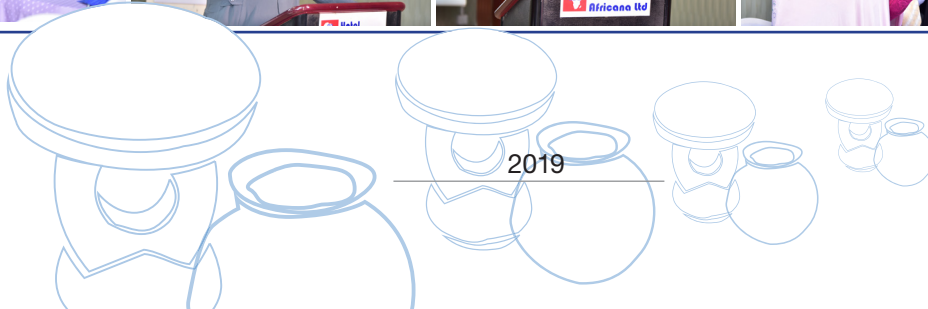
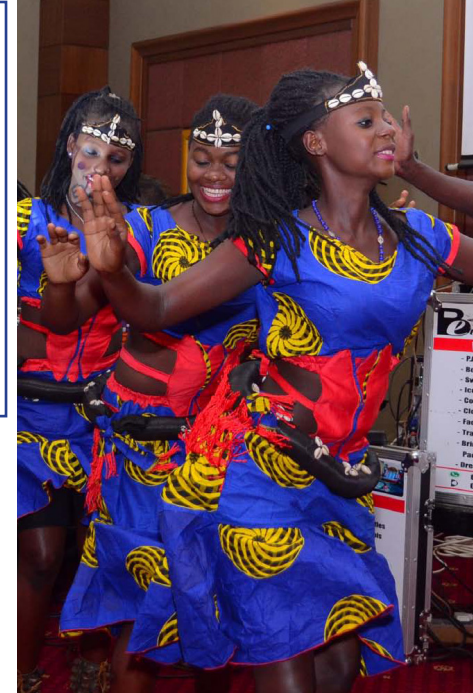


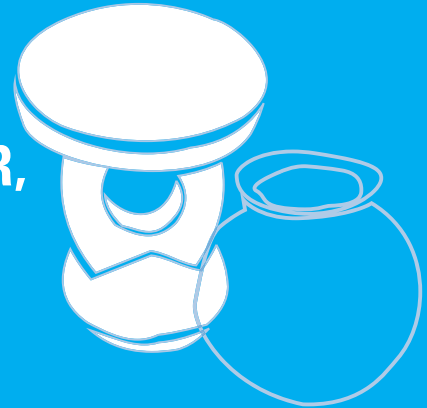


Gender Transformation & Empowerment

INFORMATION PACK ON GENDER, CULTURE AND RELIGION



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2019



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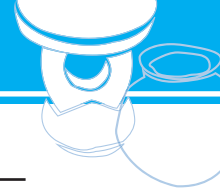
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LISTS OF ACRONYMS

CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
ICU	Itesot Cultural Union
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LEMU	Land and Equity Movement
PPRR	Principles, Practices, Rights and Responsibilities
UWONET	Uganda Women's Network

FOREWORD

Culture, Religion and Gender are foundational social paradigms in our communities, the three (3) paradigms have often been used by different sections to perpetuate inequalities. Uganda is a multi-cultural and multi-religious society with different communities practicing different cultures and religion. Many of the practices, defended in the culture, religion impinges on gender and women's rights.

However, UWONET believes that gender, culture and religion are an important tool of social transformation and acceptance of women's leadership. UWONET also believes that there is limited information on some of the positive norms and principles of gender, culture and religion that promotes women's rights and participation

in leadership. The lack of information, awareness and understanding continue to perpetuate discrimination against men and women, boys and girls.

UWONET, therefore, developed a handbook, outlining positive cultural principles within the Karamoja and Teso regions that embrace women's rights and participation in leadership to strengthen community acceptance and appreciation of women's leadership as well positive religious principles that enhance women's participation in leadership. The document will help create awareness on cultural practices, principles and religious teachings that promotes equality and women's rights.



1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

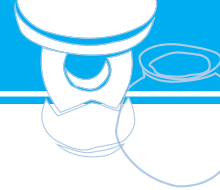
Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) has over the years worked and continues to ensure that women in Uganda are actively and effectively participating in leadership at levels in society. UWONET recognizes the role of culture and religion in promoting equality among men and women and also identifies that culture, religion and gender are foundations of social paradigms in societies, the three have often been used by the different section of societies to perpetuate gender inequalities.

UWONET commissioned a study to identify the positive cultural, religious practices and principles that promote equality, women's rights and participation in Teso and Karamoja that will inform an Info pack on

culture, religion and gender to be used by development practitioners.

The study was conducted in the districts of Soroti, Serere (Teso) and Napak, Moroto (Karamoja) and was mainly a qualitative study based on literature review and key informant interviews with the custodians of culture and religion.

Culture greatly impacts on women but also provides for participation of women in leadership at all levels for example; women are custodians of culture and this is a role that is very significant in maintaining social cohesion in society, a role entrusted to women. In cultural structures, there are institutions that promote the participation of women in leadership and these include;



the marriage institution that provide opportunities for leadership position for women. In Teso region for example, a married woman can take up leadership role in the clan like being the chairperson. Another very important role is being the “Toto esas” literally translated means mother with leadership roles and has powers to lead all women including men. “Esas” is the “stick” picked from a special tree and referred to as “esas” that gives a woman powers and authority to lead in the clan and has authority to pronounce herself on land matters of the clan.

The clan system in Teso gives opportunity for women to be leaders. Whereas in Teso cultural constitution, women are allowed to compete for any leadership position just like their male counterparts and this

explains the presence of women in the Council of the Emorimor who are Ministers.

Traditional ceremonies are conducted by women and these are very significant roles in as far as culture is concerned and shows trust given to women. These are important roles that can influence their position within the clans if used positively. For example in both cultures the naming of children is the responsibility of the women. Clan naming in Teso was in the past undertaken by women and this therefore meant that they could influence a lot of changes in those clans.

Religion on the other hand has been very instrumental in promoting the participation of women in leadership and gender equality. For example, in the Anglican and Pentecostal churches, women are allowed to





be Provost, Reverends, pastors and these are high leadership position within the church. The Catholic Church has also allowed women to be catechists a position that was assigned to men in the past.

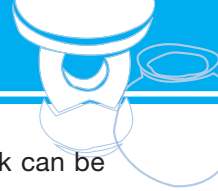
From the interviews, many changes have taken place and women in these positions have influenced decision making especially those that promotes gender equality. While Islam recognizes women and their roles in nurturing the family, but has also established a women desk that addresses women's issues. Such leadership roles in the clan and society nurtures and gives women power and influence that can be harnessed for leadership in other spheres including politics and economic.

However, with all these, there are still gaps that are affecting the participation of women in leadership that has been attributed to culture and religion. There are some negative cultural practices that undermine the participation of women in leadership rooted in

the fact that women are not supposed to be in public spheres of life and therefore cannot be leaders. This practice is common in both cultures. Culturally, the Karamojong do not allow their women to speak in public. For example; women are not allowed to be part of the "Akiriket" council of elders where all decisions concerning the community are made but they can contribute their views through their husbands who then would communicate to the council.

Religion has also its negative connotations where the bible is being interpreted negatively to silence the voices of women. Islam for example keeps a woman in the private domain of the home and therefore a woman cannot take part in leadership and hence impacts negatively on women and therefore cannot interact with the outside world where ideas and opportunities for leadership is practiced.

Worth to note is that these cultural and religious barriers to women's rights and gender equality are now beginning



to fade off as they are challenged by the communities and backed up the constitutional provisions. Many societies have applauded women's participation in leadership and this is manifested in the opportunities given to women in some clans in Teso who have been given opportunity to lead which is a very significant step.

There is need to strengthen these institutions that provide spaces for women to participate in leadership through capacity building and mindset change/transformation within the communities including leaders at all levels.

In a sociological study like this, it is important to note that society keeps changing every day and so are the cultural and religious practices. Esibo.S, notes that the Teso community is evolving fast especially in relation to cultural practices and values. In regard to this Info pack on Gender, Culture and Religion, it is important

to note that from time to time this Info pack can be adjusted accordingly at any given time.

Background of UWONET and justification for the development of the Simplified Pack on Gender, Culture and Religion

Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) is a registered Non-governmental organization as well as an advocacy and lobby coalition of national women's organizations, institutions and 9 individual members in Uganda. UWONET was born out of the East African Women's Conference held in Kampala in 1993 which was in preparation for the UN World Conference on women in Beijing, China in 1995.

UWONET envisions a Ugandan society free from gender discrimination and seeks to transform the unequal gender relations through collective visioning and action with different actors including the cultural and religious institutions, who are at the central of moral leadership and social norms.



UWONET specifically with reference to the Karamoja and Teso communities appreciates the role of culture and religion in promoting equality among men and women if used well. UWONET notices that while culture, religion and gender are foundational social paradigms in our communities, the three paradigms have often been used by different section of societies to perpetuate gender inequalities against women in the socio-economic and political spheres. Uganda is a multi-cultural and multi-religious society with different communities practicing different cultures and religion. Many of the practices, defended in the name of culture, religion impinge on gender and women's rights and hence perpetuating gender inequalities and violence against women and girls.

Gender in Ugandan societies like elsewhere is socially constructed roles and responsibilities for women and men. These roles and responsibilities are generated as a result of cultural expectations on men and women, boys and girls. They therefore

give guidance to societies on division of responsibilities, care and protection. They set the social norms of each community and rule of law on leadership.

In addition, religion also plays a critical role in shaping gender norms and expectations on men and women, boys and girls in many societies. They set the morally accepted principle of relations in society. They also strengthen peaceful co-existence and fulfillment of roles and responsibilities by men and women, boys and girls in societies.

While gender, religion and culture are the anchor of social expectations, most often these expectations have been abused and these have created power imbalance between men and women, boys and girls. These imbalances continue to cause discrimination to opportunities and privileges, including opportunity of leadership to women.

However, UWONET believes that gender, culture and religion are an important tool of social transformation





and acceptance of women's leadership. UWONET also believes that there is limited information on some of the positive norms and principles of gender, culture and religion that promotes women's rights and participation in leadership. The lack of information, awareness and understanding continue to perpetuate discrimination against men and women, boys and girls.

Purpose of the Assignment

UWONET appreciates and acknowledges that culture in all forms has positive practices that if applied well can promote equality and the rights of women in any given community. It is through this understanding that UWONET seeks to document those good practices in culture and religion. The intention for the development of the handbook is to precisely document the changing narratives in regards to culture and religion, and use the positive practices for advocacy and awareness for effective participation of women in leadership in those given communities. This simplified information

pack on gender, culture and religion, outlines positive cultural principles within the Karamoja and Teso regions that embraces women's rights and participation in leadership to strengthen community acceptance and appreciation of women's leadership as well positive religious principles that enhances women's participation in leadership, highlighting the positive Christian teachings that support women's rights and participation in leadership.

Methodology

The study was conducted in the districts of Moroto, Napak, Serere and Soroti which represents Karamoja and Teso regions. The study used mainly qualitative research methods to collect data on the existing cultural and religious practices that promote equality, women's rights and participation in leadership.

It is important to note that this is a sociological study and so it is not static and keeps changing with time and therefore these changes may influence the exhaustion



of the structures that are identified as platforms that can promote participation of women in leadership.

Literature Review

Review of existing literature regarding culture and gender in the selected regions of Karamoja and Teso was conducted. These guided the framing of data collection tools. Among the documents reviewed included; History of Teso and the governance systems, The Constitution of Iteso Cultural Union, history of the Karamojong and their governance systems and ways of life. In addition, literature on the different religious teachings and beliefs practiced in the targeted communities were reviewed. Histories about the traditional ceremonies performed by the different communities were also analyzed to identify the positive cultures there in that promote equality and the rights of women.

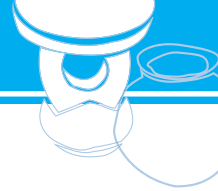
Key Informant Interviews

The total number of the respondents interviewed were 55 from the 4 districts and these were persons selected from the cultural institutions of Karamojong and Teso (11 females and 9 males), religious leaders (2 females and 10 males), opinion leaders/elders (4 females and 2 males), women leaders in political presentation (11), members of Civil Society Organizations (1 female and 3 males), district technocrats (3 females and 1 male) for primary information on gender, culture and religious principles practiced by the community and how they impact on women's participation in leadership and their proposed recommendations.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was qualitative based on the narratives collected and therefore forming themes anchored on the conceptualization of culture, religion and gender.





2.0 OVERVIEW OF THE CULTURAL PRACTICES OF THE ITESOT AND KARAMOJONG ETHNIC GROUPS

UWONET and DCA have been operating in the Karamoja and Teso region for the last 10 years. The organizations focused on strengthening women's participation and influence in leadership through addressing cultural-social, economic and political inequalities that hinder the presence and participation of women in leadership. While the two regions remain lowest in the radar of Human Development Indicators in the country (UNDP, 2015), participation and influence of women in leadership and decision making is gaining significant prominence. The region currently has two female District Council Speakers (Moroto and Amurdat), one District LCV Chairperson and several women leaders in the district Executive Committees.

Through these leadership positions, the women leaders have been able to influence budgets, policies and development priorities of the districts toward specific needs of men and women, boys and girls.

In order to sustain the gains registered and continue generating community appreciation of women's leadership, UWONET is working with different institutions of power in the region including religious and cultural Institutions. UWONET is using the Teso and Karamoja region as a model to document and encourage the use of positive cultural and religious practices that promotes women's participation in leadership.



This section gives a snap shot of the cultural way of life and governance among the Itesot and Karamojong respectively for better understanding of how culture functions and where women are situated.

Brief on the culture of Itesot

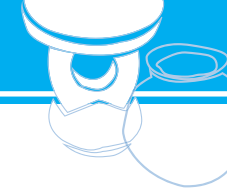
The family unit is the primary and most important for society's wellbeing in the Itesot culture. The clans are pillars of unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity (Esibo, 2017). Administratively, there are seven main clans and 1,700 sub clans registered with the Iteso cultural union (ICU, 1995). Each clan is headed by clan heads; at village level there is "Apolon Atekere" the "ebuku" then the "Emorimor" who is the head of all the Itesots. The Itesots have the chieftdom system of administration which is governed by the Itesot Cultural Union (ICU). There is "etem" which has many meanings among them "the fire place" and was very central to the governance and political organization

of the Itesots since this is where meetings on matters concerning the wellbeing of the clans were held.

The Itesot cultural union was established in 1995 under the provisions of the 1995 National Constitution of the Republic of Uganda that recognizes cultural institutions in Uganda (R o U, 2006. The National Culture Policy) The Union comprises of all Iteso clans with the specific objectives of uniting all the Itesot people of Uganda, Kenya and in the Diaspora for purposes of cultural preservation and pursuit of modern development projects for Teso.

The ICU is a Chieftdom headed by a Cultural Leader, His Highness Emorimor who is elected by the delegate's conference and is supported by the Clan Council, Cabinet, and Team of advisors and a foundation of clan executives throughout Teso Region, thus forming a comprehensive force to foster and represent all issues affecting the Iteso as a people. Important to note is that





the ICU constitution provides for all Itesot people to vie for elective positions (men and women) and women are participating in cultural leadership at all levels.

The Chiefdom covers Katakwi, Soroti, Kumi, Bukedea, Kaberamaido, Pallisa, Amuria, Tororo, Busia, Serere and Ngora districts of Uganda, the Teso North, Teso South, and Busia Districts of Kenya and the Diaspora with a population of approximately more than 5 million people.

The governance system is under clanship where each clan has a clan head. It is important to note that the Itesot community is egalitarian and therefore the Emorimor is elected by the people through their leaders. Within clan system, leadership is through election and both men and women are allowed to participate.

Brief on the culture of Karamojong

Customary Law in the Karamoja society is the normative framework that regulates the judicial, political, social and religious processes of the people and central to it is the maintenance of social cohesion. Customary law governs the performance of religious ceremonies and divination rituals. Each member of the community is assigned roles and responsibilities according to age, sex and group affiliation that maintains social organization and support on the cultural norms and values.

The Karamojong consist of nine ethnic groups namely; Tepeth, Bokora, – Ik, Pokot, Jie, Pian, Etur, Dodoth and the Matheniko speaking Ngakaramojong language predominantly. However, the smaller ethnic groups like the Ik and Tipeth have their separate language. They are all are governed by their own customary laws, which also informs the guiding principles on management of important resources like water, grazing land and





animals and this also gives authority to elders to enforce discipline on errant members.

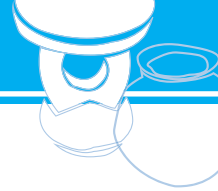
Politically the Karamojong are governed by the council of elders called “Akiriket” where important decisions are made and comprises of only initiated men. Women are prohibited from this council. “Ngitukoi” are the overall leaders of all other sub-clans-like ngiwapeto, ngikadokoi. However, these leadership structures are determined according to the initiation stage of every man in the council and not necessarily age but initiation into the gerontocratic age-based leadership system.

The Hierarchy for leadership is as follows; (Highest) Ngimoru (Mountain), Ngigetei (Gazel) and Ngidoi (Rats) lowest and qualification to this structure is in stages determined by the number years in leadership.

Important to note is that a man’s title is automatically accorded to his wife in regards to social acceptance, respect and leadership roles assigned by the custom.

In regards to welfare, traditionally women are the daily bread winner of the household and responsible for the household chores like cooking, fetching water, fetching firewood, cleaning the homestead and most importantly farming and this explains why a newly married bride receives allocation of land to till, livestock, a hut/house and personal household property from her husband upon marriage. It is important to note that marriage is a very important aspect of the Karamojong and qualifies women to take up leadership roles.





3.0 BRIEF DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Gender: Is the social attributes associated with being male or female and the relationship between men, women, boys and girls. These attributes are socially constructed and learned and they differ from one community to another.

Sex: Is the biological difference between men and women and cannot be changed, it's God given one is born either a male or female.

Culture: refers to cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, roles, spatial relations acquired by a group of people.

Patriarchy: is a social system whereby there are established and unquestionable rules how society views men and women. In this system, certain customs, values and practices have been established under the customary laws of a given society. Patriarchy gives authority and power to the men.

Religion: is a system of beliefs, values, and practices concerning what a person holds sacred or considers being spiritually significant.

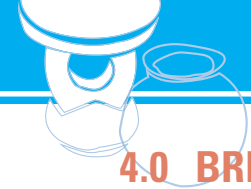
“Esas” is instrument of power and authority given to wives upon proving to the clan that they are trusted by clan. Usually a husband gives this “stick” esas to his wife as a symbol of transition and acceptance into the husband’s clan.

“Akiriket”: Refers to the council of elders, where important decision concerning the welfare of the clan is discussed and women are forbidden from being part of this council.

“Etem”: Fire place where meetings are held and sometimes acts as parliament.

“Ateker”: refers to a small unit of the clan where people who speak dialect and usually live in the same community.





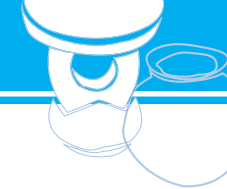
4.0 BRIEF ON COMMUNITIES' PERCEPTION ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP

The perception of the community on the rights of women to participate in leadership has been received with mixed feelings especially when community started to discuss the rights of women and gender equality. This is attributed to the fact that communities of the Itesot and Karamojong are patriarchal societies, where male dominance over power prevails. However, majority of the respondents interviewed agreed that women are entitled to participate in leadership because it is their constitutional right and that they have proved to be better leaders who deliver and are not corrupted easily. They consider women to be just and honest leaders but some respondents expressed their view that women were not created

to be leaders but subordinate to men, sighting the bible that a woman was created from the ribs of a man and that their cultures place leadership roles to men.

Within the cultural leadership of the Itesot, women have stated taking up leadership position of being the Chairpersons of the clans and the Karamojong acknowledge that their women play very instrumental roles in leadership though they do so behind the scenes. For example, one respondent in a KII had this to say “when we men fail to make decisions in the Akiriket, we then call on women to help us.....and most times they (women) come up with best solutions ...this shows how we respect and value our women”.





Currently both communities are beginning to embrace the participation of women in leadership and giving them opportunities. Important to note is that societies' expectation from female leaders is higher and comes with a lot of demands and this has discouraged many women from taking up leadership roles.

The implications of these perceptions to women's participation in leadership

The cultural mindset that women are not created to be leaders affects the participation of those who take up leadership because some members of the community including women always undermine their authority and work, making it difficult for them to deliver as per the expectations of the community.

Religious understanding of the role of women to be in the household affects women's participation in leadership. Even within the religious settings women are not well respected compared to their male counterparts simply because some people have failed to interpret the bible well.

On the other hand, where society has fully embraced women's participation in leadership, the women leaders have been able to make strides as evidenced by the presence of women in top leadership i.e. female District Speaker of Moroto, 2 female Sub-county Speakers (Rupa in Moroto district and Lotome in Napak district).





5.0 STRUCTURES THAT SUPPORT WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY

While we discuss the different structures in the cultural settings that promotes and support participation of women in leadership, it is worth acknowledging that Itesot and the Karamojong have their own cultural Constitutions that outlines key cultural principles that guides the socio-economic and political norms of each community.

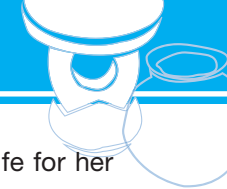
The cultural set up of the Itesots and Karamojong are patriarchal in nature. However, within these patriarchal systems of governance, there are structures that promote participation of women in leadership and plays critical roles for the sustenance of the society most importantly women have been in charge of socialization of the children and custodians

of culture. This therefore implies that women play great leadership roles in the community. Below are some of the institutions and structures that promote the participation of women that if harnessed well can have more women take up leadership roles in society and therefore promote gender equality;

The institution of Marriage

The institution of marriage is very important within the cultural settings of the Itesot and Karamojong most especially for women. This is critical in supporting their roles in leadership because it gives women a sense of identity, respect and value. In these cultures, when a woman is married then she is recognized in the family and therefore can take up leadership roles within the clan system she is married in.





In the Itesot culture, marriage is very important; a married woman can take leadership in the clan especially those that have been given the title of “esas” which traditionally symbolizes the rite of passage from her clan to the husband’s clan that gives her power and authority. Once a woman has been given “esas”, she could not be divorced and has powers to pronounce herself on land matters within the clan. This in itself is a sign that women are trusted with leadership. This woman would be called “Toto esas” and she leads the women in the clan and plays important roles like mediations in the clan and could call for meetings. It is important to note that this title also comes with seniority and character. In addition, a married woman can take the leadership role of the “Ebuku” meaning chairperson of the clan at the lower level of the administrative unit.

Within these societies married women have the right to participate in decision making especially in regard

to resource sharing such as marrying a wife for her son when he is of age.

Marriage within the Karamojong culture qualifies a woman to take up leadership roles and the authority to make decisions regarding the number of cows her husband owns and she is always consulted before any cow is sold or given out as a gift or for marriage. A woman who gets married to an initiated man automatically gets to be a leader and is accorded respect everywhere she goes in the community than any other women whose husbands have not been initiated in the community.

Land is acquired through marriage. A married woman is given land by her husband’s family to cultivate and feed her family as culturally the responsibility of taking care of the family is assigned to women and therefore land is basic asset for cultivation. And during harvesting seasons, women are also given the opportunity and the





right to taste the first harvest with men and the elders. This signifies the important role women play in the society.

The clan

The clan structure offers opportunities for women to participate in leadership. This is very important because it offers opportunity for all women and if practiced and harnessed, not manipulated and abused by male dominance it would promote active participation of women in leadership at all levels. In the Iteso culture women are allowed to take leadership within the clan. The Constitution of the Iteso Cultural Union (ICU) allows women to take leadership positions except for the positions of the Prime Minister and the Emorimor which is preserved for men. Because of this provision, many women in Teso are being elected leaders in their clans “Ebuku”, and for these women to take up cultural leadership

they must be hardworking, developmental, and polite enough to serve the clan. However, to respond to the changing norms and practices in society, all women have been given the same platforms to discuss issues that affect them and they always have female leaders that are shaped in the clan segment system. Important to note is that in these clan structures, women have been entrusted with positions of secretary, treasurer and women representative because their core role is to advise fellow women in the clan. The cabinet of the Emorimor council has two female Ministers; for culture and social services and this greatly puts emphasis on the role of women in preserving culture and looking at the welfare of the community. And at lower levels there are a number of women who are chairpersons and spokespersons of the different clans, these are great strides given the patriarchal nature of the Iteso community.



The Karamoja Elders Association (comprises of men and women above 50 years of age). This association recognizes the significance of women in their community and often women are consulted.

Traditional Functions

Traditionally in the cultures of the Itesot and Karamojong women play very critical roles for examples; women are the ones responsible for child naming ceremonies, they also prepare meals like emuna, angodich, ngikaawo during traditional ceremonies called etal (Karamojong) and it is conducted by married women who have the power to name children and the child has to accept the name given to him/her through suckling of the mother's breast. In Teso, besides naming of children, women also named clans and have been responsible for the many clans present in Teso today. This is significant for promoting leadership and signifies the position/constituency of women within those clans.

In Teso, women were in charge of the “Asapan” rituals like the marriage rites, responsibility over land while in the Karamojong culture, women play significant role during the initiation ceremonies like preparations of meat and local brew called “emootha” and “ngakutukutoi”. Leadership among women is also recognized according to initiation ceremonies and married women are responsible. Women are responsible for distributing meat to the elders and other people during ceremonies.

Traditionally, women took on the role of child nurturing, upbringing and socialization, however, roles differ from culture to culture but in the typical Karamojong setting, it is the woman who builds a home and is responsible for passing on the customs to young ones just like in the Teso culture women are custodians of culture which is a big leadership responsibility and sign of trust given to women and this if utilized well, women can use this position to influence positive changes in the culture that promotes the rights of women.





In Karamoja, women are responsible for appeasing the gods during drought so that the rains can return; It's a ritual only carried out by women; a group of women come together to invoke the gods to bring back the rains through chanting and singing while handling long sticks so that they can have pastures, water for their animals and crops. At the end of this exercise, men slaughter a goat to cleanse the women and to welcome them back to the village. With this it's clear that role of women is crucial to the wellbeing of the population.

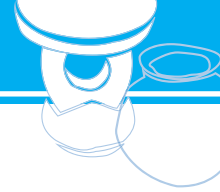
Traditionally in Karamoja and Teso, women mainly play the role of traditional healthcare givers, a leadership role that is well respected and appreciated by their communities. These women led on rituals of appeasing the gods and in many instances their patients healed and this made them very powerful members of the society.

The initiation ceremonies in to the "Akiriket" council for men automatically qualify their wives to be leaders

within the clan and take the hierarchy of their husbands in the community. Women are initiated into womanhood through traditional marriages and a woman whose husband is initiated is more respected than one whose husband is not initiated. This woman takes lead in organizing traditional ceremonies while the rest of the women are not allowed to take part during these ceremonies.

During the peace accord processes, women's role cannot be underscored and this brings out the powerful leadership roles and influence of women. Women played influential role of talking their sons and husbands out of raids and from cattle rustling and in this case the voices of women are heard and obeyed and this saw the decrease/end of cattle rustling. It was reported that during the government disarmament process, women played important roles behind the scenes that saw the success of the operation. At village level, there are peace committees where women are part of.





6.0 THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE TWO REGIONS

Religion has had a significant impact on the social and political lives of the communities of Teso and Karamoja. Religion has contributed to promoting the participation of women in leadership at all levels within the church structures especially for those of the Christian faith but very important and critical is offering education for the girl child which empowers them and offers more opportunities for leadership especially the Catholic Church in Karamoja.

The Islamic faith also recognizes women however; women are given less active roles in the public spheres but rather in the household.

The Christian faith recognizes both men and women and preaches equality and fairness. In these communities,

religion has influenced the cultural way of living in a positive way that allows women to participate in leadership.

What are the principle biblical teachings on women's rights that promotes participation in leadership

The bible is very clear that we are all created in the image of God and therefore this implies that men and women are equal before God and therefore can enjoy the opportunities. The Bible upholds the character of a woman and cherishes an upright woman as a woman of noble character, God-fearing, respectful, hardworking, and cheerful and one who can be a role model in society. They further quote "Proverbs: 32.8





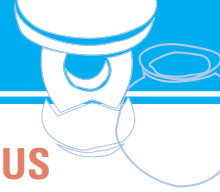
which says a woman who ingrains discipline in her children and brings them in partnership with God”.

The Catholic Church has opened up and given opportunities for women to participate in leadership even where the position was previously held by men only there has been a shift from the Vatican to allow women become catechists and now there are slots for female catechists in every parish and this is being implemented. These catechists provide priestly services to the congregations in hard to reach areas such as animating mass, celebrating the Eucharist and celebrating the holy sacraments such as baptism, anointing of the sick and penance. Within the Catholic Church, women are represented in the parish council and they are pillars of the church, a significant leadership role that cannot be underscored because they (women) leaders can have power and influence in the community that if well

nurtured can influence change that promotes the rights of women given the big constituency they operate in.

The Church of Uganda (Anglicans) and Pentecostal churches have embraced women in different leadership roles within the church. In these congregations women's significant roles in nurturing an upright society is recognized through the different roles women do play for example; women are allowed to be; Provosts, Reverends, Pastors. These are high positions within the church. Women are allowed to participate in leadership roles in all the structures within the church hence promoting their leadership roles.

In Islam, women's leadership roles are recognized. However, this is done under the “amirat”, who is women's leader. Most recently in Teso, circular was sent to the Imam to establish women's desk at the mosque.



7.0 LIMITATIONS WITHIN THE SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES THAT HINDERS THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

The cultural belief that women cannot lead still looms as the majority of men think “men are the heads of households and leaders of the community” and therefore women can’t lead them and in this they make reference to the biblical teachings.

Women leaders are restricted by time because of the gender roles assigned to them within the households (care and domestic work) and this affects their performance because of the demands and family/ society expectations.

There stigma on women leaders, they are undermined and not respected by men and women in some

instances and this affects their performance in leadership because women are seen to be weaker sex.

Majority of the rural women lack self-esteem coupled with high illiteracy levels makes it hard for them to compete/make attempts to take up leadership roles at all levels.

High expectations on women leaders from the community unlike the men, society expects a lot from women leaders.

In karamoja, women’s participation in cultural leadership of the Assembly of Elders “Akiriket” is not recognized and women are not allowed to participate



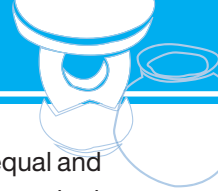


in this council where major decisions concerning the welfare of the people are made.

The misinterpretation of the bible by many people for their selfish gains hinders women's participation in leadership and this has also affected their performance because there is mixed reception of women leaders within the church.

Recommendations

- There is need to sensitize the community on the existing laws on the rights of women to participate in leadership while upholding the positive cultural values.
- Women should be sensitized on the importance of participating in leadership beyond politics and the impact on addressing political and social disparities.. Emphasis should be drawn on women participating in non-affirmative leadership positions.
- Cultural Institutions needs to work with stakeholders including Civil Societies, Development Partners to reinstate positive cultural practices like the “esas” in the Itesot culture because it gives women power to participate in leadership.
- Women should be encouraged to speak up against inequalities perpetrated in the defence of culture.
- Since marriage is a very important aspect of the Itesot and Karamojong, it is important that cultural and religious leaders advocate for formalization of this institution by couples intending to live together.
- Cultural education to the young generation is paramount for sustainability, enforcement of morals, disciplines and generally appreciation by the young men and women.
- Positive cultural practices should be encouraged at all levels because such practices give women positions in which they can be recognized and valued by their communities.
- Cultural leaders/institutions should work together with the government to promote positive cultural



practices that re-affirms women's leadership roles in society to break negative stereotypes and discrimination of women in leadership.

Conclusions

There are best cultural and religious practices that do promote the participation of women in leadership at all levels in the community. With the cultural set up of Teso and Karamoja, women have been engaged in leadership roles in the different aspects of the social life and their contribution is very significant for the survival of their cultures and communities. The role of naming clans and children by women in both cultures signifies the amount of respect given to women and this can be translated to the leadership roles they play and maintaining the cultures.

Religion on the other hand has provided good foundation for women to participate in leadership. The church allows women to take leadership and preaches

to the followers that God created all humans equal and this is being practiced by the Christian faith. Important to note is that in Karamoja, many girls have been sent to school by the missionaries and this has increased their chances of participation in leadership. However, we also acknowledge that there still exist bad cultural and religious practices that hinder the participation of women in leadership. For example, the cultural belief that women are not supposed to sit with men together to discuss the welfare of the communities as practiced by the Karamojong “Akirikit” and even in Teso, some people still believe women cannot be leaders because culture says so. The negative religious practice which has always been referenced to the bible that women were created from the rib of a man and so cannot lead a man still exists in some communities and this has affected the participation and performance of women in leadership.



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