



POST-ELECTION GENDER SURVEY REPORT

ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION



TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
SECTION 1:.....	5
BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY	5
1.1 INTRODUCTION	5
1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE SURVEY	6
1.3 METHODOLOGY	6
1.3.1 <i>Research Design and Data Collection</i>	6
1.3.2 <i>Study Areas</i>	6
1.3.3 <i>Training of enumerators</i>	7
1.3.4 <i>Data Analysis and Report Writing</i>	7
1.3.5 <i>Challenges during data collection</i>	7
SECTION 2:.....	8
RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	8
2.1 INTRODUCTION	8
2.2 PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ZEC AND ELECTORAL PROCESSES	8
2.2.1 <i>Knowledge about ZEC</i>	8
2.2.2 <i>Polling processes</i>	9
2.2.3 <i>Independence of ZEC</i>	9
2.2.4 <i>Announcement of results</i>	10
2.2.5 <i>Ballot paper design</i>	11
2.3 REGISTRATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES	11
2.4 WOMEN'S QUOTA.....	13
2.5 PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES	18
2.6 POLITICAL PARTY POLICIES ON SELECTION OF CANDIDATES	22
2.7 OTHER BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION	25
2.7.1 <i>Norms and values</i>	25
2.7.2 <i>Religion</i>	25
2.7.3 <i>Level of education</i>	26
2.7.4 <i>Family resistance</i>	26
2.7.5 <i>Sexual harassment</i>	26
2.7.6 <i>Violence and intimidation</i>	27

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Division of Knowledge Management and Communication, through the Research and Development Department would like to acknowledge with thanks the support we received from ZIMSTAT who provided enumerators for the survey and from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN) for the technical and financial support for the post-election gender survey. ZEC appreciates the selfless participation of all the men, women and youth who took part in this survey. ZEC dedicates this work to all those who are passionate about promoting equitable access to all electoral processes for the entire population of voters.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between March and April 2018, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission conducted a post-election gender survey as part of its 2018 Harmonised Election review and as a follow up to the Gender in Elections Baseline Survey which was conducted in 2017. The post-Election Gender survey sought to assess the gendered level of participation, gendered perceptions of the electorate in Zimbabwe, the gendered participation in the Zimbabwe Harmonised Elections which were held on 30th July 2018. The survey was carried out in seventeen districts across the ten Provinces of Zimbabwe. A total of 52 focus group discussions and 14 key informant interviews were conducted throughout the country.

While the Constitution of Zimbabwe promotes gender equality, non-discrimination and the right to political participation through sections 3(1)(g), section 17, section 56 and section 67, the participation of women, the youth and people with disabilities as candidates has been significantly lower than anticipated. In order to address the gender disparities in participation, section 124(1)(b) reserved 60 seats for women in the House of Assembly for the life of the first two Parliaments (2013 and 2018). These reserved seats, commonly known as the women's quota, will no longer be available after the 2023 Harmonised Elections. This study thus sought to investigate perceptions surrounding the quota system.

The findings of the study suggest that knowledge about the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission has improved significantly. However, ZEC is still perceived as partisan. There is need for continuous voter education on the role of ZEC in electoral processes and on the processes themselves. On political party registration, participants in the survey suggested that there be put in place a system to register political parties in order to manage the proliferation of parties and in order to manage the participation of women, youth and people with disabilities within political parties. The study recommends that the issue of registration of political parties be prioritised as part of legal reforms to enhance electoral processes. On the women's quota, there is evidence that knowledge about the women's quota is very little among both women and men. Some participants suggested that the quota may inadvertently result in diminished capacity of women to participate in politics as candidates. It is recommended that Chapter 12 institutions should work to enforce the equality clauses in the Constitution. On the barriers to participation, participants cited religious-cultural beliefs, violence and intimidation, sexual harassment and biased candidate selection processes within political parties. It is recommended that there be engagement with stakeholders on intra-party candidate selection processes.

SECTION 1:


BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Introduction

Female representation in positions of authority has become one of the key indicators of development. As early as the 1990's, research findings were already pointing to the fact that women's under-representation in positions of authority is not only an indicator of gender inequality, but it helps entrench gender stereotyping.¹ Unlike in the 1950s when women were fighting for the right to vote, present-day gender inequalities are evident in the number of women who hold positions of authority within political spheres.

Female representation in politics is defined as the proportion of women in politics² and female representation in Parliament is defined as the proportion or the percentage of seats occupied by women in single or lower chambers of national Parliament.³ While the proportion of women contesting in elections has increased significantly, many Parliaments are still dominated by men. As at March 2019, Rwanda had the highest proportion of women in Parliament at 61.3 percent followed by Cuba with 53.2 percent.⁴ In Southern Africa, Namibia has the highest proportion of women in Parliament with 46.2 percent followed by South Africa with 42.7 percent. Zimbabwe is ranked 40th in the world with 31.9 percent.

In the Harmonised Elections held in July 2018 in Zimbabwe, there were only 15 percent of female candidates for the House of Assembly and 17 percent for the Local Authority election. Despite constitutional provisions that aim to promote gender equality,⁵ the number of women who contest and eventually win in elections remains low. A quota system was thus introduced to increase the number of women in Parliament. Sixty seats in the House of Assembly is reserved for women who are chosen using the proportional representation system based on the number of votes cast for candidates representing political parties in a general election for constituency members in the Province.⁶ This provision will expire after the life of the second Parliament which ends in 2023.



While more women than ever are being elected to parliaments around the world, equality is still a long way off, and current progress is far too slow. Most parliaments are still heavily male-dominated, and some have no women MPs at all. Even where women are present in greater numbers, glass ceilings often remain firm.

Inter-Parliamentary Union,
<https://www.ipu.org/our-impact/gender-equality/women-in-parliament>



¹ Reynolds, A. (1999). Women in the Legislatures and Executives of the World. *World Politics*, 51(4), 547-573.

² Shonhiwa, K (2012) Contemporary Issues in Leadership and Public Policy in Africa. Zimbabwe Open University, Harare.

³ IPU (2016) Women in Parliaments. <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

⁴ <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

⁵ See section 3(1)(g) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe

⁶ See section 124(1)(b) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe

It is against this backdrop that the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission with support from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN) and UNDP conducted the Post-Election Gender Survey which aimed at capturing the experiences of the electorate during the 2018 harmonised elections. This was done in order to understand the gender dynamics that explain the poor representation of women in Parliament and in Local Authorities.

1.2 Objectives of the survey

The objectives of the survey were:

- a) To document women and men's experiences during the Zimbabwe 2018 Harmonised Elections.
- b) To document people's perceptions about the women's quota.
- c) To document the barriers to participation in electoral processes among women, men, the youth.
- d) To recommend ways of enhancing participation in electoral processes for women and men.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Research Design and Data Collection

This survey adopted the qualitative approach which focuses on documenting descriptions and experiences from the perspective of the participant as opposed to collecting numerical data and computing averages. Data was collected using focus group discussions and key informant interviews. FGDs were conducted with men, women and the youth, while key informant interviews were conducted with election candidates and political party representatives.

A total of 18 Districts were selected and three (3) FGDs were held in each district for men, women and youth (ages 18 – 35). In total, 52 FGDs and 14 key informant interviews were conducted. Focus Group Discussions aimed at capturing the electorate's gendered perspectives on electoral participation of men, women, youth and people with disabilities while key informant interviews captured political party policies and positions on gender issue. Personal electoral participation gender dynamics were captured through one on one interviews with candidates who contested in the 2018 Harmonised Elections.

1.3.2 Study Areas

Eighteen Districts were selected for this study, two from each Province except in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province which a single district and in Masvingo where one of the selected districts was affected by Cyclone Idai. The selected districts are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Selected Districts

Province	District
Bulawayo Metropolitan	Bulawayo
Harare Metropolitan	Harare, Chitungwiza
Manicaland	Makoni, Mutare
Mashonaland Central	Mazowe, Shamva
Mashonaland East	Chikomba, Goromonzi
Mashonaland West	Kariba, Zvimba
Masvingo	Masvingo
Matebeleland North	Bubi, Hwange
Matebeleland South	Insiza, Matobo
Midlands	Kwekwe, Shurugwi

1.3.3 Training of enumerators

The training of data collectors was done over a three-day period at The Village Lodge in Gweru. The training aimed to capacitate data collection teams with qualitative data collection and analysis skills. In addition to the data collection and analysis skills, the training also involved imparting knowledge on the mandate of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), gender issues surrounding elections, the electoral cycle and the polling processes. The training also involved a practical data collection session which was done in Lower Gweru.

1.3.4 Data Analysis and Report Writing

Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) was used for analysing the transcribed qualitative data. Several themes were identified from the data sets and grouped accordingly. Women representation, barriers to female participation in politics, the participation of people with disabilities, perceptions on the quota system and perceptions on political party registration among others were identified as key themes from the survey. The data analysis and report writing exercise was done at the Zimbabwe Institute of Public Administration and Management (ZIPAM) during the first week of June 2019.

1.3.5 Challenges during data collection

Cyclone Idai that hit some parts of Zimbabwe during the data collection period presented a major challenge. Bikita in Masvingo District and Chimanimani in Manicaland District which had initially been selected in the sample were severely affected by the cyclone and had to be replaced with other districts. Makoni District was selected to replace Chimanimani district. Besides the challenges presented by the cyclone, data collection teams continued facing challenges of trust with some participants and key informants who did not feel comfortable discussing election issues with ZEC staff.

SECTION 2:

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Introduction

This section presents the key findings of the survey. These are presented under thematic areas. Seven themes were identified as follows:

- Perceptions about ZEC
- Registration of political parties
- Participation of PWDs in electoral processes
- The women's quota
- Political party policies on women's participation
- Other barriers to participation in electoral processes.


Appropriate recommendations are presented after each thematic area.

2.2 Perceptions about ZEC and electoral processes

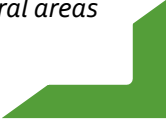
The perceptions of the electorate and political candidates about ZEC as an election management body (EMB) are a critical aspect about how electoral processes and outcomes are widely viewed in general. In the Gender in Elections Baseline Survey conducted in late 2017, knowledge about ZEC was found to be very little. In another study conducted by ZEC to evaluate the biometric voter registration (BVR) exercise, knowledge about ZEC had slightly improved although many people were seemingly confused about the role of the Commission in election management. In this survey, participants were asked about their knowledge of ZEC, its role in elections and electoral processes.

2.2.1 Knowledge about ZEC

Survey findings suggest that knowledge about ZEC as an EMB and its mandate has significantly improved. Respondents identified delimiting of constituencies, registering voters, voter education and conducting elections as among the roles of ZEC. However, some knowledge gaps still exist in the work of the Commission and participants suggested that voter education be continuous and be broadened to include all aspects of the electoral cycle instead of just being programme specific. Participant pointed out that the commission still has a lot of work to do in educating the citizens of Zimbabwe about its role as a commission.




"ZEC still has a lot of work to do in educating people about what it does because many still don't understand. If people in urban areas have a lot of questions about the role of ZEC how much more would those in rural areas know given they have limited access to information?"

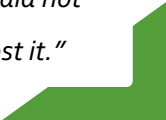


2.2.2 Polling processes

Participants applauded ZEC for giving preferential treatment to pregnant woman, the elderly, the infirm and people living with disabilities in the 2018 Harmonised Elections. Participants also commended ZEC for the high voter turnout which was attributed to a vibrant voter education campaign that spanned from door to door voter education, to local radio stations, television, print media and road shows. Participants in FGDs expressed satisfaction on the polling process and the way the polling staff served them at the polling stations. Participants in focus groups discussion said they were happy about the polling process, and commended ZEC on their voting experience. Some however felt that the way results were announced tarnished an otherwise good election.




"At polling stations everything was transparent and fast, what I did not understand is the announcement of results, that's where you lost it."




2.2.3 Independence of ZEC


Other participants felt that the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission is partisan and is not independent in its operations. Respondents in FGDs said ZEC was aligned to ZANU PF and acts in favour of the ruling party. The fact that ZEC has the same corporate colours as ZANU PFs, and both use "Zimbabwe" on their corporate names was given as the reason why the electorate felt ZEC was aligned to ZANU PF.




"My own understanding you as ZEC you're an independent board, but I disagree, I disgruntle you take sides. You're an affiliate of a certain political party."



Other survey participants questioned the impartiality of ZEC on the grounds that it employed former soldiers who they believe are loyal to ZANU – PF.




"The problem is (that) ZEC you are compromised from the composition of your staff compliment. Most of the people in your ranks are retired brigadier so and so. That on its own makes your independence questionable. These people should be retired, and people will feel comfortable voting."




Participants expressed concern over the location of ZEC offices in government complexes where other Government Departments such as the Registrar Generals (RG) office are located. They expressed doubt to the independence of ZEC when it is situated in Government premises. They also went on to say that the said location instills a feeling of fear and are therefore unable to visit ZEC offices.

The electorate expressed concerns on the criteria used to recruit seconded staff for electoral duties. They claimed that some polling officers were well known political party stalwarts, and this raised questions and cast doubt on the impartiality of the ZEC.




"We have teachers, nurses and headmasters who were recruited as polling officers, who also hold political offices in this community and no strong action was taken."




Participants also expressed concern over personalized SMS messages on their mobile phones thanking them for voting for a certain candidate before polling day. This fuelled concerns about the credibility and impartiality of ZEC and the secrecy of the vote. Some people felt that ZEC had given certain political parties access to a database of registered voters' mobile numbers. There were also fears that ZEC had already cast the vote on behalf of those who received these SMS messages.

2.2.4 Announcement of results


Participants felt election results were predetermined and that ZEC rigged elections in favour of ZANU – PF. From the focus group discussions held, some participants felt that ZEC rigged and manipulated the 2018 Harmonized Elections results on transmission from one point to the next. Participants also said the stammering and stuttering by those who were announcing results shows that they were changing the results at the point of announcement.




"ZEC must take youths who are capable of pronouncing all figures instead of using those who appear confused. Numbers must be announced with no mistakes, not making 4 to 5 attempts to read a single number."



Other participants commented that ZEC officials looked afraid as they were announcing results. They looked as if they had been threatened by someone to manipulate the results in a particular way.



"ZEC commissioners were so much in fear when they were announcing results"



2.2.5 Ballot paper design

Participants voiced concern over the 2018 Harmonized Election ballot paper printing and design. Participants urged the Commission to improve on the font and quality of the ballot paper. They also suggested that the ballot paper design should stick to the single column design used in previous elections, as they felt that the new design was done to favour a presidential candidate by placing his name on top.

Recommendations

- There is a need for continuous voter education and engagement for people to have an appreciation and understanding of the role of ZEC as an Election Management Body. The voter education should be aimed at educating the electorate on the function of ZEC before, during and after elections. Citizens must be educated on the BVR systems and all election processes.
- ZEC should relocate their district offices away from government complexes as a way of instilling public confidence that they are an independent organization operating without government interference or affiliation.
- ZEC should rebrand its corporate colours to those that are not associated or similar to any political party.


2.3 Registration of Political Parties

The 2018 harmonised elections saw an upsurge of contesting political parties in the history of Zimbabwe. There were 127 political parties by March 2018 and 23 candidates vied for the Presidential post. Political parties which operate and participate in elections in Zimbabwe are not required to register. They come into being voluntarily as and when they want. There is no legal framework which imposes demands or requirements on the political party formation process. There is no criterion established by law which political parties must meet in order to be recognised as such and participate in an election. Experience has shown that, except for a few, most of these parties sprout into being when there is an election and disappear into oblivion soon after the election.

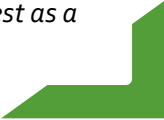
There are challenges in operating without registered political parties and these include difficulties in resolving conflicts, difficulties in enforcing the code of conduct and a general lack of accountability on the part of political actors. In the context of gender equality, registration of political parties would facilitate the enforcement of constitutional provisions on gender equality at source or where candidate selection takes place.

There was an outcry among participants in this survey over the high number of political parties that contested in the 2018 Harmonised Elections. It was felt that Zimbabwe is too small a country to have so

many political players. A key respondent gave an example of celebrated democracies such as the United States of America and Britain which only have two main political parties each.




"How can a progressive nation have 127 political parties? How can we allow people like (name given) with only 3 members to his party to contest as a presidential candidate? Such things need to be regulated".




Political parties hold primary elections to elect candidates to represent the party in a ward or constituency. Presently primary elections are held independently from the EMB, with the EMB having no say in how the primary elections are run. Political party representatives interviewed felt that Registration of political parties would give ZEC a mandated to come up with a code of conduct for political parties that would include how primary elections are run, the gender composition of political party candidates and the penalties for those who do not follow the code of conduct. Respondents felt this would ensure that primary elections are free and fair.


It was felt that a code of conduct enforced by ZEC would ensure increased participation of women in politics, through reduced political violence and intimidation. A female candidate suggested that the registration regulations should be structured in a way that encourages female candidature.




"ZEC should actually run the primary elections to reduce intra party political violence and intimidation of female candidates".



A female respondent said that the registration of political parties would lead to an increased participation of women in politics, through reduced political violence and intimidation during primary elections. She mentioned that a lot of women are intimidated by violence or threats of violence against them and/or their families at this stage and are forced to withdraw their candidature. In cases where woman manage to contest in primary elections, they subsequently lose to males because of the strong masculine patronage system within the party.



"Registration will ensure that the issue of proportional representation is not taken as a temporary measure but will become permanent".



Another advantage cited by respondents for registering political parties was that it would help political parties to access funds for running their campaign from the Government, Private Sector, donor community and well-wishers as they will be recognised legal entities. The issue of compromised political financing will thus be removed. Political parties will then by law be required to give audited statements of their accounts.

"The registration of political parties would benefit political parties in accessing funds as legal entities and will remove the issue of compromised political financing since they will be required by law to have their finances monitored."

Some respondents were however fearful that if ZEC is given the mandate to register political parties it might not be transparent and impartial in dealing with would-be political parties. The sentiment was that ZEC could manipulate the registration process to disenfranchise some parties. Respondents felt that the responsibility of registering political parties should be given to an organisation or should be the responsibility of a committee which is impartial and has integrity and is not aligned to any party and is independent from the Government or from Government influence. Registration regulations and criteria agreed upon should also not violate the peoples enshrined right to freedom of association.

"...as ZEC you are supposed to be impartial in managing elections and your impartiality is being questioned currently. Suppose you are tasked with registering political parties; how then would we know you will be impartial!"

Some political party representatives interviewed respondents were against the registration of political parties. They were of the opinion that registering political parties would infringe on people's democratic right to form and join associations of their choice. They felt that Zimbabweans of every creed should be free to form political associations as and when they want without regulation.

"The people of Zimbabwe should enjoy the democratic right to form associations of their choice. Having regulations on the formation of political parties would therefore infringe on this democratic right."

Recommendation

- There should be nationwide intensive consultations with stakeholders to come up with clear cut rules and regulations on the issue of political party registration.

2.4 Women's Quota

Gender quotas are a policy tool designed to increase women's representation in positions of authority such as in Parliament. The women's quota was introduced in Zimbabwe through the 2013 Constitution. The quota is designed to be a temporary measure that will be in effect until 2023. The women's quota is established in terms of section 124(1)(b) of the Zimbabwe Constitution which states that:

for the life of the first two parliaments after the effective date, an additional 60 women members, six from each of the provinces into which Zimbabwe is divided, elected through a system of proportional representation based on the votes cast for candidates representing political parties in a general election for constituency members in the province.

The adoption of the Women's Quota system by Zimbabwe is in line with international instruments relating to full political rights for women such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Political Rights of Women and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. The latter encourages SADC member states to ensure the implementation of its objective of ensuring that decision-making bodies at national level are composed of 50 percent women.

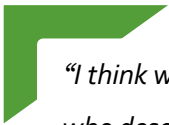
Gender quotas are a welcome development in Zimbabwe as they have a potential to contribute to the advancement of women in all spheres of politics. They also have the potential to affect women's attitudes about their role in politics thereby leading to a greater involvement of women in the political process. Gender quotas are also seen as a way to show woman that their presence in politics is welcome, leading to a subsequent increase in their involvement in political activities. Gender quotas are believed to have the following effects/advantages:

- Gender quotas for women in government bodies can improve women's representation in politics.
- The presence of women in political institutions can encourage the political engagement of women constituents and citizens more generally.
- The presence of women in parliament can bring political attention to women's interests.
- Positive effects on service delivery and human development outcomes.

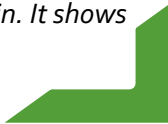
Of notable interest to the survey was that most respondents in both the FGDs and key informant interviews were not aware of the existence of the women's quota. Interviews with some candidates and political party representatives revealed that most of them were not aware of the women's quota in parliament. Most respondents when asked about the women's quota said they have never heard of it and were not aware of its existence. Of the few that were aware of the quota most were not clear on its tenants and on how it works. One key informant from a political party remarked that:

"It was not explained well. People heard about it at the primary elections, where people started asking questions with no clear answer. It was my first time to hear about it at the primary elections. We now read about it after the elections but during the elections there was no information. We see people in parliament, and we don't know where they came from."

It emerged that most respondents were also not aware of the constituency represented by women's quota Parliamentarians. There was also a general feeling that the selected female parliamentarians did not understand who they represent and who their constituency is.




"I think women need to contest like everyone else though and we need women who deserve to be there and are chosen by the community. For example, there is this woman who got in Parliament because of the women's quota and for the past 3 months she has never done anything and no one has done a follow up to see the kind of work that is done by the women that they put in. It shows she is not interested."




Some participants in the survey supported the Women's Quota and wanted it extended and be made permanent. In a women's focus group, participants noted that the women's quota gave women a chance to get in Parliament thereby increasing women's representation and consequently increasing the pursuance of the women's agenda in parliament. They reiterated that women are better able and better placed to help their communities. They expressed that when women are in public office they are more likely to help their communities with the Constituency Development Fund they receive from Government and are more likely to direct donor funds to projects that help the whole community like drilling of boreholes, building clinics and income generating projects for young women and men.


A male political party candidate expressed support for the women's quota and explained that his party encourages women to participate in elections. He said despite his party being a new party, it has a significant number of female members. He went on to say that he believes that with the women's quota in place, it will increase the number of women who participate as candidates. He believed that women make better leaders than men.



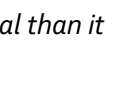
"Personally, I do not have a problem with the women's quota because they are trying to empower women to actively participate in politics. In our party we have drafted a policy that encourages women to be in Parliament and in Local Authorities. Looking at history, only men were active in politics while women were to perform household duties. As a nation we should break that barrier because education is for everyone not looking at gender, so why should men in politics discriminate against women. As of now I feel the women's quota is important and should be implemented effectively because as a nation, we want women's input in Parliament and in Local Authorities..."




One political party candidate expressed that the women's quota was a good tool to advance women's representation in parliament. He however expressed concern on its time frame (2013 – 2023). He felt the time frame should be extended up until such a time the playing field is level and women can contest as equals in elections.




"The system hasn't been fully implemented and it would be unfair to stop it before it has fully borne desired fruit. We don't have to stop it, but we should give it ten more years and work on making it fully functional than it currently is."




There were some participants who were of the view that the women's quota should be completely scrapped off, they felt that the quota was a complete waste of national resources as the woman who sit in parliament under the quota have no results to show and are just getting paid to sit in Parliament.





"I think the women's quota should be abolished. As I see it it's not useful, rather it burdens the government expenditure. Let's implement it at provincial level rather than at national level."



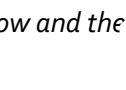
Another reason given to support the scrapping off the women's quota was that politics is a men's game. Some participants expressed that political positions are like heading a home in terms of responsibility and leadership, thus a man and a woman cannot both be leaders and sit in the same Parliament to discuss national issues.



"A home cannot have two heads; it becomes a monster and there is no peace anymore". [male FGD]



"As a woman I support women's quota, but I don't support the idea of 50/50 between men and women. Even at home a woman cannot have the same authority as her husband. Women should know their place in an African society, men are supposed to be the leaders and women should follow and the youths as well." [female FGD]



"It must be abolished and never come back. It is useless. We can't feel pity for women as if it is a disability or they are victims. That is why they think they are incapable. Women do not support this (quota system) as well because they feel insulted and reduced. Let them be at par with men and have dreams and wishes to take these positions and not give them special treatment."

[male FGD]

Women felt the quota system was not fair on women as it is more of a sympathetic act rather than empowering act as male Parliamentarians put it in place because they felt sorry for women. They felt the quota system was only used as a disguise in this country and a disguise by the government to look like they are following the international standards.


"The quota system should be removed because it is affecting us as women. They are now being looked down upon. It is very nice when it is talked about in offices and on international forums but as people who are on the ground people don't like this quota system. As long as the people are not educated on the quota system, it will be difficult to have people accepting women in leadership positions. If they are equal with men as they claim to be why are they given preferential treatment."

The reference to the quota seats as **"baccosi seats"** in Parliament further exacerbates this notion as it shows the derogatory connotation attached to the seats. This reinforces the notion that some Parliamentarians do not respect these seats and the people who occupy them.

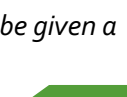
A youth participant accused some politicians of nepotism during the selection of candidates for the quota seats.

"The Quota system is useless because politicians are taking it as an opportunity to place their wives and relatives into political positions. Furthermore, rich people have higher chances of being elevated into that political arena, yet the poor will be heavily suppressed." [Youth FGD]


Some participants also accused politicians of manipulating the quota system to make sure that women do not contest as candidates in elections by promising them women's quota seats. This works against the tenants of the quota system which is meant to empower women to contest in elections. A female candidate told of how she was urged by a male candidate within her party not to contest but to allow the party to give her a seat under the woman's quota. She said that she was told that:



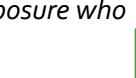
"You do not have to contest with us men during these elections, there is no need, what we can do as a party is I know I will win and you will be given a women's quota seat."



Participants also felt that there is a need for political parties to consider age dynamics in the selection of women filling seats under the women's quota. Participants felt that there was need to consider young women as a way of grooming them for future political careers.



"They should give us the youth a chance because if we don't get exposure who will be the leaders of tomorrow."



Recommendations

- ZEC should incorporate the women's quota in voter education to make everyone aware of the Women's Quota System.
- ZEC should engage with political parties with a view to promoting the equal participation of women as enshrined in the Constitution.
- If the women's quota is going to be revived through a constitutional amendment, there is need to make the quota more inclusive than it currently is.

2.5 People living with disabilities

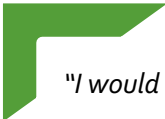
Zimbabwe has a population of 13 061 239 according to the 2010 Census Report. Disability statistics in Zimbabwe as in the rest of the world are contentious. WHO estimates that there are 1.8 million people living with disabilities in Zimbabwe, while the National Association of Societies for the Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH) argues that the prevalence rate for disability is over 10 percent. The Government of Zimbabwe estimates that 130 000 people in the country experience some type of disability such as blindness or visual impairment, deafness or hearing impairment, physical impairment, intellectual impairment, and albinism.

Zimbabwe has shown its willingness to guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities and to this end has ratified the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). The CRPD guarantees the right to political participation under Article 29. Political participation in the electoral process includes voting and holding public administrative posts without restriction to type of disability. Section 22 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe mandates the State and all institutions at every level to recognise the rights of people with disabilities. Thus, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission has an inclusive mandate as an EMB whose approach wishes to improve the participation of people with disabilities in all the electoral

processes. To this end the EMB is concerned with the need to minimize barriers which limit the full participation of persons with disabilities in the electoral cycle and especially their participation as candidates in elections.


Research indicates that participation of people with disabilities in electoral processes is unacceptably low.⁷ Consequently, representation of people with disabilities in decision and policy making bodies including Parliament and Cabinet is also very low. In Zimbabwe only 2 senators represent PWDs in terms of section 120(1)(d) of the Constitution. This makes it difficult for their voices to be heard and their needs considered when developing policies and programmes. In order to understand the challenges that limit the participation of PWDs in the electoral process, ZEC conducted a post-election review workshop with representatives of PWDs and included a PWD component in this survey.

Interviewed candidates felt that PWDs as a constituency are underrepresented not only in decision making positions in government but also as a workforce. Suggestions were that provisions similar to those introduced for women (women's quota) should be effected to ensure there is increased participation of PWDs in Parliament and Local Authorities.



"I would also advocate for a quota for People with Disabilities, they are not fully represented. A ward in each constituency should have a representative.

As a woman myself, I cannot represent all women's needs what about the PWDs." [Female political party candidate]




A lack of statistics on PWDs was noted as a major setback to improving their lives and increasing their representation in Parliament. Respondents noted that without statistics it is difficult for policy makers to mainstream disability as they might be oblivious to the magnitude of the problem. This lack of statistics was blamed by many respondents as the reason why there are only two Senators representing PWD in both the Lower House and the Upper House. It was the general feeling of survey respondents that two (2) representatives are not enough to represent the constituency. Respondents even suggested that representation of PWD should start from Ward level right up to Senatorial level. Uganda was given as a case in point where disability has been mainstreamed in Government with a representative for every type of disability in all Government ministries and in Parliament.


PWDs who participated in the FGDs felt they are still disenfranchised from the electoral process. They emphasised on the issue of the unavailability of aids and assistance they required during polling. Youth in a focus group discussion described a scene where a woman in a wheelchair had to be assisted by male voters in the queue on polling day. Participants also noted that there no voter education materials or activities designed for PWDs. Others however applauded ZEC for its efforts to increase participation of PWDs by giving them preferential treatment and assistance at polling stations and publicising this

⁷ See for example Arthur, E. A. (2017) on <http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh/handle/123456789/23887>

information. They also applauded ZEC for the content and timing of voter education programmes on radio and television, the use of sign language on TV programmes.



"----- she had to be assisted by being lifted out of her chair by some men in order for her to gain access into the polling station, this was very embarrassing for the lady and it robbed her of her dignity as a person."




People With Disabilities who participated in FGDs felt that they were disenfranchised from the electoral process by the non-provision of Braille or tactile ballot paper for the visually impaired, non-accessible polling stations, non-provision of sign language voter educators, non-provision of staff trained to deal with the unique challenges of PWDs at all stages of the electoral cycle and the non-employment of civil servants with disability as seconded staff by ZEC.

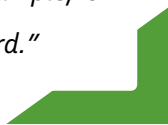
The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission introduced assistive mechanisms for the visually impaired and the illiterate to cast their ballot with the help of a confidante of their choice. The confidante should be above the age of 18 and does not necessarily have to be a registered voter. It emerged during this survey that the electorate was unclear on the role and criteria of the confidante. It was reported that some confidantes were rejected on polling day because they were under the age of 18 although they had a valid national identification document and in some instances the confidant was turned away simply because they were registered at a different polling station from the voter needing assistance.


The use of civil servants who live in the community as Polling staff who then assist them in voting in cases where there is no confidante' was noted as a serious compromise to the secrecy of the ballot and exposed PWDs to electoral violence as some of the polling staff were known active political party supporters with leadership positions in their parties.

PWDs reported that the general perception was that they were less able than those without impairments and are therefore not accorded an equal chance to participate in the electoral process. Participants reiterated this by sentiments to the effect that PWDs could not make good leaders due to the constraints that are associated with their disability, for example some survey participants said they felt PWDs would not be able to move easily within the wards as they need assistance.

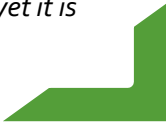


"Looking at PWDs it's difficult to accord them equal chances in leadership because most environments are not favourable for them. For example, it would be difficult for them (PWDs) to move around the ward."






"well I don't think PWDs do have the equal chances of becoming leaders especially when we look at the level of their disability, if they are blind for example how will they see what is going on in the community, if they cannot hear, how will they hear people's views in their communities and I don't think this country as it is has enough resources to cater for such needs yet it is already failing to create employment."



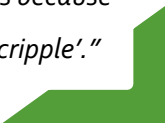
Participants reported that generally communities have not accepted PWDs as “one of us” leading to people not wanting to vote for them. Comments passed were that PWDs require someone to represent them and assist them in their day to day lives and for that reason are incapable of representing other people. PWDs in FGDs said that discrimination of PWDs is reinforced by terminology such as “chirema” and statements such as “*munhu anoda mumiriri anokumirira sei?*” {meaning that a disabled person who needs assistance cannot be in a position to represent others in a community}



"PWDs are being demeaned in line with their disability like if he can't stand on his feet how they can represent us out there." (Women's FGD)

"PWDs are looked down upon and society cannot support them. We wonder how he will execute his duties suppose he cannot walk. They need assistance every now and again so because of this people rarely vote for them."
(Women's FGD)

"I think the people that are not given much respect are the disabled. They are usually looked down on and they are not even regarded as humans because you would often hear people say 'isilima lesiyana' meaning 'that cripple'."



In FGDs with women there was a recurring sentiment that the isolation suffered by PWDs limits their participation in elections. Women expressed that this isolation begins at a tender age at home, where families with children living with disabilities keep their child hidden away from the community maybe because of the stigma attached to having a child with a disability. They said schools contributed to this isolation further by having “special” classrooms for PWDs. This causes PWD to grow up with a poor self-image and an inherent lack of confidence which is needed in politics.

PWDS noted a lack of finances as a reason they do not participate in elections. They noted that campaigning and activities related to running for a public office require a lot of money. The PWDs said

they are the most marginalised members of their communities as most PWDs do not get a chance to attend school because of the stigma attached to living with a disability, and when resources are scarce families tend to discriminate against the child with a disability by sending the able bodied to school at the expense of the one with a disability. In cases where resources are available most schools do not have the requisite infrastructure to cater for PWDs. This in turn means they cannot find employment and so cannot fund a political campaign.

Recommendations

- ZEC to coordinate activities with political parties and disability rights organisations to educate the electorate on the rights of PWDs, fielding and financially supporting PWDs who wish to run for office. Political Parties should be given a mandate to ensure that they use facilities for rallies that have been modified to enable easy access for PWDs. They should engage sign language interpreters and produce campaign materials designed to suit and accommodate the electorate that are living with various impairments. They should also be encouraged to come up with mechanisms that ensure that candidates who are living with disabilities get the necessary assistance financially and otherwise for them to run a full campaign.
- There is a need for ZEC to seek accurate statistics on PWDs so that programmes and polling station facilities are designed to suit the needs of the PWDs in line with their type of disability.
- ZEC should ensure that their offices, registration and polling stations and nomination court venues are modified to allow easy access for PWDs. Voter registration and education materials should be available to PWDs in braille for those with visual impairment. Sign language interpreters should be available at all ZEC establishments.

2.6 Political party policies on selection of candidates

The survey findings suggest that most political parties do not have a written policy on gender selection of candidates but had unwritten rules and regulations and relied on precedents. If there exist a policy, it is not communicated to the membership. One political party representative said their party had some wards which were reserved for female candidates and other wards which were reserved for youth candidates only for the 2018 Harmonised Elections. He said this was a special measure for the 2018 elections only and is not a written down policy. Another political party representative said his party stipulated that the women and youth should fill a quarter each of the seats being contested in the 2018 Harmonised Elections. However, on the ground the numbers were not a reflection of the policy position. In the end both the women and the youth did not get a quarter each of the seats under contest.

A female candidate narrated how she was censured by her political party for attempting to contest in her ward where the sitting councillor was male and from the same political party:

"I was made to stand up and say whether the sitting candidate in my ward had done a good job or not. I responded that yes he had worked hard and had done a good job; he had managed to open a clinic and build a school, the roads were maintained and we worked well with him. I was then asked in front of other party members to explain why I was running against him. My answer to them was that I was contesting because women need to also participate in politics. That is when all the trouble began for me. I was shocked that other women were against me contesting."

Another female candidate cited the challenge of regionalism in political parties. She remarked that:

"There is the issue of tribalism. You may be married in a province you don't originate from and the party may say that we want a candidate who is one of our own. This means the woman automatically does not qualify. Although you are married there and have invested there, and that province is now your home. They will say you are not one of us because you do not come from our province. There is nothing you can do about it and you just have to agree to step down." [Female political party candidate]

On the level of support available to female members who want to contest, some respondents felt that this depends on several factors such as one's popularity with the leadership of the party. One candidate remarked that:

"I can even say we had an advantage as women because we have a women committee that support female candidates." [Female political party candidate]

"The advantage is that my party paid for my nomination fee. Day to day cost of campaigns was settled by the party. The party also provided me with campaign material such as regalia, flyers and posters".

"The advantage of being in a political party is that you will be fully equipped when you get into office. They train you on how to function in that position. That is why I chose to run as a candidate for [name of party]."

Being an independent candidate

In the 2018 Harmonised Elections I contested as an independent candidate. Being an independent candidate gave me access to a certain segment of the electorate that I previously did not have as a political party candidate. I found that people were freer to associate and talk with me during the campaign than they did when I was contesting under a party card. I never got that free engagement and exchange of ideas on a party card. The campaign that I had in 2018 was the best campaign that I had because I actually felt that the politics of issues which is what I enjoy; to hear what people think, to hear what is important to them and their views. There was freer debate that was the advantage of that.

I was free to make my own policies unlike party candidates who must adhere to party policies. A lot of young people are joining politics as independent candidates as opposed to joining under a political party because they are not really getting along with political parties and do not find a chance to contest when in a political party. I lost the election like many other independent candidates because we did not have a known background. When you run for a party you have the advantage that your party has a history and people know your party and what it represents. The electorate does not generally have confidence and does not support independent candidates because they argue that we don't have political party backing and financial resources. The challenge is that people always see your party first before you, such that people would first ask me about party issues before asking how I am.

[excerpt from an interview with an independent candidate]

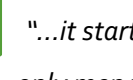
Recommendation

- ZEC should come up with a strategy to actively engage political parties together with other Chapter 12 Commissions such as the Zimbabwe Gender Commission and the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission. The purpose of this engagement would be to promote the concept of gender equality within political parties.

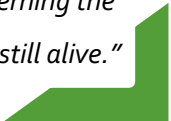
2.7 Other barriers to participation

2.7.1 Norms and values

Women lamented the structural deformities in our society that have subjected them to societal discrimination in the political sphere. Participants from the survey reported that the patriarchal nature of Zimbabwean society regards man as natural leaders while women are expected to be married, submissive, dependant, hardworking and not included in decision making. This perceived natural order of things means men stand a higher chance of being elected into political office. A male participant from the survey had this to say:



"...it started long ago when women were not even allowed to seat 'padare', only men were given authority to seat there discussing issues concerning the community. So how can a woman lead the country whilst men are still alive."

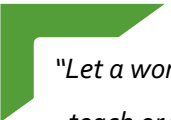


Cultural attitudes about gender roles further subjugate women and serve to limit their representation in public life. Many male participants pointed out that the most crucial role designed for women was of rearing children and doing household chores and that the political life was for men and not for women. Findings from this survey show that it is culturally unacceptable for a woman to be a leader among some ethnic groups.

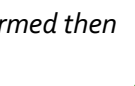
Cultural norms and values also hinder women from accessing the electorate. It was noted that women have limited ways of accessing the electorate as compared to men. Whereas man can easily and comfortably campaign in public places like beer halls and entertainment spots, women cannot access these places as easily.

2.7.2 Religion

Religion was also identified as a limiting factor to women participation in political life. Religion generally supports female subjugation to male dominance. Bible verses were quoted as supporting the supportive role of women and discourage them from life in the political sphere. One man in a FGD 1 Timothy 2; 11-13 which says,



"Let a woman learn quietly with submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man. For Adam was first formed then Eve".



He explained that this bible verse made it clear that women do not have the authority or power to lead or give an opinion about anything. Female candidates were accused of defying the natural order of things in religious teachings. A female candidate complained that her church leadership openly

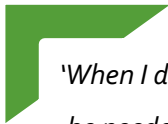
campaigned for a male candidate who is also part of the congregation while simultaneously sending a female delegation to talk to her out of contesting if she wished to remain a part of the congregation.

2.7.3 Level of education

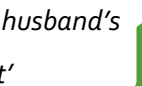
Differing levels of education between men and women which emanate from the long-standing cultural bias towards educating men at the expense of women was noted as a barrier. The survey revealed that many women lacked the exposure, confidence and knowledge required to run for political office, while men openly said they would not vote for a woman because women lack the emotional intelligence required to manage a political post, and were also weak leaders who cannot exercise authority.

2.7.4 Family resistance

Female candidates who participated in the survey said they faced resistance from their husbands and their husband's families. Most female candidates said their husbands did not support their candidature and some husbands went as far as telling his wife that he needed to seek permission from his family for the wife to run for office since she will be using the husband's name.



'When I decided to contest I had to first consult my husband who in turn said he needed to consult his relatives from the rural areas for permission since I was going to use their family name. So it took some time up to the time when nomination court was about to close. I then decided to drop my husband's name and use my maiden name so that I could contest'



The sentiment among men was that when women were elected into office will not be able to balance work and home life. They felt that when Women get elected, they begin to neglect their wifely and motherly duties and instead became big headed and disobedient to their husbands.

2.7.5 Sexual harassment

Female candidates interviewed said they suffered ridicule, name calling, sex shaming, negative stereotyping and derogatory statements and sexist remarks from other candidates, the media and from community members, something that did not happen to their male counterparts, and this worked against their campaigns. A female candidate who participated in the survey narrated how community members were spreading falsehoods to her husband and the community that she was engaging in extra marital affairs as way to discredit her campaign.

There is also a general impression in the community that women who join politics are of loose morals and will be looking for sexual partners since most of them are never married, widowed or divorced. Participants also gave the marital status of these women as a reason for not voting for them. Participants felt they cannot put a woman without a husband into political office since she has no morals and has nothing to teach them.

2.7.6 Violence and intimidation

Women said they desisted from contesting in elections although they were keen because of the violence and intimidation they were likely to face from their male counterparts and party big wigs. Most women who had successfully filed their nomination court papers later went on to withdraw their candidature on account of the harassment and covert violence they experienced from their own party and from contesting parties as well.

Recommendations

- Voter education curriculum should include the importance of women's participation in elections. The programmes should include convening meetings with the public informing them about women's constitutional rights to participate in elections. They should work in collaboration with the Gender Commission to constantly meet with the community to explain on the importance of women participation in politics, this might also help in clearing societal, religious stereotypes accompanied by women's participation.
- ZEC should also collaborate with the law enforcers to ensure that law is being enforced effectively against perpetrators of political violence to create a conducive environment for those women who would want to participate in politics.





ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

