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Full Length Research

How government policies affect women in management positions in universities: A case study of a private university in Uganda

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Accepted 29th June 2011

The issue addressed is the continuing under-representation of women in higher education management. The data presented show that in spite of advances which women have made in many areas of public life in the past two decades, in the area of higher education management they are still a long way from participating on the same footing as men. Whereas the hope is that academic life is a sphere where in theory, women should find few barriers to opportunity and that if there is anywhere that women professionals should be successful, it is in the universities, the reality seems to be that academia has been perceived as traditionally elitist, male and patriarchal in its workplace culture, structure and values. The research design used in the study was qualitative research design. The sample consisted of 15 males and 25 females, who were obtained by purposive sampling. The qualitative data was collected using in-depth interview and focus group discussions. The major finding of the study is that private universities are not adhering to Ugandan Governments’ policy that a minimum of 40% of managerial positions should be occupied by women.

Key words: Government policies, women in management, Higher Education, private universities.

INTRODUCTION

Following the liberalization of the Government Macro Policy, and realizing that the demand for trained professionals is growing as the social economic sector grows, the government now sponsors over 4000 students each year offering different courses. It is also noted that there is significant investment of the private sector including NGOs in Higher Education.

A draft Strategic Plan for higher education was finalized and is intended to reform higher education curricula to address national needs, maintain and sustain the quality of education at higher levels, and improve management of higher education in the country.

The government also enacted the University and other tertiary institutions Act 2001 to give a legal framework for management and administration of higher education Institutions in the country and give legal back up to the expansion of quality of Higher education. As provided for in the Act. The council is responsible for licensing Private Universities and it sets Academic and Management standards for all Universities in the country. The composition of the National Council for Higher Education reflects a wide range of National interest covering various areas of development.

Currently, there are 4 public and 27 licensed private Universities which award different degrees. UCU is one of the licensed private Universities (MoE 2005).

However it’s worth noting that, not every child follows the same line/ steps in the education system, (as described above), to some children pre-primary school is unheard of. Pre-primary is more common in urban schools.
Gender disparities in education

Women’s access to education indicates the general status of women in the Uganda’s economy which is affected by so many factors. Many of them originate right from the homes and communities where women tend to be relegated a second position. Singh (2002:14) writes, According to UDHS 1995, there are illiterate women 40% compared to men 26%. According to the World Bank, the rate of literacy is reducing and only 69.9% of Ugandans above the age of 15 are literate, of which 60.4% are women and 79.5% are men according to the World Bank (2007 Fact sheet). The factors for the disparity include high rates of drop out, lack of school fees, parents preference for boys if a choice has to be made of who attains education first, female children involvement in domestic chores, early marriages and need to get bride price from girls, teenage pregnancy and lack of support by the education system of Uganda (Kwesiga 2002).

Patterns of Gender inequality begin at school level

According to the study done by Fawzia (2005) with The New Vision among the parliamentarians, Amongi, one of the MPs, said that; the government funding for schools does not cover all the expenses, forcing schools to charge fees. However, parents in rural areas cannot afford to educate all the children typically give preference to boys. This concurs with what Kwesiga (2002) writes, that parents’ preference for boys’ education has kept women behind the doors of management. This stems from the cultural belief that girls are supposed to be prepared for marriage, not school. Some parents encourage daughters to marry at a very early age- even as young as ten years.

The primary education system throughout the country is further burdened by lack of feeding programmes, overcrowded classes and schools that sometimes lack separate toilets for boys and girls. This makes life awkward for menstruating girls whose plight is aggravated by the fact that they may not be able to afford sanitary towels. This consents with Kanyike, in her study about menstruation as a barrier to gender equality in Uganda. Sanitary towels are very expensive for an average parent. This means that girls have to improvise with the alternatives like old cloth (rags), sackcloth which are always unhygienic and inconvenient that sometimes interfere with the normal school day. “Oftentimes a girl gets her dress soiled and boys laugh. The girls laugh sometimes too” (Ibid).

This leads to absenteeism of averagely four days every month. Kanyike found out that in some districts like Kalangala, a menstruating girl or woman is made to sit on a pile of sand for 3 to 4 days. In some communities also a menstruating woman cannot walk through a crossroad, implying that she should stay home. Without adequate protection, girls cannot risk going to school because of fears of accidents and ridicule (Kanyike 2005).

When the missionaries introduced formal education, and for almost 100 years that is between 1877 & 1970, the majority of girls in Uganda never went to school. In Ankole for example, girls were looked up on as the second child even in decisions relation to child rearing parents preferred to have as many boys as possible, than girls who had no value at all. Kwesiga writes:

Girls hard no value…to be married off and get bride price. These limited their involvement to schooling and were prepared for marriage at early age of 15 years… parents preference for boys if a choice has to be made who to attain education first….(kwesiga 2002:75)

There is no systematic data that tracks dropout rates and causes of dropout at secondary school level for the whole decade. It is, therefore difficult to be certain whether the gender gap at this level is reducing consistently or not. Data from administrative records of the Ministry of Education and Sports indicate that school dropouts in all government aided schools in the country is higher at
primary level than at secondary level and that more girls than boys dropout at this level, continuing the pattern at primary school level.

Poverty often serves to worsen already existing gender biases. When schooling costs become a pertinent issue and a choice has to be made to send a boy or girl, the boy is usually given precedence. This choice is driven by societal construction of gender where male children are expected to carry on the family tree across generations and are therefore accorded more value than girl children (Kwesiga 2002). Perceived returns to parents of educating their daughters beyond primary school tend to be lower than for their sons, particularly in patrilineal systems where girls join their husbands. Reluctance to educate girls for the other family into which they are expected to marry is compounded by the opportunity costs which continue to get higher for poor households who depend considerably on the labour of their children in order to supplement household income and help to take care of the sick, especially in this era of HIV/AIDS.

Early marriage, especially in the case of girls is a common strategy used by poor families to raise income for the rest of household members, more practiced in rural than urban areas. Many girls perceive marriage as an escape route from family poverty while the common cultural practice of charging bride wealth brings quick and substantial income to her family. Girls sometimes withdraw themselves from school, especially if their needs for supplies like shoes and dresses are not met by their parents/guardians. In other cases parents encourage girls to drop out or fail to pay their educational costs and arrange marriages for them or encourage them to get married. This agrees with what (Chapman, 2003) wrote that due to cultural pressures, parents and guardians sometimes encourages girls into early marriages. Also Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in their study about Why Educate Girls, found out the same ideas about girls’ early marriages being in most cases arranged by their families. Most societies define femininity in relation to marriage and girls have been socialized to accept that perspective. This social construction that relates femininity closely with marriage also lower girls’ aspiration for secondary and higher education as most of them do not see the need to excel in education as a value related with marriagability.

Market-related factors lead in determining dropout rates for primary schools for both boys and girls. In the case of girls, however social relations of gender lead in creating and maintaining the gap between boys and girls dropping out of school. At primary school level it is gendered division of labour within the household that affects the girls while at the secondary school level it is marriage norms at community and household levels that adds to the gap already created by differentials due to market-related factors.

In addition to the above, young girls may fall prey to sexual advances by teachers and other male authority figures which could bring education to a halt. When girls get pregnant, they drop out of school. Problems relating to gender are worse in war-torn northern Uganda, where girls battle sexual abuse and poverty on a scale not experienced by their counterparts in other regions. From the above therefore, the literature shows that the continuous drop outs of female students to early marriages and other causes like lack of fees, pregnancy case, and war gazetted areas affects their career more than of their male counterparts.

**Study area**

Uganda Christian University is located 23 Kilometers from Kampala, in Mukono district, on the main road to Jinja. It is a private university, chartered and fully accredited by the President of the Republic of Uganda, through the Ministry of Higher Education and Sports and the National Council for Higher Education. It is owned by the Province of the church of Uganda, and has campuses in Eastern, Western and Northern Uganda.

By 2003/04 academic year, the students’ body totaled 2664 ranging from 20-60 years old, about 46% of whom are female. 2005/2006 the enrollment had almost no difference between the male and the females, of 4335 total enrollment, 50.01 were female men. Currently the university enrollment totals to 5170 students in 2006/2007 academic year, 50.3% are female.

The university council is comprised of 32 members of whom 6 are female and there is one female compared to 4 males on the university cabinet. Women senior-lecturers and lecturers make up only 15% of the academic staff with only 1 female professor (www.ucu.ca.ug).

**Literature review**

**Government Polices**

Uganda has been widely praised for having a constitution that reflects gender concerns. In addition, Uganda has pledged to implement the United Nations’ eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which include the promotion of gender equality by 2015 (refer 1.2.3). Nonetheless, progress towards real women’s empowerment has been somewhat erratic in the East African Countries. Women are visible in political office, holding almost a quarter of parliamentary seats. However, their representation and participation in business and social institutions such as hospitals and schools as well as higher institutions of learning is far less. According to a Member of Parliament (MP), Betty Amongi, in a study Uneven Progress on Gender Equality by Fawzia (2005), she states that, “the president has been using women to get political support”. The government has established a ministry of Gender but given it substantially less money than other departments, Mary Amanjo another Member of Parliament in the same study claimed. According to Amanjo, who is also a chairperson of the Uganda Women’s Parliamentary
Association, the ministry lacks finances for the local women’s councils under its authority, which are supposed to assess women’s needs. Amonjo believes that: “...the government is slow to bring about equality between men and women because we are still a male-dominated society. When we start debating anything to do with gender, that’s when male MPs walk out of the parliament to do other things” (Fawzia 2005).

There is an Act on Employment and Labour relations. It has no minimum wage provision. Lack of such basis exposes the labour force to investor abuse including paying peanuts for donkey work. The way things stand, the government is in a very weak position as it increasingly appears to favour exploitation of nationals. Private companies and institutions have their own governing laws and rates of the salaries offered. Government institutions however have the basic salaries from the MoE. Employees of the private institutions works at the mercy of the employer since there is no fixed minimum wage at least for every employee. This has culminated into exploitation of the employees, being overworked, underpaid and almost nothing like a break or leave. This has affected women’s performance and has hampered their progress to top managerial positions since they have to attend to natural responsibilities of reproduction. Several institutions are not in for employing women who are still young and can go anytime for marriage and change location. And those who are married must have either finished producing or their children must be old enough to cater for themselves.

**Limited access to formal education**

The education of women in Uganda still lags behind than that of men although the policy on education provides for equal educational opportunities for both sexes. However, in reflection of the prevailing attitudes at the inception of formal education, few girls’ schools, especially at secondary level were established. Kwasiga (2002) discusses that absence of expansion of schools during the 1980s and early 1990s, social and cultural prejudices against girls’ education and lack of career guidance and counseling, limited girls’ access to educational opportunities. The low educational status of girls in turn limited women’s acquisition of knowledge, skills and technology to compete equally with men for available opportunities, facilities and services in all sectors.

Despite the government’s regulations, Uganda still has very high rates of adolescent pregnancy. According to UNICEF (2003) in their study about Girls Education in Uganda, they found out that 35% of girls are either pregnant or have given birth at the age of 17 (www.unicef.org/girlseducation/index.htm), yet policies exclude pregnant or new mothers from school. There is no law that permits/protects a pregnant girl in a school. In some parts of Uganda however, it’s unheard of to educate a girl child. In a study carried out by Nawaguna with the New Vision Uganda. Among the Pokot people, she discovered that it’s a woman’s duty to construct a house for the family and the Pokot men despise educated girls and believe that they are prostitutes. “Those are not our girls. They are just useless!” Chemongin, an elderly man comments as he spits in disgust (Nawaguna 2007 (sic)).

Therefore, women’s access to education indicates the general status of women in the Uganda’s economy which is affected by so many factors as mentioned above. Many of them originate right from the homes and communities where women tend to be relegated a second position.

**Limited access to higher education**

In spite of increased participation in higher education, women do not have the same access to higher education as men in Uganda. Their under-representation amongst academic staff is consistent with this limited access. Zamora (1993), notes the need for a critical mass in higher education to provide the “quarry” from which higher education managers come as cited in (Denis 1993).

University education in Uganda is too expensive for most parents to afford; their daughters end up in Diploma and certificate courses that make them more of house wives with clear roles of a woman as the child bearers than continuing the ladder to the top position of higher educational management. Even some families still hold the view that educating a girl is wastage of resources since after all she is expected to be married off and cease working or work and cater for the family of her husband than the parents who educated her. Consequently, girls continue reducing in number as they move to higher levels of education, very few girls make it to the university.

The second part as said earlier discusses the particular hindrances of women to higher educational management. These are the huddles that women in higher education encounter and most probably limit their progress to greater heights of management. They include the university policies, career development and career interruptions, difficulties in pursuing and gaining tenure, mentoring, social-cultural factors, the glass ceiling and more others as discussed below.

**Theoretical framework**

**Empowerment theory**

The term empowerment has different meanings in different social cultural and political contexts and does not translate easily into all languages. An exploration of local terms associated with empowerment around the world always leads to lively discussion. These terms include self-strength, control, self-power, self reliance, own choice, own life in accordance with one’s values, capable of fighting for one’s rights, independence, own decision making, being free, awakening, and capability among others. Empowerment therefore is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make
choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process are actions which both build individuals and collective assets, improve the efficiency and fairness of the organisational and institutional context which govern the use of these assets (http://www.ioe.org/ioe/1999october/comm1.htm). Through empowerment, individuals/communities engage in learning processes in which they create, appropriate and share knowledge, tools and techniques in order to change and improve the quality of their own lives and societies. Individuals not only manage and adapt to change but also contribute to generate changes in their lives and environments. Empowerment also mean having the right to make one’s choice and of having the ability to act on them.

The perspectives of empowerment in this thesis were advanced by Srilatha Batliwala (1995) and Gita Sen (1997). Batliwala defines women’s empowerment as the process, and the outcome of the process, by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources, and challenge the ideology of patriarchy and the gender-based discrimination against women in all the institutions and structures of society. This definition provides part of the theoretical framework for the study because it holds empowerment to be a process of gaining greater control.

In addition the study utilizes Sen’s discussion of economic empowerment in which he draws attention to the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions of empowerment. Sen (1997) discusses that most government or NGO empowerment programmes do not perform well because they either concentrate on intrinsic or extrinsic forms of empowerment but do not give equal attention to both. I gained good insights into the challenges women face in higher education management in Uganda by using this perspective. Could it be that women in higher education both as managers and lecturers in Uganda are extrinsically empowered but not intrinsically or vice versa and or not empowered at all?

Empowerment broadly refers to the expansion of freedom of choice and action. World Bank (2003) and others have termed it as a process of transforming powerlessness and increasing individuals’ control over their lives (http://www.lin.ca/resource/htm/vol24/v24n1a2.htm). It is argued that empowering requires the removal of formal and informal institutional barriers (cultural values and norms) that prevent the powerless from taking action to improve their well being. According to the UNDP (1995) this improvement of people’s choices should be sustainable from one generation to the other. Sen (2000) argues that women movements were primarily involved in working to achieve better treatment for women. The concentration was mainly on the well being of women. The objective has however gradually evolved and expanded from "welfarist" focus to incorporate and emphasize the active role of women’s agency. Women are no longer passive recipients of welfare –enhancing help, but increasingly seen as active agents of change. This agency role must be much concerned with women’s well being. Therefore, the well being aspect and the agency aspect of women’s movements inevitably have a substantial intersection. Understanding the agency role is thus central to recognizing people as responsible persons. Not only are we well or ill, but also we act or refuse to act and can choose to act one way rather than the other. And thus women and men must take responsibility for doing things or not doing them.

However, Koggel (2006) comes up as a critic to Sen and she defends the feminist relational approach on the grounds that it appreciates agency of people in different capacities, environment and the power that shapes this agency. She indicates that the sense of agency as people choosing to act in one way rather than the other can be limited. Agency is understood as being able to lead a life one has reason to value and that one does this by participating in and influencing the economic, social and political processes that affect that life. Agency therefore is about having power to remove barriers, to participate in and have a say about economic, social and political institutions and change the circumstances that limit ones freedom both from the inside and outside. Koggel is sceptical on this.

She indicates that human beings exist in relationships and do not come to the world as independents, self reflective and self sufficient agents as assumed by some liberal theorists. By recognizing these relationships, Koggel adds; it allows us to attend to the details of the lives of those who are shaped by particular social practices and political contexts. This helps us to pay attention to the workings of power and oppression and the ways in which factors like race, gender, disability and international barriers may reduce or prevent agency. This is where Koggel (2006) introduces the concept of minimal vs full agency. She gives an example of homeless people, but I can give an example of women. While women may stay for example in a university that exploits them, and/or while they may be quiet about this, it does not suggest that they are not agents. Some members of the university staff suggesting that women may not be fully empowered in Uganda do not suggest that they are not agents. It is the university norms, university practices, cultural values and society expectations, of the university in both the managerial and non-managerial (lecturing and the non-teaching staff) level that shapes their agency. This is what Kabeer (1994) has called ‘the power within’. Women concede that social rules, norms, values and practices play an important role in concealing the reality and pervasiveness of male dominance and some women may find it strategic to avoid conflicting situations with men, they thus remain constrained in the positions held, because they recognise that the rules of the game are loaded against them and the costs of confrontation are
likely to be high.

In addition, Sen (1997) agrees with Kabeer. To him, many women in the universities have no ‘power with in’ because someone else has and exercises ‘power over’ them. Most women are unable to participate in ‘power with’ others, because the men who have ‘power over’ them are the ones who decides whether they cooperate with any one who gets to cooperate with, and what exactly they cooperate with them on. Women must seek to acquire ‘power over’ themselves and their lives, ‘power to’ effect change and affect others, and in order to do so, they must gain some measure of ‘power over our world’ their personal, social and domestic circumstances, and our environment in every sense.

We have learnt that women assess their lives in resources like education, work opportunities and others. Sen (2000) indicates that empirical work has brought out very clearly that the relative respect and regard for women’s well being is strongly influenced by such variables as women’s ability to earn an independent income, find employment outside home, to have ownership rights and to have literacy and be educated participants in decisions within and outside the household as well as institutions. He continues that these aspects may at first glance appear to be rather diverse and disparate, but what they all have in common, is their positive contribution in adding force to women’s voice and agency- throughout independence and empowerment.

Kabeer (2005) supporting the same has argued that Resources + Agency = Capability. The resources she refers to are education, paid work, participation in politics, good health care and others. She indicates that each of the resources has a potential to bring about positive changes in women’s lives, but unlike Sen, she recognizes the role played by the relationships that govern the access to resources in question that will determine the extent to which this potential is realized.

Kabeer (2005) continues to say that education is crucial in women empowerment, Sen in Unterhalter (2003) has argued that schooling enhances well being and freedom of individuals, improves economic production and influences social change. That women’s education strengthens women’s agency and tends to make it more informed. Education is twinned with freedom and capabilities and will always be beneficial as an enhancement of freedom and empowerment. Sen (1997) continues to argue that, it is through education and its many forms that women will gain access to power, and learn how to use it well. It is through education that women are empowered, in every sense of the word (http://esaconf.org/WB/default.asp?action.htm). So far, the battles have not been easy and are still being fought to the death by many women. The issue of power is that we must face head-on if we are to successfully challenge and change the definitions, manifestations, uses, and abuses of power in our world. Education and empowerment go hand in hand. The broader the definitions of education, the broader the power practices.

However, Unterhalter (2003) criticizes Sen on the grounds that he ignores the fact that the quality of teaching and learning may not be uniformly high. We can therefore clearly see that Sen forgot that the relationships of power exist even in schooling or even in paid labour. Unterhalter indicates that in this unfair world, some forms of education do not enhance freedom and hence may not necessarily lead to empowerment. He gives an example that going to school for a young black South African woman may not well provide openings for what they are able to do or be, but may be placing them at a grave risk of severe trauma, infection and early death. The process of education in an unregulated social facility literally ends the girl’s life and destroys her capability. This means that education is not an end in itself.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Rationale and Design**

A qualitative research design was seen as most appropriate, in view of the study objectives. The study sought to elicit responses from people who have been working at the university between 8-3 years leading to an understanding of the challenges encountered by female in the university management.

**The sampling procedures**

Following what Twuwansi (2001) writes; for those doing impressionistic studies and aim at exploration into social phenomena within a short period of time, purposive sampling is relevant for such studies. Purposive sampling was therefore deemed appropriate for this study. Mbaga (2000) holds that in purposive sampling, the researcher handpicks subjects to participate in the study based on identified variables under consideration. Purposive sampling is used when the population for study is highly unique. It differs from other types of sampling in a way that purposive restricts the sample population to a very specific population and then tends to use all the subjects available.

**Population and sample size**

The total population for UCU in 2006 was 5513 of whom, 2733 are females and distributed accordingly into different positions. 20 in administrative positions and only 3 are females, two 238 are in academia and only 83 are females, 85 are non-teaching staff of whom 60 are females and 5170 is the student body and 2587 are females students. Females comprise of 2273 to 3240 males.

The only 3 females in top and middle management were included in the study, the number was minimal because they were the only females in key managerial positions, and other 2 females working as Assistant Academic Registrars were also included as junior managers. 10 more female lecturers were included, of whom 3 were senior lectures, 3 were lectures and the other 4 were junior lecturers plus 10 non-teaching staff (they included secretaries, cooks, office messengers, cleaners, library attendants, and bursars). For males, 4 were chosen among university administrators, 6 lecturers of whom 2 were senior lectures, 2 lectures and 2 junior lecturers and 5 non teaching staff members were included in the study. The total number of respondents was 40 of whom 15 were males and 25 were females.

**Data Collection Tools**

**In-depth Interviews**

Open ended interviews are ideal for investigating personal, sensitive or confidential information which is unsuitable to cover in a group format. They are also valuable for researching people with
busy lifestyles who would be unlikely to attend a focus group. For example the university administrators were busy with meetings here and there, it was rather convenient for them to sit for 30 minutes with the interviewer and express themselves freely. Interviews with university administrators and lecturers were conducted individually and varied in length. This depended on their ability to express themselves freely. The interviews lasted for 30 minutes and 40 minutes for those who were talkative and articulate and had enough time.

Focus group discussion
In the social research, focus groups allow interviewers to study people in a more natural setting than a one-to-one interview. In combination with participant observation, they can be used for gaining access to various cultural and social groups, selecting sites to study, sampling of such sites and raising unexpected issues for exploration. Focus groups have a high apparent validity since the idea is easy to understand, the results are believable. Also, they are low in cost, one can get results relatively quickly, and they can increase the sample size of a report by talking with several people at once (Marshall and Rossman 1999).

Data analysis
This is the act of transforming data with the aim of extracting useful information and facilitating conclusions. Data analysis is usually more narrowly intended as not aiming to the discovery of unforeseen patterns hidden in the data, but to the verification or disproval of an existing model, or to the extraction of parameters necessary to adapt a theoretical model to (experimental) reality (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). It is a process of bringing order, structure and interpretation to the mass of collected data. According to Bell, data collected by means of questionnaires, interviews, diaries or any other method mean very little until they are analyzed and evaluated (Bell, 1999: 171). The purpose of qualitative research according to Kvale (1996) is to describe and interpret themes in the subjects’ lived world.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Level of Awareness of Government Policy on Women in Higher Educational Management
Higher education most especially in private institutions employment remains one of the fields that individuals both men and women both as administrators, academia (teaching staff) and the non-teaching staff (include the bursars, cooks, office messengers among others) join without any government assistance. One of the intentions of this study was to find out whether the university workers were aware of the government policies concerning women in higher education management. Different respondents had different views depending on their level of understanding but none of them was aware of any government policy. A male administrator had this to say:

There is no government policy concerning women in higher education especially here in a private university. Those who are there just maneuver with their own effort. The government is concerned with women outside higher education. The government has for example affirmative action for both women representation in the parliament and for female students joining the university. Our government does not consider women in higher institutions of learning that’s both lecturers and administrators.

From the interviews carried out, almost 99% both male and female respondents were not aware of any law or government policy concerning women in higher education management. Most of the respondents said that, they have heard of a law that women should not be discriminated. After all, what type of discrimination, on which grounds shouldn’t they be discriminated? Is that law applicable to all sectors of the economy? Why not have government policies that would guide and influence the work of women in these institutions?

In addition, through in-depth interview with one of the administrators, it was observed that, the government lacks policies in key areas. The administrator stipulated for example that Uganda has a very high rate of adolescent pregnancy. Thirty five percent of girls are either pregnant or have given birth by age 17, and yet policies exclude pregnant or new mothers from school. How will females come up especially those who have been sexually abused or those who are victims of the circumstances like those in the war torn areas. Uganda has therefore lacked policies and laws to protect the rights of women though some laws are written down; they are not all that effective in academia. Having this in mind therefore, one would be right to deduce to a conclusion that women in higher educational management in this case are not extrinsically empowered by the government.

A policy proposal of 40% of managers in higher education being women
Different companies and institutions employ the best persons they prefer. There is a system of advertising jobs/post available in the institutions, the community responds by applying and then the institution shortlists the ones who meet their requirements. The short listed persons are called upon to do interviews. Interviews are both oral and written or one of the two. The one who passes interview is appointed to work. But this is done in most cases for official and donor (international demands) purposes, 68% of all the participants said that, the companies and or institutions get the people they want to employ even prior to the advertisements for the jobs in newspapers, institutions notice boards and other ways of communication, due to the fact that most people wish to employ their relatives, their friends, the friends’ children and the sons and daughters of the most common known people. That is, the sons of the country’s tycoons. What most people term as ‘technical know who’. At the end of the day, the company employs the most efficient and the best they want because there is no law that guides them.

Having that in mind therefore, I was prompted to address the question of having women in higher education management. The interviewees were asked for their opinion about what would happen if the government introduced a policy which required 40% of managers and administrators in higher education to be women. From the interviews that I made both male and female lecturers and administrators were amazed that I was asking such
question which to some of them was like addressing a dream of establishing a policy of having 40% of either sex in educational management. As I explained above, it’s not surprising to find a company with a few or none of women on her higher positions of management.

Having 40% of either sex in higher educational management is good and encouraging to young girls, a female lecturer noted with a smiling face. In her words,

"It would act as an eye opener to our sisters, daughters and other people who hold the view that the best office of the female is the kitchen. Such people would be able to aspire for greater heights in their career. They would be motivated to step in the shoes of the successful females who are ahead of them."

Women have been behind the doors of management for so long. A female administrator said that such a policy would be a blessing to this country. She notes that,

"It would actually help to fulfill the plans of the (UPE) Universal Primary Education and the affirmative action at the university because the graduates would be easily absorbed by the community by providing them with jobs."

Roughly 60% of the respondents (men and women) wished to have such a policy in place. A lecturer observed that, having such percentage would be a way of empowering female workers both intrinsically and extrinsically. That would mean that women are gaining both power with in and power over. In an in-depth interview with one of the Assistant Academic registrars, she narrated to that,

"Being in academic leadership position means making a sacrifice of one’s time and energy for the benefit of others as well as for the institution. This attitude is inherent in women in the way they sacrifice for their family members. When a woman is in a leadership position, she is extending sacrificial and nurturing attitude from her family to the institution. Why not have even more than 40% of women in higher education management since they are capable of doing a good work."

However some respondents never wished to have 40% of women in managerial positions. Due to privatization, such policy cannot work. A male administrator in a key position observed that:

"If the government puts up such at policy, I do think that it would work very well only in the public service not in the private services because what drives us (private sector) is competitiveness. Private institutions take the most competitiveness not the most female or the most male. This even applies to some government companies. Such policy can not work in Uganda."

On the other hand, both male and female respondents' views almost met on the issue of qualifications. Most of them said such policy would not work because most of the females are not qualified enough as one of the female administrators said;

"It would be good to have 40% of either sex but I don’t know how easy it would be to implement. Because I happen to have attended a workshop with Common wealth Universities in conjunction with Makerere university and one of the things we realized was that most of the women are at lower levels like the tutorial assistants, junior lecturers, lecturers, very few at senior lecturer level because of the qualifications they hold."

This indicates that although the government puts up a policy of having 40% of either sex in higher education management, in my view it would not work because Uganda encourages and supports private institutions of which competitiveness as one male administrator said is preferred. And of course the best and the highest qualifications are the added advantage to ones appointment to the best positions in management which sidelines most females to qualify for such positions and would be hard to meet the percentage. However most of the posts were filled by men who were not more or less qualified like their women counterparts. One actually wonders whether qualifications are the necessary tool for any managerial position in higher education.

Most of the respondents challenged the government for not empowering females to get to managerial positions and to their greater heights, and even those who are there are not helped (empowered) (only) to be confronted with the patriarchal and male dominated world where many find themselves operating in a radically different culture, with different perceptions and assumptions (Kwesiga 2002). This agrees with what Eggens (1997) termed as, the “Glass ceiling”, the unseen transparent wall that has kept women in middle and lower echoes of management.

**Maternity leave**

Uganda’s population is over 28 million people. Women produce now and then but it’s a pity that the government gives them only 60 days of maternity leave (The Constitution of Uganda, Article 20 section 56 (1-6) 1995) as amended. Female respondents expressed their views bitterly about that law, some women would not mind getting 60 days off work but the law is more written than practiced, 80% both male and female respondents said that women have life in their hands through the reproduction process that normally ties them behind the door of management, so they need to be treated with care and be given more days for maternity leave since they produce for the good and betterment of Uganda and the world at large. If the employers both in private and government institutions wish to employ females who are done with reproduction or who don’t wish to take maternity leave on their work place, then where will these fresh females who have just started reproduction be employed? What if women decide not to produce, won’t the government and the country miss a lot? A female lecturer stated:

"They fail to recognize and appreciate the fact that; by
producing, women are doing a noble job for the country because if one day women say they are not “producing machines or factories” that are producing babies, Uganda will not have any people. It’s not only women but all the people because they are produced by women.

The above statement indicates that the government has put little emphasis in helping working mothers. It’s inhuman to go to work when you have not stabilised biologically and physically especially after giving birth. This has increased most especially in private institutions which are more market oriented and aim at maximizing profits by employing the most competitive to the extent that some female employees are not allowed to return to work when they leave for their maternity. The New Vision for example published an article of the woman who was sacked because she went to deliver (www.newvision.co.ug/mainNewsCategory1d=9&news)

I was sacked for getting a baby

The above statement was uttered out by Abiro who lost her job because she got a baby. During the time she expected a baby she unfortunately lost her husband which was very stressing however during that agony she failed to report to school at the expected time. She had even left the school without any official and documented leave because the head teacher denied it to her. She narrates that she asked for the maternity leave in vain. She teaches at Wiggins Secondary School in Kumi district. Fellow female workmate also said that she went to her maternity leave and she was denied her Parents Teachers Association Salary for three months and the next time when she was expecting she wrote to the head teacher asking for the maternity leave but she never got any reply. She had to look for the best way of doing, producing and spent very few days home and returned to work as soon as possible.

Respondents highly stated that though the rights of women are well stipulated in the constitution of the country, some women are still discriminated not only in the private sector but in the government spheres as well. This however contradicts what the constitution states in Article 20 (3) Discrimination in employment shall be unlawful and for the purposes of this Act, discrimination includes any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, etc which has the effect of nullifying or impairing the treatment of a person in employment or occupation, or of preventing an employer from obtaining any benefit under a contract of service 20 (7). Every employer shall pay male and female equal remuneration for work of equal value.

From the above, few of the respondents, 30% both the employees and employers, were aware while the majority, 70% were not aware of the government policy concerning women and higher educational management. Higher education management remains alien to women especially those in the Middle Ages who are still in the reproductive period and need a lot of support from the government. This makes women in education sector more vulnerable and work as much as twice compared to their male counterparts.

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