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# PERCEPTIONS ON WOMEN ELECTIONS IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES: THE CASE FOR MARONDERA DISTRICT

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## ABSTRACT

The study sought to discover –in order of importance-the forces that hold back women in Marondera District from becoming councillors. The study was conducted against the backdrop that while females constitute about 50% of the district population currently only a mere 5 out of 35 councillors are women and this translates to 14%. The scenario is exacerbated by the fact that this percentage has been falling over the past few years. This lopsided situation persists in spite of continued lobbying for the political empowerment of women by the Zimbabwean Government, the United Nations and civil society. The study employed the descriptive survey design on a sample size of 350. Sample representativeness was improved by stratification along the lines of age and geographical location. Self-administered questionnaires and in-depth interviews were used. Tables, graphs and the Spearman's correlation coefficient were used to organise and facilitate the analysis of data. A good number of interesting findings were made in respect of the district. It was observed that the younger and more educated the female, the more willing she would be to become councillor. It was also noted that of the three categories of adult women-singles, married and widowed, the latter was more available for political leadership. In the main it was found that it was the patriarchy of the society which held back women from becoming councillors in Marondera District. More specifically, such 'lady' stereotypes as *submission to male dominance* and *non-assertiveness*, readily showed up. Institutional shortcomings and political violence were cited as lesser deterrents. Interestingly these perceptions were shared by both male and female respondents.

Recommendations entail changing the patriarchal mindset in both males and females. Varied and carefully selected strategies-as depicted in the 'woman leader nurturing model'-would have to be employed by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development in partnership with the usually better resourced non-governmental organisations.

**Key word:** Acculturation, gender discrimination, gender stereotypes, patriarchal society, political empowerment, political leadership

## 1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Despite that women constitute about a half of the country's population – more precisely 52% and 49, 51% for Marondera District (cf 2002 population census) – it appears women continue to get marginalised on the political and decision making arena. For example, just before the March 29, 2008 harmonised elections, there were only four (4) women out of a total of fifty-three (53) in the cabinet; out of a possible one hundred and fifty (150), only 24 women were in parliament representing a 16% proportion whilst a mere 357 out of 1 500 women (i.e. 23, 6%) got elected as councillors in local authorities (The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission). In Marondera District, women made up only 24% of all the elected councillors.

Things were no better after the harmonised election of 29 March 2008. In fact, women representation in the house of assembly fell to 13%. The proportion of female councillors fell to 14% in Marondera district (i.e. 5 out of 35).



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It is worrisome to note that the above discrepancy between the high proportion of females in the population and the low proportion of females in decision-making positions persists unabated. This is so even in the face of continued lobbying for women political empowerment by Government, United Nations agencies and civil society.

### 1.1 Statement of the problem

In spite of the fact that females constitute almost half of the population in Marondera district, there are only five (5) female councillors out of a total of thirty-five (35). This translates to 14%. Clearly, there should be some forces keeping women from ascending into the positions of ward councillor. All being equal, the proportion of women in the councils should be a reflection of the proportion of women in the population.

### 1.2 Purpose of the study

Granted that there could well be an “established” raft of factors or forces which constrain women from ascending into positions of ward councillor, it will next be necessary to rank these factors in order of importance as they specifically apply to Marondera District. Such was primarily the purpose of this study. The study also sought out any relationships which might have existed between the personal condition – “*readiness to become a ward councillor*” and such quasi-objective variables as ‘age’ and ‘marital status’.

### 1.3 Research questions

As the research previously pointed out, there are what are generally perceived to be the forces constraining women from getting into positions of ward councillor. It was in cognisance of these forces or factors that the following research questions were fashioned. The study methodology however, went further to provide for the emergence of any hitherto unknown factors.

- 1) To what extent do minimum educational requirements keep women from getting into positions of ward councillor as compared to the other constraints?
- 2) How far have socio-cultural beliefs and practices prevented women from becoming ward councillors in relation to other factors?
- 3) To what degree have marital and reproductive responsibilities held women from becoming councillors in comparison with other constraints?
- 4) In the context of the other factors, to what extent has economic status kept women from ascending into positions of ward councillor?
- 5) How far have institutional shortcomings hindered women from becoming ward councillors?
- 6) Is there any correlation between a woman’s age and readiness to become a ward councillor?

### 1.4 Significance of the study

The findings of the study will assist players in the field of gender equality and equity to come up with more informed strategies and programmes to bring women aboard the decision- making platform. The ensuing increased uptake of political leadership positions by women should ultimately enhance leadership quality and effectiveness for communities.

### 1.5 Assumptions

- All the women who are eligible candidates for ward councillor are at least aware of government policy to politically empower them.
- Generally women at least have the same potential as men to become effective political leaders

### 1.6 Scope of the study

The study was confined to Marondera District which consists of the three electoral constituencies namely:-**Marondera East**. (a mixture of commercial and resettlement farms and Svosve communal lands); **Marondera Central** (largely urban,) and **Marondera West**. (mainly comprising the Chihota communal lands).

The period of study was from January 2008 to August 2008.



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## 1.7 Limitations

Although the researcher made all effort to mitigate a number of limitations to the study, there are a few notable ones which remained.

- For logistical reasons, the bulk of the research participants were drawn from meetings and workshops arranged by the Marondera District Office of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development. This meant that those who did not attend such meetings were automatically excluded. This had the effect of diminishing on the randomness and hence representativeness of the study sample. In a bid to mitigate the problem, effort was made to visit some participants in their homes.
- Because respondents were approached in groups, there was a possibility that some of the respondents may have had shared responses. This would only help diminish the individuality of responses.
- Reduced response rate for questionnaires was rather inevitable particularly from the older section of the sample. This was in spite of the fact that respondents were requested to complete and return questionnaires immediately.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Role Played by the Government of Zimbabwe in the Political Empowerment of Women

The Government of Zimbabwe has to date ratified a number of global protocols and conventions with respect to the redress of gender disparities in politics and decision making. In 1991, the country acceded to and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW. Consequently in 1996, the Zimbabwean constitution was amended to specifically prohibit discrimination on the grounds of gender.

In another development, in September 1995, Zimbabwe signed the Beijing Declaration, which paved the way for government to collaborate with local non-governmental organisations in developing the Zimbabwe Plan of Action. Amongst other things the Zimbabwean Plan of Action sought to address the issue of 'women in politics and decision-making' as well as 'institutional mechanisms for the development of women'.

Zimbabwe is also a signatory to a number of regional protocols. These include the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development which proposed that by the year 2008, at least 30% of positions in political and decision making structures in the public and private sectors should have been held by women.

In order to make good on the above obligations on the realisation of the empowerment of women in terms of decision-making, the Government of Zimbabwe also has in place the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development.

### Factors Constraining Women from Ascending Into Political Leadership

The choice of factors discussed in this review was based on what came out of related previous studies. As it is, the object of this study was, amongst other things, to rank those factors which emerged from the study. Therefore the order in which the factors are presented in the following discussion is inconsequential. Furthermore no related literature could be drawn from previous studies on the district as no such work could be traced.

### The Impact of Socio-Cultural Beliefs and Perceptions on Women's Readiness for Political Leadership

Ford (2002) argues that the daily messages present in popular culture also help to shape women's identity, expectations, ambitions and habits. The result is women end up losing interest in politics.

Sweetman (2004:11), in support, writes: - "... *cultural barriers prevent women speaking assertively in mixed company*". Sweetman further notes that "...*men do not want women travelling, especially if they were staying out late into the evening.*" Usawa (2008) observes that women cannot afford to stand for office because they cannot get permission from their husbands who are either jealous or simply cannot stand the challenge.

### The Constraint of the Reproductive Function

According to a UNDP report (2000), the burden of reproductive work inhibits fuller participation of women in local governance.

A study by Sweetman (2004) revealed that women were 'torn between the opportunity to play a stronger role in community politics and the expectation that they will continue to play their reproductive roles as mothers'.

### Inadequate Formal Education



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Miller as cited by Haralambos, *et al.*, (1990:46) argues that quite often, women are prevented from getting into positions of political leadership, by a lack of formal education.

Sweetman (2004) supports the above view. She adds that the lack of adequate education, particularly the limited command of language, translates into fear and shyness.

Usawa (2008) also adds her voice by citing illiteracy as a notable impediment to women's ascension to positions of political leadership.

### Lowly Socio-Economic Status

Waldorf (2005) observes that owing to a number of reasons, women are not economically well-to-do. This becomes critical in view of the fact that political candidates require a constant and steady source of income to meet the cost of political campaigns. Madziwa Miriam (2008) also subscribes to the same sentiment. A UNDP report (2000) acknowledges that generally a weak socio-economic position inhibits women from participating fully in local governance.

### Institutional Shortcomings

Sweetman (2004) observes that written policies supporting women's involvement in political decision making are very often undermined by a lack of resources for the relevant ministry.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The study which was largely qualitative in that it was primarily concerned with respondents' perceptions was also quantitative in so far as it included such quasi-objective data as 'age' and 'marital status'.

The study, which employed the descriptive survey design, used a sample of 350 (250 females and 100 males) *vis a vis* a possible registered voter population for the district of 81 764 (Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Report, 2008). Admittedly, the sample size is on the small side, but then this was due to such legitimate limitations as time, mobility and access (Angrosino 2009:48). Furthermore our sample size is in keeping with the following; where the study involves a few highly correlated variables, a size between 150 and 300 would be suitable (Hutchison *et al* 1999); sample sizes are generally smaller for qualitative studies than quantitative studies (Ritchie *et al* 2003). Finally, in a bid to improve the representativeness of this small sample, the sample was subjected to two-tier stratification.

Firstly, the district was stratified along constituency lines into three distinct zones. The three zones, Marondera East, Marondera West and Marondera Central, based on their populations, contributed respondents to the study sample in the following respective proportion :- 1 : 1 : 1,15. The population was further stratified with respect to age groups as follows :- 20 – 34 years; 35 – 45 years; 45 – 45 years, 55 – 64 years; 65+ years → 6,37 : 2,33 : 1,77 : 1:1. This ratio guided the selection of respondents from the three constituencies.

The study employed self-administered questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Data was analysed with the aid of tables, graphs and the Spearman's correlation coefficient. Ultimately, the responses from the respondents were systematically sorted out and incorporated into a developmental model for female political leaders.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The relationship between 'readiness to become a ward councillor' and the woman's 'age' and 'educational attainment'

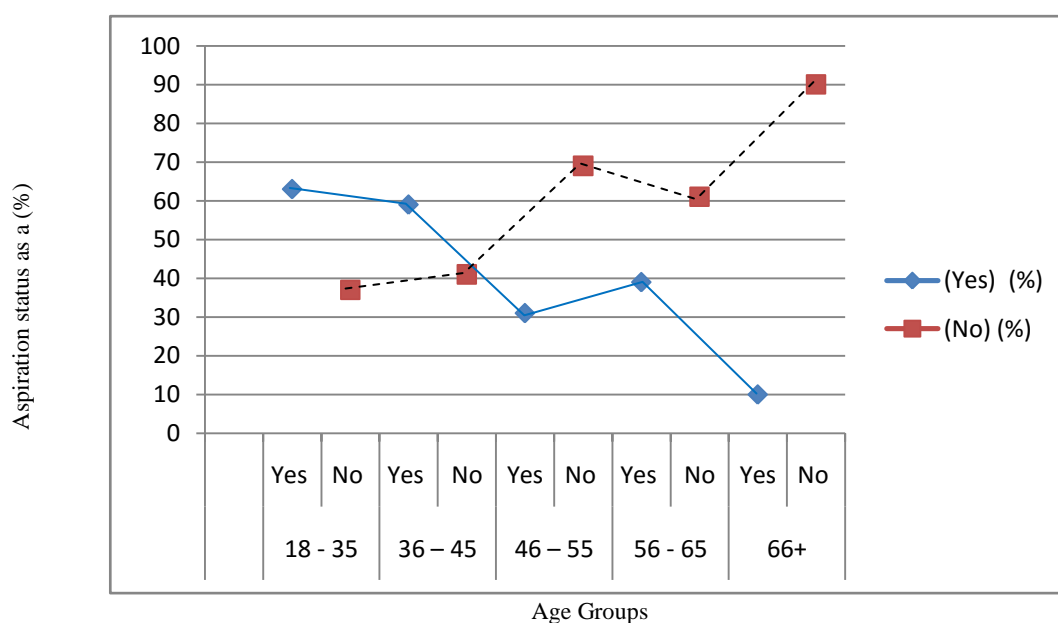
The readiness or preparedness to become ward councillor was recorded in terms of whether one wished to become a councillor (i.e. Yes) or not (i.e. No). This was alternatively referred to as 'aspiration status'

**Table 1: Female Respondents: Data on Aspiration Status by Age and Educational Attainment.**



Age group	Aspiration status	Totals per age group (%)	Level of education attained					
			Never went to school	Primary	'O' Level	College graduates	'A' Level	University Graduate
18 - 35	Yes	66 (63)	-	1 (25)	43 (74)	15 (45)	6 (86)	1 (100)
	No	38 (37)	-	3 (75)	15 (26)	18 (55)	1 (14)	0 (0)
36 - 45	Yes	20 (59)	-	3 (33)	9 (60)	4 (80)	2 (100)	1 (100)
	No	14 (41)	-	6 (67)	6 (40)	1 (20)	0 (0)	0 (0)
46 - 55	Yes	8 (31)	-	0 (0)	3 (20)	3 (50)	1 (50)	1 (50)
	No	18 (69)	-	1 (100)	12 (80)	3 (50)	1 (50)	1 (50)
56 - 65	Yes	7 (39)	0 (0)	6 (40)	1 (50)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	No	11 (61)	0 (0)	9 (60)	1 (50)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
66+	Yes	5 (10)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	No	47 (90)	1 (100)	3 (100)	1 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Total	Yes	106 (45)	0 (0)	10 (31)	56 (62)	22 (50)	9 (82)	3 (75)
	No	128 (55)	1 (100)	22 (69)	35 (38)	22 (50)	2 (18)	1 (25)

The two graphs in figures 1a and 1b are based on the **table 1** above.



**Figure 1a - Graph Showing Variation of Aspiration Status by Age of Female Respondents (based on columns i & iii)**

Figure 1a shows that the older the female, the less likely she would wish to become a ward councillor and, conversely, the younger the woman the more prepared she will be to become a councillor. Whilst acknowledging that only a proper experiment would establish any causal link between research variables, it is all the same quite appealing to think that in this case 'age' is the independent variable and 'aspiration status' the dependent variable.



### Analysis of Aspiration Status by Level of Education Attainment

NB: The graph in figure 1b is based on data from columns iii and iv

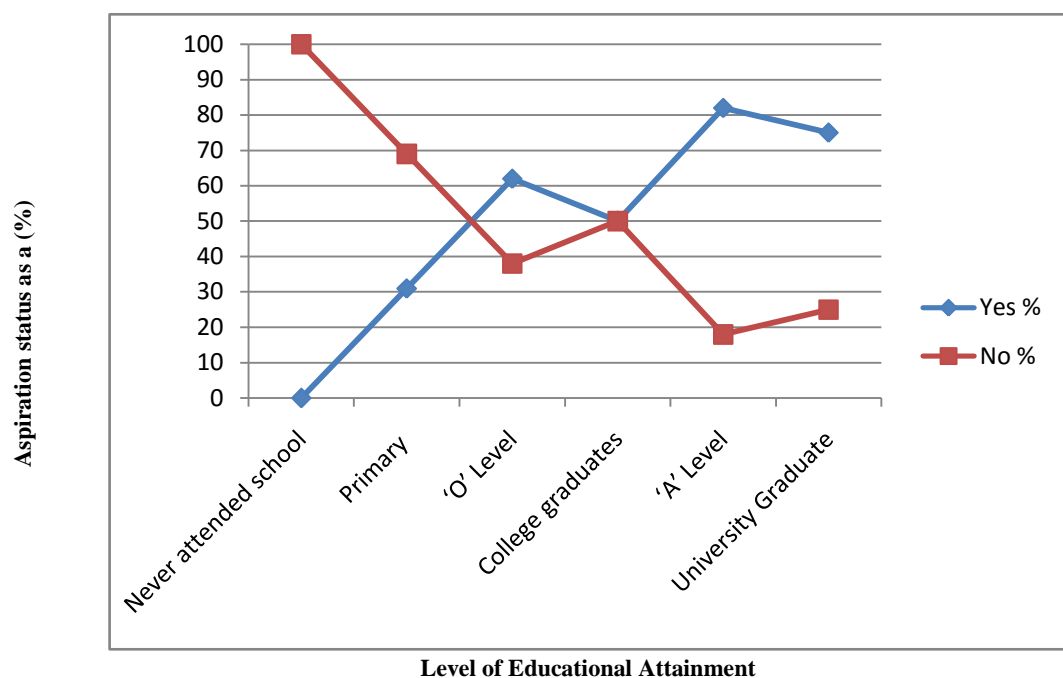


Fig 1b\ Graph Showing Variation of Aspiration Status by Level of Educational Attainment  
(based on columns iii and iv)

From the above diagram, it can reasonably be deduced that the likelihood of a female aspiring to be a ward councillor **generally** increases with the level of educational attainment. Again it sounds reasonable to assume a causal relationship between the two variables.

### A Synchronised Analysis of Aspiration Status by Age and Level of Educational Attainment

When the two analyses above are put together, it would appear that the younger and the more formally educated the woman is, then the more likely she will be prepared to become a ward councillor

However, if further inspection were to be hazarded, the greater steepness (or gradient) of the graph in figure 1b may be read to suggest that 'educational attainment' may be more predominant than 'age' as a determinant of the woman's preparedness to become a ward councillor. In other words a relatively small variation in the variable 'level of educational attainment' would result in a relatively large movement in the level of aspiration to become a councillor.

Finally, it should be noted that about one half of the number of respondents aspired to become councillors whilst the other half did not. Put differently, one in every two women in Marondera District would like to become a ward councillor.

### Analysis of Aspiration Status by Marital Status

Table 2 – Aspiration Status by Marital Status

Aspiration Status	MARITAL STATUS		
	Single (%)	Married (%)	Widowed (%)
Yes	25	33	60
No	75	67	40



The marital status analysis above was done on females above the age of 30 and these constituted a little more than half of the female study sample. The researcher deemed that females in this age category were 'more settled in life' and were therefore 'more available' for political leadership'

The table above shows that a comparatively small proportion (below 50%) for both the 'single' and 'married' women categories aspires to be ward councillors. The proportion is even smaller for single females. (It should be noted that females as old as 55 years are included in the 'singles' category). Now by contrast the proportion of women aspiring to become councillors is highest for the 'widowed' category. Interestingly, such a finding would run against the commonly held notion that it is the single women who clamour for political leadership more than any other. (However, it could well be that in spite of the anonymity of the questionnaire, the single woman, too conscious of the social stigma associated with political ambition in women, simply chose to pretend she had no interest!).

### The Most Cited Reasons Why Women Wish To Become Ward Councillors

**Table 3a:- The Five Top Most Cited Reasons for Wishing To Become a Councillor by Female Respondents**

(NB: The data given below was as a result of those who responded to the item "If you wish to become a ward councillor, say why")

Rank	Reasons (in descending Order)	Freq.	% of Total No. of Respondents
1	To uplift women and the community	46	46
2	Most of the problems in society confront women, so women are best placed to lead	22	22
3	To prove that women are effective leaders	13	13
4	Women are incorruptible	12	12
5	To represent people	7	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	

Nearly half (47%) of those female respondents who said they wished to become councillors were driven by the sheer desire to serve their communities particularly the women component. Further to this, most of the reasons put forward tended to extol women as having better leadership qualities than men, e.g. *women are less corruptible*.

### The Most Cited Reasons Why Women Do Not Wish To Become Ward Councillors

**TABLE 3b – The four top most cited reasons for not wishing to become a councillor by female respondents**

(NB: The data below was as a result of those who responded to the item "Give reasons why you do not wish to become a councillor". The response rate for this item was however very low)

Rank	Reasons (in descending Order)	Freq.	% of Total No. of Respondents
1	It is time consuming	22	40
2	It is difficult to convince people	19	35
3	The campaigns are very often violent	10	18
4	The remuneration is too low	4	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	

❖ Only the top four reasons were significant in terms of frequency.

The most cited reasons for **not** wishing to become a councillor were: '*it is time consuming*' [suggesting that women already have too much on their plate in terms of domestic chores]; and '*it is difficult to convince people*'-which points to low self-confidence. On closer analysis these two topmost reasons are linked to the 'traditional woman' stereotype. The last two –*violent election campaigns* and *low remuneration*-do not however fit the 'traditional' woman stereotype. A sizeable proportion of 18% - which interestingly largely draws





from Marondera Central (urban) – said they were put off by the violence which goes with election time. Marondera Central/Urban currently contributes only 1 out of the total 5 women councillors in the district.

#### **Factors Constraining Women from Getting into Positions of Ward Councillor – as seen by both female and male respondents**

Basing on the outcome of a pilot study conducted prior to the study proper, the researcher compiled a set of ten possible factors which constrain women from getting into positions of ward councillor. During the study the list of factors was presented to respondents – both female and male – who were asked to suggest additional factors before ranking the final list. The new list contained twenty factors. The rankings from all respondents were then consolidated. As shown in table 4 below; it was observed that the top five factors were the same for both female and male respondents – though these were ordered a little differently.

**TABLE 4 – Ranking Of the Top Five Constraining Factors by Both Female and Male Respondents**

Rank	By female respondents	By male respondents
1	• Society frowns upon aspiring women	• Society frowns upon aspiring women
2	• No resources for women to campaign	• No resources for women to campaign
3	• Women are discouraged by other women	• Women lack self-confidence
4	• Child bearing and rearing responsibilities	• Child bearing and rearing responsibilities
5	• Women lack self-confidence	• Women are discouraged by other women

Despite the fact that only the top five factors were considered above, it will still be worth the while to recognise the other factors – which are by no means unimportant. Female and male respondents alike also cited the following factors: - lack of resources for advocacy for the relevant Ministry; prevalence of electoral violence; and prohibition by certain churches.

#### **The Correlation between Ranking by Female and Male Respondents**

The Spearman's Rank Correlation co-efficient,  $r_s$  was computed for data in table 4 as shown below, to determine the degree of correlation between ranking of the top five factors by female and male respondents.

$$r_s = \frac{1 - 6 \sum d^2}{n(n^2 - 1)} = \frac{1 - 6 \times 8}{5(25 - 1)} = 0,6$$

The value of  $r_s$  (= 0,6) shows a moderately positive correlation between rankings by female and male respondents. This value can be read to mean that in the sample and hence in the population under study, women and men, more or less perceive the same factors as holding back women from getting into positions of ward councillor. This discovery brings some relief in that common ground already exists regarding perceptions on the constraints holding women from positions of ward councillor. A closer analysis reveals that at least the top five factors are, again, deep-rooted in indigenous traditional value and belief systems.

#### **The Most Contested 'Factors'**

In a related aspect of the study, respondents – both female and male – roundly ruled out the following as constraining women from positions of ward councillors: *naturally low intelligence in women* and *a low level of formal education*. The latter view is vindicated by the observation that 86% (201/234) of the respondents had attained at least 'O' level.

#### **Challenges Faced By Sitting Female Councillors**

Table 5 shows how sitting female councillors ranked, during the interviews, the top three challenges they faced.

**Table 5 – Ranking Of Challenges Faced By Sitting Female Councillors**

Ranking	Challenge
1	Antagonism from male counterparts and contenders
2	Responsibilities are time consuming
3	Contempt and derision from members of the community





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The data above, obtained from sitting councillors this time, still goes to show that the spectre of traditional culture will invariably get in the way of women becoming effective ward councillors in particular and to be politically empowered in general.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Once again, there is need to remind that the findings and recommendations which will be discussed below specifically pertain to Marondera District.

### 5.1 Conclusions And Recommendations On Why Women Will Not Get Into Positions Of Ward Councillor.

#### 5.1.1 Educational Attainment and Age

##### **Conclusion**

The observation that the higher the level of educational attainment, the more ready is the woman to become a ward councillor may be explained from an *acculturation* perspective. This is to say, at least in the Zimbabwean context, education, in its broadest sense, is the sum total of the interactions between a subject's initial worldview and the 'liberal' western culture. In its liberalism, western culture places a high premium on such empowering attributes in women as *assertiveness* and *self-confidence*. By the same logic, today's young girl, who lives in Cherima or Lendy Park, would get socialised in a much more 'liberalised' way, through the likes of television and social media (e.g. Facebook) than the young girl of say fifty years ago. Thus today's young woman would be more ready to take up a leadership position in decision making as compared to today's elderly woman.

The quotes below, cited from study interviews, are testament to the extent to which the older woman has gotten shackled to traditional culture.

*"Hazviite pesu pesu pavarume. Hazviite pachivanhu chedu"* (It is not proper, according to our custom, for a woman to be seen running around in front of men) (66 year old widow)

*Vakadzi vari pasi pevarume, so anoda (iye mukadzi) kutonga ani. Vatinoziva ana Mai Mujuru ma war veteran. Hapana mukadzi njee angazviite"* (Women are below men, so who would the women want to rule. The likes of Mai Mujuru are war veterans. No ordinary woman can do that) (67 year old widow).

Instead of being looked to as a role model, Vice President Joyce Mujuru, for all her valour, literally gets castigated as a rebel!

Finally, education, in terms of women's eligibility for the posts of ward councillor may not be an issue here. What however becomes an issue is the extent to which the education has enlightened women about their leadership capabilities. In this regard therefore concerns by writers such as Miller, Sweetman and Usawa may still remain valid.

##### **Recommendations**

The Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development (MoWAGCD), through its Marondera District office should start identifying sponsors for the girl child such as local businesswomen

#### 5.1.2 Marital Status

##### **Conclusion**

From the study, widowed women were the most ready to become ward councillors as compared to the single and married categories. A plausible explanation for this state of affairs could be that the widowed category has reduced marital and other family responsibilities. (In the study, widows were largely in the 46 – 55 years age band). Probably the single woman is more concerned about preserving her 'integrity'! In the long-term however the single woman and society alike will need to be disabused of the 'loose woman' stigma in order for the single woman to participate in political leadership freely and fully.

##### **Recommendations**

The implication for those into capacity building for women leadership is that, at least for now, the widow category should serve as fertile hunting ground for prospective female leaders. Whenever the opportunity arises to select candidates for political leadership development, the district office of the MoWAGCD, should, in the absence of volunteers, look in the direction of the widows.



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### 5.1.3 Economic Status

#### Conclusion

As it emerged, the low economic status of women was, from the perspective of both female and male informants, the second most significant constraint keeping women from positions of ward councillor. Low economic status of women was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> by both female and male respondents. It should be noted that our traditional patriarchal society has always favoured the male child when it came to inheritance.

#### Recommendations

It would therefore mean that, at least for women, economic empowerment is a prerequisite for political empowerment. The Marondera District office (MoWAGCD) should intensify its 'Women- in- Business' programmes through smart partnerships with stakeholders such as SEDCO and NGO's involved in small business development. It is important that the selection of participants for such programmes be non-partisan and be free from favouritism.

### 5.1.4 Socio-Cultural Barriers

#### Conclusion

The following were put forward by both female and male respondents as the top five constraints holding women from the positions of ward councillor; low regard for female political aspirants by society in general: low economic status for women, contempt and derision from other women, child rearing and other domestic chores as well as lack of self-confidence. A closer look at all these variables reveals that they all share a common stem-a retrogressive patriarchal culture.

Akin to the retrogressive traditional culture is the issue of *religion*. This is ranked 12 and 8 out of 20 by female and male respondents respectively. Alette Hill *et al* write "... the church, the synagogue and the mosque have repeatedly told women that they are inferior to run [for political office]' (p. 69). In this regard religion -just like traditional culture, - largely conspires against the rise of women.

#### Recommendations

In short our traditional culture is the stumbling block. The relegation of women into second class originates from a mindset which has been moulded over time by persistent perceptions and beliefs. This negative state of the mind can only be corrected by a series of de-education and re-education over both the short and the long term. Indeed it is well that the study looked at 'perceptions' rather than the 'hard reason' because the way forward in fighting a negative mindset hinges on changing perceptions. Negative gender stereotypes have to be revolutionised. Advocacy and awareness campaigns under such slogans as 'women are incorruptible' as well as setting in place subsidized child day care centres, would go a long way in creating an enabling environment for nurturing an effective woman councillor. Such faith-based umbrella organisations as the Zimbabwe National Council of Churches (ZNCC) could be roped in to urgently engender a paradigm shift among their membership. The MoWAGCD could enlist community, traditional and church leaders as well as NGO's in order to run effective advocacy programmes in the district. Admittedly the game- changing is not going to be an easy one yet it has to be done.

### 5.1.5 Other constraints

#### Conclusions

The other constraints are the few variables which *do not* directly flow from traditional culture. In this regard two noteworthy factors will be mentioned – namely *institutional shortcomings* and *political violence*. Institutional shortcomings, which largely refers to government's capacity to advance gender issues through the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development was ranked 8 out of 20 by both female and male respondents. The phenomenon of political violence was ranked 11 out of 20 by both female and male respondents.

#### Recommendations

Granted the government is perpetually operating on a shoe-string budget, it would still be imperative for government to have the political will to enlist the partnership of non-governmental players such as, Women in Politics Support Unit (WIPSU) and Women's Trust, in order to advance the relevant advocacy and awareness programmes.

On the question of political violence-which may well culminate in the rape of the council aspirant- the onus to arrest this phenomenon falls squarely on the shoulders of government. Through the parent ministry, the Marondera District Office in partnership with



organisations like the Zimbabwe Women's Lawyers Association (ZWLA) could run zero –tolerance- for-violence programmes in the district.

## 5.2 Conclusions And Recommendations On What Hampers The Effectiveness Of Sitting Female Councillors

### Conclusion

The circumstances facing a female sitting councillor are somewhat different from those facing the one who is not a councillor. For example such factors as *'lack of campaigning resources; political violence, contempt from members of the community and lack of self-confidence'*, get to be less relevant when the female becomes a councillor. At the same time factors like *antagonism from male counterparts* and *domestic responsibilities* (which include *child bearing and rearing*) become more pertinent. Once again it should be noted that the factors at play here are, again steeped in patriarchal culture.

Viewed from another angle, prior to becoming a councillor, the female's mindset can be said to be in a 'brainwashed' condition. So to speak, the locus of the constraint is internal. On becoming a councillor, the female has shed off the fetters but still has to grapple with an externalised locus of constraint in the form of 'antagonism from male counterparts' and 'the demands of domestic responsibilities'.

### Recommendations

In order to bring about total emancipation and empowerment for women in the district, it would be necessary for the MoWAGCD to focus its conscientisation efforts not on women alone but men as well, as it takes two to tango.

## Model for Nurturing the Female as a Political Leader

The analysis of the female mindset *before* and *after* she becomes a councillor, has inspired this model for the development of the female as a political leader.

### A description of the model

The model comprises three basic phases namely *blinders phase*, *oppressor phase* and *liberation phase*.

**Blinders phase:** The initial phase is when the female mindset is completely 'brainwashed' by and submitted to retrogressive traditional culture. She is blissfully contented with her circumstances.

**Oppressors phase:** At this stage the female is completely aware that she is under oppression and she strongly resents it.

**Liberation phase:** This is the ideal state where society has unconditionally accepted the female as an equal to the male in terms of eligibility for political leadership.

For the first two phases the model proposes both short and long-term strategies and the respective change agents for leadership development

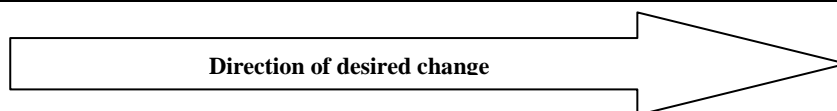
### Identifying the Developmental Phases for a Given Group of Females

The model suggests a rule- of- thumb for identifying the obtaining phase for a given group of females for the purpose of instituting appropriate developmental strategies.

- If to the question **Why are women not getting into leadership positions?** The predominant answer is or the equivalent of **It is just not right for women to aspire for political office**, then the obtaining phase is **blinders**. However if to the same question the answer is **Men discourage women from doing so**, then the obtaining phase would be **oppressor**.

**Table 6: MODEL FOR NURTURING THE FEMALE AS A POLITICAL LEADER**

	Phases		
	Blinders	Oppressor	Liberation
Short-term considerations	<b>CONSTRAINTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Men were created to lead and women to follow</li> <li>Fear of the prostitute stigma</li> <li>Fear of divorce</li> <li>Belief that women are less intelligent</li> <li>Political violence</li> </ul>	<b>CONSTRAINTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Antagonism from male counterparts</li> <li>Child bearing and rearing</li> <li>Lack of resources</li> <li>Political violence</li> </ul>	-
	<b>STRATEGIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocacy/awareness programmes directed at women</li> </ul>	<b>STRATEGIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selected 'mixed sex' groups are targeted for community leadership and management training</li> <li>Awareness programmes aimed at men</li> <li>Promotion of female entrepreneurship</li> <li>Child day care facilities</li> </ul>	-
	<b>CHANGE AGENTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government (education and women affair's ministries)</li> <li>NGOs</li> <li>Churches</li> <li>Political parties</li> </ul>	<b>CHANGE AGENTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government (education and women affaires ministries)</li> <li>NGOs</li> <li>Churches</li> <li>Political parties</li> </ul>	-
	<b>STRATEGIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporation of gender studies in school, college and university curricula</li> </ul>	<b>STRATEGIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporation of gender studies in school, college and university curricula</li> </ul>	-
Long-term considerations	<b>CHANGE AGENTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government</li> <li>College, university and other stakeholders</li> </ul>	<b>CHANGE AGENTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government</li> <li>College, university and other stakeholders</li> <li>Carefully conceived affirmative action to redress gender inequality</li> </ul>	-
	<b>Expected outcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realisation by women that they, like men ,can also be political leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realisation by society especially men that women, can also be political leaders</li> </ul>	- Mutual acceptance of each other by men and women as equal participants in political leadership



**NB:** the above model was developed by the researcher and is premised on the nature of the factors constraining women from ascending into positions of political leadership

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