

**AN ASSESSMENT OF BOTSWANA GOVERNMENTS' POLICY IN
PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT SINCE BEIJING
(1995)**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HUMAN AND
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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation/thesis is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been appropriately acknowledged. The thesis is being submitted for the Masters of Arts Degree in International Relations in the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences in the Department of History Politics and International Relations of the North West University: Mafikeng Campus. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other university.

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ABSTRACT

This study is about the Assessment of the Botswana Government's policy in Promoting Gender Equality and Women Empowerment since Beijing (1995). To be empowered, it is important to be aware of one's own capabilities and creative energies. Empowerment is as much about taking charge of the process of making decisions, as it is about the achievement of empowerment goals. In the 21st century, women enjoy more freedom and power than ever before. However, women in Botswana are still disadvantaged compared to men. Women are deprived of equal access to education, health care, capital, and decision making powers in the political, social, and business sectors. Botswana women are not receiving equal opportunities or access to national leadership positions that accord them the responsibility to contribute to the country's development of national policies, laws, and regulations. Men continue to dominate leadership in cabinet, parliament and other higher government institutions with only a few women reaching these positions.

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It has been established that significant achievements have been made by the Botswana government, in partnership with local NGOs and international organizations, in redressing the tide of gender inequality and women empowerment over the past fourteen years. This is true especially in the areas of institutional and policy changes, review of legislation to remove discriminatory clauses, public mobilization and sensitization for gender awareness, ensuring gender parity in enrolment in primary and secondary schools, as well as improving the health of women. However, it has also emerged from the analysis that further work may still have to be done to complete the exercise. This pertains especially to the economic empowerment of women, ensuring that more girls receive science-based and vocational training, and stemming the tide of gender-based violence and its attendant impact on the vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS. However cultural practices, coupled with deep-rooted societal attitudes and institutional cultures that discriminate against women are the major challenges hindering the achievement of gender equality in Botswana.

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

BPFA Beijing Platform of Action

BNSF Botswana National Strategic Framework

BNPC Botswana National Productivity Center

BNCW Botswana National Council on Women

BOPA Botswana Press Agency

BCWP Botswana Caucus for Women in Politics

CEDAW Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

DAW Advancement of Women

POA Framework and plan of Action

GAD Gender and Development

GFP Gender Focal Point

GPPC Gender Project Planning Committee

INSTRAW International Research and Training institute for the Advancement of Women

IMF International Monetary Fund

MOA Ministry of Agriculture

NIR National Institute of Development Research and Documentation

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

NGP National Gender Policy

DDR Post-conflict Management

SADC Southern Africa Development Community

UN United Nations

UNRISD United Nations Institute for Social Development

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNECA United Nations Economic Commission For Africa

UNESCO United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization

UNIFEM UN Development Fund for Women

WAD Women Affairs Department

WEDO Women's Environment and Development Organization

WID Women in Development

Table of Contents

DECLARATION.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACRONYMS.....	iv
Chapter One	2
Introduction.....	2
1.1 Background.....	2
Literature Review.....	14
2. Introduction	14
2.1. Attitudes of all Stakeholders towards the empowerment of women	18
2.2. Gender Equality Institutions	22
2.3. Factors that are affecting the empowerment of women.....	25
2.4. Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in Africa.....	28
2.5. Gender Equality and Women Empowerment globally.....	37
2.6. Benefits of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment	41
Chapter 3.....	44
Methodology	44
Introduction	44
3.1. Data Collection.....	44
3.2. Sampling Technique.....	44
3.3. Data Analysis.....	45
3.4. Ethics	45
3.5. Organization of the Chapters	46
Chapter 4.....	47
Findings	47
4. Introduction.....	47
4.1. Achievements by the Botswana Government in Promoting Gender Equality and Women Empowerment	47
4.2. Drawbacks in the Botswana Government's Policy to promote Gender Equality and Women Empowerment	51

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4.4. Chapter Summary.....	55
Chapter 5.....	57
Recommendation and Conclusion.....	57
5. Recommendation.....	57
5.1. Conclusion	59
REFERENCES	61
APPENDIX 1	67
QUESTIONNAIRE	67

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background

The 1948 United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights states that rights and freedoms will not be limited by a person's sex and establishes that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". In 1946, the United Nations created the division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) to champion women's empowerment and gender equality to enable half of the world's population enjoys equal rights and live in dignity as equal citizen everywhere. Since then, the United Nations through the DAW is championing women empowerment, rights and equality and in 1974, declared an International Year of Women, which was globally celebrated by women (AU, 2008).

The struggle to advance the status of women was enriched by the emergence of an international women's movement in the mid-1970s. The activism of this movement brought about four United Nations (UN) World Conferences on Women. The first and second conferences took place in Mexico City and Copenhagen in 1975 and 1985 respectively, while the third and fourth conferences were held in Nairobi and Beijing in 1985 and 1995 respectively. A significant outcome of the 1995 Beijing conference was the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) signed by all governments; the BPFA provides an agenda for women's empowerment that is seen as a necessary and fundamental pre-requisite for equality, development and peace. The Platform provides a blueprint for women's empowerment that is exceptionally clear, straightforward and actionable. The document includes gender analysis of problems and opportunities in twelve critical areas of concern, and clear and specific standards for actions to be implemented by governments, the UN system and civil society, including, where appropriate, the private sector. In addition, the Platform provides the first global commitment to gender mainstreaming as the methodology by which gender equality and women's empowerment will be achieved (BPFA, 1995). It is worthy of note that despite the adoption of subsequent instruments, the Beijing Platform for Action remains the blueprint for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment globally (UNECA, 2005).

The increased focus on gender and development debate has been an important development of the last three decades. The global realization that failure to pay closer attention to the differentiated positions of women and men in society (resource allocation, rights, and opportunities) in formulating policies and designing projects can have adverse impact on development outcomes. With this understanding, the consensus around the Beijing Platform for Action and was endorsed by 189 governments and leaders of key international institutions at the United Nations (UN) International Conference on Women in 1995 held in Beijing. The centrality of gender equality as one of the prerequisites for poverty reduction was further recognized as the world leaders agreed to a set of time-bound and measurable goals and targets, now called Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), for halving poverty and hunger, ensuring universal primary schooling, reducing child and maternal mortality and infectious diseases, improving environmental sustainability and achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. At the World Summit in 2005, Governments of Africa and other regions and international development organizations, reaffirmed their commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment as essential to development, peace and security (AU, 2008).

To promote gender equality and empower women, the international community has made specific commitments in a wide range of instruments. In 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The convention provides a comprehensive framework to guide all rights-based action for gender equality. It has therefore come to be known as the Women's Bill of Rights. Under this treaty, gender inequality is understood to be the result of discrimination against women. CEDAW calls for equality in outcomes rather than simply equality in opportunities. In other words, it is not sufficient that anti-discrimination laws are put in place by states signatory to the convention. States also have the obligation to take all necessary steps to ensure that women actually enjoy equality in their daily lives (UNDP, 2008). According to Mutangadura (2005), CEDAW continues to provide the framework for promoting gender equality for rural women, as it is the only international legally binding instrument with specific provisions for rural women.

Another significant commitment made by world governments to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women is contained in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

According to the UNDP (2008), the MDGs in effect consolidated previous agreements, including those on women's rights, women's empowerment and gender equality, into a single set of core goals, targets and benchmarks for the development community. Though the Millennium Declaration makes gender equality and the empowerment of women the concern of the third MDG, many authors and experts have argued that gender equality is not just a goal in itself, but is also a prerequisite for the achievement of most if not all the other goals. For example, Mutangadura (2005) argues that the MDGs of eradicating poverty, achieving universal primary education and combating disease such as HIV/AIDS and Malaria cannot be fully realized if women continue to be marginalized. Grown et al. (2005) have demonstrated that achieving the MDG of gender equality and the empowerment of women is not just central to achieving the other MDGs, but also that the realization of each of the other goals will go a long way to promote gender equality and empower women. For example, they argue that "a mother's education, income, and empowerment have a significant impact on lowering child and maternal mortality" and that "because the HIV/AIDS pandemic is rapidly being feminized...failure to control this epidemic is likely to leave girls and women increasingly vulnerable" (Grown et al. 2005).

While considerable gains have been made in the global fight to reduce the gap between men and women during the past decades, gender inequality remains a stark reality within and across countries in the developing world. In these countries, few women are employed out of the agricultural sector, and those who find work in nonagricultural sectors are usually overworked and underpaid. The situation is even worse in Africa where gender differences are reproduced and sustained by institutional constraints and cultural practices. African women are exposed to all forms of exploitation and oppression by their male counterparts. In addition to being relegated to the role of welfare-givers, women in Africa are constantly the victims of domestic and sexual abuse that undermines their human dignity (Rwomire, 2001).

Gender inequality and the marginalization of women remains a serious problem in Southern Africa. The majority of the population resides in rural areas. There are significant differences in livelihood opportunities and outcomes between women and men. Thanks to a combination of cultural practices and customary law, women in Southern Africa face immense difficulties in

having access to land and water rights, credit and income, and even basic education . To make matters worse, gender-based violence is endemic in this region. Despite the efforts of SADC in persuading national governments to adopt legislation and policies meant to protect the rights of women, certain forms of gender-based violence such as trafficking are on the rise in the region. To make matters worse, the incidence of HIV/AIDS is higher among women than men in the region. This condition, which to a larger extent mirrors the domestic and sexual abuse to which women are subjected to, has gone a long way to add to the already huge burden of care that women in the region encounter (Mutangadura, 2005).

Following the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, significant efforts have been made to make these gains relevant to the African continent. According to United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA, 2005), almost all African states have now ratified CEDAW, and 17 have signed and 3 ratified the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. More still, some countries have aligned their national legislation to the provisions of CEDAW. A number of regional declarations and mechanisms have also been developed on gender and development. For example, in 2004, African Heads of States adopted a Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, providing normative standards on women's human rights in Africa to be adhered to by governments at the national level. In 2008, the African Union developed and adopted its first Gender Policy. This Gender Policy provides a mandate for the operationalization of the commitments made by the AU Assembly and is accompanied by a comprehensive ten-year Action Plan, which will guide the implementation of these commitments by AU organs (AU, 2008).

Botswana has ratified or acceded to several international and regional instruments that pertain to women's civil, political, economic, social and cultural status. For example, Botswana has acceded to the CEDAW and is also a signatory to the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action. As a member state of SADC, it is also a signatory to the SADC Declaration on Gender Development and its Plan of Action. Consequently, the government has put in place various institutional frameworks to propel the process of gender equality and women empowerment. In 1997, the Women's Affairs Unit in the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs was upgraded into a full department, with the task of coordinating all women issues at local and national levels. A National Council on Women has also been established to act as the highest advisory body to the

government of Botswana on matters relating to gender and development. It also advises on the monitoring and interpreting government policy concerning gender and women empowerment programmes (Rathapo, 2000).

At the policy level, the government in 1996 instituted an ambitious National Policy of Women and Development with the aim of achieving effective integration and empowerment of women in order to improve their socio-economic status, enhance participation in decision making and their role in the development process. Specifically, the policy aims to eliminate all economic, social and legal discrimination against women, to improve women's health, to promote education and skills training and to mainstream gender into development planning. Two years later, in 1998, the Botswana government responded to the Beijing conference by creating the National Gender Programme Framework to transform policy principles into concrete strategies. The framework prioritized six areas of concern from the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including poverty and economic empowerment; power and decision making; education and training; health; and girls (UNDP, 2005).

A further institutional development following the Beijing conference was the formation of the Botswana National Council on Women (BNCW) in 1999. The BNCW is the highest advisory body to the Government on all matters relating to women in development. It has been given the mandate to guide and support the Government, NGOs, and the private sector as well as monitoring and reviewing policies and programs for gender equality, awareness and progress. In order to ensure that national policies have an impact on the ordinary Woman, and extend its capacity to achieve the twin goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women, the government of Botswana, through the Women's Affairs Department, works closely with a variety of women NGOs. These NGOs act as the major implementing agents of most of the government's programmes and projects for gender equality and the empowerment of women in Botswana (Rathapo, 2000).

Although, Botswana has been independent since 1966, and is economically and politically stable, the country still faces a challenge of gender inequality and dominance of men in national decision making (Dow, 2001). According to Ntseane (2004), gender inequality persists despite efforts to bridge the gap between men and women in all fields through the implementation and

adoption of national policies, such as the 1966 National Policy on Women and Development. Even with such measures, traditional Tswana gender-role expectations continue to impact women's career mobility. Traditionally, Batswana men have been accorded the role of being heads of their households, acquiring power to dominate all important household decision making and resources.

This custom continued even outside households, where men dominated managerial and leadership positions of both private and public institutions (Dow 2001), while women occupied lower level positions regardless of capability, willingness, or birthright. For example, until very recently, a woman was not permitted to inherit her father's chieftainship; only sons could take over following the death of a chief. A woman remained minor under the care of some men all her life (Matemba, 2005), beginning with her father and automatically transferring to her husband once she got married. This perception still prevails today and may affect women's motivation to take up higher national leadership positions, traditionally expected to be occupied by men. Women may also be deterred to take up leadership roles or, to be comfortable and effective in those roles, they may think that society may not view and accept them as capable of such roles.

Customary laws and cultural attitudes continue to discriminate against women in Botswana. Fewer women obtain post-secondary education, especially vocational and technical training, thereby limiting their access to job opportunities. Though female-headed households represent 47% of all households in Botswana, indicators of economic activity and employment portray a huge gender gap. Women therefore bear the brunt of poverty in the country. This is in addition to the high rate of domestic and sexual violence they are exposed to. To crown it all, the participation of women in political and decision-making processes in Botswana remains very low (Rathapo, 2000).

The 1995 World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, re-affirmed the global commitment to achieving equal rights for both women and men. The Government of Botswana has committed itself to achieving this goal. It is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Violence against Women and the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development. Following the Beijing Conference, the Government has prepared the National Gender Program Framework, a policy and strategy document that will guide the implementation

of gender and development initiatives (AU, 2008). It has also adopted a nondiscriminatory Constitution, which provides a platform to challenge any form of gender discrimination and grant opportunities to organizations to lobby for more gender equality (Kalabamu, 2006). Gender equality has also been incorporated in the National Vision 2016 plan, which is based on democracy, development, self-reliance, and respect for human dignity. Despite these efforts, women have not been elected to national leadership at the same rate as men; only a few women have managed to rise to the positions of power and decision making.

Despite this impressive development record, the persistence of income inequality and poverty among women remain areas of concern. This situation implies that the growth benefits have not sufficiently trickled down to all groups in society. Available data on income distribution suggests that the distribution has become skewed over time. Estimates obtained from the 1985/86 household Income and Expenditure Survey indicates that 55 per cent of the rural households were below the poverty datum line. Income levels were generally found to be considerably lower among the rural population and among female-headed households. Nearly 40 per cent of women were found to earn less than P100 per month in cash and in kind income as compared with about 25 per cent for men (Botswana Government, 2009).

Ditshwanelo (2007) however pointed out that strong societal perceptions continue to hamper efforts to achieve gender equality, with women often sharing the same view as men about women's place in society, decision-making, marriage and the family. Customary Law and customs reinforces these perceptions and inequalities, with women receiving unequal treatment regarding issues such as property rights, inheritance, maintenance and custody and guardianship of children. Some aspects of Customary Law are biased against men, such as practices regarding access to children born out of wedlock.

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According to Rathapo (2007) Women are more affected by poverty. In Botswana, Women face a number of economic barriers, including: Legal and cultural obstacles, lack of skills and information, unequal access to jobs, dependency on male partners and unequal participation in development. These economic disadvantages facing women are part of the broader economic development constraints in Botswana. To reduce these disadvantages and eliminate poverty, it requires policies and strategies that respond to the complex nature of the problem, and its

underlying causes. These policies and strategies need to address, among others, women's heavy workload and unequal division of labor, lack of equal participation in education, as well as unequal access to economic resources, and decision-making, changing oppressive traditional and cultural practices; promoting alternative leadership through encouraging and acknowledging leadership initiatives of women at all levels of society, and promoting a culture of peace and non-violence.

The proportion of women in positions of power remains well below 50%. Women are often ignorant of their rights and lack the power to assert their rights. A further finding by the World Bank's established that, 'violence rivals cancer as a cause of morbidity and mortality for women of childbearing age. Even within marriage, women may not be able to negotiate when and what type of sex to have, nor to protest their husbands' multiple sex partners. Poverty and exclusion push some girls and women to engage in sex work, almost always the desperate, last choice of people without other choices (Care, 2005). This study is designed as an important step toward filling that void. It provides a comprehensive outlook by conducting a survey of the assessment of the Botswana government's policy in empowering women.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Women are still more disadvantaged than their male counterparts in such areas as education and employment opportunities. According to Somolekae (2005), Botswana women are not receiving equal opportunities or access to national leadership positions that accord them the responsibility to contribute in the country's development of national policies, laws, and regulations. Men continue to dominate leadership in cabinet, parliament, and other higher government institutions with only a few women reaching these positions. For example, Minister Margaret Ntshengwe; Tribal Chief Mosadi Muriel Seboko; Governor of Bank of Botswana, Linah Mohohlo; Attorney General Atalia Molokomme; and High Court Judge Unity, Minister of Trade and Industry, Dorcas Makgatho are some of the women who have managed to break the glass ceiling of Botswana's higher national leadership.

Besides the 1995 Beijing Declaration and its attendant Platform for Action, Botswana has acceded to or ratified a number of other international and regional instruments for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. These include the 1996 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, the 2000 Millennium Declaration and the Solemn Declaration on Gender and Development by the African Union. The first move by the government of Botswana to internalize these instruments was in 1996 when it upgraded the National Women's Unit, created in 1981, into a full-fledged Women's Affairs Department (WAD) in the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs. The Women Affairs Department is one of the twelve Departments in the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs. It links with other Ministries/Departments through Gender Focal Persons (Botswana Government, 2004).

A further institutional development following the Beijing conference was the formation of the Botswana National Council on Women (BNCW) in 1999. The BNCW is the highest advisory body to the Government on all matters relating to women in development. It has been given the mandate to guide and support the Government, NGOs, and the private sector as well as monitoring and reviewing policies and programs for gender equality, awareness and progress. In order to ensure that national policies have an impact on the ordinary Woman, and extend its capacity to achieve the twin goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women, the government of Botswana, through the Women's Affairs Department, works closely with a variety of women NGOs. These NGOs act as the major implementing agents of most of the government's programmes and projects for gender equality and the empowerment of women in Botswana.

While these developments and attainments are important, there is a growing realization that gender equality and empowerment of women has not been fully integrated into policy formulation and project design. Considerable gaps between men and women in education attainment, economic opportunities, voices and decision-making and wellbeing are persistent in Botswana and this study is designed to fill these gaps. By understanding the major challenges the country is faced with regard to gender inequality and disempowerment it is that hoped policy makers and/or managers' planners will be better equipped to formulate policies that enhance women empowerment. They will also be able to develop and implement more effective support

structures that ensure women play a leading role in combating their disempowerment. The status of women in Botswana has remained a concern in Policies since 1996 when national policies started to address specifically the needs of women. It was wrongly assumed that men and women were equally benefited by development activities. As a result, women lagged far behind men in all developmental activities. To address this problem, women development Programmes have been progressively developed and implemented by many of the government institutions and side by side with government interventions, NGOs are providing various types of women empowerment Programmes including Income Generating Programmes (IG). A separate ministry, to look after the welfare of the women has been established in September 1995 immediate after Beijing Conference.

Since 1995, a number of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs') are innovating and implementing women's income generation and development Programmes. However, in spite of involvement of various Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs') in women empowerment through income generation and skill development Programmes, the status of women is still not satisfactory in Botswana as various official as well as unofficial reports claim and the outcomes against the stated objectives of the NGOs' women empowerment Programmes are often questioned. Therefore, the present study is focused in assessing the impact of Policies and programmes run by government and non-governmental organizations in empowering women with the hope that the knowledge accruing through it will form an important base from which policy makers and managers can draw in their initiatives to empower women.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

The study was motivated primarily by the personal desire to contribute to the fight against gender inequality and the disempowerment of women in Botswana. The choice to undertake research of this nature was therefore informed by the urgent need to interrogate the efforts of the Botswana government's policy in promoting gender equality and women empowerment, with a view to triggering constructive debate that would culminate in the greater advancement of the rights and privileges of all women in Botswana. Also, the researcher intends to contribute to the available literature on the study.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study assesses the attitudes of policy makers, women and the public towards the empowerment of women in the process of identifying possible prospects and challenges for women to become leading players in the socio-economic development of the country. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. To Examine attitudes of policy makers and the public towards gender equality and women empowerment since Beijing (1995).
2. To identify factors affecting the empowerment of women in Botswana.
3. To critically analyze the current policy or policies and efforts by government to promote gender equality and women empowerment.

1.5 Aim of the Study

To provide a critical assessment of Botswana's policy and efforts associated with gender equality and women's empowerment.

1.6 Hypotheses

The government of Botswana is lagging behind in its commitment to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Conducting this study is important for three reasons. First, the study will contribute to the stock of available knowledge in the subject area of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment. There is a growing interest in research that focuses on the nexus of gender inequality and poverty and women empowerment, which forms some of the bedrock underlying the objectives of this particular study.

The study will also generate knowledge that could form the basis for policy formulation in the empowerment of woman as possible panacea in combating gender inequality and disempowerment of women. Although the study was initiated for explanation purposes and not primarily for policy, the knowledge accruing through it will form an important base from which policy makers and managers can draw in their initiatives to empower women. By understanding

the issues the country is faced with on gender inequality and disempowerment it is faced with, policy makers and/or managers planners will be better equipped to formulate policies that enhance women empowerment. They will also be able to develop and implement more effective support structures that ensure women play a leading role in combating their disempowerment.

Finally, understanding what contributes to women's empowerment as well as gender equality is critical in ensuring goals of gender equality and women empowerment is achieved. As a consequence of this study the research will provide direct answers to the questions of gender inequality and disempowerment. The major concern in Botswana is that economic and other policies generally favor males at most, at the expense of female.

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Chapter 2

Literature Review

2. Introduction

This section reviews the empirical and theoretical literature around the subject matter of women empowerment with the view to establishing the theoretical bedrock upon which this research is based. It focuses on the meaning and importance of women empowerment and the role of government in economic development as well as the challenges facing Botswana and the opportunities available to the empowerment of women. The researcher also explores the various theories developed, which focus on the strategies for the empowerment of women in Botswana. To reiterate, this study is the Assessment of Botswana government's policy in promoting Gender Equality and Women Empowerment. It seeks to identify factors that may influence bringing gender inequality and women disempowerment to an end, and therefore, constitute a basis for finding ways to enhance the success of initiatives toward that end. Among the theories developed none has assessed the Botswana Governments' policy in promoting Gender Equality and Women Empowerment therefore a need for this study.

Despite having ratified the Beijing Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, most nations lack a coherent strategy for empowering women. Such a strategy will be necessary for building on the achievements thus far, learning from past mistakes, and improving the future of women in these economies (Lopez-Claros et al, 2005). The overall impression that emerges from this study is that while significant achievements have been made at the global level to combat gender inequality, the same cannot be said of the trend at the regional and sub-regional levels. The picture becomes gloomier when it comes to Africa and the Southern African region in particular, where deep-rooted cultural beliefs and social attitudes continue to hamper progress towards gender equality.

Broadly speaking Kindervatter (1979, cited by Weeden) defines empowerment as "people gaining an understanding and control over social, economic, and/or political forces to improve their standing in community. Participation has also been linked to empowerment as a way of encouraging people, especially the public to see themselves and their role as relevant and indispensable in community activities. Dean (1999) argues that for people to be active in their

own development, they must be given power that connotes respect for and the use of local knowledge experiences and interest.

Saraswathy et al (cited in Snijders, 2009) defined women empowerment ideally as 'a continuous process where the powerless people become conscious of their situation and organize themselves to improve it and access opportunities, as an outcome of which women take control over their lives, set their own agenda, gain skills, solve problems and develop self-reliance'. Through empowerment, more Botswana women could gain control of their lives and democratic participation in national affairs. Empowerment can be used as an intentional intervention process centered in a local community, through which people lacking equal share of resources may gain greater access to and control over those resources. Empowerment programs that are geared toward intervention may help eradicate gender issues while providing opportunities to develop knowledge and skills to women aspiring to national leadership. Botswana government and other organizations have implemented empowerment programs to equip women, but much still has to be done to ensure equal opportunity and positive development in national leadership positions.

According to Rose and Subramanian (2005), the concept of gender equality denotes a situation where women have the same rights and opportunities in life as men, including the ability to participate in the public sphere. The promotion of gender equality does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. According to the UN (2001), equality between women and men has both a quantitative and a qualitative aspect. The quantitative aspect refers to the desire to achieve equitable representation of women, while the qualitative aspect refers to achieving equitable influence on establishing development priorities and outcomes for women and men. Consequently, gender equality involves ensuring that the perceptions, interests, needs and priorities of women and men will be given equal weight in planning and decision-making.

Grown et al (2005) have developed a three-dimensional framework for understanding gender equality. Firstly, there must be equality in the possession of basic human abilities measured by education, health and nutrition. These capabilities are considered to be fundamental to individual well-being and are the means through which individuals access other forms of well-being. The second dimension of gender equality has to do with the access to resources and opportunities.

These include equality to access economic resources such as land, property and income, as well as equal access to political opportunity such as representation in parliament and other political bodies. The third dimension of gender equality is in the domain of security. According to Grown et al. (2005), for gender equality to be complete, there must be reduced vulnerability to violence and conflict, especially on the part of women and girls.

According to the UN (2001), the empowerment of women concerns women gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. Put another way, Kabeer (2003) argues that an empowered woman is one who has the agency to formulate strategic choices and to control resources and decisions that affect important life outcomes. The core of the concept of empowerment therefore lies in the ability of the woman to control her own destiny. This implies that to be empowered women must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), they must also have the agency to use those rights, capabilities, resources, and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions such as is provided through leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions (Grown et al., 2005).

With regards to the rationale for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, a number of authors have argued that equality between women and men is not just a matter of human rights and social justice, but that greater equality between women and men is also a precondition for sustainable people-centred development. In other words, the perceptions, interests, needs and priorities of both women and men must be taken into consideration not only as a matter of social justice but because they are necessary to enrich development processes.

According to Kegley et al (2004), there is "incontrovertible evidence that women's status in society, and especially their education, has an important influence on human development, and that women's treatment is a human rights issue that affects everyone." Similarly, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has touted gender equality as an irreducible condition for inclusive, democratic, violence-free and sustainable development (UNDP, 2008).

The dual goals of gender equality and women empowerment can be met through two broad and complementary strategies: gender mainstreaming and targeted activities to support women. Until the mid-1990s, the route to gender equality and women empowerment was characterized almost exclusively by initiatives that specifically target women's needs and priorities, with a view to reduce existing disparities and create an empowering space for women. These include legislation, policy development, and women-related research, projects and programmes (UN, 2001). According to Musa (2008), the shortcomings of these targeted initiatives resulted in the adoption of gender mainstreaming at the 1995 Beijing Women's conference as an alternative strategy for the fight against gender inequalities and the marginalization of women.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defines gender mainstreaming as "a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated" (ECOSOC, 1997). Despite the apparent superiority and preference for gender mainstreaming over targeted initiatives, the UN (2001) has advised that these two strategies are in no way in competition with each other. Even in an environment that prioritizes gender mainstreaming, women specific projects can also continue to play an important role in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

According to the theory of empowerment, powerlessness is a process that empowers the entire community of women (Perkins et al, 1995). Through identifying and addressing issues that cause others to be powerless in the community, the entire community is empowered. Empowerment theory also suggests that, through research and intervention, the well-being of individuals can be linked with the larger social and political well-being. Through empowerment, more Botswana women could gain control of their lives and democratic participation in national affairs. Empowerment can be used as an intentional intervention process centered in a local community, through which people lacking equal share of resources may gain greater access to and control over those resources. Empowerment programs that are geared toward intervention may help eradicate gender issues while providing opportunities to develop knowledge and skills to women aspiring to national leadership. Botswana government and other organizations have implemented

empowerment programs to equip women, but much still has to be done to ensure equal opportunity and positive development in national leadership positions.

2.1. Attitudes of all Stakeholders towards the empowerment of women

Botswana, recognizing the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, commissioned a review of all laws affecting the status of women in Botswana in 1998 (Ntseane, 2000). Amendments were made to several national laws to align them with the convention and various laws, including the Penal Code, the Employment Act, the Marriage Act, and the Citizenship Act, have since been amended. These amendments have significantly contributed to policy measures leading to women's empowerment socially, economically and politically, and to the balancing of power relations and equity in decision-making under the jurisdiction of the Common Law. As for women's role in political and public life, the reality is that there are many gender-related factors limiting women's advancement in political and all aspects of life, particularly in power-sharing and decision-making. However, the President has the prerogative of nominating four "specially elected" members of Parliament, and in the last general elections the President appointed three women out of the four Specially Elected members to ministerial positions.

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Botswana has done much to promote women's development and inclusion in national leadership structures, starting with the adoption of a nondiscriminatory Constitution, which provides a platform to challenge any form of gender discrimination and grant opportunities to organizations to lobby for more gender equality (Kalabamu, 2006). Some of the efforts taken by the government include the 1966 National Policy on Women and Development, the creation of a Women's Affairs Unit in 1981, the formulation of a National Women in Development Policy in 1995, the establishment of a National Gender Framework in 1998, and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1998. In addition, the Botswana government is a signatory of various international gender agreements, including the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development. Gender equality has also been incorporated in the National Vision 2016 plan, which is based on democracy, development, self-reliance, and respect. Despite these efforts, women have not been elected to national leadership

at the same rate as men; only a few women have managed to rise to positions of power and decision making.

According to Ntseane (2005), in many homes in Botswana, and particularly in rural areas, the inequality of the girl child in comparison to the boy child is reinforced in the allocation of responsibilities and expectations starting from childhood. The Government thus continues to support public education, awareness creation, and social programs intended to remove socialization practices that disadvantage women and in particular the girl child. The Ministry of Education (and Skills Development) has taken cognizance of gender imbalances in education and is currently preparing an "Equal Opportunities Policy" that should facilitate the promotion of equality of learning opportunities and eliminate any existing potential discrimination among students on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, religion, sex, marital status, disability, age, social status or location. A "re-admission policy" has also been adopted, to allow girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy to return to school after a period of six months.

According to Botswana national strategic framework (BNSF) the HIV/AIDS epidemic is gender biased: Women are more vulnerable to infection than men, and they bear the burden of care. Sometimes girls are even withdrawn from school to take care of sick relatives or siblings. The Government has therefore established several programs, including prevention services; care, support and treatment; support for interventions that mitigate the impacts of HIV/AIDS; counselling, routine testing, blood safety; and food baskets. In addition, the Ministry of Health aims at increasing male involvement and participation in sexual and reproductive health matters in order to increase their knowledge and reduce transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections and to combat gender-based violence. Regarding the latter, while there is currently no provision for marital rape in the laws of Botswana, the Government provides financial and technical support to initiatives that offer assistance to victims or survivors of violence (BNSF, 2010).

The Government of Botswana recognizes the wide ranging contribution of women to the socio-economic, political and cultural development of the nation. Government further recognizes that the contemporary situation of women warrants the existence of an effective national machinery, at a recognizable level, to adequately articulate women's issues and needs, especially as future

national development depends in part, on enabling women to participate more fully without undue hindrance. Given the multiple and changing roles of women in society, the developmental of women's concerns, the need for information and data on gender-issues, appropriate technology and training needs; adequate health care and improved status through legal and socio-cultural reforms, women issues have assumed not only national importance but also global significance (Botswana Government, 2000).

Since the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) Botswana has made major strides in the advancement of women despite the fact that there are still gaps and constraints. A major achievement in implementing the National Plan of Action for gender equality and advancement of women has been the adoption of two very important documents. In 1996, the Government promulgated the National Policy on Women in Development. This policy attempts to address the situation of women in Botswana in an integrated and multi-sect oral manner. It focuses on areas including:

- Elimination of all negative economic and socio-cultural practices as well as inappropriate laws which will be done through eliminating all forms of inequalities and inequities among women and men.
- Enhancement on women's health which will be achieved through promoting women's health including reproductive health and rights.
- Promotion of education and skills training which will be done by ensuring that education is designed to create gender awareness.
- Promotion of gender awareness in development planning which will be met through ensuring that the needs of women are identified and provided for (Ditshwanelo, 2007).

In 1996, another milestone in the advancement of women in Botswana was reached with the Government's ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The convention, inter alia, on Women's Rights emphasize the need to review all laws and customs in order to remove gender bias. It also emphasizes the importance of public human rights education, gender sensitization and the provision of legal services to assist women whose human rights have been violated. Whilst there

has been a continual revision of pieces of legislation to address gender inequalities in 1997/98 a comprehensive review of all laws affecting the status of women in Botswana was carried out.

The public's perception on gender equality and advancement of women has changed since the UN Fourth World Conference on women (1995) which was followed by nationwide gender awareness building efforts at grassroots and district levels. General public now views this as a challenge for every person and they are now beginning to grasp fundamental concepts relating to gender equality. Non-governmental Organizations (NGO's) dealing with women empowerment has significantly increased in number over the past years. The University of Botswana, Botswana National Productivity Centre (BNPC), and Institute of Development Management (IDM) are among many institutions which have taken gender equality and advancement of women into consideration and offer training on gender. However, it is worth noting that there is no set standard therefore, there are variations in the quality of training (BNPC, 2009).

Gender equality and women's empowerment is central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)). Yet, while there are some positive trends in gender equality, there are still many areas of concern. Girls account for the majority of children not attending school; almost two-thirds of women in the developing world work in the informal sector or as unpaid workers in the home. Despite greater parliamentary participation, women are still out numbered four-to-one in legislatures around the world. Gender equality is a condition for inclusive, democratic, violence-free and sustainable development. UNDP works collaboratively with national partners to: Include women in planning, budgeting, and policy-making processes in a meaningful way;

- Promote women's and girls' economic rights and opportunities;
- Address the gender dimensions of HIV and AIDS;
- Strengthen the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data;
- Ensure that essential public services like health and education benefit women, men, girls and boys equitably (UNIFEM, 2008).

Equality between men and women is a fundamental human right. When women have equal access to education, and go on to participate fully in business and economic decision-making, they are a key driving force against poverty. Women with equal rights are better educated,

healthier, and have greater access to land, jobs and financial resources. Their increased earning power in turn raises household incomes. By enhancing women's control over decision-making in the household, gender equality also translates into better prospects and greater well-being of children, reducing poverty of future generations (Grown et al, 2005).

2.2. Gender Equality Institutions

A Women Affairs Department (WAD), within the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, was created as unit in the ministry in 1981, upgraded to a division in 1987, and upgraded to a full department in 1997. The Women Affairs Department is with integrating gender policies into various government initiatives and mobilizing social support for advancing the status of women in Botswana. In line with the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), the Women's Affairs Department in 2002 introduced the establishment of Gender Focal Points (GFP) in other ministries. It is hoped that the establishment of GFP will expedite the process of gender mainstreaming and promote ownership of the policy on Women in Development at the level of individual government ministries (Botswana Government, 2005)

The Botswana National Gender Programme Framework provides a Plan of Action to mainstream the gender strategy within all sectors of government. WAD services the Botswana National Council on Women (BNCW), which was appointed in September 1999 and became operational in January 2000. The council is the highest advisory body to the government on matters relating to women and its role is to advise on, monitor and interpret government policy concerning women in development matters, and make suggestions on areas to be addressed in comprehensive women and development program (Botswana Government, 2005).

The Botswana Caucus for Women in Politics (BCWP), whose creation was spearheaded by Emang Basadi Women's Association and was established to ensure that gender and women's issues are put on the agenda of the decision-making institutions. In order to ensure that national policies have an impact on goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women, the government of Botswana, through the Women's Affairs Department, works closely with a variety of women NGOs. These NGOs act as the major implementing agents of most of the government's programs and projects for gender equality and the empowerment of women in Botswana. Most of these gender-related NGOs have come under an umbrella body referred to as

the Women's NGO Coalition. This body was formed in 1993 to co-ordinate NGO activities in preparation for and after the Beijing Conference (Botswana Government, 2004).

The University of Botswana is also another major institution for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in Botswana. The University of Botswana has been incorporated into the Botswana government's national women's machinery to provide gender training and play a key role in the generation, documentation and dissemination of gender-related information. The university has developed a number of organizational structures to this effect, prominent among which is the Gender Project Planning Committee (GPPC). Through short courses and related academic programs, the university has been instrumental in providing training on a gender and development to a variety of stakeholders including policy-makers, development planners and NGO staff. Through its National Institute of Development Research and Documentation (NIR), the university also plays a pivotal role in the generation, documentation and dissemination of gender information in the country (Botswana Government, 2008).



National Women's Machinery still lacks the critical human and financial resources that would enable it to execute its mandate fully; thus making the POA fully operational. The National Women's Machinery has to prioritize (which is extremely difficult at times) because of these limitations. The National Women's Machinery has continually supported initiatives to empower communities to take part in the women's issues and also promoting a sense of ownership gender mainstreaming activities.

There should be rigorous information dissemination by the National Women's Machinery; therefore, there is a need of decentralizing the operations of Women's Affairs Department to sustain programs at district and community levels. Women's issues are still viewed as the exclusive responsibility of the National Women's Machinery. As such, other extension departments or divisions consider responsibilities in this regard as of secondary concern to their regular work. Therefore cooperation is thwarted; there is no agreement on respective roles and responsibilities of various government departments. As a result, there are more obstacles in realizing national goals for the meaningful empowerment of women (Botswana Government, 2008).

The attention to gender balancing and advancement of women has improved since 1995 in government policies. The different government departments have since started to include the National Women's Machinery in the development of their policies to ensure that a gender perspective permeates their policies, examples of such policies include the Population Policy, the Land Policy, and the Sports and Recreation Policy. However, the change has been rather slow. All Ministries now have Gender Focal Points (GFPs). There is improvement on knowledge in, and full appreciation for gender mainstreaming. There is, however, still a need to do more in this regard especially training of the media personnel in order to promote positive reporting of gender issues (Botswana Government, 2004).

The National Policy on Women in Development adopted in 1995/6 focuses on areas such as the empowerment of women in order to improve their socio-economic status, the enhancement of their participation in decision making, and their integration in the development process. This goal is meant to be achieved by eliminating all economic, social and legal discrimination against women, improve women's health, promote education and skills training and mainstream gender into development planning. The underlying principles of the National Policy on Women in Development include recognition that women and men are guaranteed equality under the law, and that all government policies in Botswana must consider women and men as equally important human resources for economic, social and political development (Botswana Government, 2004).

A National Gender Programme (NGP) Framework and Plan of Action (POA) were developed (from 1997-1999) based on the National Policy on Women in Development. The NGP is a long-term vision for Gender and Development in Botswana and the POA stipulates activities that need to be undertaken in the next six years. It also indicates key players, targets and stakeholders in the implementation process. A consultancy to develop a comprehensive advocacy and social mobilization strategy for the National Gender Programme was commissioned with the main objective of developing a comprehensive strategy for consensus building, resource mobilization, and sustained commitment to the National Gender Programme (Botswana Government, 1995).

The NGOs play a very important role in planning and shaping the follow-up activities aimed at making the National Plan of Action (NPA) a reality. The National Women's Machinery and the

Women's NGO Coalition hold forums on a regular basis to share information and ideas on women's issues. The fact that the National Women's Machinery is not decentralized makes the NGOs role quite significant as they work with the communities at the grass root level as implementation partners. The formulation of an NGO policy is at an advanced stage. There is an effort by the National Women's Machinery to come up with Gender Focal Points in government ministries and departments. While this is still at infancy stage, there are some ministries that have established functions to ensure that gender is consistently mainstreamed into their policies and programs (Botswana Government, 2008).

The Government of Botswana is committed to ensuring that Batswana women and men actively participate in national development through meaningful contribution in the economy, socio-cultural activities, political power-sharing and the creation of an enabling environment that is free from gender discrimination. The comprehensive review of laws that discriminate against women is expected to trigger a process that will systematically ensure a removal of law-related barriers that have constrained women's free participation and limited their choices and opportunities for self development and national contribution(Physicians for Human rights,2007).

In spite of remarkable achievements made by women in education, health and employment in the modern sector in the recent past, there are a number of negative economic and socio-cultural practices, as well as laws which militate against women's full participation and integration into the development process. Of further significance are issues of high maternal mortality, high teenage pregnancies, low levels of skills training and development for girls, especially those who drop out of the school system; and the rising incidence of female-headed households which adversely affect the status and welfare of women in society (Ditshwanelo, 2007).

2.3. Factors that are affecting the empowerment of women

According to Somolekae (2005) socio-economic studies on Botswana indicate that women are politically, economically, and socially disadvantaged regardless of their contributions to the country's overall development. This could stem from years of receiving less opportunity for higher education and less access to resources compared to men (Siphambe et al, 2001). Some studies have suggested that the inequality between men and women in Botswana's national leadership may be embedded in Tswana culture that perceives men as natural leaders and women

as followers. Hence, the saying “ga dike di etelelwa ke manamagadi pele,” literally translated to mean “women cannot be leaders of the nation” (Dow; Ntseane, 2004). Women constitute 52% of Botswana’s population and are the majority of voters (Sechele), they head 47% of the country’s households and make up about 40% of the workforce (Ntseane), yet only a few have managed to reach higher national leadership positions, as indicated by Botswana’s statistics for the last two elections.

A study done by Botswana Press Agency (BOPA) showed an increase of women in parliament by 2% and in cabinet by 9.6% over a period of 10 years from 1994 to 2004. Since Botswana’s independence in 1966, 10 women have occupied ministerial positions, 9 have occupied parliamentary seats, and 3 were crowned as chiefs. Almost all women in parliament and cabinet were specially elected (Sechele, 2004), a factor that may indicate reluctance on the part of women to voluntarily assert for such responsibility. It also indicates the power imbalance as it is still men who decided who will be appointed. These women, however, have managed to overcome cultural and organizational barriers such as gender discrimination, lack of professional and political support, lack of role models, and mentoring opportunities and have situated themselves in high-ranking leadership positions.

According to Care (2005) women work two-thirds of the world’s working hours, according to the United Nations Millennium Campaign to halve world poverty by the year 2015. The overwhelming majority of the labor that sustains life for example: growing food, cooking, raising children, caring for the elderly, maintaining a house, hauling water is done by women, and universally this work is accorded low status and no pay. The ceaseless cycle of labor rarely shows up in economic analyses of a society’s production and value.

- Women earn only 10 percent of the world’s income. Where women work for money, they may be limited to a set of jobs deemed suitable for women invariably low-pay, low-status positions.
- Women own less than 1 percent of the world’s property. Where laws or customs prevent women from owning land or other productive assets, from getting loans or credit, or from having the right to inheritance or to own their home, they have no assets to leverage for economic stability and cannot invest in their own or their children’s futures.

- Women make up two-thirds of the estimated 876 million adults worldwide who cannot read or write; and girls make up 60 percent of the 77 million children not attending primary school. Education is among the most important drivers of human development: women who are educated have fewer children than those who are denied schooling (some studies correlate each additional year of education with a 10 percent drop in fertility). They delay their first pregnancies, have healthier children (each additional year of schooling a woman has is associated with a 5 to 10 percent decline in child deaths, according to the United Nations Population Fund)

These factors have been identified as underlying the measures that matter in women empowerment. Women play the position of underdog in many parts of the world, Africa included, let alone Botswana.

However, strong societal perceptions continue to hamper efforts to achieve gender equality, with women often sharing the same views as men about women's place in society, decision-making, marriage and the family. Customary Law reinforces these perceptions and inequalities, with women receiving unequal treatment regarding issues such as property rights, inheritance, maintenance and custody and guardianship of children. Some aspects of Customary Law are biased against men, such as practices regarding access to children born out of wedlock (Kalabamu, 2006).

The high and growing incidence of AIDS also highlights women's lack of power over their own sexuality. The very high of HIV/AIDS and the practice of unsafe abortions remain a major problem. The Criminal Code criminalizes abortion, unless pregnancy is a result of rape, defilement, or incest, poses a physical or mental health risk to the pregnant woman, or if unborn child would suffer from or later develop serious physical or mental abnormalities or disease (Mutangadura, 2005).

At the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the United Nations suggested that "poverty has a woman's face," and that 70% of the poor in the world are women (Akinboade, 2005). It is important to mention that poverty does not only affect active and productive women, rather circles of chronic poverty and its outcomes affect also girl-children and elderly women. Consequently, boys who are raised in families headed by women will

automatically be products of chronic poverty and will thus be affected by it. Poverty is caused by a number of factors, for example, lack of education, high unemployment among women, and lack of access to productive land (in east and southern Africa), lack of access to capital/financial services, and lack of participation in the labor force (Akinboade, 2005).

Gender equality and women's empowerment should be every nation's priority, in order to eradicate women's poverty, violence, and health issues (Sandler, 2007), which are causes and outcomes of low representation. According to the UN General Assembly, nations that choose to exclude women in decision making, and that discriminates against women on the basis of gender, pay a high price in terms of greater poverty, lower standards of living, and stagnant economies. As leaders of most families, women are the major stakeholders in nations' social responsibility programs, and the success of these programs is questionable without women's input. Hence, women's inadequate representation in political and corporate decision making can prove to be costly to public and private sectors since organizations' decisions on social responsibility programs may be affected. Increasing the number of women in Botswana's leadership will enable women's perspectives and views to be included in national decision making. Bringing adequate number of both men and women into national leadership, their different perspectives and ideas bring diversity and creativity to the decision-making process.

2.4. Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in Africa

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Equality between women and men was one of the major themes of subsequent world conferences on women. The Beijing declaration and platform for action (1995) explicitly linked gender equality with women's empowerment. Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality development and peace. The Beijing platform for action maintains that similarities and differences between women and men should be recognized and equally valued, and that women and men should enjoy equal status; recognition and consideration; equal conditions a "to realize their full potential and ambitions"; equal "opportunities to participate in, contribute to and benefit from societies resources and development"; equal "freedoms and quality of life"; and equal "outcomes in all aspects of life".

At the World Summit in 2005, Governments of Africa and other regions and international development organizations, reaffirmed their commitment to gender equality and women empowerment as essential to development, peace and security. The centrality of gender equality as one of the prerequisites for poverty reduction was further recognized as the world leaders agreed to a set of time-bound and measurable goals and targets, now called Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), for halving poverty and hunger, ensuring universal primary schooling, reducing child and maternal mortality and infectious diseases, improving environmental sustainability and achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

In July 2003, the African Union adopted the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, a supplementary protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which was adopted in 1981. The Protocol, which fills a major gap in the regional human rights system (Amnesty International, 2005), calls for the protection of the rights of women in reproductive health, violence against women, elimination of all forms of harmful traditional practices (including early marriage and female genital mutilation, equal right to education and training). In protecting women's economic and social rights, it calls for women's equal access to employment and equal pay for jobs of equal value, the right to inherit property, the right to equal share of matrimonial property at the time of divorce, ensure women's equal access to and control over productive resources and guarantee their property rights, promote and support the occupations and economic activities of women, in particular, within informal sector, establish system of protection and social insurance for women working in the informal sector and take necessary measures to recognize the economic value of women's work. The Protocol was entered into force in 2005 and as of January 2006, was ratified by many African countries (UNCEA, 2005).

A March 1997 survey by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) found that only 10 African countries had drawn up action plans. A more hopeful indication was the September 1997 signing of a Gender Declaration by the leaders of the 14-member Southern African Development Community (SADC) at their meeting in Malawi. The declaration commits member states to eradicate gender inequalities in the region; mainstream gender in all SADC activities; create a standing committee of ministers responsible for gender affairs; and set up

focal points dealing with gender in all sector coordinating units as well as a gender unit in the SADC Secretariat.

Despite such positive moves, there has been insufficient political will and sustained commitment to meeting the needs and interests of women by local authorities and governments. While many countries have ratified UN agreements such as the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, which guarantees women equal rights and protection from discrimination, these have not informed policy-making or translated into better living and working conditions for women (Wendoh et al, 2005). This hampers Africa's development by excluding the perspectives, skills and dynamism of half the population. Without meaningful commitment in the form of policy changes and the provision of resources to deal with the root causes of women's conditions, Africa cannot hope to see a breakthrough in its development and renewal. UNECA (2005) argues that in most African countries, there is a clear lack of demonstrated political will and commitment to translate gender declarations and policies into actionable measures for achieving gender equality. This is attributed not only to the absence of committed and capable women and men in the highest echelons of power and decision-making, but generally to the inadequate commitment and adherence to democratic principles.

UN agencies such as the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and UN Development Programme (UNDP) support gender awareness training for policy-makers in Africa, provide technical assistance and build strong gender components into their own programming and projects. Similarly, the Commonwealth Secretariat has commissioned several studies on gender and economic policy-making and applies a gender perspective to analyze the effectiveness of governmental policies and public services. The World Bank also emphasizes the developmental costs of ignoring women and denying them access to key resources, and urges countries to draw up gender action plans. However, the severe economic constraints that African countries face tend to undercut these new emphases and shifts in approach. The continuing poverty of the majority of African countries, declining terms of trade and the burden of external debt create an unfavorable environment for development. Of the limited resources available, little is directly allocated to women. In addition, structural adjustment policies pursued for nearly two decades by African governments in conjunction with the World Bank and the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) have had important gender consequences. Governments' macroeconomic policies do not incorporate gender perspectives in their design and ignore the structure of households in Africa and the social relations that influence women's roles in production (SADC, 2008).

Progress has also been attained in policy and legal reforms and institutional arrangements at both regional and country levels. Some countries formulated gender policies, revising family laws or adopting new ones, revision of legal frameworks and setting up institutional structures to facilitate advancing their gender equality agendas. In some countries, new and revised constitutions make provisions for women's equal rights. While these developments and attainments are important, there is a growing realization that gender equality and empowerment of women has not been fully integrated into policy formulation and project design. Considerable gaps between men and women in education attainment, economic opportunities, voices and decision-making and wellbeing are persistent in many parts of Africa (AU, 2008).

These successes notwithstanding, it is apparent from the reviewed literature that women and girls still face enormous challenges in most Southern African countries. This position is reflected in the outcome of the 2005 SADC Regional Consultative Conference on Gender and Development. The conference report notes that while the policy framework for the advancement of gender equality in Southern Africa has significantly advanced since 1997, implementation still falls short of stated commitments. Persistent and new threats to gender equality identified in the report include the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, increasing poverty and gender based violence, declining social security nets and the trafficking of women and children in the region (SADC, 2005).

SADC member states have committed themselves to promoting women's full access to, and control over productive resources such as land, livestock, markets, credit, modern technology, formal employment, and a good quality of life in order to reduce the level of poverty among women (SADC, 1997). However, the SARDC report reveals that in most SADC countries, the economic disempowerment of women persists even in cases where policies, legal provisions, and programs to address specific provisions exist. Women, especially those in rural areas, still lack

control over means of production and experience limited access to credit and capital (SARDC, 2006).

There are a number of institutional constraints that continue to hinder the translation of gender policies into gainful actions in Southern Africa. Chief among these is a perceived lack of political will and the absence of appropriate mechanisms to monitor policy implementation. Besides, most countries do not have Gender Equality Acts to legalize implementation of gender mainstreaming, and some national constitutions still contain discriminatory elements that hamper the implementation of gender policies and frameworks.

Even in countries with elaborate gender machineries, these are usually understaffed, inadequately funded, and not strategically positioned within the government structures. This obstructs them from adequately coordinating, monitoring and evaluating progress in gender mainstreaming in line ministries. Similarly, the work of Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in sectoral ministries is hindered by lack of gender specific job descriptions, lack of or inadequate knowledge of gender issues and low morale. These institutional constraints are compounded by deep-rooted cultural perceptions and practices that adversely affect women. In most Southern African countries, customary laws continue to be in conflict with statutory laws and run at variance with efforts to promote gender equality and empower women (UNECA, 2004).

Over the past decade international commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment have been reaffirmed in continental conferences and declarations, and translated into a number of strategic documents. In July 2003, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa was adopted by African Heads of State at the Maputo Summit of the African Union, held in Mozambique.

According to Gawaye et al (2005), this protocol is of major significance for three reasons. It does not only reinforce the status of women's rights that have been established and elaborated in other international and regional instruments, but is also touted as an advanced tool for protecting the rights of women in particularly vulnerable situations – for example, widows, older women, and pregnant and nursing mothers. Most importantly, the African Women's Protocol has been hailed for being the first instrument of its kind developed by Africans, for Africans. In July 2004, African Heads of States adopted a Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, providing normative

standards on women's human rights in Africa to be adhered to by governments at the national level. The Declaration further urged African states to sign and ratify the African Women's Protocol by the end of 2004, and to support the launching of public campaigns to ensure its entry into force by 2005 (UNCEA, 2005).

In addition to these instruments and declarations, commitment to the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment in Africa is also reflected in the structure and policy documents of the new continental institutions. Committed by its Constitutive Act to the principle of gender equality and equity, the African Union, for example, provides further opportunities for institutionalizing gender mainstreaming and increased political participation of African women in regional decision-making. The AU Commission was formed on a 50/50 gender parity basis. The first Speaker of the AU Pan African Parliament (PAP) is a woman and at least one in every five national members of the PAP is a woman. In 2008, the AU Gender Policy was adopted to establish a clear vision and make commitments to guide the process of gender mainstreaming and women empowerment. The policy document also seeks to influence policies, procedures and practices which will accelerate the achievement of gender equality, gender justice, non discrimination and fundamental human rights in Africa (AU, 2008).

The decisions and declarations made at the regional and sub-regional levels have created an enabling environment for advocacy for and given impetus to the drive towards gender equality in individual African countries. Most if not all Africa countries have set up various types of national machineries such as ministries, commissions, divisions, departments, councils and forums to monitor the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. These structures have been strengthened in many countries, with gender focal points in all ministries and portfolio committees on gender in legislative bodies. Moreover, national institutional mechanisms have been supported by gender policies and national plans for implementing the BPFA. Civil society organizations have also organized themselves into gender networks, coalitions, women's forums and lobby groups to strengthen monitoring of the implementation of the BPFA (UNECA, 2005).

Evidence in the literature points to the fact that the establishment of institutional mechanisms for the implementation of the BPFA has been accompanied by a relative improvement in the status of women on the continent. Reports from most African countries indicate successes in areas such as

increased school enrolment for girls, wider coverage of health services, awareness-raising campaigns and programmes on women's human rights, increased participation of women in the economy and higher representation of women in national governance structures. However, as UNECA (2005) has observed, despite these positive trends, major challenges still remain in all areas. An assessment of the situation of women in Africa shows that most of the strategies developed have either not been fully implemented or have not made notable differences in the lives of grassroots women. Comparisons with other regions of the world indicate that Africa still lags behind in many areas. African women still have limited access to productive resources, suffer gross violations of their social, cultural and economic rights, have inadequate access to social services and are generally marginalized in the economy.

A number of factors have been identified as impediments to the successful promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa. These range from the lack of the necessary political will to the persistence of negative attitudes towards the phenomenon. In their review of gender mainstreaming activities in four African countries, Wendoh et al (2005) for example, document that gender equality is still perceived by African people as a foreign import that poses a threat to the stability and cohesion of the traditional African society.

As such, the implementation of gender mainstreaming does not only face resistance from the wider society, but is also treated with a lukewarm attitude by the very government and civil society officials who are expected to champion it. A similar concern is shared by UNECA (2005), which argues that in most African countries, there is a clear lack of demonstrated political will and commitment to translate gender declarations and policies into actionable measures for achieving gender equality. This is attributed not only to the absence of committed and capable women and men in the highest echelons of power and decision-making, but generally to the inadequate commitment and adherence to democratic principles.

Inadequate progress in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa has also been blamed on factors outside of the continent. According to Wendoh et al (2005), most of the funding for gender activities carried out by government and non-governmental organizations in Africa comes from foreign donors. Paradoxically, they argue, this outside involvement has been identified as one of the major challenges to the promotion of gender equality on the continent.

Firstly, most donors have made the inclusion of gender equality goals as a requirement for funding NGO activities. Because most African NGOs have few opportunities for raising funds locally, they are often compelled to include a gender component in their funding proposals without any real commitment to or knowledge of gender issues. According to the words of Wendoh et al (2005), "this donor-led insistence on including a gender element, without due regard for local perspectives, skills or analysis, results in NGOs masquerading as gender-sensitive at best, and becoming resistant, mistrustful, and sceptical at worst." Secondly, they argue that donor funds come with conditions that are usually insensitive to the cultural realities on the ground. This usually makes it difficult for local NGO staff to factor their knowledge of the local environment into their gender activities. The result is gender work that is not amenable to effective social and cultural change.

A second external constraint on gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa is associated with the disabling macroeconomic environment discussed above. For scholars such as Randriamaro (2002), this problem is best epitomized in the gender-insensitivity of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). As the socio-economic programme of the African Union, NEPAD envisions to ensure that the specific issues faced by poor women are addressed in its poverty reduction strategies (NEPAD, 2000).

However, Randriamaro (2002) argues that a gender and institutional analysis of its macroeconomic framework shows fundamental flaws that will negatively affect the achievement of its stated goals regarding poverty and the role of women in social and economic development. The logic behind this position is that by subscribing to neoliberal economic policies, NEPAD is simply reproducing the Washington Consensus, which is reputed for entrenching poverty and reinforcing gender inequalities in Africa.

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The Southern African region presents a shining example of intergovernmental initiatives and efforts at the sub-regional level to deal with the challenges of achieving gender equality and promoting gender sensitive development. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has developed a gender policy and set up an institutional framework for monitoring the implementation of the policy. The 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender Development and the Plan of Action adopted in 1998 gives member States ownership, empowerment and accountability for measures to address the issue of the advancement of women in the sub-region. It plays an

important role in translating international instruments, such as the Convention for the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) into regional commitments (UNECA, 2001).

According to a ten-year review report on the implementation of the BPFA in Southern Africa, most countries in the sub-region have adopted National Gender Policies and gender policy implementation plans, which they have started implementing. Institutional mechanisms in the form of Ministries, Directorates, Divisions, or Gender Focal Points (GFPs) to co-ordinate the implementation of the Gender issues have also been established. The UNECA report further notes that most Southern African countries have ratified CEDAW and other legal frameworks. A number of countries have even reviewed their constitutions in line with some of the provisions of the Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW. As will be expected, these institutional and policy arrangements have resulted in a number of gains in some of the priority areas of the BPFA. For example, in the area of education and training of women, most countries have registered a significant rise in the enrolment rates of girls in primary school. And while there has been an increase in women's representation in political decision-making, actions have also been taken by most countries to mainstream gender in their respective poverty reduction strategy programmes (UNECA, 2004).

These successes notwithstanding, it is apparent from the reviewed literature that women and girls still face enormous challenges in most Southern African countries. This position is reflected in the outcome of the 2005 SADC Regional Consultative Conference on Gender and Development. The conference report notes that while the policy framework for the advancement of gender equality in Southern Africa has significantly advanced since 1997, implementation still falls short of stated commitments. Persistent and new threats to gender equality identified in the report include the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, increasing poverty and gender based violence, declining social security nets and the trafficking of women and children in the region (SADC, 2005).

The inadequate implementation of gender equality commitments in the Southern African region is also exposed in an audit report on the implementation of the economic empowerment provision of the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development prepared by the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC). According to Section H (iii) of the SADC Declaration on

Gender and Development, member states commit themselves to “promoting women's full access to, and control over productive resources such as land, livestock, markets, credit, modern technology, formal employment, and a good quality of life in order to reduce the level of poverty among women” (SADC,1997). However, the SARDC report reveals that in most SADC countries, the economic disempowerment of women persists even in cases where policies, legal provisions, and programmes to address specific provisions exist. Women, especially those in rural areas, still lack control over means of production and experience limited access to credit and capital (SARDC, 2006).

UNECA (2004) has documented a number of institutional constraints that continue to hinder the translation of gender policies into gainful actions in Southern Africa. Chief among these is a perceived lack of political will and the absence of appropriate mechanisms to monitor policy implementation. Besides, most countries do not have Gender Equality Acts to legalize implementation of gender mainstreaming, and some national constitutions still contain discriminatory elements that hamper the implementation of gender policies and frameworks. Even in countries with elaborate gender machineries, these are usually understaffed, inadequately funded, and not strategically positioned within the government structures. This obstructs them from adequately coordinating, monitoring and evaluating progress in gender mainstreaming in line ministries. Similarly, the work of Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in sectoral ministries is hindered by lack of gender specific job descriptions, lack of or inadequate knowledge of gender issues and low morale. These institutional constraints are compounded by deep-rooted cultural perceptions and practices that adversely affect women. In most Southern African countries, customary laws continue to be in conflict with statutory laws and run at variance with efforts to promote gender equality and empower women (UNECA, 2004).

2.5. Gender Equality and Women Empowerment globally

To promote gender equality and empower women, the international community has made specific commitments in a wide range of instruments. As far back as 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The convention provides a comprehensive framework to guide all rights-based action for gender equality. It has therefore come to be known as the Women's Bill of Rights. Under this treaty, gender inequality is understood to be the result of discrimination against women. CEDAW

calls for equality in outcomes rather than simply equality in opportunities. In other words, it is not sufficient that anti-discrimination laws are put in place by states signatory to the convention. States also have the obligation to take all necessary steps to ensure that women actually enjoy equality in their daily lives (UNDP, 2008). According to Mutangadura (2005), CEDAW continues to provide the framework for promoting gender equality for rural women, as it is the only international legally binding instrument with specific provisions for rural women. Article 4(1) of the convention specifically states that "States parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women...and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas" (CEDAW, 1979).

A major drawback of the CEDAW is its failure to explicitly include gender-based violence. This gap was rectified in 1993 with the adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW). According to Article 1 of the Declaration, "(Gender-based violence) is any act of violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (quoted in UNDP, 2008). The adoption of this declaration therefore brought the issue of gender-based violence unambiguously within the purview of the convention that seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

The struggle to advance the status of women was enriched by the emergence of an international women's movement in the mid-1970s. The activism of this movement brought about four UN World Conferences on Women. The first and second conferences took place in Mexico City and Copenhagen in 1975 and 1985 respectively, while the third and fourth conferences were held in Nairobi and Beijing in 1985 and 1995 respectively.

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A significant outcome of the 1995 Beijing conference was the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA). Signed by all governments, the BPFA provides an agenda for women's empowerment that is seen as a necessary and fundamental pre-requisite for equality, development and peace. The Platform provides a blueprint for women's empowerment that is exceptionally clear, straightforward and actionable. The document includes gender analysis of problems and opportunities in twelve critical areas of concern, and clear and specific standards for actions to be implemented by governments, the UN system and civil society, including, where appropriate, the private sector. In addition, the Platform provides the first global commitment to gender

mainstreaming as the methodology by which gender equality and women's empowerment will be achieved (BPFA, 1995). It is worthy of note that despite the adoption of subsequent instruments, the Beijing Platform for Action remains the blueprint for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment globally (UNECA, 2005).

Another significant commitment made by world governments to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women is contained in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to the UNDP (2008), the MDGs in effect consolidated previous agreements, including those on women's rights, women's empowerment and gender equality, into a single set of core goals, targets and benchmarks for the development community. Though the Millennium Declaration makes gender equality and the empowerment of women the concern of the third MDG, many authors and experts have argued that gender equality is not just a goal in itself, but is also a prerequisite for the achievement of most if not all the other goals. For example, Mutangadura (2005) argues that the MDGs of eradicating poverty, achieving universal primary education and combating disease such as HIV/AIDS and Malaria cannot be fully realized if women continue to be marginalized.

Similarly, Grown et al. (2005) have demonstrated that achieving the MDG of gender equality and the empowerment of women is not just central to achieving the other MDGs, but also that the realization of each of the other goals will go a long way to promote gender equality and empower women. For example, they argue that "a mother's education, income, and empowerment have a significant impact on lowering child and maternal mortality" and that "because the HIV/AIDS pandemic is rapidly being feminized...failure to control this epidemic is likely to leave girls and women increasingly vulnerable" (Grown et al. 2005).

Since the First World Conference on women in 1975 there have been significant improvements in the social and economic status of women. For example, according to a report by United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD, 2005), girls' enrolment in primary and secondary education has increased rapidly worldwide, to the extent that the gender gap in school attendance has been reversed in some countries. It further argues that many developing countries have witnessed a decline in fertility, a development that has both reduced the risk of maternal mortality and eased the burden of unpaid care work, which invariably falls to women and girls.

Consequently, more and more women have been gaining employment outside of the household. The report also contends that the presence of women in public life has also grown, especially when it comes to political representation. This latter assertion is also supported by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which documents that there are more women in government than ever before. The percentage of parliamentarians at national level who are women has increased by 8 per cent to the current global average of 18.4 per cent in the decade from 1998 to 2008 (UNIFEM, 2009).

The UNRISD (2005) report also argues that gender inequalities remain deeply entrenched, especially in developing countries. In education for example, despite the advance in many countries towards gender parity, notably at primary level, progress has been far slower than expected. At higher levels of education too, the gender balance in many developing countries still heavily favours boys, despite some change. Despite the greater numerical presence of women in the world of work and in the domain of politics, the narrowing gender gap conceals marked gender asymmetries in pay and status. Women continue to be concentrated in jobs with low pay and authority levels, placing limits on their overall access to income, status and power. Worst still, the increase in women's access to paid work has been accompanied by deterioration in the terms and conditions of much of the work on offer. The enduring gender inequalities in the economic domain is succinctly captured in the 2005 United Nations Millennium Development Goals Report which contends that "women's access to paid employment is lower than men's in most of the developing world, women are less likely than men to hold paid and regular jobs and more often work in the informal economy, which provides little financial security" (UN, 2005).

A number of factors have been identified as posing significant challenges to gender equality worldwide. According to a report by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, traditional gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes towards women continue to pose a barrier to gender equality. Among other things, the report further documents that the growing political rhetoric in support of gender equality was not matched by policies and programmes to make this a reality and that the absence of democratic culture and rule of law, in some countries, was a continuing constraint to the full enjoyment of human rights, undermining the goal of gender equality. Most importantly, the UN report identifies the growing policy shifts towards

liberalization, privatization and deregulation as undermining the role of states in enforcing rights and securing social protection for women and children (UN, 1999).

Authors such as Mills (2003) and Bergeron (2001) have also cited neoliberal macroeconomic policies as providing a disabling environment for the realization of gender equality and women empowerment. Their argument is founded on the thesis that a world in which the dominant policy model tends to deepen social and economic inequality and reinforce marginalization, and in which governments compromise the interests of their citizens to accommodate global forces, is unlikely to be a world that secures gender equality. Highlighting the effects of structural adjustment policies on gender equality, Mills (2003), for example, has pointed out that because they require states to cut back or eliminate many social programs and subsidies, such programmes of economic restructuring depend upon the flexible capacities of private households to absorb the loss of state-funded social services. Under these conditions, the welfare of families and society at large depends largely on women's unpaid domestic labour and their engagement in informal income-generation activities such as vending and hawking.

2.6. Benefits of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

The empowerment of women and their inclusion in decision making processes can help advance equality, whose benefits will trickle down to their communities and their countries. Women tend to be more concerned and involved in the daily activities of their children than men. They can play a more positive role if they are educated and can contribute to the education of their children. Women who are educated understand its essence and value and are thus less likely to deny their children the same (UNDP, 2005).

According to Hausmann et al, (2009) education for the next generation can break the intergenerational chain of poverty. Girls' education produces some of the highest returns of all development investments, yielding private and social benefits that accrue to individuals, families, and society at large. Girls are just as productive as boys, and the two can complement each other's efforts. When empowered women are allowed to contribute to development processes, they improve livelihoods in their families and communities. The more education they receive, the more productive they become, and the more positive their contributions.

Women are concerned about their households than men are, so they will consciously reinvest in them to aid growth and development. A 2009 study by the Nike Foundation revealed that 'women reinvest 90% of their income back into the household, whereas men reinvest only 30% to 40%. This is beneficial to the household and the community and helps produce healthy children by providing for their basic needs. Eco-feminists assert that women are closer to nature and therefore care about the environment (Nike Foundation, 2009).

The most striking notion coming of research is that there would be less corruption, if women were empowered. According to Swamy et al,(2001) "Governments are less corrupt when women are more active in politics or the labor force" In fact, Swami et al (2001) found that women appear to be more reluctant to take bribes in general, based on data from World Values Surveys administered in 18 countries in 1981 and 43 countries in 1991. More recently, in an experimental study with university undergrads in Barcelona, Rivas (2006) submits that "women are indeed less corrupt than men" (women offered fewer and lower bribes and accepted fewer than men). Based on her significant findings, she suggested that "increasing women's participation in the labor force and politics would help to reduce corruption."

Female economic power also enhances the "wealth and well-being of nations." Women who control their own income tend to have fewer children, and fertility rates have shown to be inversely related to national income growth. Women are able and generally more willing than male counterparts to send daughters as well as sons to school, even when they earn less than men. In turn, a woman's level of education affects her decision-making process when it comes to questions about contraception, age of marriage, fertility, child mortality, modern sector employment and earnings (Blumberg et al, 2008).

According to Casper et al. (1994), development is more than just economic efficiency and growth; it includes well-being, equality, dignity, the right to exercise one's human potential, and freedom from violence and poverty. Furthermore, empowering women with decision-making opportunities adds not only to women's development but also to the development of children. Mothers nurture children, help with education, and provide personal and career guidance, making sure that children grow into responsible citizens. Such wisdom may be hindered by constraints of inadequate representation in positions of power and national decision making.

The real tragedy is that women are often better economic stewards of capital than men. Research has shown that women are more likely to reinvest profits back into human capital than men. When women have economic power, defined as control of income and capital (land, livestock) they gain more equality and control over their own lives, while contributing directly to their children's development (nutrition, health and education) and thereby indirectly to their nation's income growth (Grown et al, 2007).

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The UN World Summit of 2005 reaffirmed gender equality as a Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and underlined its importance as a means for reaching all the other goals. Attempting to achieve the MDGs without promoting gender equality will raise the cost of the other goals and the likelihood of realizing them. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) shapes its priorities on creating an environment in which men and women can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accordance with their needs and interests. This is based on the realization that inequalities hinder and cannot in any way aid development projects and programmes (UNDP, 2008).

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The study adopted the interpretive qualitative methodology. This method entails getting close to research subjects in their natural setting in order to understand and describe the world through their eyes. This method was judged to be suitable for the study because it focuses on the process rather than outcome; emphasizes the actors' perspective; and most importantly has as its primary aim on in-depth description and understanding of phenomena (Babbie and Mouton, 2004). It therefore came handy in the attempts in Assessing Botswana government's policy in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

3.1.Data Collection

Information for the study was collected using a combination of questionnaires and reviewing of the existing literature. This will enable the researcher to have a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. Primary data was collected using questionnaires distributed to the selected non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on gender and women issues, and to the Department of Women's Affairs in the Botswana Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs. The main sources of secondary data were well researched books and journal articles, newspapers and magazines, government legislations, research reports and the internet. These were used to support primary data sought from the opinions of renowned scholars and civil society actors (men and women) who have researched and those engaged in gender advocacy work including local, provincial/state government officials.

The main primary data came from a survey of one urban (Gaborone) and one rural area (Molepolole). The overall data obtained from the survey of women in the selected communities was individually collated and analyzed as aggregates within each region and comparatively

3.2. Sampling Technique

A purposive or judgmental sampling technique was used to select the organizations to which the questionnaires are sent. According to Babbie and Mouton (2004) this is a type of non-probability sampling in which the researcher relies on his or her judgment to select the sample elements. The

sample elements were chosen based on their knowledge and expertise of the phenomenon under study. This sampling technique was most suitable for the study because the focus of the study was not necessarily on making generalizations, but on producing quality in-depth analyses that would be suggestive of the state of gender equality and women empowerment in Botswana.

The ideal sample design for a community survey study of this nature is the cluster sampling design because the use of any other sample design requires identifying each element in the population to get a sample frame, which in this case is almost impossible considering the size of the sampling population. The women were categorized into settlements group types that were used as clusters, the simple random sampling technique was used to identify and survey them at different levels to cover the variations in the study of population. In each study area, the research team went randomly from home to home to survey women in their immediate environment.

3.3. Data Analysis

Using the questionnaire and interview instruments, the study relies on data from a survey. The study adopted the immersion/crystallization technique to analyze data. This method entailed reading the data repeatedly, and engaging in activities of breaking the data down (thematizing and categorizing) and building it up again in new ways (elaborating and interpreting) (Terre Blanche et al, 2002). Data analysis followed the triangulation method. In order to guarantee the reliability of interview responses, this information was regularly weighed against data collected from secondary sources.

3.4. Ethics

The researcher explained the purpose and nature of the research to all respondents to ensure that their participation is based on informed consent. Considering the sensitive nature of government information, the researcher ensured that all official data are treated with the highest confidentiality and that the wish for sources to remain anonymous was respected. Efforts were also made to acknowledge sources of secondary information in a bid to avoid academic plagiarism.

3.5. Organization of the Chapters

This study is organized into five chapters as follows. Chapter one contains the introduction and provides the necessary background to the study, the problem statement, the aim (or purpose) of the study, and the significance (importance) of the study. In chapter two a review of the empirical and theoretical literature is carried out around the subject of women empowerment as disempowerment and gender inequality combative. The review emphasizes the meaning of the concept of empowerment, the factors that influence the empowerment of woman as a way of improving socio-economic development, and an evaluation of whether there is any significant relationship between the empowerment of women and combating most social evils. The third chapter presents the methodology utilized by the study including the site description and units of analysis, the study sample and selection procedures, the methods of data collection, the techniques of data analysis, ethical considerations, and the limitations of the study. While the fourth presents the findings of the study, the final (fifth) chapter discusses those findings and summaries the study; offers policy recommendations and draws the conclusions.

Chapter 4

Findings

4. Introduction

This chapter looks into the major findings of the research. It starts by making an appraisal of the efforts of the Botswana government in promoting gender equality and advancing the status of women in line with its international commitments. This comes in the form of an analysis of the achievements that have been made so far and the gaps that persist. The last section is dedicated to a discussion of some of the major challenges that continue to frustrate the efforts of the Botswana government in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

4.1. Achievements by the Botswana Government in Promoting Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Since the 1995 Beijing Women's conference, Botswana has made significant progress towards achieving the goal of gender equality consistent with national, regional and international policy goals and plans of action. The government responded to the Beijing conference by establishing national gender machinery. Botswana was among the first African countries to initiate and promote the mainstreaming of gender in the policies and activities of government departments. With the help of Gender Focal Points (GFPs), the Women Affairs Department (WAD) has since 2000 taking a leading role in ensuring that a gender perspective permeates the policies of all government ministries. Success stories in this regard include the Population Policy, the Land Policy, and the Sports and Recreation Policy, all of which are gender-sensitive (Botswana Government, 2006).

One of the outstanding areas of success in the promotion of gender equality by the government of Botswana has to do with the legal environment. Between 1997 and 1998 a comprehensive review of all laws affecting the status of women in Botswana was carried out under the auspices of the Women Affairs Department. Coupled with the lobbying and advocacy efforts of Women NGOs like the Emang Basadi, this exercise prompted the government of Botswana to take significant steps in reviewing its legislation. The objective was to remove all clauses that discriminate against women. Examples of legislations that have either been repealed or reviewed

include the Rape Law, Removal of marital power and the Affiliation proceedings Act. In 1998, the Deeds Registry Act was also amended to enable women married in community of property to register immovable assets in their names and to empower them to give consent when joint property is disposed of.

With regards to reducing poverty associated with gender inequality, the Botswana government with the financial assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched a programme that provided assistance to projects geared towards the economic empowerment of women. This programme started in 1997 and ended in 2003. The actual execution of this programme was carried out through NGOs, women groups and Community-based organizations (CBOs). Through this programme, women groups such as the *kgetse ya Tsie* are engaged in less expensive economic activities such as growing vegetables and bakery, and some have even initiated micro credit and saving schemes for their members (Botswana Government, 2004).

Besides this collaboration with the UNDP, the government of Botswana has put in place other programmes that make available funds for the economic empowerment of women, with a view to reduce poverty. Examples of such schemes include the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) and the Local Enterprise Authority (LEA). The Women's affairs department also has empowerment programs that have funding components of women poverty alleviation projects. In addition, the WAD provides capacity building in business management skills, support women's participation in the trade sphere through hosting of national women's expositions and sponsorship for women to participate in international trade expositions.

When it comes to the accession of women to positions of power and decision-making, it was established that Women's representation in decision-making positions, including political office, senior management in both the public and the private sector, and in traditional male domains such as chieftainship and priesthood, has risen. Success in this regard has come through a partnership between the government, *Eman basadi*, the SADC Gender Department and the Inter Party Caucus of Women Politicians. Thanks to a combination of political education projects, advocacy and mobilization programmes, lobbying and affirmative action practices, Botswana now has three women in the house of chiefs and ordained female priests in some of the major Christian denominations. A case in point is the ordaining of a female priest by the Dutch Reformed Church in the village of Mochudi. Women are equally making steady progress in

politics, the civil service, and in governing boards of Public Enterprises (PEs). Women's representation in Parliament increased from 6.8% in 1992, to 9.1% in 1994 and subsequently to 18.2% in 1999. The 2003 Cabinet had five (5) women, who constituted 22.7% of the 22-member Cabinet (Botswana Government, 2004).

At the level of decision-making, in 2002, 33% of the directors of PEs and 67% of the Deputy Chief Executive Officers were women. In the same year, women headed over 50% of Botswana based NGOs. Worthy of note here is the recent appointment of a woman as the Governor of the Central Bank of Botswana (Botswana Government, 2004).

On the educational front, the study found that Botswana has succeeded in achieving gender parity in most formal education. Girls' enrolment in primary and secondary education is at par with that of boys.¹ Moreover, in a bid to address gender-specific vulnerabilities that interfere with schooling, the government has put in place a re-admission policy of girls who dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy. To this effect, projects such as the YWCA Teen Mothers and Diphanala Projects have been initiated to enroll young mothers who had to leave school due to teenage pregnancy (Botswana Government, 2004).

Similar achievements have been reported in the area of women's health and HIV/AIDS. Thanks to a number of government initiatives such as the provision of safe motherhood and reproductive maternal services, maternal mortality has been reduced significantly in Botswana. Besides, a combination of mother-to-child prevention programme, counseling and home-based care, and the rolling out of free Antiretroviral (ARV) to HIV positive women has been instrumental in reducing the burden of HIV/AIDS on Botswana women.²

This study found out that as part of intervention measures to address the endemic problem of gender-based violence in Botswana, the government has, with the help of women NGOs, embarked on an extensive sensitization to engender a change of attitude among perpetrators of gender-based violence, the police, health and court officials dealing with victims of violence. In addition, a number of laws that discriminate against women have been reviewed to make them

gender sensitive and gender sensitive laws have been enacted. For example, rape cases are now being heard in camera and the Penal Code was amended in 1995 to ensure sterner measures were taken for rape cases. The government is also reported to be giving support to NGOs such as the Women's Shelter and Women Against Rape. While the former provides assistance to battered and abused women and children, the latter gives legal advice and assistance to women and girls who are victims of rape (Botswana Government, 2004).

Recent studies of educational trends in Botswana reflect an improvement in relative opportunities and participation of girls and women in schooling and training. Another area where significant progress has been made is the removal of gender stereotypes from curriculum materials. However there is need to strengthen career guidance and counseling so as to widen awareness on possible career choices available to women as there is an observed tendency for women to opt for traditional female-dominated courses or opt for lower level qualifications that is to say certificates or diplomas less familiar in other fields of study. At the moment it is not easy to determine the exact degree and nature of women's involvement due to the fact that information that is available is not gender desegregated in most instances (Physicians for human Rights, 2007).

Commendable progress has been made towards improving the quality of women's health in areas where they are most vulnerable. Examples are the Maternal and Child Health as well as the Family Planning programs. Collaboration on basic issues such as food, shelter, clean water, sanitation; has contributed positively towards the welfare of women. Nonetheless there still remains the challenge of sharing critical health information with all women in Botswana to enable them to exercise their full right when making choices relating to their personal health and welfare (Ntseane, 2004).

A close consideration of women's involvement in power-sharing and decision making processes in Botswana indicates that the participation of women is significantly lower than that of men. It would appear however, that the recent global move towards an enhanced involvement of women at all levels of decision-making has made an impact in Botswana. For instance, there are more women now in the House of Parliament, the executive level of civil service and more women

now sit on Boards of Directors. There is need to develop strategies to enlist and ensure the full and representative participation of women in the total development process (Ditshwanelo, 2007).

4.2. Drawbacks in the Botswana Government's Policy to promote Gender Equality and Women Empowerment.

Despite the aforementioned achievements, it was discovered that much still has to be done in order for the Botswana government to fully live up to its commitment to achieve gender equality and women empowerment. For example, it was found that the process of gender mainstreaming is yet to be entrenched in a number of government departments either because of ineffective and inefficient GFPs or a lack ownership of gender programmes at the departmental level. As a result, some government departments and enterprises still maintain organizational structures, cultures and policies that are gender insensitive (Botswana Government, 2004).

Serious gaps were also identified in the area of economic empowerment. Even with the empowerment programmes discussed above, women in Botswana, like their counterparts in other SADC states, do not as yet enjoy equitable treatment vis-à-vis men in access to and control of productive resources. Even when legislation may be gender neutral, tradition and institutional culture perpetuate practices that disadvantage women in relation to men. For instance, some financial institutions, and government departments, treat married women as de facto minors, requiring them to seek their husbands' consent for transactions for which they would not place similar requirements on married men. Furthermore, inheritance and succession practices in traditional communities generally favor men.

The study found out that women still endure relative economic disadvantage in Botswana. Employment and wealth are still decisively skewed in favor of men. Women account for only 39 percent of workers aged 12 years and above, and yet slightly more than 50 percent of the population is female. Women headed 47 out of every 100 households in 1991 and 46 in 2001. Nearly half of these women, well above the national rate of unemployment, were not engaged in any cash-earning employment. Similarly, political and decision-making power is still largely controlled by men. Though women representation in political and decision-making institutions has improved since 1992, this increase has been marginal. This is evident in the fact that as at 2004, Botswana had still not reached the SADC target of 30% representation of women in all

positions of power. The situation is even worse in the private sector where women representation, especially at the level of board member is still lagging behind (Botswana Government, 2004).

Another area with marked deficit is education. Whereas milestones have been achieved in eliminating gender disparity in most primary and secondary schools, the same cannot be said of the higher education sector. Enrolment in teacher training colleges and nursing institutions is still skewed in favour of women, whilst enrolment in vocational training institutions is skewed in favour of males. This sex-segregated occupational stereotyping is also reflected at the University of Botswana and its affiliated institutions, where men dominate science-based training and women dominate the humanities and some social sciences (Botswana Government, 2004).

The study also discovered that despite all the measures put in place by the government, and amidst all the mobilization and sensitization campaigns of NGOs, violence against women is on the increase in Botswana. The continuous gender based violence in Botswana has been attributed to a number of factors, including gender hierarchy, the equation of women with property, women's dependence on men and the overall failure to grant women social, economic and legal rights. For example, while the Penal Code stipulates a maximum life sentence accompanied by corporal punishment for rape, such sentences are rarely pronounced. Actual sentences have been found to fall between six months and nine years. The situation is made worse by the high incidence of domestic violence and sexual harassment against women and girls in the workplace and at school. The study by Physicians for Human Rights, also found that due to the economic dependency and low social and legal status of women in Botswana, women still lack the power to make decisions regarding their sexuality. As a result, they are more likely than men to be involved in sexual risk-taking, a situation that increases their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS (Physicians for Human Rights, 2007).

Botswana has made good progress towards gender equality. Parity has virtually been achieved in primary and secondary education. In both the public and business sectors, the share of women in decision making positions has grown considerably. Furthermore, policies and laws have evolved rapidly to ensure fair regulatory balance for men and women in respect of access to opportunities, position and resources. Even so, there are areas that require marked improvement.

These include violence against women: battering, rape and rape are serious problems. The incidence of rape was estimated at 97 women raped per 100,000 population in 2009, a slight improvement from 104/100,000 in 2008 but still very high. Women's representation in political office, cabinet, parliament and local authorities is still below the SADC threshold of 30% and has worsened. Historical and culturally entrenched inequalities: inequalities in access to opportunities, resources and power are bound to trail progressive regulatory reforms. It will take time for progressive regulatory reforms to fully undo such inequalities (Women Affairs Department, 2011)

4.3. Challenges to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Botswana

The first major challenge the Botswana government is faced with in its drive to eliminate gender disparity and advance the status of women is the endemic negative social and cultural attitudes towards women. While the government of Botswana has been lauded for putting in place laws and policies that are amenable to gender equality, institutional and cultural practices make it difficult for these laws to have any meaningful impact on gender equality. While official documents from private and public institutions still have provisions that discriminate against women, tradition and customary practices play a major role in limiting the range of things women can do or be.

For example, in some cultures females are forced into pre-arranged marriages at puberty stage forcing them to leave school early. This makes it difficult for girls from different cultures to be retained in school, especially in the Western and North Western parts of the country (Botswana Government, 2004a). Similarly, institutional practices that discriminate against women continue to ensure that access to agricultural land and other productive resources like credit collateral and seeds remains a major problem for women. This limits the participation of women in high value businesses that require heavy investments, leaving them to venture into the relatively less productive aspects of the informal sector (Botswana Government, 2008).

It should be noted here that Botswana's legal system comprises both customary and Roman-Dutch traditions. And, considering that most of the population in Botswana is concentrated in the rural areas, most civil disputes are heard by traditional courts, using customary laws, which in

the most parts remain discriminatory against women. Under customary law, women are often subordinated to men, lack independent legal capacity and are subjected to the guardianship of their fathers, brothers, uncles or husbands. For example, a woman married under traditional law is held to be a legal minor vis-à-vis her husband, requiring her husband's consent to buy or sell property. Women are also traditionally barred from owning cattle, an important symbolic and financial asset, and a very important factor in the rural economy (Physician for Human Rights, 2007).

A lack of human and financial resources was also identified as a major challenge to the efforts of the government in promoting gender equality and women empowerment. It was discovered that the implementation of the Plan of Action for the National Gender Programme Framework has been severely limited by the fact that the Women's Affairs Department still lacks critical human and financial resources. As a result of this deficiency, the department has been forced at times to prioritize its activities, resulting in some areas of concern being put on hold. This has seriously impacted on the progress that has been recorded.³

Progress in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in Botswana has also been hampered by the absence of an effective mechanism for monitoring gender inequalities. It goes without saying that effective action to promote gender equality requires an appreciation of the magnitude of the problem by a broader range of stakeholders. At present however, critical information for gender related analysis is out of the public domain in Botswana. According to Rathapo (2000: 306), this problem can be attributed to the fact that there is no coordination in the collection documentation and dissemination of gender related information in Botswana. Although a number of institutions such as the courts, the police, labour department, educational institutions and NGOs generate raw gender related data, there is still no coordinated mechanism to pool together this information in order to generate a credible database and information that supports gender related policy analysis and advocacy. In other words, the institutional capability to monitor, evaluate, document and analyze issues and trends related to gender is still very weak (Botswana Government, 2004).

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A related constraint is the lack of collaboration between the various government departments. This problem stems partly from the fact that women's issues in Botswana are still viewed as the exclusive responsibility of the Women Affairs Department and its attendant Gender Focal Points (GFPs). As such, other extension departments or divisions consider responsibilities in this regard as of secondary concern to their regular work. Simply put, there is a lack of ownership of gender programmes on the part of most government departments and divisions. This has resulted in a situation where GFPs at best receive little cooperation from officials, and at worst face resistance in their attempts to promote gender mainstreaming (Botswana Government, 2004a).

Finally the scourge Of HIV/AIDS was also noted to be impeding the efforts of the Botswana government to reduce gender inequalities and improve the status of women. As in Most African countries, women in Botswana bear the brunt of this pandemic as they are not only the most vulnerable to infection, but are also the ones expected to take care of the sick. Consequently, more and more girls and women in Botswana are being forced to drop out of school or forgo meaningful economic activities in order to take care of sick relatives or orphaned children. This is especially the case in rural areas where the socio-economic impacts of HIV/AIDS on rural livelihoods have aggravated gender inequalities resulting in the increased vulnerability of women to poverty and HIV infection (Mutangadura, 2005).

4.4. Chapter Summary.

This chapter was dedicated to a critical analysis of the progress made by the government of Botswana's policy in promoting gender equality and women empowerment. It has been established that significant achievements have been made by the Botswana government, in partnership with local NGOs and international organizations, in redressing the tide of gender inequality over the past fourteen years. This is true especially in the areas of institutional and policy changes, review of legislation to remove discriminatory clauses, public mobilization and sensitization for gender awareness, ensuring gender parity in enrolment in primary and secondary schools, as well as improving the health of women. However, it has also emerged from the analysis that further work may still have to be done to complete the exercise. This pertains especially to the economic empowerment of women, ensuring that more girls receive science-based and vocational training, and stemming the tide of gender-based violence and its attendant impact on the vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS. The prevalence of these gaps has

been attributed to a number of challenges, the subject of which constitutes the focus of the last section. The section highlights that cultural practices, coupled with deep-rooted societal attitudes and institutional cultures that discriminate against women are the major challenges hindering the achievement of gender equality in Botswana. This is in addition to the impacts of HIV/AIDS on the livelihoods of women, the absence of a credible database that can support gender related policy analysis and advocacy, and inadequate financial and human resources.

Chapter 5

Recommendations and Conclusion

5. Recommendations

This study is about the Assessment of the Botswana Government's policy in promoting Gender Equality and Women Empowerment. It seeks to identify factors that may influence bringing gender inequality and women disempowerment to an end therefore the following recommendations are made:

The study indicated that the majority of women agreed that the government has specific measures in place to strengthen the contribution of women in socio-economic development. Since this has been a very effective policy, as indicated by the respondents, effort must be made to maintain or improve in order to have total contribution to the socio-economic development in the area. The government need to come up with aggressive strategies to address, among others, women's heavy workload and unequal division of labor, and their lack of equal participation in education, as well as unequal access to economic resources, and decision-making, changing oppressive traditional and cultural practices; promoting alternative leadership through encouraging and acknowledging leadership initiatives by women at all levels of society, and conceptualizing an alternative framework for women's leadership such as the responsible use of power, challenging corruption and promoting a culture of peace and non-violence.

Education and training are fundamentals tools of empowerment. They provide the poor and the disadvantaged with the means to increase their productivity and income earning power. Education and training can enhance the bargaining power of the poor; foster assertiveness and self confidence; promote greater awareness of legal and social rights; and improve access to and use of economic resources such as jobs, land, credit, and information. However, formal education as it is currently planned and practiced does not enable and enhance the capabilities of the poor as much as it might. Rather, it is a shaky vehicle for the structural changes in the socio-economic and political environments that are crucial in enabling poor citizens to participate in their own development. Education and training policies must be geared towards transformation and structural adjustments of the economy. Non-formal education, vocational training, on the job training and other educational derivatives should be advanced as the vehicles that enable people

to develop skills and capacities, which increase their control over decisions, resources and structures affecting their lives. In this way, education creates conditions for full and equal participation of people in discussions and decisions, and at the same time empowers all people to act for change.



To date, the majority of citizens in Botswana have not had the opportunity to acquire business skills in the selection of investments, nor do they have access to credit that would enable them to participate in equity investment or use borrowed money to start or expand their own business. In these circumstances, some education or training on sound investment practices is needed. For example, more emphasis could be given to develop and expand the scope of business subjects in secondary schools as recommended in the SMME policy paper. Such schemes require high standards and will not encourage a culture of entitlements and dependency on the State. Entrepreneurial initiatives must be promoted, keeping in mind that entrepreneurial spirits can only thrive in a competitive, not a protective environment. In this regard, private sector companies should be induced to play a more active role in empowering Botswana, especially through training.

The government needs to take stronger measures against institutions that continue to engage in discriminatory practices or implement policies that undermine the cause of gender equality and women empowerment. Measures should be put in place to ensure that GFPs receive the cooperation of all officials in the various government departments. A good way to achieve this could be by holding heads of department and senior managers accountable for the attainment of gender transformation in their respective departments. This would create a conducive environment for gender mainstreaming and thus advance the cause of gender equality.

It is also imperative for the government to provide additional incentives that would encourage and facilitate the entry of young women into disciplines that are traditionally dominated by men such as engineering. These incentives could take the form of full time study bursaries or scholarships. Focus should also be on ensuring that gender specific constraints on learning are eliminated. For example, the government could consider providing some form of social support to families where due to economic hardship young girls are forced to sacrifice their opportunity for studying in order to contribute to the family's livelihood. Such support that could be

disbursed in the form of a family grant would go a long way to relieve the girl child of the burden of household responsibilities beyond normal chores and thus motivate them to attend school.

An important issue raised in the Beijing Platform for Action is equality of responsibility between men and women for gender equality to become a reality. In order for more women to reach the same high positions as men in various fields, more focused education and socialization are needed for better burden-sharing and a fairer division of labor between the sexes in the home and society. Not only should the governments' macroeconomic policies incorporate gender perspectives in their design, they also need to take into account intra-household differences in resource use and control, recognizing that improvements in women's incomes promote equity as well as child welfare.

The government should demonstrate commitment to removing legal impediments and socio-cultural obstacles against women, especially in the rural areas where the majority of women live and are economically active. The constraints on women's access to land, credit, extension services, inputs and new technologies must be removed, and opportunities should be created for their enterprise. Measures to improve women's access through institutional reforms must be pursued and monitored for effectiveness.

To curb the spate of gender based violence and its attendant impact on the vulnerability of women to HIV infections, new legislation need to be considered to criminalize domestic violence. Similarly, the courts should be brought on board to ensure that perpetrators of rape are given tougher sentences than what is currently the norm.

5.1. Conclusion

The overarching purpose of this study was to detail the findings of an investigation conducted into the assessment of the Botswana government's policy in living up to its international commitment to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. As recorded in chapter two, an initial study of the literature on this phenomenon globally revealed that most sub-Saharan countries in general, and Southern African countries in particular have not been able to make meaningful gains in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. Informed

by this revelation, the inquiry evolved from the central hypothesis that the government of Botswana is still lagging behind in its commitment to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

According to the study, the women appreciate the efforts that the Botswana government has made in empowering women for example: the majority agreed that there are many socio-economic benefits and also that the empowerment of women is recognized as a major avenue in socio-economic development. Although the Botswana government has made some progress towards achieving Women empowerment over the last ten years, significant gaps still remain. Most of the institutional, policy and legislative reforms that the government has succeeded in putting in place have failed to engender the expected societal and personal transformation that lies at the heart of gender equality. This is because Botswana is one of those African countries in which the perception that women are subordinate to men is still gravely entrenched in the traditional beliefs and attitudes of the people. Unfortunately, in some cases, even women share these views. The dominant picture that emerges from this analysis is therefore one in which progress in gender equality and the empowerment of women in Botswana is increasingly being stifled by the battle for space between traditional African practices and social attitudes on the one hand, and progressive policy and legislative reforms on the other hand.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Dolly Rubadiri, studying at the University of North West, Mafikeng campus, in South Africa. I am currently conducting research on assessing the Botswana Governments' policy in promoting Gender Equality and Women Empowerment towards a Masters degree in International Relations. I am formally soliciting your assistance by requesting you to kindly fill out the questionnaire below. Please be rest assured that the information provided will be treated with confidentiality, and will only be used for academic purposes.

Question One

Age

Indicate your age by marking with an x in the appropriate box.

25-35

☐

35-45

☐

45-55

☐

55 and above

☐

Question Two

Gender

Indicate your gender by marking with an x in the appropriate box.

Female

☐

Male

☐

Question Three

Indicate your employment position by marking with an x in the appropriate box.

Director ☐

Assistant director ☐

Secretary ☐

Question Four

Indicate by marking with an x the gender office you work with.

Women's Affairs Department ☐

NGO/centre for gender equality ☐

Question Five

In your opinion, is the government of Botswana doing enough to promote gender equality and empowerment?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Explain

Question Six

What has the government done to promote gender equality and women empowerment?

Question Seven

Kindly make any suggestions or constructive criticism on the government of Botswana in respect to the questionnaire you have responded to.

Please explain

Question Eight

Please select any items below that in your opinion need attention. You may select more than one item by marking an x against each.

▪ Poverty Reduction	☐
▪ Access to education & training	☐
▪ Access to health services	☐
▪ Gender violence	☐
▪ Economic empowerment	☐
▪ Political participation & decision-making	☐
▪ Institutional & legal mechanisms to promote gender equality	☐
▪ Others	☐

Explain

THANK YOU