoms and rights and issues of
discrimination and violence against women are very rare and if any are dealt with according to the law.

5.1.3 Women best articulate feminism agenda

Women participation brings forth sensitive issues that cannot be articulated well by their male counterparts. For example, issues of maternity health, child development and growth, early pregnancies, rape, forced marriages are issues that affect women directly. These are issues which men cannot be addressed and draft adequate policies that can deal with them despite the contribution of women.

Women who are affected directly by these issues are able to come up with adequate legislations, which are able to address their experiences, solutions that will best, solve these challenges and create better living for them. The legislation for example of the sanitary pads to be issued freely among school girls and those in the rural places is a critical legislation that goes a long way in addressing the health concerns of women and provide them with the critical material that will not only make their health better but boast and improve their self-esteem.

5.1.4 Protection by the Constitution

The constitution protects women from issues of gender violence, rape, discrimination, etc. women freedom and rights are protected by the Rwandan constitution, which gives them advantage to participate fully in the growth and development of Rwanda. Those found guilty of gender discrimination and violation of legislations put in place to protect women and empower their feminism agenda arrested and persecuted accordingly.
5.1.5 Reconstruction and transformation of Rwanda after the genocide

Rwanda during the genocide experienced devastating destruction of property, infrastructure and other structural mechanisms were missing and completely affected and destroyed. This therefore required after the genocide for the people of Rwanda to engage in reconstruction and transformation of their country. This could not be done by men alone but required the contribution of both men and women. During this process, the Rwandan people witnessed the importance of women in the society and this pushed their male counterparts to appreciate and adequately create a conducive environment for women involvement. This therefore made it easy for women to push their feminism agenda, promote, and empower the women to greater heights.

5.2 Conclusion

After the genocide in Rwanda and its impact on the people to the economy and growth of Rwanda, there was need for adequate and appropriate mechanisms put in place towards rebuilding and transforming Rwanda from the impacts and consequences of the genocide. This preempted the government and the people to engage both male and female in the rebuilding process and making Rwanda a peaceful and stable country.

The genocide further provided a tipping point towards what the forces of inequality can result to and how important it is promote gender equality towards development and growth of Rwanda in post genocide. What Rwandan people and government realized was that it was critical for gender equality to take center stage towards developing it because failure to do so would neglect the women or the feminine gender and further create more inequality and slow the development of Rwanda in post genocide, which affected the feminine gender greatly.
Empowerment of women in Rwanda is a major focus for the government and civil society dealing with women and feminism agenda. These efforts are critical in promoting gender equality by understanding that to eliminate war and conflict there is need for gender equality that will not only improve women lives but also make it possible for both male and female gender to participate in decision-making process and other critical issues and situations affecting the Rwanda people.

A majority of women in Rwanda have benefited from various government projects and activities that promote health and education. These are critical areas affect women health including reproductive health that requires a lot of government intervention towards empowering women by promoting proper reproductive health facilities and engaging women in health clinics for their well-being in the society. Education on the other hand considered a male dominance and therefore the government involvement in promoting the girl child education is fair enough towards creating gender equality and promoting inclusivity for greater gender equality (Deckman & Swers, 2015).

The government and other non-governmental organizations in the grassroots must now come through in areas such as investment in agriculture, trade as a vast majority of women is not adequately empowered, and therefore they do not benefit from any real and proper mechanisms in place to promote investment in these sectors. Their male counterparts have programs that address these challenges and therefore women must be involved more profoundly in matter investment and trade towards fostering and promoting Rwanda to become a great economic giant in the African continent.

Research has shown according to Krook and Childs (2010), that women are better managers and business people, therefore their involvement in businesses in areas such as
agriculture can promote Rwanda to become a powerhouse in economic advancement and development and further male gender equality a reality admired and copied by other nations in Africa. With clear gender equality, policy that promotes women involvement and participation in every sector is critical in rebuilding Rwanda from the impacts of the post genocide.

Ford (2011) observes that legal reforms and policies that empower women are all in place marking the first step towards promoting equity among women. The problem is the implementation phase of these gender equity programs formally addressed focusing on quantitative targets but the essential economic justification remains dominant (Krook & Childs, 2010). What is lacking with these governments promoted programs is the limited scope for civil society involvement and grass root participation that are critical to obtaining adequate results that address gender equity.

Policy implementation that promote gender equity is lacking in achieving gender equity but a critical obstacle to the resistance from the grass root levels where traditional cultural practices and values is still dominant and therefore resist change that the government is trying to implement towards gender equity realization. The issue of gender roles entrenched in the traditional beliefs and values is a major challenge to gender equity and empowerment making it difficult to promote and enhance gender equity programs by the government and other stakeholders.

Cultural norms and beliefs have become a critical challenge and obstacle towards gender equity not only in Rwanda but also in most African countries. Gender equality policies are often limited with the existence of the deep-rooted social norms and practices in place for the longest time possible. Creating the policies that strive to change such occurrences
especially in the rural areas of Rwanda must gain resistance from the dominant male gender.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Application of legislated candidate quotas

Legislated candidate quotas according to Ford, (2011), in the political parties act requires political parties to have provisions for a particular number of women candidates to represent them. Such provisions are critical in making sure that women participate in politics without being intimidated.

This form of policy known as ‘gatekeepers’ to women’s representation in politics gives power to women by obliging the political parties to allocate a specific number of candidates both elected or nominated to women. It acts as a gender neutralizer and promotes women participation in politics.

5.3.2 Sanctions for Non-Compliance

This is a sure way of promoting women participation in politics. If political parties’ provisions such as the legislated candidate quotas not complied with, government ought to implement strict enforcement measures including sanctions that make political parties not to participate in elections and other electoral process. These sanctions including financial penalties will make it necessary for political parties to include women in their political agenda and further promote women participations and engagement in political affairs. Sanctions will also create disharmony and disrupt the status quo therefore it will be necessary for women to be included in political affairs however hard it would look or sound.
5.3.3 Reserved Seats in parliament

Creating a seat for women is a major step towards promoting women participations in politics. Rwanda neighbor in the East African region Kenya for example has implemented this well in their constitution. Kenya has a slot in all the 47 counties representing women in parliament known as “women representative”. This is a seat specifically meant for women and champions women rights and agenda in the political arena. This can be emulated by Rwanda towards promoting the female agenda in politics. These seats give women an opportunity to engage in legislation and bring forth feminists agendas and ideologies, which can be passed and implemented to help in creating better lives for women in the society.

5.3.4 Financial support for women in politics

Politics in the modern day requires finances for various purposes of engagement with the locals to helping them in solving current situations and challenges that the locals experience. High level of poverty has therefore deterred many women from participating in politics. Lack of financial support affects women during their campaigns as they cannot compare their financial wealth with their male counterparts making it difficult to compete on a level playing field politically. Offering financial support will create such equity and promote women participation in politics.

5.4. Calls for follow-up studies on feminism

Although feminism as a whole is a burning issue and needs to be solved, very few scholars in our current century research on it, or they rarely post their findings online. It is because the topic of feminism especially in Rwanda has limited material online. Donors
should fuel funding to scholars who wish to address this issue because on the entire globe, Africa in particular, needs to change their perspective towards feminism. Moreover, many awareness foundations should be formed in communities to educate members about the importance of equality and women empowerment (Orjinta, 2014).
REFERENCES


52


56


Strochlic, N. (2014). The Daily Beast. From Two Decades After Genocide, Rwanda’s Women Have Made the Nation Thrive: Available at


