

**CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN DOMESTIC SOLID WASTE
MANAGEMENT IN LUBOWA-SEGUKU PARISH.**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE
STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS
IN DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION AND
MANAGEMENT OF KAMPALA
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY**

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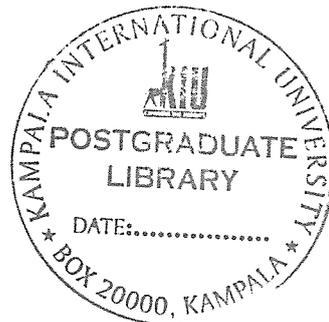
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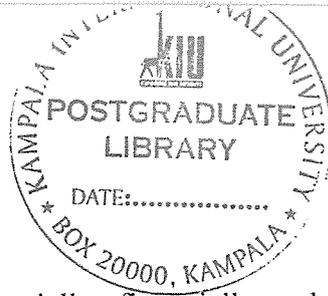
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DEDICATION

To my parents, siblings and daughter Faith, for their financial, material and spiritual support and encouragement and patience during my absence from them when I was for studies.





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I am indebted to a number of people who supported me materially, financially and spiritually during my studies and at the time of this research. Firstly, I wish to register my sincere gratitude to my parents who were always by my side during my studies.

Special thanks go to my supervisor Dr Michael Mawa for tirelessly encouraging and guiding me throughout my studies, in particular this research and always guiding me with parental love in my academic achievements.

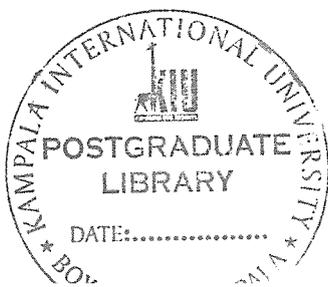
I thank the Director School of Post Graduate Studies Professor Peter John Opio for being such a parent that he took all the burden of ensuring the school operates efficiently, and the entire staff of Post Graduate School Kampala International University for their support.

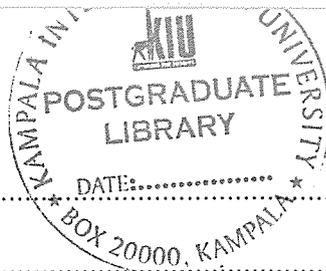
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To all of you, I say **Thank You!**

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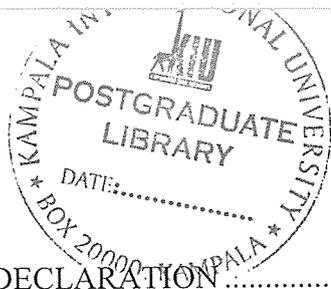




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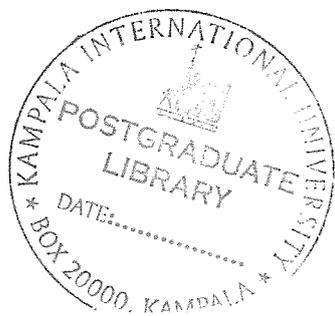
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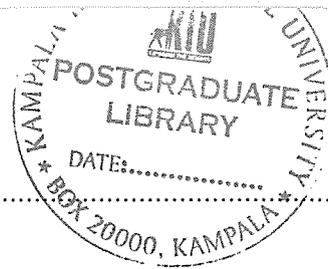




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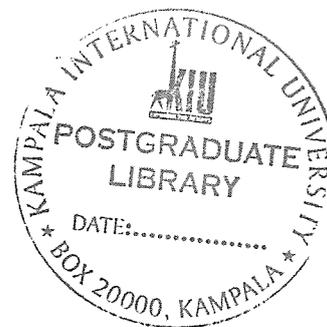
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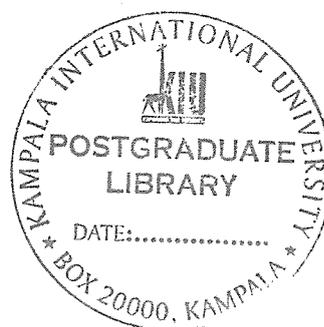
ACFODE	Action for Development
UN	United Nations
UWESO	Uganda Women's Effort to save Orphans
FIDA	Uganda Association of Women Lawyers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UWONET	Uganda Women's Network
ISIS-WICCE	ISIS-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange
NGO	Non Governmental Organizations
NCWID	National Commission of Women in Development
IPU	Inter Parliamentary Union
ANC	Africa National Congress
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NRM	National Resistance Movement
RC	Resistance Council
LC	Local Council
DRB	Domestic Relations Bill (1998)
AA	Affirmative Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms Discrimination against Women

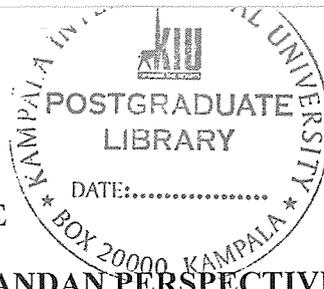
ABSTRACT

In order to understand women's struggle for political independence and other freedoms in Uganda in particular, and Africa at large, it is important to first identify factors which hinder them (women) from freely taking part in the government of their choice right from grassroot levels. This study employed a documentary and descriptive model to investigate the reasons for the low participation of women in politics in Uganda particularly and the globe in general.

The results indicate that male dominance (patriarchy tendencies), cultural attitudes of society towards women and low educational levels for women increases their inability to participate in political and decision-making affairs of the country. It is seen that women need to be given the freedom and encouragement by their male counterpart such that they can be able to participate freely in decision-making issues of their country and other serious issues affecting them.

The study recommends that male politicians should change their ways of perceiving women in negative ways, so that women come out of the marginalization cycles to engage in active politics of their countries. Discriminatory tendencies towards women as regards their education by parents and inferiority feelings among women themselves should be priority issues that need to be critically addressed. The government should establish institutions that can protect the interests of women and their concerns besides the organizations formed by women themselves. Above all women should be allowed the freedom to form and join political parties because this will provide a level ground for them to actively get involved in politics.





CHAPTER ONE

WOMEN AND POLITICS IN THE UGANDAN PERSPECTIVE

1.1 Background

Women are moving to the forefront of the global agenda for economic, social and political development. However, moving from agenda to policy practices takes time and sometimes generations. Furthermore, it takes numbers to support the demands for equal status. It is believed and popularly known that women are not supposed to speak up and express themselves in public, and this view is deeply embedded in the African patriarchal values which confine women to the household and domestic work of homecare and family upkeep (Tamale, 1999). Such views assume that men are the anointed link between the home and the public world, they are the natural players. However, women have increasingly rejected this view, as Tamale notes;

“they (women) have defied customs, culture, discrimination, and denial by their spouses to take part in political and other activities in the country as well as marginalization to join formal politics in Uganda” (Tamale, 1999).

This study was carried out basing on the view that much as there is freedom of expression and other rights contained in international and national human rights documents and open political windows for them, women are not protected to a certain degree. They do not engage actively in most decision-making issues in their country (Uganda) and in the researcher's view these women have been marginalized since time immemorial in political, social, economic and cultural affairs. The study investigated women's political experiences in Uganda and Africa at large since the 1980's, women's struggle for political freedom, the (NRM) government's effort to empower them to participate in

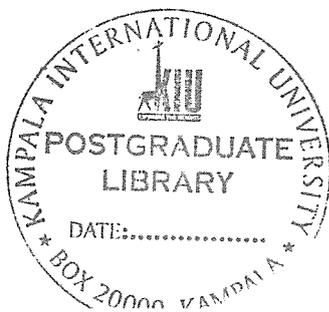
political and other developmental activities in Uganda, women and politics in the African context, women politicians and conflict management and the challenges they face in their political career. The study established in the introductory section a brief history of Ugandan politics in the pre and post colonial period as well. This provided a background to Ugandan politics and women's issues.

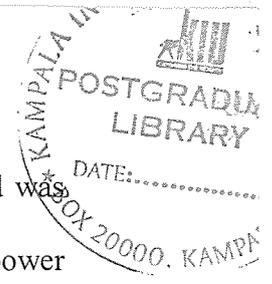
1.2 Uganda's Political History in Pre and Post colonial times

Women and men in Uganda play a complementary role in the development process. Although this is so, such development is affected by unequal gender relations resulting in gender imbalances basing on access to and control over resources, political power imbalances and weak empowerment policies. Government and civil society organizations have therefore instituted policy frameworks for reducing gender imbalances as a guide to all development practitioners including participation in political, social, economic and cultural affairs (Nakaweesi, 2003; Tripp and Kwesiga, 2002; Tamale, 1999)

Uganda and politics in Pre-Colonial time

Uganda was a British protectorate in 1894 and remained so until 1962 after the attainment of independence. Uganda was a focal point of European rivalry before being colonized by Britain in 1890 and it was composed of four Kingdoms and many ethnic tribes of about forty tribes (Tamale, 1999; Tripp and Kwesiga, 2002). Before the colonialists came to the country, the political setup varied from one tribe to another depending on the Kingdom divisions by region. Two smaller kingdoms, Ankole and Toro became independent of Bunyoro. Each of these Kingdoms, with variations, modeled its society and political system on the state (Uganda). Buganda was ruled by a king (kabaka)





who was advised by a council of great nobles known as the (lukiko), and the land was divided among the noble men and farmed by the peasants. Cattle were symbols of power and were owned by the nobility.

Politics at that time was an exclusive of men, much as there were some women included in the Kingdom affairs by the Kings, women did not feature anywhere in top leadership positions. For example it is not uncommon for a female King to be heard of in this period. Women did not feature anywhere in the top political positions in Kingdoms like Buganda. As Tripp (2000) noted,

“the position of women especially queen mothers (namasole) and the Princess (lubuga) were undermined when Uganda became a British protectorate in 1894”.

Under such an arrangement, the positions of elite women like the namasole and lubuga were greatly undermined, because they were not in most cases included in the likiiko and other top posts. All the top positions were subject to British monarch’s approval. For instance the lubuga (King’s sister) was not mentioned in the 1900 agreement, while the namasole received only scanty mention, indicating that the namasole (queen mother) was to be paid an allowance during her lifetime, but this was to be stopped for future queen mothers. As Tripp writes;

‘thus the two political positions of significance for Baganda women were effectively denuded of their significance by the British rule. Thus the (political) roles of the royal women at this time was greatly undermined’ (Tripp, 2000; Tamale 1999)

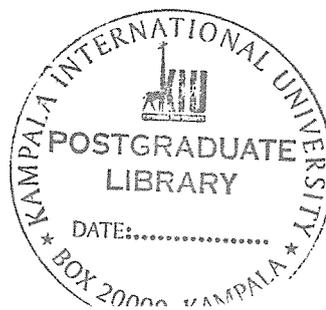
Where as the pre colonial period saw a reduced role of women in Buganda Kingdom, the other Kingdoms like Ankole, Teso and Acholi saw a remarkable

consideration of the roles women played. Female chiefs became common at the turn of the century and women participated in male activities like mediating and acting as spies in the Kingdom although their numbers were scanty (Tamale, 1999). One female gombolola (Sub County) chief appointed by the British administration, Julia Kibumbura was from Ankole, and this indicates that women in some of these Kingdoms at least had a say in the affairs of these Kingdoms much as they were not given the opportunities to make important decisions like men.

Colonial History and towards independence period

Within a decade the differences created by the British caused civil wars and this destabilized the country and caused causing many to flee for their lives while many more lost their lives including women and children. Once isolated, the region, with its rich soils, had become by 1890 a major object of the European nations' scramble for African territory. By 1896 a British protectorate administration had extended its authority over most of the region, and the name Uganda was adopted. Final details concerning the administration of Uganda were settled by a series of agreements in 1966, the most comprehensive of which guaranteed special status to Buganda, including the continuation of its social and political system.

Britain ruled in Uganda for almost 70 years and employed a centralized European bureaucracy superimposed on a federation of kingdoms and tribes in the country. This worked relatively well until the independence period of the 1960's, when Buganda demanded separation from Uganda. Only after Kabaka Mutesa II was exiled for two



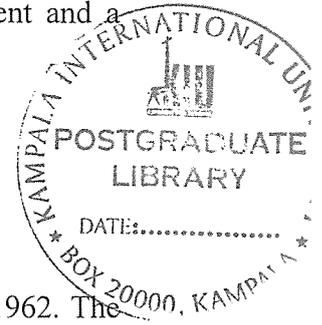
years in 1953 was it possible to proceed with developing a united government and a Uganda with little improvement in the affairs of women.

The post independence Period in Uganda

After much experimentation, a federal constitution was promulgated in April 1962. The Uganda People's Congress won the elections, and Milton Obote became Prime Minister. Independence was granted in October the same year. Misunderstandings continued, and by May 1966 Obote sent the army into Buganda and drove the kabaka into exile. He then proclaimed a new republican constitution, which formally abolished the kingships, and became Uganda's first president of a unitary government. Amidst all these wrangles, some women alongside the men found themselves in exile in other countries, more to that Obote only encouraged women's organizations like the Uganda council of Women to work under his Uganda People's Congress (UPC) party instead of women making their own decisions.

Uganda under Idi Amin's reign of terror

This was a very brutal regime that was characterized by a fall-off in the economy, and charges of corruption which led to an army coup in January 1971. Power devolved upon the army commander Idi Amin, who began eight years of terror and misrule. He increased the size of the army, murdered his political opponents, and began a reign of terror directed at the people of Buganda, the Langi tribe, and at their neighbours the Acholi and he did not spare the women either during this time. It is estimated Amin



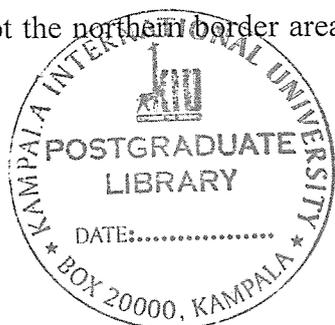
ordered the killing of around 300,000 Ugandans. Women who wore short skirts and the unmarried risked their lives during this same period.

He expelled the Asians, many of whom were entrepreneurs, in the country in 1972, there by ordering Africans to manage the wealth and economy which had been improved by these Asians and Indians. Uganda became very bankrupt by 1979, characterized by interstate and border conflicts and civil strifes and the government depended entirely on loans from Arab states that were by then friendly to Amin. After Uganda went to war with neighboring Tanzania in late 1978, Tanzanian forces allied with Ugandan rebels drove Amin from the country in 1979.

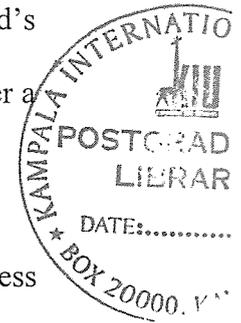
The NRM Government under Museveni

The National Resistance Army, led by Yoweri Museveni, which had been fighting to overthrow Obote since 1981, continued the fight against the Obote II government which disgusted him and after several days of severe fighting in Kampala took over the country in January 1986. Among its (NRM's) first priorities was the re-building of a nation state from a country reduced after 15 years of misrule and violence against humanity.

Mr. Museveni started his rule by involving all ethnic groups in the government, as well as most of the main political parties, the inclusion of all stakeholders in the economy and running a democratic (or was it really democratic?) government and Museveni largely succeeded in all this (Tripp and Kwesiga, 2002). Peace was restored to almost all the country, except the northern border area near Sudan, the northeastern, where small rebel



groups led by Alice Lakwena (The Holy Spirit Movement), and later the Lord's Resistance Movement of Joseph Kony which to date has caused untold suffering to over a million people, women, children and the elderly.



During 1993 and 1994 debate began on a new constitution, as the first step in the process of returning the country to a democratic government. The constitution, which allowed for the voting of a referendum in 2000 on the future introduction of a multi-party system, came into force in 1995. Both women and men participated to the drafting of this constitution and this gave women a voice in national affairs unlike the earlier regimes of Obote and Amin which ignored women's contributions to national issues.

During his first few years in power, Mr. Museveni was viewed as quite different from all other leaders Uganda had in the past. His idea of rebuilding the nation gave hope for most Ugandans; he initiated economic recovery programmes, involvement of all stake holders in the political, social, economic and cultural affairs of the country. It was during the same time that affirmative action policies were introduced in the country to allow women to take part in all the affairs of the country.

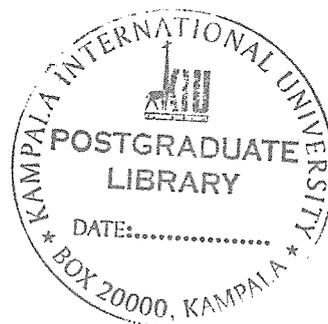
However, as time went on the president began changing gradually and this led to tensions between Uganda and her neighbours like, Kenya and between Uganda and Sudan, regarding sheltering of each country's rebel forces that resulted in border raids and invasion threats which continued in the later 1990s. In March 1997 the matter reached crisis levels when the northern border with Sudan was closed. Sudanese support for Ugandan rebels, the LRA in the north displaced some so many people in that year alone and caused untold suffering, poverty and disease to millions more.

Women and politics after the NRM power takeover

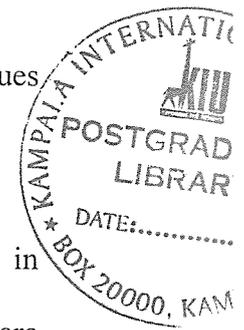
The issue of women's participation in politics not only crosses disciplinary boundaries but also establishes goals and priorities in line with the challenges they face. Women's political empowerment and equal participation in all decision-making institutions are very crucial elements in their struggle against their subordinate position within the family and the society at large in Uganda. In Africa in general and Uganda in particular, women who witnessed the independence of their countries possessed rich traditions and qualities as leaders and participated in women's organizations for the liberation alongside the men against the colonial masters.

Women's organizations emerged mostly immediately after the 1985 Nairobi and 1995 Beijing UN conferences, although most of these organizations had their roots in earlier political experiences of the country. These organizations were quite different from the post independence organizations and they were independent of the National Resistance Movement government (Tripp and Kwesiga J, 2002). These organizations selected their own leaders, they set their own objectives and agendas, and they had their own financial resources and this clearly portrays in women good qualities of leadership.

The empowerment of women and their inclusion into political activities is central to the achievement of the goals of equality, peace, democratization and development. In achieving such goals it is very essential to include and put women in key decision-making positions with equal numbers as men. Women's involvement in these positions will help to ensure the restructuring of institutions that take into account their concerns



like; sexual harassment, domestic violence, reproductive health and other pressing issues that affect them.



However, much as there has been an open political window since the late 1980's in Uganda, and empowerment policies put in place to uplift the profile of women, there are still pressing issues that have made them lag behind particularly in Uganda and the world in general. For instance despite the numerous and important roles they played in the pre-colonial and post-colonial politics in Uganda, women are still conspicuous for their absence in the literature on the political history of Uganda. Most of the analyses in the available literature generally appear as if women are non-existent and their contributions have not been taken into account. As noted by (Tamale, 1999);

'women played in Ugandan legends very important roles, like the queen mothers of Toro, Buganda, Bunyoro, and Busoga yet most historians subjectively omit the roles performed by these women''.

Such a history has forced most women activists and women organizations to emerge all over the country during the late 1970's, 1980's and 1990's to stand for their cause. The most powerful agents and force behind the empowerment struggle of women has been the formation of the women's movement in the 1980's and the force behind this was the UN women's conference in Nairobi of (1985) and the Beijing conference (1995). Women of both national and international backgrounds met in these two conferences, addressed critical issues that affected them publicly and privately and they devised some measures forward, (Tripp and Kwesiga, 2002; Shushee la Kaushik)

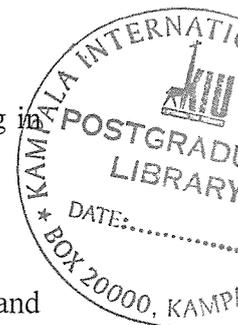
1.3 Statement of the Problem

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which are international Human Rights documents which are inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These documents provide grounds for both men and women to equal participation in the political destiny of a country. Uganda is a signatory to these conventions and bills without reservations, and she (Uganda) has ratified some of these conventions and treaties and the Constitution of the country in Article 21(4) provides that men and women have equal rights in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural aspects. Women in Uganda however have been significantly sidelined since opening up of political windows in the country in the late 1980's much as there are provisions for equal treatment in the country's Constitution and international human rights documents.

Women have not been liberated to a certain degree, much as the Ugandan government has tried to bring their issues to the table inspite of all these regional conventions and treaties. They are discriminated against, left out of national political decision-making issues, their plight is not given first or second priority and above all they are expected to work within certain limits in the politics of the country. This shows that although the political freedom in the country has been granted to allow every Ugandan citizen to freely take part in, women still find it very difficult. The male dominance (patriarch) that has prevailed with the social prejudices that view women as naturally weak, the female dependence on their male counter parts which cuts across Uganda's different cultures, worsened by the general characteristics among women that tend to incapacitate them in



the political participation have contributed greatly and barred them from participating in political and decision-making issues.



The laws, instruments and treaties put in place to protect the rights of women and interests have remained on paper in most countries. Uganda has not been an exception to this. The legislative changes regarding women's concerns in Uganda for instance have been very unimpressive, which is mainly due to a weak tradition of lobbying and advocacy, and the loyalty of most legislators who do not take women's issues seriously. In Uganda this is very common since some, if not most; legislators do not work directly with the electorate from their constituencies, (Tripp and Kwesiga, 2002; Tamale, 1999). There continues to be suppression from the male legislators of the female counter parts and this has made most female parliamentarians to perform very poorly in the sessions. At local levels, women leaders are also facing pressures from their electorate who expect them to only perform to a certain level.

1.4.0 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by two sets of objectives; general and specific.

1.4.1 General Objective

The core and general objective of this study was to investigate the reasons for the low participation of women in politics since opening up of the political windows in Uganda in particular and Africa in general basing on the periods 1986 to date.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

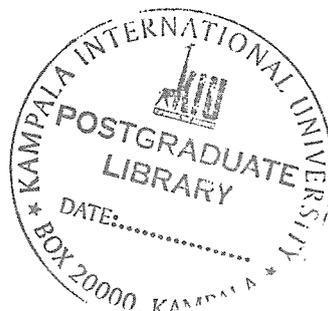
The study specifically was intended to:

- Examine the role of the current (NRM) government in empowering women to participate in political activities.
- Establish why besides Women Empowerment and Affirmative Action policies in the country, they have kept a low profile than men in the political arena.
- Investigate the challenges women face in their political life and career in since women normally encounter a number of problems than men.

1.5 Hypothesis

Research by different scholars reflects that women in Uganda come from different political and social backgrounds, and as a result of these differences, they respond differently to the political and social life outside their homes. Others respond positively since they are able to balance between life at home and outside, while are unable due to a lot of pressure from their spouses and their concerns for the home affairs and families. Political differences have therefore had a greater influence on women's participation and life outside the home.

Furthermore it is also evident that competitiveness among women's organizations, political differences, lack of strategizing and cohesive mechanisms among the women organizations, coupled with cultural attributes and norms have brought about the low participation of Ugandan women in political activities since the 1980's. Women politicians compete amongst themselves especially during this time when the political windows have been opened; they identify with certain political parties and forget the critical issues that are affecting women in the country, something very common with the women parliamentarians who at times forget the cause of women because they have



become too loyal to certain political parties that they do not think about problems affecting them (women).

The male authored history texts which in part are influenced by the present marginalization of most African women from the formal political spheres are viewed by most female analysts as a major factor which contributes to their low numbers and lack of interest to participate in politics in Uganda. In essence, the role of women right from colonial times is ignored and if reference is made to women at all, most analysts do so through referring to them as apolitical beings (non performers). Women for lack of such serious consideration have remained behind the male politicians and kept a low profile, (Tamale, 1999).

1.6 Method of the study

Since the study was basically library based and employed descriptive model and use of secondary data, it involved analysis of women's political participation by other writers, documentation, use of available magazines, brochures and newspapers and critical analysis of women politicians in the African context. This involved a look at women and politics right from the grass root levels in the Ugandan context involving women in politics from the lowest levels of the government provides and forms the basis of their active involvement in higher level participation in decision making and leadership issues.

The researcher chose not to go directly to the field because it was thought that since most analysts have done extensive research in the same field, there was need to make a difference. Secondly since women's contributions to any developmental issues are in most cases not visible yet they perform more, it was of the researcher's interest to bring



out some of these issues through the already existing and available literature and information. Since most women activists who have carried out research about women and their struggles have done it in the field, it was the best and appropriate method the researcher chose to use description of the study so as to make a difference in the study of the same subject.

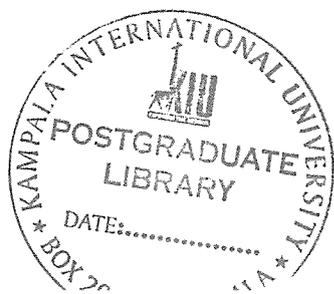
1.7 Scope of the study

This study was mainly documentary and descriptive in nature. It involved assessment of women's political participation in Uganda as a whole and was limited to periods from 1986 to 2006. However, a brief history of Ugandan politics before this period were looked at and this provided a background and history of women and politics in Uganda and the world in general, and the nature of politics before 1986 regimes.

The study furthermore looked at the participation of women politicians right from grass root levels (lowest level) in Uganda's case (the Local council levels) and in the African context as well. It is believed that involving women in lower level politics provides the basis and experience for higher level participation in issues that affect them besides the national politics. This therefore would encourage women who are able to stand for political posts, right from the lowest level of political setting of Uganda to actively involve in the nation building affairs of the country. This giving an opportunity for such women to compete equally with men for the same posts in general elections.

1.8 Significance of the study

The study will be very useful in a number of ways to women politicians and activists. These include the following:





The study will be beneficial to other researchers and women activists by providing knowledge and information to be used as a basis for further research about women's political life and participation as citizens of Uganda.

The research will provide a highlight about the challenges women encounter in trying to fit life outside the home and actively becoming leaders and decision-makers in the country. This in a way will help the future women activists to concentrate more on issues that affect them since they will have known how to defend themselves.

Finally, the study will encourage other women to know about their rights and freedoms and to defend, protect and promote these rights. They will be able to learn how to balance between home life and national affairs.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

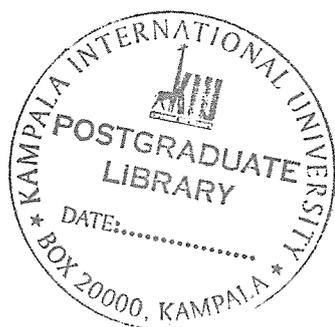
This study was based on the theory of 'Women Empowerment'. This theory sometimes is commonly known as Development Alternative for a new era to Women (DAWN). In the mid 1980's at the end of UN decade for women, members of the Southern (developing countries') feminist research network (DAWN) published a landmark critique of development impact on women. They analyzed the impact of development policies on the third world poor women and proposed an alternative model. This model was known as self empowerment approach and it advocates for women to be organized through creating political consciousness, popular education and emphasizes income generating activities.

Uganda is a country known in Africa and the world over as a pioneer in advancing the cause and issues of women especially concerning politics, education and health. Women

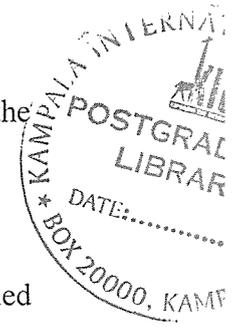
empowerment in the country began around 1989 when the NRM government came to power and Affirmative Action policies were adopted and aimed at uplifting the profile of women. This created room for women to join politics, economic activities and the education sector. The appointment of the former vice president Dr Specioza Kazibwe in the mid 1990's and other female ministers under the NRM leadership is an indication that women have been heard and they are being uplifted.

The emergence of Women's organizations like ACFODE, NAWOU, FIDA (U) and UWESO can be said to be the alternative models adopted by in Uganda and other African countries women organizations. These organizations have created avenues for them to advocate more for, stand and defend their cause. Empowerment has created greater opportunities for women through equality in different sectors and women have been able to participate in political activities as well as in cultural, social and economic activities. It is through these organizations that women have learnt a lot concerning human rights issues, politics, economics and other social aspects of society.

Women empowerment theory aims at increasing their capabilities and to encourage them to actively participate in society. It aims at dispelling the myths about women's movements, particularly about the South (developing countries) that women cannot and are not able to hold public offices hence should be confined to domestic affairs. These myths in the first place limit women's political activism to anti-colonial struggles, and secondly women's participation in decision-making and leadership roles. The theory therefore stresses the need to dispel such myths and aims at empowering women to be as



equal partners with men in the political and other development oriented activities in the country.



Much as Uganda has embarked on women empowerment policies, and has been regarded as a champion in addressing women's issues by the international community, the theory still faces setbacks and has not been fully implemented (Mugenyi, 1998). Ugandan women for instance have not been given chance to hold highest positions of office like prime minister, the ministry of women affairs which was once a full ministry was reduced to a women's department in the present (NRM) regime with very few workers and besides this women are only appointed as state ministers of education, women affairs and agriculture, which have been referred to as traditional ministries, and have not featured in the cabinet positions in greater numbers like men. From the grassroots levels, women are not given full opportunities to compete for political posts like men due to interferences by their spouses, cultural pressure and male dominance tendencies.

1.10 Limitations to the study

The researcher encountered a number of challenges and problems during the course of this study. Among these were the following;

Data collection was another constraint that the researcher faced since this involved moving from one resource/information centre to another. At the same time getting the required information was not an easy process because some resource centres only allowed registered members with them to utilize their facilities.

The researcher faced inadequate financial problems that made it very difficult to move to various resource centres to gather data. Besides this, printing, photocopying and typing the report up to the final work were very costly.

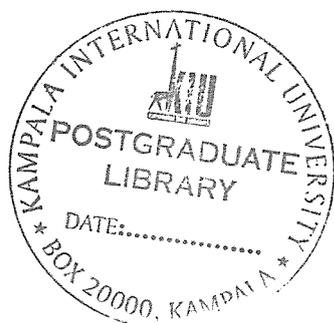
Finally, there was a problem of getting sufficient information from some resource centres. These could not allow the researcher to borrow some books, and magazines for enough time.

1.11 Organization of the Dissertation

The introductory section of this study is the first chapter. It gives an introduction to Uganda's political history right from the pre-colonial regimes to the present NRM regime, Ugandan women's experiences with political life after the NRM government takeover of power, statement of the problem, objectives, scope, and hypothesis, method of the study, significance and limitations to the study.

The second chapter presents women's involvement in politics and looks at it from an African perspective in particular and the globe in general. Women and constitution making processes in Africa are also reviewed in this chapter. Women politicians and conflict management in the African context forms chapter three of the study and here, women as combatants, the peace building process and women's contribution, the impact of armed conflict on women as well as the nature of conflicts in Africa are analyzed.

Chapter four describes women politicians and top leadership positions in Uganda; it examines the role of Ugandan government (NRM) in empowering and uplifting their profile. The chapter further discusses the issue of women's human rights and examines



the challenges they face in their struggle for freedom and independence. The last chapter which is chapter five is comprised of the summary, conclusions and recommendations for the study





CHAPTER TWO

WOMEN AND POLITICS IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

In Uganda, Africa and the globe at large, history depicts that although women are the majority and make up the highest population in different countries, they have been regarded as the minority among the minority male. Women have been marginalized and discriminated in political, economic, social and cultural arena. This has created a picture among women as though their voices do not exist and cannot be heard. Women are often victims of violence; wars, rape, assault and any other forms of abuse simply because they are weak. Male tendencies of discriminating against them (women) and cultural traditional beliefs towards them make them become the immediate victims of any circumstances that may arise. This chapter is a presentation of women and politics in the African perspective .A theoretical understanding of women and politics in different African countries, women's organizations as a force behind their political participation, African women and the constitution making process have been presented in the chapter.

2.2 Women and Politics in Africa

History has shown that around the 1990s, during the post-independence period greater numbers of African women began to aspire to higher political leadership at both local and national levels. Although their impact and numbers were still very minimal and they faced a number of challenges, new female faces and voices began to be seen and heard in the African political scene in the 1990's. The 1990s was a decade of new beginnings for women and politics in most African countries, and all this indicates that greater pressures

for female political representation and participation in the decades ahead will continue to be seen (Tripp, 2002; Solome, 2003).

It should be noted that it was not common for most female politicians and other women to stand for any political or leadership posts right from the lower level politics to the highest levels in Africa before the 1990's. The 1990s however saw differences in women's political career compared to the earlier regimes in most of these African countries. Some very determined women like; Charity Ngilu and Wangari Maathai stood as presidential candidates in the 1998 Kenyan presidential elections, Rose Rugendo of Tanzania's party Chama Cha Mapinduzi sought the nomination of the party in the 1995 presidential primaries, among a few African women. Although unsuccessful in their desire for power, these women set important grounds in their respective countries for other women to follow in future politics of these countries (Tripp, 2002).

In Africa, Uganda is one of the countries that set a very important example by providing for one third female representation in local councils and national political representation and this has been made possible through the open political windows, the adoption and implementation of affirmative action policies to encourage more women to join politics in the late 1980's. In Mozambique during the general elections women won one quarter of the seats in the National Assembly. This was largely due to the government's 35 percent quota system, which brought the percentage of women-held government seats to 37 percent (Tripp, 2000). Although these affirmative action strategies are very controversial in Africa, what is indisputable is the fact that where they have been



implemented, the popular political culture has gradually become more accepting for female politicians.

In South Africa, the large number of women in parliament and other key political appointments has been because of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party, which has stood for women's political advancement and affirmative action. For instance 89 out of the 117 women in the National Assembly and the Senate are from the ANC party. Presently, women make up 25 percent of the legislature, which represents a dramatic break from the previous apartheid regimes, in which women made up less than 3 percent of the legislature. In addition, four out of 25 ministers and eight out of 14 deputy ministers are women. Although these are low figures compared to those of men, they are still higher than under the earlier regimes (Tripp and Kwesiga, 2002).

Similarly, the Liberians for the first time in the history of Africa exercised their democratic rights by voting wisely for the first ever female African head of state (President), Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf which was a clear manifestation that women are not only able to be parliamentarians and ministers but that can also aspire for the highest positions of the government. Women are now being considered in the political arena especially after the political windows are being open in most African countries. It should however be noted that, much as these women are coming up, they still face resistance from male politicians which need to be addressed if women are to participate on equal basis with men (Tripp, 2002).

Throughout Africa, women's organizations have increasingly been calling for the adoption of affirmative action measures. For example, in Nigeria, leading women's

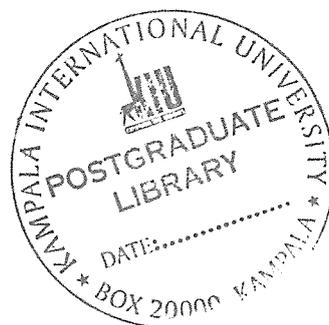


NGOs have become concerned about the low levels of female political representation and political appointments. Organizations like Gender and Development Action, Women Empowerment Movement, the National Council for Women's Societies umbrella organization, Women Opinion Leaders Forum and other NGOs have sought reserved seats for women in parliament and demanded larger numbers of female appointees to public bodies (Tripp, 2000).

2.3 Women's organizations as a force behind their political participation

The International Women's organizations have played a significant role and have encouraged women to seek political office and influence policy making in different African countries. Although the driving forces for these changes have been internal, external pressures and norms have been an added advantage to these new demands. For instance to address the low rates of female representation, the issue was raised at the UN Beijing Conference on Women in 1995 by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) which is the world's organization of national parliaments, to monitor the proceedings in parliament of different African countries.

The IPU adopted a Plan of Action to address the reality that men dominate political and parliamentary life in almost all countries. One of the proposals adopted by the IPU included affirmative action measures to be advocated on a strictly interim (temporary) basis so that women may not be taken by these policies and ignores the efforts they should have otherwise put to actively compete with men in politics (Tripp, 2000; Tamale, 1999). This was a good proposal because it would give women the opportunity to become



active in politics. However, its implementation has taken a slow pace in most African countries and this has not brought greater change in women's political life.

The opening up of political windows that occurred in the early 1990s in some African countries made it very easier for the formation of new women's organizations that helped in lobbying, civic education, and leadership training organizations by women politicians and activists themselves and this in turn encouraged these and other women to run for office. Several changes occurred in women's mobilization during this period. One was the influence of the mass organizations tied to the single party, for example, Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA), Uganda women's effort to save orphans (UWESO), Uganda Association of University Women, the League of Malawi Women that is the women's wing of the (Malawi Congress Party), and the Women's League of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) in Zambia and many other women's organizations linked up together to address their fate have made it possible for women to actively become active (Tripp and Kwesiga, 200).

The simultaneous emergence of independent women's organizations meant that for the first time many women through these organizations could now select their own leaders, set their own agendas, and were no longer tied to participation in the patriarchal nature of the ruling political parties in different countries that were dominated by mainly men. This means that women's organizations are adopting new agendas that includes but also goes beyond the old focus of religion, welfare concerns, and income-generation as well as family concerns by women as advocated for in the earlier colonial regimes. Countries like



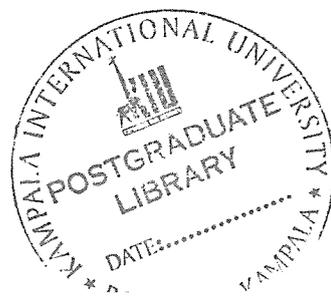
Uganda and South Africa that had the most independent women's organizations seem to have gone the furthest distance as regards women's participation and politics in Africa.

New political organizations emerged to support women candidates and female political leaders by the late 1990's. For instance in 1994 Uganda's Wandera Specioza Kazibwe became the first female Vice President in Africa, Sylvie Kinigi served as prime minister of Burundi from 1993 to 1994, while at the same time Senegal also had a woman vice president in 2001. By the end of the decade, in Ethiopia, Lesotho, and South Africa legislative bodies had female speakers of parliament and Uganda, Zimbabwe and South Africa had female deputy speakers and presently the deputy speaker of Uganda's parliament is a female (Tripp and Kwesiga, 2002).

The presence of these women in these key posts is a clear manifestation that women are responsible citizens who are able and can represent the interests of their people if given the opportunity. However, these women have occupied these positions with a lot of fear from their male counter parts and the general public and traditional cultural beliefs about women's positions. For instance the then Vice President Specioza Kazibwe of Uganda had to give the simple excuse of going for further studies when in the real sense, she was facing a lot of challenges from the male politicians in the position she had held.

2.4 Women and constitution-making process in Africa

In several African countries, there were increased involvement of women in the Constitution- making process (Matembe, 1991). Women were very active in the process of drafting the new South African Constitution, which guarantees women the right to equality, freedom and security of the person, freedom from violence, the right to make



decisions concerning reproductive health, and the right to security and control over one's own body as well as political, civil, social, economic and other rights.



The Women's National Coalition (WNC) in South Africa lobbied hard to have the Women's Charter passed. The independent Women's National Coalition (WNC) was formed in 1991 after much deliberation to unite women of all parties and political differences, (Tripp, 1998). The Coalition brought together different women's organizations including organizations affiliated with the ANC, such that women could contribute to the constitution-making of the country. This would therefore pave the way for critical issues affecting women to be included in the supreme law of the land, hence protection and promotion of their rights and freedoms.

The Women's National Council furthermore brought together interests as far as the Rural Women's Movement, Union of Jewish Women, and the South African Domestic Workers Union (Tripp, 1998). Over three (3) million women participated in focus groups organized by WNC to voice their opinions on women's concerns to be included in the constitution. Regional and national conferences were held and a Woman's Charter was drafted and endorsed by the national parliament and all nine regional parliaments had female representatives. The charter addressed a broad range of concerns, including equality, legal rights, economic issues, education, health, politics, and violence against women (Matembe, 1991; Tripp, 1998).

The National Women's Lobby Group (NWLG) in Zambia along with other NGOs succeeded in getting the Constitutional Commission to incorporate into the draft Constitution a section on women's rights, focusing on discrimination, affirmative action,

violence against women and the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (Tripp, 1998). Women were to actively engage in putting their concerns to the table so that these issues can appear in the constitution.

In Uganda, it was widely known that no other group was as organized and cohesive as women's organizations when it came to making a committed effort to influence the Constitution making process. Two women were involved in the Constitutional Commission and a total of 51 women (out of a total of 284) held seats in the Constituent Assembly, which was formed to debate the new constitution, as Matembe (1991) puts it;

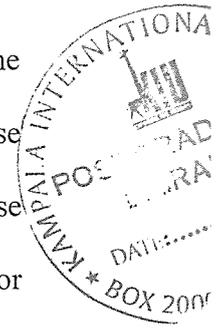
'Women's organizations wrote more memoranda submitted to the Constitutional Review Commission than any other sector of society. They also took part in a countrywide effort to educate women about the purpose of a Constitution and to gather views into the memoranda''.

Women delegates to the Constituent Assembly in the country formed a non-partisan Women's Caucus that carried out workshops for women delegates on speech making, confidence building, coalition building, parliamentary procedures and other related topics. The Caucus developed strategies to make sure that women's concerns were brought to the floor in the Assembly and aired their views in a weekly radio program dealing with ongoing debates in the Constituent Assembly, which demonstrated women as potential and capable Ugandan leaders if they are given the opportunity (Tripp, 1998; Matembe, 1991).

In Malawi, measures were put in place where women's organizations involved in the Constitution making process had to be constantly on the alert so that women's concerns



were not dropped from the agenda. For instance in 1994, a conference preparing for the upcoming multiparty elections agreed, under pressure from women delegates to endorse particular women's concerns and to incorporate some of them into the constitution. These included promoting girls' education, equal access in politics and business, equal rights for women and HIV/AIDS prevention programmes for men and women in the country.

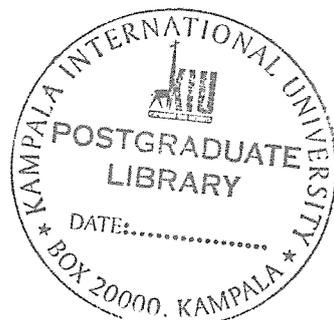


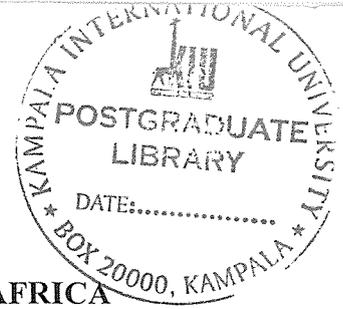
Recommendations by the National Commission on Women in Development (NCWID) to include women's concerns in the bill of rights and equal representation of men and women in the Senate (upper house in parliament) in Zambia were incorporated and withdrawn four times prior to the ratification of the constitution in May 1994. However, a group of women in the NCWID lobbied the National Consultative Council every time they attempted to take out the recommendations such that they (women) and their issues were to be included in the constitution. This demonstrates that, women's voices slowly are beginning to be heard and they are emerging as strong leaders with skills initially presumed to be an exclusive of men.

2.5 Conclusion

The involvement of African women and women all over the world in the drafting of the constitutions of their respective countries, which is the supreme law of the land and upon which everybody is to be protected and guided is a very big achievement for women in the political set up of these countries. Women representatives in big numbers in the process of constitution making is really an indication that much as they are still marginalized and discriminated against, the governments in Africa which are mostly male dominated are beginning to realize the worth of women as far as decision making on

critical issues is concerned, and that women have a say concerning the national issues which in the past were an exclusive of men.





CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN POLITICIANS AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA

3.1 Introduction

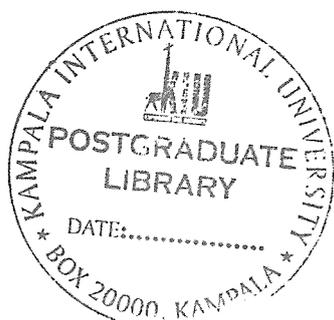
Today, one of the issues greatly affecting women and children in Africa, especially in the Great Lakes Region, is that of armed conflicts, civil wars and interstate/inter tribal clashes. Countries like the Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have suffered from prolonged civil conflicts and intertribal clashes. Uganda, as one of the African countries, has unfortunately not been spared from the unfortunate disease of bloodshed caused by these wars and conflicts. Violence and armed conflict have particularly blighted Uganda's political history since the mid-1960s when the first republican government of Sir Edward Mutesa was overthrown by the then Prime Minister, (the late) Apollo Milton Obote. Since then, Uganda has undergone turbulent political times, coupled by bloody insurgencies.

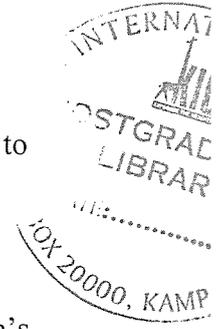
The African continent is one of the continents that has been ravaged by civil wars and conflicts. Although there are some countries free of armed conflict, patriarchal governance, weak law enforcement structures, military regimes and dictatorship form high incidences of gender violence and gross abuses of human rights do characterize such countries and the immediate victims are women. For example, since the 1950s when a good number of African countries attained independence from different colonial powers, the continent has experienced many civil wars and conflicts. The Economic Commission for Africa (African Women's Report 1998) indicates that since the 1970s more than 30

wars have been fought in Africa. In 1996, out of the 53 African countries, 14 had experienced armed conflicts contributing to more than half of all abuses leading to untold suffering, torture and deaths of the victims globally. The number of wars on the continent has continued to increase resulting into gross human rights violations especially against women and children.

Uganda is among the African countries that has had one of the worst histories of armed conflict on the continent. Uganda's armed conflicts and civil strifes has its roots in the pre-independence colonialism and unresolved or poorly managed issues (Oguttu, 2003). All parts of the country have either directly experienced war or have been affected indirectly by it. The armed conflict in post independence Uganda began in 1966 with the overthrow of the country's first president, who was at the same time Buganda's King Mutesa II, by the then prime minister Milton Obote.

The crisis led to the suspension of the Ugandan constitution by Parliament. The Idi Amin military dictatorship (1971-1979) that followed the Obote 1 regime was characterized by brutality, death and disappearance of many Ugandans who sought refuge in other countries and other forms of violations of human rights and property rights of citizens and non- citizens in the country. The later period of 1980-1985 witnessed violent armed conflict between the then National Resistance Army (NRA), a rebel group then and the then government forces of Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) of General Tito Okello. This guerilla war lasted for five years and led to the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives. For the past 20 years, there has been an on going conflict in parts of





Northern and Eastern regions of the country; although now peace talks are going on to end the suffering of the people in these regions.

Armed conflict sometimes spreads to neighbouring countries. For instance, Idi Amin's brutal regime extended the conflict to the Kagera region in Tanzania. The armed rebellion and toppling of the post Amin regimes were quickly felt in neighbouring Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo where the Ugandan army (UPDF) and Rwandan army were involved in serious fighting in the DRC. This caused untold suffering and displacement as well as loss of lives and property in the country. It is also important to note that while the extension of conflict may be inevitable and quick to initiate, its ending is often difficult.

3.2 Conflicts in Africa and their nature

Over the past few decades Africa has probably experienced and suffered more from armed conflicts, interstate and intertribal clashes than any other continent in the world yet these conflicts have not been dealt away with to date and new ones continue to emerge day and night. What is happening in Somalia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo especially during the current general election period, Southern Sudan region of Darfur and other African countries indicates that Africa will continue to witness wars and conflicts in the decades ahead, as long as inequalities continue to exist basing on, resource allocation differences, regional imbalances and high rates of corruption among the top officials of the ruling governments in the respective countries.

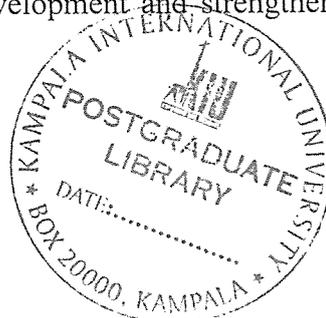
In most African countries, conflicts have changed in nature. There are interstate conflicts which have given way to internal civil wars and the main victims are civilian populations

who also include women, children and the very old. The tragic Rwandan genocide in 1994 will forever remain one of the darkest pages in African history and something the survivor victims will live to remember in their life time. The new types of conflicts no longer aim at defeating the opponent enemies but at inflicting pain and humiliation on civilians by destroying their identity and sense of livelihood, property destruction, loss of lives and the general poverty and suffering to the civilians, as (Okumu,1990; El Jack,2002) state;

‘they erode institutions that provide a basis for the sustainability of African societies and undermine societal values replacing them with institutionalized violence. Women become specific targets. Rape, forced pregnancies, sexual slavery and assault have also become deliberate instruments of war’’ (Okumu, 1990).

In Africa and other parts of the globe at large, between 1960 and 1998 alone, about 32 wars have occurred and out of this, seven million lives were lost and over nine million people became refugees/homeless, returnees or displaced. In 1996 alone, 14 out of the 53 countries of Africa were afflicted by armed conflicts, accounting for more than half of all war-related deaths world-wide. The crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo alone has involved a dozen or so States and over 50 million people of the Great Lakes region. This is not a record of which the continent can be proud because out of this population, half the victims are found to be women (King .A, 2001). People have been displaced, tortured, killed and others have been forced to flee the country.

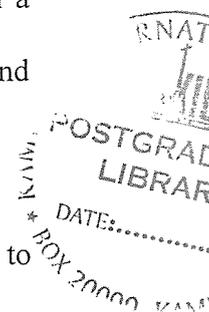
The consequences of these conflicts have seriously undermined Africa’s efforts to ensure long-term stability, prosperity, human rights and gender equality for its peoples. As a direct result, the search for socio-economic development and strengthening of African



economies has been undermined. For example, the past 20-year old civil war in Southern Sudan and the 20- year old conflict in Northern Uganda have resulted in more than a million dead and at least another thousand displaced. It has brought about starvation and extreme poverty to the people of these regions.

Civil wars and conflicts have caused diversion of a lot of funds and national budgets to funding the wars through purchase of military hardware and rehabilitating the victims, instead of using the available funds for developmental and productive purposes. For instance Ethiopia and Eritrea diverted an estimated 80 per cent of their national budgets to solve the problems of conflict which claimed over 400,000 lives, and yet today there has emerged fresh conflicts in the same region. They now face famine and destroyed livelihoods for millions of their citizens, in particular the most vulnerable and affected being women and children, (King. A, 2001).

These realities make the issues of gender equality and human rights particularly salient features of conflict management. It is vital that attempts at managing violent ethnic conflicts or preventing them from occurring, must bring women into the process at an early stage as contributors and active participants in all stages of conflict management (Tomasevski, 1999; Kemi, 2000; Mulumba, 2002). The involvement of women to actively participate in the issues of conflict management is and should be the first step countries affected by wars and conflicts should take. This will help to identify the likelihood of occurrence of these conflicts to be detected at an earliest stage and solutions can be derived there and then.



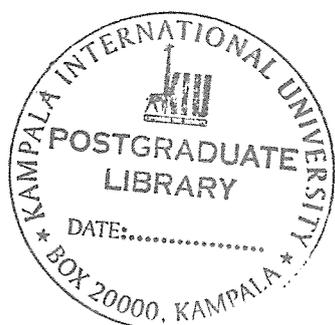
Armed conflicts negatively affect women and men and this results in gender specific disadvantages, more specifically for women that are always recognized or addressed by mainstream gender understanding of conflict management. Gender inequality in this sense reflects power imbalances in social structures that exist in pre-conflict periods and are reflected by armed conflicts and post-conflict situations.

Furthermore, armed conflicts encourage and put to mind the expectations that men will always fight and women will support them in the home. The issue in this sense is that men are aggressive and fighters while women are wives, mothers, social workers, caregivers, nurses and sex workers for those who go to fight (men). It is true that primarily men are forced to kill in the battlefields, but women make up the majority of civilian casualties and suffer in their roles as caregivers due to the break down of the social structures (Byrne, 1996; El Jack, 2002).

The inequality which women experience during and after armed conflict in all societies derives from dominant understanding of gender roles. In the context of armed conflicts, the perception persists as (El Jack, 2002) notes;

‘women are regarded as wives, mothers, nurturers, caregivers whereas men are seen as aggressors and soldiers’.

Although women and men do often assume these traditional roles, there is a tendency in the mainstream gender to exaggerate the extent to which they play these roles in armed conflicts. The reality however is that women are also active as combatants in situations of armed conflicts while men may be both victims as well as combatants. The issue of





ignoring women's contribution to the management of conflicts therefore is frustrating women and their efforts to bring about peaceful resolution of conflicts in society.

3.3 African women as combatants

In many countries in Africa, the armed forces include women who sometimes are at the frontline of the battle field. However, marginalization against women continues to be manifested even in situations of armed conflicts, even when they are fighters themselves. It is seen that women are not only victims of war, but violence continues to occur in their participation in fighting and in the battle fields (Tsjeard et al, 2005). Although women in Africa and the world at large do engage in active fighting for their countries, their efforts are at times frustrated by the men who turn them into sexual objects and wives to the bosses (Lieutenants and Generals). Women's participation in armed conflicts therefore becomes irrelevant due to the frustrations and challenges they encounter from male politicians.

It should be understood that, sometimes women are abducted at gunpoint by armed groups. Despite their search for greater freedom and autonomy, women and young girls who join armed conflicts often find themselves sexually exploited. They are often forced to take contraceptives so as to remain free from becoming pregnant and having babies, or even forced to take an abortion against their will. According to the Amnesty report (2004), one young woman in Bogota, Colombia testified in July, 2001 that;

'when i just arrived like within 20 days, they told me that they had to give me an injection and then i said no, i didn't want to... Then the female doctor told me that i had to let them give me the injection ... they had to give me the injection each month'.

The above indicates that women combatants are not free to choose what they want and do not want. Thus for women, both peace and insecurity do mean a time of struggle against the male

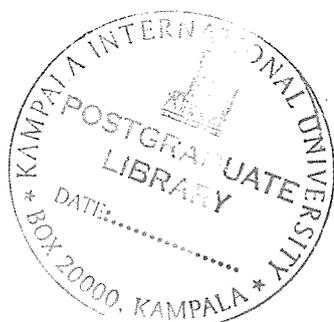
nature of dominance in all fields. As one female combatant also described how she was forced to have an abortion by the armed group to which she belonged. When she asked to keep the baby,

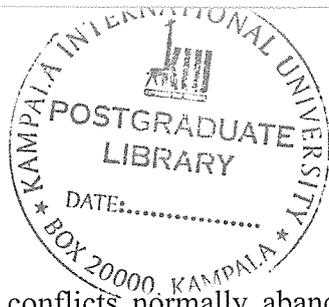
'they said no-just imagine a pregnant bitch in combat or whatever and with that big belly! They made me have an abortion... The Doctors that scraped me were guerilla doctors and i was under recovery for two months. Then they had me on watch duty and helping out making meals... I got better. But you aren't the same and you get really hurt' (Amnesty, 2004).

3.4 The impact of conflicts on Women

It is evident today that during armed conflicts, perpetrators have used torture and other forms of abuses as weapons directed against personal identity and integrity. In most cases, survivors are left with a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness. Those who experience rape have their bodily integrity and control taken away from them (ISIS-WCCE, 1999).

The impact of conflicts and civil strifes on women and other members of society have been demonstrated through the loss of hundreds of thousands of people, loss of property, traumatic experiences due to torture and gender based violence and wider consequences including destruction of the social and political infrastructure, disappearances of family members, displacements and deeper entrenchment of poverty, ignorance, illiteracy and disease, emotional/psychological and physical pain on the victims as well as a sense of worthlessness in the society where they live. The research conducted by Isis-WICCE on women in Gulu district Uganda (1999) with war experiences yet survivors shows a destruction of the positive fundamental human rights and individual values of these women, leaving them devastated and having no meaning in life. They live in fear, never trust other people and in most cases have changed beliefs.





Destruction of Shelter and Housing

In Africa, the victims of wars and conflicts normally abandon their homes and seek refuge in concentrated camps. For instance in the mid 1990s, most of the population in Northern Uganda, especially in Gulu district, was forced to abandon their homes because of insecurity, the local means of livelihoods had to be abandoned, and the entire communities were confined to internally displaced people's camps. Over 30 camps were set up in Gulu district and by June 2000, the UN Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported an estimated 370,000 internally displaced persons in Gulu district (ISIS-WCCE, 1999). In Kitgum district there were some 82,000 IDPs in government camps and an estimated 10,000-20,000 in transient or unofficial camps (ISIS-WICCE, 2002). The camps which are still in existence are over congested and lack the basic facilities and necessities for a normal living like proper shelter, medical care, schools and social clubs.

Sexual Violence

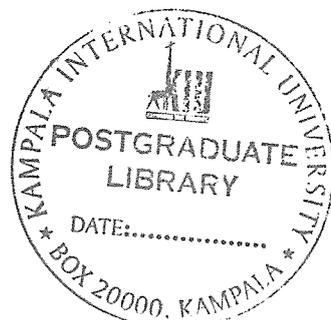
Sexual violence is used as a weapon against women to make them submissive and to humiliate them and this sometimes is done before community members. Women's human rights have been violated through sexual abuse, especially rape. Moreover the conditions of war make life difficult and many women are forced into prostitution for survival and sexual slavery to appease and attend to the comfort of the soldiers. This is because most of them do not have access and opportunity to work in order to earn a living. Forced marriages, torture of women, sexual assault and gang rape are conducted to spread terror,

in places of armed conflicts and wars. Women have experienced violent sexual crimes committed against them (ISIS-WCCE, 2002).

Reproductive Health and Sexual rights

The reproductive health of women and girls is affected because of the sexual abuse. However; reproductive health related problems are often overlooked because it is usually the health of the children that is addressed during situations of armed conflict. Through socialization, women have been taught to remain silent about their health problems, but take care of everybody else's health needs. When these health problems are left untreated they result into more serious reproductive health related illnesses such as genital and cervical cancers. A testimony of a woman who was gang raped by six soldiers in Luweero district in a research carried out by (ISIS_WCCE, 1999) in Luweero-Uganda brings out the horrors that some women have gone through in armed conflict situations;

“.... I was 30 years old... six soldiers found me hiding and raped me one after anotherThis lasted for about three hours. I could not talk. My relatives discovered me later, soaked in blood, urine, feaces and men's semen. i was torn everywhere and developed backache. Before i recovered, i was again gang raped at a military checkpoint. This time 15 soldiers raped me. This left me shattered. I was once again torn to an extent that i could not control my biological functions. The cervix was dislocated and the uterus started hanging out. ... I have to push it back in. My vaginal part and anus are separated by just a thread of flesh and when I get diarrhea, i defecate from both the front and behind. Oozing of water and blood has continued up to today despite the medical treatment i obtained. The fluid is sometimes mixed with pus I use a small pad. The men say I am not fit for them and hence i do not get satisfied ...I cannot deliver without professional assistance”.





The above is a horrific testimony that one can imagine is just a tale but the reality is that it happened and happens to women. In the real world, women do go through a lot of very tragic experiences in times of war and conflicts. There are those instances in which they are forced to have sex with their relatives like parents and children while there are those who innocently are gunned down due to resistance before their relatives and friends.

Loss of life

A number of women lose their lives, or have their husbands, children and relatives killed while they watch the traumatic experiences. In Northern Uganda, to ensure compliance, all abducted persons including women were forced by rebels to participate in brutal acts. Women, girls and men were initiated into rebel ranks and forced to torture and kill their colleagues while the rest watched in the late 1990's. The following is an extract from an interview with a woman who fled from rebel captivity conducted by (ISIS-WCCE, 2002);

“While in captivity, even shy girls were forced to murder those condemned to die. They had to kill while others were looking on.”

Torture and Trauma

In addition to sexual violence, women survivors of war like men, are always faced with other forms of torture such as seeing their children and spouses abducted, handicapped and killed, having their ears, nose and lips cut off, their limbs blown off by landmines, being accused of connections with fighting forces; as a way of getting information about the opponents; forcing them to provide perpetrators with money, food and other basics.

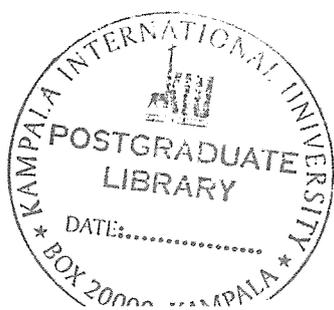
Breakdown of Social Setting and families

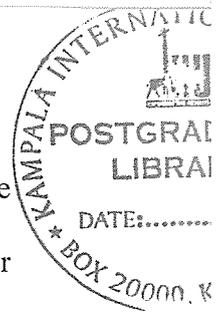
Rape as an act of aggression, breaks down the collective dignity of women and of the community in which they live. It is a lasting mark that remains even after the aggressors have left. Women who experience these conditions are regarded as ‘damaged property’ and are usually ex-communicated, divorced or neglected because of the abuse they went through. In some instances, rape results into unwanted pregnancies and unwanted children who remain a permanent reminder of the crime and experience the woman went through.

Many men also do separate from their sexually abused wives because of feelings of humiliation. Some say that they fear to contract HIV/AIDS, while others say it is purely due to the humiliation they suffered during the experiences their wives underwent. As a result, many women who experience rape have no support to cater for their children who are also usually abandoned. This has left many women psychologically traumatized.

Access to Education

In the areas that have been ravaged by armed conflict, majority of the women are illiterate or have attained only primary level education while young girls have never had the opportunity to attend school. The study conducted by ISS_WCCE, 1999 and 2002) in North and North Eastern parts of Uganda reveal that the relatively less education for girls is due to cultural attitudes where by girls are viewed as a source of income. Sending girls to school does not necessarily increase their “value” with regard to bride price, girls are denied an opportunity since this is perceived as a waste of time and resources.





On the other hand for the girls who attend school, the war appears to have had a more direct and profound effect on the education of these children in these regions. The danger of abduction and sexual abuse by rebels kept most of the girls in Gulu district out of school. As early as 1998 the Lord's Resistance Army rebel soldiers targeted schools as recruiting grounds to swell rebel ranks and as a source of girls for sexual satisfaction. Rebels would way lay the pupils who were coming back from school and other pupils were shot while others became child soldiers.

3.5 African Women Politicians as Peacemakers

It should be noted that women can play the same roles as men in conflict management in war times. As some scholars have argued that, women are socially conditioned to be more peaceful, peace loving and less violent than men. They further contend that, as a result of women's intermediary role within the household and community, they believe that women have well developed negotiating skills which could be extended into conflict resolution and negotiations at both national and international levels ((Kemi and Kwezi, 2000).

Helland and Kristensen, (1999) argue that, further integration of women in conflict management and peacekeeping activities helps change the situation and they believe women bring a new way and dimension to the accepted way of doing things. According to them, gender equality within peace missions influences gender relations within local communities. They maintain that gender equality provides positive results for the mission and its mandate. Factors that formulate our assumptions about the role of women in

conflict management are usually advanced as unprogressive and hence perpetuate the stereotype that women are incapable of playing meaningful roles in this field.

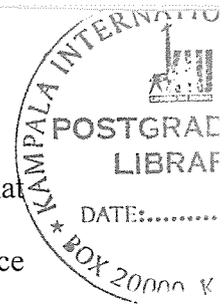
However women have faced marginalization since time immemorial in political, social, economic and cultural spheres. This continues to date when they are excluded from peacemaking or negotiations that may bring about lasting peace in situations of wars and political instabilities. They are often not taken seriously as peace negotiators as (Lirri, 2006 July in the Monitor newspaper) noted;

“despite successful efforts to bring peace to conflict areas, women have not been active participants in the process, a report by the International Crisis Group indicates, that women are often times excluded from peace agreements and conflict resolution processes and under-represented in the security sector as a whole”.

According to Lirri in a report posted on the web by International Crisis Group, "Beyond Victim hood: Women's Peace building in Uganda, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo," released on June 28 says governments and the international community must do much more to support women peace activists. The ICG adds that, while some women in the conflict areas of Uganda, Sudan and DRC have been involved in informal conflict resolution mechanisms, many have remained marginalized in formal peace processes and post-conflict governance, thus little has been done to address problems that particularly affect women and girls in these regions and the world at large.

It is very vital to involve women in the peace process if their real concerns in life are to be addressed. In the ICG report, (Lirri 2006; Helland and Kristensen,1999) contend that involving more women in conflict resolution processes would mean having a more





inclusive approach towards security and addressing key social and economic issues that would have otherwise been ignored. Therefore there is need to bear in mind that, Peace agreements, post-conflict reconstruction and governance work are better when women peace activists are involved.

Research has shown that, while women politicians actively involve themselves in politics and peace initiatives, most women who are non politicians have remained outside this circle and face marginalization in their daily lives. For instance as Lirri noted in the ICG report (Monitor Newspaper, 6 July, 2006);

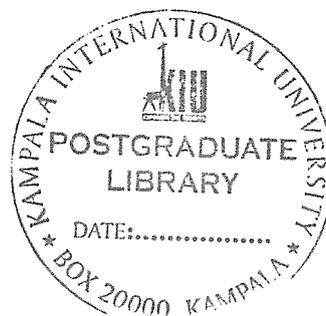
“that while some women in the conflict areas of Uganda, Sudan and DRC have been involved in informal conflict resolution mechanisms, many have remained marginalized in formal peace processes and post-conflict governance, thus little has been done to address problems that particularly affect women and girls”.

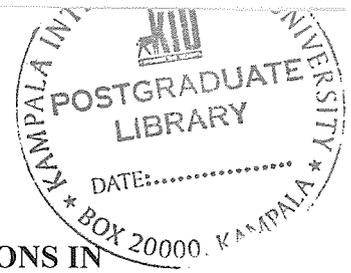
3.6 Conclusion

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 reaffirmed the role of women in preventing conflicts and mandates UN member states to increase women's participation in decision making, political participation as well as conflict management and peace building. Governments in Africa and the rest of the world should therefore consult with local women to design, implement and monitor budgets, policies and programmes that promote women's rights including making education and training accessible to women and girls caught up in conflict areas.

It should be remembered that like any other human being, conflicts have got adverse effects on women and men alike, and there is need to find lasting solutions to conflicts in Africa if stability, development and prosperity is to be achieved on the continent. This

solution cannot be achieved without the involvement of both parties in negotiations and peace talks (men and women). Women can equally play the role of peace making through, negotiations and through the gun as well to defend themselves and their countries. It is vital for men therefore to take women very seriously especially when it comes to matters of national concern.





CHAPTER FOUR

WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING AND TOP POLITICAL POSITIONS IN UGANDA

4.1 Introduction

Whereas, the world is starting to grasp that there is no policy more effective in promoting development, health and education than the empowerment of women and girls, the role of women in decision making continues to be marginalized due to existing norms, cultures and beliefs that women do not have the capacity to make informed choices due to their position in society (Tamale, 1999). There is need to recognize these differences and transform the existing ideologies among the communities so as to integrate women in development oriented issues as well as political developments of women, and their involvement in national issues.

In Uganda, there is still continuous debate about the position of women and their organizations about whether they (women) should be allowed and given high decision-making positions even though the political windows are open. In any country, society or community, proper organization requires a group of people with leadership skills and a common agenda. Women in Uganda are a large group and form about 51.6% of the population, (Odida, 2004). There has mainly been space for women among the women NGO's which shows and gives a picture that women should never give up easily and it is never too late to be included in decision-making positions. However in the public sector and government departments, the number of women in key positions is still unimpressive.

Culture and history combined with male patriarchal tendencies have conspired to make women a minority in the political positions not only in Uganda, but the world at large,

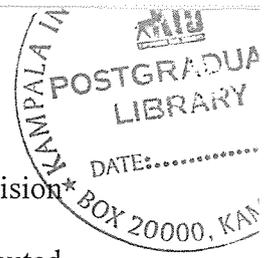
although various national and international factors have slowly led to increase in their numbers (Odida, 2004). The affirmative action policies which are contained in articles 32, 33, 78(1)(b), 180(2)(b) and (c) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda have had an increasing impact on the number of women in political and executive offices at national and local levels, all over the country. Moreover, these Affirmative Action policies are encouraging more and more women to join formal politics.

4.2.0 Women as Decision-Makers in Uganda

While the 1970's and early 1980's witnessed almost no difference in the number of women in decision-making with only one (1) woman in both cabinet and parliament in 1980, the 1990's saw an upward trend in the involvement of women in both political decision-making and other issues affecting the country. They constituted 18% in parliament and 18% in the constituent Assembly/ district representation, (Country Report, on Women, 1995). In the administrative levels, women constituted 13%-16% of the Residence District Commissioners during the 1990's (Tripp, 2002). This improvement in their representation is a manifestation that women like men are able to head political and top decision-making positions if only they are not denied the chances. They are however always threatened by the attitudes of men towards their wives being in top positions than them (men), and this frustrates the women from actively engaging in life outside their homes.

The significant improvement in women's participation in political and other activities is however mainly attributed to the increasing levels of awareness among women of their potentials in contributing to the development process. The affirmative action taken by the





government to counter the factors that hinder women's participation in the decision making process as well as political participation in the country has also partly contributed to this process (Tamale, Onyango, 1996). The over all involvement of women in these positions is however frustrated by the government especially women who are in the opposition political parties.

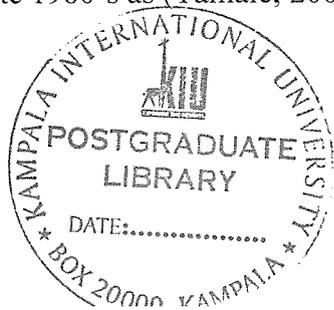
The number of women and their history through the available statistics indicates that, they are still very few and their percentage has not reached the 30% standard put by the United Nations by the year 2000 for every UN member country of which Uganda is. In Uganda, the story is no different from other countries in the world. For instance in the 1996 general elections, only 18% out of 100 % were women in the legislature, in the judicial department there were 21% of the women and 23 percent were chief magistrates, while the rest were men, the ministries only saw 12% women.

Table 1.1 Showing percentages of women in decision- making process (1996).

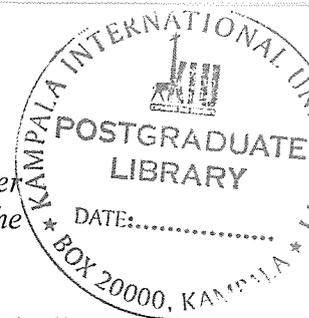
Levels	Total Number of Women	Percentage of Women in Decision-making
Presidential Advisors	3	20%
Judges	5	21%
Parliamentarians	47	18%
Ministries	6	12%
CA Delegates	50	18%
Permanent Secretaries	6	19%
Residence District Commissioners	5	13%
Chief Magistrates	5	23%
Under Secretaries	10	23%
Ambassadors	2	8%

Source: Women in Development, UNDP Human Development Report, 1996

As it can be observed from the table above, there is still unequal distribution of power and top leadership positions much as the political windows are open in the country and due to this, women continue to witness discriminatory tendencies against them. In the Seventh parliament for instance, women chaired only 3 of the 12 standing committees, and 2 of the parliament’s sessional committees (Tamale, 2003). The number of female legislators needs to be increased to ensure a difference in regard to male dominance of the legislative structures and institutions. Women saw no difference in their leadership positions even after the introduction of the affirmative action programmes in the country, in the late 1980’s as (Tamale, 2003) writes;



“A closer analysis of the quota system in Uganda shows a number of loopholes, when they introduced the quotas for women in the national assembly”



In other words when the composition of decision-making assemblies are so markedly at odds with gender and society's make up they represent, there is a clear evidence that certain voices are gradually being silenced and oppressed (Weylen,1994; Tamale, 1999). These voices in this case are non other than women's voices.

Table 1.2 showing the position of women in the seventh parliament in Uganda (2001-2006)

Representation	Total No of Seats	No of Women who won	% of Women
District (reserved for women)	56	56	100
County(open seats)	216	13	6.0
Youth (reserved)	5	2	40.0
Organized Labour(reserved)	3	1	33.3
PWD(reserved)	5	2	40.0
Army(reserved)	10	0	0
Ex-Officio (unelected Cabinet Ministers)	9	1	11.1
Total	304	75	24.4

Source: United Nations, Human Development Report, 2003

It should be noted that, before the Affirmative Action policies were introduced in the country, women members of parliament were virtually non existent before the introduction of affirmative action programmes in Uganda. For instance women in the

colonial times in Uganda were only nominated and not at any time did their numbers exceed three women in the decision-making structure of the government (Kwesiga, 2002; Tripp, 2000). As Tripp writes (2002) that;

‘‘Within Parliament, women have generally had poor representation in the leadership of standing committees (women served as chairs of only 2 out of 9 committees in 2002), but have had slightly better representation in leadership of sessional committees. In the past, women have also had difficulty being taken seriously and listened to in parliament’’.

It is worth noting that, there is an increase in the number of women who are willing to stand for parliamentary elections and they are slowly succeeding in this agenda. For example in the 1996 general elections, there were 32 women and 824 men contestants while in the 2001 general elections, there were 844 men and the number of women who stood as candidates was also 32 much far less than that of men even though the political windows have been open by then. Such a trend however shows that, compared to men, women are still extremely very few in the decision-making positions in this country.

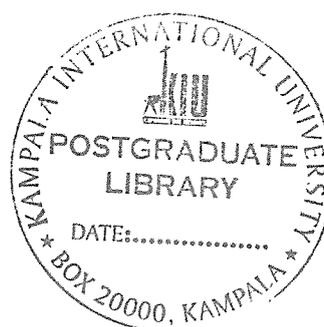
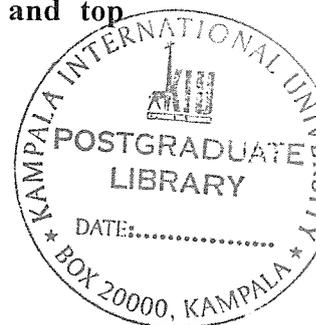


Table 1.3 showing the trend of women's position in decision-making and top leadership positions in Uganda (1980- 2001).

Period	Total No of Women Candidates	Successful Women Candidates
1980 General Elections	4	1
1988 NRC Expansion	9	2
1994 CA Elections	25	9
1996 General Elections	32	8
2001 General Elections	32	13



Source: Gender Bulletin No 1, 1996 (Ministry of Gender and Community Development).

Women's interests in opting for highest political offices in Uganda have been to a large extent frustrated by men's attitudes towards them on one hand, and the electorate's expectations of the women candidates on the other hand. It is important to note that during the 1996 general presidential and parliamentary elections, various means were used and put in place to discourage female candidates from contesting for political positions. For example a female candidate's marital status was questioned, her place of origin and her personal behaviour analyzed in a way that men were generally spared (Kwesiga J.C, 2002). This to a common understanding is an indication of male dominance which still takes centre stage when it comes to exercising democratic rights and this has brought about low female participation in political and decision-making affairs much as there is political freedom.

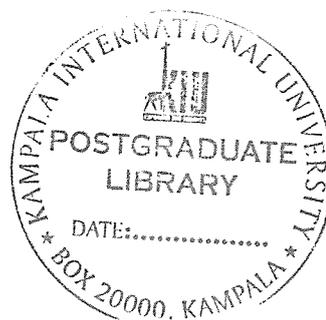
4.2.1 Economic Decision-making

Women under the patriarchal system find it not a surprise for men to be the main decision makers at the household, community and national levels in Uganda and elsewhere in the world over today. Since the 1980's Uganda has gained positive image from both the local and international community as a country with a fast recovering economy. Thus there was reason to celebrate its several achievements (Kwesiga, 2002). Moreover, the country is credited in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa region largely due to its level of gender awareness and efforts to address the wide spread gender disparities.

This international image however should not act as a mask. In practical terms, the gender gap has not been narrowed to some extent. When assessed critically, levels of access to and control of productive resources, education, employment and other decision-making issues, these clearly demonstrate the differences in opportunities for men and women. As put forward by one analyst, Ssenkumba that;

“to many Ugandans, the widespread conception mainly held by the outsiders that their country is an oasis of stability economic progress and democracy is a frustrating mirage. From those without privileged protection from the unilateral exercise of governmental authority, however enlightened this authority may appear to be this image of Uganda as an arena of boundless political opening, relentless economic progress is grossly deceptive” (Ssenkumba, 1998).

One basic issue to be noted in the Ugandan politics and the involvement of women in such political and decision-making positions is that, Uganda is a patriarchal society, where by it is always the men who are in dominant positions, and this kind of arrangement affects the lives of both sexes differently (Kwesiga,2002; Snyder,2000).





Women's power to make economic decision is always reduced if they do not own land or property. They work the land but do not own it or the proceeds from this land. Research indicates that only about 7% of the women own land and decisions about how to utilize it, that is which crops to grow and in which field is the prerogative of the man (Snyder, 2000; Kwesiga, 2002; UNDP, 1996). It is public knowledge though there is little statistical evidence that a man may often and does stop his wife from selling any farm produce she has grown in case of agricultural areas entirely on her own. The simple reason is that after all he owns the land; and if he allows the sale, he may even do it himself and is free to decide how the income will be spent. As Snyder writes;

'To fail to pay attention to women's economic activities is both morally indefensible and economically absurd' (Snyder, 2000)

Lack of economic freedom and independence has economically crippled women and they have never come out of the vicious cycle of dependence on their partners. It is even right for an employed woman who is well off to fail to buy soap or salt in her home simply because she is not in control of her finances. Poverty which has a human face of 1.3 billion people is common and women in most countries live in it, and 70% of this population is women. The increasing poverty among women is linked to their unequal situation in the labour market and lack of control over their own resources (UNDP, 1996). As Kwesiga, (2002) writes;

'Even a cursory analysis of Uganda's gender profile demonstrates widening gender disparities: a dichotomy between men and women as regards access to productive resources, poverty levels, education, employment opportunities and participation in the political process'' (UNDP, 1997).

4.2.2 Women and Employment decision-making

When it comes to women's employment, some men do not allow their wives to work outside the home. Others even stop them from working. At the work place equally women face oppression in form of sexual abuse from their bosses in return for job opportunities or promotions. Women's free choice of making decisions regarding their work life to some extent is determined by men. There are men who even determine and dictate the nature or type of work their wife must do. Moreover, the employers and organizations also have discriminatory tendencies as regards the employment of female workers. There are those who will or do not like to employ married women, while others only employ the unmarried. From an economic point of view therefore, women do not have the freedom to make economic decisions as the men do and this frustrates their ability to actively engage in the affairs of their countries.

In economic decision making, women face workload hazards. In developing countries, much of the work in society goes unrecognized and unvalued. Most of this work is done by women. In industrial countries, about two thirds of women's total work time but only a third of men's work is unrecorded (UNDP, 1996). Women in most countries do more work than men. Evidence shows that women in developing countries tend to carry an even larger share of the work load than those women in industrial countries (about 13%), an average higher than men's share, and in rural areas about 20% higher.

4.2.3 Women and land ownership

The Ugandan Women's organizations joined the Uganda Land Alliance (a civil society coalition) in 1997 and conducted a research nation-wide on women's land ownership





rights. They demonstrated the prevalence of the tragedy of widows being forced off their homesteads by their husband's families. They also argued in favour of what became known as the spousal co-ownership amendment - that without the wife's consent or financial gain in the transaction, husbands could no longer sell family land (Forti, 2005).

The relentless lobbying of women's civil society organizations gained the support of some women Members of Parliament who championed the amendment in Parliament. The amended clause on spousal co-ownership and land used for daily sustenance of the family was tabled and passed before Parliament on 25 June 1998 as Forti writes;

"Where land is occupied as a home and, where land is used, it should belong to husband and wife. In a polygamous situation [...] where the wives work on the same piece of land, they shall hold the land jointly with the husband" (Forti, 2005).

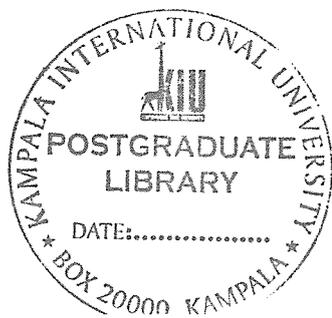
The amended clause was unanimously accepted during parliamentary debate as (Forti 2005) writes. However, when it was published, to the surprise of all people, the co-ownership clause had mysteriously disappeared altogether from the Land Act. After months, official records justified the omission on the basis of procedural irregularities in the way the amendment to the clause had been tabled in Parliament which disqualified it from appearing in the Act. Eventually, President (Yoweri Museveni) admitted that he had personally intervened to deletion of the amendment, to the justification that the clause would more appropriately belong under the pending domestic relations bill.

In light of the current thin likelihood that the DRB was even going to be tabled in Parliament and despite several attempts to reintroduce the clause in subsequent amendments of the Land Act in 2003, the co-ownership clause was as good as "lost" as

(Kwesiga, 2002; Forti, 2005). Finally, it was even explicitly brought forward by high government officials, that the clause would be an impeachment to the development of the private sector in Uganda and to speedy transaction over the selling of land, and ultimately to the disadvantage of the country's development. This indicates that the sale of family property like land by husbands without the consent of the woman is justifiable since she does not have the right to own such properties or the simple excuse that she is part of her husband's property.

Such a judgment confirms, if anything at all, that as long as national laws and law reform organisations are in line with capitalist and ultra-liberalist thinking combined with dominant or could we say dictatorial tendencies among those we would regard as light for women; then indeed the process of implementation is smoothly enacted and effectively enforced, but as soon as any social oriented concept, with concrete implications for questioning power structures and social inequalities, is trying to make its way through the national legislative processes that aim at addressing the concerns of both men and women, then it is effectively rejected and for this reason women will always be treated unequally regarding their right to economic decision-making including ownership of family assets.

Lack of access to and control over resources by women in sub-Saharan Africa has been identified by numerous studies as the single recurrent cause of gender inequality across the African continent. As in many countries, land in Uganda is the most important factor of production and Ugandan women play a central role in the agricultural output. While women are responsible for 60 % of cash crop production and 80% of food crops, only 7



% of registered landowners in Uganda are women. Women are not given the rightful freedom to own land and other family assets, they continue to struggle in all sectors of the economy and enjoying their property rights becomes through struggle as well.

4.2.4 Women and Political decision-making in Uganda

Respect for the concept of Human Rights is one of the major characteristics of politics in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries, and one of the few moral visions most people and nations strive to achieve all over the world today (CEDAW). As a key element therefore, universality is a major vision of human rights and the mechanisms designed to actualize them are supposed to be equally available to both women and men. However, there is a sizable gap between the two parties as far as the culture of patriarchy, dominance, abuse and discrimination still prevails among our modern societies. It is common knowledge that women witness discrimination against them on political, social, economic and cultural aspects due to the male dominance characters and women on this ground are not allowed to make decisions concerning the politics of their country, as (Tamale, 2003) writes that;

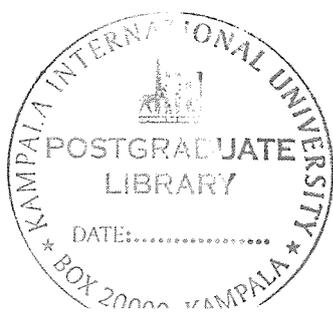
“We are all aware of the widespread and multi-faceted backlash against women’s rights in this country. The gains that the women’s organizations have achieved, especially in the last two decades, face a real danger of being lost. The severe backlash against our rights can be gauged from the rhetoric emanating from the corridors of power, as well as from the various memoranda submitted to the Constitutional Review Commission. There are hundreds of proposals to scrap sex-quotas and the policy of affirmative action. The kind of hostility, intolerance and attacks to feminism was well captured in the reactionary rhetoric of one MP Nsubuga Nsambu when he referred to the domestic relations bill as “a nuisance,” “a vexation,” “a fuss,” “displeasure,” “a serious bore”; he urged all responsible men not to honor it” (Tamale, 2003).



The domestic relations bill, which seeks to rearrange the dynamics of the dysfunctional traditional family by recognizing the rights and contributions of the female partner in this basic institution of our society, represents a huge threat to patriarchy and to men's power and dominance over women. It is not surprising that women will get stiff resistance from male politicians who wish to power. Oppression is oppression whether it takes place at the national level or in the family. True democracy is not restricted to the level of government but permeates all socio-political institutions, including the family, women and the vulnerable groups to take part in it like men (Tamale, 2003).

Women's right to vote furthermore and admission into politics and the recognition of their voting right is and should be the first prerequisite of their political participation but this has been recognized just of recent and yet to be finished, (Tomasevski,, 1999).History depicts that, women have been granted the right to vote only in the last 30 years and to engage in active politics. Moreover, from recent elections in some countries like the DRC, Egypt among others, it was the very first time for most women to exercise their democratic right of voting which indicates that women are still struggling for their rights and freedoms. Political decision-making for women has almost remained a dream that will never come true in most African countries.

In Uganda, the 1970's and early 1980's witnessed a lot of political upheavals and socio-cultural instabilities, gross violations of human rights, women and children were always the immediate victims. Women had no say over the decision- making process of the country and in fact there were no general elections especially during the dictatorial regimes of Idi Amin, which did not allow people to exercise their political and voting



rights in the country. The regimes in other words affected the democratization process in Uganda. People were forced to seek asylum in other countries for their lives and the politics of Uganda at that time was generally male dominated.

The formal right to vote is the essential prerequisite for political participation but much more is needed to make women's political participation more effective. Most countries that got their independence in the late 20th century gave women the right to vote only when men got it. In other words, before this period, women in most African countries were not allowed to exercise their political rights like the right to vote and be voted into public offices and they were only expected to keep and look after their homes and other domestic affairs. This kind of mentality did not give women any chance to participate in life outside their homes and their roles in the civil society. They were denied the democratic and other rights and freedoms they are to enjoy by provisions of laws in the respective countries.

When it comes to the enjoyment of their rights and participation in different political, economic, social and cultural activities, research conducted by various people indicates that, women do not enjoy the rights and freedoms to which they are entitled by the mere fact that they are female (Tomasevski, (1999). International human rights standards and procedures are perceived to be gender-neutral. However, this neutrality often amounts in practice to a disregard of women's human rights in Uganda and other parts of the world. Women have learnt from these experiences that their needs and interests as well as their rights are neither automatically recognized, nor guaranteed unless they articulate them and fight for them. The most important tool to be used here is the existing knowledge



which is known or not known by most of the women all over Africa and the globe in general.



The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the UN fourth World conference on Women in September 1995, confirmed women’s rights as Human rights and the human rights of women and the girl child as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The platform underlined the human rights implications of violence against women, particularly in armed conflicts and focused on violation of the rights of women which eventually resulted into refugee inflows and vulnerability of women, (Byrnes A, et’ al, 1996) However, the Beijing platform in most cases remained on paper and the reality still remains that women do not enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms as the law demands in Uganda and across Africa.

4.2.5 Women and Political Freedom in Uganda

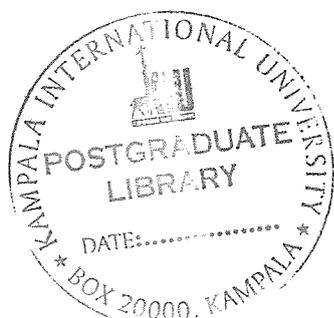
Women in Uganda do feature on the political scene in varying degrees. It is observed that gender imbalances exist in the political leadership positions in Uganda and at other decision-making levels (Tamale, 1999). For example among the top decision-makers in the country, women comprise only 18%. Furthermore, few women are seen to be active in policy formulation and implementation. The sole reason for this being the traditional social and gender roles dictated by society that separates women’s roles from those of men. Women are expected to be home makers and keepers while men are expected to engage in life outside the home.

There is insignificant participation of women in political and decision-making institutions in Uganda inspite of open political windows in the late 1980's and the Affirmative Action policies by the current government to uplift the profile of women. This implies that the concerns of importance to the wellbeing of women and the enhancement of the quality of their lives are determined by administrative structures in which they have been inadequately represented. The realities of women remain marginalized since the factor of numbers is not catered for. This clearly implies that the majority of the population of women still remains backwards and do not contribute favorably to debates that impact on their existence, (Arise: a women's development magazine issue (Number 30, July 2001).

Women's political struggle for freedom continues to be witnessed even at present. Their political power is often underrated not only in Uganda but in other parts of the world as well, yet they contribute the majority of votes that give political power to representatives both male and female. Women's voices need to be heard, they should be active participants and not passive observers in the political arena in the country. This has to involve not only one or two women, but the full and active participation of women in politics since this is significant to influence decisions relating to their status and the realization of meaningful development in the country, (Arise,2001: No.30).

4.3 Obstacles to women's political decision-making in Uganda

Despite the availability of human rights laws at international, regional and national levels, there are still a number of challenges that make it difficult for women especially in both peaceful and in situations of armed conflicts to enjoy their rights and to participate



actively in the politics and decision-making issues of their countries. These among others are discussed below;

Illiteracy and Ignorance about women's rights

Low levels of education, particularly amongst women, continue to impede and thwart the respect and promotion of women's rights and their ability to participate fully in the political decision-making of the country. More women are illiterate with an illiteracy rate of 55.1% as opposed to 36.5% for men. Illiteracy affects the ability of citizens to compete and thus defend their rights. Illiteracy combined with patriarchy tendencies provides a very unfavourable ground for advocating for women's rights and issues affecting them. Women themselves have become more vulnerable due to high illiteracy levels that, they have ignored critical issues affecting them. The rural woman for instance does not know what is meant by the term women's human rights protection and anything to do with addressing women's problems.

Poverty

The high level of poverty among women and other community members is an obstacle in ensuring that women are able to compete and canvass for votes for instance when it comes to general elections. Majority of women and men in conflict areas alone live in abject poverty due to lack of support to rebuild their lives. As a mechanism of attaining some security and support for the family, women often go with those who promise to give them financial and physical security and they end up forgetting the critical issues



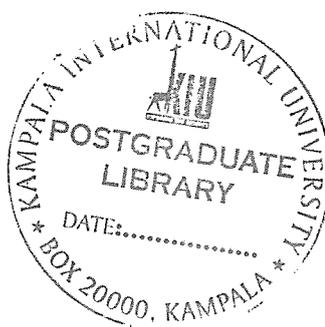
that affect women in society, by giving in for petty items like money, material valuables among others in return for sex.

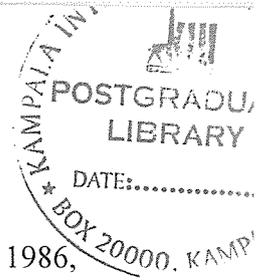
Cultures

Some cultural practices and beliefs are not conducive for the observance of human rights especially women's human rights, for instance wife battering. Patriarchy, for example has been one of the major obstacles to the realization of women's contribution to political development in most developing countries like Uganda. In situations of armed conflict women are further marginalized and sexually abused since they are viewed as sexual objects. The role of women is underestimated and that is why women are not included in decision-making issues in the country.

Poor Prioritization

There is a high level of poor prioritization on the part of government in the allocation of resources. In most cases the budget for defense is always two or three times higher than that of health and agriculture, which are more or very essential to every day living. Much as it is important to have a well facilitated military force to protect the citizen's lives including both women and men there must be a balance with the basic services that benefit the people they are supposed to protect can enjoy. For women who have lived in camps for the past 20 years in Northern Uganda for example, without enjoying any peace they do not see the relevance of such a high budget.





4.4 The NRM Government and Women's Political participation in Uganda

Since the National Resistance Movement (NRM) administration take over power in 1986, Uganda has been operating under the movement political arrangement which was to accommodate all citizens regardless of political inclination, tribe, religion, sex or social class. The affirmative action policies adopted in the country through quotas created reserved seats for women made their way in the Ugandan political scene in 1986 (Tamale, 2003).

It is true that, the status of women in this country has made some leaps in certain spheres of society in the last twenty years. For instance, women are more visible in formal decision-making institutions both at the national and local government levels, Some people will suggest that women's improved status happened under the movement systems as opposed to the multiparty era that prevailed prior to 1986.

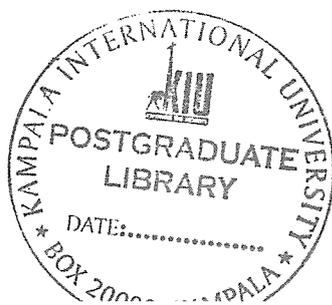
Many national and international players have advocated on the issues of women's rights and their participation in all spheres of development especially since the first Women's Conference held in Mexico in 1975 through the 1985 Nairobi conference to Beijing 1995. Uganda has ratified and signed treaties and conventions that provide for women's rights and affirmative action for all groups, (Nakaweesi, 2003). These include among others; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. The government of Uganda is also party to key declarations made such as the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action. All these conventions and covenants have similar principles

that promote equality and non-discrimination as well as highlighting the need for women to participate in politics and decision-making in African countries.

Although the policies of the NRM leadership take some credit in creating an enabling environment for accelerating women's progress towards their participation, empowerment and emancipation to actively engage in the affairs of the country, several other forces have brought about a significant increase in women's numbers to top positions in the country today (Tamale, 2003). For instance globalization, pressure from the women's movement, past political experiences and opportunities among others have contributed greatly to women's greater participation in decision-making and leadership positions in Uganda today.

This however does not mean that women are not vulnerable to discrimination against tendencies against them created by patriarchy tendencies among the men in the political affairs. The vulnerability of such gender policies that are not backed by strong political will is evident to most Ugandan women today. The one fact here is that the Ugandan state (whether under Museveni's movement system or Obote's pluralist system) has primarily acted in the interests of self-preservation as a patriarchal institution with men firmly holding the substantive reigns of power and authority while ignoring women and their contribution to national development of Uganda.

Without advancing women's strategic interests at all, the NRM administration gained the support of women legislators and councilors by offering them access to the political world of male power. The patriarchal structures and institutions within which politicians operate have themselves not any difference either. So, basically what we have are women





in power without power! Moreover, the new political spaces created by the top-down affirmative action policy introduced by the NRM have, in a way, proved to be nothing more than sites of accommodation and control by the state (Tamale, 1996).

It should be borne in mind that, although the Ugandan government under the NRM leadership has been seen as a champion in the affairs of women by the international community and other local individuals, there are and remain loopholes in the way things are done in this country, especially when it comes to gender related issues. Like (Ssenkumba, 1998) noted, this international image has only been a cover up story to convince the international and donor community so as to get in more Aid in the name of helping address the needs of women and fund women initiated NGO's and projects.

The principle of individual merit is preferred to party affiliation when one runs for any elective political office under the NRM arrangement. As noted by Tamale, (2004), adherence to the idea of individual merit was generally maintained in the initial years of this arrangement, but it was soon overtaken by the political agendas of the subsequent years. Today, the government even openly backs the movement candidates and openly campaigns for them in any elections. So whether the candidate is a female or male, as long as he/she is not on the movement side, such a candidate is bound to suffer.

Affirmative Action was in Uganda through the quotas. Reserved seats for women made their appearance on the Ugandan political scene in 1986. These policies were aimed at improving the profile of women in the politics of the country, and this was done through offering them reserved seats in parliament, and appointing them to do jobs that initially were male dominated. However, these affirmative policies did not do much to improve

women's status in the political arena. In what appeared to be a testing of the waters as (Tamale, 2003) put it that;

“ the NRM first experimented with one mandatory seat for women on the executive councils of LC's at all levels of the five tier system. Thus females were guaranteed to fill the posts of secretary for women on the nine member executive councils of LC's. However, most executive councils throughout the nation deliberately reduced the role of women to nurturing and caring for their families. They were expected to serve tea to other councilors, take care of the social aspects of council work and have little to do with local politics ” (Tamale, 2004).

In Uganda there is a view that women have gained tremendously in political, economic, social and cultural affairs due to the affirmative action policies, which has established gender as a national concern (Kwesiga and Tripp, 2002; Tamale, 1999). This has stimulated more women into contesting for political posts and leadership in various national programmes. The affirmative action programme is embedded in the constitution of the land, Article 32(i) and due to this programme, women are slowly being accepted as legislatures compared to the earlier regimes. However, a lot of effort is still required to woo women into politics and leadership roles in this government and above all there is need to eliminate the obstacles in women's ways.

Since the 1980's when the NRM government came into power, women's numbers in the political and leadership positions have been increasing ever than before. This ranges from local council through the highest leadership positions like vice presidency position. More over, under the NRM government (leadership), there have been large numbers of women in parliament which is an indication of success of women's efforts in lobbying for greater representation. However some if not most of these women feel that women



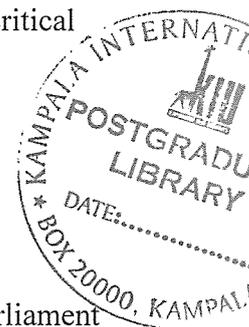
parliamentarians have been constrained and suppressed, that they cannot raise the critical issues that affect women. As Tripp and Kwesiga, 2002) describe it;

“Our voices have been hijacked at the highest organs, at parliament. Our voice there has been killed”.

Furthermore, there are those who even argue that the affirmative action seats in parliament have created a group of legislators that is more loyal to the NRM government that they have completely forgotten the cause of women’s emancipation and desire for greater political freedom., much as the political windows have been open (Tamale, 1998; 1999; 2003). It is seen that, most female parliamentarians owe their positions especially when appointed to top positions, to the NRM (movement) leadership under President Museveni instead of the women’s organizations and efforts (Kwesiga and Tripp, 2002) argue that;

“many women parliamentarians owe their positions to the movement which helped them get elected. Some who are extremely loyal to Museveni are understandably less likely to take up women’s causes that might force them to oppose his movement. Women who have been appointed to top positions in the Cabinet and ministries found themselves silenced around key women’s issues even issues that were dear to their heart’.

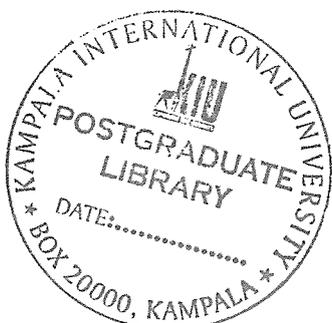
In the general elections of 2001 a number of incidences occurred in which women politicians who were opposed to the third term project were subjected to untold forms of violence, abuses and intimidations. Those who continued to be outspoken and were in key positions were warned, demoted or even thrown out of their positions. Miria Matembe former Integrity and ethics Minister and Winnie Byanyima who formally worked at the NRM secretariat are very good examples who saw their exit by losing the positions in which they were, because of being too outspoken to the third term and corruption issues in the movement government respectively. Those who were upcountry continued to face



intimidation and were at other times threatened by their husbands by being thrown out of the marriage if they voted for other candidates other than the NRM candidates (Tamale, 1998, Tripp and Kwesiga, 2002).

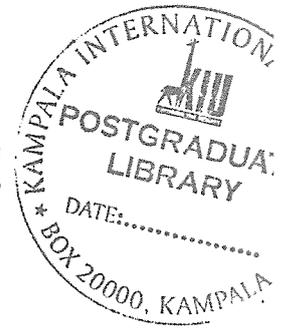
In Uganda, it should be remembered that some instances have seen women's political participation being frustrated by key NRM members like the president himself. In the 2001 presidential and parliamentary elections for example, three prominent women candidates were singled out by the president and the movement secretariat as targets of physical and emotional violence directed against their agents, supporters and themselves as well. Due to this the women's association (ACFODE) protested the treatment of these women candidates, arguing that this could grossly affect and undermine the future capable women in Uganda who would participate in politics.

The issue of women's exclusion from top leadership and political positions should be traced right back from the time the NRM came into power (1986). The NRM administration which became the first post colonial government in Uganda to take proactive measures to the inclusion women in formal politics, due to the affirmative action for women, however was not different from the pre-independence (patriarchal) old boys as (Tamale, 1999) referred to them. One interesting thing to note about the NRM is that women were excluded from top leadership positions right from the beginning of this government. This can be seen from the way the ministry of women which was once a full ministry was reduced to a department. The NRM government right from the start came with ten (10) point programme which were the principles that would guide the running of



the government. It should however be noted that in all the ten points the word women was not seen anywhere as Tamale puts it;

‘How can we account for the drastic changes favouring women introduced by the NRM? Were the NRM males fundamentally different from the patriarchal old boys?, Interestingly however, women did not feature at all in the NRM Ten-point programme, which stated its original guiding philosophy’, (Tamale, 1999; 1998).



The government (NRM) in the late 1980's embarked on the introduction of affirmative action policies. These policies that were introduced under this government (NRM) in the late 1980's to uplift the political and decision-making profile of women should not be viewed as having improved women's lives. Women continue to struggle despite the introduction of these policies and for this reason they have been ineffective and as earlier on pointed out by Tamale;

‘Indeed beyond the affirmative action policies, there is little evidence to suggest that men in the NRM leadership are fundamentally different from the pre-1986 old boys in showing a real commitment to women's emancipation. Examples demonstrate that the policies of NRM only pay lip services to women's emancipation’, (Tamale, 1998; 1999; 2003).

The principles upon which cabinet and state ministerial appointments are based clearly also demonstrate that much as the NRM government preaches non sectarian and non partisan practices in the governance system, there is still much to be desired. In the 1996 post election cabinet appointments, there was a clear indication that major differences existed between the men and women. Only six out of sixty two cabinet members were women, while in the recent cabinet appointments also indicates that there are still major disparities concerning the appointments of women and men in key

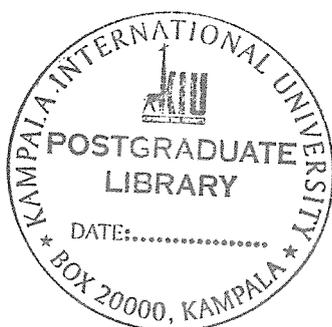
positions. Out of twenty five cabinet positions, only seven women were appointed and seven in the state ministerial positions out of forty four posts.

This clearly indicates that the struggle for women concerning political freedom and leadership is still persistent much as the political windows are open. This will require more decades ahead before total liberation and freedom for women is achieved in Uganda and Africa at large. As Tamale (1999) puts it, that such acts prompted comments from female politicians as;

'the President who has been a champion for the cause of equality between men and women has let us down this time. Women have contributed a lot as mothers and producers in this country; surely our president can do better. He fought for five years and women supported him. Ten (Twenty) years on as president, women have been in the forefront supporting him. How then can he start slipping backwards? (Byanyima, 1996, The crusader; Tamale, 1999).

The other side of the NRM government and women Empowerment in Uganda

On other fronts however, Uganda as a country under the NRM government leads the way as far as uplifting the profile of women is concerned. Whereas in the 1980's there was only one woman in parliament and not more than four in the whole cabinet, this has greatly changed today. For instance today, 25 percent (more than 77) of the parliamentary seats are held by women, which increased up from 18 percent after the 1989 and 1996 general and local council elections. One remarkable achievement for women under the NRM regime is also that they do feature right from the lowest local councils in the village up to the highest level politics in the country unlike in the earlier



regimes, women are given an opportunity to take part and participate in the political activities today.



The government (NRM) came to recognize the role played by women in issues regarding local, national and international political and other development issues. The status of women each day gains momentum, and they continue to be seen as partners in political participation in Uganda under the NRM government. The introduction of the Affirmative Action policies in the early 1990's and the inclusion of women during the period of drafting of the 1995 constitution of the Republic of Uganda clearly indicates that the present government had plans earlier for women even when the women activists had not started addressing their concerns before the government. This has enabled more and more women to come up to join formal politics in the country.

In the effort to politically empower women and promote participatory democracy through collective decision-making at all levels, the present government established decentralized political authorities or systems in 1987. These were known as RC systems which was a six-tier structure at every administrative unit. That is, from the village, parish, sub county, county and district levels. Through this structure, the local people elected their leaders, controlled and managed their affairs. The participation of women in this structure was mandatory. Here the RCs stature of 1987 provided for the post of secretary for women in all the nine member councils and committees at all the levels of the RC structure. Women also competed for the other eight posts on the committee with men (Stiftung, 1994).

Currently, Uganda's deputy speaker of parliament is a woman who even retained the seat for the second time after the elections for the position of speaker and deputy

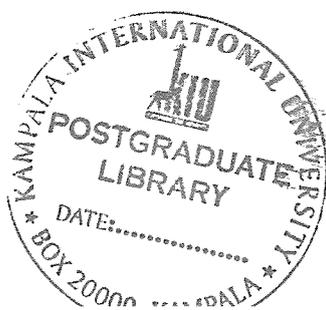
speaker. This gives a good picture that women are able and they can equally perform well like men if they are given the opportunity, and there are other women in key positions that were appointed under this NRM government (Tripp and Kwesiga, 2002).

The growing numbers of women in politics in the Ugandan political scene can be said to be one of the biggest changes and achievements that Mr. Museveni's government has fostered. This has largely however been due to pressure from women's associations and organizations, and as Tripp and Kwesiga describe it;

'Some (women) feel that, the pro-women stance of Museveni's Movement is not genuine and that it has been adopted largely to curry favour with women voters''.

Although the motivations and encouragement to women by the NRM for many of these changes have been tremendous, the increased numbers and presence of women in positions of power has had a significant impact on the general acceptance of women as public figures and leaders. Some researchers even put it that in assessing the accomplishments of women's organizations many women leaders now had a voice and they were being heard, even though it was a continued struggle to have their issues addressed.

Women have made inroads under the NRM government into other areas of government appointments. Since 1996, the head of Public Service Commission has been a woman (Florence Mugasha). Women in addition occupy 44 percent of the positions in the public service commission. For about 15 years for example, the press secretary of the president has been a woman (Hope Kivengere), the first woman to direct CID is Elizabeth Kuteesa, the Supreme Court has about 14

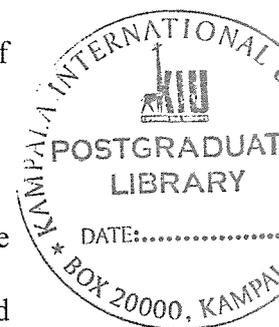


percent female judges and women hold 25 percent of all positions in the court of appeal, 26 percent in the high court and they represent 30 percent of chief magistrates (Tripp, 2000; Tripp and Kwesiga, 2002).

Women through the affirmative action policies have also held one third of the local council seats, and this has put Uganda on the fore front as a leader and champion in the world in female representation in local government. In the 2001 general elections, Uganda had 18 female ministers (26%) out of 69 Cabinet Ministers while 7 females are on the Cabinet and 7 in the state ministerial positions. This number though still very low really indicates that the NRM government considered women's issues seriously.

Today, women are not only found in the traditional ministries of education, culture and gender ministries, but have been appointed to cabinet positions too. There is a woman state Minister of defense (Ruth Nankabirwa), a former state Minister for internal affairs (Sarah Kiyingi), a former state Minister for Justice and Constitutional affairs (Janat Mukwaya) among others. It should be bone in mind that the above posts initially were held by men, but women's occupancy of them clearly shows that the government has contributed a lot to uplifting them.

There is widespread acceptance of women and their political roles in Uganda today, unlike the pre-1986 regimes much as the political environment was secure for them to some extent. A survey carried out by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems in the year 2000 indicates that, 80% of women in Uganda were registered voters and 75% participated in the 1996 general elections. In this



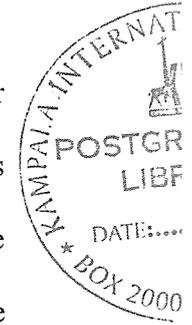
survey, at least 86 % women and 75% men felt it is very vital for women to be in top government positions while 95% women and 91%menfelt it was necessary for women to be members of parliament, while 49% men and 66% women thought a woman can and should be president of Uganda one day (Breton et.al, 2000; Tripp and Kwesiga, 2002).

With the empowerment policies of the NRM government through the affirmative action programmes, women have successfully pushed for greater acceptance of female leadership and participation in other areas that traditionally were not open to them (Tripp, 2000). Gender specific organizations have seen greater numbers of women and this is one way the critical issues affecting women are brought to the table. Hence today, women have a presence that has not been evident in the past in non gender based organisations, religious institutions, businesses and in general the workplace.

4.5 Challenges to Women's Political Participation in Uganda and Africa in general

Although the atmosphere for them in the political arena is not very conducive as expected, in the past two or so decades, women have made landmark achievements in their struggle for political independence and equality before the law in Uganda and Africa at large. Since the 1980's the country (Uganda) has been recovering from the brutal and dictatorial regimes of the Late Idi Amin, and there are and still remains a number of constraints to women's complete freedom from oppression and dominance by their male counter part.





Research indicates that the possibilities for the advancement of women and their inclusion into the political issues in Uganda began to fall back in the around mid 1990's after the NRM government led by President Museveni began to face a drop in the massive support it had enjoyed after it (NRM) first came to power. At first the government was broad based, anti-sectarian and promised to women heaven on earth and their activism in the country (Tripp and Kwesiga, 2002). When the NRM government began to be more constricted due to rampant corruption and as women's issues were not being addressed as was expected, most women activists began to question the government's agenda for women, (Tripp and Kwesiga, 2002).

This was the time women who were especially critical of the rampant and high rates corruption that was swallowing up the government, the third term project and who raised more issues that affected women's lives got sacked from their positions and even expelled from the NRM party (or was it a party then?). Women politicians, activists and decision-makers encounter the following setbacks in their efforts to bring about democracy, good governance and political liberty in Uganda and the globe at large:

4.5.1 Cultural Barriers

Cultural beliefs, practices and traditions on the African remain one of the largest and biggest obstacles to equitable treatment of women, whether they are politicians or rural agriculturalists. Most cultures in fact train women to become good mothers, caretakers and homemakers rather than politicians, professionals and academicians as Tamale states (1999);

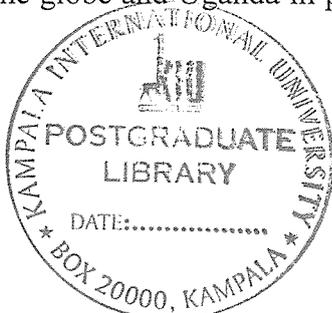
"... policies such as affirmative action provide the space for women's entry into politics and a potential for change. But the contradictions of implementing such policies under existing patriarchal structures ... [means that]... hens may begin crowing but they will continue to lay and hatch from eggs (the old patriarchal order)". Female parliamentarians are subjected to sexual harassment from their colleagues, ridicule in parliamentary debates and the media, the burden of double and triple duty, and the reminder that for most of them their presence in parliament is tokenism''.

Although elected as women members of parliament (MP), once in the House they are admonished that they do not represent women per se, but must represent both men and women. Yet they are only heard (and largely ignored) when they debate women's issues. A case in point is the passing of the Land Act in (1998). The then MP Miria Matembe lobbied for and succeeded in passing an amendment to include provision for co-ownership by women of the matrimonial residence (a major accomplishment, as women customarily do not own or have rights to land).

The Land Act was promulgated, but the amendment was omitted. Likewise, patriarchal opposition to the reform of the Domestic Relations Bill (largely in relation to polygamy) has stalled the passage of that bill through Parliament. In spite of the successes of women in Uganda, tradition dies hard and constrains them such that they find it difficult to air out their views and grievances. Whether the presence of women in politics in Uganda is at the pleasure of the NRM or sustainable in the long run is still open to debate (Tamale, 1999; Tripp and Kwesiga, 2002).

4.5.2 Top Positions

Women are poorly represented in top positions of government in different countries across the globe and Uganda in particular. Currently, of the 159 UN member states, only



six (3.8)% of the top positions were headed by women at the end of 1990 and these included countries like Philippines, Ireland, Nicaragua, Norway, Dominica and Iceland.(United Nations, 1991). Only 3.5% of the world's Cabinet Ministerial positions in about 93 countries all over the world are occupied by women. This is a clear manifestation that much as the political arena in many countries are open, and freedom to take part in the politics of different countries has been advocated for, women have and still are under represented

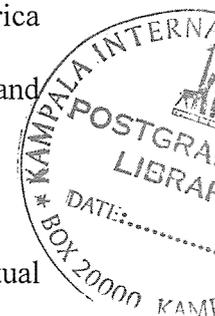
In Uganda for example, it is clearly seen that, most women in government leadership positions are in such ministries as education, culture, social welfare and women's affairs, which are primarily regarded as traditional ministries. Moreover, even in the social fields, women average only 12-14% of the positions in developed countries and this excludes Europe and the Soviet Union, 9% in the sub-Saharan Africa and 6% or less in the rest of the world. Overall statistics therefore indicate that women are under or least represented in Africa, Asia and the Pacific (United Nations, 1991).

4.5.3 Political gap

Women lack the political power to attract the attention of men, the electorate and the general public as regards their contribution to national development in different countries. This lack of women's political power is a worldwide injustice. The share of women in parliament still does not reach the level of 30% in most countries of the world as advocated for by the United Nations by the year 2000. Presently in Africa in general and Uganda in particular, there is a huge gap between men and women in leadership positions. In Africa alone for example up to June 1991, a survey indicated that women



represented 12.2% of the Ugandan parliament; in Zimbabwe women comprised 12% of its members of parliament, in Tanzania 11% were women, Malawi had 9.8%, while Namibia had 6.9% women in the legislative wing of the government. Women in Africa comprised 27% of the continent's parliamentary seats hence making the political and economic gap very wide between the two groups much as there is political freedom.



Despite some improvements on the issue of equality between women and men, the actual participation of women at the highest levels of national and international decision-making has not changed significantly since the time of Beijing (1985). Women's equal participation with men in political processes, decision-making and priority-setting at all levels is not only an inherent right, but serves to ensure that policies and programmes address both men's and women's needs. Studies have even shown that genders change when women enter into politics. However there are still constraints for them (women) to actively commit themselves to political activities.

4.5.4 Denial of the right to vote

All human rights including civil, economic, political, cultural and social as well as the right to development are universal, indivisible, interdependent and inalienable by the fact that the rights bearers are all human beings and were born naturally with these rights. The human rights of women and their right to vote are therefore supposed to be an inalienable, indivisible and an integral part of the universal human rights as stipulated in the international instruments and conventions, The Beijing Platform for Action, 1995, para.213). Women all over the globe and particularly in Uganda have however not lived to see these declarations, treaties, conventions and articles implemented to the best of

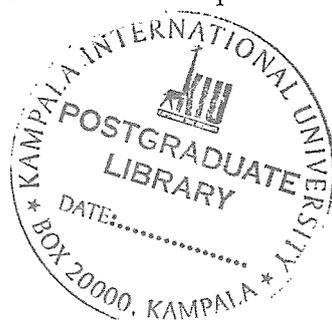
their interests. These declarations and documents have remained paper work and in conference rooms where they were discussed some two to three decades ago.

Much as women make up at least half of the electorate in almost all the countries and have attained the right to vote and hold office in almost all the member states of the UN, they continue to be seriously under represented as candidates for public office. The traditional working patterns of many political parties and the government structures continue to be barriers to women's participation in public life. Women may be discouraged from seeking political office by discriminatory attitudes and practices, family and child care responsibilities and the high cost of seeking and holding public office, (Beijing Platform for Action, paragraph 182).

4.5.5 Financial constraints

Women in Uganda and most African countries lack proper financial bases, training and most of them are illiterate. Due to the African culture where most parents are more interested in educating the boy child than the girl child, women have remained behind the academic sphere and for this reason most them find it very difficult to participate in policies and programmes that affect them simply because they cannot address some of these issues. Once they are illiterate, they cannot have access to better paying jobs and they remain financially dependent on the men.

The perennial problem of insufficient funds for the implementation of their programmes, policies and issues has led to dependency of these women on the donors (Snyder and Kwesiga, 2002), in Tripp and Kwesiga (eds). The affirmative action policy which has been seen a door way for women emancipation has had little impact and it has been seen



that the NRM leadership men are no longer different from the pre-1986 'old boys' in showing commitment to women emancipation in Uganda. For instance, since the Ministry in charge of women affairs came into force, it has always received very small portion of disbursements from the government coffers a very clear indication that women's activities are under funded in Uganda.



4.5.6 Tokenism and Dependence Syndrome

Women's political participation in Uganda is facing a great challenge. Women's participation in political affairs in some instances is through tokenism by the governments that are mainly ruled by men. In other words there is a high dependence syndrome among the women. For example even when the woman is highly educated and learned, she will still seek for male approval before she does something and this culture has made them to poorly participate in the political and decision making affairs of the nation to the dismay of open political windows for them. This in essence means that there are women in power, without exercise of this power.

4.5.7 Jealousness among men

Most men by nature are very jealous about the presence of their wives in very prominent and key government posts, they think that their wives can easily be engaged in affairs with their political bosses. Men do not allow their wives to attend meetings for fear that they meet other men, thus thwarting women's full engagement into the affairs of their countries and addressing critical issues that affect women (Arise, 13-18 March 2000).

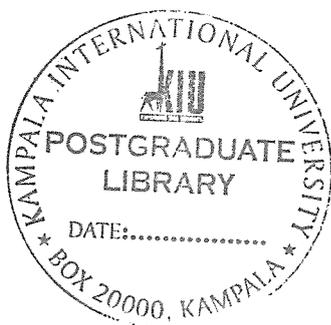
4.5.8 Fear among women and the general population

There is a general tendency of fear among the general population including both women and men. Due to Africa's turbulent history, there is fear that engaging in a pluralist democracy will have repercussions. Historically, multiparty election politics in Uganda and Africa at large have been characterized by name calling, dirty tendencies, mud slinging, use of vulgar languages such as 'you are sick', you are not right and fit for this position and violence that women may not want to engage in due to fear of being persecuted. A notable example is the multiparty elections in 1960's and the 2001 general elections in Uganda in which there were greatest incidents of violence, arrests and detentions and massive abuse of human rights in Uganda and other African countries currently carrying out general elections.

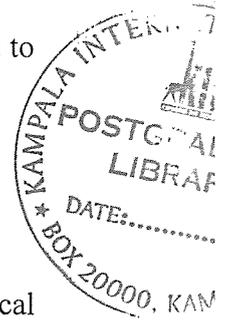
Related to the above are culturally determined factors. By nature, women are shy, lack confidence, have low self-esteem and cannot easily express themselves in public places. This accompanied with low educational levels has contributed greatly to their low performance in political leadership and decision-making positions in Uganda and the rest of the world.

4.5.9 Invisibility of women

Women in most current political parties in Uganda. This invisibility has made the activities they engage in almost invisible. In October 2004, UWONET (a women's network organization in Uganda) had dialogue with different political parties and found out that these parties were not enthusiastic in women occupying important positions in



the party because they have had an experience where many of their own have defected to other political parties.



4.5.10 Inaccessibility to relevant Information

Lack of information about certain critical issues what is meant by Opening up of political windows for women, multiparty political systems, and what is in it for women, will the gains for women under open political windows such as affirmative action be lost, or will women succeed in their efforts of demanding for their rights and freedoms. For instance, consultations undertaken by Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) in 2004 to solicit for Women's minimum demands to political parties and organizations found out that many women at the grassroots levels lacked critical information on pluralist democracy and what women expect to get out of it so that they can make informed decisions and choices. Moreover even in urban centres where we expect women to do much more about their rights and freedoms, it turns out to be the opposite, simply because most women do not get the necessary information about the current issues in time.

4.5.11 Challenge of Domestic workload and political participation

Women's workload causes poor time-keeping and prohibits their effective participation; they are very much taken up by both domestic and non domestic affairs for those who are educated and work outside the home. Research shows that women at least contribute about 13% of the labour for their families yet this is work which is not paid for nor recognized by the governments and neither rewarded by family members who enjoy the efforts brought in by women.

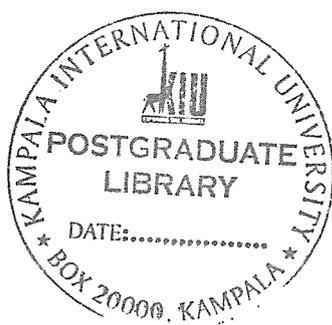
4.5.12 General disrespect of female decision-makers

There is generally lack of respect for women as leaders by both women and men in Uganda and other African countries. Most men do not respect their wives who work outside the home especially in political issues. Others threaten them (women) with divorce such that they are discouraged in taking part in politics for the sake of saving their marriages. If such women go ahead to act contrary to the demands of their husbands, they eventually divorce. Marriage, divorce or becoming widowed affects where women live, and for this reason they (men) do not give their wives due respect as public figures and this has created problems for women leaders.

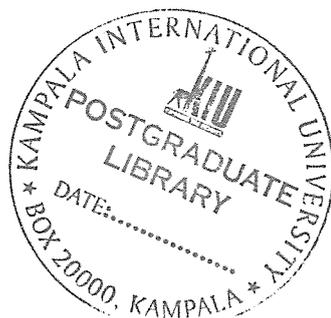
4.5.13 Conclusion

Women like men are able to make decisions in public concerning national issues if they are given the opportunity. They have like men, good leaders and qualities of leadership and also those who are not able to lead and make proper decisions. However cultural values/traditions, male dominance tendencies, and lack of confidence in the women themselves frustrates their ability to become active decision –makers in Uganda today and Africa at large.

Furthermore the statistics openly speak for themselves in terms of gender inequalities and economic related power inequalities at both household and national levels. These inequalities substantially limit the opportunity women would otherwise have to independently guarantee basic elements of their livelihood. Women's economic dependency on their husbands or male counterpart not only limits their choices and access to their socio-economic rights but in situations of domestic violence and abuse



seriously impairs the opportunity that women might have had to break free from the circle of violence. Without property rights and economic power, women simply cannot afford to reach a safer political environment.



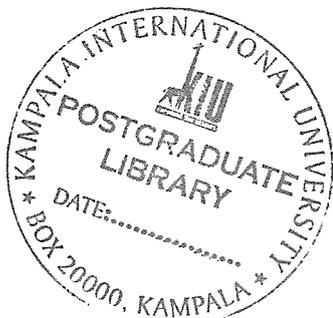
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 SUMMARY

Women in Africa have faced and continue to face so many challenges in their quest, thirst and desire for political freedom and independence. There are so many women's organizations that emerged in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries. Through these organizations, women have come up and organized themselves through their autonomous leadership activities, strategies, financial assistance to fellow women, and other agendas to address the fate of women in the political and other spheres. These organizations have taken up issues that go beyond the concerns of the pre-1986 period in Uganda, and these range from reproductive rights of women, through female political participation and media representation of women such that they can sensitize the public about the critical issues that are affecting women all over the country and the world in general.

The developments in Uganda that women have made in the political arena have been seen in other parts of Africa. Women's organizations that emerged in different parts of Africa have been seen as a pavement for them to address their concerns and raise critical issues that most governments have not been able to take so seriously. Women are organizing themselves locally and internationally, and are networking across the continent in order to come up with a common agenda of how to address the gender issues of inequality and male dominance in the political arena in different countries. They are seeking redress of how they should be included in the highest political and decision-making structures of the governments and to be included in the functioning of the affairs of their countries

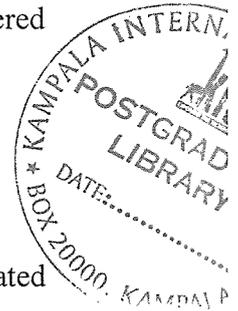


although this has not been achieved overnight but remarkable progress is being registered every other day.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

In most African countries, statistics indicate that gender inequalities and economic related power inequalities at both household and national levels are still very common and directed towards women. These inequalities substantially limit the opportunity women would otherwise have to independently guarantee basic elements of their livelihood through freedom of expression, political participation and decision-making. Women's economic dependency on their husbands not only limits their choices and access to their socio-economic and political rights, but in situations of domestic violence and abuse, it seriously impairs the opportunity that they might have had to break free from the vicious circle of dependency on the men. Without property rights and economic power, women simply cannot afford to achieve a safer environment in the political, social, cultural and economic affairs of their countries.

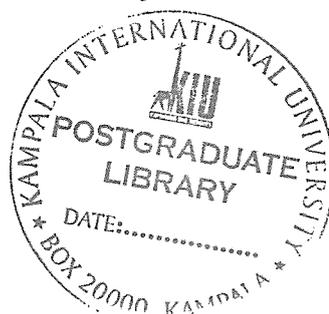
Women have however in the past few months and years broken this dependency circles by being elected to highest political positions like heads of states, prime ministers, Cabinet ministers and other top leadership positions. For instance in Germany, Liberia and Chile and India women have assumed these highest offices which clearly demonstrates their political capabilities. Throughout the world, women are taking steps to improve their rights and increase their freedom and equality before the law with men. This does not mean that things have been moving so smoothly for them, they have suffered problems in their struggle for equality. Women have almost no voice in politics



and decision-making issues. Their human rights are denied. Sexual attacks, violence in the home and even murder threats directed at women in their every day lives, are crimes that women in many parts of the world face yet these crimes go unrecognized, unmentioned and unpunished.

The international community has taken steps to protect and enforce the rights of women. More than twenty-five years ago, the United Nations approved a treaty called the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The nineteen seventy-nine treaty is considered a bill of rights for women. To date, one hundred eighty nations have approved the treaty. But, women in many of these UN member countries are still treated as unequal citizens though their numbers in the political positions is ever increasing. For example the U.N estimates indicate that half a million women die every year while having babies. The number of women and girls in the world infected with H.I.V/AIDS is growing due to lack of proper health care for them. Often this is as a result of sexual attacks, and violence against them, forced labor and human trafficking of young females continue as well as treating them as sex slaves especially in war torn regions.

Religious traditions and beliefs have had a greater influence on women's political and leadership career today. Some religious organizations have neither elevated women to positions of higher authority, nor provided them the avenues for uplifting themselves. In the Middle East Islamic traditions have influenced women's rights to participate in politics for example. The Islamic culture in fact prohibits women from becoming leaders and taking part in what is considered to be male tasks or jobs and this shows that



although women are emerging as winners in their struggle, family ties and religious traditions still burr them from fully engaging in active politics and freedom fighting.

It should also be noted that, most women in Arab nations have a very hard time getting elected to political and leadership offices. In Bahrain for example, thirty-nine women ran for local and national office in two thousand two. However to one's surprise, not a single woman was elected thus indicating that women in some of these countries are still marginalized and the struggle for political independence continues to be a great challenge for them.



5.3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations to this study were divided into three parts. Firstly, it was to the governments in Africa to take the issues of women very seriously, secondly the study came up with general recommendations which were to the public, and the civil society organizations and finally the study provided recommendations to women themselves.

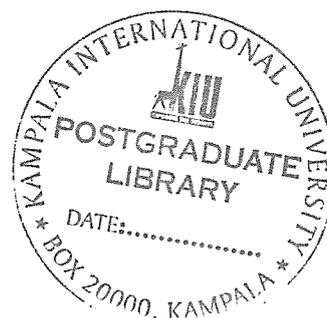
5.3.1 To the Governments

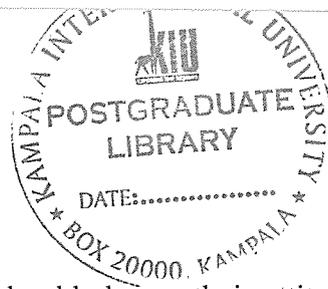
Education of women should be encouraged and prioritized in the first place by the African governments, if they are to participate on equal footing with men in the political activities. Literacy is the backbone of peace, security and democracy in the world today. There is no way the government can be successful when 85 percent of its population cannot read and write. It is therefore recommended for every government in Africa and the world over to come up with education policies that can favour both women and men. Moreover, there is need to eliminate the gender biases as regards the education of both

the girl and boy children since this may affect their performance in the academic career in future.

There is need for the governments of Africa to promote women's leadership skills through workshops, seminars, retreats and these should be organized by these governments themselves. Since in most countries it is always the men who are leading the political parties, women should and (must) be given the opportunity to have resources and to participate as leaders in political life in these countries, and if possible they should be given the freedom to form political parties and interest groups such that they can be able to address their concerns easily with confidence. There is need to put more work into the demand side of participatory involvement of women in governance by African governments.

There must be the willingness expressed by government of including women to top political and leadership positions, and the major responsibility of doing this lies in the hands of the governments. Unless the political will to promote women's participation in policy decision-making positions is there by the governments, Ugandan and African women will remain outside the political decision-making process. Among other things, the government can come up with an official policy, which initiates national programs to include women in political, social and economic decision making. One way to do this is the introduction of affirmative action policies (which in Uganda is already there), there is need to strengthen such policies at least in the present situation where cultural norms are still a barrier to women's participation in public life.





5.3.2 General

In Africa and other parts of the world, male politicians should change their attitudes of perceiving women in negative ways so as to enable women come out of the marginalization cycles to engage in active politics of their countries. Discriminatory attitudes towards women should be priority issues that need to be critically addressed and the governments should establish institutions that can protect the interests of women and their concerns besides women's organizations formed by women themselves. The society and the general public should be sensitized about the gender roles of women and men and how this can be a barriers to women's political career. Above all women should be allowed the freedom to form and join political parties since this will enable them to feel they are part of the decision-making group in their countries.

Women should be given the right and opportunity to own resources and property by the general public. Lack of access to and control over resources by women in sub-Saharan Africa has been identified by numerous studies as the single recurrent cause of gender inequality. As in many countries, land in Uganda is the most important factor of production and Ugandan women play a central role in the agricultural output. While women are responsible for 60 % of cash crop production and 80% of food crops, only 7 % of registered landowners in Uganda are women. The economic situation generated by this lack of economic independence is crucial to the invocation of women's rights and to finding immediate solutions and effective response to such inequalities.

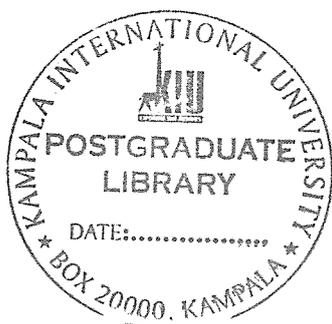
The civil society should work closely with the government in initiating public awareness campaigns to encourage women to participate in political decision making and to expose

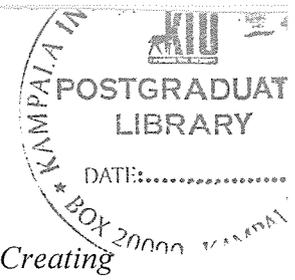
the myths surrounding the issues of discrimination against women. The first step towards this would be to conduct nationwide workshops and seminars on women's participation in politics and decision-making issues in different countries. This will enable emphasis to be put in building the capacity of potential women leaders so that they become well equipped to be able to participate in senior government positions with confidence.

5.3.3 To Women

It is recommended that women should themselves come up and defend their rights. They should come out of the vicious cycle of dependency on men and engage more actively in women's associations and affairs. This should be done through provision of financial assistance by these women to their fellow women and solving critical issues that affect them without referring to men for the solutions. This will provide a favourable ground for these women to venture for other bigger issues that require men's reasoning only.

In Uganda and Africa at large, the new challenges women face especially the constraints imposed on them by an uncertain political environment prove to be very serious limitations on the possibilities for sustained freedom and transformation of women's active political involvement. Ugandan women for example have won the admiration and respect of those who have watched them struggle through enormous difficulties in the past, and there is no doubt that they have the courage and determination as well as the ability to continue on a way that has already made them leaders in advancing women's rights and status in Africa. We should not also forget that once in positions of power, women can make a major difference hence the need to consider them as important people with vision.





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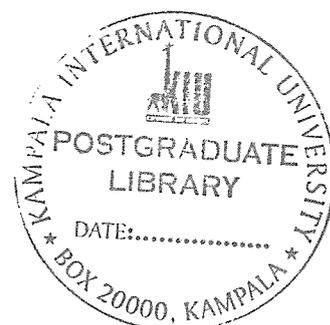
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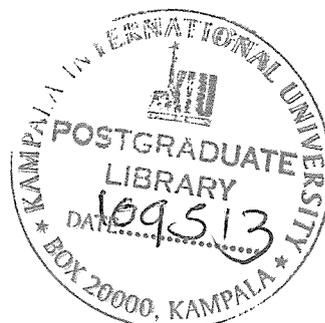
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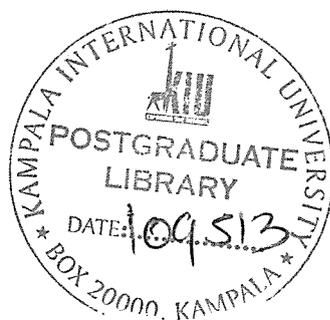


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