

WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT: THE CASE FOR BOTSWANA

Prof. S. Tichapondwa Modesto (DLitt et Phil)
stmodesto2006@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Study aims to share information on the employability of women in management in Botswana. It was motivated by the problem of lack of commonly available information about the ratio of women to men in decision-making positions. Three questions guided the investigation conducted over a period of four weeks:

- i. What is the proportion of women to men in management positions?
- ii. From general observation, it seems women in decision-making positions are fewer than men. Why is this the case?
- iii. What policies are in existence to rationalise allocation of management positions?

To respond to the questions, data were collected using: document analysis and questionnaires with officers purposively sampled from four main players: the public sector, parastatals, the private sector, and organised groups (e.g. trade unions and non governmental organisations). Essentialist and social construction theories guided data collection. Analysis of data involved interpretation of statistics and views solicited from participants. Two key findings were that: a) the proportion of men in decision-making positions remains higher after almost 50 years of independence. Secondly, there is a conscious effort at statutory level to ensure inclusion of more women. Based on the findings, the study came up with recommendations and one of them was that apart from having in place policies, which are conducive to elevation of women, there should be more conscious effort to expose more women to open and distance learning higher education programmes that will make them more competitive.

Keywords: Decision-making positions, management, empowerment, gender mainstreaming.

INTRODUCTION

In www.gta.co.bw/news/.../2012/Women-in-Business-in-BOTSWANA.pdf, Grant Thornton International Ltd. observes that in Botswana, 39% of senior management roles are held by women – a 7% increase from last year's 32%. This signifies a lower percentage compared to that of men, and this means there is room for improvement in terms of the number of female leaders in the country's corporate organisations. Drawing comparison with other countries, Grant Thornton has observed that Botswana, Brazil and Japan (all 3%) perform worst on the measure used, with the United Kingdom and the United States (both 6%) not far ahead. Australia topped the table with the highest proportion of females in top management. It is against the perceived problem of a lower percentage of women CEOs and other higher positions in Botswana that the investigation was conducted, to inter alia, establish reasons for the low percentage, and confirm what policies are in place to enhance opportunities for women elevation.

Discussion will revolve around a number of key words, including the following:

Decision-making positions: When occupying a position, decision-making involves weighing the positives and negatives of each option in a given problem situation, and consider all the alternatives. For effective decision-making, a person must be able to forecast the outcome of each option as well, and based on all these items, determine which option is the best for the organisation This view is expressed in <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/decision->

[making.html#ixzz2hxWbqP6H](#). Decision-making accounts for the successful strategic management of an organization.

Management: This refers to the daily exercise of functions of planning, leading, organising and controlling as a result of a formal position of authority held in the organisation (Kotter, 1990; The Harvard Leadership Guide, 2005). Management entails institution of systems to ensure that all employees comply with top-down policies and directives.

Empowerment: According to recent information from the World Bank (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTEMPOWERMENT/>) Empowerment 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 individual and collective assets, and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context which govern the use of these assets. In our discussion of women in high positions, empowerment is closely linked with management and decision-making.

Gender mainstreaming: ECOSOC (1997) defined the concept of gender mainstreaming as follows:

"Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality."

The definition is relevant to our discussion of women in management.

Background to the Study

The Republic of Botswana, is a landlocked country in the Sub-Saharan Africa sharing borders with South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. She gained political independence from Britain in 1966 after existing as a protectorate for fifty years. Botswana practices a multiparty democracy and uses the first-past-the-post constituency model of electoral system. According to the *Government of Botswana, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs* (2008, p. 4):

In Botswana, ascent to the positions of power is constitutionally guaranteed to all individual citizens regardless of their race, ethnic group, religion, gender and any background that can define a person as long as the considered candidate is fulfilling the requirements. Even though women have the same civil rights as men in Botswana on a legal level, in practice, political and societal prejudice is observed to be persistent.

However, Botswana is one of the countries that have ratified to the international and regional gender declarations. These are the Beijing Declaration-platform for action, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and Southern African Development Community (SADC) declaration on gender and development. These declarations address human rights and components of gender equality and empowerment of women.

Statement of the Problem

The study investigates the lack of commonly available information about the ratio of women to men in decision-making positions. Related to the problem are questions regarding reasons for the perceived low ratio of women vis-à-vis that of men, as well as whether there are policies in place to address the issue of equality. Action research is conducted to address the perceived problem so that there is a basic common understanding of this important feature of our country. Three questions guided the investigation conducted over a period of four weeks:

- i. What is the proportion of women to men in decision-making positions?
- ii. From general observation, it seems women in decision-making positions are fewer than men. Why is this the case?
- iii. What policies are in existence to rationalise allocation of management positions?

Aims of the Study

Although views on gender have been written in daily newspapers, and expressed variously at conferences, there remains a gap in bringing information to the general public about women/men demographics about equality in decision-making positions. It should be common knowledge to speak with confidence about any discrepancies about representation by either gender (the what aspect), and also explain why the situation stands as such (the why aspect). Equally important, the literate and the professionals, should be familiar with policies, if any, that are in place to enhance women advancement (the how aspect). Thus, the study aims at empirically investigating the Botswana situation and shed light on:

- What the gender proportion is
- Why the gender proportion is the way it is
- How the government motivates women advancement

Justification of the Study

Knowledge about the three aspects itemised as aims, empowers citizens (at the general level) with an understanding of their social, cultural, and economic environment. Academics, possessing such knowledge will be able to share such knowledge with increased confidence, while planners in government will be able to apply policies with more insight than is currently the case. They will mainstream the gender notion in their activities. Most importantly, women themselves, who are central to the discussion, will benefit from the present study regarding their employability at managerial level. The benefits to the three groups will be in line with Botswana's Vision 2016, the country's strategy to propel its socio-economic and political development into a competitive, winning and prosperous nation. It aims to make Botswana an educated and informed nation.

The foregoing is, therefore, ample justification for the study. However, for systematic investigation to occur, it is needful to be guided by some theory.

Theoretical Grounding

Literature on gender abounds, but research on gender issues is under-theorised. In the present section, a brief discussion of views on gender, from general literature is shared. This will be followed by selected theories applied in tackling research on women in positions of decision-making.

The history of concern with gender issues shows how human rights advocates preoccupied themselves with different aspects of the gender debate. For example, Freeman (2004) observes that in 1963, the Equal Pay Act was passed by the U.S. Congress, promising equitable wages for the same work, regardless of the race, colour, religion, national origin, or sex of the worker. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (2010) observes that it was not until 2005 that women in Kuwait were granted the right to vote and stand for election. In her most influential book, *The Second Sex* (1949), de Beauvoir argued that women have been defined by men and that if they attempt to break with this, they risk alienating themselves.

Smith (2005) calls her particular approach **institutional ethnography**. It is a method of elucidating and examining the relationship between everyday activities and experiences and larger institutional imperatives. The very term “institutional ethnography” explicitly couples an emphasis on structures of power (“institutions”) with the micro level practices that make up everyday life (“ethnography”). Smith’s point, of course, is that it is in micro level, everyday practices at the level of the individual that collective, hierarchical patterns of social structure are experienced, shaped, and reaffirmed. It is against this ethnographic background that women struggle to be recognised in everyday life. This, coupled with affirmative action, would be a more viable alternative.

Further, women are advised to cultivate around the minimum qualifications required for promotion by learning new skills, demonstrating innovativeness and creativity. This happens through continuous professional development, and is accomplished by cultivating life-long habits, which will support the manager to successfully navigate shifting organisational leadership directions. This echoes what Lamb and Cassidy (2006) refer to as career self management. Thus, employability enables individuals, men or women, to enhance promotion chances when posts are advertised either in the applicant’s current organisation, or elsewhere.

The concept of employability comes to mind as a general framework guiding promotion for both male and female executives. Affirmative action and possession of relevant qualifications aside, the applicant for a decision-making position must be employable. Yorke (2004, p. 1) defines employability as:

a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy

Literature (e.g. Baruch, 2003; Seibert, Kraimer, and Crant, 2001) makes it clear that there is no substitute for skills, and in the words of Bevitt (2008, p.22) “...successful enterprises of the future will be those with the most skilled, creative, innovative and enthusiastic workers”. This means, for either men or women to be promoted, they must necessarily possess these attributes. For women in particular, it is noteworthy that holding the required degree and affirmative action should not be viewed as the ticket to occupying leadership positions.

Three conclusions can be drawn from the views expressed in the general literature above:

- a. Not only is the standpoint of men consistently privileged, but that of women is devalued.
- b. The experience of women in society is not the same as that of men.
- c. The expansion of women’s rights does not proceed automatically and must not be taken for granted.

Two complementary theories are selected in order to guide investigation about women in management in Botswana, namely, essentialism and social construction (Trauth, 2002). Although these have been specifically used to investigate women and Information technology, they are considered applicable to the present study given the under-theorisation in gender research.

Essentialism is the assertion of fixed, unified and opposed female and male natures (Wajcman, 1991, p. 9). The existence of biological difference between the sexes has led to a tendency to assume that other observed differences between men and women are due to biological determinates as well (Marini, 1990). When applied to the topic of gender and management, the essentialist theory presumes the existence of relevant inherent differences between women and men with respect to the way they manage organisations. Thus, the causes of gender underrepresentation in management could be attributed to biology. It turns to observed differences in men's and women's behaviour for explanations of what are believed to be inherent, fixed, group-level differences that are based upon bio-psychological characteristics. Essentialism underlies research on gender and elevation to managerial position that views gender as a fixed variable that is manipulated within a positivist epistemology (e.g., Dennis, Kiney, & Hung, 1999; Venkatesh & Morris, 2000). Adam *et al.*'s (2001) analysis of this perspective points out that focusing on a background literature of psychology, alone, places too much emphasis on individual gender characteristics where a form of essentialism may creep in. Looking only to psychological explanations of observations without giving attention to the influence of context results in a determinist stance with respect to gender. Essentialism theory, therefore, says that women are denied promotion simply because they are women.

The other dominant theoretical perspective focuses on the social construction of positions of decision-making. According to this theory, there is a fundamental incompatibility between the social construction of female identity and the social construction of leadership positions as a male domain (cf. Trauth, 2002; Smith, 2005). This explanation for women's relationship to management looks to societal rather than biological forces. Thus, the causes of gender underrepresentation can be found in management as a reflection of the wider society. According to this view, the social shaping of top positions as a preserve for men, tends to place leadership outside the domain of women.

Thus, application of the theories will assist in answering one of the questions, namely: Why are women under-represented in management positions? Research in the Botswana Case Study will confirm the extent to which biologism or social constructionism account for the allocation of responsibility.

Methodology

Presently, discussion shifts to the critical methodology issues. The research design used, the paradigm, the methods, and sampling procedures are explained in some detail.

Research design

The research is conducted in accordance with the Case Study design, best defined by Yin (1984:23) as:

...an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

The locus of the study is the real life of promoting women to higher positions in Botswana, and the understanding of the situation on the ground has been identified as the problem. In that regard study of the case examines a single example (the Botswana scenario) in order to provide reliable information about the broader class of the phenomenon of elevation of women. As Flyvbjerg (2006) observes, the case study is a scientific research methodology, which produces the type of context-dependent knowledge. By capturing views expressed by officers, we get authentic knowledge about Botswana's situation.

Research paradigm

The study is approached with some degree of subjectivity because somehow we already know that generally speaking, men are more preferred than women in Botswana and neighbouring countries. What we may not know for certain are the reasons for that, or what policies are in place. It is, thus, difficult to objectively measure the observable social realities of promotion. The present study falls in the interpretivist or constructivist paradigm. According to this paradigm researchers give importance to their beliefs and value to give adequate justification for a research problem (Easterby- Smith *et al.* 2006).

Methods

To collect data about the ratio of women to men who are in positions of decision-making, and reasons why there are more men than women, documents from the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) were analysed. Statistics from different national players were analysed and commented upon. In this regard, statistics constituted quantitative data documented as close-ended information.

In contrast, office bearers who were requested to respond to a questionnaire, gave open-ended information in which participants responded in their own words. This method particularly solicited information that answered the question: Why are women in decision-making positions fewer than men? The analysis of these qualitative data (words or text) typically follows the path of aggregating such words into categories of information and presenting the diversity of ideas gathered during data collection.

By mixing the datasets (quantitative and qualitative), a better understanding of the problem is provided than if either dataset had been used alone.

Sampling

Botswana recognizes the responsibility attached to offices by salary grades. The top most salary bracket for CEOs in the Public Service is marked as F0, while that of deputies is noted as F1. Other decision-making salary scales are E1, E2, and D1. The sample comprised five organisations from which officers in F1 and E1 scales were selected to respond to questionnaires. CEOs were excluded mainly because they are too busy to be in a position to attend to details such as answering questionnaires. The sample stood thus:

Organisation	Female Number in F1	Male Number in E2
a. A Parastatal	2	2
b. A Public Sector Institution	2	2
c. A Private Sector Organisation	2	2
d. A Trade Union	2	2
e. An NGO	2	2
Total	10	10

The sole purpose of the sample was to get representative views from the five acknowledged players. There are many in each category, that is nationwide, and it was difficult to contact all. Judgment was exercised in terms of vicinity (thus cutting down on cost), and accessibility. Purposive sampling was, therefore, preferred regarding participants. On the other hand, selection of documents for analysis depended on their availability, so convenience sampling was used.

Ethical Considerations

Distribution of the questionnaire had ethical implications, especially that the researcher was dealing with important people in society. Participants wanted to know to what purpose the solicited information would be put, and as to whether any clearance to conduct the study had been sought with the relevant parent organisations. First and foremost, the participants were given explanation of the objectives of the study, and how responses would enable the nation, at large, to have basic knowledge on women in management. During visits to individual respondents, assurance was given that the information, when systematically presented, would serve as material for use by academics who were pursuing the Commonwealth Executive Master in Business Administration or Public Administration (CEMBA/CEMPA). They were informed that Botswana was an active participant in the COL initiative, so the resulting document would help in profiling Botswana as a democratic nation. Assurance was given that the study was not a profit-making activity, and at the same time participants had the right to decline to participate. Finally, one benefit promised was that once the article had been accepted by the COL's Executive Governing Board for the afore-mentioned two programmes, participants would receive a copy.

FINDINGS

For ease of analysis, the findings are presented question-by-question.

What is the proportion of women to men in decision-making positions, nationwide?

Data, which were captured to respond to this question came from documents conveniently sampled from various sources. The UNICEF (2011, p. 6) Annual Report observes that despite being an upper middle-income country, Botswana continues to face development challenges such as persistent poverty and inequality among men and women. Although there is evidence that there is progress in women's participation in managerial positions and positions of leadership, women's representation in political office in Botswana is well below the SADC target of 30%. The percentage of women in Parliament dropped to 7% in 2009, from 11% in 2004 (UNICEF, 2011). These statistics on political representation are representative, and are echoed in the composite percentage by Grant Thornton International (2012) who note that in Botswana, 39% of senior management roles are held by women – this is a 7% increase from

the previous year's 32%. Obviously, this shows some improvement, but the percentage is, nevertheless, low taking into consideration statistics provided by Thornton International. According to their findings in terms of the number of female CEOs in the country - Botswana, Brazil and Japan (all 3%) perform worst on this measure, with the United Kingdom and the United States (both 6%) not far ahead. Australia topped the table with the highest proportion of female CEOs - women lead three in 10 businesses in Australia.

The Government of Botswana, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (2008), from which subsequent information is sourced, gives further statistics on the subject. Table 1, data about decision makers in the civil service are shown.

Table 1 Civil Service decision makers

Grade	Female	Male	Total
D1	173 (41%)	250 (59%)	423 (100%)
E2	88 (40%)	133 (60%)	221 (100%)
E1	27 (28%)	61 (69%)	88 (100%)
F2	19 (28%)	56 (72%)	78 (100%)
F1	11 (31%)	25 (69%)	36 (100%)
F0	5 (18%)	23 (82%)	28 (100%)
Total	323	548	874 (100%)
Percentage	37%	63%	100%

The Table indicates that those in the top salary scales, associated with leadership positions, account for 37% women and 63% men. It is, therefore overtly clear that men are more privileged. The next table from The Government of Botswana, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (2008) sheds light on statistics from individual ministries.

Table 2: Distribution of decision making positions by gender per Ministry

Ministry	Female	Male	Total	Percentage women
Agriculture	14	34	46	26%
Education	14	24	38	37%
State President	42	56	98	43%
Finance and Development Planning	45	44	89	51%
Trade and Industry	9	19	28	32%
Local Government	29	28	57	51%
Works and Transport	2	32	34	6%
Minerals Energy and Resource	4	19	23	17%
Health	53	108	161	33%
Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	12	25	37	32%
Lands and Housing	6	10	16	37%
Communications Science and Technology	14	10	24	58%
Environment Wildlife and Tourism	9	14	23	39%
Youth Sports and Culture	8	8	16	50%
Labour and Home Affairs	7	11	18	39%

The lowest percentage (6%) is recorded in the Ministry of Works and Transport, followed by

Ministries of Minerals and Energy (17%), Agriculture 26%), Foreign Affairs (32%), Trade and Industry (32%); and quite surprisingly, Health (33%). The Health Ministry is normally dominated by female nurses. The Ministry of Communication Science and Technology recorded an impressive appointment of women into the positions of Decision making with 58%. It is followed by the Ministries of Local Government, Finance and Development Planning and Youth Sports and Culture with 51%, 51% and 50% respectively.

Parastatals such as Bank of Botswana, Botswana Technology Centre, Botswana meat Commission, and Botswana Telecommunications Authority (BTA) do have a clear inclination towards more men decision-makers. The BTA has the low percentage of 13%. Finally, the private sector tells a similar story with the distribution of top positions in favour of men. A Clay works company indicates that 23% decision makers of this company are women while the rest are men. The other companies are A car battery manufacturing company (17%); A motor car fuel company (14%); a private primary school (71%); and an insurance company (10%). All companies favour men, and the only variation is the private school.

The present section has answered the question about representation in the different sectors. The conclusion arrived at is that with few exceptions, the inclination of most organisations leans towards more male decision-makers. It is the reasons for this, which are addressed as we answer the next question.

From general observation, it would appear women in decision-making positions are fewer than men. Why is this the case?

Researching within a cultural background that is known to have a bias towards men, it is inevitable to explore this question with some pre-conceived explanations. However, in a more empirical bid, it is essential to base conclusions on views by insiders (position holders). A total of 20 decision-makers from five players, sampled from the national pool (see §7.0 on methodology) responded to questionnaires. Interpretation of findings will be influenced by the theories of essentialism and social construction, alluded to in §...

Essentialism argues that differences between men and women are due to biological determinates. On the other hand, social constructionism argues that the issue of underrepresentation of women in management positions is best explained by societal rather than biological forces.

In response to the question, two things, which made the respondents qualify for the post they hold were a) the right qualification, and b) relevant experience. The exception came from two male respondents, namely, having higher than just the right qualification. They observed that today, more than minimum qualifications should be considered.

Only five women affirmed that holding the right qualifications should be considered when women compete for the same post with men. Eight of ten male participants concur that possession of the right qualification should be upheld. All who responded to the question in the affirmative, agree to this on the basis of two variables, and these are:

- a. without the relevant qualification, one cannot lead successfully; and
- b. that having the right qualification means possession of requisite skills

The women who said 'no' to the need to hold the relevant qualification offered two reasons as follows:

- a. In Botswana, men have more privilege to go to school, so if a woman has a diploma she should be promoted when competing against a man who holds a degree.
- b. A woman without a degree, but has a good basic qualification plus experience should be elevated.

From this, it can be concluded that the issue of education, a social construction element, bears some impact on the elevation of women.

The next question was: What challenges do women leaders face when in positions of decision-making, which their male counterparts do not face? Two points came from all the 10 women:

- a. Natural ailments, which women experience every month resulting in missing out days at work.
- b. There are responsibilities of a mother at home, which take time and energy.

The majority of men, seven of 10 raised similar points. These commonly shared responses illustrate that biological considerations are actively at play, and negatively impact on the preferment of women in Botswana. In response to the questions, some male respondents make additions thus:

- a. When women are visited by natural ailments, they become moody and this makes the workplace atmosphere unpleasant.
- b. Women think men are challenging their authority even when asking constructive questions. They think men despise them for being women

It is concluded from the two responses that deciding to offer a woman a decision-making position has a psychological dimension to do with the way women are perceived as leaders. Some kind of stereotyping comes to the fore. However, it is difficult to note with certainty that women leaders would be moody and have a negative attitude towards their male subordinates.

As to whether there are any other criteria used to elevate women, the majority of both men and women concurred that promotion was influenced by four aspects of a social nature, namely, political affiliation, bribery, favouritism and nepotism. Women respondents explained that these four usually favour men applicants for a post. The responses confirm Social Construction theory, which shows that there are factors other than biological determinates accounting for the low percentage of women in positions of responsibility.

The final question, some kind of follow-up to the foregoing one, requested respondents to specify whether there are any attitude problems militating against promotion of women. The following responses from women add a new dimension to the discussion:

- a. Botswana society looks down upon women.
- b. Because men are physically stronger, they think they are more intelligent than women.
- c. Men think that women are there to satisfy their sexual desire, and they cannot separate this when thinking about promoting women.
- d. Most interview panels have a large percentage of men who are biased towards women.

The conclusions, which can be drawn are that elevation of women is mired in cultural and societal misconceptions as shown in (a). Similarly, (b) is another misconception with a biological explanation. On the other hand, (c), which has sexual connotations is considered influential when deciding to elevate women. Finally, (d) is an eye-opener for something normally taken for granted, that is, the composition of interview panelists in different

organisations. It is logical to conclude that if the majority of men constitute the interview panel, the foregoing attitudes, which men are said to have towards women, can actually work in favour of male interviewees.

To sum up, this section has shown that there are a myriad of cultural, physical and social barriers, which prevent women from reaching the top jobs. With the rapid urbanization and new ways of handling development, Botswana may still be grappling with how to deal with the issue of promotion for women.

What policies are in existence to rationalize allocation of positions?

Within a given country, and for any developmental agenda, policies are a critical component of governance. In the case of the present study, they enhance gender mainstreaming. To answer the question on policies, data were obtained from two sources, namely, document analysis and responses to the questionnaire.

The Government of Botswana, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (2008) gives a fairly comprehensive coverage of a wide range of gender related matters, including policies. It is observed that Botswana is one of the countries that have ratified to the international and regional gender declarations. These are the Beijing Declaration-platform for action, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and Southern African Development Community (SADC) declaration on gender and development. These declarations address human rights, and components of gender equality and empowerment of women. All the countries that ratified these declarations are expected to conform to the commitment and report on the progress and status of gender equality and women in their respective countries. The areas of focus for Botswana included reporting on the status of women in power and decision making positions.

The current Botswana Gender Equality Policy, http://www.gov.bw/en/Ministries--Authorities/Ministries/Ministry-of-Labour--Home-Affairs-MLHA/Gender-Issues/Gender-Equality-Policy/?p_id=1437 was adopted by Parliament in 1996 with the understanding that all Botswana and their organisations would own and implement it.

Botswana acceded to the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1996. Botswana has also acceded to the Optional Protocol on the CEDAW. The Optional Protocol is a monitoring and evaluation instrument for the CEDAW. At a highly publicized van Brink, Mookodi and Dirasse (2000) reveal their interesting findings from a case study. The workshop looked at gender responsive planning to various National Development Policies. A case study had been carried out, which found that women are biased against themselves and believe that they are not as competitive as men. Therefore, it was concluded that not only do custom and culture tend to work against women's interest and aptitude in some work places but attitudes and beliefs contribute to the problem.

Three conclusions can be concluded from the above data. First, it is clear that Botswana is aware of the need to address gender related issues, at least at the government level. Awareness at individual organization level is quite another matter. Second, there are policies in place to guide gender related issues such as elevation of women to decision-making positions. Third, literature brings out a researched view that women are biased against themselves and believe

that they are not as competitive as men. This finding complements findings in the foregoing section.

In the questionnaire also, a question was asked requiring respondents to state whether they were aware of any Gender policies in Botswana, and explain any aspect of a given policy. Out of 10 women, five expressed awareness of existence of policies, but none could name a policy nor give some explanation. It can be observed that it is in the interest of women to have a functional knowledge about what is available by way of statutes. Otherwise ignorance of this cannot help their cause for elevation. Thus, it can be concluded that there is need to mount a campaign aimed at informing women of the policies.

More than a decade after the Beijing conference, the adoption of Women in Development Policy on women in development, and more than five years after the adoption of other national and international gender instruments, Botswana women are still found to be continuously lagging behind in all of the decision making structures. These setbacks are what governments and organizations are left to address.

DISCUSSION

The problem, which was stated as the lack of commonly available information about the ratio of women to men in decision-making positions was the primary motivation for the present study. The three questions, which guided the study led to data collection and analysis, as reflected in the findings presented in §9.0. In the present section, focus shifts to the discussion where from the conclusions already drawn, implications of the study are made, the contribution of the study shared, and recommendations formulated before proposing future research.

Statistics indicated that although Botswana seems to be doing reasonably well regarding furtherance of the cause for women in leadership, the situation is in favour of men. Several government ministries have a low showing, with the Ministry of Works and Transport having as low as 6%. On the other hand, some ministries have high percentages, e.g. 58% for the Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology. This implies inconsistency in the distribution of leadership positions across organisations. It is recommended that inter-ministerial dialogue be promoted so that ministries benefit from each other's strengths and weaknesses. Regarding the low percentages in private companies, it is motivated that they learn from public service organisations, which seem to be ahead in terms of awareness and implementation of national expectations. Were that to happen, many companies, which are branches of mainly South African companies, would be well advised to consider empowering local women.

In the data analysis (cf. §9.2) responses showed that lower education on the part of women tends to prejudice their opportunities for elevation. Education, therefore, seems to be key, yet accessibility by women is considered limited. Conscious steps should be taken by the government to create opportunities for access to higher education.

The one alternative at the beck and call of women is open and distance learning (ODL). Vacancies at conventional institutions are limited, while the ODL route has the advantage of helping women enhance their qualifications without leaving employment and losing earnings. More importantly, they will not move away from their families and social responsibilities, and they study and apply newly acquired skills in the job environment where they are likely to seek promotion in future.

In responding to questions about the imbalance in terms of representation, a majority of the women respondents opined that bribery, nepotism, political affiliation, and favouritism for men applicants also accounts for exclusion of women. This implies that the four elements alluded to are a reality in the debate, a revelation not much talked about in Botswana. If this were to be given the benefit of the doubt that it is men who are guilty of perpetuating this malpractice, it is recommended that the Government of Botswana should take the necessary steps to ensure fair play when posts are competed for.

In response to the prevalence of attitudes, women respondents overwhelmingly noted that the Botswana society looks down upon them, something which they say is also reflected in the male dominated panels of interviewers. What is not new about this is the well acknowledged understanding that Botswana society, in general, has that unacceptable attitude towards women. However, what is new is the allusion that interview panels tend to be dominated by men. This implies that something ought to be done. In view of this, it is recommended that key stakeholders come up with a think-tank on how to systematically work on social attitudes towards women in the professions, in general, and women in decision-making positions in particular. Such an initiative would be going beyond mere rhetoric, given that much talking has been evident, but it has not been supported by the much-needed action.

In §9.3 findings showed that some women are not aware of policies in place, which aimed at safeguarding their lot. However, more importantly, research findings are said to have exposed the view that women are biased against themselves, and that they believe that they are less competitive than men. As already observed, availing educational opportunities ought to be looked into. Notwithstanding that, and regarding the point of women prejudicing themselves, a different sort of education is recommended. The psychological mindset of ambiguity and lack of confidence in the self, would require systematic attention for purposes of disambiguation. Concerted effort, through seminars and workshops, ought to be applied to ensure progress in self discovery and self worth in women.

Contribution of the study

Quite obviously, findings in answer to research questions have confirmed, in the first instance, that the ratio of women leaders is lower relative to that of men. This is no longer a case of guesswork. In the second instance, the study has solicited answers from those concerned about reasons for women under-representation. Guided by the essentialist and social construction theories, it was confirmed that bias towards women is accounted for by biological and social misconceptions. Thus, at theoretical level, the applicability of the two theories, in the context of Botswana, has been confirmed.

The third contribution is at the application level. Now that concrete findings are in place, the Government of Botswana, and indeed any other interested government, have researched information upon which appropriate action can be taken to address anomalies specified in the problem statement. Significantly, both men and women citizens can now discuss the issue of women in management with a reasonable degree of confidence.

It is also noteworthy that university study courses on gender are many and ambitious about accuracy of information about specific countries. The present disquisition is an instance of systematic presentation for those who may be engaged in academic studies. It will be acknowledged, however, that the study has its limits, one of which is a somewhat narrow basis of data sources. In mitigation, availed content, and views of insiders, make the effort authentic.

On future research, it is recommended that a more broad-based study, centring on more stakeholder organisations should be conducted. Such a study could also take two or more SADC countries into account, thus enhancing comparability and trustworthiness of the findings.

CONCLUSION

Empowerment of women by having them occupy positions of decision-making is an acknowledged area of national concern. While it is true that governments across the world have put in place policies to regulate women preferment, research has shown that the equation is still in favour of males. The present study has confirmed this, and deliberated on the reasons for such a state of affairs. Some of the reasons are attributable to biological determinates, while the majority can be attributed to social misconception about women. The overarching aim of the study has been to avail information so that women and men benefit equally, and that inequality is not perpetuated.

REFERENCES

- Adam, A., Howcroft, D., & Richardson, H. (2001). Absent friends? The gender dimension in information systems research. In N. Russo, B. Fitzgerald, & J. DeGross (Eds.), *Realigning research and practice in information systems development: The social and organizational perspective* (pp. 332- 352). Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers
- Baruch, J. (2003). Transforming careers: from linear to multidirectional career paths, organisational and individual perspectives. *Career Development International*. Vol. 9 no. 1, 58 – 73.
- Bevitt, S. (ed.). (2008). *Career and Self Development*. University of Derby: The Derbyshire Business school.
- De Beauvoir (1949). *The Second Sex*. Paris
- Easterby-Smith et al. (2006) ubir.bolton.ac.uk/index.php?action=fileDownload...22&hash.. (Retrieved 19 October 2013)
- The United Nations Economic and Social Council ECOSOC (1997).
- Dennis, A. R., Kiney, S. T., & Hung, Y. (1999). Gender differences in the effects of media richness. *Small Group Research*, 30(4), 405-437.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). “Five misunderstandings about case-study research”. *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 12 (2) pp. 219 – 245.
- Freeman, J. (n.d.). National Women’s History Project. In Goodwin and Jasper (2004). *American Journal of Sociology*
- Government of Botswana, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (2008)
- Lamb, P. and Cassidy, N. (2006). *Jump start your career: Essential steps to a brilliant future*. Harlow: Education Publishers LLP.
- Marini, M. M. (1990). Sex and gender: What do we know? *Sociological Forum*, 5(1), 95-120.
- Seibert, S.E. , Kraimer, M.L., and Crant, J. M. (2001). What do proactive people do? A longitudinal model linking proactive personality and career success. *Personnel Psychology*. 54 (4) 845 – 874.
- Smith, D. (2005). *Institutional Ethnography*. USA: AltaMira Press.
- Trauth, E. M. (2002). *Theorizing Gender and Information Technology Research*. USA: The Pennsylvania State University
- van Brink, E.; Mookodi G.; Dirasse L. (2000). Report on the Gender-Responsive Planning Workshop. The Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, Women's Affairs Unit, Gaborone

- Venkatesh, V., & Morris, M. G. (2000). Why don't men ever stop to ask for directions? Gender, social influence, and their role in technology acceptance and user behavior. *MIS Quarterly*, 24(1), 115-139.
- Wajcman, J. (1991). *Feminism confronts technology*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press.
- World Bank
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTPOWERMENT/> (Retrieved 28 September 2013)
- Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case Study Research: Design and methods*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.
- Yorke, M. (2004) 'Employability in Higher Education: what it is - what it is not', Higher Education Academy/ESECT
www.gta.co.bw/news/.../2012/Women-in-Business-in-BOTSWANA.pdf, Grant Thornton International Ltd. (Retrieved 15 October 2013)
http://www.gov.bw/en/Ministries--Authorities/Ministries/Ministry-of-Labour--Home-Affairs-MLHA/Gender-Issues/Gender-Equality-Policy/?p_id=1437 (Retrieved 9 October 2013)
<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/decision-making.html#ixzz2hxWbqP6H>. (Retrieved 13 October 2013)