

History of Political Empowerment of Women in Uganda

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Abstract

This paper examines how the women's movement in Uganda will lead to political empowerment of women. This paper investigates the role played by women in political sphere in Uganda. This paper will also focus on the struggle of women and women's movement in politics, which has traditionally been considered as the men's sphere. Moreover, it also investigates the conditions of women in Uganda from pre-colonial to post independence period and changes in the conditions within that time period based on the availability of secondary data. This research is done to throw light on the origin and role of women's movement in Uganda and its achievements in terms of political empowerment of women. Available literature is insufficient to explain that whether it is due to the pressure of women's movement that Museveni had to give space to women in politics or there were other reasons too.

Using the data collected from various sources such as articles, books, Government of Uganda reports, it will find that women's movement leads to empowerment of women in political sphere to the extent that Uganda's quota design has set an inspiring model for other quota adopter countries in the region. In the central and eastern Africa region alone, Sudan, Burundi, South Sudan, Eritrea, Kenya, Djibouti, Zimbabwe, and Somalia have followed Uganda's quota adoption in 1989 and reserved seat quotas were introduced in their majoritarian parliaments (Clayton, Josefsson & Wang: 2016). Hence, it was an early quota adopter country. This research would encourage the women's movements in economic and social sphere. Because it is evident from this study that if oppressed people are aware about their rights and if they are able to organize themselves in a group to put pressure on the government for their rights then they can achieve it.

Introduction:

In 1989, Uganda became one of the first nations in the world to provide women-reserved parliamentary seats. Uganda has reserved seats for women in legislators since 1989, although they are also permitted to run against men for open seats. Because Uganda was an early adopter, so its quota design served as an example for other quota adopters in the region. After Uganda enacted reserved seat quotas in its majoritarian parliament in 1989, Burundi, Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, and Zimbabwe followed suit in the central and eastern African region (Clayton, Josefsson & wang, 2016: 2). Elite women continued to have political influence before the thirteenth century, when clans became the predominant type of political organisation. Women ruled the country as kabaka or king in the thirteenth century, but as the state-building process between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries got under way, things drastically changed for women's position in politics in Buganda. Furthermore, when polygamy increased in the nineteenth century, women's participation in politics continued to drop. It is a reality that affluent women had access to political posts in pre-colonial Uganda. Uganda became a British protectorate

in 1894, which brought about changes to the socio-political structure. Along with the king's and the clan chiefs' authority decreasing, the political function of royal women in Uganda also suffered. Additionally, it was at this period that Christian missionaries, businesspeople, and the spouses of colonial administrators founded the first women's voluntary associations. As time went on, numerous organisations with various goals for empowering women could be seen emerging in history. The early organisations aimed to develop in women the leadership qualities that would be essential to increasing their participation in public life. Women's interests were promoted in the early years of independence by women's organisations.

However, under Obote's administration, a small demoralising change took place. When Idi Amin took control in 1971, all forms of resistance, including women's organisations, were outlawed. Female representation in Parliament decreased throughout this time, going from 4% in the years 1955–1958 to 1% in the years 1980–1986 (Ballington, 2004: 39). After the country's independence, the women did not begin to receive recognition in the political sector for around 30 years. When the National Resistant Movement (NRM) came to power with the election of Museveni in 1986, it became the turning point for women. Prior to 1986, the representation of women barely went above 4%. The quota system is principally responsible for the sharp increase since 1989. However, as soon as Uganda's quota policy went into effect, men assumed responsibility for selecting the qualified women to fill the vacant seats. This was partly because the formal politics into which women were being pushed was mainly a male sphere. It was partly because women at the time did not make a significant political grassroots effort that would have helped to strengthen their victories. In addition, research by Tamale (1999) found that more than 90% of the women who entered the parliament in 1989 had been approached by male elders to persuade them to run for office. However, the government's pro-women policies and campaigns for women's empowerment assisted in eradicating this pattern in later elections (Tamale, 2003). Currently, most women don't hesitate when it comes to getting engaged in political activity. Finally, with the adoption of the Ugandan Constitution in 1995 and the Local Government Act in 1997, women gained more than just the legal and constitutional freedom to take part in politics. But it also significantly contributed to the strengthening of their political position. Because of this, the percentage of women in parliament climbed from 17.6% in 1989 to 19% in 1996 (Tripp, 2000). In 2014, women representation in parliament had reached to 35%. Therefore, the political empowerment¹ of women under the NRM has its roots in a previous phase of activity that started around the 1940s, when they started to form national organisations in Uganda, to seek the progress of women, and which has been going on since the 1940s in one way or another.

Conditions of women in precolonial era:

Men were employed in the prestigious and highly skilled fields of bark fabric, tanning, pottery, canoe making, and ironworking in the Buganda and Toro kingdoms (Reid, 2002: 97). Women were typically not allowed to work in these fields. Men were also in charge of the majority of regional and local trade in ivory, slaves, and handcraft goods and women were not allowed to leave the house or engage in trade (Roscoe, 1911). According to Hattersley (1908), Roscoe (1911), Wrigley (1957), and Perlman (1966), women were primarily responsible for caring for the children, providing water and firewood, and caring for food crops inside the limits of the home. According to Reid (2002: 89), domestic basket and mat weaving are the only occupation open to women in Buganda. Women were submissive to men in the two

¹ “Political empowerment refers to the process of transferring various elements of power (resources, capabilities, and positions) to those who do not have it and it requires inclusion in democratic decision-making processes” (Budryte, 2014).

communities (Perlman, 1966), and societal norms restricted women's movement² and outward appearance (Roscoe, 1911; Kyomuhendo and McIntosh, 2006). According to John Speke, a British explorer who travelled to Uganda in 1862 in search of the source of the Nile, there is nothing called as marriage, King distributed the women based on merit or rank, and if someone had a beautiful daughter, she was given away as an appropriate gift even though the woman was not regarded as property (Briggs, 2007).

However, Roscoe noted that in Toro and Buganda societies, marriage was fixed by parents or other senior members, ensuring chastity, future bride-wealth, and labour power because marriage was viewed more in terms of the clan than the nuclear family (Roscoe, 1911, Perlman, 1966, Hastings, 1973, Banja, 2013). According to Taylor (1958), marriages between members of the same clan as one's parents were prohibited for both men and women in Buganda, thus, prohibited inter-family and inter-clan marriages. According to Hastings (1973), the traditional marriage process included the potential groom's application, the parents' approval, the transfer of bridewealth, the ceremonies surrounding the transfer of the bride, and the official cohabitation of the couple. Males were frequently sent to the kabaka's court to obtain training outside the house, while, indigenous education for girls was provided by their mothers, preparing them for adulthood in their homes (Fallers, 1964). The patrilocal and patrilineal cultures of Buganda and Toro implied that the bride should live with or close to the husband's family after marriage and children should be recognised by the patrilineage. As a result, the males and the elderly held the majority of the power in these homes. In both communities, polygamy was common, which worsened the situation of royal women but, peasant wives had more personal freedom than royal wives because their husbands typically could only afford one wife and relied completely on her. Peasant women also did not require escorts while travelling, unlike royal women, and may flee to their relatives if their husbands mistreated them (Schiller, 1990: 458). But much like common women, women of the ruling class were prohibited from engaging in clientelistic relationships and were not permitted to inherit any chieftain's property. Prior to the Baganda conquest, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Teso, both men and women attended and participated in clan meetings, but women were not permitted to attend interclan meetings. Women could attend meetings if they were regarded safe (Webster et al., 1973: 130). The most significant female position was that of the *apolon ka etale*, the woman in command of rituals that governed clan taboos. She was the oldest woman in the clan. Her responsibility was to ensure that newlyweds were introduced into clan taboos; this gave her authority over the clan's women and children (Webster et al., 1973: 107-8, 169). Even among the communities that merged to form the Acholi, where descent was traced through male lineage, women could claim the throne (Atkinson, 1978: 139). This suggests that, in pre-colonial Buganda and Toro, women's socio-economic status within the family and society was far from equitable when compared to men.

Political conditions of women during pre-colonial era:

The participation of women in public life throughout the pre-colonial era varies with region. Clan systems were popular prior to the thirteenth century. Female chiefs were common in Ankole during the pre-colonial

² According to Meyer and Tarrow (1998) and Jenkins and Form (2005), Women's movements, as a subgroup of social movements, have several traits. These group challenges can take on a variety of shapes, ranging from primarily cultural and embodied expressions of demands for change (or opposition to change), to traditional pressure-group tactics of access and influence, to confrontational and disruptive protests – often used simultaneously in the context of specific campaigns.

era (Maddox, 1946). Murogo, a well-known diviner, was assigned to serve as a spy for the king (mugabe) Rwebishengye on the Banyoro (Morris, 1957: 3-4). Other Bantu or Nilotic clans were not like the Iteso clans. Women never completely disappeared from political leadership among the Acholi or the other Nilotic communities in northern Uganda, in contrast to the Iteso (Atkinson, 1978: 138). Acholiland had female leaders in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (Atkinson, 1978: 160). However, upon the establishment of kingdoms, the monarch (rwot) gave the throne to his eldest son. In a few places, such as Puranga, women were allowed to become rwots, when the son was too young to govern at the time of the king's death in the mid-1800s (Atkinson, 1978: 580-1; Onyangoku-Odongo and Webster, 1976: 150). Women have ruled as Kabaka (Kings) in the Bugandan empire, according to Aili Mari Tripp, probably since the 13th century. They also held important positions as the Kings' mothers and sisters within the four different kingdoms, and the King did not interfere with their authority (Tripp, 2002). Despite the fact that most of this early history is semi-mythical, Sir John Grey asserts that there is a wealth of evidence to support his assertion. Naku, the daughter of Mukibi, the Lugave clan's progenitor, was one such ruler. She wed Kimera, who is credited with founding the kingdom of Buganda in the 13th or 14th century (Kaggwa, 1971; Ray, 1991: 98). However, Kimera's primary claim to power was that he had married the daughter of a monarch, according to Grey (Grey, 1934: 267; Kaggwa, 1971: 16-17), who contends that she was the de facto ruler. The war between the Baganda and the Banyoro at Mpigi, which the Baganda lost, gave rise to the fame of the Baganda queen Nanono, the wife of Kabaka Nakibinge (1494–1524). She united the Baganda warriors after learning that the monarch had been killed in battle and stopped additional casualties. After that, she governed the nation for eighteen months and had she given birth to a boy, she would have been named Kabaka (Grey, 1934: 267; Kaggwa, 1971: 28). When Princess Nassolo led her brothers in a revolt against the cruel ruler Kagulu (1674–1704). She assassinated Kagulu and chose Kagulu's successor (Kaggwa, 1971: 62–6).

Two of the three people who could be addressed as kabaka or king were female: the queen mother (namasole) and the queen sister (lubuga), the king's half-sister who served as the queen during his installation. Together with the princesses, they possessed significant political influence informally due to their lineage positions. The princesses, who were ladies descended from kings, as well as the senior spouses of the kabaka (Schiller, 1990: 462, 472). According to Grey (1934), the namasole and lubuga possessed her own court, estates, and held authority similar to that of the monarch. Princesses did, however, continue to enjoy a few of rights, such as the ability to possess land. Although they were not formally allowed to marry or have children until the 1800s, they were spared from several limitations that were placed on other women. This prevented their descendants from inheriting the kingship. In fact, only members of the royal family descended from the father were permitted to succeed to the Buganda kingdom (Musisi, 1991: 77; Roscoe, 1911: 232).

Despite the aforementioned instance, clans or lineages within them were able to attain political power through clientelism, also known as client politics, which is the exchange of goods and services for political support, frequently involving an implicit or explicit quid pro quo. Women were kept out of direct participation in political life due to their exclusion from clientelism and their dependence on their husbands. Only men could sign up as clients, and women could only get land through their fathers or husbands. Women weren't allowed to inherit or own land until the early 20th century. In this early time, women's ability to negotiate land claims from men depended on their capacity to carry out numerous responsibilities, such as childrearing and farming (Musisi, 1991: 757–62; Sacks, 1979: 208–10). It is said that the process of state formation, which accelerated from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries,

involved the progressive abolition of clan authority and the ascent of the king's (kabaka) power. According to Grey, women's political status in Buganda appears to have undergone significant changes, beginning to decline between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries when states began to develop (Grey, 1934: 266). Women lost their claims to political leadership as a result of the practise of elite polygyny, which considerably increased in the nineteenth century and constituted an essential component of the process of state building.

Thus, before the middle of the 19th century, the queen mother of Uganda had been a part of a system of gendered political authority in which the mother of the King had independent authority, which she used to restrain the king's excesses and protect the country, including the right to enthrone or remove a king and to control the actions of the king in power. However, the economic, political, and military developments of the second half of the 19th century were already undermining the wealth and authority of the queen mother and the kabaka's senior wife. As a result, this shows that although initially royal women could hold political positions in the pre-colonial era when clans were the predominant form of political organisation, clentalism and polygamy affected their position in the later pre-colonial period (Kaggwa, 1971: 121; Musisi, 1991: 782-6).

Conditions of women during colonial era:

Socio economic conditions of women during colonial era:

Nothing much changed in the early years of the colonial period. In Buganda, as in the majority of other ethnic groups, males took care of the animals in pastoral economies, supplied shelter and clothing, and carried out the strenuous task of clearing the bush before planting. While women were in charge of raising, processing, and cooking the staple foods such root crops, bananas, and the vegetables used in sauces. Men produced bar fabric, hunted and, in some areas, fished, while women also constructed mats, baskets and other home items (Robertson & Klein, 1983).

Early in the colonial era, relatively few women engaged in any income-generating activity, and those that did so only in a very small number of areas. According to historians of Baganda culture, taking a woman outside the house to shop or conduct business was formerly a taboo (McIntosh & Kyomuhendo, 2006: 57). The male member was in charge of meeting the family's financial demands. Despite the fact that women produced the majority of the food and occasionally the crafts items also that were traded by men. The bartering or selling was done by their husbands or other male relatives (Uzoigwe, 1972: 422). Due to physical danger and cultural restrictions against their journey, women did not engage in trade involving manufactured goods or long-distance travel (Mair, 1934). The only partial exceptions were a few royal princesses who organised trading expeditions to the seashore early in the century but do not to participate personally. Again, this is in stark contrast to urbanised areas of West Africa in the early 20th century, where women made up the majority of market vendors in big regular marketplaces and participated in some long-distance trading (Ekechi, 1995:41). Being an Ayah was the only domestic position available to a few women during the early colonial era. As a result, the first medically linked profession available to African women was midwifery. A small number of women worked in the salt industry in Bunyoro as well (Kyomuhendo and McIntosh, 2006). But as the Christian missionaries started to come, they made education a priority right away. In British Africa after 1894, Christian conversion and enrollment in mission schools flourished like nowhere else (Oliver, 1952: 184; Hastings, 1994: 464-78; Ward, 1999). Both Roman Catholics and Protestants provided girls with some form of education. However, mainly boys received the formal education offered in schools. Church Missionary Society (CMS)

missionaries began their work in 1877, the Catholic White Fathers began their work in 1879 and Anglican bishops paid particular attention to the education of women (Brown, 1981: 107).

Girls' boarding schools were also built. During the colonial period, girls were primarily educated to become good brides to educated men (Tamale, 1999), although mission schools sought out both girls and boys as students. Between 1910 and 1938, more than a third of all primary school students (Catholic and Protestant) were girls (Frankema, 2012). CMS encouraged educated young women to enter professions such as teaching, midwifery, and nursing gradually and subtly. Later, women worked in hospitals, managed pharmacies, and taught. The majority of the ethnic groups in Uganda embrace polygamous practises (McIntosh & Kyomuhendo, 2006:66). Throughout the colonial period, customary marriage and the bridewealth system persisted and usually preceded and succeeded a Christian ring marriage (Hastings, 1973; Hansen, 1984).

The majority of women's lives altered relatively little between 1940 and 1962. Male dominance in the home was undermined as a result of altered economic patterns, such as the expansion of cash crops, an increase in commerce and marketing, and the introduction of some Ugandan men into shopkeeping. Girls were encouraged to pursue higher education at this period as well. After World War II, Ugandan women were able to enrol in higher education (McIntosh & Kyomuhendo, 2006:95). The majority of women were receiving education, participating in framing clubs and community organisations, but they were mostly excluded from participation in politics and governance (McIntosh & Kyomuhendo, 2006: 87).

Political conditions of women during colonial era:

In some areas, women continued to participate in public affairs during the early colonial period. Women played important but specifically defined roles in various clan activities, religion, and healing in several regions, such as Teso and Acholi. They also have political functions in these realms. At the turn of the century, female chiefs and spiritual visionaries were common in Ankole, and a woman later held the position of sub-county chief. In Bunyoro, the queen sister served as the king's advisor and served a specific ritual function as well as a specialised role in resolving political conflicts. Female members of the extended royal family of Buganda had traditionally been given significant ceremonial and practical responsibilities (McIntosh and Kyomuhendo, 2006: 74).

The Uganda Agreement of 1900, was concluded between the British and the kabaka to recognise the kabaka as the ruler of Buganda as soon as the Uganda became British protectorate in 1894. The Lulciiko, a loosely organised group of notables and leaders, was to serve as his indirect means of governance over the province. Thus, a tribal council. The namasole of the Kabaka Daudi Chwa was to be paid an allowance during her lifetime, but this allowance was to be stopped for future queen mothers. However, the lubuga was not mentioned in the 1900 Agreement and the namasole received only rare mention. Similar agreements were reached with Bunyoro, Toro, and Ankole kingdoms. None of them granted female royal family members, who had previously played specific political functions, such as the queen mother and the official sister of the monarch, any recognition or power (Apter, 1961: 109–113). Thus, British control successfully eroded and deprived the namasole and lubuga's political positions of their significance.

During the early colonial period, the royal women's access to their own estate, chiefs, courts, and influence over policy was severely limited. Nevertheless, some wives still give their husbands informal advise, and women were part of a sizable and diverse coalition of Baganda who complained to the government about the distribution of mailo land in 1924 (McIntosh & Kyomuhendo, 2006: 74). However, not only royal ladies had their duties reduced at this time. Additionally, the kabaka's and the clan chiefs' power was

also reduced. In reality, Julia Kibubura, the lone female gombolola chief nominated by the British government, was from Ankole (Morris, 1957: 3).

According to Sylvia Tamale, the British colonisation of Uganda is responsible for women's delayed entry into politics. With a Victorian, male-dominated style of government, the woman's function being secondary to the man, which was imported by Christian missionaries and British rulers. Where there was a marked separation between the public and private spheres, the male operated in the public and the female in the private. In the past, Tamales claims, there was no clear distinction between these divisions in Ugandan society (Tamal, 1999). The primary goal of the female missionaries and colonisers in Uganda was to educate Ugandan women so that they would become better wives for their Westernised African husbands (Tripp & Kwesiga, 2002:23). However, a degree at the A-standard level or its equivalent is required in order to join the Parliament (Ballington, 2004).

Women's movement during colonial period (1897-1962):

After Uganda became a British Protectorate in 1894, Christian missionaries and the wives of colonial officials and merchants launched the early women's volunteer organisations, such as the Protestant Mothers' Union, which was established in 1906 in Budo by British missionary wives. It was made open to Ugandan women in 1908, most of whom were the wives of male students of King's College, Budo (Bell, 1960: 339) and Promoting Christian values in marriage, childrearing, and Christian living were among its primary goals. The Uganda Women's League then in 1930s and 1940s got involved in setting up nursery schools, training nursery school teachers and erecting maternity wings in hospitals. In 1946, this work served as the foundation for the creation of the Uganda Council of Women (Tripp, 2000:34). McIntosh & Kyomuhendo (2006:98) noted that the UCW, which sprang out of the Mother's Union's Young Wives section, was committed to defending women's rights. Thus, when the Uganda Council of Women (UCW) was founded in 1946, the struggle to advance women's rights truly began. It is true that the majority of its participants were English speaking and that its African members were mainly educated Baganda women working as teachers or community development workers. However, the UWC promoted issues affecting women among its members and had a political goal. For instance, the group advocated for changes to the rules governing marriage, divorce, and inheritance during the latter half of the 1950s and 1960s by publishing booklets in English and regional languages and hosting conferences on property and domestic law. (White, 1973: 47; Brown, 1988: 20).

In 1952, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) was established. It began as an effort to address the primary school dropout issue that emerged in the 1940s following the implementation of a new educational system. The YWCA was also engaged in providing leadership training, pushing for changes to the divorce and marriage laws, advocating for women's rights, delivering citizenship education, and working on health, education, and agricultural initiatives (Tripp, 2000:35). These early women's organisations were resisted by some African men because they pulled women out of their homes and into the groups for training and discussion of the common problems (McIntosh, & Kyomuhendo, 2006:96). As a result, these early associations were stepping stones for the growth of women.

These organisations also helped women develop the leadership abilities that were essential to increasing their participation in public life. One of the founding members of the Mothers' Union, the Uganda Council of Women, and the YWCA, Yemina Kabogozza Musoke, for instance, explained in an interview that her involvement in these organisations helped her personally by increasing her awareness of the broader issues facing women in society and the connection between women's problems at home and in society (Tripp,

2000: 35). Musoke's participation in these groups also taught her public speaking skills. She discovered that she had learned to defend herself when challenged after attending conferences both domestically and abroad. According to Nakanyike Musisi, the education of women in missions served two incompatible purposes. It was designed to assist women in performing their roles as mothers, spouses, and home guardians more effectively while also introducing them to new vocations and financial opportunities. Many women gained a self-awareness during this process that went much beyond the limitations imposed by the educational system. As a result, the early clubs and organisations for women had both restrictive and liberating aspects.

The emergence of consciousness led to women beginning to speak out by taking part in various public activities. For instance, two Bagandan women who joined eight men in 1949 to deliver a list of complaints to the Kabaka was one of the first significant political acts or movements (Tripp, 2000: 36). A group that emerged from the Mothers' Union to conduct an anti-colonial protest against the deportation and exile of the kabaka by the British in 1953, was another significant political action or movement by Ugandan women. In order to demand information from the kabaka, two busloads of women travelled to the office of Uganda's prime minister in January 1954. In June, a sizable group of women travelled to Entebbe to inform the governor that they opposed his actions as mothers, wives, and dutiful Ugandan citizens. According to Musisi, the 1955 campaign that was successful in getting the kabaka back to Uganda marked a turning point in the history of Bagandan women. Women gained knowledge, courage, self-confidence, organisational abilities, and contacts from the demonstration that they would utilise in their future struggles (McIntosh & Kyomuhendo, 2006: 97).

In a different instance, a few Baganda women attempted to vote in legislative council elections in the 1950s even though they were not permitted to do so or hold official positions. Eight women ran unsuccessfully for seats in the Lukiiko while campaigning against the limits, but when their attempts to win the chieftaincies from the kabaka failed, they were left with no political activity outside of minor positions in the municipal governments. In fact, a large number of the first female legislators had served as UCW leaders. Out of a total of 60 members, Barbara Saben and Alice Boase were proposed as the first women representatives in the Legislative Council (Legco). The first African woman nominee for the Legco was Pulma Kisosonkole in 1956, who was followed by Sarah Nyendwoha (Ntiro) in 1958 (McIntosh & Kyomuhendo, 2006).

At a significant conference of women's organisations in 1960, topics such as bride wealth, property, and inheritance, succession rights, marriage legislation, women in public life, and the right to work for women were discussed. Abolition of the customary bride price, women's education, women's property rights, and succession rights were among the resolutions adopted during the meeting. For instance, in one resolution, regardless of whether she had children, the widow was to inherit a sizable portion of her husband's estate, which included the house and the land it was linked to, so long as she did not remarry. The administration was also asked to focus right away on developing facilities for girls to pursue post-primary and secondary education, particularly in places where such facilities were lacking. Both in the local and English-language press and radio gave the meeting a lot of coverage (Mwaka, 1996:455).

The Uganda Council of Women (UCW), established in 1946, took the lead in advancing the cause of women early in 1962 by working with the Ministry of Information to distribute leaflets that addressed women's issues prior to independence (Kimala, 1988: 26). These issues included the need for girls to have access to education, for more short-term courses and scholarships for mature women, for more vocational opportunities for women, for more and better hospitals and maternity care facilities, and for women to

have equal opportunities in public life (Akello, 1982: 11). As independence draws closer, UCW aimed to provide women with the skills necessary to influence public opinion and governmental policies that impacted women, families, and the home. Women also applied pressure on the nascent political parties to appoint women to offices and place women's issues on their agenda (White, 1973). Only a small portion of their efforts were successful. When the Democratic Party (DP), for instance, released a policy statement in 1986, it emphasised the value of women to the growth of the nation but ended with the tepid pledge that "we will appoint women as ministers if any are able and willing" (McIntosh and Kyomuhendo, 2006:98). These groups including religious ones were crucial in empowering women with the knowledge and abilities to take political action on matters that mattered to them. The Mothers' Union, the Uganda Council of Women, the YWCA, and the Forward Society, among others, are reported to have helped all female politicians today get the experience they needed to enter politics (Tripp, 2000: 36).

Women's movement in Uganda after independence

Visram and Lubega were nominated to the National Assembly (Parliament) as representatives of Buganda as a result of the pressure of UCW during the general elections in April 1962, while Makumbi sat in the East African Legislative Assembly until 1977. Apart from Visram and Lubega, whom the Buganda Lukiiko delegation sent to the National Assembly in 1962, no women had seats in parliament from 1962 until the NRM came to power in 1986 (White, 1973: 223). Women's organizations' request for seats reserved for women in the National Assembly was later denied by Prime Minister Milton Obote in 1964 (White, 1973: 226).

Even the three previous constitutions of Uganda—the ones from 1962, 1966, and 1967—do not explicitly recognise the equality of gender in the exercise of civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights. In addition, the constitutions did not address gender equality when it came to exercising these rights and did not include any other institutions, apart from the courts of law, for enforcement of human rights, particularly in relation to gender inequality. Even worse, policy makers and implementers had no policies in place to address gender-related development concerns such as service delivery and awareness (Mushemeza, 2009).

Hence, at independence that is in 1962, there were 2: 88 female: male ratio in parliament, whereas in 1967 there were no women members in parliament. UWC therefore intended to exert pressure on the government for the benefit of women, but by the time they took action, Obote's government had been ousted by Idi Amin in 1971. Women's organisations were prohibited by Idi Amin when he came to power in 1971 (Tamale, 1999: 15), and they didn't reappear until Obote's second government (1980–1985). Statistics show that female representation in Parliament decreased throughout this time, from an already low proportion of 4% in the years 1955–1958 to a meagre 1% during the years 1980–1986 (Ballington: 2004: 39). Rhoda Kalema and Geraldine Bitamazire briefly served in parliament during this time, and Theresa Odongo-Oduka only served from 1980 to 1985, thanks to the efforts of numerous women's organisations (White, 1973: 223). Thus, out of 143 members of parliament in 1980, Teddy Oduka was the only female.

Hence, A small autonomous women's movement started forming connections with worldwide women's organisations around the time of the NRM takeover in 1986 and tried to adopt drastically different objectives. Fortunately, several of the top organisations for women's rights, including Action for Development (ACFODE), had started mobilising at a crucial time shortly before the NRM takeover. This meant that the NRM had already planned their programme for advancing women into important political

positions and giving them the opportunity to advocate for other crucial demands when they got to power. After the NRM took office in January 1986, they started to mobilise women and stepped up their attempts to apply pressure. The NRM didn't have a specific programme to address women's issues in the beginning. Women aren't even included in Museveni's Ten Point Programme, which is the NRM Manifesto (Tripp, 2000: 68). But soon after the NRM took power in 1986, 20 representatives from the National Council of Women (NCW), ACFODE, and other NGOs made President Museveni a courtesy call and handed him a memo calling for the inclusion of women in positions of leadership in the government. Eight out of 75 ministers were female in 1989, and several of these recommendations were quickly implemented, including the appointment of nine female ministers.

In addition to that, Women had gained a great deal of respect as a result of their involvement in the guerilla war against Obote's soldiers from 1980 to 1985, which had helped them establish themselves as a force to be taken seriously. Museveni grew to view women as a political advantage in creating his no-party movement, believing that their support was essential to the regime's success. In order to promote their leadership at all LC (local council) system levels and encourage them to form clubs at the LCI level, NRM reserved one seat for a women's secretary at each level of council. In regions that the NRM controlled, such Luwero, this was already the practise during the guerilla struggle. However, several individuals were worried that women would be underrepresented in this one seat after the NRM took power. Because of this, fresh groups like Action for Women in Development (ACFODE) fought vehemently for a clause allowing women to run for all posts on the LCs (Ankrah, 1996: 21).

Additionally, women achieved significant progress in parliament, partly as a result of the NRM reserving special seats for women in parliament beginning in 1989 in response to pressure from female leaders. Following years of conflict and political instability, the quota policy was the product of both lobbying by women's organisations and political concerns on the part of the ruling NRM. 34 seats in the National Resistance Council (parliamentary) were reserved for women in the 1989 elections; two of the women, Rhoda Kalema and Victoria Sekitoleko, won their seats in open competitions against male candidates, three women were nominated by the President, and two were historical members, appointed because of their involvement in the guerrilla war waged by the National Resistance Army. As a result, women won 41 (17%) of the seats in parliament in the 1989 elections. 52 women (19%) held parliamentary seats in 1996, 39 of which were reserved for women.

Reserved seats, one of the most significant outcomes of the women's movement, gave women the exposure, political experience, and self-assurance to run unopposed in general elections. In the 1994 elections for the Constituent Assembly, 36 women competed directly against male candidates, and nine of them won seats (three in the Mukono district alone and three in Busoga). In total, 52 women made up the Constituent Assembly, accounting for 18% of the assembly's members. In the 1996 parliamentary elections, only 26 women ran for open seats, but eight of them were elected. Although expanding the number of women in political leadership positions has been a priority of the women's movement, women have also successfully battled for wider acceptability of female leadership and participation in many other fields that have historically been closed to them. Along with increased political representation and engagement, pressure from women's organisations has compelled the Museveni administration to take national women's issues into account in ways that previous administrations had not.

The expansion of the women's movement's goal to push for significant legislative reforms after the mid-1980s was one of its major successes. This was made feasible primarily because the movement maintained its independence, unlike under prior governments. The entire procedure leading up to the passage of the

1995 Constitution included participation from women's organisations. These initiatives led to the adoption of significant measures for the political empowerment of women in the Constitution. In accordance with Article 78(1) of the 1995 Constitution, there shall be one woman representative for each district in the parliament. According to Article 180 (2b) of the 1995 Constitution, women must make up one-third of any local government council's membership. Women are elected to council positions in particular constituencies.

Women still experience prejudice on a socioeconomic basis, despite some political empowerment. Therefore, women's organisations in Uganda continue to push for an egalitarian society. The women's movement in Uganda has finally seen the passing of two bills that address better women's rights and discrimination in 2021 after decades of urging for women's rights. The Succession Bill, which was passed, addressed the discrimination that women face when it comes to inheritance and land ownership. The former legal system had gaps, and the male kid received property ownership by inheritance. Now that the gaps have been filled, all kids, regardless of gender, are given the property. The Employment Bill's passage aims to outlaw sexual harassment in the workplace. In accordance with the bill, "all employers are now required to put measures in place to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, and to prohibit abuse, harassment, or violence against employees." The bill also offers assistance to unpaid domestic employees whose job is now formally recognised (The Borgen project, 2021). Although the Ugandan women's movement has made tremendous progress in reducing gender inequality and enhancing women's rights, the movement will continue to fight for additional rights and address the problem of gender-based violence. Furthermore, there is cause for optimism that the women's movement in Uganda will keep advancing given its recent momentum.

Status of women after Independence:

Socio- economic conditions of women after Independence:

According to Mushemeza (2009:168), the common perception of women in Uganda was quite conventional and constricting until the changing times of the mid-1980s. Mothers and wives were considered to be the primary roles for women. Women were traditionally responsible for taking care of the home and family. Women were typically not viewed as public performers or public decision-makers. Therefore, a woman's status can be determined by her position of authority and power inside the family as well as by the respect she enjoys from other family members and the community. UN HABITAT (2016: 7) adds that women may feel powerless in Ugandan society due to a number of issues, such as social norms and practises that limit their ability to fully participate in the workforce, unequal gender pay gaps, and various obstacles in both women's professional and personal lives. In addition, while social and cultural standards vary from region to region within Uganda, they frequently restrict the chances for both women and girls, denying them equal rights and participation. Certain cultural customs were found to be contradictory to modernity, health, and development goals. These included the practise of pushing young girls into marriage, the payment of bride prices, their commercialization, and the negative connotations they carry, the customs surrounding widow inheritance, female circumcision, and the restriction of certain nutrient-rich foods for women and children (Matembe, 2002:65).

Despite Uganda's significant efforts to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, including the 1995 Constitution, the Local Government Act of 1997, the National Gender Policy of 1997, and others, women and girls continue to confront several obstacles nationwide. According to UN HABITAT (2016:10), a large majority of women continue to work in sex-stereotyped occupations that are frequently

more hazardous, fragile, and poorly compensated than those of males. Additionally, for jobs of equivalent importance, gender wage inequalities still exist. Women are hence disproportionately affected by the lack of suitable work and consequent poverty as compared to men. Additionally, women are still restricted from owning enterprises and productive resources like land and credit (UBOS, 2015:98). This can result in dead capital, that stem from the fact that many women lack the legal ability to utilise their property as security. This not only results in the unequal economic rights of women but also causes economic inefficiency. Women's employability and earning potential are hampered by their marginalisation in the development of skills, access to financial resources, work in non-agricultural industries, and inheritance rights (UBOS, 2015:74). The development of women's entrepreneurial skills and mentorship initiatives for girls are prioritised in new strategies to fight this (UBOS, 2015: 201).

Concerns regarding laws that discriminate against them in a number of areas, including property ownership, marriage, separation, divorce, child custody, and inheritance, have also been expressed in the family sector. It was recognised that women were frequently denied the right to possess property in the society. Before marriage, a woman's family owned all she owned; after marriage, everything belonged to the husband and his family or clan. Even when there was no son in the family, daughters were not permitted to inherit from their dads. In some societies, the widow was viewed as 'property' that may be inherited as a portion of the estate (Mushemeza, 2009: 169).

At this point, discrimination against girls was also seen in the educational field. Education for guys has always been preferred. Girls were the first to be pulled out of school when parents couldn't raise enough money. Particularly among young women, unemployment rates are higher than those of young men. In comparison to men in the same age range, three times as many young women were categorised as "Neither in Education nor Employment nor Training" (UNDESA, 2015). This is partially a result of unequal access to education and skill development, early marriage rates among young women, and duties related to unpaid care and household work (UNDP, 2016). In addition, low levels of education lead to vulnerable employment and poor salaries (UBOS, 2015). As a result, women's limited access to education and productive resources limits their capacity to earn money and act as agents of development by limiting their ability to contribute to economic growth.

Women in Uganda continued to experience discrimination until 2021 in matters of inheritance and land ownership. Prior legislation gave precedence to boys' children. Widows were frequently forced to leave their houses by their families. Many women in Uganda were destitute and exposed to assault since they were unable to own land or earn a living. The 2016 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey found that more than a fifth of Ugandan women between the ages of 15 and 49 had suffered some type of sexual violence. Additionally, sexual violence affects 13% of women in the same age bracket every year. There was little safety for women in marriage when there was no law to control marriage and divorce. Although the Ugandan Constitution "provides that the minimum legal age for marriage for both men and women is fixed at 18 years," customary customs in rural regions permit child brides. As a result of early marriage and pregnancy, girls drop out of school at higher rates. Additionally, although polygamy was permitted by these customary laws, polygamous women were not protected in case of divorce. The Domestic Violence Act and the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act were both passed in 2010 in the country. The Domestic Violence Act punishes the perpetrator and offers protection and assistance to victims of domestic violence. The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation forbids female genital mutilation and the threat of female genital mutilation against girls and women. The Equal Opportunities Act was also passed by Uganda in 2007. According to the law, discrimination against any person or group,

including on the basis of gender, is punishable by the government. In order to correct the imbalances previously held against marginalised groups, it also permits the state to take affirmative action in their favour (The Borgen project, 2021).

Political conditions od women after Independence:

In opposition to the Catholic DP (Democratic party), the UPC (Uganda people's congress) with the Kabaka Yekka form Uganda's first independent government. However, the clash between the UPC and Buganda occurred and in 1966 Obote suspended the constitution, proclaimed a one-party state, expelled the political kingdoms, and exiled the Kabaka. Amin's takeover in 1971 put residents of his Western Nile region in government. Of course, this prototypical murderous military phallocrat did not bother with parties, vesting all administrative and legislative authority in his own person. It is believed that UPC election fraud stole the victory from the DP in the elections held following the 1980 Tanzanian invasion that brought an end to Idi Amin's government (Human Rights Watch, 1999: 34). The Ugandan Patriotic Movement, a small new party founded by Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the transitional government's minister of defence, also performed horribly in that election. He immediately began an armed uprising against the Obote regime, which was become more and more authoritarian. While the UPC did support a number of "Women in Development" initiatives that were starting to draw foreign money in the first half of the 1980s, neither the UPC nor the DP were dedicated to advancing women's interests in politics. In terms of women's social, economic, and political rights and roles, neither party dared to question orthodox ethnic and religious traditions. Both parties established female wing organisations where female party members were required to host leaders. As a result, before 1986, women's representation barely went above the four percent threshold. 17.6 percent of parliament's members were women in 1989 (Tripp, 2000:38). The quota system, which was the outcome of the ongoing battle of women's organisations, is principally responsible for the sharp increase since 1989.

Affirmative action was established by NRM in 1989 to benefit disadvantaged segments in society, particularly women. Women were given seats in Parliament, one for each district, and their participation in political decision-making through representation on RCs was emphasised (Ballington, 2004: 40). One post in the nine-member Board of the Local Council's Resistance Councils (RC) system, which was established during the guerilla fight against the Obote dictatorship, is reserved solely for a woman. The constitution later changed the name of RCs to Local Councils (LCs). At each of the five levels of the Local Councils, a specific seat was created for women (Tamale, 1999: 70–71). Consciously or unconsciously, the female delegates assumed the job of tea and coffee maker or dealt with the practical concerns within the Board's work on the basis of the historical female role of carer, and access to the purely political activity was conspicuous by its absence.

The quota's justification is in question. Some questioned why there was an abrupt change. Many people think that Museveni was persuaded to adopt quotas due to international pressure and female lobbying from the women's movement. Others believe Museveni said himself that the female quota was just a show of goodwill towards women (Ballington, 2004: 40). Museveni himself stated that because women make up half of the population and earn the majority of Uganda's revenue, the NRM wants to open up political opportunities for them (Museveni, 1997). As a result, Uganda under NRM granted the country's half of the population the rights that had been denied to them for decades. In addition, a few women who ran for office against men did so and prevailed.

There were 39 districts in Uganda during the 6th Parliament (1996-2001), hence 39 women (19%) were elected as female district MPs (Tripp, 2000:38). Uganda had created 17 new districts by the time the 7th Parliament (2001–2006) was chosen, guaranteeing women at least 56 seats in the legislature. The majority of women in the 7th Parliament are chosen through separate women's elections. According to Onyango (2000), the eighth parliament of Uganda included 217 constituency representatives, 99 women made up the entire number of parliamentarians. 79 of them were district-level women legislators, 14 were directly elected women lawmakers, and six were representatives of particular interests. In the eighth parliament, this made up 31% of the female representation. The number of women MPs climbed from 31% in the eighth parliament to 34% in the ninth parliament (2011-2016), which had 375 members and included 129 women (Awuyo & Kopoka, 2020). However, during the 10th Parliament (2016-2021), this percentage remained unchanged at 34.9 percent. Hence, Uganda has one of the highest rates of women in politics in the eastern African region due to constitutional provisions and the 2006 Electoral Law, which reserved quotas for women at the national and sub-national levels. Out of the 529 MPs that have been elected to the new parliament since the general elections were held, Uganda currently has more than 173 women serving in the legislature. In addition, women currently hold the top positions of vice president and prime minister, as well as about half of the 81 cabinet ministers in the nation. This is a complete change from previous legislatures, when men dominated the cabinet's top positions. The Forum of Women in Democracy (FOWODE), a pioneer in educating women for political leadership, has been advocating and drumming up the need for more women in leadership, which has resulted in a rise in the number of women in positions of authority (The Independent, 2021).

Conclusion and Findings:

Hence, it can be concluded that Uganda's struggle for women's emancipation has a long history. One of the most powerful societal forces that has been mobilised in Uganda is the women's movement. The efforts of the women's movement led to the establishment of women's political rights in Uganda. Nevertheless, in terms of population, they have not yet risen to their proper position. But thanks to the women's movement, women in Uganda have at least made a mark in the political domain. Now it is a high time to think for the similar efforts for their economic and social rights as well.

Futhermore, it has been found that, Firstly, Museveni had already seen the potential and capacities of women that how bravely they helped the NRM during his gurella war to overthrow corrupt obeto's regime so, He does not want to invite enmity from half of the country's population. Secondly, he was also facing immense pressure from women's movement to give their rightful place in society through the women organizations like UWC. And he does not want to reapeate the same mistakes as its predecessor did regarding women. He realized that if NRM wants to remain in power for longtime then he cannot afford to ignore the half of the country's population otherwise he would also met the same fate as his predecessors. This is the main reason for his party being in power from 1986 till now. Thirdly, he used quota policy as Political tool to sustain his regime since last 36 years. To pacify women, he from time to time fulfill their demands.

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