

Contributions of Rwanda Gender Equality Policies to the Women Empowerment in Rwanda

Emmanuel NIYONZIMA¹, Eyayu Kasseye Bayu²

¹Pan African University Institute of Governance, Humanities and Social Sciences, Governance and Regional Integration; Yaoundé, Cameroon (ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-4804-1529>)

²Lecturer at University of Gondar, Ethiopia (ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8105-4478>)

Email address: emnionzimal@gmail.com¹, eyasukassa21@gmail.com²

Corresponding author: Emmanuel NIYONZIMA, Emnionzimal@gmail.com

Abstract - This study was conducted in Rwanda with the main purpose of examining the contributions of Rwanda's gender equality policies to women's empowerment. This research solely employed secondary data to analyse the effects of gender equality policies on the empowerment of women in Rwanda. To gather information, many books, journals, newspapers, and other research publications on gender and women's empowerment were examined. This study discovered a significant link between gender equality and women's empowerment in the study area. Gender equality policies, for example, increased the number of women who went to school, increased labour force participation, reduced maternal health risks, raised the national GDP, and promoted human rights. Furthermore, to attain gender equality and increase women's empowerment, the government has adopted numerous policies that have played a significant role in achieving gender equality. Among these initiatives are the formation of the Gender Monitoring Office, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the National Women's Council, and a council for women who are in parliament. Furthermore, the government has implemented various legal instruments to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. They are associated with inheritance, employment, human resources development, human rights, and other spheres of society. Yet, the women in Rwanda have some encounters for full participation in development as well as achieving gender equality, like society norms about gender equality and family violence. For those challenges, the authors would like to recommend that the government increase the mobilisation of citizens about the contribution of women's empowerment and gender equality to sustainable growth, increase the budget for girls' education, and enact new laws for gender-based violence and women's empowerment promotion.

Keywords- gender equality, gender policies, women empowerment, gender and development, gender theories and challenges of gender equality

1. Introduction

The current decades have been characterised by a greater emphasis on gender equality in all aspects of global politics than at any other time in history. This is due to the fact that different research has proven that without women's participation in societal actions and growth-related programmes, sustainable development and inclusive growth will not be realized. As a result, various international, regional, and national institutions have emphasised gender equality and women's rights as key aspects that can aid particular nations in achieving economic success. Women, according to Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, should be viewed as development catalysts. They should also be consulted during the policy's creation and execution. Furthermore, the 1995 Platform of Action asserts that women have just recently proved their infinite role in development and should not be excluded from the formulation and implementation of development programs. Their voices and everyday lives should be taken into account in order to accomplish economic progress. Gender equality and women's empowerment were given vital attention during the worldwide summit of the

United Nations on sustainable development because gender equality is the driver of growth. Similarly, women should be prioritised in all sustainable development objectives, and their voices should be heard on the global stage. Simply put, women's empowerment can be defined as the process of increasing the status of women in society through education, training, health, decision-making, ICT, and other aspects of life (Tamboura, 2022).

According to Debusscher and Ansoms (2013), Rwanda's national gender policy was first adopted in 2004, and it is updated by the government of Rwanda every three years through the adoption of various new gender policies for women's empowerment. The newer amendment of national gender policies was in 2021, and it has led to various significant outcomes that have led to impressive results in terms of women's empowerment as well as inclusive growth in Rwanda. Gender has been incorporated in various policies like NSTI (National Strategies for Transformations) 1, Vision 2020, and EDPRS (Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategies) 1 and 2. In addition, it has been incorporated into various laws and other legal instruments. The results have led to impressive results in terms of women's

empowerment and country development. For instance, in 2016, 63% of women could access finance, up from 36% in 2012. Currently, women hold 61.3% of the total seats in parliaments in Rwanda, and they occupy 66% of the total seats in cabinets.

Bunnet (2019) adds that the establishment of the quota system by the government has led to incredible results that have helped the government overcome the challenges to women that were brought about by the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994, like high extreme poverty, force, and poor standards of living. Furthermore, gender equality policies' and women's empowerment policies have significantly contributed to the promotion of women in decision-making, land ownership, education, and the use of ICT.

Gender equality in Rwanda has resulted in beneficial improvements that did not exist before. For example, the fact that both men and women now have equal rights in terms of land succession, access to national resources, and the ability to make decisions for their families, which did not exist before, Female women's employment contribution has risen from 41.9% in 2016 to 58% in the previous five years. In addition to that, women's participation in the labour force is 45.1%, compared to 63.2% of men. Moreover, the development of gender equality via empowerment and gender equality has helped women gain access to health care, education, and legal inheritance (Kayitesi, 2014). Generally speaking, human resource development has been prioritised in Rwanda's development policies. Human resource development and the engagement of both men and women in development strategies would boost Rwandan development initiatives. This will help the country attain a knowledge-based economy in the future, allowing it to compete on a global basis. Rwanda also believes that empowering women and men through entrepreneurship leads to economic progress. Currently, Rwanda has highlighted gender policies in all areas of policy, and the business sector has been urged to implement gender equality policies in their employment and production operations.

USAID (2013) stresses that Internationally, Rwanda is regarded as a pioneer in the promotion of women's emancipation. The government implemented significant and extensive changes to improve all spheres of women's development in the wake of the 1994 genocide against Tutsi. Legal changes that granted rights that were related to the properties and enabled them to get access to the inheritance of the properties, which was different in the past, especially land, were particularly significant. Obviously, gender equality is aggressively promoted under the 2003 Constitution. It upholds the idea of equality in marriage and forbids all forms of gender discrimination. Moreover, according to the constitution, women should also occupy 30% of the positions that are elected in both private and public institutions. Recent studies have proven that 62.9% of the women who are of productive age can get modern methods of family planning and necessary services for reproductive health. Citizens'

human resources have been expanded by providing education opportunities to both men and women and equipping them with the skills needed to compete on an international scale. Furthermore, the government has increased its investment in both girls' and boys' education, and barriers to girls' education and involvement in development plans have been removed. Previously, these barriers included a lack of school expenses, household poverty, conventional norms, family duty, and family ignorance.

The final goal of this study is to investigate the contributions of Rwandan gender equality policies to women's empowerment. In doing so, this study will contribute to the body of knowledge in the discipline of gender studies.

Problem Statement

Rwanda has been distinguished in recent decades by robust policies and institutional processes that have resulted in overwhelming outcomes. The Rwandan government has reaped the benefits of economic prosperity thanks to the implementation of a gender equality system. The involvement of women in the labour force and other industrial activities has assisted the country in increasing productivity. Rwanda is now considered one of the best achievers in the world for gender equality. Besides, the genocide against Tutsi in 1994 created various problems. Because of the genocide, 80 percent of women were destitute and unable to satisfy their basic needs. The majority of women were widows, and they were the heads of many households. It was a significant challenge for the new administration to develop new policies to address the issue of orphans and widows in society. The implementation of different gender laws, such as the quota system, gender equality in education, inheritance, and others, has made Rwandan accomplishments a global buzzword (Nader, 2018).

Even if the laws and policies put in place by the Rwandan government have increased the proportion of women in the labour force, male dominance still prevails in this field. The Gender Monitoring Office contends that males predominate the labour market because they possess more resources and the necessary skills than women to participate in employment. Rwandan women have fewer opportunities than men to create, apply for, and get employment, and they regularly face discrimination when applying for specific high-level posts. The social standards in Rwanda are one of the primary causes. Men are seen as being more qualified for jobs requiring greater responsibility and leadership in Rwandan society due to their higher levels of education (GMO, 2018). Rwandan society, like that of many other nations, believes that women should prioritise societal obligations like taking care of the home and giving care to children first since they don't have enough time and cannot occupy high-level employment. Therefore, the government must accurately handle this issue.

This study was carried out in order to gain and spread knowledge regarding gender equality policies related to Rwanda and to assess whether they have a significant linkage

to women's empowerment. It also attempts to create awareness of the Rwandan government's success in achieving gender equality.

General objective

1. to investigate the contributions of Rwanda gender equality policies to the women empowerment

Specific objectives

1. To assess the effects of Rwanda's gender equality policies on women's empowerment in decision-making.
2. To examine the effects of Rwandan gender equality policies on the empowerment of women in ICT , education, poverty reduction and health
3. to find out different gender equalities policies that were taken by the government of Rwanda to empower the women

2. Literature Review

Bang (2016) studied and analysed gender equality. By using exploratory factor analysis, this study recognised two aspects of gender equality according to economic growth. Gender equality in financial resources and opportunity, as well as gender equality in financial and political accomplishments by both women and men, are instances of this. Furthermore, a regression study of 101 nations found that gender equality stimulated women by improving equality by 1.3 percent, while the standard deviation of improvement in opportunities for both sexes climbed up to 1.2 out of a hundred. In conclusion, this study found that one's level of development may influence one's ability to achieve equality. The growth of many economic sectors, such as education, health, and employment, will determine the repercussions.

Mitravinda (2020) studied gender-based violence in developing countries. The results stressed that gender-based violence has increased globally since 2020. In addition to that, he discovered that in 2020, about 750 million women will have been abused by males through forced marriage before reaching the legal marriage age. This has generated a variety of issues throughout the world, such as increased poverty, human rights abuses, and overall underdevelopment. This survey also discovered that one out of every two females aged 15 to 19 had experienced female genital mutilation at some point in her life, particularly in less developed nations. The figure also demonstrates that males in the study's 18 countries have reduced their spouses' commitment to job activities in their lives. Furthermore, boys and girls in 39 countries have been told that their families will not be given the same privileges about their family's properties and inheritance after the death of their parents. In addition to that, in 49 countries around the world, there is still concern about women's protection against men's violence and patriarchal structures of oppression. 1/5 of the women in the study area have faced physical violence, including beatings and injuries. According to this study, despite the pressure from intentional human

rights instruments and other human rights organisations, only 23.7 percent of women eat the foods that are available in different countries all over the world. Furthermore, merely 52 percent of the women around the world influence the decisions that are taken in their families and play a primary role in family decision-making. Last but not least, 13 percent of the women around the world only work in agriculture, especially in developing countries.

Grossman (2000) undertaken the study about human capital in relation to gender aspects. His study revealed that women's education has a big impact on economic progress. For example, by teaching women, they will be able to regulate their fertility and sexual practices while being with their partners. This can lead to family planning and, as a result, economic prosperity. According to him, education can also contribute to improved child health since educated mothers care for their babies' more than uneducated ones. Similarly, educated women may readily determine if their children need particular care in life and the various types of food required by children for growth, resulting in greater family health. Furthermore, during a disease outbreak, educated women are more likely to implement favourable measures than uneducated women. Finally, education may help women earn an income that they can use to support their families, purchase products and services, and pay taxes.

Galor and David (1996) Note that women's exclusion from the consumer market can have both direct and indirect implications for economic growth. Women constitute a higher proportion of the population, and their absence indicates that a larger proportion of society has been excluded from economic progress. Their exclusion can lead to a variety of issues, including poverty at both the household and national levels, family disputes, poor government revenues, violations of human rights, trauma, stress, and mortality. Women's engagement in government programmes and empowerment may provide major outcomes since they pay taxes, care about their facilities, invest in business, participate in the community, and are productive in society.

UN Women (2010) Contends that promoting gender equality is the best strategy for agricultural growth, whereas gender disparity reduces agricultural production and causes agriculture to decline. According to their findings, gender equality in agriculture can assist farmers in obtaining fertiliser loans and market access, ultimately contributing to the growth of society. This is because the majority of farmers in developing nations are women, and a lack of gender equality in agriculture might imply that the majority of the population lacks access to different amenities. According to the report, when there is gender equality, it is easy to attract investors since they choose to operate in places with a greater labour force and labour productivity. Furthermore, the availability of a larger work force lowers production costs and increases profitability.

Besley and Anne (2003) Revealed in their work that including women in the legislative process can benefit the

economy and women's standard of living. For example, their participation might influence governance budgets, where some funds can be devoted to family life and women's development. This will result in more sustainable development and higher living conditions for the populace. According to this study, the participation of women in legislatures has resulted in the development of infrastructure and household support in both the United States and India. These findings highlight gender equality as a critical instrument for attaining economic growth and human rights. Gender equality simply means that both men and women develop their particular talents and make their own decisions without regard for their gender. Furthermore, in a certain culture, opinions, needs, and expectations should be handled equally, with no sex discrimination. According to this concept, this does not indicate that men and women are the same. It simply means that their hopes, goals, and needs should be recognised equally, since human rights are not exclusive to one gender.

Jennie (2008) Emphasises in his study on gender equality and economic development that gender equality is a significant portion of sustainable development that should not be overlooked. Gender equality, in his opinion, is a fundamental human right that does not require more explanation because all humans were created equal, and hence their rights should be treated equally. UN members have included gender principles in both the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Objectives in order to achieve global gender equality and women's empowerment. Achieving sustainable development goals would necessitate gender equality. Women with higher levels of education, for example, can play a larger part in development efforts than women who didn't go to school or who have a lower qualification. This argument pushed for women's empowerment in all parts of their lives, as well as their protection from all forms of abuse. This may be accomplished by including all national, regional, and international gender mainstreaming partners.

Becker (1985) discussed the relevance of gender equality as well as women's empowerment in employment, development, and education. This study discovered that women's exclusion from development programmes and job opportunities can stifle economic progress in a variety of ways. For example, their removal may result in a smaller work force, resulting in decreased output and economic growth. Because women make up almost half of the world's population, their absence can lead to family incapacity, low company growth, and low economic growth. Women's gender equality and empowerment can be achieved by educating women and providing them with the necessary skills to compete in the labour market and use their acquired skills and income to develop their families and the country's development projects. Women have recently proved that, if included in the development agenda, they can play an infinite role in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. This may be

accomplished by closing the gender gap and establishing laws against any type of violence against women.

Watsemwa (2022) investigated the relationship between gender and utilization of investment services. By using unilabiate and bivariate of data analysis, this study revealed that both sexes in the study areas used the micro finances services for their development. Moreover, this study also stressed the strong relationship between investments and gender .women interventions in the financial services as well as investing in the economics are very crucial for development. This study finally emphasizes that the micro financial institutions should reduce the interest rate to the women and they should give the incentives and loans to the women who works in the groups so as to help them to develop. By doing that, the challenges that hinder their access to the financial can be addressed hence the inclusive development

3. Theories of Gender

Functionalist approach

Giddens (2018) portrays that this theory suggests that because society comprises various aspects, they must all interact with one another in order for harmony to exist. Historically, civilizations were divided into labour divisions based on this concept. Men, for example, excelled in hunting and fighting in battles, but women excelled at nursing, housework, and child care. Furthermore, the distribution of duties exists in all cultures and is influenced by societal norms and culture.

Persons and Bales (2018) think that the distribution of tasks between men and women may contribute to the development of both society and family life. According to them, when members of the family share responsibility, all requirements of the family and community may be met on time and well by members of society. Women, for example, can care for the children while men go grocery shopping. This can lead to family growth.

From a functionalist approach, Comte, Durkheim, and Spencer all have diverse views on gender equality. Gender equality, according to Spencer, is necessary for advancement due to biological disparities, but because men and women are not physically equal, oppression of males or females will persist due to that gap in abilities. Women, on the other hand, have emotional and spiritual superiority, which implies they are superior to men in emotional and spiritual activity, according to Comte. Finally, Durkheim said that some characteristics of women make them prone to some illnesses in the community. This theory contradicts the widespread belief that men and women have distinct cultures. Similarly. These sociologists reach agreement that women have more natural gifts for health care and infant socialisation than men (Bowlby, 1953). As a consequence, the duties of men and women in society would benefit their growth. Even though they are physiologically linked, they have distinct features that, when combined, can contribute to the advancement of civilization.

Conflict Theory in Gender

According to Macionis (2010), Gender theory defines conflict as the battle between two opposing groups for control of resources, power, or other resources. Karl Marx, the pioneer, emphasises that conflict theory may also be utilised at the family level. He felt that before the advent of capitalism, males had a low level of authority over women. He goes on to say that today's society is marked by its capitalist nature, with women living in a patriarchal society under men's control. Men have more power, resources, and decisions, while women are marginalized. Finally, he said that men's activities are highly valued, but women's work is less recognised, despite the fact that women accomplish higher-level jobs than men. Frederick Engels, like Karl Marx, believes that men's supremacy over women stems from the fact that capitalism has made men both producers and consumers, while women have been created as consumers without production. Furthermore, societal institutions have supported males in acquiring better-paying occupations and places in society while rejecting women in attaining better employment and positions.

Symbolic Interaction Theory

The symbolic theory asserts that gender is not something distinct for people but rather something that enables people to socialise with each other and enjoy society's social life. According to this belief, men tend to rule society more than women since they are born inherently powerful with various qualities and strengths. According to this idea, the categories of race, gender, race, and ethnicity did not previously exist. To put it simply, they existed objectively. When we engage with society, we encounter gender. In short, this idea contends that the process of socialisation Gender is one of the variables that determine people's relationships in society (Baligar, 2018).

4. Methodology

This study investigated the linkage between gender equality-related policies in Rwanda and women's empowerment by using secondary data. the population of this study are the women in Rwanda .Both quantitative and qualitative data were used during this study .Quantitative data were collected from international and national recognized institutions like: UN Women ,the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion and National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda .Qualitative data were collected by reading and consulting online books, published articles, reports by recognised institutions, online libraries, and other research papers were consulted to get rich research. Data from those sources was analysed by SPSS and interpreted by the authors. The dependent variable is women empowerment while the independent variable is gender equality policies

1. Results and Discussion

Gender Equality Instruments in Rwanda

National Programs

Vision 2020

Nader (2004) Shows that Vision 2020 is one of the greatest methods designed by the Rwandan government to achieve democratic, cohesive, and inclusive growth. In general, the vision for 2020 was formed during the Urugwiro talks in 1999–2000. It was one of the programmes designed by the government for unity and reconciliation as part of a long-term strategy to help residents grow and transform the country into a middle-income state by 2020. Furthermore, by the conclusion of the programme, the country would be affluent, educated, and unified. This strategy was founded on seven pillars and a number of cross-cutting concerns, including gender equality. This ideal, according to the project, would not be realised until women enrolled in it. To accomplish this, new legislation to assist women in leaving poverty and educating them would be required. Finally, this strategy attempted to educate women and provide them with the skills they needed to compete in the employment market.

EDPRS (Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategies)

The EDPRS was created to help execute and achieve Vision 2020. Poverty would be reduced from 57 percent to 46 percent by the end of 2012, according to this new program. Furthermore, because poverty is the enemy of progress, the programme strives to eliminate poverty at a higher rate among Rwandans. According to Rwanda's government, poverty will fall from 60 percent to 48 percent by the end of 2020. Gender equality and empowerment of women in all aspects of their lives were two of the components that were carefully considered during the EDPRS's design and implementation. Women, for example, were assigned important values while establishing and executing policies connected to the EDPRS (Jennie, 2008).

National Strategy for Transformation (from 2017 to 2024)

The Rwandan government created the National Transformation Strategy as a mechanism to improve Rwandans' economic and lifestyle situations from 2017 through 2024. Priorities for this approach are social change, transformative provision, and economic transformation. This programme's cross-cutting problems include gender equality, family enhancement, and inclusive growth. Gender equality and empowerment are components of inclusive growth, according to this program. This emphasises the need to provide equal opportunity for national resources to all Rwandans, male and female. In addition, disadvantaged populations and cultures should be included for sustainable development (GoR, 2017).

National Legal Frameworks

Women's empowerment and gender equality in the Rwandan National Constitution

According to national constitution of Rwanda (2015) the government of Rwanda has been successful in promoting gender equality, and it is dedicated to empowering women

and promoting gender equality as a method of boosting economic growth. Clearly, the Rwandan national constitution stresses that minority groups, including women and children, should be given equal rights like others. The Constitution, which was revised in 2015, asserts that all human beings are created equal. Discrimination or violence on the basis of religion, ethnicity, skin colour, mental impairments, or economic position is forbidden and punishable by law. According to this article, there should be no violence or prejudice towards women. Various laws and other legal instruments have been put in place to support women and prevent abuse. For example, the quota system has been legislated and implemented in both government and corporate organisations in order to reduce the unequal gender gap in decision-making power between men and women and also stimulate women's empowerment.

Those legal instruments are explained as below:

Organic budget law no. 12/2013 requesting gender responsive budgeting

According to GoR (2013) the gender responsive budget was adopted as a way of solving the needs related to gender equality. The budget is allocated to gender-related needs and women's empowerment in Rwanda. This has made a crucial contribution to women's development, fighting against gender-based violence, and women's empowerment in general.

Law No. 27/2016 of July 8, 2016 that regards matrimonial regimes, donations, and successions:

This legal instrument highlights that there should not be any discrimination based on sex during succession or during the sharing of properties between the parents when they die. Girls and boys are given equal consideration, while parents give their children

Persons and Families Law n 32/2016 of August 28, 2016:

Both women and men possess the same decision-making authorities when they are making decisions regarding their families. In addition to that, there should not be any gender-based violence at home [11].

Law No. 003/2016 of March 30, 2016, establishing and governing maternity leave benefits

The institutions are required to provide maternity leave benefits to the women and other benefits that are proposed by the law when they give birth. In addition to that, all new-born babies, either boys or girls, should be given equal consideration in front of the law and other legal instruments.

Law No. 43/2013 of August 30, 2018 governing land in Rwanda

This law States that women possess the same rights as men for access to land ownership and the utilisation of natural resources for development.

Law No. 68/2018 of August 30, 2018 regarding labour in Rwanda

According to this law, both women and men should have the same opportunities for job opportunities and protection from any type of harm that can result from the job environment, as well as equal consideration during payment arrangements and promotion.

Law No. 68/2018 of August 30, 2018 determines offences and penalties in general and provides punishment against gender-based violence:

This law stresses that any type of violence against women is prohibited and is strongly punishable by law. Those include rape, forced marriage, beatings, and physical violence. Violence, emotional violence, and other types of violence for both men and women should be given equal rights in front of laws and other legal instruments.

Law No. 71/2018 of August 31, 2018 related to the protection of child rights

All children should be treated equally. Both girls and boys should be given equal opportunities in education, family care, protection, health, inheritance, and other opportunities in society.

Prime Minister Order No. 001/03 of January 11, 2012, regarding how government institutions respond to gender-based violence in their duties:

As demonstrated by this law, gender-based violence is prohibited and is punishable by law. When there is any type of violence against women, it should be reported to the responsible organs, and legal decisions should be taken.

Institutional Framework for Gender Equality

The Rwandan government has launched a number of projects to combat any discrimination against women, empower women, and encourage equality. These institutions operate in conjunction with the government to address problems linked to gender equality and women's protection on a daily basis. These institutions are as follows:

Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion

According to the Rwandan government, this is the higher institution in charge of monitoring, evaluating, and supervising gender equality policies, family development, child rights, and other requirements connected to women's empowerment. Furthermore, MIGEPROF protects girls' rights and monitors and oversees how gender policies are applied in various organisations and private entities. Finally, it monitors how other existing gender equality institutions meet their goals (MIGEPORF, 2021).

Gender Monitoring Office

The gender monitoring office is mandated to supervise gender mainstreaming activities in all aspects and other related activities related to men and women's equality (GMO, 2021).

National Women's Council:

The major aim of the national women’s council is to empower women by enhancing their ability to participate in national development. Furthermore, it is the key actor in combating all types of violence and discrimination against women and enacting legislation linked to empowerment (MIGEPROF, 2022).

Forum of women who are in parliament

This forum is significant in creating legislation that promotes women's empowerment and women's rights. Furthermore, it is critical to promoting women's rights and their development in all areas of their lives (NISR, 2015).

The final goal of this study is to investigate the contributions of Rwandan gender equality policies to women's empowerment. In doing so, this study will contribute to the body of knowledge in the discipline of gender studies.

Women Empowerment in Decision Making

Women empowerment in parliament

Rwanda has done more to empower women in decision-making at home and in political engagement. It has introduced numerous policies that have assisted women in influencing policies that might directly or indirectly affect their life. Since the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, women have been at the heart of several development programmes aimed at alleviating poverty and promoting equitable growth.

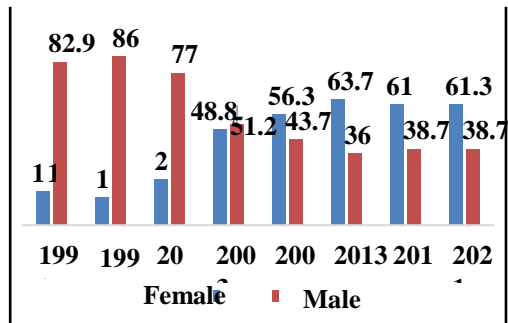


Figure 1: percentage of women and men who are in Rwandan parliament since 1990

According to the table, gender-related policies have a considerable impact on women’s empowerment in decision-making. In 1990, for example, women made up 17.1% of the Rwandan parliament, while men made up 82.1%. However, the government’s women development policies resulted in better results. Women now hold 63.1% of all posts in parliament. According to these figures, it is the best parliament in the world, with the largest number of women.

Women empowerment in local government

In Rwandan government women hold 53.3% of cabinet positions and 41% of permanent secretaries of state. They also have 48% of the judiciary organ seats, 26% of the district mayors, and 45.2% of district council members. Furthermore, data reveal that 70.4% of women engage in local health care decision making.

Table 1: women and men positions in the cabinet from 2014-2021

Variables	2014	2016	2018	2021
Female (%)	36.8	40	50	55
Male (%)	63.2	60	50	45
Total (%)	100	100	100	100

Rwanda gender equality have played a significant role for women empowerment and development in participation in decision making through local governance. as shown in the table , women who were in local governance in 2104 were only 36.8 against 63.2% men but the number became 55% against 45% of men .This shows that women become competitive and governance policies about gender equality and women empowerment have led to the women empowerment

Empowerment of women in judiciary organs

Rwanda has adopted legislative policies for women empowerment, peace, and security in accordance with the national constitution and United Nations Resolution 1325. Countries would become more inclusive and achieve sustainable growth in the future, according to the resolution. Rwanda, according to the report, has undertaken a number of policies aimed at empowering women in health, education, employment, resource management, and other areas of the economy and social life. Obviously, Women have significantly contributed to the conflict resolution agenda, unity and reconciliation, and societal peace.

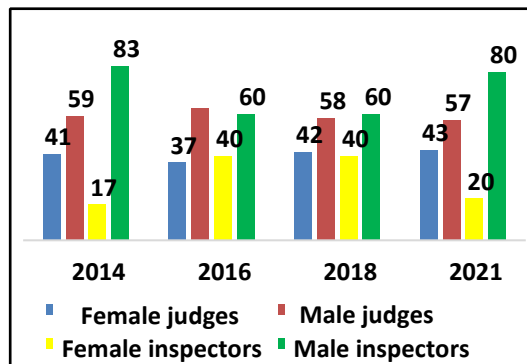


Figure 2: percentage of women and men judges and inspectors in Supreme Court 2014

Men	93.3	86.7	20
Total (%)	100	100	100

women presently occupied 41% of all court seats in 2014 against 59% men and they become 43% against 57% in 2021. accordingly, inspectors in supreme courts (women) were 17% in 2014 against 83% and the number increased to 20% in 2021. furthermore, data shows women hold 45% of national human rights commissions; 18% of national POLICE; and 25% of the police and army that go on humanitarian operations across the world. In this sense, they strongly contribute conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peace building, gender equality policies, and other actions for the development of society (MIGEPROF, 2022).

Women participation in Private Sector Federation at national level

Table 2: women and men positions in Private Sector Federation at national level

Variables	President	Vice president	Second vice president
women	30	10	70
Men	70	90	30
Total (%)	100	100	100

As highlighted in the table. Women occupy 30% of presidential positions in the private sector federation at national level. In addition to that, they also hold 10% of vice presidential positions at national level. Lastly, they hold 70% of second vice presidential positional position at national level. This shows that women are more competitive to the second vice presidential positions than other positions at national level in Private Sector Federation.

District level

Table 3: women and men higher positions in Private Sector Federation at district level

Variables	President	Vice president	2nd vice president
Women	6.7	13.3	80

Only 6.7% of women who have presidential positions in Private Sector Federation at district level, while 13.3% occupy vice presidential positions, furthermore, 80% are second vice presidential positions. This shows that there is a gap in gender equality between men and women in private sector. This is due to the fact that men have 93.3% as presidents and 86.7% as vice presidents.

Women Empowerment in Education and ICT

Women empowerment in ICT

Rwanda has prioritised the knowledge-based economy, as seen in Vision 2020 and other long-term development programmes. To ensure that all elements of society are represented in development policies. Women were educated in all areas of education, as well as in ICT and allied fields. As seen in the graph below, the number of women who have access to ICT tools such as television, radio, and telephones is growing.

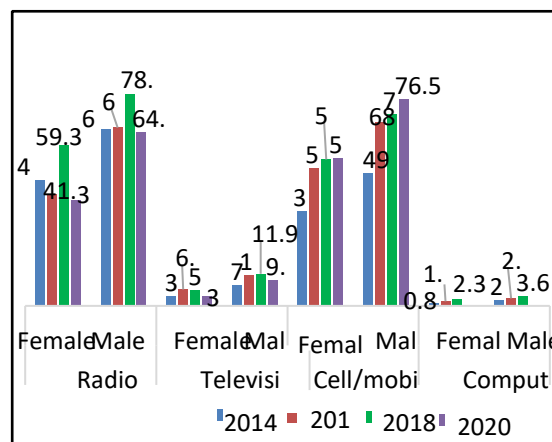


Figure 3: number of women who get access to radio, TV and computer from 2014-2020

The graph indicates that the number of women with phone access has been growing since 2014. For example, in 2014, just 35.1% of women had access to cell phones, but by 2020, the figure had risen to 54.7%, compared to 76.5 percent of males. Furthermore, women who had a radio at home were 46.5 percent, rising to 64.4 percent in 2020. Finally, the proportion of women who can use a computer was 0.8% in 2014 and is expected to rise to 2.3% by 2020. The availability of materials to both men and women has been critical in the development and distribution of goods and services. Rwanda’s government has recently pushed online commerce and the delivery of a variety of government services via the internet. Women’s engagement in the ICT business, as well

as their access to ICT tools, has helped Rwanda increase its national revenue and improve the well-being of its population.

Women empowerment in education

Rwanda's administration is committed to inclusive growth and gender equality. The Rwandan government has recognized that the role of women is critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and ensuring long-term development. To that end, the Rwandan government has established a number of policies the main focus of empowering gender equality as tools for long-term development. Both girls and boys, according to these regulations, should have equal access to education, as promoted by UNESCO and other development partners. Rwanda's government accomplished this through establishing nine- and twelve-year education, nine-year and twelve-year school facilities, public mobilization around female education, the development of education organs, and family training.

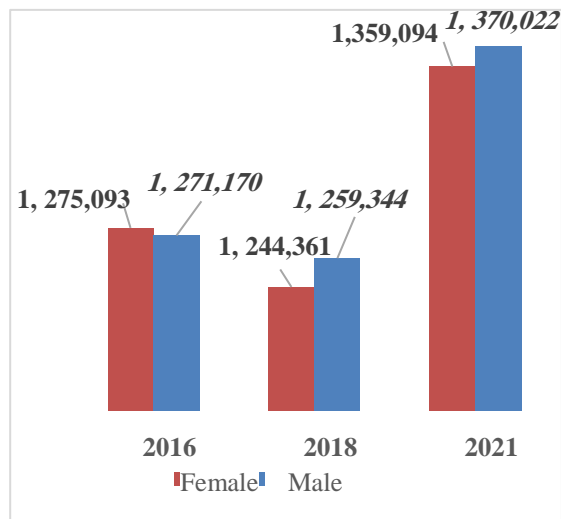


Figure 4: number of girls and boys enrolled in schools

The number of females enrolled in school has risen from 1,275,093 in 2016 to 1,359,094 in 2021. According to the gender parity index data, the number of girls attending school has lately surpassed the number of boys attending school. Through the He or She Programme, NI NYAMPINGA TV, TVET schools, and other development programmes, the Rwandan government supports gender equality and girls' education. Their involvement has aided Rwanda's work force, revenue, and health (NISR, 2021).

Poverty reduction

The Rwandan government created a number of development schemes with the goal of raising women out of poverty and fighting against gender-based violence. Both men and women were not given equal opportunities. Rwanda's first and second republics were marked by ineffective government programs promoting women's empowerment and gender

equality. Following the 1994 genocide against Tutsi, the government implemented a number of programs aimed at integrating women into development strategies and combating gender-based violence and inequality in society. Vision 2020, community-based health insurance, a one-cow-per-family plan, local-based cooperatives, twelve-year education, and so on were among the policies

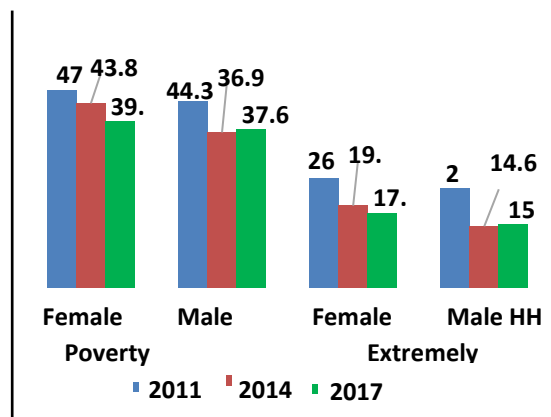


Figure 5: number of both males and females who are in poverty from 2017-2018

The number of women living in poverty in Rwanda has been steadily falling over the last two decades, thanks to numerous economic development strategies that have played an important role in lifting women out of poverty. For example, in 2010/2011, 47% of women lived in extreme poverty, but this fell to 39.5% in 2016/2017, while extreme poverty fell from 26% in 2010/2011 to 17.8% in 2016/2017 (MIGEPROF,2021).

Different factors that impedes gender equality and women empowerment in Rwanda

Even though Rwanda has turned out to be a champion in the advancement of gender equality, women face some setbacks that prevent them from achieving full equality regard with men at the national level. These are like: traditions beliefs about the women and men, social position, low level resources, and low gender policy implementation by local leaders

First and foremost, there is a matter of status in community. For instance, some Rwandans communities, women are still considered as housekeepers, mothers, and lower-class. honestly, this challenge them to compete with men in commercial activities, and occupying governmental roles. Second, there is a challenge a problem with bad implementation. Moreover, despite the Rwandan government's 30% policy, local authorities are failing to implement it. Some institutions, particularly private ones, do not, for example, adopt it. This is because they still regard women as inferior to men and weak in terms of leadership responsibilities, which is no longer the case in the twenty-first century. Third, there is an issue of traditional beliefs by

society. Here, in some civilizations, women are viewed as housekeepers and would not intervene in certain positions as well other duties due to society belief don't permit women's participation in certain positions. For instance, women hold 76.7% of all vice mayor posts but just 20% of economic and planning jobs

Powley (2008) Highlights that various impediments to women's participation exist, including a lack enough information, a low level of education, and a low resources availability. To begin with, one of the major causes of women's low engagement has been a lack of information. For example, women do not receive information about job openings, elections, and other chances due to a lack of technology tools and resources and the effects of household obligations. Second, women don't have enough resources; as example women don't possess enough money to use for completion during elections, nor do they have transport fees to attend job interviews. Furthermore, they don't have much resources like men to start new business as well as compete with men entrepreneurs the resources to invest in business and compete with men in self-employment. This can be attributed to the structure of the society as well as traditional beliefs about gender roles and ownership. Third, women face the problem of low level of education. For example, some women, particularly those over the age of 40, lack the necessary education qualification required to participate and compete with the mean during the job exams and elections. This impedes gender equality policies and other women's empowerment policies.

6. Conclusion and Future Scope

The main objective of this paper was to investigate how Rwanda's gender equality instruments have contributed to women's empowerment. As a consequence, this article demonstrated that those policies have played an important role in women's empowerment and economic progress. Firstly, the policies aided Rwanda in integrating women into decision making. Currently, Women hold 63.1% of parliament seats, 53.3% of cabinet's seats and 41% of permanent secretary of state's seats. Secondly, the policies aided women to be integrated both in education and ICT. For instance, this study revealed that currently, 54.7% women can get access to the cell phones while the number was 35.1% in 2014. Furthermore, the number of girls who go to schools has significantly increased from 1,275,093 in 2018 to 1,359,094 in 2021 .thirdly, women extreme poverty fell from 2010/2011, 47% to 39.5% in 2016/2017.this confirm the hypothesis that there is a close relationship between gender equalities policies and women empowerment.. Yet, women still meet various hurdles to full participation in decision making in private sector. This is caused by various impediments. Those include cultural beliefs, low income and resources compared to men, multiple roles at home, etc. For those reasons, I would like to recommend that the government should increase the budget related to women's education, enact new laws and policies gender equality, and increase the

mobilization regarding gender equality and its role in development. Finally, I would highly recommend future researchers to conduct other studies on the linkage between Rwanda gender equality policies and agricultural development, as well as assessing the contribution of women's empowerment in Rwanda and environment protection.

Data Availability

This study employed secondary data to evaluate the linkage between gender equality policies in Rwanda and women's empowerment. Secondary data were collected through reading scientific papers like articles, books, reports by recognized institutions, and other types of scientific papers.

Conflicts of Interests

The authors of this research affirm that there are no conflicts of interest regarding this research. Furthermore, this study was not sponsored by any organization or institution or by any institution or organization that has a stake in it. Finally, this study was conducted by respecting research ethics like confidentiality, privacy, integrity, and informed consent

Funding Source

This study was conducted without the support, funding, or sponsorship of any organization or agency.

Authors' Contributions

This study was conducted by two authors (Emmanuel NIYONZIMA and Eyayu Kasseye Bayu). Structures, contents, analysis of data, and preparation of the final draft were prepared by both authors.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge the teachers in masters of governance and regional integration at Pan African University, the Institute of Governance, Humanities, and Social Sciences, for their important advice and guidance in writing this paper.

References and bibliography

- Baligar, M.P. (2018). *Gender In Sociology* .retrieved from <http://ijrar.com> on 4th February, 2023.
- Bang, J. (2015). Gender Equality and Economic Growth: Is It Opportunities or Outcomes? *Feminist Economics* 21(1) DOI: 10.1080/13545701.2014.930163.
- Becker, G.S. (1985). Human Capital, Effort, and the Sexual Division of Labor." *Journal of Labor Economics* 3(1): S33-S58.
- Besley, T., & Anne, C. (2003). Political Institutions and Policy Choices: Evidence from the United States. *Journal of Economic Literature* 41: 7-73.

- Bowlby, J. (1953). *Child Care and the Growth of Love*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Burnet, J. E. (2019). Women's Political Representation in Rwanda. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=anthro_facpub.
- Daly, M. (2005). Gender Mainstreaming in Theory and Practice. *Journal of social politics* 12(3):433-450. Doi:10.1093/sp/jxi023.
- Debusscher, P., & Ansoms, A. (2013, September 01). Gender Equality Policies in Rwanda: Public Relations or Real Transformations? *Development and Change*, 44. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12052>.
- Galor, O., & David, W. (1996). The Gender Gap, Fertility, and Growth." *American Economic Review* 86(3): 374-387.
- Gender Monitoring Office (2018). *State of gender equality in Rwanda: from transition to transformation*. Kigali: GMO
- Gender Monitoring Office. (2019). *the State of Gender Equality in Rwanda*. Kigali : GMO.
- Giddens, A. (6th Eds) (2009). *Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Government of Rwanda (2004). *Rwanda Vision 2020(Revised Version)*. Kigali: Ministry Of Finance and Economic Planning.
- Government of Rwanda. (2023). *National Constitution of Rwanda*. Kigali: MINIJUST.
- Grossman, M. (2000). "The Human Capital Model," in Mark V. Pauly, Thomas G. McGuire and Pedro Pita Barros, eds. *Handbook of Health Economics*, 1, pp. 347-408. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Grown, C et al. (2016). Aid For Gender Equality and Development: Lessons and Challenges. *Journal of international development* 28 (2)311-319.
- Ivic, M. (2015). Economic Growth and Development. *journal of process management*. vol 3, no 1, 2015.
- Jennie, E.T. (2008). *In Gender Balance and The Meaning of Women in Governance in Post Genocide Rwanda*, African Affairs, London, Oxford University Press p.361-386.
- Kabeer N. (2005). Gender Equality and Women Empowerment. *Critical Analysis of Third Millennium Development Goal. Gender and development* 13.19.13-24.
- Kayitesi, M. (2016). *Gender And Family Development: The Impacts of Gender Equality and Development of Family Households in Gasabo District*. Kigali: University of Rwanda.
- Klasen, S., and Francesca, L. (2009). "The Impact of Gender Inequality in Education and Employment on Economic Growth: New Evidence for a Panel of Countries." *Feminist Economics* 15(3): 91-132.
- Law of the Republic of Rwanda No 003 of 2016 Establishing and Governing Maternity Leave Benefits Scheme.
- Law of the Republic of Rwanda No 27 of 2016 of July 8, 2016 governing matrimonial regimes, donations, and successions.
- Law of the Republic of Rwanda No 32 of 2016 Governing Persons and Family.
- Law of the Republic of Rwanda No 43/2013 of 2013 governing land in Rwanda.
- Law of the Republic of Rwanda No 66 of 2018 regulating labor in Rwanda
- Law of the Republic of Rwanda No 68/2018 determining offences and penalties in general, provides punishment for gender-based violence (GBV) that was previously considered a family matter.
- Law of the Republic of Rwanda No71 Of 2018 relating to the protection of child rights.
- Lindsey, L. L. (2nd Ed) (2011). *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective*. New York: Pearson.
- Macionis, J. J. (13 Eds) (2010). *Sociology*. London: Pearson.
- Ministry of Gender and family promotion (2021). *Revised national Gender Policy: Accelerating Effectiveness of Gender Mainstreaming and Accountability for National Transformation*. Kigali: MIGEPROF.
- Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (2022). *Annual Narrative Report for 2021-2022*. Kigali: MIGEPROF
- Mitravinda, K. (2020). *Gender equality: the need of an hour*. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/d7apn>.
- Moser, C. (1993). *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice, and Training*. London. Routledge: www.bigpond.com.kh/users/gad/glossary/gender.htm
global.finland.fi/julkaisut/taustat/nav_gender/glossary.htm www.un-instraw.org.

- Nader, A. M. (2016). *Report On Gender Equality*. Agha Khan Foundation.
- National Gender Statistics (2022). *Report 2021*. National Institute of Statistics Of Rwanda .Kigali: NISR.
- National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (2021) .*National Gender Statistics Report 2021* .Kigali: NISR.
- National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (2021) .*National Gender Statistics Report 2021* .Kigali, Rwanda.
- National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR). (2016). *National Gender Statistics Report 2016*. Available at:
<http://www.statistics.gov.rw/publication/national-gender-statistics-report-2016>. (Accessed on 20 March 2018).
- Organic Budget Law of the Republic of Rwanda No 12 of 2013, instituting gender-responsive budgeting:
- Parsons, T. & Bales, R. (1956). *Family Socialization and Interaction Process*. London: Routledge.
- Powley, E. (2008). *Engendering Rwanda's Decentralization Supporting Women Candidates for Local Office*. Available at https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/1091_engendering_rwandas_decentralization.pdf. (Accessed 24 March 2018).
- Powley, E. (2008). *Engendering Rwanda's Decentralization Supporting Women Candidates for Local Office*. Available at https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/1091_engendering_rwandas_decentralization.pdf. (Accessed 24 March 2018).
- Prime Ministers of the Republic of Rwanda Order N 001/03 of 2012, determining modalities in which government institutions prevent and respond to gender-based violence.
- Rehavi, M. M. (2008). "Sex and Politics: Do Female Legislators Affect State Spending?" mimeo: University of Michigan.
- Revised national Gender Policy (2021). *Accelerating Effectiveness of Gender Mainstreaming and Accountability for National Transformation*. Ministry of Gender and family promotion, Kigali: MIGEPROF.
- Svaleryd, H. (2009). "Women's Representation and Public Spending." *European Journal of Political Economy* 25(2): 186-198.
- Tamboura, T., I., Danadji Ngaba, E.A and Diallo, a (2022) .Effects of Gender Inequality on Human Capital Development in Sub Saharan Africa'', ''*International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Multidisciplinary Studies*, vol 8 (11), p 01-10.
- UN Women (2014). *Gender Equality and Sustainable Development: World Survey on Role of Women in Development*. New York: UN Women.
- UN women (2020). *Where We Are, Eastern and Southern Africa: African*. New York: UN Women
- United Nations Development Program (2022). *Gender Equality Strategy*: .Kigali: UN group.
- USAID (2011). *USAID/Rwanda Gender Assesment* .Kigali: USAID
- Watsemwa, R., Kabumbuli, R., and Mirembe, S. (2022). gender and utilization of investment services in Bugembe town council, Jinja district, ''*International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Multidisciplinary Studies*, vol 8 (9), p18-24.