WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH SUDAN.

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES, 2005 - 2013.

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**2. ABSTRACT**

Globally, women’s empowerment and political participation has been recognized as an important measure of the status of women in any particular country. Hence, in recent years, women’s participation in politics and decision making has received significant attention across the world. However, women remain seriously underrepresented in decision-making positions. The central objective of this study is to examine challenges and opportunities of women empowerment and political participation in the Republic of South Sudan. To this end qualitative research methodology will be employed. Data will be collected from secondary sources mainly from published journal article, media reports, books and report of government and non-government organization operating in South Sudan. It is true that more than half percent of the world’s population are women. But, they lack access to political decision making as compared to their counter parts at all levels of government. So that women’s equal participation in decision-making and politics is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy, but necessary pre-condition for women’s interests to be taken in to account in public life.

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**1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Background**

The exclusion of women in political participation and decision making processes was one inherited by human history. Even when democracy had birth ancient Athens in 5th century BC, the exclusion of women from political participation and decision making existed. The Athenians women had no right to vote or to participate in the democratic process and even they were not considered as citizens. Only Athenian men had a right to attend meetings of the assembly, a meeting of the citizen body which was called more than 40 times per year (Bentley et al., 1995). The absence of women in the involvement of the decisions of the assembly had deprived them to have a right to speak and to vote at the assembly. This also prevented them from having a chance to directly determine what the law should be. In other European countries, women had neither a right to political participation nor get involved involve the decision making and public affairs before 20th century. At the beginning of the 19 centuries Britain electoral system was far from democratic. The Britain electoral system was male adult suffrage and did not provide the means for fair and equal representations. The right to vote and be voted was restricted to men. Women had no role in the political sphere of the country. This had resulted in the rise of the suffragists (women campaigned to win the vote) (Bentley et al., 1995). Despite the efforts of the chartists, a mass movement of mainly working people who demanded universal suffrage in the late 1830s and 1840s, it was not until 1867 that the second reform Act was passed. Just after the end of the First World War, Britain was fully recognized the women’s right to political participation and decision making process (Bentley et al., 1995). After the establishment of the UN in 1946, there was an increasing recognition among international community of women's historic exclusion from structures of power. In African countries women have lacked space, of not purposely denied in both political engagement and decision making process. Although the whole African constitutions and laws enshrined provision that recognize the right of women to equally participate in politics, African women is the most disadvantageous and marginalized groups in political arena. Because this the result of several underlined and perceptible factors. One of the most remarkable factors was the African customary and traditional laws which were based on the patriarchy supremacy (Abdo & Abegaz, 2009).

For example the African traditional assembly leaders were male dominant; male exercised the power of the law making, decision or policy making and leadership of the African society traditionally and even religiously. Women had neither decision nor had the right to sit and speak or vote at the assembly. The ignorance of the African culture in women’s role of traditional leadership has hampered the current political participation and decision making involvements of the most African women, though many African nations made affirmative action’s to enable women’s equal participation in politics. According to Quadri Nigeria (and other African countries) lives in a patriarchy society where the women’s place is said to be in the kitchen. She can’t go against the wish of her husband. And within political groups, the woman is seen as a threat that must not be allowed to thrive (Charles & Tayo, n.d). Women will get empowerment in politics only if they get reservation in politics. Social barriers can also be overcome when the roots of women are raised and activated in politics. Although the South Sudan government already activated on paper the Affirmative Action (25% women representation in government positions) more concrete steps needed to enforce that further. This change of political development is visible in the form of political power. Instead of women, the place is reserved for political parties. The political uplift of women is not the basis of women's economic status. Women in this country have long waited for politics to come because the majority of parties do not give a chance to women in politics. This research intends to highlight the challenges facing women’s struggle for political participation as well as opportunities and provide some recommendations on the way forward in addressing the phenomenon.

South Sudan is currently governed by a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) which is expected to oversee several reform and transformation processes in different sectors as stipulated in the Agreement on Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) 2015. The TGoNU is to facilitate reforms and transformation processes in the security sector, judiciary, public/civil service, private sector, etc. In such a dynamic and fast changing environment, decisions are often taken in a fast tracked manner where by in most cases only those around the table at that particular time get to adequately shape and influence the direction of such decision. Therefore, at this rate, women as was the case in the past will often be excluded either deliberately or by omission. To mitigate the eminent omission, it is important for women to be adequately included in the reform and transformation processes being undertaken by the TGoNU.

Hence the importance for women to endeavor to realize both gender balance and gender competence by positioning best-qualified candidates for available opportunity. Certainly there are South Sudanese women who have attained a reasonable level of empowerment and particular skills and competencies required to lead and meaningfully participate in decision-making at national level. However, the systems, institutional norms and attitude of some men in some institutions still present obstacles for the progress of these women to hold higher positions and utilize their skills and intellect in providing services to the nation. Therefore, clear articulation of aspirations, setting priorities and laying strategies on how to utilize the existing opportunities is key to provide for meaningful participation of women in decision-making during and after the transitional period hence the need for this study document. Yet in some institutions women are yet to attain the required experience and rise to ranks that will enable them participate in major decision making processes in the sector, but in other sectors there already exists competent and capable women to strike the equilibrium of gender balance. Therefore, it is imperative that South Sudanese women focus on ensuring that they too are treated as equal citizens of this country and not always perceived as 25% Affirmative Action as is the case at the moment. The skills and potentials of South Sudanese women if well utilized would be of great benefit to the nation. E.g. Women as University 15 professors, legal practitioners, those who have been heading and serving in independent commissions, media, organize forces, civil society and the private sectors (Banking and other commercial sectors) just to mention a few. These are women who have the technical expertise and necessary competencies therefore they deserve to serve the nation in the best of their capacities and not to be treated as an affirmative action in the sector. Despite the fact that in South Sudan the adult literacy rate stands at a mere 27 per cent, 3 and women comprise 16 per cent4 of the 27 per cent overall adult literacy. Among the 16 per cent there exists women who have the required knowledge, skills and competencies to meaningfully contribute in national decision making yet they are not fully being engaged. It is therefore unfortunate to mention that these few women who could qualify to participate in various decision making processes still don’t get to adequately involved to participate in national decision making processes and shape the national agenda that impacts their lives and that of their fellow citizens.

Due to the above stated reason, this study will examine the aspirations and priorities of the women in specific sectors and enhance their participation in national decision-making across different sector and political divide. While all the political developments in the country seem not to fully recognize the potentials of women, for a long time, women too seem not to have a clear and formidable strategy that communicate their concerns and link women’s aspirations and priorities to different opportunities, thus the purpose of this study.

**1.2 AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The utmost reason for this study is to investigate the present state of concerns in relation to women’s political participation. The outcome of this research could be adopted as a way for political parties, civil society organization and other women political groups to campaign for the need to include women in internal party elections, constituency and general elections in South Sudan. The study seeks to find the development of women’s political participation relying on statistics to good governance and ways of achieving high levels of political participation of women in South Sudan. It is the keen hope of the research to try to pinpoint and look for answers to the encounters women face in their bid to get into politics. Finally, the research will try to suggest recommendations for political parties and the electoral processes as well as policy makers to inculcate in their policies to address ways that prevent women from participating in politics. Evidently, there is enough reasonable backing to support the claim that women have capabilities, which can be employed to meaningfully enhance economic, social and most importantly the political development of nation. Civil and women's groups have identified that women’s political participation is lacking and have made conscious efforts to address the issue, while such efforts have generated, in certain instances, positive outcomes, there is still much to be done to ensure that women are recognized in the political dispensation of South Sudan.

It is the above that the research tries to find out ‘What are the factors for the steady increase in women’s political participation in South Sudan? From the above, the following research questions will guide the study:

1. What is the role of education in the political participation of women in South Sudan
2. What is the role of gender quotas in the course of recognizing women in politics in South Sudan
3. What are the opportunities of women’s political participation?
4. What are the levels of women’s political participation under the lights of the South Sudan Transitional political landscape?
5. What are the challenges facing women political participation and what factors contribute to these?

**1.3 METHODS AND DATA**

Previous research has shown that women’s political participation around the world is increasing, but there is still work to be done to enable women pass the threshold in political participation. This study is aimed at researching into women’s political participation in South Sudan. The central objective of this study is to examine challenges and opportunities of women employment through political participation in the Republic of South Sudan. To this end qualitative research methodology will be employed. Data will be collected from secondary sources mainly from published journal article, media reports, books and report of government and non-government organization operating in South Sudan.

**2. CHAPTER TWO: PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

**2.1 Introduction**

This section of the research deals with existing studies which are relevant to the central theme, and show its association with the topic under investigation. Again, the literature review seeks to explain and justify how the research will lead to uncovering solutions to some of the questions in the research area. Hardly will you open a book or read from the media, without finding something related to gender and to its pertaining issues.

The issue of gender and politics has recently been a topic of discussion throughout the world: in the media, local politics, national level politics and international arenas as well. The scholarship on gender and politics go hand in hand or are intertwined. As posited by Diekman & Schneider (2010), men and women tend to support diverging political attitudes, as it is commonly identified both by social scientists and journalists. Gender has been identified by Waylen, Celis, Kantola & Weldon (2013) as not being about sex nevertheless, cuts across race, ethnicity, nation, class and different scopes of social life.

The researchers Waylen et al (2013), attest that male domination in ceremonial, leadership positions had come to be noted as normal and unchallengeable, and male power that existed in the family was viewed as biological obligation and mark of civilization since colonial eras.

**2.2 GENDER MATTERS POLITICALLY**

Gender is usually understood as sets of generally created understandings of masculinities and femininities. These connotations emanate from categorizations about male and female behavior; from the features of conduct usually linked with men and women; from normative suppositions about suitable behaviors of women and men; and from conventions about biological modification and from social structures of supremacy and alteration (Waylen, 2012). Even though, sometimes receive little attention by both experts and academicians equally, gender in politics needs to be addressed as both a practice and politics as theme of 9 study as noted by Beckwith (2010). Central to this endeavor, according to Waylen (2012) is that the politics of recognition cannot be overlooked as practice and the discipline of politics different from each other. The problem confronting both politics as a practice and politics as an educational discipline with respect to gender subjects are interwoven. When considering politics as a discipline and a practice, it is evident that there are massive alterations or modifications to both. True to the issue at hand is that more women have now been noticed as prominent politicians, leaders of state and of acclaimed bodies in Africa, Europe and Latin America, ranging from Angela Merkel in Germany, Dilma Roussef, the president of Brazil and Christine Largarde at the International Monetary Fund, and also not forgetting female heads of states in Africa: Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Joyce Banda and Catherine Samba-Panza, former presidents of Liberia Malawi and the Central African Republic.

It will virtually be difficult to refute that there have been noteworthy efforts and accomplishments, both in terms of accumulating women’s political participation and enlightening the prospects for women academicians in its entirety. Waylen (2012) believes that not just mere increasing of numbers of women has been important, but more reflective modifications are necessary for both politics as practice and politics as a discipline to make them more gender impartial.

To be able to make this a reality, it is vital to grasp what it is about politics as an educational field and politics as a practice and the means in which the two work together that account for men being dominant in politics than women. In the United Kingdom there are fewer women ministers in the cabinet, representing 22.5 percent pegging them on the 59 the position in the world league table of women’s representation, whilst South Sudan is sandwiched at the 169th out of 188 countries on the UN Human Development Index in 2015 and held the same rank on the UN Gender Development Index (GDI), which compares disparities between women and men in three basic dimensions of human development – health, knowledge and living standards. Women’s roles and the postulations made about their roles in the private arena still have an influence on the roles in government sectors. This continues to impact concepts of what is taken into account as politics and the political, which is still primarily high politics in the government sectors; who is perceived as a qualified individual to be involved in politics; and what are rightful concerns that is often shallowly explained and does not take into account definite events and actors and represent particular assumptions of masculinity and femininity, as observed by Waylen (2012). The artificial partitioning of the civic and private, benefitting high politics, and the acceptance of certain models of a person that has made politics as a discipline, somehow diverse of sociology and anthropology and the other social sciences, 10 which find it freer to connect the private arena and, as a result, have created an easy way to take gender aboard and take account of women in their field. Considering politics as a practice, it can be noticed that these fundamental suppositions are also mirrored in the ways in which politics is experienced. According to Waylen (2012), second movement feminism confronted the interpretations of what undertakings and issues are justifiably regarded as political. Of course, the women’s movements, as it was known by then, such as the political right and anti-war crusades, that were thought-provoking the status quo in the 1960s and the early 1970s. It is also necessary to bear in mind that upspring of the women’s movement itself was in part a response to prejudice within those other women’s wing.

**2.3 WOMEN IN POLITICS AND REPRESENTATION; GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

Women are less represented in politics globally. Just switching on the television to international leaders meeting, deliberations at a United Nations and African Union, meeting show a deficiency of female faces. Women are the majority of every country’s population 12 worldwide. But the global average proportion of women in national parliaments is merely 21.4% (IPU, 2013). But this shows a slight increase from that of 2007 average of 16 percent (Paxton & Hughes, 2007). Of the more than 195 countries on the globe, a woman is a leader of the government (prime minister or president) in only 19 (World Statement, 2014), this is also an increase from seven in 2007 (Paxton & Hughes). At the turn of the 21st century, there is obvious discrimination against women in politics. Nearly all countries in the world give women the freedom to partake in politics. Women can cast ballots, women can throw their support for aspirants or candidates and can compete for political office. But the absence of detectable women in the political endeavor of country after country suggests that disguised discrimination against women exists. From the perspectives of Paxton & Hughes (2007), there is no country in this world that women constitute fifty (50) percent of the national legislature, but few nations come near and even beyond. Sweden for several years occupied the league table of the percentage of women in parliament; however, Sweden was in 2003 overtaken by Rwanda, which reached 48.8%, but now boasts of the world’s highest average of women in parliament with 63.8 percent (IPU, 2013).The difference between the two countries is that Sweden is an industrialized nation and has seen harmony for centuries. In the Swedish case, women’s upsurge in politics was a long slow development. Beginning with transformations in the 1920s, Sweden recorded the 10% streak for women’s parliamentary representation in 1952, boasted the first woman interim prime minister in 1958, and then surpassed the 20 percent mark for women governmental manifestation (Paxton & Hughes, 2007). On the contrary, in 2003, Rwanda had just started to recuperate from a ruthless annihilation in which over a million people died. The 2003 poll was the maiden balloting of a new constitution, which assured women at least 30 percent of the National Assembly seats.

Prior to this, women have been invisible, never reaching 20% of the legislature before the change to a provisional government in 1994 (Paxton & Hughes, 2007). Longman (2006), attributes this achievement of more women in the Rwandan parliament to international organizations, local women’s institutions, and the total number of men who were either exterminated or imprisoned after the massacre, defines the sudden rise of women to significant political supremacy in Rwanda. Why care about the low number of women governments? Politics is an essential field of decision making. Politicians or government officials take political resolutions at the detriment of others. Judgments by legislators even have an influence on a person’s selection, by 13 inspiring some conducts and outlawing others. Again, political supremacy is respectable. Martin (2004), asserts that legislators hold supremacy over other societal organizations, such as family or education, and are capable of organizing specific practices into the decree. Political figures have the supreme edge to impose their decisions, sometimes with force. When there is political power, there is a position of control. In principle, most regulations are gender unbiased, and selected officials focus on voters in the same way. In practice, though, feminist political philosophers have contended that the presence of objectivity toward gender or parity that exists among men and women in political office really hides large gender disparity (Paxton & Hughes, 2007). In general terms men legislators are less likely to move and pass rulings that function in the interest of women and children (Childs & Withey, 2004; Schwindt-Bayer, 2006). But in social equality, opinions of all individuals or groups need to be heard, therefore, the expressions and point of views of women as well as men must be assimilated into political decision making.

**2.4 WOMEN AND QUOTAS IN SOUTH SUDAN**

According to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), women’s liberation and their full contribution on the grounds of parity, in all spheres of influence of society, consisting of membership in decision-making approaches and access to supremacy are important for the accomplishment of parity, growth and peace. From the IPUs (2013), perspective women have become powerhouses and powerful in political life in many nations, hitherto, they still lag behind in their representation in politics in the executive and governance at all echelons. Ever since the 1990s, gender quotas have been identified and accepted by many states as the most efficient instrument for amassing women’s political participation.

This from the standpoint of the UN (2005), recognized that 30% was the critical minority needed for women as a cluster to make an impact and affect parliamentary assemblies. This was to be attained via a variety of instruments with quotas for women’s representation in legislation. Almost half of the nations on the globe today have some form of the democratic gender quota system according to Dahlerup (2009). Still the importance and significance of gender quotas is contended especially in both liberal and young democracies such as countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including Ghana and Tanzania. Discussions continue on how to approach the low representation of women in politics and legislation. Quotas represent a kind of affirmative action measure intended to ameliorate the low pace of change in the representation of women and marginal groups in parts of societal order, where they are generally lagging behind men, comprising employment, education and in political 17 organizations. Quotas normally constitute allotting a percentage of spaces to be occupied by those who have a low representation of members. Dahlerup (2002), again stresses that for the past two decades, allocation of seats have been widely used in nations from the length and breathe of the globe as a propelling factor in the political representation of women. The quota system or scheme, according to Dahlerup (2002), puts strains on enlistment not on the individual woman, but on those who manage the process of recruiting. The major principle behind the scheme is to commission women into politically aware positions and to make sure that women are not under- represented.

In South Sudan, the Legal Frame system in place includes mandated quotas in the Constitution and the election law. The 25 per cent constitutional provision is not often met at local levels (Governors and County Commissioners). Women’s participation at the lowest level of government (Payam and boma) is also weak. No effective power parity between men and women in decision making positions has been reached so far. The Transitional ***Constitution, 2011 (TC)*** The TC guarantees women to participate equally with men in public life. A 25 per cent quota is mandated in each level of legislative and executive organs.

***The National Election Bill, 2012 (NEB)*** Elections for the President are held under an absolute majority system, with a candidate having to get at least 50 per cent plus one vote in order to win. If no candidate gets the required majority, a second round between the two candidates who received the highest numbers of votes is carried out. All State Governors and 60 per cent of legislative assemblies (both national and states) are elected using the simple majority system, in single member constituencies. The remaining 40 per cent is elected using a system of proportional representation with a 4 per cent threshold.

The proportional system incorporates two distinct pillars, a closed party list reserved for women of 25 per cent of all elected seats; and a general closed party list for the remaining 15 per cent. Women are predominantly elected only on reserved seats and just a minority run on geographical constituency and party list (Women were only 4 per cent amongst the candidates in party lists and for geographical constituencies (EU EOM Final Report, (2010). Furthermore, the 25 per cent clause is merely restricted to women nominated by political parties and independent women candidates are not foreseen in the National Election Commission (NEC). This will require women to have negotiating power to discuss with their parties in order to identify who will be on the women’s list. In addition, no rules on concerning the rank order on the party list are established in the law thus potentially undermining women’s chances to be in a winning position. Quota systems generally aim at ensuring that women constitute at least a "critical minority" of 30 or 40 per cent1. In this respect, the actual 25 per cent, combined with the virtual lack of women in the two other pillars of the electoral system, does not facilitate the attainment of a critical mass within the decision-making system. The literacy requirement to be eligible as candidate hampers women’s participation as candidates further on as 84 per cent of females in South Sudan are illiterate (Government of South Sudan’s Statistical Yearbook for Southern Sudan 2010). The nomination fees to be paid by candidates from the party and women list may also represent an obstacle to women candidates as many may not have the requisite amount of money due to their low economic status. 1.3. Draft Political Parties Bill, 2011 (PPB) The draft bill does not make clear whether it will be possible for parties to register at the Political Parties A Commission (check the correct name) after the 90-days deadline established in the draft law. This could carry implications for women’s group to establish themselves as political parties. Although parties must specify in their constitution how they will select their leadership, there is no provision concerning the possibility to introduce a quota system for candidacies and internal leading positions. There is no gender provision concerning parties’ responsibility in promoting women’s rights and political participation.

**2.5 SUMMARY OF REVIEWS**

Gender gap can be defined as the differences between men and women, particularly as depicted in social, political, intellectual, cultural or economic attainments. The understanding of the gender gap dichotomy is necessary for the course of politics. Having a deeper understanding of gender gaps in politically aware approaches with due appreciation of their integral difficulty, needs a method that combines influences from different disciplines; namely feminist analyses, political science and sociological standpoint. Even though, the gender gap is sometimes treated casually in the mass media, gender gaps are difficult spectacles that need cautious and logical consideration. The academic encounter is to have a deeper understanding of gender gaps not leading to essentializing variances amongst men and women and with emphasis on the appropriate services that design those characteristics. Again, there is the necessity to have a more refined, in-depth knowledge of players, and to proceed entirely away from concerns of just mere figures. This has before now existing with the upsurge of debate of critical actors, who are definitely men and womenfolk in a variety of settings. Superior investigation of organizations and societies and their interrelation with players or, at the slightest, how organizations define the aims and objectives of the players.

To be able to understand why gender matters in politics, it is critical that bodies or associations 19 are examined. In line with much of social science, there has been a structural turn in sexual role and politics. In general, it is essentially vital that understanding how together politics as a practice and politics as a discipline are sexualized be developed. To attain this, there should be an upgrade of examination of actors, traditions and the collaboration or relations amongst them. In effect, politics as a practice and a discipline as well as the societal differentiation of actors, structures and policies need to be aligned carefully and critically. Furthermore, the three categories of gender representation described by Paxton & Hughes (2007), thus, formal, descriptive, and substantive representation should be given a serious and critical look to its application of the different levels of the political divide to enable parity of gender in the political arena. The debate suggests that men and women are not the same due to dissimilar socialization and lifetime involvements.

Thus, according to Philips (1956), women bring to politics a different set of values, experiences and expertise. Women and men have different interests, and the concerns of women cannot be represented by men, therefore, women must be visible in political representation. It can also be said that the superiority of legislative outcomes should surge with more presence of women because; women’s inclusion increases the complete range of philosophies, principles, priorities and administrative styles. When women are part of the political field there are fresh thoughts, in that woman represent diversity of concerns. In addition, the effectiveness of the quota system is relevant to the course of women’s political participation. Considering the world league table of women in parliament, it could be noted that those parliaments which performed well used some form of a quota system. In the case of South Sudan, the Affirmative Action plan still lacks women’s representation in the national assembly all because, there is no proper defined electoral process which seeks to institute such quota systems to help women in South Sudan pass the critical minority.

**3.1 CHAPTER THREE: POLITICAL SITUATION OF WOMEN IN SOUTH SUDAN**

**3.1 Political History of South Sudan**

In 1956, when the Sudan attained independence from the British, a number of critical issues were left unresolved which became a source of conflict that devastated the country for the next five decades. At independence, the Sudanese Constitution had been expected to resolve the contentious issues of whether the country would be a secular or Islamist state and also to provide for the adoption of a federal structure. Unfortunately, both topics were neglected by the Arab-led government in Khartoum, prompting a mutiny by southern army officers that eventually sparked the first civil war, which lasted from 1955 to 1972. This in effect divided the Sudan between the predominantly Muslim north and the south, which was mainly Christian and animist. This first civil war ended with the signing of the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement between the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement and the Government of Sudan, which granted a degree of regional autonomy to Southern Sudan. The autonomous region consisted of the three provinces of Equatoria, Bahr el-Ghazal and Upper Nile, with Juba as the regional capital. For about a decade there was relative peace in the Sudan, until 1983 when President Jaafar Nimeiri introduced Sharia law and went against the spirit of the Addis Ababa Agreement. Once again, civil war erupted, with the South taking up arms under the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) against the Government of Sudan.

In June 1989, President Nimeiri was overthrown in a military coup by General Omar Al-Bashir. The civil war continued until 2005, ending with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The second civil war lasted for 21 years, leaving an estimated two and a half million people dead and over four million people displaced, mainly in the South. The extended period of armed conflict left behind a shattered economy, dismantled social fabric with very fragile social support systems, a traumatized population and disintegrated communities, all brewing risks and security threats, especially for women and children. Today, the after effects of the conflict are still evident, with disrupted community and family structures, a huge presence of small arms in the hands of civilians and vigilantes, the pervasiveness of trauma in the populace, increased alcohol and drug abuse, widespread unemployment, poverty, weak security institutions and an inadequate justice, law and order sector.

**3.2 SOUTH SUDAN WOMEN BEFORE AND AFTER INDEPENDENCE**

**3.3 South Sudan Women Before the Independence**

There is enough backing to support the key role women played in the run-up to attaining independence and soon after. Women’s role was vital in assisting the main political entity of that period, the Convention People’s Party (CPP). It is ascertained that women merchants were strong and powerful supporters of the CPP leadership, which also gave monetary support and helpful services. Inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic fighting over grazing lands and water sources, together with cattle raiding, have existed in the culture of most South Sudanese ethnic groups, but the scale, intensity, and impact of violence was not as intense as it became with the advent of modern weaponry in the country. Traditionally, rudimentary weapons, such as spears, were used and like in all African societies, women and children were never seen as legitimate targets in war. Not until the second Sudanese civil war (1983–2005) did the country begin experiencing a huge influx of unregulated small arms and light weapons that exposed many unarmed civilians to grievous bodily harm and death. Having illegal firearms in the hands of civilians became common place and brought about a transformation of culture, in which guns replaced spears and arrows. With firearms, the act of killing or injuring other people was depersonalized, promoting impunity and physical attacks on women and children. Increased weapons in the community translated into more violence against women and girls in their homes and in the public sphere.

Men became more violent and explosive, not only towards enemy soldiers on the battle field but even toward their loved ones and unprotected females in their homes, who had no fallback position for redress or attainment of justice. While women’s participation during the first civil war (1955-1972) is not well documented, there is ample evidence that South Sudanese women during that period challenged oppression by the conflict. Unfortunately, there has been no justice for the widespread injuries and violence women and girls experienced during the wars and until now, the issue has been systematically neglected during the peacebuilding and reconstruction period. Generally, women have not been given a chance to heal and reconcile with their past and effective mechanisms to enable the survivors of violent conflict-related crimes to access justice are lacking. It is important to note that even in the CPA women’s critical concerns – such as, human, economic, political and social security, health issues, including reproductive health, property rights, food security, access to justice and sustainable livelihood opportunities - were not addressed since the negotiations focused on issues related to power and wealth sharing between the north and south, restoration of security in respect to attaining a ceasefire between the warring factions, instituting security sector reforms, establishment of power structures, such as the executive and the legislative branches, strengthening the judiciary and putting in place systems for the administration of states.

**3.4 SOUTH SUDAN WOMEN AFTER THE INDEPENDENCE**

The independence of South Sudan from Sudan in July 2011 brought a sense of hope for peace and justice to all citizens of the country. Women in South Sudan hoped for acquisition of their rights and empowerment in both public and private spheres. However, this hope quickly disappeared when the country degenerated into conflict (Johnson, 2014). This left little chance for meaningfully empowering women through the ratification and implementation of the necessary international human rights instruments that promote the rights of women in line with the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan. Since then, international and regional agreements that deal with the need to prevent, strengthen, and address GBV and its victims are yet to be ratified and implemented (Mediel Hove, Enock Ndawana, 2017).

These embody “the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.” The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1996 (2011) which culminated in the setting up of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) all affirmed the importance of gender expertise to ensure the success of women participation in the political sphere and gender mainstreaming in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping operations, and post-conflict societies and in case of the latter addressing GBV as a weapon of war (Ali, 2011). By gender mainstreaming, we are simply referring to the recognition of the experiences, rights, and needs of both men and women, boys and girls.

Despite being the most important, even the UN has failed to fulfill the gender equality obligation called for by the CEDAW. This is manifest in the lack of a fair percentage of women occupying top posts of the international organization (Beleza, 2013). Besides, there was no system of accountability designed to redress human rights abuses in the last civil war that took place between north and south. Even before the outbreak of the third civil war, the legacy of the previous wars was apparent in Jonglei state where fighting between armed civilian groups had never ceased. This ruined the long-awaited benefits of personal safety and general security which were expected to be ushered in by the political transition. Consequently, war and violence unequivocally brought about mostly intense effects on the perception and creation of gender relations, with novel, more violent constructions of masculinity in previously present patriarchal relations frequently culminating in more dependency, exploitation, and subservience of girls and women (Jok, 2005).

**3.5 SOCIO ECONOMIC SITUATION OF WOMEN IN SOUTH SUDAN**

Women account for over 60% of the population in South Sudan. This is not a force of nature but a direct result of over 39 years of conflict since Sudan’s Independence. They are actively involved in all aspects of their society’s life. Though women’s share of the division of labour differs from place to place and from culture to culture, their average working day is believed to vary between 14 and 18 hours per day. Their status is low where they: (a) are generally poorer than men because they earn less; (b) are less educated; (c) are increasingly becoming heads of households, with no resources to support their dependents; (d) do not enjoy due acknowledgment for their labour contribution, particularly in agriculture, and (e) do not have decision making power. South Sudan is a patriarchal society that keeps women at a subordinate position, using religion and culture as an excuse. These excuses have for many decades, supported by laws and legislation that uphold patriarchy and women’s subordination. This has brought about and maintained disparities between men and women, in division of labour, share of benefits, in law and state, in how households are organized, and how these are interrelated. They also suffer from work stereotype and gender distribution of labor, more are occupy in economically invisible work. Women experience lower socioeconomic status in general and hence is marginalized from making decisions at all levels. Nonetheless, women are poor in terms of access to resources, services and employment.

Despite the subordinate status they have in the society, and their exclusion from most of the privileges and opportunities availed to their male counterparts, women’s contribution for the survival of the household and economic and social development of the society as producers and reproducers is indispensable. Hence, now a day’s efforts have been made to address the problem of gender inequality and gender based discrimination in the country. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan formulated several laws and policies to promote gender equality. Particularly Article 16 (3) of the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan 2011, clearly stipulates that "women shall have the right to participate equally with men in public life "the government has also been promoting the mainstreaming of gender in all of its development policies and strategies to address gender inequality. The South National Action Plan 2015 - 2020 was formulated and adopted in 2015 in order provide protection for women and girls, including those with disabilities, against any form of sexual and gender-based violence and restore the respect for human rights, human dignity and equality in South Sudan. The incorporation of gender issues in different national policies including Education and Training, Health, HIV/AIDS, Population and others formulated in the same year; as well as adequately addressing women’s concerns in the Transitional Constitution of 2011.

**3.6 INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

South Sudan’s Constitution and national policies are consistent with international legal instruments on gender equality, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the most comprehensive treaty on women’s human rights, which came into force in 1981, has been ratified or acceded to by 165 states worldwide.

It calls for equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and it emphasizes the importance of equal participation of women with men in public life. States that are parties to the Convention are obligated to ensure women equal opportunities in the right to vote and be eligible for election, the Beijing Plat form of Action which focused on full recognition of women’s rights and fundamental freedoms, and demands for progress towards gender equality in education and health care, in work and the family, and in the public sphere. The African Charter on Human and People Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the South Sudan constitution guarantees the rights of women as equal to those of men in all spheres including equality in marriage, the right to equal employment, and rights to maternity leave with pay, the right to acquire, administer, control, use and transfer property, with emphasis on land and inheritance issues and the right to access family planning and education. South Sudan is therefore making several efforts to strengthen national structures for achieving gender parity. In this regard the former South African president Nelson Mandela argues that “Freedom cannot be achieved unless the women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. All of us take this on board that the objective of reconstruction and development programme will not have been realized unless we see in visible practical terms that the condition of women in our country has radically changed for better and that they have been empowered to intervene in all aspects of life equal with any other member of the society”. Likewise the government of South Sudan should work a lot to close gender gap in the country and to bring women at the center of policy making and development. Equality between men and women, and boys and girls, is one of the central pillars of the South Sudan Gender Policy. The vision of the South Sudan National Gender Policy is that of a country that is free from all forms of discrimination and violence, where women, men and children enjoy their human rights on the basis of equality and non-discrimination in all spheres of national life. It is underpinned by the commitment of the Government of South Sudan to uphold and protect the rights and dignity of all the people.

**3.7 ARGUMENTS FOR WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

Politics is almost everywhere a male-oriented, male-dominated enterprise and female political participation is not as such good as expected. In today’s discussion of women’s political representation, there are different important arguments. The justice argument; women account for approximately half the population and therefore have the right to be represented as such; the experience argument; women’s experiences are different from men’s and need to be represented in discussions that result in policy-making and implementation.

These different experiences mean that women ‘do politics’ differently from men; the interest argument; the interests of men and women are different and even conflicting and therefore women are needed in representative institutions to articulate the interests of women.; the symbolic argument says that every female politician acts a role model for all women, regardless of political views or party membership and will attract other women to the political arena; the critical mass argument states that women are able to achieve solidarity of purpose to represent interests when they achieve certain levels of representation; and the democracy argument asserts that the equal representation of women and men enhances the democratization of governance in both transitional and consolidated democracies. All of the arguments deals about the importance of women inclusion in politics are great. As a result women need to be included equally with men in every sphere of their life.

**3.7 THE CONCEPT OF WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

Participation is a development approach, which recognizes the need to involve disadvantage segments of population in the design and implementation of policies concerning their wellbeing. The strengthening of women’s participation in all spheres of life has become a major issue in the development discourses and hence, socioeconomic development cannot be fully achieved without the active involvements of women in the decision making level in all society. On the other hand political participation refers the active involvement and engagement by individuals both women and men with political process that affect their lives. The act of active engagements includes voting, standing for office, joining of political party or to take part the political campaigns of the political parties and to exert influence in the decision making process through public debate, and dialogue with the representatives they elected or through their capacity to organize themselves; or exercise public power by holding public office at different levels of administrations- local, regional, national and international. Therefore, political participation is understood as a prerequisite for political development hence, by improving women’s political participation, given that they constitute over a half of the world’s population may help to advance of political development and improve the quality of women’s lives. In fact, without the active participation of women, and the incorporation of women’s perspective at all levels of decision making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.

**4.1 RESEARCH GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

The general objective of this study is to assess the women’s political participation and decision making under the South Sudan political landscape.

***The specific objectives of this study are:***

To determine the opportunities in women political participation

2. To determine the level of opportunities of women’s political participation under the lights of the South Sudan political landscape;

To determine how can we empower women for political participation?

To expose the potential factors contributing to the lack of women political participation.

**4.2 HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY**

As I indicated in the prior part, women’s political infra-representation has been impulse by several factors. We could differentiate between those socio-economic dimensions involve in the process, as well as the more institutional ones. Regarding to the socio-economic factors, we can talk as to the potential influence different elements as economic development, women’s employment and education position, and religious main confession.

In that sense, it is reasonable to assume that in the poorest countries, in those places where the insertion of women to the labour market has been limited, in countries where women levels of education are significantly low, and in those parts of the world where the occurrence existence Christian religion is elevated, the stage of women’s presence in the decision-making process is still incomplete. These arguments lead to my first group of hypotheses:

* H1: The wealthier a country is, the higher is women’s political representation.
* H2: Countries with a consolidated level of female education are countries were women’s political representation is higher.
* H3: The more extended is the presence of women in the labour market, the more complete is women’s political representation.
* H4: The less introduced in the Christian religion, the higher is it women’s political representation.

In what concern to the institutional dimension, we can consider diverse factors related to the quality of democracy, the configuration of the electoral system, the state ideological profession, the level of women’s movement development, and the legal confirmation of specific gender rights. In that sense, we could say that countries with electoral systems ruled by a proportional principle of representation, and countries where a system of quotas was legally introduced for assuring females presence in electoral lists, are potentially stimulating women’s political representation. This idea frames my second group of hypotheses:

H5: The more consolidated are democratic principles in the country, the higher is women’s political representation.

* H6: The longer the right of universal suffrage is extended to women, the more political representation females have obtained.
* H7: The more proportional the electoral system is, the easier is taking part in the decision-making process for females.
* H8: The introduction of women representation quotas by law, involves an effective increase d of women’s political participation.
* H9: The more developed is women’s movement organization, the higher is women’s political representation.
* H11: In those countries where the abortion right is legally recognized, women’s political participation is higher.

**4.3 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY**

Women, who are considered to be the cornerstone of society, women in the modern era are representing the politics of most countries around the world. Seeing history, you find that women are playing an important role in creating society. It is known that the role of women in society and their nature is philosophical, religious and political views. Communal structure and women's politics were given a place in the discussion on the situation so that they could come to politics themselves. In South Sudan, women have contributed to the economic development, raining of family and even other also decided to joint and fight as combatants for the independence of the country. Given this history, it’s important to shade more lights on opportunity and challenges facing women in this country thus this study.

**4.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study on the challenges of political participation and decision making of women in South Sudan will be conducted through descriptive analytical survey design. The study will specifically investigating the women’s political participation and decision making challenges, and the previous failures and how to empower women to participate in politics and decision making process aimed at to solutions towards political imbalance in South Sudan.

**4.5 GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE**

Geographically, the study will be carried out in Juba, the capital city of South Sudan. This location of research has been chosen because of its strategic being as capital city of South Sudan where the central government is actively operating, the city of the politician and the civil society and also there is accessibility, time and economic factors as well. All of these facilitates getting the necessary information concerning the matter under investigation.

**4.6 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this study, I will review the existing definitions and measures of women’s empowerment and political participation in South Sudan. It’s important to know what kinds of difficulties the previous studies have faced in measuring women’s empowerment; what the different indicators of women’s empowerment are; what the existing policies are to accelerate women’s empowerment, how much they are effective to change women’s empowerment etc. Understanding the impacts of women’s empowerment on different developmental outcomes is another objective of my study.

I will also need to understand the possible determinants of women’s empowerment. In order to gather the existing knowledge regarding the above mentioned facts I need an extensive literature survey. Keeping this view in mind, I will review various literatures relating to my study.

**4.7 CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

The central objective of this study is to examine challenges and opportunities of women employment through political participation in the Republic of South Sudan. To this end qualitative research methodology will be employed. Data will be collected from secondary sources mainly from published journal article, media reports, books and report of government and non-government organization operating in South Sudan.

**4.8 TIME SCOPE**

The study will cover the period between 2011 – 2013 to find out the opportunities of women political participation after the declaration of the South Sudan as an Independent Nation and also how negatively the unfortunate political event which erupted in 2013 result in the civil war in the newest nation has undermine the existing efforts to women political participation in South Sudan.

* 1. **RESEARCH TIME FRAME**

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| --- | --- |
| **Objective** | **Schedule/Dates** |
| **Phase 1: Pre-writing** |  |
| Share the draft proposal with the program Mentor for review | 30.05.2019 |
| Receive Feedback from the program Mentor | 10th/06/2019 |
| Meet with my Sample population and get answers to me questions | 13/06/2019 |
| Enter the data obtained from the field | 15-17/06/2019 |
| Assemble materials, review and finalize proposal | 20/06/2019 |
| Share the final copy of the proposal with the Mentor | 24/06/2019 |
| Budget needed for the Field Work | 20’000 South Sudanese Pound (SSP). |

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