
**The Zambian women parliamentarians caucus:
Making inroads into the legislative process**

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CEDAW	–	The Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women
GRZ	–	Government of the Republic of Zambia
ICCPR	–	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
IPU	–	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MP	–	Member of Parliament
NGO	–	non-governmental organization
PPP	–	parliamentary practice and procedure
SADC	–	Southern African Development Community
SO	–	standing orders
YWCA	-	Young Women Christians' Association
NGP	-	National Gender Policy
ZWPC	–	Zambian Women Parliamentarians Caucus

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1 Introduction

Statement of the problem

Women comprise half of the world's population, yet in the majority of the world's democratic countries where universal suffrage is and has been in place for decades, democracy is not, in fact, completely at work. Except in rare instances, the laws of the land are drafted, formulated, debated, passed and implemented by men. While few women are restricted in law from participating, a wide gap remains between their *de jure* right to participate and their *de facto* participation in politics.

In Zambia, women constitute 51 per cent of the population and yet they make up less than 15 per cent of the members in the national legislature, the executive and the judiciary.

Cultural and religious values of civilizations tend to assign roles and tasks to men and women, limiting women's participation in public life, nevertheless, without destabilizing cultures or imposing values foreign to the national culture, it should be possible to enhance women's dignity at the social level. This would allow a more balanced mix of men and women to participate in the management of the nation's affairs.

Unless women are prepared to inch along another several hundred years until society evolves – as it inevitably will – it is incumbent upon women at all levels to take action. The fastest way for women to attain legislative power is to take control of the power which is rightfully theirs (Albertyn, 1991).

Through my interaction with female MPs, I was inspired to select a research topic that looks at how women can be more effective in a male-dominated Zambian parliament.

The aim of the research is, therefore, two-fold. Firstly, it seeks to uncover the reality of the experiences of the ZWPC in so far as its participation in the legislative process is concerned. Secondly, it seeks to offer solutions that may enable the Women's Caucus in Parliament to engage more effectively in this process, thus the title, 'Making inroads into the legislative process'.

Location of the study

This research was undertaken in Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia, where the Parliament of Zambia is situated.

The Parliament of Zambia

Parliament has been defined as 'an officially elected group of people in some countries who meet to make the laws of the country' (*English dictionary for advanced learners*, international students' edition).

According to Article 62 of the Constitution of Zambia, parliament is a composite body consisting of the president and the national assembly. The president of the republic, through the powers conferred by the constitution, calls parliament to meet, orders elections to take place and gives final approval to laws (the presidential assent) but does not play an active role in parliamentary work. It is the national assembly which consists of elected and nominated MPs, that carries out a wide range of important public responsibilities. These responsibilities include making laws (Acts of Parliament), approving proposals for taxation and public expenditure and keeping the work of the government under scrutiny and review.

There are 150 parliamentary constituencies in Zambia where those aspiring to be MPs stand for elections every five years. The President of the Republic nominates eight MPs. The total number of MPs is, therefore, 158. Out of these, 19 are women.

The ZWPC

The ZWPC is a multi-party grouping of female MPs who advocate for women's issues in parliament. The caucus is involved in activities aimed at building the capacities of female MPs in order to enhance their participation in the decision-making process. It also seeks to empower women outside parliament through legislation passed in parliament.

The ZWPC was established as a follow-up to the SADC seminar on 'Practical gender equality, from dialogue to action', held in Windhoek, Namibia in 1997. One of the main resolutions of the seminar was that a SADC women's parliamentary network be formed with the aim of contributing to the achievement of democracy within the SADC region by promoting women's full participation in decision making at all levels, and towards a democratic process.

On the basis of the Windhoek Resolution, women in the Zambian parliament resolved to form a caucus based on the objectives of the Windhoek agenda at their first meeting on 19 March 1997. Upon approval by the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Zambian caucus became known as the Zambian women parliamentarians' caucus (ZWPC).

Although membership of the caucus is voluntary, all women MPs are considered members because the caucus takes special interest in issues of fundamental importance to women and children and takes a united stand on these issues. Currently, the ZWPC is comprised of 19 female MPs.

Aims and objectives

As stipulated under article 3 of the ZWPC constitution, the aims and objectives of the caucus are as follows:

- 1 To provide a forum for discussion on matters affecting women in the country, the SADC region, the Commonwealth and other regions;
- 2 To promote and help sensitize all parliamentarians to the principles of gender equality in the country, within the SADC region, the Commonwealth and other regions;
- 3 To facilitate the effective implementation of projects on gender issues;
- 4 To encourage and mobilize women's participation in all issues pertaining to national development and to promote self-reliance and economic independence among women;
- 5 To facilitate networking with other organizations and institutions within and outside the country, such as non-governmental organizations, businesses and intellectual communities in activities aimed at promoting gender equality and participation;
- 6 To research into issues affecting women and to make recommendations thereon; and
- 7 To promote peace and stability in the country and to contribute to the democratic process.

Background to the research

At the initial stage of the research, I intended to study the legal responses to the barriers to the effective performance of the ZWPC. Thereafter, I changed the focus to studying the efficacy and functioning of the ZWPC in so far as undertaking their mandate in parliament is concerned.

As the research progressed and after much probing, it became apparent that the focus of the research should be on studying the barriers to the effective performance of the caucus and ultimately on finding solutions to how it can make an impact and put across its views effectively.

The research theme then changed to, 'The Zambian women parliamentarians caucus – making inroads into the legislative process.'

The research took the women in parliament as the starting point.

Research assumptions

The research, finally, was based on the following assumptions:

- 1 A women's caucus is important in the Zambian parliamentary process in facilitating the passage of legislature and debate dealing with women and children's issues;
- 2 The women's caucus has not adequately facilitated the passage of such legislation and holding of debates;
- 3 The expectations placed on the caucus are unrealistic because:
 - a Women in parliament are obliged to first meet party and constituency demands;
 - b The caucus is adversely affected by lack of cohesion because of party affiliation;
 - c The caucus is an informal body;
 - d The caucus competes for time and attention with committee duties and other political obligations;
 - e There are few female MPs, therefore the caucus lacks numerical force; and
 - f Women's issues are undervalued;
- 4 Women parliamentarians:
 - a Are perceived as lacking confidence;
 - b Seem to lack commitment to women's issues and the caucus; and
 - c Are over committed because the gender sensitivity of the Zambian parliament means that women have to be represented on all committees and parliamentary delegations leading to the women's lack of drive;
- 5 Women have to manage their traditional duties in addition to their social and public roles;
- 6 Women parliamentarians do not chair committees, therefore they lack the power to significantly influence decisions;
- 7 Women parliamentarians lack confidence and expertise to engage in debates and parliamentary procedural issues;
- 8 Women parliamentarians seem to be marginalized from committees where influence can be exerted;
- 9 The Women's Movement is providing capacity building and empowerment workshops but the ZWPC does not seem to take advantage of these.

Research questions

The questions arising from the assumptions were thus as follows:

- 1 Is a women's caucus important for the Zambian parliamentary process in facilitating the passage of legislature and debate on women and children's issues?
- 2 Is it true that the ZWPC has not adequately facilitated the passage of such legislation and holding of debates?
- 3 Are the expectations placed on the caucus unrealistic because:
 - a Women in parliament are obliged to first meet party and constituency demands?
 - b The caucus is adversely affected by lack of cohesion because of party affiliation?
 - c The caucus is an informal body?
 - d The caucus competes for time and attention with committee duties and other political commitments?
 - e There are only a few female MPs, so the caucus lacks numerical force?
 - f Women's issues are undervalued?

- 4 Are women parliamentarians:
 - a Perceived as lacking confidence?
 - b Lacking in commitment to women's issues and the caucus?
 - c Affected by the gender sensitivity of the Zambian parliament which means that women have to be represented on all committees and parliamentary delegations leading to the women's lack of drive?
- 5 Do women also have to manage their traditional duties in addition to their social and public roles?
- 6 Is it true that women parliamentarians do not chair committees and therefore, lack the power to significantly influence decisions?
- 7 Do women parliamentarians lack the confidence and expertise to engage in debate and parliamentary procedural issues?
- 8 Are women parliamentarians marginalized from committees where influence can be exerted?
- 9 Does the Women's Movement provide capacity building and empowerment workshops ZWPC does not take advantage of?

Significance of the study

The literature reviewed reveals that there has been a lot of work done in Zambia on how to get women into parliament, while very little research has been done on how to ensure women are effective once they are in parliament. Thus far, most of the work has focused on one dimension: that of studying ways and means by which women can enter parliament, there has also been more emphasis on equality in opportunity to achieve parliamentary power and the obstacles and hindrances faced in this process.

The Zambia National Women's Lobby Group has been working in collaboration with other non-governmental organizations and has undertaken research on issues such as:

- Getting women into Parliament
- Participation in leadership positions
- Training women in campaign skills
- Public speaking
- Communication skills.

There is also limited material in this area internationally and much of it relates to the developed world. The Inter-parliamentary Union which is a key player in the area has focused mainly on how to 'train' women to exercise their political rights, to run an electoral campaign and to obtain clean funds or deal with the media. It has paid very little attention to what happens once women are in parliament.

This study has taken one step further. Previous efforts related to increasing the number of women in parliament have been made – it is now important to look beyond such efforts to enhancing the effectiveness of the women's caucus in the Zambian parliament. Therefore, it will be important to address the following questions:

- What are the major obstacles that the women's caucus in parliament faces which impacts on its performance?
- What means could be used to make the caucus more effective?

As a pioneer in this regard, this research has been undertaken with the realization that equality in decision making is essential for women's empowerment.

My interaction with female MPs gave them a sense of participation and made a significant contribution to this research which has touched on their lives as women. It is hoped that this research will enhance the participation of the caucus in parliament in the long run.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this study are as follows:

- 1 To seek to identify solutions to the obstacles being faced by the ZWPC, so as to make it more effective.
- 2 To assist the ZWPC to transcend party politics as it endeavours to foster women and children's issues.
- 3 To urge the legislature to take women's issues seriously in recognition of the value that women add to parliament.
- 4 To use the research to provide a model to improve the participation of women in future parliaments and in parliaments in other countries.

Outline of chapters

This study seeks to find ways and means to make the ZWPC effective in parliament.

Chapter 1 Introduction

This gives the background to the study – the justification, objectives and assumptions are outlined herein.

Chapter 2 Law and literature review

The law review looks at the Constitution of Zambia, the National Gender Policy, international law and various constitutions to see how these laws regard women's political rights and how they have addressed the issue of affirmative action.

The literature review looks at the literature that provided the background information for the research.

Chapter 3 Methodology

The methodology used is the grounded theory approach of women's law theory. This section outlines the methods used to collect data and the limitations faced during the research.

Chapter 4 Emerging themes

These have been grouped into three main themes that emerged during the research. These are:

- Women in parliament
- The ZWPC
- The ZWPC and the Women's Movement.

Chapter 5 Discussion

Here the gap between the law and reality in relation to the field of research is discussed. This is looked at in the light of International human rights and women's political rights in Zambia.

Thereafter, the conclusion are drawn and recommendations are made.

2 Law and literature review

Law review

The Constitution of Zambia

The Constitution of Zambia was amended in 1996 to include sex as one of the grounds on which discrimination is outlawed. Of particular interest and importance is part 3, 'the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals'. It bestows upon all persons in Zambia, regardless of race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed, sex or marital status, the rights and freedoms enshrined therein. Under Section 23 (subsection 2) the Constitution prohibits discrimination on account of, among other things, one's sex. Save for this provision, there is no other provision that specifically provides for the protection of the rights of women. However, article 23 (subsection 4) allows for the discrimination of women in wide areas of administration and social practice by making the provision non-applicable with regard to the application of custom and tradition as well as in all other matters of personal law. The article is, therefore, contradictory to the provision of CEDAW which in article 7, states that:

'...state parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular shall ensure ...women, on equal terms with men, the right...'

Although this exception does not relate to the area of politics, it legally sanctions discrimination against women under customary law in a way that perpetuates negative attitudes towards women in parliament and, further, indirectly affects women's involvement in matters of governance. This is because, although customary law varies between one tribe and another in Zambia, one common factor is the 'legalized' discrimination against women (Siameet *et al.*, 1998).

Customary Law emphasizes male pre-eminence in decision making where women are subject to the decisions of men. Therefore, this belief in male supremacy provides a basis for male domination in both domestic and public life. Parliament, being a public domain, embraces this dominion which systematically has a bearing on the position of women in parliament.

The Constitution of Zambia has been compared with constitutions of countries both within and outside the SADC region. Although the Constitution of Zimbabwe is similar to that of Zambia with regard to the rights of women; other countries' constitutions in SADC could well guide Zambia as they have taken strides towards protecting women's rights by formulating gender provisions which are coupled with affirmative action in this regard.

These are:

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
- The Constitution of Namibia
- The Constitution of Uganda.

The Constitution of Zimbabwe

The Constitution of Zimbabwe is the supreme law of Zimbabwe.

The Constitution of Zimbabwe is being cited in order to compare it with Zambia's constitution in which the co-existence of customary and statutory law often works against the interests of women and consequently impacts on their level of decision making in all areas of their lives, including in politics.

Article 23 (subsection 2) of its Declaration of Rights reads in part:

'... for the purpose of subsection (11) a law shall be regarded as making a provision that it is discriminatory and any person shall be regarded as having been treated in a discriminatory manner, if as a result of a particular description by race, tribe, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or gender are prejudicial ...'

Like in the Zambian constitution, there is no specific mention of the protection of the rights of women. Further, section 23(3) of this constitution allows discrimination against women on grounds of customary law by making the provisions of the above article non-applicable in areas where women are most affected, such as custom and tradition and in all matters of personal law.

Chiwandamira (2000), in her study of the obstacles and challenges faced by women in the parliament of Zimbabwe, stresses that for as long as the Zimbabwean constitution allows gender discrimination in one sphere of life such as customary law, it promotes the perception of women as inferior and creates a psychological basis for their discrimination in the process of governance, albeit in a hidden form.

Perpetuating female inferiority in any area also goes counter to the call on governments to take measures that will ensure that women have equal access to and full participation in power structures of decision-making bodies.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is of relevance to this study because of the extent to which the right to equality is protected with respect to sex, among other things.

Further, it sets a good example by providing for measures to protect persons who may be disadvantaged by unfair discrimination. This provides a safeguard measure to protect women who may be discriminated against by administrative practices, rules and regulations that perpetuate gender discrimination and therefore serve to exclude them from decision-making roles.

In the South African Constitution, chapter 2 (the Bill of Rights) section 9 reads:

- 1. Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.*
- 2. Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be undertaken.*
- 3. The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone, on one or more grounds, including race, gender, **sex**, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.*
- 4. No persons may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds in terms of subsection (3).*
- 5. Discrimination on one or more of the grounds listed in subsection (3) is unfair unless it is established that the discrimination is fair.'*

The Namibian constitution

The Constitution of Namibia, like the South African constitution, is relevant to this study as it explicitly mentions sex as grounds for discrimination. It therefore leaves no room for misinformation of gender equality as is the case in the constitutions of Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In the Constitution of Namibia, article 10 (Equity and freedom from discrimination) states that:

- ‘1. All persons shall be equal before the law.*
- 2. No persons may be discriminated on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status.’*

Furthermore, a commendable effort to protect women is made in the affirmative action, article 23 and sub-article 2 and 3 as follows:

- ‘1. Nothing contained in article 10 (Equity and freedom from discrimination) hereof shall prevent parliament from enacting legislation providing directly and indirectly for the advancement of persons within Namibia who have been socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged by past discriminatory laws or practices, or for the implementation of policies and programmes aimed at redressing social, economic or educational imbalances in the Namibian society arising out of past discriminatory laws or practices or for achieving a balanced structuring of the public service, the police force, the defence force, and the prison service.*
- 2. In the enactment of legislation and the application of any policies and practices contemplated by sub-article (2) hereof, it shall be permissible to have regard to the fact that women in Namibia have traditionally suffered special discrimination and that they need to be ...’*

A commendable effort is made in the Constitution of Namibia by allowing international law to be part of national law. Namibia further promotes the protection of women’s rights. This is provided in article 144 (International law) that states:

‘...that unless otherwise provided by this constitution or Act of Parliament, the general rules of public international agreements binding upon Namibia under this constitution shall form part of the law of Namibia’.

The Constitution of Uganda

The Constitution of Uganda is also worth emulating. Unlike in the Zambian constitution, it specifically provides for the protection of the rights of women.

Like in the Constitution of Namibia, it also has a provision for affirmative action with regard to the protection of these rights.

In the Constitution of Uganda, section 33 states:

- ‘1. Women shall be accorded full and equal dignity of their person with men.*
- 2. The state shall provide the facilities and opportunities necessary to enhance the welfare of women to enable them to realize their full potential and advancement.*
- 3. The state shall protect women and their rights, taking into account their unique status and neutral maternal functions in society.*
- 4. Women shall have the right to equal treatment with men and that right shall include equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities.*
- 5. Without prejudice to article 32 of this constitution, women shall have the right to affirmative action for redressing the imbalances created by history, tradition or custom.*
- 6. Laws, cultures, customs or traditions which are against the dignity, welfare or interest of women or which undermine their status are prohibited by this constitution.’*

Of importance to the protection of women's rights, is the provision of affirmative action in section 32:1 which states:

- '1. Notwithstanding anything in this constitution, the state shall take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalized on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom, for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them.*
- 2. Parliament shall make relevant laws including laws for the establishment of an equal opportunities commission, for the purpose of giving full effect to clause (1) of this article.'*

For Zambia, the lack of affirmative provisions for the protection of women's rights and the ambiguity of the same provisions in the constitution means that women will continue to be discriminated against.

This continued negation of women's rights and the performance of women in state institutions such as parliament can be attributed to a large extent, to the non-provision of the protection of women in the constitution, as in the constitutions of Uganda, South Africa and Namibia.

The Zambia National Gender Policy

In line with national development characterized by multi-party democracy and a free market economy, in 1991, government decided to formulate the National Gender Policy which has a holistic approach in ensuring that both women and men participate fully and equitably benefit from the development process. The National Gender Policy was therefore adopted in recognition of the need for full participation of women in the development process at all levels to ensure the attainment of equality and equity between the sexes.

It is also in recognition of the fact that for an extended period of time, women have been under-represented at all levels of decision making. This has been especially so in government, parliament and in other state institutions. The factors leading to this have been mainly low educational attainment, traditional gender attitudes and prejudices among women and men, and women's weak economic status through their limited access to productive resources.

Article 4 of the policy covers the policy measures. These spell out what government intends to undertake in order to address gender issues relating to women's poor participation at various levels. Government undertakes to review and harmonize laws and practices with international, regional and sub-regional conventions and instruments dealing with gender.

The policy, therefore, seeks to address, amongst others things, the following gender issues and concerns:

- 1 The power relations between men and women in the domestic community and public domains which are impediments to the advancement of women;
- 2 Mainstreaming gender in all sectors of the Zambian society to eliminate all negative economic, social and cultural practices that impede equality of the sexes; and
- 3 To create equal opportunities for women and men in decision-making in all areas and at all levels.

However, implementation of the policy leaves a lot to be desired. It seems that lack of resources and lack of political will to implement the policy, especially considering the length of time it took for it to be adopted, only serves to frustrate the efforts of gender mainstreaming and to continue the negation of women's rights.

The caucus strives to promote the rights of women and children. Therefore, negation of these rights means that such issues are not taken seriously in parliament. This impacts negatively on the caucus' efforts to promote women's rights within and outside parliament.

International and regional instruments on the rights of women

Zambia is party to several international human rights instruments which recognize the rights of women and children. Notable among these instruments are: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966), the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR, 1981) and its optional Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women (1995), the Cairo ICPD Programme of Action, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on Human Rights, and the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development (1997).

Primarily, Zambia has a duty to respect the human rights of all its citizens without discrimination.

These international conventions are important in that they lay down principles for basic human rights that every human being should be accorded regardless of sex, age, marital status, race or creed. They are relevant to this study in that they provide a benchmark against which state parties, such as Zambia, are measured in relation to promoting the rights of women in all spheres, including in politics. However, marginalization and under-representation of women remains contrary to the commitments that Zambia has made through the various instruments. There has not been any constitutional provision, or specific government policy, which require that the provisions of international instruments be domesticated. Therefore, these do not apply in the local scenario.

However, marginalization and under-representation of women remains contrary to the commitments that Zambia has made through the various instruments. There has not been any constitutional provision or specific government policy which requires that the provisions of international instruments be domesticated. Therefore, these do not apply in the local scenario.

As Zambia has ratified these instruments without adopting their provisions into domestic laws, they are not seen as binding on the government or as part of the domestic legal system.

All this points to the fact that women continue to be discriminated against and invariably lag behind in matters of governance.

Literature review

Why we need women in parliament

First of all, it is becoming increasingly evident that if women are to enjoy justice, freedom and equal rights with men, they themselves have to do the necessary work to obtain these goals. No-one, no matter how powerful, will ever be able to give women equal rights and control over their own lives; these are rights that every woman has to strive for. Political participation is one of the ways through which these goals can be achieved (Graff, 2003).

Women have special interests and needs that may not be properly represented in organs such as the legislature where the majority of members are men. A study of gender differences in public opinions in the United States, for example, showed that women were more likely than men to give top priority to issues affecting women. The study further showed that women were likely to work on legislation intended to help other women, hence promoting improvement in women's human rights and wellbeing.

Women's participation in decision making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspectives at all levels of decision making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.

The most frequently used justification is that the participation of women is essential to a democracy that claims

to reflect and represent the diversity of its people. It is an argument based on the values of justice and equality which require that women and men participate equally in decision making (Albertyn, 1999:1).

This reasoning is also found in international texts such as the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. Paragraph 131 states that:

‘... achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making is a demand for simple justice and democracy’, *an*

‘... women’s participation in decision making is a necessary condition for women’s interests to be taken into account.’

Further justifications may be based on the idea that women bring different values to decision making which in turn impact on the content of politics. Underlying the above arguments are claims that women, by virtue of being women, make a difference in legislative bodies. This is supported by conventional international wisdom that a critical mass of women in parliament has resulted in a notable shift towards women’s concerns, such as welfare issues. Such conclusions emerge from research conducted on legislatures where women have increased in number, such as in some of the Scandinavian countries (Albertyn, 1999:2).

Socialization, traditional roles and the political advancement of women

Adult role socialization theorists build on childhood socialization when they hold that childhood socialization experiences are reinforced by the adult roles that woman assume, especially family and work roles (Tamale, 1999:27).

Many of the tasks that woman perform in the African context include unremunerated housework, childbearing and child rearing, food preparation, small-scale farming, as well as household-level production of both food and goods for the market. These would, therefore, have a bearing on the differences between men and women’s political participation. Notions of patriarchal gender ideologies that emphasize maternal altruism and wifely duties for women and men’s rights to women’s service and nurturance as well as to control over their reproductive capacities, would all predetermine the performance of men and women who decide to participate in politics (Tamale, 1999:26).

To differing degrees, the culture and religious values of civilization tend to assign more or less rigidly specific roles and tasks to men and women. Thus, they tend to limit women’s participation in political life or even to exclude women from politics.

According to the ‘Women in local government’ policy paper (2003), in the last decade Zambia has experienced debilitating levels of socio-economic regression, thereby increasing the demands on women as a core group that sustains livelihoods at the household level. This means that for the majority of women in Zambia today, feeding their families is the first priority and participation in politics is secondary.

The family and the person

Most literature points to the fact that one of the major constraints for women, is the sheer amount of work in Parliament. While all parliamentarians face this problem, it is aggravated for many women because of added domestic responsibilities.

As the saying goes, ‘women hold three quarters of the house’, as a result of which personal and family interests come before political advancements. Budlender *et al.* (1999), in a study of the participation of women in the legislative process in South African legislatures, noted that parliamentarians, like all other people, come into contact with many institutions. For women parliamentarians, in particular, the family constitutes a primary institution which often impacts on their performance in parliament (Budlender *et al.*, 1999:50).

Chiwandamira (2001) reported that in a study entitled, 'Redefining politics: South Africa, women and democracy', Colleen Morna notes that the domestication of women and the heavy workload confine women to the private sphere, while politics is a public sphere. The heavy workload of women takes up their time and often leaves them no time to participate in politics.

Also, Kadaga (2000) in her study of workplace related sexual harassment of women in high level decision-making positions in the Ugandan cabinet, noted that such demand is just one instance that creates a situation where a woman is forced to choose between home and a political career.

Reproductive roles linked to women's social status tie them to housekeeping responsibilities and keep them from entering politics. Child care costs also eliminate potential capable candidates. This impedes women's upward political mobility (Odile, 1983: 13).

Ndangariro Moyo (2001), in her study of the participation of women in local governance in three wards of Zaka district in Zimbabwe, noted that, in reality, women are tied down to housework to an extent that they cannot participate in any roles outside the home and its surroundings.

The difficulty that women face in reconciling a political career with family obligations is reflected in the guilt associated with not being at home for the family. There is also guilt about neglecting or assigning low priority to all the daily tasks of running a household (Mandel, 1981: 91).

It is often argued that women's double burden of work and domestic responsibilities make their participation difficult. There is no doubt that, on average, women today devote more time to domestic responsibility than men and that this affects the way in which they allocate their time (UN, 1992: 114).

Gender equity in representation in national decision-making organs

There are many reasons why both women and men should be adequately represented in the governing and decision-making organs of the country. Although women, for example, are not homogeneous, they form a distinct group that deserves representation according to the normal tenets of democratic governance. Good governance is critical for sustainable development.

A growing body of evidence suggests that gender equality in rights and resources is associated with less corruption and better governance. There is also evidence that indicates that increasing the number of women in the governing and decision-making organs of a country could result in increased levels of good governance. Gender equity in decision making could thus reduce the loss of much-needed resources for national development (World Bank, 2002). Equality in political participation and decision making is one of the major priorities for achievement of women in this era. Without success in this area, other areas of advancement of women will be put at risk.

Democracy and women's political representation

Democracy as a form of government traces its traditions back to the city states of ancient Greece over 2,500 years ago (Graff, 2003: 5). Today, 'democracy' is a much touted word and has become a goal for individuals and nations around the world.

Its definition however, remains elusive.

The basic tenet of democracy is a belief in direct participation in decision making by all citizens. Democracy falls almost exclusively within the domain of politics (Graff, 2003). Further, it comes within the traditional definition of politics which is characterized as male-dominated, specific to the 'public sphere' and therefore not necessarily women friendly.

Therefore, despite the increasing popularity of the concept and practice of democracy, the question regarding why democracy and women's political representation are inter-linked needs to be answered. First, women's political rights are an integral and inseparable part of their human rights which are a fundamental aspect of any

democratic framework. Further, in a democracy the points of view of different groups must be taken into account in formulating any decision. It is therefore important to note that democracy must be inclusive of opinions and perceptions of women as well as men. Moreover, women constitute half the world's population and half of all national populations. To conceptualize issues and develop policies that will, directly or indirectly, affect citizens' lives without taking into account the situations and perspectives and realities of all those who will be affected is no longer credible (Karam, 1998: 14). Taking account of and involving men and women in decision-making processes is a *sine qua nom* of any democratic framework, hence democracy must strive towards equality and representation of women and men in decision-making processes.

Today, it is generally accepted that democracy and human rights are inextricably intertwined; they are each other's precondition and mutually reinforce each other. Since women's rights are now recognized as a fully integrated part of human rights, an evident assumption would be that when countries shift from non-democratic rule to democracy, women in general will enjoy more rights and the opportunity to improve their living conditions (Graff, 2003).

3 Methodology

The grounded theory approach

The research was conducted using the women's law perspective which takes women's lives and not the law as the starting point. To let the women talk and relate their experiences in relation to their participation in parliament (in order to see how the law relates to the reality of their lives). This perspective was achieved through the use of the grounded theory approach.

The grounded theory approach has been described as an iterative process in which data and theory, lived reality about perceptions and norms are constantly engaged with each other to help the researcher to decide what data to collect and how to interpret it.

Glasser and Strauss (1967) describe the approach as a method of analysis of empirical data whose aim is to generate a theory or learning by empirical experience rather than starting from an hypothesis.

Using the grounded approach

This study was exploratory in that it sought to explore the lived realities of women in as far as their participation in parliament is concerned. Most research today is designed to verify existing theories and not to generate new ones. Theories are thus generated through logical deduction from past studies and knowledge and not from the data itself (Glasser and Strauss, 1966).

The grounded theory approach does not start with preconceptions of existing theories.

In using the grounded theory approach, therefore, from the data that was collected, theories emerged which explain the barriers to the effective performance of the women's caucus in parliament. These were grouped into three main themes: women in parliament, the ZWPC, and the ZWPC and the Women's Movement .

Using the grounded theory approach means that the researcher is not a prisoner to his or her hypothesis. In conforming to this approach therefore, data was collected which was then analyzed. The data that was collected allowed me to plan what to study or look for next. For instance, armed with my assumptions, I started the research with only female MPs in mind but as the research progressed, the data collected led me to realize that for more meaningful data, I would have to seek the views of selected non-governmental organizations and some male MPs. These were, therefore, included on the list of respondents.

I entered the research with an open mind and was mindful not to rely too much on my initial assumptions and what I already knew about the women's caucus as I felt that it would blind me to the richness of the incoming data.

Having an open mind also meant that I was open to other data which were not in my initial assumptions. For example, the theme 'Parliament is a male domain' just 'sprang out' as I interrogated the women and during the times that I observed their behaviour during parliamentary sittings. As a member of staff, I was able to sit in the chamber to observe the proceedings of the house.

As the grounded approach is an iterative process, I was able to explore the respondents' views deeply by probing into areas that I had not thought of but which I felt were relevant to the research. For example, the effect of variables such as age, responsibility, marital status, and so on, in the women's ability to handle their multiple roles.

The other advantage of using the grounded approach was that it took the lived realities of women as the starting point. Obtaining this empirical data on women's lives was important for the purpose of studying the conflict of *de jure* equality which is discussed later, in relation to their participation in politics and simultaneously in the legislature.

In using the grounded approach therefore, the ZWPC was looked at in the light of women's experience and interests.

Legal pluralism

In Zambia as in many former European colonies, legal pluralism exists and is considered to be one of the legacies of colonial rule.

It was important to take into consideration that women's lives in parliament are guided by both culture/social norms and by formal state law and to examine the interaction between the two systems.

This Research shows that non – legal norms are at least as important as formal legal norms in as far as determining the efficacy of women's participation in Parliament. This is because a wider range of normative orders other than formal Law come into play to shape a woman's legal and social position' (Graff, 2003).

Therefore, it was important to acknowledge this fact to be able to fully understand the situation of the women's caucus in parliament.

Legal centralism

The role that the law plays in the parliament of Zambia is cardinal. Parliament is guided by procedures which are known as parliamentary practice and procedure (PPP) or standing orders, which derive their strength from article 86(1) of the Constitution of Zambia. These guide the behaviour of MPs and the processes in the House such as committee work and the passage of Bills and have a bearing on women's participation in parliament.

The study therefore relied on legal centralism with its emphasis on legal perspectives. It was used to examine women's political rights under instruments such as the Constitution of Zambia. This aspect was also used to compare women's political rights in the Zimbabwean, South African, Ugandan Constitution and Namibian constitutions.

This approach was significant the law is central to the functioning of □parliament in Zambia which derives its authority from the constitution.

Research methods used

The data which I sought was qualitative. Qualitative data explains why and how things are as they are. Qualitative data also seeks to explain the occurrence of an event. I felt that a qualitative approach to the research would assist me in collecting rich data on the impediments to the women's caucus' effective participation in parliament and at the same time, try to find solutions to this situation. Also, as an approach to gathering data, it seemed to be the most efficient way of obtaining information on consequences, processes, patterns and systems (Glasser and Strauss, 1967:18).

Secondary data

Information from secondary sources proved very useful for the research. I perused the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) reports, daily debates from the time parliament began sitting (during the research period from 4 November to 29 December 2003). I also perused the Constitution of Zambia and the ZWPC minutes.

I looked at the National Gender Policy of Zambia and international conventions that Zambia is party to and which are relevant to the study

Focused interviews

This was the main method used. It allowed me to speak with each MP that was selected for the study. When I first went into the field, I had a list of the 19 female MPs. The interviews were done on a one to one basis –only one person was interviewed at a time. I felt that this would prevent them from being constrained by the presence of others. While conducting the interviews, I used a recorder. This was to enable me capture as much of the interview as possible and to ensure that no relevant information was left out.

The interviews were focused to the extent that while I used a question guide to direct them, I did not ask closed questions, thereby allowing the interviewees to express their views freely and occasionally raise other issues. Interviewees were not given a copy of the interview schedule prior to the interview so as to avoid biased responses. I however informed them about the interview in advance as most of them wanted to be adequately prepared.

I found that using interviews as a method to collect data was advantageous. Firstly, I was able to observe the respondent's facial and other bodily expressions as they spoke. This enabled me to learn whether they were comfortable with the interview or not. For example, when the subject of the impediments to the caucus' effective performance in parliament was introduced to some respondents, their initial reaction showed that it was a subject that they were uncomfortable to discuss.

I also felt that the interviewees were more open when there were no other people present. This enabled me to probe further if I felt that the response given had left out relevant information. Through this probing, other themes that I had not initially thought about came out. For example, I probed variables such as age, extent of responsibility, marital status, and so on, to determine the extent to which women could handle their multiple roles. And, when the issue of parliament being a male domain was brought to the fore, after much probing, the issue of sexual harassment came out.

Group discussion

There were two group discussions in total. The guide for the group discussions is given in Appendix V (B).

These group discussions were as follows::

- 1 With the Committee on Legal Affairs, Governance, Human Rights and Gender Matters. As a member of staff who services this committee, I had no difficulty in convening a discussion with the members. Also, as luck would have it, the committee was meeting at the time of the research to adopt their annual report.

The committee comprises eight MPs representing different political parties. Only one member out of the eight is a woman.

2. With three members from the ZWPC. I was having a discussion with one female MP when two other MPs who were on their way out to attend a meeting outside parliament became interested in the ongoing discussion. This resulted in a group discussion.

The advantage of having group discussions as a data collection method is that people are less inhibited. The only problem with such discussions is that everyone wants to contribute at the same time. At other times, the discussion diverted from the topic being discussed. For example, during the group discussion with the Committee on Legal Affairs, Governance, Human Rights and Gender Matters, one member introduced a topic on girl-child education and that was the beginning of a mini-debate. Secondly, other members seemed to 'shadow' their colleagues and therefore, did not contribute much to the discussion. Further, some simply concurred with what their colleagues said. At times I felt that they did not hold similar views to their colleagues.

Observations

At the time of the research, parliament was sitting for the second session of the ninth national assembly. The matters under discussion were:

- Questions for oral answers
- A number of government bills
- Adoption of some committee reports

I sat in the chamber following the proceedings on several occasions. This enabled me to observe how women participated in the deliberations.

Problems encountered

At the beginning of the research, parliament was in recess, therefore it was difficult to access MPs to interview. However, when parliament started sitting, there were several workshops lined up for MPs, which created another problem of access.

Some female MPs interviewed seemed inhibited in expressing their views concerning the caucus, I felt that this was a fear of 'washing dirty linen in public'. Vital information was therefore, withheld. Also, for some reason, some MPs did not turn up for interviews at the appointed time. This led to making alternative arrangements with other members whom I had not initially targeted.

Making appointments with some non-governmental organizations proved problematic. They postponed interviews several times and consequently some who I had initially targeted, were not interviewed.

However, I had an advantage in that as an officer of Parliament, I had easy access to MPs and parliamentary offices. Further, the respondents were people known to me therefore, the interviewees were at ease during most of the interviews.

It was also very easy for me to make appointments with MPs. This enabled me to make changes to my initial interviews list in instances where an interviewee failed to turn up for an interview.

The grounded theory approach was relevant to my study as it enabled me to explore the lived realities of the women in parliament. Further, it allowed the generation of new ideas as it is an iterative process. For example, as I mentioned earlier, other themes such as, 'Parliament is a male domain', emerged during the research.

4 Research findings

The findings have been divided into three themes that emerged during the research. These present barriers to the effective performance of the ZWPC in parliament. The three themes are as follows:

Women in parliament

There are 19 women MPs in the Zambian parliament. Their attributes and or characteristics, coupled with the importance attached to women's issues in parliament, seem to have an impact on the performance of the caucus. The research revealed that the women in parliament seem to lack confidence and that they lack the capacity to deal with women's issues in parliament. It also revealed that women are marginalized in Parliament and that the Committee and parliamentary system and the women's multiple roles seem to impact on their performance in Parliament and ultimately on the Caucus.

The ZWPC

The ZWPC is guided by a constitution which spells out, among other things, its mandate in parliament. However, from the findings of the research, it is evident that factors such as its status and organization, its lack of numerical force, the solidarity and commitment of its members and partisan politics are a stumbling block to its efficacy in as far as carrying out its mandate of promoting women's and children's issues in parliament is concerned.

The ZWPC and the Women's Movement

The relationship between the caucus and the Women's Movement should ideally be one of partnership as they both endeavour to promote women's rights. Research findings however indicate that the relationship between the two is not a harmonious one. This seems to affect the effective performance of the caucus.

Women in parliament

Lack of confidence

One persistent view during the research was that women in parliament seem to lack confidence and that this impacts negatively on their performance. This could be attributed to parliament being a male-dominated institution where women's views may not be well received.

However, respondents dwelt more on the causes of this seeming lack of confidence amongst the women in parliament. One male MP said:

'The quality of our women is questionable. Therefore most do not have confidence in themselves. Perhaps educational requirements for one to be an MP should be raised.'

In supporting this view, another male MP stated that:

'Women do not understand issues in parliament, this has contributed to their lack of confidence.'

Interestingly the view of one former MP was that:

'Female MPs in this ninth session of parliament are more educated than their colleagues in previous sessions. It is also in this session that the first female MP was appointed Minister of Finance. This lack of confidence is really uncalled for.'

The chairperson of the women's caucus was of the view that:

'Although women are competent enough to undertake their mandate in parliament, they are sometimes not assertive, hence the need for capacity building. This lack of confidence undermines our contributions in parliament.'

Further, a representative of the women's lobby group felt that the parliamentary system is discriminatory to women in parliament. He said;

'Women are not taken seriously, hence they are not confident of themselves.'

Several parliamentarians, including some of the men, pointed to the need for training to build up women's confidence while some women mentioned the need for gender-related training in various aspects such as budget analysis, legislation and policy.

Lack of capacity to deal with women's issues

Most female respondents were of the view that women in parliament are able to deal with women's issues effectively. However, a few were of the opinion that 'female' MPs in government lack the capacity to deal with women's issues, as they have failed to move Bills concerning women in parliament. A representative of the women's lobby group felt that women in parliament lack commitment to women's issues. He said:

'Women are more concerned with consolidating their positions in parliament at the expense of women and children's issues'.

In supporting this view, another member of the national women's lobby group said:

'Women in parliament are not gender sensitive. They subordinate women and children's rights issues which are very important.'

Marginalization of women in parliament

Research findings are that women are important in Parliament because there are unique problems that affect them differently from men and more so because of certain values that they have, which are valuable in parliament. While it was felt that women should not be given positions on a silver plate, the general feeling amongst the female respondents was that women are marginalized in parliament.

According to Inonge Wina, MP:

'Women are marginalized in parliament. For example, there is only one woman chairing a sessional committee.'

Further that:

'Women's issues are not taken seriously.'

Regina Musokotwane, MP noted that:

'The role of women in parliament is greatly underplayed.'

It was also the perception of most interviewees that because women comprise a very small number in parliament, they are sidelined. This means that their views are not taken seriously.

Women and parliamentary committees

The standing orders committee is mandated to determine the number of women and nominate who should serve on which committee.

Committees in the Zambian parliament are classified into four distinct divisions as follows:

- 1 Housekeeping committees which are concerned only with matters of the house itself;
- 2 Department-related committees which oversee the activities of various ministries;
- 3 General purpose committees whose mandate is not confined to any specific ministries as the issues that they consider are applicable to different ministries depending on situations and issues involved;
- 4 Select ad hoc committees which are created as the need arises – they are established for a specific purpose.

Currently there are 158 MPs of these only 19 are women. Nine out of these hold ministerial positions, the rest (10) are backbenchers.

The standing orders of the national assembly stipulate under article 125 the selection of members of committees that:

‘National assembly shall ensure political party/group and gender representation’

The gender sensitivity of parliament demands that each committee should have at least one female member. In this regard, a lot of effort has been made to ensure that female members are evenly distributed among the various committees.

Eight out of the nine backbenchers belong to more than one committee. Three belong to three committees, five to two committees and the remaining one belongs to a committee which she chairs. (A detailed table on women on parliamentary committees is in appendix iii).

While most respondents were satisfied with the distribution of women on these committees, a few stated that they were not happy as they felt that some of their colleagues were placed on what they termed ‘more important committees’. As Mrs Wamulume, MP, said:

‘I am not happy with the distribution of women on committees, some women are more respected than others.’

This was in reference to committees such as the public accounts committee, the committee on estimates and the reforms and modernization committee which exert a lot of influence and there is a lot of importance attached to being a member of these committees.

Still others felt that despite serving on more than one committee, the time (period) allocated to discuss issues brought before them was not enough. Therefore, they felt that this left a lot of issues unattended to.

‘Time allocated for parliament sittings and committee meetings is not enough – a lot of issues are left unattended to. For example, the committee on Sport, Youth and Child Affairs. You cannot seriously discuss three important issues say in three weeks – in fact the hours we sit in parliament are less than the time civil servants spend at work – this is not fair – we need to work more hours.’

Research findings also reveal that women MPs are not happy with the fact that there is only one female member chairing a committee. As Mrs Musokotwane pointed out:

‘We need more women in parliament, especially to chair committees if we are to make strides.’

However, Mrs Inonge Wina, MP, was quick to point out that:

‘Perhaps women’s negotiating and lobbying skills need to be sharpened to enable them to earn leadership positions’.

Intricacies of multiple roles - constituency, parliament, party and family demands

Given the small number of women in parliament, the requirement that every committee should have at least one female member means that women are overstretched. In addition to this, women have constituency matters to attend to as well as party and family commitments.

Contrary to my earlier assumption, however, most respondents felt that they were able to balance their various roles effectively, as they said:

‘After all, nothing can be too much for a woman, juggling my many roles does not bother me.’

This is a typical woman’s response and can be attributed to their socialization which dictates that women should be able to handle multiple roles effectively. Also fear that to admit otherwise would present a problem and justify the assumption that women should not be involved in politics.

This response led me to probe further and examine how variables such as the respondents' age, level of responsibility, marital status, and so on, impacted on how effectively they could handle these roles. For example, a respondent with young children, married and holding a ministerial position would have problems managing her multiple roles because holding a ministerial position adds further demands on women ministers. As Kadaga (2001) noted, there is no doubt that women ministers feel the pinch more since they are still expected to carry out their motherly roles in addition to their ministerial roles. It was common to hear:

'All my children are above fifteen and I have no dependants.'

'I am a widow, therefore I have no husband to look after.'

'My family (extended) helps me to look after my children'

Such responses would obviously impact positively on the women's ability to handle multiple roles. This is different for men's experiences because they devote less time than women to domestic responsibility. Therefore, they have more time to pursue their political careers without the burden of the 'home'.

Women engaging in the parliamentary process

Parliament is guided by rules which are known as parliamentary practice and procedure. These are defined as procedures that guide the behaviour of all MPs in the chamber and during committee meetings. Engaging in the parliamentary process goes beyond just knowing these rules. Being able to understand and apply them is paramount. It was the general feeling among respondents that these procedures were too legal or technical for a lay person. This is obviously a disadvantage to women in parliament:

'The language they use in these rules is too legal for us. Some of us are not lawyers'.

At the time of the research, as indicated earlier, parliament was sitting to consider various Bills. On a few occasions, I sat in the chamber to follow the proceedings of the house. I also took time to peruse the daily debates for the period of the house sitting. On average about three women contributed to the debate of a bill under consideration on any given day. This indicates a low level of debate and participation by women in the legislative process. Although this could be said of some men, the frequency of the women's contribution when looked at in the light of the total number of women in parliament, could attest to the above assertion.

Research findings also indicate that women in parliament do not take a proactive role and equip themselves with knowledge that might assist them to engage in this process. From the responses given, very few spend time to use the parliamentary library or to use the research department in order to keep abreast of developments in parliament and parliamentary processes. There were responses such as:

'I do not have time to use the library',

'I have not really found the need to visit the library.'

However, Mrs Inonge Wina, MP, summed this up by saying:

'The problem with some of us women is that we do not want to consult members of staff who have the expertise on parliamentary issues and also to take time to research to enhance our knowledge.'

It is possible to assess that the women are not properly prepared, by looking at their level of participation in parliament.

The ZWPC

Status and organization

Most of the female MPs interviewed pointed to the informal status of the caucus in parliament as an impediment to its effective performance. As one member said:

'The caucus lacks the support of parliament – parliament completely ignores it.'

Another member had this to say:

‘The caucus is ignored – nobody takes it seriously – we cannot even carry out our plans or projects because we do not have money – parliament does not fund us like the other committees.’

It was the perception of most respondents, particularly the male respondents, that the caucus’ stand on parliamentary issues is not known. As one male MP noted:

‘The caucus has not moved any Bills or motions on women’s issues. Also, as no law had been repealed affecting women, no moves have been made regarding policies affecting women.’

During the discussion with the Committee on Legal Affairs, Governance, Human Rights and Gender Matters, members held the view that the caucus seemed to lack proper organization. As one member noted:

‘The caucus lacks priority and wastes time on trivial issues like workshops.’

The game of numbers

The low proportion of women in parliament means that the caucus lacks numerical force to have meaningful impact on the legislative process and they cannot occupy influential positions in parliament to exert any impact on this process. As one member aptly put it:

‘The main problem is the small number of women in parliament. We are just 19 out of 158 MPs. Therefore, we are denied any real possibility of changing the decision making process.’

Other interviewees felt that the few female MPs meant that they could not have an impact on issues concerning women and children and that perhaps if they took men on board they would be able to make inroads in parliament. Doing so would mean being able to receive the much-needed support from the men in terms of promoting women’s issues in parliament.

Solidarity and commitment of members

Research findings seem to indicate that women need to support each other. The research revealed that there was very little commitment amongst members of the caucus to each other and to the caucus. The most common response was that:

‘When meetings are called, very few people attend.’

It was observed that members holding cabinet positions showed very little interest in the caucus:

‘We backbenchers try to be committed except for one or two members, but our colleagues on the other side have no time for the caucus’ (meaning those holding ministerial positions).

However, it was the general feeling among the interviewees that members of the caucus who are backbenchers seem to be more committed, perhaps because they have fewer commitments than their colleagues holding cabinet positions.

It was however, interesting to note that older members (backbenchers) seemed less committed than the newer members because, as one said:

‘They feel they know it all.’

One male MP, Lucas Phiri, observed that:

‘There is among the women’s caucus the syndrome of Kulibonesha taa. This syndrome kills the spirit of solidarity amongst the women or implies that “women being what they are cannot work together”.’

¹ A lenje word (from the Central Province of Zambia) which means to show off.

The caucus and party politics

It was apparent from the responses of most interviewees that the focus of the caucus in parliament is on party issues at the expense of women and children's issues. As a representative of the national women's lobby group asserted:

'The caucus is not gender sensitive, it subordinates women and children's issues to party issues.'

And further that:

'Members of the caucus "toe the party line", neglecting their mandate in parliament.'

Toeing the party line has meant that there is often no gender consideration on issues. An example was given by a former MP on the matter of the impeachment of the current president, Levy Mwanawasa:

'Women from the opposition supported the impeachment while those from the ruling party voted against it – it was evident that they were voting on party lines.'

This is a women's issue, as it shows how party politics affects women's participation in parliament.

Also, women feel that they will be misunderstood as mis-aligning themselves from their party programmes if they commit themselves to the caucus. As one female member asserted:

'Women from the ruling party are very uncomfortable that the caucus is currently being chaired by a member of the opposition as they feel that they will be misunderstood as supporting the opposition, hence their minimal participation in the caucus' activities.'

Yet others felt:

'My party brought me here, so I have to articulate my party's manifesto in parliament.'

The caucus aims at bringing women together disregarding party affiliation. However, it is evident from the responses that party politics have an impact on women's participation in the caucus.

The ZWPC and the Women's Movement

Article 3(e) of the ZWPC constitution states as one of its objectives that the Caucus shall:

'Facilitate networking with other organizations – such as non-governmental organizations – aimed at promoting gender equality and participation'.

The question as to whether women MPs represent gender interests raises issues of links between the women in parliament and those advocating for gender interests outside parliament as well as the effect of these links on the performance of female MPs.

The perception of the relationship between the caucus and the Women's Movement was divided. Most of the interviewees, especially those from the Women's Movement, felt that the relationship between the two is one of suspicion. According to this group:

'The relation between the two is suspicious in the sense that the caucus feels that the Women's Movement is there to oppose and challenge their views. The movement on the other hand feels that the caucus is just there to promote their political aspirations while ignoring women's interests.'

It was also felt that the caucus does not take advantage of assistance from the movement. A representative from the national women's lobby group said:

'The female MPs mostly take advantage of our assistance during their election campaigns. As soon as they are elected into office, they forget about us.'

Further it was noted that most invitations to participate in the movement's programmes have been met with apathy except from the leadership of the caucus. This, it was said, impedes the effective performance of the caucus.

Although some MPs appreciate the role the woman's movement is playing, especially through their empowerment programmes, others feel that the movement is very selective in whom amongst the MPs they want to work with. In their words:

'The Women's Movement is biased in terms of who they want to work with'.

This kind of attitude from the Women's Movement may widen the gap between the movement and the women in parliament further.

Other emerging themes

During the research other themes which I had not addressed in my earlier assumptions emerged. These are:

- Parliament is a male domain;
- The issue of sexual harassment
- Correlation between the level of education and level of participation in parliament

Parliament – a male domain

Zambia is generally a patriarchal society which, like many societies, places little value on women's participation in various spheres. Therefore parliament, like other institutions of governance, has developed in a patriarchal society and has been shaped by the assumptions of unequal gender relations and consequently on the basis of who should operate within these institutions of governance. As one female MP observed:

'This parliament was made for men, even recreation is tailored for male MPs - what happens to those of us women who do not patronize bars?'

Another female MP noted that her accommodation provided no sanitary bucket when she first occupied it:

'I had to constantly remind the motel manager to provide me with one - a clear indication that parliament was built with men in mind.'

There is further evidence of a range of ways in which parliament is a gendered organization. One is the usually unspoken incentive system which rewards 'male' ways of operating which is very apparent in debates in the house, one of the most public activities of MPs, and in other areas as well. Such an environment is alien to women, both to their natures and to their experiences.

Interestingly, some female respondents were of the view that although members of staff were generally polite, they feared and respected the male MPs more. For instance, one of the respondents said she had noticed that security personnel at the main entrance only salute the male MPs or as another female MP put it:

'I have had not any problems with the staff as such, but it is clear they respect the men more than us.'

Sexual harassment

After a lot of probing another theme that is a result of the unequal relations in parliament arose – sexual harassment. According to Matrine Bbuku-Chulu and others (2001), sexual harassment is 'according to feminist theory an aspect of male power over and control of women' (Bbuku-Chulu *et al.*, 2001). The research findings revealed that sexual harassment is common although it is not taken seriously, 'that is how men are', was a

common response. However, it was the general perception that it is an experience that could impact negatively on the recipient.

Rubenstein (1992), has defined sexual harassment as conduct of a sexual nature which is ‘unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct’ (Rubenstein, 1992: 11). Such behaviour obviously defines women’s role as sexual objects rather than as work colleagues and is common in a male domain such as parliament.

Once, when I sat in the chamber to observe the proceedings of the house, one male member of the opposition made a comment regarding the dress of a female member from the ruling party. He likened her attire to a wedding dress. This could however, have been a case of *chimbuya*.²

The importance ascribed to ‘dress’ reflects a broader concern over men’s social and political roles and how these are symbolized. It has been argued that ‘dress’ is another form of control and denies a woman her space. It can also be argued that it stigmatizes and denies a woman the right to decide on her appearance. A woman would be more conscious of herself, especially in a male-dominated environment such as parliament, and this could impact on her confidence. Making a woman a subject of a joke is a domination technique that men often use to put a woman down.

Correlation between level of education and participation in parliament

Although the relationship between level of education and participation in parliament is an obvious one, it had not been addressed in the earlier assumptions. Ordinarily, there is minimal participation of women in parliament. However, during my observation of the sitting of the house, it was very apparent that the more educated female MPs contributed more to the Bills under debate. This is because they are more exposed and more knowledgeable of current issues and are therefore able to engage in the parliamentary process more effectively.

5 Discussion, conclusion and recommendations

The gap between the law and reality in the protection of women’s political rights in Zambia

Zambia has ratified several United Nations conventions and declarations relevant to the participation of women in decision-making bodies such as the Zambian parliament. Of relevance to this study are the following:

- 1 The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights - ICCPR (1996).

In article 3 of this Convention:

‘The state parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal rights of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in the present Covenant.’

- 2 The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women – CEDAW (1979)

This states under article 7:

‘State parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political life and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women on equal terms with men, the right:

- *to vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;*
- *to participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform public functions at all the levels of government;*

² Tribal cousinship is widely practised in Zambia. People normally jest at each other with no offence meant to the recipient. This is also common in parliament.

– *to participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.*

3 Reaffirming governments' commitment to CEDAW is the Beijing Platform of Action (1995) from which SADC countries have identified areas of concern, one of which is the inequality between men and women in the sharing of power at all decision-making levels.

4 The Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa

The protocol derives its authority from article 66 of the African Charter of Human and People's Rights which provides for special protocols or agreements to supplement the provisions of the African Charter. The significance of this protocol is that it is a specifically African instrument. It is also significant in that it acknowledges international declarations and conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR 1948), the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR 1966), the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR 1966), and the CEDAW. These relate to the rights of women as being indivisible and interdependent human rights.

Article 9, 'Right to participate in the political and decision making process states that:

'State Parties to the Protocol shall take specific positive action to promote participative governance and the equal participation of women in the political life of their countries through affirmative action, enabling national legislation and other measures to ensure that:

(a) women participate without any discrimination in all elections;

(b) women are represented equally at all levels with men in all electoral processes;

(c) women are equal partners with men at all levels of development and implementation of state politicize and development programmes.

4. State parties shall ensure increased and effective representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making'

For the purpose of this discussion, Zambia's obligation to international conventions relating to the political rights of women will use the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa. The protocol has been selected because it brings together, in a single comprehensive human rights treaty, the provisions of United Nations instruments concerning discrimination on the basis of sex and extends them further to create a tool dedicated to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

A very important duty under the protocol's state obligations is to ensure the protection of the rights of women as stipulated in international declarations and conventions. It is by taking the duty of promoting women's equal right to political participation seriously that African governments can truly make progress in women's empowerment.

This study will look at the Constitution of Zambia, which is the supreme law of the land and also the National Gender Policy which was adopted in recognition of the need for full participation of women in the development process at all levels to ensure the attainment of equality and equity between men and women.

The questions to ask are: 'Are women's political rights protected in the existing legal framework in Zambia?' or 'Has Zambia upheld international human rights principles in relation to women's political rights in its legal framework?'

Women's rights under the Constitution of Zambia

Article 13 of the constitution is a general equality provision which provides protection from discrimination on the grounds of gender. As indicated earlier, there is no specific provision for women. Article 13 is, however, contradicted by article 23 of the amended 1996 constitution which remains identical to the same article in the

1991 constitution. This exempts all forms of discrimination arising from customary, family and personal law. This means that it exempts from its purview all those areas where discrimination against women is most practised. This provides the ideological foundation for the larger pattern of societal discrimination and has a spill-over effect on institutions such as parliament.

This falls short of the spirit of the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa which states:

‘ State parties shall combat all forms of discrimination against women through appropriate legislation...’.

Women’s rights under the National Gender Policy

As far as the Zambian National Gender Policy is concerned, despite an elaborate plan of action, implementation of these provisions is yet to be seen. As much as the lack of resources may be blamed for this, it also confirms government’s lack of commitment to raising the status of women in all spheres. This is the case despite the changing political landscape to pluralism and the expected opportunities arising out of global and regional trends that have been alluded to in this study.

It is evident that there is a gap between the principles of the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa and national law in as far as its application in Zambia. It is for this reason that women in Zambia shall continue to lag behind men in the decision-making process.

Conclusion

Women’s role in society has gradually changed from their traditional roles as homemakers and caregivers to decision makers. This evolution of societal roles could indicate a political environment more conducive to women’s participation. In many countries where women’s rights are formally recognized and active, steps have been taken to abolish legislation that discriminates against women. The realization has been that mere legislative enactment has not in practice accorded women equality. There has remained a distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* equality. This means that what is proscribed in the law does not relate to what is obtaining on the ground in terms of women’s equality.

Women’s increased participation should however be judged by their increased effectiveness and impact on how they can influence changes in institutional rules, norms and practices and increased rights for other women. Further, to redress gender disparities and improve the quality of women’s lives.

From the findings during this research, a conclusion can be drawn that it is important to ensure, among other things, a critical mass of representation by women in parliament if matters affecting them are to be adequately addressed. Other mechanisms have been suggested that may be put in place to ensure that constraints to the participation and effectiveness of the women’s caucus in parliament are removed. It is therefore, essential to look beyond numbers as an indicator of equality but more on the impact and effectiveness of the caucus’ participation in parliament. The importance of the establishment of the Gender Oversight Committee in Parliament cannot be overemphasized in this regard as it will ensure that women’s concerns and ultimately the caucus’ interests are taken seriously in parliament.

However all suggestions made will be more rhetoric without political will to take them to fruition. The call for political will to realize this dream cannot be overemphasized. In the words of the then President of the Republic of Zambia, Dr Friedrich Jacob Titus Chiluba, in his foreword in the National Gender Policy (March-2000):

‘ Government is committed to the attainment of its vision of gender equality. The full realization of this vision is dependent upon the commitment of all stakeholders including individual citizens.’

There are various measures that need to be undertaken to address promote the participation of women in politics and ultimately in the ZWPC.

Addressing the gap between international law and national law

Zambia as state party to human rights treaties, namely, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of Women in Africa, has a duty to adopt domestic legislation to conform with these international obligations. Therefore, as a way to close the gap between international human rights law and national law with regard to women's political rights there is need for the following:

Law reform

Legislative provisions in the constitution and national policies, such as the National Gender Policy, constitute the cornerstone and guarantee for mainstreaming gender in national policy. Law reform will therefore be essential as a way of working towards harmonizing domestic law to be in conformity with the principles of international human rights.

The 2003 constitutional review and reform process presents a good opportunity to ensure that discriminatory clauses are removed from the constitution.

Domestication of CEDAW

In Zambia, the lack of political will and commitment to implement the interests and aspirations of women has always been a serious difficulty in relation to having actionable strategies and decisions in its policies and the resolve to domesticate international conventions and resolutions. Domestication of the CEDAW will provide a legal framework to protect women in parliament whose absence hinders their participation in matters of national importance. However this seems unlikely because of government's evident reluctance to domesticate international law.

Adoption of non-legal measures

Domestication of CEDAW is not a guarantee for effective enjoyment of human rights. In addition to this, there is need to adopt other non-legal measures such as administration, economic and social measures which should be consistent with the nature of these rights. These are measures that will be designed to promote equality. This will entail effective implementation of CEDAW. For example, it may be that women in Zambia are prevented from enjoying their political rights because of their low financial status. It is by taking the duty of promoting women's economic empowerment that government can truly make progress in empowering women in this regard.

From the findings in the research, it was noted that it may be that alternatives to ensure that women's voices are heard in parliament will have to be considered in order to accustom the nation to the fact that women are on the road to achieving parity in parliament.

Women in parliament

Empowering women

The mere presence of women in parliament is not enough. It has to be women who can make an impact. Their impact can be increased by empowering women in parliament. Another common theme that emerged during the research was the failure of the ZWPC to facilitate the passage of legislature that deals with women's issues. Further, there was the lack of confidence and assertiveness of women in parliament to enable them to engage effectively in the parliamentary process. Through empowerment, the quality of the women in parliament may improve and this will simultaneously remove the element of patronage in parliament. Empowerment will enable the women in parliament to assert their rights. It will also enable them to confront the unequal power

relations that are a hindrance to their effective participation. Schuler and Hashemu (1991) define empowerment as, 'a process through which women increase their ability to share their own lives and environment; and involvement in women's self awareness status and efficiency in social interactions' (1992:33).

The Women's Movement is already playing a commendable role in this regard. There is however need to intensify this by providing training and assisting them to create useful networks within and outside parliament.

Further, enabling women parliamentarians to attend workshops on issues such as parliamentary procedures will enhance their confidence in parliament as they will have good grounding and sound knowledge and understanding of the processes and procedures of the institution.

It is also vital that women parliamentarians have a comprehensive understanding of international human rights conventions on women's rights. These could assist them in raising issues regarding women's situation and concerns in parliament. The MPs could also use their understanding of such international legislation to legitimize their demands and emphasize the international obligations undertaken by their countries, and ultimately contribute to their national legislation (Kellope, 1998: 201).

It will also be possible for them to play a significant role to enforce international legislation and to ensure that Zambian policies and laws give effect to international instruments which advance gender equality. This will further enable the monitoring of the progress made in the signing of international treaties, particularly those related to the protection of women's rights. Further, through knowledge of these instruments, they will be able to make use of their parliamentary right to introduce legislation to address discrepancies between international conventions that Zambia has ratified to protect the human rights of women and which are contrary to national legislation.

Learning to cope with domination techniques

Women in parliament are often faced with informal barriers especially as they form a small minority in parliament. They are therefore susceptible to male domination techniques. It is important for them to know and to be able to recognize these techniques and to understand that they present not only technical harassment but general gender domination – whether consciously or not and to learn how to fight them.

Learning the rules and procedures of parliament

Women need to adopt a strategic approach. They need to be encouraged to learn the rules and proceedings of the parliamentary system, and to use them effectively to promote women's decision making. To support women's endeavours to change the rules and discourse of parliament, training and orientation programmes may be needed.

Through the adoption of this kind of strategy women can act to change legislative rules and procedures. These strategies could include establishing a national machinery to facilitate dialogue with the women's caucus and monitor implementation of gender-sensitive policies and legislation. It is also important to consider how to raise awareness, conduct research, target the media and strengthen women's caucuses and networks to involve women parliamentarians so as to increase their participation in parliament.

The ZWPC

Affirmative action

A recurring theme during the research was that the ZWPC lacks numerical force to be effective in parliament. It is therefore being recommended as follows:

Quotas or reserved seats for women in the legislative assembly

Quotas are temporary corrective measures that seek to increase women's representation in decision-making and policy making processes. That is until barriers for women's entry into politics are addressed. The fundamental concept about this system is to motivate women to take part in politics and to ensure that they are not isolated

in political life. The basic argument for the use of quotas is that it addresses inequality brought about by law, religion and culture.

It is important to ensure a critical mass of representation by women if matters affecting them are to be adequately addressed. Thus the IPU, CPA and SADC motivation for the use of, for example, a 30 per cent quota should be adopted.

Recent studies show that most of the countries that have succeeded in implementing the quota system have amongst the highest level of female political representation in political and administrative decision-making position. (Karam, 1998).

The provisions of such reserved places may not be universally approved but it does ensure that women's voices are heard in national fora. Pakistan, Tanzania and Bangladesh have taken steps to ensure the advancement of women by reserving seats for them in their legislatures. In Uganda, there is a constitutional clause mandating the percentage of women's representation.

A parliamentary seat from each of the thirty nine (39) districts would be reserved for women, resulting in an increase in women's political representation.

Some other countries with higher percentages of women representatives have achieved this through the use of the quota system. In 1997, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, North Korea and Nepal had compulsory quotas either in terms of candidates or actual seats (Budlender *et al.*, 1998). 33). Some women felt that quotas would not 'help' as women would get no respect and be regarded as appointed rather than elected, detracting from their authority.

Since political parties are the key players in power structures and have more influence in the politics of our society they should also use quotas so that women are able to compete on an equal footing with men. They should also allocate a considerable percentage of their budget for gender-related programmes, particularly capacity building training for prospective candidates. This training should include techniques for debates and speeches apart from political campaigning and self-assertion techniques.

Nominated MPs

The eight seats in the Zambian parliament reserved for nominated MPs could be allocated to women as a way to increase the number of women in Parliament.

The status of the caucus

The caucus is an informal grouping of female MPs. It is evident from the responses given during the research, that status is a stumbling block to the caucus' functioning. This status also means among other things that the caucus does not enjoy the privileges of other sessional committees of parliament. For example, it has to source its own funding for its programmes. It also does not have its own secretariat. Most importantly any recommendations on matters within its jurisdiction that it may make cannot be brought to the house for debate and subsequent legislation. It is, therefore, recommended that consideration be given to granting the women's caucus formal status in parliament.

Establishment of a parliamentary committee on gender

Currently, there is in place a sessional committee which deals with legal affairs, governance, human rights and gender matters. Its mandate is to oversee the activities of government ministries and departments outside parliament – the Ministry of Legal Affairs, the Gender and Development Division at Cabinet House and the Permanent Human Rights Commission.

It is worthy of note that this committee deals with matters outside parliament – government ministries and/or departments. It is recommended that consideration be given to the establishment of a gender oversight committee. Such a committee would cover, among other things, mainstreaming parliamentary processes, activities and

policies such as the parliamentary budget. It will also ensure that the concerns of the caucus are addressed and will facilitate the passing of legislation on matters of importance to women. The composition of this committee should be eight MPs out of which at least four should be women.

In addition to this, consideration should be given to establishing national machinery to facilitate dialogue with the women's caucus and to monitor implementation of gender-sensitive policies and legislation to increase the women's political participation.

Including male MPs

The patriarchal culture in Zambia is obviously an obstacle to women's advancement in many spheres, including parliament. The job of advancing the women's agenda is still predominantly in the hands of the ZWPC. However, the participation and involvement of men in achieving the full inclusion of women in political life is one form of positive cooperation and is an important alliance to develop.

Involving men in the activities of the ZWPC will enable them to appreciate women's issues and ultimately win their support in parliament. The notion that women's issues are only for women should also be dispelled by taking the men's views on such issues into consideration. While outside organizations, and in particular GIDD have in the past made efforts to create awareness of gender and related issues amongst MPs through workshops, they should not relent in these efforts, despite the apparent lack of interest from women MPs.

Parliament as an institution also has a role to play in this regard. It can do this through the induction or orientation process of MPs. The induction or orientation of MPs is held at the beginning of every term of office, usually every five years. Issues such as the following are addressed:

- Operation of parliament, for example rules and procedures of the house and its constitutional mandate;
- The role of the Office of the Clerk of parliament;
- Operations of departments of parliament;
- Other subject-specific topics.

It is recommended that this process should include issues of women and children. All MPs should be targeted regardless of sex so that they are all conversant with such issues and can appreciate their national significance.

Party politics and the caucus

Although the role and functioning of political parties is being questioned in many countries today, they remain central to representative democracies, promoting essential competition on ideological and policy alternatives.

By maintaining firm control over the nomination of candidates, political parties play a determining role in women's access to and participation in parliament. The stage at which women are chosen as candidates for election is perhaps the most crucial for determining whether women will enter parliament:

'So long as political parties remain institutions dominated by men, without clear and transparent rules for the recruitment of candidates, women's access to decision-making positions (such as in parliament) will remain restricted' (Kadirgamer and Bylesjo, 2002).

Although some parties are taking measures to address the low number of women in decision-making bodies by adopting affirmative action strategies, the rate of progress remains slow. Political parties need to be more practical in training and promoting women candidates to contest elections and providing sufficient financial resources for women.

This would be overcome by the gender oversight committee whose mandate would include overseeing the affairs of the women's caucus in parliament.

The ZWPC and the Women's Movement

Interaction with women's organizations

In recognition of the importance of the role that the Women's Movement is playing to support women parliamentarians, there is need for women in parliament to take advantage of this support. The interaction with women's organizations outside parliament will also be beneficial to the caucus as these organizations will be able to mobilize support for them from the electorate. This will in turn enable them to be accountable to the women whose interests they strive to promote in parliament.

There is also need for the establishment of an organization (a non-governmental organization) which should be solely responsible for the affairs of women in parliament. This is to ensure continuity in terms of support to the caucus and the women in parliament and not only during elections, as is the case at present.

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Appendix 1 Constitution of the Zambian Women Parliamentarian's Caucus

We, the Zambian Women Parliamentarians do hereby give to ourselves this Constitution.

Article 1

This Constitution shall be called the Constitution of the ZWPC.

Article 2

In this Constitution, unless the context otherwise requires: 'Executive Committee' means a Committee established in pursuance of Article 5 of the Constitution. 'Caucus' means the ZWPC.

SADC' means the Southern African Development Community.

Article 3

Objectives

The objectives of the Caucus shall be:

- (a) to provide a Forum for discussion on matters affecting women in the country, the SADC region in the Commonwealth and other regions.
- (b) To promote and help sensitize all Parliamentarians to the principles of gender equality in the country, within the SADC region, the Commonwealth and other regions;
- (c) To facilitate the effective implementation of projects on gender issues;
- (d) To encourage and mobilize women participation in all issues pertaining to national development and to promote self reliance and economic independence among women;
- (e) To facilitate networking with other organizations and institutions within and outside the country, such as non-governmental organizations, business and intellectual communities in activities aimed at promoting gender equality and participation;
- (f) To research into issues affecting women and to make recommendations thereon;
- (g) To promote peace and stability in the country and to contribute to the democratic process.

Article 4

Membership and subscription

Membership to the caucus shall be open to the following;

- (a) All Zambian women MPs
- (b) Associate members
- (c) Life members

Members

Any sitting female member of the Zambia National Assembly or former MP shall be entitled to become a member of the caucus upon payment of the prescribed fee.

Associate member

Any member of the caucus upon ceasing to be a member of the National Assembly of Zambia can be an associate member upon payment of the prescribed fee. Associates shall not be entitled to take part in the management of the caucus.

Life member

Any sitting female member of the Zambia National Assembly or former member shall be entitled to become a life member upon payment of the prescribed life subscription fee. Non-sitting life members may not vote nor take part in the management of the caucus.

Honorary member

Any male or female who contributes significantly to the ZWPC and gender balance in Zambia. They may donate in cash and/or kind.

Membership fees and subscriptions

Membership fees shall be as approved by the caucus and these shall be as follows:

- (h) Membership fee
- (i) Associate membership fee
- (j) Life membership fee
- (k) Annual subscription fee

Article 5

The Executive Committee

1. The following Executive Committee of the caucus is hereby established and shall consist of the following:

- (a) Chairperson
- (b) Vice-chairperson
- (c) Secretary
- (d) Vice-secretary
- (e) Treasurer
- (f) Vice-treasurer
- (g) Publicity secretary
- (h) Vice-publicity secretary

2. Other sub-committees on the ZWPC may be established as approved by the Caucus.

Article 6

Functions of the Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for:

- (a) Management of the affairs of the Caucus;
- (b) Giving directions to the Caucus and ensuring that the decisions of the same are implemented;
- (c) Preparation of annual reports;
- (d) Preparation of draft programmes of the Caucus activities;
- (e) Tabling of the annual audited accounts before the Caucus.

2. The Executive Committee shall be answerable to the Caucus.

3. Members of the Executive Committee shall be elected by the Caucus every two years and current office holders may be re-elected.

4. Decisions at the Caucus' meetings shall be arrived at by consensus and in the even of the failure to reach a consensus, by voting provided that each member shall be entitled to one vote.
5. Where a member of the Caucus ceases to be a MP, she may become an Associate or Life Member as per Article 4
6. A quorum shall be made up of half of the members of the Executive Committee and the Caucus.

Article 7

Financial Provisions

1. Sources of Finance

The Finances of the *Zambian Women Parliamentarians Caucus* shall accrue from the following sources.

- (i) The Caucus be considered financially just as any other parliamentary Committee.
- (ii) Annual subscriptions from members the amount which shall be determined by the Caucus;
- (iii) Contributions from members and other well wishers
- (iv) Grants or donations;
- (v) Fund raising activities approved by the Caucus and the Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia.

2. Financial Year

The Financial Year of the *ZWPC* shall commence on 1 January and end on 31 December of each calendar year.

Article 8

Amendments

An amendment to this Constitution shall be adopted by a decision of two thirds (2/3) of all members of the Caucus.

A proposal of amendment may be made to the Chairperson for consideration by the Caucus.

Appendix II Female Members of Parliament

1. M. K. W. Nalumango
2. M. M. Nsingo
3. C. Namugala
4. J. Kangoma
5. C. J. Chisupa
6. R. Chipampe
7. R. M. Musokotwane
8. S. T. Masebo
9. G. J. Sialumba
10. Reverend G. Z. Nyirongo
11. P. N. Nawa
12. O. N. Liebental
13. B. H. Jere
14. R. C. Banda
15. Q. V. Kakoma
16. I. M. Wina
17. Princess Nakatindi Wina
18. E. Z. Nawakwi
19. B. Wamulume

Appendix III Women and committee membership

Regina Musokotwane, MP	Standing orders	Local Governance	Sport, Youth and Child Affairs
Besnart Jere, MP	Privileges, absences and support services	Government Assurances	Delegated Legislation
Edith Nawakwi, MP	Reforms and modernization	Economic Affairs and Labour	Health, Community Development and Social Welfare
Patricia Nawa, MP	Estimates	Public Accounts	
Inonge Wina, MP	Communications Transport, Works and Supply	Education Science and Technology	
Grace Sialumba, MP	Agriculture and Lands	Health, Community Development and Social Welfare	
Queen Kakoma, MP	Legal Affairs, Governance, Human Rights and Gender Matters	National Security and Foreign Affairs	
Bataba Wamulume, MP	Economic Affairs and Labour	Sport, Youth and Child Affairs	
O Nkumbula – Liebenthal, MP	Energy, Environment and Tourism (Chairperson)		

Appendix IV Committees of parliament

A. General purposes committees

- Public Accounts Committee
- Committee on Delegated Legislation
- Committee on Government Assuarances

B. Housekeeping committees

- Standing Orders Committee
- Committee on Privileges and Absences and Support Services

C. Departmental committees

- Committee on Agriculture and Lands
- Committee on Economic Affairs and Labour
- Committee on Communications, Transport, Works and Supply
- Committee on Energy, Environment and Tourism
- Committee on Health, Community Development and Social Welfare
- Committee on Information and Broadcasting Services
- Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
- Committee on Education ,Science and Technology
- Committee on Local Governance, Housing and Chiefs Affairs
- Committee on Legal Affairs, Governance, Human Rights and Gender Matters
- Committee on Sport , Youth and Child Affairs

Appendix V Interview guidelines (A- D)

A. Female MPs

Personal Information

1. Age Group
 - 30–40
 - 40–50
 - 50–60
 - 60–70
2. Educational Qualifications
3. Are you single/married/Divorced/widowed?
4. How many dependants do you have?
 - children under 15 years
 - children above 15 years
 - no children
 - old persons
 - handicapped persons
5. Are you happy with the services offered by Parliament e.g support staff, ablution facilities, accommodation, catering facilities? etc.
6. How do you feel about combining political commitment and family life?
7. Do you have any problems in raising women's issues in your constituency?

Women in parliament

8. How do you see women in Parliament?
9. Do you feel that they contribute effectively to the Parliamentary Process.
10. What has been your experience as a female MP?
11. Do you receive support from the male MPs? From members of staff?
12. Do you feel that women are competent enough to undertake their mandate in Parliament.
13. What problems do women face in Parliament?
14. Do you receive support from your closest relations for your parliamentary commitment and activities.
15. Would you say that your political party is supportive and receptive to women?
16. Are you conversant with Parliamentary Practice and Procedure?
17. Do you feel that the timing of committee meetings and parliamentary meetings take into account of your needs as a woman?
18. How often do you use the facilities of the Parliamentary Library? Often/rarely/sometimes

The ZWPC

19. How do you see the usefulness of the Women's Caucus in Parliament?
20. How do you see the commitment of members of the Caucus?

21. What do you feel are the barriers to the effective performance of the Caucus?

22. Do you feel that the Caucus is important in raising women's issues?

The ZWPC and the Women's Movement

23. How do you see the relationship between the Caucus and the Woman's Movement?

24. Do you feel that the Women's Movement plays or could play an effective role in lobbying government to domesticate international women's rights instruments to improve the performance and participation of women in Parliament.

25 Do you feel that women's organizations are active in promoting the status of women?

26 Do you feel that the Women's Movement is sufficiently in contact with women parliamentarians.

B. GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Do you feel that the women's caucus in Parliament?

- Enjoys official support of Parliamentary services?
- Enjoys official recognition?
- Is able to influence Parliamentary and legislative activity?

2 What do you feel are the barriers to the effective performance of the Caucus?

C. MALE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

1. Do you follow the activities of the ZWPC?

2. How do you see the usefulness of the Caucus in Parliament?

3. Do you feel that female MPs are competent enough to undertake their mandate in Parliament?

4. Do you feel that women are discriminated against in Parliament in any way?

5. What do you feel are the barriers to the Caucus' effective performance if any?

6. What do you think should be done to make the Caucus more effective?

D. WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

1. Do you feel that the ZWPC is fulfilling its mandate as a tool foster women's interests.

2. How is your relationship with the Caucus?

3. Do you feel that the Caucus is taking advantage of your assistance to enhance or promote their effectiveness?

4. What do you feel are the barriers to the effective performance of the Caucus?

5. Could you offer recommendations to make it more effective?

6. On the CEDAW

(i) Do you feel that female MPs are discriminated against in Parliament?

(ii) Could the fact that Zambia has not domesticated the CEDAW and other women's rights treaties be the reason for the discrimination of women in Parliament in general?

7. How do you see your role in encouraging the government to domesticate the CEDAW?