

preferably in their constitution. To them, in other words, it is austerity forever or the end of social Europe.

So far, the European trade union movement has not been able to curb this reactionary policy of liberalisation, privatisation and austerity. It still clings strongly to the social partnership ideology of the post-Second World War period, despite the fact that the class compromise on which this policy was based, has broken down. Right up to the last few years, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) therefore has (like their closely related Social Democratic Parties) actually supported most of

the neo-liberal legislative and institutional development of the EU. Only recently have we seen the beginning of a change of this policy – under pressure from some national trade union confederations, particularly from the south of Europe.

The all-European trade union actions which took place on 14 November 2012 were in this regard promising. At least, nothing like it has ever happened in the history of the European trade union movement. General strikes were organised in six EU member states (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Cyprus and Malta). In addition, more limited strikes were carried out in France and Belgium

– and huge demonstrations and solidarity actions were organised in a number of other countries, including in Central and Eastern Europe. This is the tendency in which Croatian trade unions will have to find their place in order to defend the interests of their members – and thus start the construction of another Europe, a peoples' Europe. ¹⁸

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Fewer women in leadership:

Case of Zimbabwe teacher colleges

Although Zimbabwe has made strides in gender equity there were still some gaps such as those found in leadership positions in teacher training colleges. In these institutions fewer women occupied leadership positions write **Nunurayi Mutyanda** and **Tecla Chido Bvumisani**.

Zimbabwe's literacy rate stands at 90.9% and its education system is one of the best in Africa. In terms of gender, the country has at least 17 pieces of legislation in place that enhances the status of women. Regardless of all these measures, the 2013 Human Development Report produced by the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP) shows that Zimbabwe is not doing very well in various development indicators including gender equality. According to the report, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) for Zimbabwe for 2012 was 0.544 ranking the country at number 116 out of 148 countries covered in the report. A look at the number of women in leadership

positions at the institutions of higher learning, particularly teacher training colleges reveals severe underrepresentation of women in leadership positions.

Zimbabwe has 13 teachers' training colleges. Out of these only two of the principals or vice principals are female. Why is the situation like this? Could it be that

women are under qualified or inexperienced for such positions? This article traces the cause of this situation and will also outline what the state has done and needs to do towards achieving gender equity and equality in the country in general and the education in particular.

GENDER POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

For centuries women were not treated equally to men in many ways. They were not allowed to own property, they did not have a share in the property of their parents, they had no voting rights, and they had no freedom to choose their work or hold senior positions at their workplaces. Gender activists the world over have successfully pressed international agencies to have women accorded their rightful place. As such various international statutes have been promulgated to reduce gender inequality. With countries adopting and ratifying international conventions to remove gender discrimination, Zimbabwe was never left behind.

In a bid to achieve gender equality and gender equity, Zimbabwe signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1991), Beijing Platform of Action (1995), and the 2008 SADC Gender and Development Protocol that advocates for 50:50 gender parity in decision-making positions at all levels of development which Zimbabwe's parliament ratified in 2009.

The Constitution of Zimbabwe section 23 (section 17 in the draft constitution) has also been tailor made to remove all forms of discrimination against women. The country's Labour Relations Act (28:01) also states that, 'no employer should discriminate against any employee on the grounds of race, tribe or place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed

or sex.' As if that was not enough, the country has a fully-fledged Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development established in 2005. To mainstream gender in public service, the 2004 Public Sector Gender Policy was put in place with gender focal points in all ministries and parastatals. Regardless of the existence of all these measures women remain severely underrepresented in leadership positions in institutions of higher learning.

In 1992 measures to increase the participation of women in the public arena and in leadership positions included the promulgation of the Gender Affirmative Action Policy by the government of Zimbabwe. While the policy achieved marked increase in terms of enrolment of female students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, there still remains gender inequality in education management and the country in general. In response, the state set up the Nziramasanga Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training. The commission's findings noted the existence of, among other things, gender disparities at all levels of education. Following the recommendations of the commission, the state showed its commitment towards achieving gender parity in the education sector by launching the National Gender Policy in 2004. One of the objectives of the policy is 'to promote equal opportunities for women and men in decision making in all areas and all levels'.

These enactments had varying impact at different levels of the education system. In his 2011 report on Zimbabwe's human rights situation, Justice and Legal Affairs Minister Patrick Chinamasa noted that, the government's effort to achieve gender parity in higher education enrolment had achieved female enrolment levels of nearly 72% and 63% for primary and secondary teachers' colleges respectively. Polytechnics, at

44.28%, are close to parity whereas universities are nearly at 40% female enrolment.

However, in the area of educational management, women remained glaringly under-represented. Currently there are four female principals at the country's teacher's colleges. Only one is acting as a vice principal. Sports wise, there is only one female sports director in all the 13 teachers colleges representing 7.69% of women in leadership. The number of female lecturers also resembles a sad story. Female lecturers constitute two-fifths of all lecturers at teachers colleges in Zimbabwe. All lecturers (women included) have at least a first degree, the minimum entry level qualification in order for one to become a lecturer (the entry qualification is now a masters degree starting 2012). The lecturers are mostly from the same source, the country's primary and secondary school teachers. This means both men and women have similar experience.

Yet focus on achievements in gender is as the minister rightly pointed out, being measured in terms of female enrolment. This confirms Lynn Davies's argument that in many countries, concerns about gender disparities in education have focused on student enrolment and performance, particularly 'in terms of under-achievement of girls, differences in access at various levels of schooling, dropout rates in subjects taken and these have evoked a range of explanations and policies around gender gaps in educational outcomes'.

Yet, the question of gender disparities in the management structures of colleges has received little attention, despite the fact that, as Marianne Coleman observed: 'There is recognition in education of both the importance of equal opportunity and the strengths that women bring to management.' On that note the common assertion,

that 'women teach and men manage' in educational institutions, still holds true despite a multitude of strategies to rectify the gender imbalance in educational management.

It can be seen from this background that in Zimbabwe, policies and legislations have been put in place designed to address the problem of women's under-representation in positions of educational leadership. However, gender inequality persists.

FACTORS AGAINST WOMEN PROMOTION

In their study of the factors that impede the advancement of women into leadership positions in primary schools in Zimbabwe, Owence Chabaya, Symphorosa Rembe and Newman Wadesango identified low self-esteem and lack of confidence as the major stumbling blocks. This is coupled with the belief that leadership positions are challenging so they are men's domain.

Additionally, women are still sceptical about the leadership of other women. Where there is a female leader, the relationship with other women is characterised by mistrust, suspicion and in extreme cases hatred. There is a general belief that women in leadership are hard on others so other women fear to support them and give them authority over them. In the event of a woman being promoted into a leadership position, other women have a tendency of tracking the new leader's background and social life. The new female leader is discredited on the basis of social traits and not on professional leadership that the woman possesses. This causes reluctance amongst women to apply or take up leadership positions.

Zimbabwean society is inherently patriarchal. Patriarchal beliefs and ideas have been well internalised by the members of the society through socialisation. One of the key beliefs under patriarch is that it

is the responsibility of the female counterpart to nurture the family, that is children the elderly or a sick member of the clan. This is one of the roles that heavily weigh down women who would want to assume leadership positions. It is essentially problematic where the leadership position to be applied for is outside of the family's city. Most men and family members do not support a woman who would choose to leave the family and assume a leadership position in a different location.

The patriarchal tendencies are also seen in the attitude of men towards women. Dashrath Bhuyan in his article titled 'Empowerment of Indian Women: A challenge of 21st century' noted extreme exploitation of women in spite of reservation granted to women in Panchayat elections after 73rd and 74th Constitution amendment. Bhuyan wrote that among the Panchayats the male chauvinism does not allow them to function independently. This is the same scenario with most patriarchal societies of which Zimbabwe is not an exception. Despite the presence of legislation and existing evidence that women are capable of leading like other men, some men still have a belief that leadership positions are men's domain and women should be relegated to the private sphere.

What is also disappointing is the fact that, in many patriarchal societies teaching has long been regarded as a feminine job. As such women have been concentrated in this field. Disappointingly, they are exceedingly outnumbered in terms of staff enrolment at teachers colleges. Worse still they are heavily absent from management positions.

With the constitution prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender and marital status while providing for the application of affirmative action to previously disadvantaged women, there absence of clear affirmative action provisions in the legislation.

Agonisingly, there is equally limited implementation of adherence to these affirmative action policies that actually are in place. There are no set quotas on the number of women that should take up leadership positions. Barriers to the promotion of women into leadership positions could be overcome through the setting aside of particular positions for women.

CONCLUSION

Although feminist campaigns have exploded some myths about women's weakness and inferiority, they are still not found in positions of leadership in colleges of higher education like teachers colleges in Zimbabwe. With approximately 52% of the population in Zimbabwe being female; they are still disproportionately represented in management positions in teachers training colleges and in other decision-making positions. This is so regardless of the fact that there is gender parity at primary school level, and near gender parity at lower secondary level, while the gender parity decreases in upper levels.

With Zimbabwe having a good track record in ratifying key international and regional instruments, there is still need for supporting initiatives to build social cohesion and an enabling environment for women to freely participate in politics. Although there are at least 17 pieces of legislation in place that enhance the status of women, the lack of specific legislative provisions on quotas is a barrier to the increased representation of women in leadership positions. The pieces of legislation of the country are silent on quotas to advance the representation of women. ¹⁸

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