

EXPLORING MECHANISMS TO IMPROVE FEMALE PARLIAMENTARIANS'
PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING: CASE STUDY OF NAMIBIAN NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to explore mechanisms to improve female parliamentarians' participation in decision-making, propose way to assist female parliamentarians to effectively participate in substantive decision-making and explore measures that can facilitate women's active role in participating in legislative processes. The study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design. This research design provided a contextual, in-depth information on the why and how questions that could provide great insights and was useful for understanding mechanisms in place to assist female parliamentarians to effectively participate in substantive decision-making. A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data for the study. The data was analysed using thematic data method, which was accomplished by searching a data set for repeated patterns, analysing them, and reporting them using themes. The study findings revealed that there some mechanisms in place (such as: as framework laws, governmental programs, national action plans, and the establishment of gender equality committees) to improve female parliamentarians' participation in decision-making. However, despite these mechanisms, female parliamentarians continue to face obstacles when attempting to table, defend, and pass motions in parliament. The obstacles identified include lack of confidence, language barriers (low level of fluency in official language), lack of exposure to national and international debates, and party structures (how members are ranked in the party). The study therefore concluded that the system needs to ensure that female parliamentarians are on party lists. Female parliamentarians require a strong women's movement as well as collaboration between civil society organisations and political parties, to advocate for women. The study also suggests that female parliamentarians be exposed to exchange visits in order to learn from other female legislators. A critical recommendation is for female parliamentarians to avoid political affiliation as a ground rule for opposing female ideas or motions, and political party rules/agenda should not interfere with a country's national platform to solve national issues.

Keywords: Female parliamentarians, Parliamentary decision-making, Motions, Table, defend and put through, Mechanisms, women's political participation and representation.

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ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

APP -All People's Party

CEDAW -Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

CPRW- Convention on the Political Rights of Women

NUDO -National Unity Democratic Organisation

PDM -Popular Democratic Movement

RDP -Rally for Democracy and Progress

SADC- Southern African Development Community

SWAPO -South West Africa People Organisation.

UDHR - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN -United Nation

WPP- Women's Political Participation

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DEDICATION

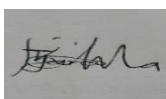
This piece of work is dedicated to my late father Dr. Alexander Jarimbovandu Kaputu who passed on 10 March 2021 when I was busy with this project. May his spirit continue to guide me in all my endeavours.

DECLARATION

I, Tjara Kaputu, declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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Tjara Kaputu

Date: April 2024

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study including the background of the study, statement of the problem, the research questions, significance of the study, the limitations and delimitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Across the globe, there have been significant efforts at improving women's political representation and participation in political decision-making bodies (Quadri & Thomas, 2018). The Inter-Parliamentary Union Report of (2018) has shown that, women all over the world held at least 30 per cent of seats in 67 chambers (both single/lower and upper houses), and less than 10 per cent in 39 chambers (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2018).

In recent years, the percentage of women in parliament or cabinet in Africa varies from one region to the other. According to the first Women's Political Participation (WPP) Africa Barometer (2021), women constitute 24% of the 12,113 parliamentarians in Africa - 25% in the lower houses, and 20% in the upper houses of parliament. While local government is often hailed as a training ground for women in politics, women constitute a mere 21% of councillors in the 19 countries for which complete data could be obtained. The (WPP) Africa Barometer (2021), further revealed that women in parliament overall in Southern Africa are about 28%, while about 38% of women in Namibia are in cabinet.

Another international instrument is the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, which explicitly mentions women's political equality in Articles 7-9 and discusses women's equal participation at all levels. Article 7b specifically states that:

“States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure that women on equal terms with men, the right to participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government” (United Nation, 2019, p. 32). These commitments collectively express that women's equality cannot be reached without equality in political decision-making positions (United Nation, 2019).

During the colonial project in the late 1880s, the present territory of Namibia was made up of various states, organized into independent political units (Wallace & Kinahan, 2011). One of the common features of these communities is the organization of power and political participation. In these years, politics was not seen as an arena for women. Thus, in many countries, traditions continue to emphasize women's primary roles as mothers and housewives and to restrict them to those roles. After, independence in 1990, Namibia decided to follow the democratic path and adopted a democratic constitution, thus at the state level, a stance against patriarchy had been adopted and legislated. At the level of policy intent, the post-independence state has been immaculate and is generally credited for the high-level clarity on gender equality.

According to Shejvali (2013) Namibia using the constitutional provisions in the Namibian constitution such as Articles 10 and 23 provides equality before the law and outlawing gender discriminations and the affirmative action for women. Shejvali (2013: 2) indicated that Namibian government has repeatedly stated its support for women's rights and representation and has enacted, signed, and ratified a plethora of laws, conventions and protocols to this effect. Policies such as the National Gender Policy, the National Gender Plan of Action, and the ratification of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development are all testimony to Namibia's theoretical commitment to equal and equitable women's representation in leadership and governance, as well as in other social contexts. In addition, the National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia has passed progressive laws that govern women's right. This includes the Constitution of Namibia that was adopted in 1990 and which includes a Bill of Rights that recognizes equality between the sexes (Conteth, 2012).

Amupanda and Thomas (2019), revealed that President Sam Nujoma established, within his office, a women's desk to deal with women's affairs. This desk was later transformed into the Department of Women Affairs. When the President formed the new Cabinet in 2000, he also created the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Child Welfare. Following the establishment of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare in 2000, several policy instruments aimed at promoting women's empowerment in general and women's political participation in particular began to gain traction. At the 2002 SWAPO congress, the SWAPO Women's Council also began asking for more women to be included in mainstream politics.

In August 2008, Namibia signed the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. This protocol, amongst others, stated as an objective to “set realistic, measurable targets, time frames and indicators for achieving gender equality and equity” (SADC 2008, p. 6). Considerable progress had been made in terms of the number of women in politics and decision-making position with the increase from 25% to 47%, by 2017. Namibia had still not achieved the 50% target it committed to achieve by 2015 (MGECW, 2017). This concur with Amunyela (2022) that while some believe the country is on the right path to achieving the set Southern African Development Community (SADC) target of 30% representation of women in positions of power, primarily in politics, others believe not enough is being done, and called for a paradigm shift. The surge in the percentage was due to the SWAPO 50/50 policy, adopted in 2013, and saw a significant number of female parliamentarians entering the National Assembly.

Namibia’s actions towards improving women representation in parliament builds on international goals of improving gender equality. The Beijing Platform for Action, stemming from the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995 for example prioritized women’s leadership as outlined in sections G.1 and G.2: “take measures to ensure women’s equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making” and “increase women’s capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership” (United Nation, 2019, p. 34). Since its adoption, countries have recorded progress on women’s participation in decision making and leadership.

Currently, 46% of female members serve in the National Assembly, 49% in local authorities and municipalities, and 19 to 23% in regional elections. Namibia, on the other hand, is failing to meet the SADC quota due to a lack of implementation.

Since the Beijing conference, Namibia has made gender balance at all levels and in all spheres of society a national priority (Conteth, 2012). Furthermore, as a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, and SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, the country has committed to ensuring equal representation of men and women in decisionmaking in state organs and SADC structures at all levels. The goal has been to have at least 30% of women in all political and decision-making structures by 2005 (SADC, 1997).

SADC, (2018) explained that States Parties shall adopt the necessary policies, strategies, and programmes such as affirmative action to facilitate the implementation of this Protocol. Affirmative action measures shall be put in place with reference to women and girls, in order to eliminate all barriers which, prevent them from participating meaningfully in all spheres of life.

The objectives of this Protocol focuses on : (a) to provide for the empowerment of women, to eliminate discrimination and to achieve gender equality and equity through the development and implementation of gender responsive legislation, policies, programmes and projects; (b) to harmonise the implementation of the various instruments to which SADC Member States have subscribed to at the regional, continental and international levels on gender equality and equity which, amongst others, are the Convention on the

Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979); Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); the International Conference on Population and Development (1994); the Beijing Declaration and its Platform For Action (1995); the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development (1997) and its Addendum (1998); the Millennium Development Goals (2000); the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000); the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003); the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2008); or any other legal instruments that may be relevant to this Protocol, in order to accelerate implementation; (c) to address emerging gender issues and concerns; (d) to set realistic, measurable targets, time frames and indicators for achieving gender equality and equity; (e) to strengthen, monitor and evaluate the progress made by Member States towards reaching the targets and goals set out in this Protocol; and (f) to deepen regional integration, attain sustainable development and strengthen community building (SADC, 2018).

According to the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance IDEA (2021), the percentage of women in African parliaments stood at 24%, with the Namibian national assembly had 44% of women in parliament. Women were also well represented at the executive level of government, with the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister both being women. There is an increasing number of female presidential running mates and, as a result, vice-presidential candidates (IDEA, 2021).

In 2022, for example, the current ruling party in Namibia SWAPO had two women running for vice president who will eventually run for the party's presidential nominee in

the 2024 national elections. In comparison to other African countries, Namibia fairs quite well in gender representation at the executive level. The Africa Barometer of 2021 shows that women hold just 7% of top executive positions (President, Vice President, Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister). The proportion ranges from 12% in East Africa to zero in North Africa. Countries whose electoral laws provide for a running mate for the presidency may have a higher chance of bringing women closer to the top position. Thus, in the long run, this incremental presence will provide the opportunity for women to demonstrate the ability to govern.

In addition, women hold 46% of the seats in the National Assembly and 14% in the National Council. Women make up 36% of parliamentarians overall. Women comprise 48% of the total close to gender parity at the local level, where there is a 30% legislated quota reinforced by SWAPO's voluntary party quota, demonstrating that the combination of voluntary party and legislated quotas is a winning formula. SWAPO has 60% women in top leadership positions and has fielded 51% female candidates for the 2019 national elections (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) (IDEA, 2021).

Lastly, according to an analysis of the top five political party lists in the 2019 Namibia elections, each fielded at least 35% female candidates, as follows: SWAPO received 51% of the vote, the Popular Democratic Movement (PDM) received 41%, the National Unity Democratic Organization (NUDO) received 43%, the Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP) received 39%, and the All-People's Party (APP) received 46%. Three of the top five political parties (PDM, NUDO, APP) have 20% women in top party leadership positions, with SWAPO having the highest at 60% and RDP having 40%. The

combination of a statutorily mandated minimum quota of 30% and SWAPO's voluntary 50% quota at this level has resulted in a high proportion of women at the local level, as well as in the election of any local authority council with ten or fewer members. Party lists must include at least three female candidates; in the case of a municipal council or town council with 11 or more members, party lists must include at least five female candidates, for a total of 30-45%.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In terms of numbers, female representation in parliament has increased. The emphasis has largely been on increasing the number of motions, with less emphasis on substantive contributions to motions, tabling motions in general, and motions seeking to improve gender equality. Amupanda and Thomas (2019) attempted to investigate the motion presented and their findings. However, no one has examined the barriers and factors underlying non-participation, as well as the factors in place to improve women's contributions. In addition to the fact that Namibia is transitioning from a patriarchal society governance, women must be treated equally with men in order to participate substantively in decision-making.

However, there are few motions tabled, defended, and passed by women for parliamentary decision-making. There are no studies that investigated mechanisms put in place to increase female participation in decision making. As a result, this study investigated the mechanisms in place to help female legislators effectively participate in substantive decision making. It also investigated ways to encourage women to take an active role in legislative processes.

1.3 Research questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1.3.1 Which motions have the female parliamentarians tabled, defended, and put through as parliamentary decisions?

1.3.2 What obstacles prevent female parliamentarians from tabling, defending and putting through motions for parliamentary decision-making?

1.3.3 What mechanisms are in place to enable female parliamentarians to table, defend, and put through motions for parliamentary decision-making?

1.3.4 What should be put in place to help women to improve their capacities to table, defend and put through motions for parliamentary decision-making?

1.4 Significance of the study

Women's participation in decision-making is highly beneficial, and their role in developing and implementing public policies improves people's lives. This study's findings will contribute to the body of knowledge in the fields of development and gender studies. It will add to academic discussions about gender representation and participation in terms of numbers versus actual and substantive participation. It aims to encourage debates about gender equality to go beyond the mere presence of men and women in decision-making bodies, and to emphasise the types of contributions and motions that seek to improve gender equality in society. The study's recommendations could be used to make recommendations for improving female parliamentarians' substantive participation in tabling, defending, and

passing motions for decision-making for the development of communities, regions, and the country.

Consequently, when women are given political power, countries' living standards rise, and improvements in education, infrastructure, and health are visible. Women's participation has a positive impact on communities, legislatures, political parties, and citizens' lives, and it helps democracy improve citizens' lives (Markham, 2012 as cited in Beaman et al., 2007). This is the foundation of the study's importance. Raising debates about the empowerment of women as political leaders and legislators in order for Namibia to experience higher living standards and positive development. Debates about women's participation are essential for building democracy and improving governance.

1.5 Limitation of the study

During the data collection phase, the study experienced significant delays. This is due to the researcher's inability to secure interviews with the female parliamentarians who met the criteria. The most significant limiting factor was the COVID-19 restrictions, which prevented research participants from participating in interviews. Along with the numerous deaths that occurred at the time, many research participants took on caregiving responsibilities. Since it was COVID-19, the research participants were contacted via virtual means, such as SMS messages and emails. Participants did not respond to emails or SMS messages left on their phones requesting interview appointments in the majority of cases, causing significant delays in the research.

The majority of female legislators were unwilling to participate in the study, so they did not. Because some participants refused to be recorded using ZOOM/TEAMS, the researcher was forced to try alternative methods of reaching the participants, such as telephonic interviews. After initially expressing interest in the study, some participants decided to withdraw, and others were not always available due to work, family, and care work obligations. As a result, the researcher needed to find more participants to reach the desired sample size. Time became a constraint because the anticipated participants had busy schedules and could not be reached for interviews. Meeting them for interviews was thus a challenge that the researcher took seriously.

1.6 Delimitation of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate mechanisms to increase female parliamentarians' participation in decision-making: a case study of the Namibian National Assembly. As a result, the study concentrated on the perspectives of female parliamentarians on mechanisms in place to enhance female parliamentarians' substantive participation in decision-making on women issues, and just women perspectives. Markham (2012) distinguished between women's issues and women's perspectives by explaining that women's issues are those that primarily affect women, either physically (e.g., breast cancer screening, reproductive rights) or socially (e.g. gender equality, childcare policy). Women's perspectives encompass all political issues.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces and engages with literature on women and political representation, empowerment and decision-making, mechanisms to improve female parliamentary participation, and barriers to female parliamentary participation. The chapter discusses women and political participation, international and regional conventions on women's political participation and representation, the slow pace of women's representation in politics, the quota system as a mechanism to push gender balance in political institutions, moving beyond formal participation and constraints to substantive political participation, and the quota system as a mechanism to push gender balance in political institutions.

When women enter the legislature, they frequently encounter an institutional culture that is hostile to their needs. These include infrastructure issues such as the physical architecture or location of the legislative building, as well as the easy availability of women's restrooms, and cultural issues such as dress codes or how parliamentary members address one another (NDI, 2011). For example, when women first entered South Africa's first post-apartheid parliament, they struggled to balance family and political responsibilities. Women fought to have evening and night-time parliamentary sessions abolished because they interfered with family responsibilities. In addition, childcare services were established in the parliament building. Men eventually began to use childcare services for their families as well. Often the changes that women put in place benefit everyone, staff as well as MPs (Geisler, 2000).

According to research, the gender of legislators has a significant impact on their policy priorities (Moccia & Anthony, 2006). For example, as more women are elected to office, evidence suggests that policymakers will prioritise the needs of families, women, and ethnic and racial minorities. Women must participate actively in governance in order to represent the concerns of women and other marginalised voters and to propose policy alternatives (Markham, 2012).

2.1 Women and political participation

Women's participation at all levels of decision-making and political involvement is critical to achieving equality, sustainable development, peace, and democracy, as well as the inclusion of their perspectives and experiences in decision-making processes (Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019). Over the years, women have demanded for seats at the tables where public policy is discussed, these demands that have led to the institutionalisation of the formal participation and representation, guaranteed by countries' constitutions and legislations. Political participation refers to voluntary activities undertaken by the mass public to influence public policy, either directly or by affecting the selection of persons who make policies. Examples of these activities include voting in elections, helping a political campaign, donating money to a candidate or cause, contacting officials, petitioning, protesting, and working with other people on issues. Activities cluster into modes of participation. While Political representation is the activity of making citizens "present" in public policy making processes when political actors act in the best interest of citizens (Uhlener, 2015).

Additionally, women's political participation has been shown to be particularly influential to women in their communities. Factors such as female voter turnout, female political participation, and public service responsiveness towards women have a positive relationship with the presence of women in decision-making positions across the public and private sectors (Burns, Schlozman & Verba, 2001).

Women's parliamentary presence could also have a role model effect. A study by O'Neil, Plank and Domingo (2015) underscored the importance of women role models for individuals of all genders to normalize the idea and practice of women holding power. Furthermore, a study conducted in India explained that the increased proportion of women village leaders had closed the "aspiration gap" between girls and boys by nearly 25 percentage points and had eventually erased or reversed the gender gap in educational outcomes (Beaman et al., 2012). Girls also began spending less time on household activities in areas with increased women's leadership in the village (Beaman et al., 2012).

These role models can substantively affect future women's representation. Following the 2018 general elections in Fiji, women accounted for 20 per cent of the representation in Parliament, a record high for the country. This is attributed to the role-model effect of its first Woman Speaker of the House. The view that women in politics matter is sustained by three reasons: First, politics is an important arena for decision making. Individuals who hold official positions in government get to decide how to allocate scarce resources such as tax revenues in the development of a nation. Politicians make political decisions that may help some people at the expense of others. Decisions by politicians often affect individual choices by encouraging

some behaviours and outlawing others. Second, political power is a valuable good. Politicians hold power over other social institutions such as the family (Quadri & Thomas, 2018).

Third, holding a political position is to have a position of authority. It is possible to advance the argument that men cannot adequately represent women's interests, needs and concerns in parliaments. There are substantive women's issues such as reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, women trafficking among others that require women's perspectives and views in addressing them. Thus, integrating women in the political decision-making process provides women the opportunity to discuss and engage with these issues.

Moreover, Shejavali, (2018) found that more than two-thirds (68%) of Namibians say women should have the same chance as men of being elected to public office. This is about the same level of support recorded in 2005 and 2012 surveys but reflects an 11-percentage-point drop from 2014, the year Swapo instituted its gender-equal party list. In addition, with the current 50/50 representation hence the need for calls for women representation in decision making processes.

Shejavali, (2015) further explained that Namibia made some unprecedented gains in increasing the participation of women in politics. Currently, 42% of parliamentarians in the National Assembly are women (mainly to the Swapo party's 2014 constitutional provision to implement 50/50 through the use of a zebra list) At the Local Authority level, due to existing quota systems, about 42% of councillors are women. However, at the Regional Council Level, these gains appear out of reach. During the 27 November 2015 Regional Council election, only 15% of the 284 candidates who participated as candidates, and 16% of the 121 candidates elected

as councillors, are women. This is a far cry from the 50% prescribed in Namibia's Gender Policy and Plan of Action. However, at the Regional Council level, these gains have not been made.

2.2 International and regional conventions on women's political participation and representation

Women's full participation in political and electoral processes originates in the principles of non-discrimination and equal enjoyment of political rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (United Nation (UN), 1948), adopted in 1948, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (CPRW) (UN, 1952) and other regional conventions that explicitly state that the enjoyment of such rights shall be without distinction of any kind, including sex or gender. A number of international human rights instruments include provisions that recognize women's political rights, in light of the principles of non-discrimination and equal enjoyment of rights.

Formal equality is the formal equality of men and women, in which all are equal and subject to the same rules and regulations in social, political, economic, and other areas of life. No one in society is discriminated against or given special treatment. Furthermore, formal equality ignores the unique needs of individuals with varying capacities, needs, and interests. Formal equality emphasises the idea that everyone is given equal opportunity to live their lives according to their own abilities, with no one expected to act on their behalf. Women have historically been underrepresented in decision-making bodies. This was attributed to by all nations, with the cultural framework of values and religious beliefs, a lack of services, and men's failure to share the tasks associated with household organisation and childcare and

raising being the most significant factors impeding women's ability to participate in public life. Cultural traditions and religious beliefs have played a role in confining women to private spheres of activity and excluding them from active participation in public life in all nations. As a result, according to the United Nations (2019), the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) explicitly mentions women's political equality (Articles 7-9) and discusses women's equal participation at all levels (Article 7b): "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the country's political and public life, and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right to participate in the formulation and implementation of government policy, as well as the right to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government" (Part II, Article 7b). These commitments collectively express that women's equality cannot be realised without equality in positions of political decision-making.

Furthermore, in light of Article 7 of the Convention, Article 4 of the CEDAW encourages the use of Temporary Special Measures (TSMs) to accelerate the achievement of de facto equality. The right of women to fully participate in all aspects of public life has remained a cornerstone of UN resolutions and declarations. From the United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution (E/RES/1990/15) to the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (UN, 1995), the Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (UN, 2000), the "Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions (UN, 2006), and the General Assembly Resolution 66/130 on Women and Political Participation (UN, 2006), (UN, 2011), Governments have consistently been urged to implement measures to significantly increase the number of women in elective and appointive public offices and functions at all levels, with

the goal of achieving equal representation of men and women in government and public administration positions, if necessary through positive action.

Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals seeks to "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life" (target 5.5.). Its indicators include the "proportion of female seats in national legislatures and local governments" (5.5.1.) and the "proportion of female managerial positions" (5.5.2). Furthermore, Sustainable Development Goal 16, "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels," cannot be met unless men and women have equal opportunities to participate in politics and elections.

A number of declarations, including the Yogyakarta Principles (2007); UN (2006) and the Declaration of Montreal, emphasise the importance of ensuring LGBTI people's full enjoyment of human rights (UN, 2011). Principle 25 of the Yogyakarta Principles recognises all citizens' right to participate in the conduct of public affairs, including the right to run for elected office, participate in the formulation of policies affecting their welfare, and have equal access to all levels of public service without discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Women's equal participation with men in power and decision making, as stated in the Millennium Development Goals, is part of their fundamental right to participate in political life and is at the heart of gender equality and women's empowerment. Women must play an active role in determining development agendas (Akiyode-Afolabi, 2020).

2.3 Slow pace of women's representation in politics

While formal equality has been institutionalised through policies and legislation, progress toward equality has been slow in practise. As previously stated, Namibia has yet to meet the 50% target it set for itself by 2015. Amunyela (2022) explained that not enough is being done and called for a paradigm shift. It is suggested that more efforts be made to cultivate opportunities for people based on meritocracy rather than gender. Evidence shows that 46% of Namibia's National Assembly members are female, 49% serve on local authorities and municipalities, and regional elections feature 19 to 23% women; however, this representation is a challenge.

Furthermore, Amunyela (2022) stated that more needs to be done, but she also advocated for women to be promoted on merit. The Swapo Party Women's Council secretary went on to say that the ruling party has solid structures in place to promote women's advancement in politics, as well as fair representation in parliament. Namibia, on the other hand, is failing to meet the SADC quota due to a lack of implementation. Meanwhile, Elma Dienda, a Popular Democratic Movement (PDM) parliamentarian and veteran politician, stated that "we are failing due to a lack of implementation." Our ministers, government, and president sign protocols, but they don't follow through." The only thing that slows the pace of women's political representation is the failure to implement all of the strategies and plans in place by those in charge of implementation.

2.4 Quota system as a mechanism to push gender balance in political institutions

Countries implemented quota systems as a mechanism to push for a large gender balance in political institutions due to slow progress in achieving equality in decision making. Women's quotas require that a certain number or percentage of members of a body, whether it is a candidate list, a parliamentary assembly, a committee, or a government, be women. Quotas are intended to increase women's representation in publicly elected or appointed institutions such as governments, legislatures, and local governments. Gender quotas derive legitimacy from the exclusionary discourse, which holds that the main reasons for women's under-representation are the exclusionary practises of political parties and political institutions in general. Quotas shift the burden of candidate recruitment away from the individual woman and toward those who control the recruitment process, most notably political parties. Quotas compel those who nominate and select to begin recruiting women and provide women with opportunities that they do not currently have in most parts of the world (Akiyode-Afolabi, 2020).

Namibia has a Bicameral parliament with both voluntary and sub-nationally legislated party quotas. Women hold 46 of the 104 (44%) National Assembly seats.

The Namibian Constitution (1992, Article 10), like other Southern African constitutions, provides for formal equality before the law for men and women and prohibits discrimination based on (among other things) sex. The Constitution, however, qualifies Article 10 equality with Article 23(2), which empowers parliament to enact legislation that leads to the "advancement of persons within Namibia who have been socially, economically, or educationally disadvantaged by previous discriminatory laws or practises, or for the implementation of policies and programmes aimed at redressing social, economic, or educational imbalances in Namibian society arising from previous discriminatory laws or

practises." Article 23(3) allows "regard to the fact that women in Namibia have traditionally faced special discrimination and that they must be encouraged and enabled to play a full, equal, and effective role in the nation's political, social, economic, and cultural life." The state is responsible for promoting Namibian welfare and enacting policies that aim to "enact legislation to ensure equality of opportunity for women, enabling them to participate fully in all spheres of Namibian society..." (Article 95). (a).

The first women's quota was established in the Local Authorities Act of 1992, which required at least two women on party lists in elections for local authority councils with ten or fewer members. At least three women had to be on party lists in elections for councils of eleven or more members. These figures were raised to three and five, respectively, in 1997, and this rule was made applicable to future elections in 2002. (Frank 2004, p. 88 and LeBeau & Dima, 2005, p. 84). Thus, while the constitution does not mandate quotes to ensure adequate representation of women in elective bodies, it does create a framework that recognises women's marginalisation and discrimination and allows and requires measures to be taken to address these substantive inequalities. In the first and second National Assembly elections, Namibian women faced a challenge. Women constituted only 6.4% of the National Assembly and 17.9% of the Senate. Since the country's independence in 1990, an increasing number of women have held positions of leadership in the government as well as non-governmental and community-based organisations.

According to Conteth (2012), the National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia has passed progressive laws governing women's rights, and the Namibian Constitution, adopted in 1990, includes a Bill of Rights that recognises gender equality. As a result, the government has

signed a number of international and regional treaties aimed at improving women's social status. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development is one of them, requiring "all states parties to ensure equal participation by women and men in policy formulation and implementation by 2015." The National Gender Policy and its Plan of Action, two of the most important national policies and programmes, identified Gender Balance in Power and Decision Making as one of the critical areas of concern.

According to Quadri and Thomas (2018), the campaign for 50/50 gender balance in politics and decision making has resulted in increased female representation in Namibia's National Assembly from the third to the current elections. The ruling SWAPO party implemented the 50/50 zebra style in 2013, indicating that women's participation in national and regional politics and decision-making is far from satisfactory. The Namibian government, on the other hand, has taken several steps to improve women's status in society and to promote gender equality in all areas. One practical issue with these legal requirements is that there are still negative attitudes toward gender equality at the national level. These attitudes make gender-responsive policies and development programmes difficult to implement (Quadri & Thomas, 2018).

2.5 Beyond formal participation

Over the last few decades, the discourse on gender and political representation has begun to emphasise the importance of going beyond formal participation and examining the relationship between women's numerical participation and policy representation. For example, Akiyode-Afolabi (2020, p. 1) research provides a comprehensive view of women's political participation

by examining how formal representation affects gender equality outcomes and discussing the barriers to substantive representation of women in the political arena.

Although women continue to be significantly under-represented in today's legislatures, they are now looking beyond the numbers to focus on what they can do in parliament and how they can make an impact, regardless of their numbers. They are learning the game's rules and applying their knowledge and understanding to promote women's issues and concerns from within the world's legislatures. The goal is to move "beyond tokenism" and toward adopting a female perspective and effecting change on women's issues. Women seeking to make an impact should keep three broad tactics in mind: learn the rules that apply to the parliamentary mode of deployment or functioning; use these rules to bring about desired changes; and change the rules, which may be unhelpful in some cases in advancing women's concerns. Each tactic embodies a variety of strategies that fall into four broad categories: the nature of parliament, issues of representation, the discourse used about and for women MPs, and legislative or policy outputs.

One of the frequently mentioned aspects of learning the rules while impacting through the various categories is the need for MP training and orientation exercises, which would enable them to, among other things, distinguish between women's perspectives and women's issues; network with media and women's organisations on various levels (local, regional, and international); and participate actively in a wide range of committees. When it comes to changing the rules, women MPs must consider establishing national machinery to support women's causes and monitor policy implementation; changing the candidate selection rules for their parties, particularly for leadership positions; and establishing mechanisms within

parliament to give women MPs priority in areas where they are under-represented or less vocal than their male counterparts. Providing special incentives for initiatives outside parliament that sponsor and support women's issues and women's representation (e.g., women's leadership training schools, media programmes on women politicians); and expanding legislation to include emerging issues of interest to women.

O'Brien (2013)'s case studies on South Africa, France, Sweden, and Rwanda demonstrate the diverse conditions and areas in which women are making a difference. Among the many changes are institutional and representational changes, such as the specification of women's budgets, the specification of parity laws, and the establishment of national machinery; and discourse changes, such as cooperating and networking with the women's movement to change the way women are referred to, their participation is evaluated and sought after, partnerships with men are formed, and their efforts are evaluated.

The debate over the IPU's Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, for example, brings to light another relatively unknown but crucial reality. Caucusing, according to O'Brien (2013), is not only a forum for female MPs to share experiences and strategies for improving their representation; it is also beneficial to the organisational structures that serve women's needs. This is especially true when it comes to fine-tuning women parliamentarians' responsiveness to changing contexts, political realities, and consequent needs. Coordination efforts in this area should be made at multiple levels, and they should build on, rather than duplicate, the pioneering work that has already been done.

O'Brien (2013, p. 1) discovered that the "presence of female politicians has little independent effect on women's policy representation" in a study that examined the platforms of 12 political parties in 12 Western European countries. According to the study, increasing the proportion of seats held by women can result in substantive representation, but only if the parliamentary delegation has significant policy-making authority (ibid). While there have been calls to go beyond formal political participation, existing literature has also examined the political, socioeconomic, and cultural factors that limit substantive representation. These and other considerations are discussed in greater detail below:

2.6 Constraints towards substantive political participation

First, consider how women are less interested in politics and less active in civic affairs. Second, cultural, and traditional norms that makes it difficult for women to participate in politics. Last, there are additional international, local, and structural barriers to women's decision-making participation.

2.6.1 Women less interest in politics and less active in civic affairs

Despite the fact that Namibian women support women in political leadership more than men, Afrobarometer data show that women are less interested in public affairs than men (Sheyavali, 2015). Women discuss politics less frequently than men. Furthermore, because women are less interested in politics, Namibian women participate in certain community and political activities at a slightly lower rate than men. Joining with others to request government action, contacting government officials to highlight problems or make

a complaint, and contacting regional and local councillors, traditional leaders, and political party officials to address a problem or share their views are all examples.

2.6.2 Cultural and traditional norms

According to George (2019), norms that drive larger social structures shape women's ability to engage politically both inside and outside of the voting booth, particularly as community organisers and elected officials. The fundamental constraint that women face is an entrenched patriarchal system in which males control the family and make decisions.

Furthermore, it is revolting to see members of parliament, who should be progressive legislators in our country, sanction and condone rape in the context of marriage. It not only undermines the Constitution's principles of equality and the right to safety, but it also raises the question of whether Namibian MPs from all parties are committed enough to uphold and protect the bodily autonomy, integrity, and dignity of rape victims and survivors (Petersen, 2022).

Despite strong gender equality attitudes, 14% of Namibians say they experienced gender discrimination in the previous year, and the majority believe it is better for women to be the primary caregivers for the home and children. Shejavali's (2018) findings show that there is still much work to be done to ensure that Namibians fully experience the gender equality envisioned in Namibia's Constitution and gender policies.

As a result, Namibia should fight and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5. Women

had fought long and hard to achieve gender equality at home and in the workplace. Protecting women's bodily integrity in their domestic settings is critical to ensuring gender equality. This includes measures to prevent domestic violence, which includes rape and other forms of abuse (Petersen, 2022).

Furthermore, traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes, particularly regarding women's roles and status in society, persist, especially in rural areas (Sadie, 2005). Traditional gender roles and labour divisions persist. Social norms that make transitioning from traditionally domestic roles to more public roles outside the home more difficult for women (Kangas et al., 2015). Gender identity in women is still primarily conceived of as feminine. Recent debates in parliament have focused on patriarchy's entrenchment. This raises the question of how cultural and religious beliefs are used to justify preventing gender equality.

Finally, Elma Dienda, an MP from the official opposition Popular Democratic Movement (PDM) in Nthengwe, (2022), stated that rape does not exist in marriages. "I'm referring to husbands and wives here, not boyfriends and girlfriends." You're told that you can't deny your partner his right," (Nthengwe, 2022, p. 11). Furthermore, Dienda's assertion that sex is a right of a husband perpetuates rape culture, panders to victim blaming, and dismisses married rape victims and survivors. It smacks of patriarchy princess syndrome, in which a "female is content with the world remaining a patriarchal society." It also inadvertently

invites us to decipher her words with empathy. Namibians in all societies are socialised victims of a patriarchal system that sanctioned and institutionalised such behaviour.

2.6.3. International, local, and structural barriers to women's participation in decision-making

Gender stereotypes and a lack of support at home and in the workplace, according to Chabaya et al. (2009), are some of the major causes of women's persistent under-representation in school leadership and decision-making. According to Hubbard and Solomon (2017), individual competitiveness, as well as organisational competitiveness, which includes member competition, can sometimes prevent women from supporting one another. This makes it difficult to speak with a unified voice, even if supported by the majority, if not all, of the female parliamentarians.

Gender stereotyping is wrong, according to the United Nations, when it results in a violation or violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. One example is the failure to criminalise marital rape due to the stereotype of women as sexual property of men. Another example is the failure of the justice system to hold perpetrators of sexual violence accountable based on stereotypical views of women's appropriate sexual behaviour. Discrimination against women includes treatment disparities caused by stereotypical expectations, attitudes, and behaviours toward women. Here are a couple of examples: Stereotypes about women's roles in the family, according to the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, lead to a division of labour within households, which often results in time poverty and lower levels of education for women. The CEDAW

Committee has highlighted how traditional attitudes that regard women as inferior to men perpetuate widespread violence and coercion. Both the CRC and the CEDAW Committee acknowledged that harmful practises, such as stereotyped sex and gender-based roles, are multifaceted (United Nation, 2014).

Third, articulating a feminism that addresses the needs and aspirations of women ranging from subsistence farmers to urban professionals is a monumental task. The women's movement is still looking for a way to bridge the gap between grassroots women and the educated elite, as well as between urban and rural dwellers. The persistence of racial, economic, ethnic, and political divisions is a major impediment to collaborative action (Hubbard & Solomon, 2017).

Finally, Hubbard and Solomon (2017) state that even the most active women are constantly working to improve their networking, lobbying, and strategy skills. Institutional change is another mechanism by which violent conflict can induce structural changes that affect the participation of female politicians. Institutional constraints include impediments such as rigid political systems that disregard women's domestic responsibilities, as well as the type of electoral quotas used (if any) (Kangas, Haider, Fraser, & Browne, 2015). Adoption of new electoral or party rules during or after a war may make it easier for women to participate in politics. In addition, there are insufficient support structures in place to reform existing codified institutions and achieve gender equality in global politics (Morobane, 2014).

2.7. Mechanisms to improve female parliamentarians' participation

Despite pledges, women continue to be under-represented in political and economic decision-making in both individual Council of Europe member states and international organisations (Jarroud, 2015). Nonetheless, equal participation of men and women in decision-making is a precondition for improved democratic and societal functioning, and it is part of the overall gender sharing of responsibilities.

Kodikara, (2009) identifies eight key strategies employed by women's organizations to increase women's participation and representation in political institutions over the years and critically examines each of these below. Kodikara (2009) identifies and critically examines eight key strategies used by women's organisations to increase women's participation and representation in political institutions over time:

Research/publications - Research studies on women's political participation and representation have inspired and fueled much of the activism in Sri Lanka to increase women's representation.

Training and capacity building for political leadership - Training programmes were overwhelmingly geared toward the Sinhala community, with only a few exceptions aimed.

Awareness raising - Women activists and organisations have used various means to raise awareness about the issue of women and politics, particularly the appallingly low levels of

representation of women in political institutions, among various constituencies and target groups. Workshops, mainstream print and electronic media, alternative media, as well as poster and sticker campaigns, have all been used.

Advocacy for a quota - Several women's organisations have lobbied political parties in Sri Lanka over the last decade or so to address the underrepresentation of women in political institutions through media campaigns, press conferences, one-on-one meetings, and direct correspondence with political party leaders. Since the late 1990s, women's organisations and the National Institutions for Women, particularly the NCW, have lobbied for a legal reservation/quota for women as a critical remedy to address the under representation of women in political institutions in Sri Lanka. In fact, a provision reserving 25% of local government seats for women was included in the 1997 draught constitution.

Experiments with independent lists - Another method used by women to gain political power has been to experiment with all-women independent lists. The Nuwara Eliya-based Sinhala Tamil Rural Women's Network (STRWN) was among the first independent women's groups to run for provincial council elections in 1999. With a membership of approximately 29,000, STRWN, a community-based organisation working on issues of poverty alleviation, microcredit, health, education, the environment, and peace, decided to contest elections primarily to address the marginalisation and pauperization of vegetable cultivators in the area, but failed to win a single seat.

Interventions at the level of political culture - A few women's organisations have attempted or are attempting to take a more bottom-up approach to the problem of underrepresentation by addressing and addressing political culture.

Networking - The goal of several women's networks that exist today is to increase women's political participation and representation. Mothers and Daughters of Lanka, one of Sri Lanka's oldest women's networks, has 28 organisations and six individual women.

The Central Province Women's Voice is a network of civic, political, and economic women leaders from the Central Province who are collaborating to build their own power bases by connecting Central Province women leaders. TEAM 1325 is a group of women from 25 districts who are leading the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Sri Lanka, including increasing women's political representation.

Finally, international advocacy before the CEDAW Committee - Women's groups have raised the issue of women's underrepresentation in Sri Lankan political bodies before the CEDAW Committee. Prior to the consideration of Sri Lanka's third and fourth combined reports under CEDAW, women's organisations led by CENWOR prepared an alternative NGO report with technical assistance from IWRAW Asia Pacific in 2001. Although the shadow report did not address Articles 7 and 8, which refer to non-discrimination in public and political life, representatives of NGOs who gave oral evidence before the Committee when Sri Lanka's report was being considered in February 2002 did.

As a result, in its concluding remarks, the CEDAW Committee urged the state to take all necessary measures to increase women's representation in politics and public life at the local,

provincial, and national levels, including through the implementation of temporary special measures. While the NCW and women's organisations have been lobbying for quotas in the years since, CEDAW is frequently overlooked in these efforts.

To make up for lost time in this area, the Parliamentary Assembly is advocating for a number of positive measures to strengthen institutional mechanisms, such as framework laws, governmental programmes, national action plans, and the establishment of gender equality committees in elected assemblies. It emphasises the role of political parties in advancing women's access to decision-making positions, as well as the media's role in informing public opinion about women's roles in society (Conteth, 2012).

Furthermore, non-governmental organisations' interactions with parliaments result in the involvement of women's groups in shaping progressive legislation. However, this relationship must be strengthened by including women who do not have access to legislatures. Parliaments are making efforts to reach out to women who may be uninterested in what happens in their country's legislature. The South African parliament has organised workshops for rural women to learn how the legislature works and to provide feedback on draught legislation and, more importantly, the implementation of domestic violence and customary marriage laws.

2.8 Conclusion

The chapter discussed women and political participation, international and regional conventions on women's political participation and representation, the slow pace of

women's representation in politics, the quota system as a mechanism to push gender balance in political institutions, moving beyond formal participation and constraints to substantive political participation, and the quota system as a mechanism to push gender balance in political institutions.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

According to Gay (2009), a research design is a detailed description of a study proposed to investigate a specific problem. A research design is the configuration of data collection and analysis conditions in such a way that relevance and the research purpose are combined. As a result, Creswell's relevance point criteria are as follows: problem statement, relevant literature, data collection and analysis questions, report writing (Creswell, 2013). This research project took into account all of these factors.

The goal of this study was to look into the mechanisms in place to help female parliamentarians participate effectively in substantive decision-making. The study used a case study design and a qualitative research approach. Kumar (2011) emphasised that this approach does not choose a random sample, but rather a case that can provide you with as much information as possible in order to understand the case in its entirety. This research design provides contextual, in-depth information on the why and how questions that can provide great insights, and it is useful for understanding mechanisms in place to assist female parliamentarians in participating effectively in substantive decision-making.

As the case study focuses on ongoing or past events (Cooper & Schindler, 2014), it fits this study because it is investigating a phenomenon. Furthermore, the design allowed the researcher to collect a large amount of information in a short period of time, which would have been prohibitively expensive if other approaches had been used.

Finally, the researcher was able to keep the holistic characteristics of real life events while investigating empirical events (Kothari, 2013). As a result, a researcher design must include a clear statement of the research problem, procedures and techniques for gathering information, population studied, and data processing and analysis methods. Given all of this evidence, the qualitative research design was deemed the best method of investigation.

3.2 Population

The population of the study was made up of female parliamentarians who had served in the Namibian National Assembly for two or more terms. The populations of the study was fifty-four (54) female parliamentarians based on the characteristics of the intended study.

3.3 Sample

To obtain the desired sample for this study, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique. Taherdoost (2016) defines this as a strategy in which people are purposefully chosen to provide critical information. The researcher's sampling technique provided the most useful data for understanding mechanisms to improve female parliamentarians' participation in decision-making in the Namibian National Assembly, purposive sampling was deemed appropriate and advantageous for this study. Using this sampling technique, the study sample consisted of 20 female parliamentarians who had served two or more terms in parliament.

The twenty (20) female parliamentarians were chosen using additional criteria: ten female parliamentarians who have served exactly two terms in the National Assembly and ten female parliamentarians who have served more than two terms. As a result, while there are many female parliamentarians, only those who have served two or more terms in parliament were chosen.

The following themes emerged from the findings based on individual interviews: Mechanisms involved in orientation or training programmes empowering female parliamentarians to achieve gender equality in decision making, status on party lists before joining parliament mechanisms for preparing parliamentarians from political parties participants planned motions on gender equality in parliament, and improving female parliamentarians' ability to table, defend, and pass motions for decision making at National assembly.

3.4 Research instruments

The data was gathered using a semi structured interview guide. The researcher had specific and well formulated questions that needed to be answered in order to gather more information. The issues revolved around motions introduced, defended, and passed as parliamentary decisions by female parliamentarians. The current mechanisms in place to help female legislators achieve gender equality, particularly in influencing parliamentary decision making. Finally, the researcher concentrated on mechanisms that should be put in place to help female legislators improve their abilities to table, defend, and pass motions for parliamentary decision-making.

The questions were more open-ended, allowing participants to go into greater depth. The researcher, on the other hand, led the participants through follow up questions in order to gain insight into their subjective experiences, opinions, points of view, and motivations (Busetto, Wick, & Gumbinger, 2020). As a result, the researcher was able to freely ask the participants about mechanisms to improve female parliamentarians' participation in decision-making in the Namibian National Assembly.

3.5 Procedure

The researcher sought permission from the Namibian National Assembly after receiving approval from the University of Namibia and ethical clearance. Following permission, the research team identified research participants and scheduled interviews. Because of the COVID19 pandemic, which is expected to hit the world hard in 2020, interviews were conducted using Zoom and Microsoft Team.

As a result, the fieldwork took eight months to complete. This was due to the researcher's inability to move and meet the participants face to face, as well as difficulties in obtaining interview appointments with female parliamentarians. Since the majority of the target participants did not respond to the emails and SMS messages requesting interviews. The interviews were taped to ensure a verbatim account of the sessions, and they lasted between 40 and 1 hour.

3.6 Data analysis

Thematic data analysis was used to analyse the data. This was accomplished by searching a data set for repeated patterns and themes, analysing them, and reporting them using codes (Kiger and Varpio, 2020). Furthermore, the analysis entailed a close examination of transcribed responses, coding, and the identification of themes related to research questions. The preliminary analysis, which consisted of reading all the information gathered during the interviews in order to gain a general sense, was followed by manual coding, which reduces texts to descriptions and coding develops themes and descriptions (Creswell, 2012).

The variables examined were female parliamentarians' experiences with the motions they tabled, defended, and passed as parliamentary decisions, as well as the mechanisms currently in place to support the role of capacity building in empowering female parliamentarians to achieve genuine gender equality. Particularly in terms of influencing parliamentary decision making and the mechanisms that will be put in place to assist them in improving their contributions to table, defend, and pass motions for parliamentary decision making.

3.7 Research ethics

The researcher sought for the Ethical clearance from the University Research Ethics Committee to carry out the research. The University of Namibia granted the researcher research permission and ethical clearance. Then, the researcher obtained permission from the National Assembly and signed informed consent by sending letters to the sampled

participants, clearly informing the research participants about the purpose of the study and informing them that they could withdraw from participation at any stage of the interview process without consequence. During the scheduled appointments, the data collection intervention occurred at a time that was convenient for the participant.

Furthermore, because participants were not asked to provide their names the ethical principles of the study were met by using their information. The identities of the participants were kept private. For ethical reasons, the study's data is stored in a link that only the researcher has access to via a pin code. The data will be deleted after four years, according to UNAM policy. The participants' data is not linked to any of the study's findings and is not linked to any of the study' findings and is not revealed in this thesis. Data is only accessible to the researcher and supervisor and is used for research purposes only.

3.8. Conclusion

This research methodology chapter presented the research design, population studied, sample size, research instruments, procedure, and data analysis as a systematic approach to solving the research problem investigated. The chapter also looked at how the research ethics were followed. Finally, the chapter attempted to reflect on the research methodology and factors that influenced participants' choices and decisions during the data collection and analysis stages. The data analysis and presentation are covered in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The study aimed to explore mechanisms to improve female parliamentarians' participation in decision-making, propose way to assist female parliamentarians to effectively participate in substantive decision-making and explore measures that can facilitate women's active role in participating in legislative processes.

The study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design. This research design provided a contextual, in-depth information on the why and how questions that could provide great insights and was useful for understanding mechanisms in place to assist female parliamentarians to effectively participate in substantive decision-making. A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data for the study. The data was analysed using thematic data method, which was accomplished by searching a data set for repeated patterns, analysing them, and reporting them using themes. The participants were assured of their confidentiality as the questionnaire did not include personal information such as names.

This chapter discusses the demographics of the participants, the structure of Namibian parliament, and how to get into parliament, as well as orientation and trainings. It also looks at how to promote gender equality in decision-making, the role of civil society organisations, and the perspectives of women. Furthermore, the chapter discusses motions

tabled and discussed in parliament addressing women's issues, improving female parliamentarians' ability to table, defend, and pass motion. Women's perspectives, and finally the findings and conclusion.

4.1 Participants Demographics

The study's participants are female members of parliament who have served two or more terms in the National Council (upper house) and the National Assembly (lower house). This group consists of 20 female legislators, 10 from each house. In terms of age, two participants were between the ages of 35 and 39, three were between the ages of 40 and 44, four were between the ages of 45 and 49, and twelve were over the age of 50. None of the respondents were under the age of 34. Furthermore, all the parliamentarians stated that they had completed their grade 12 exams. With seven (7) respondents indicating that they have diplomas from various national and international colleges, five (5) participants hold a bachelor's degree, a postgraduate diploma, and a master's degree. As for their education level, they have other training certificates in various areas, with the majority (17) of the participants having a certificate in community development.

4.2 Setting the Scene: Parliament in Namibia

Parliament is a neutral forum in which legislators discuss and consult openly on political, social, and economic issues, as well as their legal implications for society. It is made up of elected and/or nominated representatives who are in charge of making and changing the country's laws. Namibia has transitioned from a communal law-making process to

colonial rule, where laws and administrative decision-making were entirely in the hands of the colonising countries. The country went through a liberation struggle that culminated in its independence in 1990, when a Parliament that is truly representative of the Namibian people was established based on general election results. However, the traditional law-making process that was suppressed during the colonial period survived, and as a result of this historical development, Namibia now has two legal systems, namely customary and statutory laws.

Furthermore, the Parliament of the Republic of Namibia is one of three state organs, the others being the Executive (Cabinet), the Legislature (Parliament), and the Judiciary (the Courts). Following the November 1989 elections, Namibia's National Assembly was formed on March 21, 1990, on Independence Day, from the Constituent Assembly of Namibia. Foreign observers were present during the election to ensure a free and fair election process in accordance with United Nations guidelines. The National Assembly is the Republic of Namibia's legislative power, according to Chapter 7, Article 44 of the Namibian Constitution, with the authority to pass laws with the President's assent. The National Assembly and the National Council comprise the parliament, which serves as the government's legislative arm.

According to Namibian Constitution as amended Article 46 (1) (a), the National Assembly has 104 members, of which 46 (44%) are female voting members and 5 nonvoting members (b). The National Assembly consist of 96 elected members (voting members) and eight (8) non-voting members appointed by the President in accordance with Namibian Constitution Article 32 (5) (c). Voting members of the National Assembly are

elected on the basis of party lists (article 49), and each National Assembly member serves a maximum of five (5) years (article 50).

In addition, Article 46 of the constitution focuses on composition and states that the composition of the National Assembly shall be as follows: a) seventy-two (72) members to be elected by general, direct, and secret ballot by registered voters. Every Namibian citizen who meets the qualifications described in Article 17 is entitled to vote in the elections for members of the National Assembly and, subject to Article 47, is eligible for nomination as a member of the National Assembly; b) not more than six (6) persons appointed by the President under Article 32 (5)(c), by virtue of their special expertise, status, skill, or experience: provided, however, that such members have no vote in the National Assembly and shall not be taken into account for the purpose of determining any specific majorities that are required under this Constitution or any other law.

The members of the National Assembly referred to in paragraph (1)(a) shall be elected in accordance with procedures to be determined by Act of Parliament, subject to the principles referred to in Article 49.

Members of the National Council, on the other hand, will serve for six (6) years from the date of their election and will be eligible for re-election. When a member of the National Council's seat becomes vacant due to death, resignation, or disqualification, an election for a successor to occupy the vacant seat until the expiry of the predecessor's term of office is held, unless the vacancy occurs less than six (6) months before the expiration of the National Council's term, in which case the vacancy does not need to be filled. Such election shall take place in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Act of

Parliament referred to in Article 69. (2). Every member of the National Council shall take and subscribe to an oath or solemn affirmation in the terms set out in Schedule 3 before the Chief Justice or a Judge designated by the Chief Justice for this purpose. No person shall be qualified to serve on the National Council if he or she is an elected member of a Local Authority or unless he or she is qualified to serve on the National Assembly under Article 47 (1)(a) to (e).

Moreover, before proceeding with any other business, the National Council shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson from among its members. The Chairperson, or in his or her absence, the Vice-Chairperson, shall preside over National Council sessions. If neither the Chairperson nor the Vice-Chairperson are present at any session, the National Council shall elect a member from among its members to act as Chairperson during that session.

Also, the National Council shall have the authority to: consider all bills passed by the National Assembly in accordance with Article 75; investigate and report to the National Assembly on any subordinate legislation, reports, and documents required by law to be tabled in the National Assembly and referred to it for advice by the National Assembly; recommend legislation on matters of regional concern for submission to and consideration by the National Assembly; and perform any other duties as may be assigned to it by the National Assembly. The National Council shall have the authority to form committees and to establish its own rules and procedures for exercising its powers and carrying out its functions. A National Council committee shall be entitled to hold all such hearings and collect all such evidence as it deems necessary for the exercise of the National Council's

powers of review and investigation and shall have the powers referred to in Article 59 for such purposes (3). Finally, the National Council shall make provision in its rules of procedure for such disclosure as may be deemed appropriate in regard to the financial or business affairs of its members.

In conclusion, the members of the National Council shall have the following duties: all members of the National Council shall maintain the dignity and image of the National Council both during National Council sittings and in their acts and activities outside the National Council; all members of the National Council shall regard themselves as servants of the people of Namibia and refrain from any conduct that seeks improperly to enrich them. Rules governing the privileges and immunities of National Council members shall be established by Act of Parliament, and all members shall be entitled to the protection of such privileges and immunities. Namibia's legislative power is vested in the National Assembly, which has the authority to pass laws with the President's assent, subject to the powers and functions of the National Council as set out in this Constitution. The National Council is Namibia's bicameral Parliament's upper chamber. It reviews bills passed by the lower chamber and makes recommendations to the lower chamber on legislation of regional concern. According to Article 45 on the representative nature, members of the National Assembly shall be representatives of all the people and shall be guided in the performance of their duties by the objectives of this Constitution, the public interest, and their conscience.

4.3. Getting into parliament

Namibia has a Bicameral legislature that employs both voluntary party quotas and sub-nationally legislated quotas. The party list must include at least three female candidates in any election for a local authority council of ten or fewer members. If there are eleven or more members on a municipal or town council, the party list must include at least five female names (Local Authorities Act, Article 6). (4). Only the SWAPO party has a 50% zebra system on voluntary Political Party Quotas (alternative between men and women) for the inclusion of women on electoral lists for local elections. Aside from quotas, female parliamentarians are elected by the president or join the legislature as members of their political party's list.

Additionally, the majority of female parliamentarians were elected through their respective party lists, according to the study. The president nominated a few research participants, and all parliamentarians interviewed stated that they were very active in regional politics in their respective regions. Furthermore, Quadri and Thomas (2018) discovered that some female parliamentarians join parliament as parliamentary candidates through their party's female wings, and that in order to do so, one must demonstrate genuine qualities of being nominated to parliament.

4.4 Orientation and trainings into parliament

The research participants described various types of support they received from parliament when they were elected to the National Assembly and National Council.

One of the participants stated that each house of the National Assembly and the National Council has its own administrative department. The Presiding Officers (the speaker and the deputy speaker), Committee Services (Parliamentary Standing Committees), Research, Information and Technology, Legal Services, the Speaker's Table Office, the Secretary's Office, and General Services are among the departments that make up the Secretariat. The section on general services is concerned with personnel services related to the development of parliamentarians through training. All parliamentarians, regardless of gender, have access to this personnel service. Other departments in the National Assembly and National Council include Assembly procurement, outreach, Hansards, and political parties.

Before taking their oaths as members of the National Assembly and National Council, all parliamentarians are briefed on the rules that govern the assembly as a whole (through the general services department). This is primarily concerned with one's behaviour in parliament and the code of conduct.

Parliamentarians also attend a parliament preparation workshop hosted by the secretariat department via the personnel support service, according to study participants. The work starts with a description of why one is in parliament. Who do you exist to serve? Members' and parliamentarians' expectations, as well as a parliamentarian's role in the development of the country. The administrative portion of the workshop is covered in the other section, in which parliamentarians are instructed on how to present and defend their motions, address other parliamentarians, reintroduce motions that are frequently side-lined due to gender and discuss issues without becoming aggressive.

This workshop is applicable to all parliamentarians, regardless of political parties that provide orientations to their members, especially those being groomed for leadership positions in their respective parties. According to Basit (2019), some political parties provide orientation programmes to new politicians; however, this is not done based on gender. The study's participants also stated that they received extensive training on how to debate a motion and when and how not to ask questions during parliamentary sessions. Both male and female parliamentarians are welcome to attend the parliament preparation workshop. Female parliamentarians appointed by the President receive an induction that outlines how to take the floor, debate, discuss, and argue on the motion at hand. For example, one of the study's participants stated that:

My induction was based on priority areas identified by the National Assembly; the parliamentarians programme was designed to benefit parliamentarians, covering thematic areas such as committee and parliamentary business management, fostering better relations with clerks, and improving communication with internal and external stakeholders. Despite being shorter than the induction for all parliamentarians, all topics were covered (FPM1 35).

These workshops, according to research participants, focused on preparing parliamentarians and developing their abilities to table a motion, defend a motion, debate and engage with other political parties, and research additional information about the motion. Some of the research participants had previously been exposed to these topics as part of orientations organised by their respective political parties. Kasomo (2012) attests

to the importance of training, stating that female legislators are given workshops to help them strengthen and improve their report-writing skills.

Also, female legislators stated that they received additional training on how to participate in bill floor debates. These findings show the type of capacity need support that parliamentarians receive when they enter the chamber, which benefits all members of parliament, regardless of gender. This supports Basit's (2019) assertion that formal induction training is in place.

Moreover, these types of trainings, according to Markhaam (2012), are for female legislators to learn the functions of the legislature as well as the rules of the game - both written and unwritten code. Women must learn the "internal practises of parliaments" in order to "equip themselves to successfully use these rules and devise effective strategies to change the rules in order to advance women's interests and goals" (ibid, p.4).

Perhaps the question that needs to be asked is whether gendered trainings in parliament are necessary, or whether these trainings should take gender into account. It is clear that the presence of this gender-focused training strengthens women's voices and assists female parliamentarians in learning the practises of male parliamentarians who tend to dominate in parliament.

Capacity building and training for male and female parliamentarians has been identified as an important factor in strengthening decision-making institutions, which can lead to greater engagement with gender equality in parliamentary work. These trainings,

however, must take into account specific gender circumstances. The findings indicate that these trainings are not gendered, and that needs-based gendered trainings are required to strengthen women's voices in parliament.

Furthermore, when asked if they had served on decision-making bodies prior to joining parliament, most research participants stated that they had not. They were just active members of their parties. Existing literature indicates that “women legislators are less likely to have previously served as politicians than their male colleagues,” which is one of the specific circumstances that must be considered when providing orientation trainings (Markham, 2012). Because of their background in civic organisation and advocacy, male legislators are more likely to be self-assured than their female counter parts. Markham also stated that single sex sessions for women have been shown to be beneficial in terms of self-esteem building because they provide a safe learning environment in which women are more likely to participate actively (ibid). Thus, National council should try this approach in offering training to the female parliamentarians in hope of substantial participation in decision-making.

In addition, the study findings revealed that the training is only offered on a periodic rather than ongoing basis, and that some parliamentarians did not attend the training because it was not offered at the time they entered. Markham (2012, p. 4) emphasises the importance of ongoing and progressively more advanced training programmes, with sequential training sessions provided to allow legislators to apply what they have learned to more rigorous problem-solving scenarios.

Finally, research participants agreed that in order to achieve gender equality in decision making, female parliamentarians must be active both before and after elections. As rural and grassroots outreach can assist female legislators in achieving gender equality in decision-making (Quadri & Thomas, 2018).

4.5 Advancing gender equality in decision making

The research participants described what female legislators require to advance gender equality in decision-making. To begin, research participants agreed that female legislators should involve male legislators who are allies in efforts to advance women's political advancement. For example, one of the research participants stated that:

With the perception that many men have toward women in general, we can only approach those that we know they will be of assistance our issues. I prefer to share my views with our male counter parts that are nation driven and not bias on gender issue (FPM1).

In a separate case, the European Parliament has rejected a resolution on sexual and reproductive rights. According to the Centre for Reproductive Rights (2013), the European Parliament rejected a resolution calling for access to safe and legal abortion, contraception services, non-discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and comprehensive sexuality education. One of the issues identified by research participants was advancing the needs of younger girls in society. In a different vein, (FMP2) stated that:

A motion on child marriage in Iran has been rejected, which means that the legal and judicial commission of Males has rejected a parliamentarian's motion proposing a ban on allowing children under the age of thirteen to marry (FMP 2).

According to the study's participants, this is rarely considered. As a result, while female parliamentarians can identify and table motions that will advance the position of women and girls in society or address existing needs, these motions will not pass by majority vote if male members of parliament do not support them. One of the research participants went on to say:

As female parliamentarians who have historically been disadvantaged in the political arena, we require a strong women's movement. This will not only allow us to be more united, but it will also strengthen our voice and allow us to be heard as female legislators. "It is obvious that if we are part of a decision-making body, we will correctly advise on issues concerning our gender, particularly our health status, as well as a lack of solidarity among women MPs stated one female parliamentarian (FMP3).

The research participant was emphasizing the importance of female parliamentarians working together across party lines with this reflection. This is supported by researchers, such as Rosenthal (2001), who claims that increased female political participation improves cross-party cooperation. Women's caucuses amplify women's voices. If women form a formal caucus, they are more likely to shape the parliamentary agenda. Sharing resources such as staff time, training materials, and research budgets allows women caucus members to advance their agendas more efficiently and strategically. Such

caucuses not only advance women's policy priorities, but also serve as a model of democratic governance and collaborative policymaking, which is particularly important in post-conflict or highly polarised environments. Others argue that “women are more likely to reach across party lines and strive for consensus, even in partisan and polarized environments” (NDI, 2011).

4.6 The role of civil society organisation

Participants in the study indicated that collaboration between civil society organisations and political parties in decision making are necessary to achieve gender equality.

One participant stated:

For example, if we establish a project that has strong local support or is known to benefit the community, it is likely to succeed because most community members have a sense of belonging to the project... As a result, we need your cooperation with our local members before we can reach at regional level (FPM4).

Another respondent stated,

The civil society organisation can support by sponsoring training to be done at different locations." Finance courses, particularly in leadership and development or political science, are available to those who cannot afford to take the courses on their own. Civil society organisations can help by sponsoring materials for the training, particularly the practical component, and by providing a venue where parliamentarians can fully practise what they have learned (FPM5).

According to Chabaya et al. (2009), women's organisations, which are often part of civil society organisations, can provide a solid foundation of support for women's agendas, particularly the full realisation of women's rights. Furthermore, raising awareness and understanding among women who are part of a movement or organisation will be much easier.

4.7 Women's perspectives

Political participation by women is essential for democratic governance. However, because of restrictive laws and institutional barriers; discriminatory cultural practises; and disproportionately low access to quality education, healthcare, and resources, girls and women continue to be marginalised from the political sphere globally (Plan International, 2019). Discriminatory policies and practises, on the other hand, can and have been reversed. One female legislator stated:

I am confident that if these barriers in institutions, sociocultural norms and individual capacity are removed, all girls and women will be empowered, and their voices will be amplified in decision-making processes. Alternatively, there is a need for interventions that range from raising awareness of rights and national power structures among girls and women, particularly the most marginalised, with the goal of fostering inclusivity in leadership roles (FMP 6).

According to Tam, Plank, and Domingo (2015), women's participation in local government is also critical for informing policy and effecting change. Women's participation in grassroots leadership positions has been linked to higher quality

education, health, and infrastructure projects, as well as an increase in women's empowerment and living standards. This is consistent with one respondent's claim:

Empowerment begins at home and in the community. The fathers' role is important for children, especially in terms of unpaid care work and children's understanding of gender equality. According to research, community and sports programmes can help girls develop problem-solving, team building, communication and leadership skills that they can use throughout their lives (FMP 7).

4.6. Motions targeting women issues tabled and discussed in parliament

This theme provided the basis for female parliamentarians' planned motions on gender equality. Despite increased female representation in the National Assembly, the study discovered that female parliamentarians are slow to contribute to debates, with very few motions relating to women and gender issues. Some of the motions presented by female parliamentarians' date back to when the then-ruling party's Minister of Women Affairs and Child Welfare, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, submitted the human and women rights motion (Frederick, 2004).

In another case involving female planned motions on gender equality, parliament blamed COVID-19 for failing to debate the issue of legalising abortion in Namibia, despite the fact that the matter had been tabled for discussion during the pandemic (Johannes, 2020). In June of this year, Parliament received two petitions, one for and one against abortion, according to National Assembly spokesperson David Nahogandja. "because of COVID-

19, we only sat for two terms this year, and we have not sat as usual to discuss more about this," he explained.

Nahogandja stated that the parliamentary committee tasked with the matter will meet early next year when parliament reconvenes to examine both the petition and the issue. This comes after NUDO leader and Deputy Minister of Health Esther Muinjangué officially tabled the abortion debate, which was then postponed until July 2020. The debate, however, did not resume after the first recess of Parliament, until it was announced that the National Assembly would be on recess from October 29 to February 9, 2021.

In other words, Participants debated two key motions introduced in parliament: free sanitary pads for girls and gender-based violence. The Namibian Deputy Minister of Information and Technology (MICT) tabled a motion in the National Assembly on March 3, 2021, requesting that tax laws be amended to allow for a tax exemption on all menstrual hygiene products. The motion was approved on March 17, 2021, and will take effect in the fiscal year 2022/2023.

While one participant intended to discuss violence against women and children, particularly when a husband dies. Another intended to discuss violence against men. According to one participant, due to cultural backgrounds and societal norms, most societies do not report violence against men. This is one of the leading causes of male suicide, particularly among those who believe they are unable to communicate with anyone because they are men.

Many of our younger mothers, on the other hand, have become victims of their partners killing themselves simply because they believe they are men. As a result, communities will be safer if more parliamentarians discuss some of society's most pressing gender issues. Thus, male parliamentarians need time to fully comprehend gender-related motions, as explained by the participant below:

Because men are naturally insensitive to a variety of issues in the house, we can only help our fellow male parliamentarians understand the issues we are raising, particularly those concerning gender, by asking direct questions or providing examples." You could, for example, ask male legislators, "Would you like someone to rape your daughter?" Male parliamentarians are unlikely to understand and support the motions unless we provide real-life examples of them (FMP8).

From 2015 to 2018, female parliamentarians only tabled five of 60 motions in the National Assembly, none of which were related to gender issues. This is consistent with the findings of the participants, who discovered that the majority of motions tabled by female parliamentarians are fewer than those tabled by male parliamentarians.

When more than 65 percent of parliamentarians are women, the nation benefits from policies that benefit women, children, and families in general, according to Jarroud (2015). Women in parliament, for example, can advocate for legislation that protects the rights of women. As a result, female parliamentarians should begin to advocate for and pressure those who represent their interests in parliament to participate meaningfully in debates.

4.7 Improving female parliamentarians' ability to table, defend, and pass motions

In this study, gender quotas were discovered to be necessary as transitional mechanisms. Evidence suggests that when women are elected to political office, they can help girls and women while also having a significant influence on legislation. Women in positions of power are more likely to advocate for positive change in areas such as health, community well-being, poverty reduction, and family welfare, as well as to seek policy consensus.

There is a need for collaboration with institutions of higher learning to assist us legislators in conducting research on various current and international issues (FMP 9) stated.

Furthermore, the study discovered that female parliamentarians should use the strategy of negotiating with other female parliamentarians, regardless of political party affiliation. This enables women to be heard by those with power in decision-making bodies. The findings also emphasised the significance of all women engaging fully with international female parliamentarians and consulting with former female parliamentarians. According to one participant, female parliamentarian should be a part of international organisations that aim to increase the visibility of women parliamentarians not only locally but also nationally.

Participants suggested that students studying development studies or political science, for example, could assist parliamentarians with research.

Another important way for female parliamentarians to improve their ability to table, defend, and pass motions is to caucus on various gender issues regardless of political affiliation." This will not only help get motions passed, but it will also help bring out the voices of MPs who do not belong to powerful political parties. This procedure will aid in amplifying all female parliamentarians' voices, regardless of political party affiliation (FMP 10).

Finally, the majority of female parliamentarians stated that they would lobby/negotiate with other political parties in order for the motion to pass. One long serving female parliamentarian agreed, saying:

We need to get out of there and be known, and most importantly, understood, by our legislative brothers. "They are more likely to support us once they understand our motives, but in most cases, we remember to be fully supportive of them. It is simple if we have most cases, we must remember to be fully supportive of them. It is simple if we have a larger number of female legislators supporting them, when our turn comes, it will be simple (FMP 11).

According to one of the respondents, in order to overcome the language barrier,

It is necessary to use plain language so that others can easily understand what one is sharing." Avoid using complicated vocabulary to appear intelligent or good at debating. Perhaps we can develop transcribing tools that will transcribe what someone is saying into the language they have chosen to understand better. Finally, using jargons or esoteric vocabulary only increases the possibility of miscom

munication and makes other parliamentarians feel bad because they can't understand what was said (FMP 12).

Another female parliamentarian suggested that:

We can have a translation service that can translate when a legislator is speaking. However, a thorough background check must be performed to ensure that the person is truly qualified and experienced in translation. The parliament can hire interpreters to ensure that no information or instruction is missed due to a language barrier. Finally, parliament can use a visual method of communication because, most of the time, words fail us and showing is more effective than telling. As a result, I recommend that we use pictures or diagrams to explain complicated concepts (FMP 13).

Some female parliamentarians may refrain from expressing their ideas due to a lack of confidence. Respondents' opinions:

Providing gender sensitive political leadership and skills based training for women lay the groundwork for them to actively participate in politics. Many groups and organisations around the world have implemented programmes aimed at breaking down major political barriers for female candidates, legislators, and influencers. Another way to increase women's decision making power is to place more women positions of economic leadership. Gender equality in the workplace empower women to make more decisions and improves family wellbeing. Women

typically invest more of their income in their children's health, nutrition, and education than men (FMP 14).

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the study's findings in accordance with the objective of the study. The study's findings were organised around four research questions from the interview guide (see Annexure III). The first section provides demographic information about the participants, and the rest of the findings from the interview guide present the participants' perspectives on the mechanisms in place to assist female legislators in effectively participating in substantive decision making. Mechanisms in place to assist female legislators in effectively participating in substantive decision making were classified into several themes:

Mechanisms in orientation and training programmes that provide female legislators with the tools they need to achieve gender equality in decision making, Status on their party's list "prior to" being elected to parliament, Participants discussed gender equality motions in parliament as well as ways to improve female parliamentarians' ability to table, defend, and pass motions.

The study revealed positive findings that there is some sort of mechanisms in place to improve female parliamentarians' participation in decision-making. However, the negative outcomes are that female parliamentarians continue to face obstacles when attempting to table, defend, and pass motions in parliament. Barriers such as lack of

confidence to actively participating in decision-making motions, language barriers, lack of exposure to national and international debates, and party structures were discovered to hinder the effective participation of female parliamentarians in substantive decision-making.

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The study's rationale was to investigate mechanisms to increase female parliamentarians' decision-making participation, using Namibia's national assembly as a case study. The chapter also includes the study's summary, recommendations, and conclusion.

5.2. Conclusion

The study's main finding is that strong women's movements, as well as collaboration between civil society organisations and political parties, are required for female legislators. According to the study, rural and grassroots outreach can also help female legislators achieve gender equality in decision making by raising awareness among other local women.

Furthermore, female legislators aimed to pass a variety of motions. Among these are the Girl Child Free-Sanitary Pads and Gender Based Violence, rape and rape acts, violence primarily against women and children, especially when a husband dies, and violence against men, which is rarely reported in most cultures due to cultural background and societal norms. Other motions, centred on female legislators, sought to discuss the advantages of women, children, and families in general. As a result, legislation for women's rights is being promoted. Despite the obstacles, there are mechanisms in place to allow female parliamentarians to participate in decision-making, primarily workshops and training in which they are taught a wide range of parliamentary activities, including

how to debate and argue. Through using translation service enlist interpreters, and to employ a visual method of communication language barrier can be tackled. Similarly, lack of confidence can be addressed by offering gender-sensitive political leadership and skills-based training for women.

Although the majority of female parliamentarians aimed to bring in ideas to be discussed, political affiliation frequently became a barrier to successfully table, defend, and put motions for decision-making. As a result, the majority employs the strategy of lobbying/negotiating with other political parties to support the motion in order for it to pass. Finally, more research techniques are desperately needed for all female parliamentarians to be able to present their motion or debate with evidence on the issues under consideration.

In conclusion, female legislators must engage male legislators who are willing to work hard to advance women's political advancement. Female parliamentarians require a strong women's movement as well as collaboration between civil society organisations and political parties. The study also suggests that female parliamentarians be exposed to international parliaments. So that they can learn from other international female legislators.

5.3. Recommendations

The following are specific recommendations derived from the study findings in light of the study objectives.

- According to the study, all MPs, not just women, should learn how to conduct gender analyses and review and revise legislation to ensure gender responsiveness. Workshops on other topics should include gender issues and gender analysis training so that all participants are exposed to the subject, not just those who choose it out of personal interest. For example, at least one component of a budget analysis training session should cover gender responsive budgeting. Alternatively, constituent relations training should examine the differences in men and women's policy priorities and access to legislators. In other words, practitioners must ensure that gender issues are addressed in their own training and capacity-building programmes.
- Female legislators should be given specific training on how to use technological devices to make their presentations/arguments heard clearly.
- Another type of training programme that has been used successfully with female legislators is the study tour, which allows them to observe the legislative process in another country first hand. These programmes provide a comparative democracy education as well as an opportunity to see how women in other countries have influenced the legislative agenda. They also foster international parliamentary networks and help women legislators gain confidence and credibility.
- The study recommends that women's causes be more active and recognised, as they have positive correlations to higher quality education, health, and infrastructure projects, as well as a boost to women's empowerment and living standards, and they complement parliamentary gender committees.
- Female parliamentarians should be encouraged to caucus and go beyond political affiliation, and political affiliation should not be used as a rule to oppose other females'

ideas or motions, and political party rules/agenda should not interfere with a country's national platform for solving national issues.

- The study recommends that training needs for female and male parliamentarians be identified, and that parliamentarians be trained separately based on their capacity.

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APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: UNAM-DEC-HSS/03/04/2021
05/05/2021

Date:

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Decentralised Research Ethics Committee (DEC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the DEC's at the Faculty/Centre/Campus/Unit.

Title of Project: EXPLORING MECHANISMS TO IMPROVE FEMALE PARLIAMENTARIANS' PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING: CASE STUDY OF NAMIBIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Nature/Level of Project: MASTERS (NON HEALTH)

Researcher: TJARA KAPUTU

Student Number: 200317571

Supervisor: DR. ROMIE NGHITEVELEKWA & DR ELLISON TJIRERA

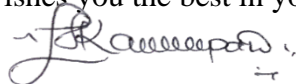
Faculty: HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Take note of the following:

- (a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the DEC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.

- (b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the DEC and the CRP.
- (c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the DEC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus/Unit Research Ethics Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by DEC and the CRP.
- (d) Approval is valid for a period of one year from the date of issue.
- (e) A mid-year report to be submitted to DEC (where applicable), thereafter to the CRP
- (f) The DEC retains the right to:
 - (i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
 - (ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.
 - (iii) *Cognizance and the observation of Namibian's Research Science and Technology Act of 2004 which makes it compulsory for Non-Namibian Based researchers to obtain the compulsory Research Permit from the National Commission on Research Science and Technology (NCRST) FIRST, BEFORE the research can commence.*

The DEC wishes you the best in your research.



Prof. T. Kalusopa, DEC Chairperson - FHSS

APPENDIX 2: PERMISSION LETTER



CENTRE FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301 , Windhoek, Namibia
340 a +264 Mandume 61 206 3275/4662; Ndemufayo Fax Avenue, +264
61 Pioneers 206 3290; ParkURL.: <http://www.unam.edu.na> UNAM

UNIVERSITY NAM I BIA

26 May 2021

Student Name: Tjara Kaputu

Student number: 200317571

Programme: MA Sociology

Approved research title: Exploring mechanisms to improve female
parliamentarians' participation in decision making: Case Study of
Namibian National Assembly

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby confirm that the above-mentioned student is registered at the University of Namibia for the programme indicated. The proposed study met all the requirements as stipulated in the University guidelines and has been approved by the relevant committees. Permission is hereby granted to carry out the research as described in the approved proposal.

Best Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seth J. Eiseb', is written over a horizontal dashed line.

Dr. Seth J. Eiseb

Acting Director: Centre for Postgraduate Studies

Tel: +264 61 2063414

E-mail: directorpgs@unam.na

APPENDIX 3: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER



National Assembly

Private Bag 13323
Windhoek
Namibia
Republic of Namibia

Tel: (+264-61) 288 9111
Fax: (+264-61) 226 899
E-mail: parliament@parliament.gov.na

Ref:

Enquires : Mrs. Linea. N. Shikongo
Telephone. : (061) 288 2514/0811432510

06 October 2021

Ms. Tjara Kaputu
P.O. Box 70030
Khomasdal
Windhoek

Dear Ms Kaputu,

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO GATHER DATA FROM MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT (MPs)**


Your request to conduct academic research within the National Assembly titled "*Exploring mechanisms to improve female parliamentarians' participation in decision-making*" has been approved.

Upon completion of your research you are expected to share the report with the Office. The information recorded should be treated with confidentiality and used only for research purposes.

Yours Sincerely

LYDIA T. KANDETU (MS)
SECRETARY: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

APPENDIX 4: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

UREC Annex 5F: Informed Consent for Qualitative Studies INFORMED CONSENT FORM	
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Informed Consent for: Female parliamentarians who have been in the Namibia National Assembly for two or more terms, who I am inviting to participate in research titled, exploring mechanisms to improve Female Parliamentarians’ participation in decision-making: case study of Namibian National Assembly

Name of Principal Investigator:	TJARA KAPUTU
Name of Sponsor:	N/A

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- **Information Sheet (this section, to share information about the study with you)**
- **Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you choose to participate)**

You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form.

PART I: INFORMATION SHEET

Introduction

I am Tjara Kaputu a final year master’s student in the Master of Development Studies programme at the University of Namibia. I am conducting research on mechanisms to improve female parliamentarians’ participation in political decision-making as part of my academic studies. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. You do not have to decide today whether you will participate in the research. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information, and I will take time to explain. If you have questions

later, you can ask them from me. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to interview you.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this interview is to enquire about the mechanisms in place to assist female parliamentarians' participation in political decision-making. This include mechanisms to assist them to be able to defend and pass motions for parliamentary decisions. I believe that you can help me by sharing your experience and observation about female parliamentarians' participation in political decision-making at National Assembly. I want to explore on how female parliamentarians can table, defend and pass motions for parliamentary decisions. I also want to explore about different ways that female parliamentarians can table, defend and pass on motions at National Assembly for parliamentary decisions.

I hope to use this information to unpack the role of capacity building mechanisms in empowering women to achieve genuine gender equality, and to influence political decision-making. It will also add to the body of knowledge within the field of Development Studies.

Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve your participation will take place at a time of your convenience and an appointment will be scheduled. Due to COVID interviews will be recorded via ZOOM/Microsoft Teams to ensure a verbatim account of the interview sessions and the interview is expected to last for about an hour.

Participant Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because I feel that your experience as a female parliamentarian who have been in the Namibia National Assembly for two or more terms, can contribute much to our understanding and knowledge of female parliamentarian contribution at National Assembly.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. If you choose not to participate you will have no impact on your job or on any work-related evaluations or reports. Please note that the choice you make now, you may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

Procedures

I am asking you to help me explore mechanisms to improve female parliamentarians' participation in political decision-making. I am inviting you to take part in this research project. If you accept, you will be asked to participate in an interview with myself Tjara Kaputu. During the interview, I will sit down with you in a comfortable place at the location of your choice or due to COVID19 we will meet via MS Teams or ZOOM. If it is better for you, the interview can take place in your home or at the office. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question. No one else but me/the interviewer will be present unless you would like someone else to be there. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except Dr.Nghivetelekwa will have access to the information documented during your interview. The entire interview will be recorded, but no-one will be identified by name in the recording. As a participant, you have the right to consent or not to consent to being recorded. I Tjara Kaputu the researcher will ensure safekeeping of the recordings and transcripts by keeping them in a password protected folder on the computer that will be deleted upon final examination of the thesis.

Duration

The research will take place over a month. During that time, I will visit you once for an in-depth interview and each interview session will last for about one hour.

Risks

There could be a risk that you may share some personal or confidential information by chance, or that you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. However, we do not wish for this to happen. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the interview if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes

you uncomfortable.

Benefits

Dear participant, there will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help explore mechanisms in place to improve female parliamentarians' participation in political decision-making. This include mechanisms to assist them to be able to, defend and pass motions for parliamentary decisions. I hope to use this information to unpack the role of capacity building mechanisms in empowering women to achieve genuine gender equality, and to influence political decision-making. It will also add to the body of knowledge within the field of Development Studies. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to interview you.

Reimbursements

Please take note that you will not be provided any incentive to take part in the research. However, we will share the findings of the research with you by means of presenting you with a copy of the dissertation.

Confidentiality

I will not be sharing information about you to anyone outside of the research team. The information that we collect from this research project will be kept private. Any information about you will have a pseudo name on it instead of your name. Only the researchers will know what your name is, and the researcher will ensure safekeeping of the recordings and transcripts by keeping them in a password protected folder on the computer that will be deleted upon final examination of the thesis. It will not be shared with or given to anyone except my supervisors (Dr.R.Nghitevelekwa) who will have access to the information, as authorised University personnel.

Sharing the Results

Nothing that you tell us today will be shared with anybody outside the research team, and nothing will be attributed to you by name. The knowledge that we get from this research will be shared with you before it is made widely available to the public. Each participant

will receive a summary of the results. I will publish the results in partial fulfilment of my studies at the University of Namibia (UNAM) so that other interested people may learn from the research.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so and choosing to participate will not affect your job or job-related evaluations in any way. You may stop participating in the interview at any time that you wish without your job being affected. I will give you an opportunity at the end of the interview to review your remarks, and you can ask to modify or remove portions of those, if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly.

Who to Contact

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact me on 0814035965/ email: tjarakavihuha@gmail.com

This research has been reviewed and approved by the relevant Ethics Review Committee at the University of Namibia, which is a committee whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. The committee reports to the University's Centre for Research Services. If you wish to contact this Centre, please call +264 61 206 4673 or send an e-mail to research@unam.na.

You can ask me any questions about any part of the research study if you wish to. Do you have any questions?

PART II: CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked, have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

.....

Name of Participant (print)

Signature of Participant

.....
Date (day/month/year)

If illiterate

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

.....
Name of Witness (print)



Thumb print of Participant

.....
Signature of Witness

.....
Date (day/month/year)

.....

Statement by the Researcher/Person taking Consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

1. Consent is obtained from the University of Namibia,
2. then schedule appointments to conduct in-depth online face-to-face interviews with the participants. The data collection intervention will take place at a time of the participant's choosing upon the scheduled appointments.
3. participant has the right to agree to participate in the interview and not to be recorded in the interview.

I declare that I will not divulge any information that I interpret during this research intervention to a third party outside this study.

.....

Name of Interpreter (print)

Signature

.....

Date (day/month/year)

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

TOPIC: EXPLORING MECHANISMS TO IMPROVE FEMALE PARLIAMENTARIANS' PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING: CASE STUDY OF NAMIBIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCTION

I am Tjara Kaputu a final year master's student in the Master of Development Studies programme at the University of Namibia. I am conducting a research on mechanisms to improve female parliamentarians' participation in political decision-making as part of my academic studies. The purpose of this interview is to enquire about the mechanisms in place to improve female parliamentarians' participation in political decision-making. This include mechanisms to assist them to be able to defend and pass motions for parliamentary decisions. I hope to use this information to unpack the role of capacity building mechanisms in empowering women to achieve genuine gender equality, and to influence political decision-making. It will also add to the body of knowledge within the field of Development Studies. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to interview you. I would also like to state that this interview is purely for academic purposes and no names or information from this interview would be used for any other purposes. The interview is planned to not last for more than an hour. You may decide whether you want to end the interview at any time, or to withdraw your participation. Your identity will not be revealed to anyone, and I will maintain confidentiality.

Kindly respond to the following questions:

QUESTION 1: When you took up the position as a parliamentarian, what were some of the aspects involved in the orientation or training programs?

QUESTION 2: Before you joined parliament, were you on your party list?

QUESTION 3: In brief, please elaborate on what is involved in the process of preparing your political party's parliamentarians?

QUESTION 4: Would you explain the kind of issues/motions or pressing needs that pertain to gender equality/inequality that you aim to table in parliament?

QUESTION 5: During your tenure as a parliamentarian, discuss the motions you tabled in parliament?

QUESTION 6: What was the motivation behind the motions which you tabled?

QUESTION 7: How successful were the motions you tabled in parliament?

QUESTION 8: To what extent and in what ways do female parliamentarians caucus (despite party differences) on common issues/motions aimed at addressing gender inequalities?

QUESTION 9: Discuss challenges that women parliamentarians face in tabling and pushing through motions.

QUESTION 10: What do you think should be done to improve female parliamentarians especially in influencing parliamentary decision making? (by being able to table, defend and put motions through as parliamentary decision making).

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.!