

The Implications of the Quota System in Promoting Gender Equality in Zimbabwean Politics

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Abstract

This paper investigates the implications of quota systems in promoting gender equality in politics. Zimbabwe is a signatory to many declarations aimed at increasing women connexion in top decision making positions such as the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development of 1997, CEDAW 1979 and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. Quotas are assumed to be the undisputable way of a significant increase in women representation in politics. Evidence on the ground shows diminutive direct relationships between constitutional quota system and the promotion of gender equality in politics. The major questions this study attempts to answer are: is the constitutional quota system likely to promote/enhance gender equality in politics? Has the quota system received any political support from its inception in Zimbabwe? Has the violation of the quota system been enforced? What calibre of women politicians is produced by the quota system? Documentary evidence, in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions have shown that violence against women in parliament and during campaigns, cultural, socio-economic values and the media are amongst factors hindering women advancement in political positions. Legislation in a vacuum is unnecessary; there is need for the implementation of the quota system at both political party and societal levels. Quota systems should apply at constituency levels and violation of the system should be enforced by law.

1.0 Introduction

Although there is a prominent commitment by the international community to gender equality, gender gap in politics still exist. According to the *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Report*(2005) the international community reinforced the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform of Action, but only twelve countries had women who held 33% or more seats in their parliaments. Despite the sterling efforts of Zimbabwean women to end marginalisation from corridors of power things are far from moving in the right direction if events in the run up to the June 24-25 parliamentary elections are anything to go by (*Electoral Institute for Sustainability of Democracy in Africa*2000). Zimbabwe has a low representation of women in top political decision making positions for example its cabinet has only six women out of a total of thirty ministers including President Mugabe and his two vice presidents. The under representation of women in Zimbabwe has been so stark since 1980 (*Chiroro*,2005). Power sharing between women and man is among the critical areas of concern outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action yet according to the *United Nations Chronicle*, women have made a remarkable progress in many professions, and politics is not one of them. According to (*Chiroro*,2005) researches show that no country in the world has managed to achieve at least 30% of female decision makers without a legislative quota system. This paper aims at identifying inhibiting factors to women participation in politics since independence. Trends of women participating in politics were studied since 1980 and circumstances surrounding women involvement in politics were also analysed.

Constitutional quota system increases the number of women in political position due to the reservation of seats specifically to be occupied by women.

Changing laws in favour of women, without women accessing political resources may not be adequate in transforming patriarchal norms against women participation in politics. The effects of paternalistic cultures as well as factors contributing to women's lack of financial muscles were analysed. Politics these days is about what the aspiring Member of Parliament gives to the voters which might be beer or monies for projects. Women are poor hence the need to support them financially especially during election time if an increased participation of women in politics is to be realised. Sexual harassment of women is assumed to be one of the weapons used to silence women at constituency, party and parliamentary levels. This study interviewed politicians at all levels for the researcher to understand the role of sexual harassment in decreasing the number of women willing to be politicians. The presence of women in parliament has had a modest impact on debates particularly in raising of issues pertinent to the specific interest of women (Dahlerup, 2000). Quota system has enabled some women parliamentarians like Jessie Majome to be parliamentarians. Contributions of such women in parliamentary debates were studied to analyse the calibre of women politicians quotas produce. Women headed constituencies were also visited in comparison of constituencies headed by man to study the qualities of women quotas are likely to bring into leadership. The following questions guided this research

- What are the major cultural, socio-economic values and media practises which have hindered women participation in politics?
- Is constitutional quota system likely to lead to equal sharing of political resources between man and woman?
- What calibre of women politicians is produced by constitutional quota system?
- Is constitutional quota system likely to be respected given that it is not upheld at constituency levels?

2.0 Background to the problem

2.1 Constitutional legal quotas

The Constitution of Zimbabwe (1980) and the electoral laws of the country make no provisions for quotas to advance the representation of women in publicly elected bodies (*Electoral institute for the sustainability of Democracy in Africa* 2000). According to www.eisa.org.za the Constitution is masculine in its language. "He" and "him" are used throughout in a way that assumes that the masculine embraces the feminine, while the words "she" and "her" appear nowhere. It also prohibits discrimination in law or in the activities of public officials so as to exclude the prevention of discrimination against women in customary law and specifically permits discrimination that "takes due account of physiological differences between persons of different sex or gender" (*Constitution 1980, Article 23*). It permits "the implementation of affirmative action programmes for the protection or advancement of persons or classes of persons who have been previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination" (*Constitution 1980, Article 23, 3(g)*). Women in Politics Support Unit (WiPSU) have been agitating for a 30 per cent representation of women in leadership positions since the formation of Government of National Unity but according to www.thezimbabwean.com their calls were watered down by all the three main political parties, Zanu (PF) and the two MDC formations. Constitutional quota systems become the panacea to increased women participation in politics. According to Mrs KandawasvikaNhundu (*ibid*) legislated quotas do not discriminate against men but they simply re-right the wrongs of the past and remove barriers that impede women from holding positions as man. Deputy Minister of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development, Jessie Majome said Zimbabwe's failure to have a 50/50 quota system was caused by the country's constitution, which she said is not gender sensitive (*Zimbabwean* 25 January 2011).

In the same article Jessie Majome describes Zimbabwe as having one of the worst constitutions in the world in terms of women's rights as the constitution gives license to women abuse and fails to provide equality. Pressure groups in Zimbabwe anticipate slim chances of an increased women involvement in politics without legal quotas. Statistics given in a report by the Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of democracy in Africa illustrates that in 1980 and 1985, there was a total of 100 seats and only 9 were taken up by women. In 1990, 1995 and 2000, there were 150 seats and they were taken up by 21, 22, and 14 women respectively. In 2005 there were 120 seats and only 20 (16.67%) were taken up by women. In 2008 there were 210 seats and only 30 (14.29%) were taken up by women.

Instead of an improvement in women representation, Zimbabwe has witnessed a decrease in the number of women taking up political responsibilities from a peak of 22% in 1995 to 14.2% in 2008. According to Madeleine Albrght (*Financial Gazette* 18 August 2011) legal quotas which lack in Zimbabwe, have enabled countries like Rwanda to be part of the four percent that have achieved 50/50 with a 56 percent representation of women in Parliament, Lesotho (58 percent), South Africa (47 percent), Namibia (42 percent), Ghana (30 percent) and Uganda (35 percent).

2.2 International Conventions

Zimbabwe is a signatory to a number of declarations aimed at increasing the number of women in top decisions and political positions. Declarations signed by the country include the Southern Africa Development Community protocol on Gender and Development signed in August 17, 2008. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development calls for far reaching changes and includes timelines for these goals. Included in these goals is the inclusion of gender equality and equity in National Constitutions, the repeal of all discriminatory laws, and countries to work towards the continental goal of fifty percent women in political and decision making positions by 2015 (www.womensnet.org.za). Zimbabwe also signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, and is often described as an international bill of rights for women. According to www.un.org the convention provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life, including the right to vote and to stand for election as well as education, health and employment. States parties agreed to take all appropriate measures, including legislation and temporary special measures, so that women can enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Zimbabwe is also a signatory to the Beijing Platform for Action. Though the country has entered into sounding conventions aimed at improving the status of women both in political and public life Zimbabwe is still miles away the realisation of the aims of conventions. Zimbabwe did not adopt these legislations into its constitution so women's legal and constitutional rights are not guaranteed. All protocols aimed at improving women participation lack sanctioning powers for countries which do not reach the agreed levels of women participation. The only hope for the increase of women in political positions is the draft constitution. If it is adopted into law, the 50/50 representation might be realised in Zimbabwe.

2.3 Political Parties

Researches have shown that success in improving women's representation in proportional representation has been accompanied by the adoption of voluntary quotas for women candidates by parties themselves (www.eisa.org.za). Political parties in Zimbabwe, despite public rhetoric, have no strict regulations that promote the inclusion of women as candidates or leaders; this has been blamed on a number of factors that include male dominance, violence and traditional values held by many who see women who participate in politics as misfits (*The Zimbabwean* 15 October 2012). Lobbying by ZANU PF women led to the adoption of the quota system in the party. According to *EISA* 2000 in 1999 members of ZANU-PF women's league threatened to boycott the party's congress unless they got assurances that women would be guaranteed representation in the top four posts of the party. Unfortunately the women's league achieved no results as the top four posts in the ruling party are still occupied by men. The ruling Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) adopted and implemented a 25% quota for candidates for the National Assembly in 2005, but at least a third of these were nominated in opposition strongholds where they had little chances of success and in the end only 17.7% of elected ZANU-PF members were women (*Chiroro* 2005, 102). Party quotas not accompanied by constituency quotas are unlikely to increase women participation as at the constituency level the opposition parties may have nominated male candidates who might be voted into office. According to (*ibid*) the implementation of the quotas reflects the party's traditional marginalisation of women and effectiveness of opposition by powerful men within the party who are against the effective implementation of the quota system. ZANU-PF requires that a third of its Politburo be women and that one of its two vice-presidents must be a woman, but has no quota for its Central Committee (*Sachikonye* 2005, 36).

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has no quotas other than the provision that one-third of its National Council must be women and sufficient women must be co-opted, if necessary, to ensure that this is the case (*ibid*). In the 2005 elections only 15% of MDC candidates were women and 14.6% of the party elected representatives were women (*Chiroro* 2005, 102).

Mashonaland West MDC-T Deputy secretary EdelineChivimboHuchu blasted the 50/50 gender quota system meant to assist female politicians vying for senior party positions, arguing that promotion of women into politics should be based on merit as the quota is unfair (newsday.co.zw). As a party MDC is trying to populate gender participation at all levels as the party is a firm believer of affirmative action according to the party's spokesperson Nelson Chamisa(*ibid*). Chamisa's statement points to the fact that political parties in Zimbabwe are solely concerned about political power not the fulfillment of the 50/50 representation by 2015. The political situation in Zimbabwe may not be conducive for the implementation of the quota system since it's a struggle for governance between the two major political parties. Parties may not risk losing constituencies by placing a female candidate who might have a male competitor from the opposition party.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Conceptual Framework

Four arguments rally behind the push towards increased women participation in politics (*Dahlerup and Freidval* 2003). The first is known as the justice argument which argues that women are made up of half of the population and therefore have the right to half of the seats. In Zimbabwe women are more than half of the population as they constitute almost 52% of the population, but they are underrepresented in decision making positions at all level from local government to the national level. According to Mr Jazi (www.kubatana.net) only 24 women are senators out of a total senate number of 99 while only 32 women are members of the house assembly out of a total membership of 214 which implies that women are not prioritised at national level as very few women are in decision making positions in parliament and at the local level. In the 2005 elections, women comprised 28% of councillors in rural district councils and 10.5% in urban councils and now women comprise 18% of urban councillors and 19% of rural councillors (www.undp.org.zw). The justice argument will therefore increase women participation in political decision making positions. Men decide for women whilst women form the greater part of the population, thus social injustice prevails. Quotas become the fast track to equal political representation according to *Dahlerup and Freidval* 2003.

The second argument for the push towards women's increased participation in politics is based on experience. According to *ibid* women have different experiences whether they are biologically or socially constructed and they should enter politics as they will approach issues differently from what man do. In Rwanda the caucus of women parliamentarians was able to advocate for women rights and gender equality and also mobilized grassroots women to contribute to the making of the constitution (www.unesco.org). The consequence of this was that issues of gender equality took centre stage and the caucus of women parliamentarians also facilitated the monitoring of the budget to ensure that it addresses the needs and concerns of women and men (*ibid*). The involvement of women in politics implies that women's daily problematic issues are also brought in parliamentary debates which include bread and butter issues and health challenges from a female perspective. One of the male colleagues in Rwanda's parliament posited that motherhood prepared women parliamentarians to better understand, analyse, and act on the problems of children (www.unicef.org).

The third argument for women participation in politics is the idea that men and women might have conflicting interests therefore men cannot represent women which is known as the interest group argument(*Dahlerup and Freidval* 2003). When parliaments are constituted by males(one interest group) and female (the other interest group) it means that the two groups are going to compete and no one group is going to dominate all the time. The idea of checks and balances between the two competing groups is likely to be the order of sessions and debates. The fourth basis is that women politicians represent role models for women in society and gender quotas bring women in positions of power to guarantee that they are not left out in the political life. Rwandan society formerly regarded women as good for nothing else than caring for children and households, but now since women are at the top, it is encouraging future generations to be ambitious and to follow in the footprints of their mothers who are role models to children, especially girls(www.unicef.org).

4 Research Findings

4.1 Factors hindering women participation in politics

4.1.1 Political violence

According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on VAW, Yakin Ertürk, violence is a “disempowering force, which erodes women’s self-dignity, their capabilities and ability to enjoy the full spectrum of their human rights” (www.un.org), including their ability to participate in public life and politics. The nature of politics in Africa, Zimbabwe inclusive is constituted by torture, bloodshed and intimidation just before the elections. According to www.kubatana.net women are victims to the above forms of violence mainly because of their reproductive roles and the burden of care for the children, the sick, and the elderly whom they live with, thereby constraining their capability to running away at the first sign of danger unlike their male counterparts. Interviews with Jessie Majome have indicated that there is a correlation between political violence and women participation in politics. In Zimbabwe the number of women vying for political offices is likely to decrease with the increase in political violence. According to the same source women have been raped in the last election leading to HIV infections and the birth of a lot to fatherless children especially in Kapiropiri in Mount Darwin and Buhera areas. Violence instils a sense of fear in female candidates whether directly involved in politics or not. Most women in Zimbabwe view politics as a dirty game as it has contributed to permanent health problems to some activists or their family members. Politics in Zimbabwe is associated with insecurity both for the individual involved and family members.

Key informant interviews with Oppah Muchinguri highlighted that Zimbabwe’s parliament is not conducive for 50/50 representation as there is too much scolding of women. Jessie Majome seconded Muchinguri’s sentiments by arguing that there is a lot of sexual harassment in parliament. According to Majome and Muchinguri men use vulgar language to silence women who try to be vocal in parliament, instead of focusing on parliament business men start describing women’ private parts just to frustrate women who end up fearing to contribute in parliamentary debates. Whenever women who are divorced make contributions in parliament male parliamentarians shout loudly personal family matters so as to silence them. Jessie Majome argued that given the current abusive language in parliament it might be very difficult to conclude that women are always silent in parliament as it is an induced silence from man who want to dominate in politics and want to prove that women politicians are useless as they make no contributions in debates. Married women are therefore unlikely to join politics as it is dirty. In responding to these allegations from women, Minister of Indegenisation and Economic Empowerment Saviour Kasukuwere argued that women who wish to be politicians must be brave enough to fight back with vulgar language.

This statement by Minister shows that male politicians really do not accommodate women as fellow politicians since it is not every woman who can openly speak vulgar, whilst vulgar should be used as a weapon against male domination. Without changes in male characters and attitudes male domination in politics remains. Instead of regretting for such behaviours in the country law making body the minister is aging women to be like Mahofa who uses vulgar language to silence man too. Women’s issues seem not to be of priority to most male politicians who are concerned about the power struggle between ZANU PF and MDC. One can therefore conclude that the political situation on the ground is not conducive for the implementation of the quota system. Focus group discussions held in Harare with female youth aspiring to be future politicians have indicated that given such an environment they cannot waste their hard earned degrees to join an environment which is not dignified.

4.1.2 Electoral system

Research demonstrates that the type of electoral system plays an important role in determining whether or not women get properly involved on party lists or get elected (www.wetpaint.com). In-depth interviews with Jessie Majome have indicated that the political environment in Zimbabwe is not conducive for women involvement in politics firstly by lack of constitutional legal quotas and intra party level politics. Since the constitution lacks legal quotas parties are left with their prerogative to implement the quotas or not. MDC has three main organs which are the main body, youth and women. Majome argues that these three organs are a gender biased terrain. The main body is specifically for man with no women in it, the youth wing again is composed of mainly boys and very few women, women are found in the last wing which is the women’s wing. The main body is the policy making body of the party.

This implies that in terms of party policies women play a subservient role with regards to policy formulation as their wing is the last in importance. This is the party's stance despite the fact that women constitute more than half of the population which might cascade into more voters than men. On this ground, one might therefore be tempted to question the democratic levels of the party, since democracy entails equal participation in decision making positions. At ward levels the chairman is the head of the two wings and surprising this position is always occupied by man. Female focus group discussions with MDC supporters have shown that women are indirectly discouraged from political participation by what some members termed an "inhuman" arrangement. Stereotyping of women contributed towards placing women in the third wing. Youth and main body are the ones who choose those to stand in parliament, according to Majome this set up gives women slim chances of being nominated as competing candidates in elections and the implementation of the quota system becomes the only way out. Even though male candidates may be chosen either by quota system or by coincidence, the major challenge in the administration of quotas according to Majome is that quotas do not apply at constituency levels. Women candidates may be outweighed by male candidates from the opposition party which might choose to implement its quota system in a different constituency. Due to this lack of constituency quotas men and women end up in competition in all constituencies with males' likelihood of domination due to their greater political finance muscle.

4.2.3 Socio-economic variables

Zimbabwe is a patriarchal society which believes in male domination over females. Male domination at the family level has contributed to women being side-lined at the political level. Women in Zimbabwe are more associated with child bearing and rearing not the political arena which is viewed as specifically for man. As women are viewed as sources of livelihoods for the family they lack the time needed to interact with voters in campaigning as well as the funding. According to Jessie Majome Zimbabwean politics can now be regarded as politics not only of patronage but of 'matronage' too. Matronage according to Majome is the giving of gifts to voters as a way of luring support. Women are generally poor since very few women have their own businesses to finance their campaigns as compared to men who own a lot of businesses according to Oppah Muchinguri. In-depth interviews with Majome have shown that for one to be able to win in an election he /she must have either started projects in that area just before the elections or should buy beer or drinks to voters. Most female aspiring candidate lack resources therefore cannot compete with their male counterparts in constituencies. Male aspiring candidates also have enough time to spend at beer halls chatting with potential voters even to late hours and very few female candidates can do the same since they have other duties they are expected to fulfil in their households.

This has contributed to about 90% of the female politicians being single as highlighted by Muchinguri. Female politicians are regarded as beaches hence women who are dedicated to be politicians' divorce which might be due to pressure from their husbands to quit due to the bad publicity and the nature of politics in Zimbabwe. In a bid to empower women ZANU PF at some time gave them grind mills which was a short lived measure aimed at showing that when women are empowered can deliver according to Muchinguri. A woman in or aspiring to be in parliament lacks financial support and Majome proposes that the political finance act needs to be amended to add a gender dimension on their funding. Majome advocates for more funding to political parties with more women since the increase in the number of women in political positions hinges on the number of women in political parties.

Focus group discussions with women have shown that women when they are in politics do not support other women hence very few women remain at the highest decision making positions. In support of focus group sentiments Muchinguri argued that Khupe and ThabitaKhumalo are always fighting each other rather than supporting each other to jointly further the interests of women. Focus groups supported the quota system as it the way in which women can be increased in political positions as female candidates have the tendency to decampaign each other in constituencies through gossip. Female candidates end up losing voters to male candidates due to female habits of gossiping. Most female politicians are divided over the 50/50 representation in parliament hence it might be difficult to achieve it by 2015. VimbisoHichu cited above argues that it might lead to lack of respect to female politicians. In-depth interviews with Gonese have also pointed to the fact that if the 50/50 is overstretched it may include women who are not qualified.

4.2.4 The Media and lack of advanced technology

According to Oppah Muchinguri and Majome the media in Zimbabwe does not support women in politics. Focus group discussions have also supported this argument. The researcher evidenced that almost all of the group members could mention about four or five male members of parliament (MPs) but could hardly mention two female MPs. The mentioned male MPs were known through either the discussions they have done on the national television or through the newspapers. The media is criticised for publishing politics as a dirty game hence young women are even afraid of joining politics because of the bad stories they read in connection with politics. Female politicians are of the view that the media also needs to publish some good aspects of politics and the achievements made by women in politics.

5.0 The contributions made by women MPs

Women MPs in Zimbabwe always contribute in parliamentary debates, asking questions and adequately responding to questions asked in line with their ministries. Issues that women bring to debate include bread and butter issues as well as issues related to the welfare of the youth and the disabled. In the *Zimbabwe Parliamentary Debates* (2011, 2417) Mrs Shirichena asked the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education government policy pertaining to the provision of education to the youth and Mrs Zinyemba asked a question in relation to accommodation for police officers. In the same volume Mrs Mangami requested the Minister of Education why there is only one special needs training institution for teachers of people with disabilities whilst the disabled constitute 10% of the country's population. According to Jessie Majome despite the hostile environment in parliament most women are making sound contributions in parliament. She further argued that male MPs are not contributing in debates as woman. Jessie Majome a beneficiary of the quota system was once sexually harassed during her presentation on food aid but was able to finish her presentation. One factor that hinders participation of women in debates is lack of technology. Parliament in Zimbabwe lacks even microphones for voice amplification hence when men start making noise harassing them, they would not be heard by most MPs. According to Oppah Muchinguri given resources women can be good MPs who can deliver in constituencies, but the biggest challenges women are facing is lack of adequate development funds for their constituencies. Women who enter into politics through the quota system are just like any politician since they would have joined political parties for not less than five years before becoming MPs, since no one can be eligible to stand in for a political party when new. In constituencies women parliamentarians are even admired more than their male counterparts as women are on record visiting their constituencies talking to residents and even trying to understand their problem, though they lack the money to effectively solve constituency problems.

6.0 Conclusion and recommendations

Constitutional quota system is the panacea to women increased involvement in politics. Countries which have quota systems have reached the 30 percent. Researches have indicated that there is no direct relationship between increased women participation in politics and democracy, since countries which are viewed as examples of democracies like the United States of America have not implemented the quota system. Zimbabwe lags behind in terms of women participation in politics as the country has been a signatory of diverse conventions empowering women but never to be adopted as law in the country. The only solution for Zimbabwean woman is constitutional quotas as well as behaviour change on the part of male politicians who are on record chanting vulgar songs and languages when women are presenting or contributing in parliament. Women who have been privileged to join politics through quotas have not been respected they are viewed as joining not through merit, there is a relationship between quota system and increased women involvement in politics but no direct relationship between quota system and gender equality in terms of political resources.

They are given less respect hence some female politicians in Zimbabwe are against the quota system. For quota systems to be fruitful in Zimbabwe political parties should allow more women in their structures from the grassroots to the national levels. Quota systems need to be implemented from constituency levels to avoid competition between man and woman from contesting political parties. ZANU PF needs to engage female youths in their structures as of now the ruling party has no wing for female youths. Involvement of female youth therefore becomes a long term measure in assuring female representation in politics. MDC has to involve women in the two major wings which are the decision wings for the party (the youth and the mainwing). This will therefore mean that women will be able to choose other women to stand in as aspiring MPs.

There is need for political parties to implement the quota system and some incentives may be set aside for rewarding parties with more women in their structures. More budgetary allocation for parties that have achieved or go beyond the quotas prescribed may force political parties to be tolerant to women. Failure to implement the quota system at party levels may have to be enforced by law even disqualifying the political party from contesting in elections.

Researches have shown that women lack funds for campaigns. Women need to be empowered especially in terms of money for campaigns so that they can compete with men when it comes to buying beer and starting projects aimed at luring voters. Politicians in Africa need to be tolerant to each other so that political campaigns are not constituted by bloodshed and disappearances. Females are peace loving and want the protection of their families hence are removed out of politics due to the nature of the political arena. Politics needs to be a clean job for constitutional quotas to be effective. Organisations which fund women in politics need to be strengthened by injecting more funds into their accounts. This leads to an equal participation during campaigns as all (females and males) will be afforded equal playing fields as all will be having monies for campaigns. At the family level politics needs support from the immediate family members so that more married women become politicians. As of now politics is viewed as a man's world hence all females into politics are viewed as beaches, this works against protocols calling for increased women participation. The media in Zimbabwe also needs to be supportive of female MPs treating them in the same way it treats men, calling women politicians for public discussions on television and newspapers so that they become known by the public. Parliament in Zimbabwe needs to be furnished with latest technology, microphones included to improve the participation of women in debates as they will contribute from where they are seated and every member hearing them despite the noise being made in the house. Increases in the number of women in political positions should also be accompanied by access to political resources for equality to be recognised. Areas recommended for further research include, the role played by political parties in women participation in politics and the relationship between democracy and increased women participation in politics.

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