



**UNIVERSITY OF RWANDA**

**COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**CENTER FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT (CCM)**

**UNDERSTANDING THE PERCEPTION OF PEOPLE ON  
GENDER EQUALITY AND RELATED FAMILY CONFLICT.  
THE CASE OF KIGALI SECTOR/NYARUGENGE DISTRICT**

**A DESSERTATION SUBMITTED TO UR IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTERS DEGREE IN PEACE STUDIES  
AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and to the best of knowledge, it has not been previously published or written by another person, or certain material which to substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at University of Rwanda or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the study.

Name: **Corneille MURIGO**

Sign:

Date:

**Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Umutoni Adeline, my daughter MURIGO Ella Nelyse Queen and my son MURIGO Cyusa Alek.

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I am very grateful to the almighty God for his mercy, love, blessing and protection. The success of this study is a result of a valuable contribution from various individuals. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all those who contributed in one way or another to the success of this study.

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May God bless you all!

**Corneille MURIGO**

## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

ACHPR: African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

ASAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations

IRDP: Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace

BDPA: Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CID: Criminal Investigation Department

EAC: East African Community

ECHRFF: European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

GBV: Gender Based Violence

GE: Gender Equality

GMO: Gender Monitoring Office

IACPPEVW: Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women

ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Right

ICCSCR: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

ICPDPA: International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action

IRDP :Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

RIB: Rwanda Investigation Bureau

SAARC: South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

SADC: Southern African Development Community

SDG's: Sustainable Development Goals

SGBV: Sexual and Gender Based Violence

UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN: United Nations

UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

USAID : United States Agency for International Development

UNSCR: United Nations Security Council Resolution

VAWG: Violence Against Women and Girls

VDPA: Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

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## **ABSTRACT**

This Study was conducted in order to understand the perception of people on gender equality and family related conflict in Kigali sector/ Nyarugenge District. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to: i) analyze the perception of people around gender equality concept. ii) assess how gender equality perceptions contribute to family related conflict (iii) recommend some possible intervention strategies for a better understanding of gender equality that suggest for harmonious family relationships. Methodologically, the study was purely qualitative and data were collected using individual in-depth interview and review of secondary data tools. Ten females, ten male, five local leaders participated in the study. In total (25) respondents participated in this study.

According to the narratives from respondents who participated in this study, indicates that laws and policy related to gender equality created the opportunity for women and helped them to understand their rights to participate in different activities that promote their wellbeing. However, testimonies from respondents on other hand reveals that these policies related to gender equality empower women and disempower men and this become a threat to men who still have cultural beliefs of supremacy and domination over women. This different understanding of gender equality by women and men create tension that turns to violence sometimes, as consequences the family become unstable.

Furthermore findings indicates that 64% of respondents who participated in this study narrated that lack of communication and dialogue between couples become a source of conflict at household level.

The findings suggested strategies include: public awareness on the real meaning of gender equality for the improvement of better understanding of the concept, recommendations also have been given and areas for further research have been also suggested.



## CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Gender equality is a fundamental human right preserved in all international human rights covenants and declarations (Universal declaration of human rights, 1948; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966; The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995; United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, 2000 among others.

In the same vein, regional organizations such as the East African Community; the Economic Community of West African States; the Southern African Development Community; the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, have also included gender equality in their respective charters as one of the governing principles.

Similarly, the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium Development Goal, “to promote gender equality and empower women” also signaled global recognition that this is both an important global development goal in itself, and a key to the success of all the other goals. The debate of gender equality has long been emphasized on the launch of United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015, where gender equality could be found as the fifth goal.

Notwithstanding this global recognition of gender equality and its subsequent enjoyment, recent studies associate the misconception of this concept with family conflicts (Olah, Richter and Kotowska, 2014). Indeed, the concept of gender equality brought changes in traditional gender roles accompanied by a substantial increase in female labour participation as well as women’s social and economic independence (Jokinen and Kuronen, 2011; OECD, 2011 cited by Oláh et al(2014,p.3)

In addition, gender equality has incorporated dimensions of independence and responsibilities that belonged to the male domain, and promoted a more equal distribution of responsibilities between men and women.

As Inglehart (2003) mentioned that the concept of gender equality requires reorganizing professional life as a function of family life and defining cultural models of paternity based on a new role distribution.

Similarly, Geist and Cohen (2011) cited by Lomazzi et al(2018,p.2) stipulated that “balancing professional duties and family responsibilities remains a relevant issue for men and women, who must combine the needs of taking care of family members with the necessity of paid work”.

They further argued that when couples define their arrangements to balance such differing responsibilities, many elements come into play including availability of resources and personal preferences, cultural context, and institutional setting for opportunities that contribute to establishing individual work-life balance strategies and, more generally, the gender contract between partners. However, researches revealed that men still condition their family responsibilities as a function of their work demands (Ranson, 2001). Becker, Landes and Michael (1977) were also of the view that misconception of gender equality destabilizes marital unions because it endangers role specialization within a couple as the traditional believes and cultural norms push men to maintain their power over women and control the family.

It is in this context that Olah, Richter and Kotowska (2013) found the numbers of separations, divorces, dissolutions and family conflict rising . This mainly attributed to the interplay between new gender roles and increasingly complex family forms as well as relationships.

Rwanda embraced gender equality and showed its commitment in addressing gender inequality by including this concept among the fundamental constitutional rights, ratifying relevant international treaties and making it one of crosscutting issues for sustainable development. Since its inception, it is not clear whether perception of traditionally prescribed gender roles have changed to adapt to the new concept of gender equality or whether traditional perceptions still exist and subsequently fuel family related conflicts. This research therefore will elucidate the relationship between perception of gender equality and family related conflict using a case of Kigali sector, Nyarugenge District.

## **1.2. Problem Statement**

The Strategic plan for the implementation of national gender policy (2010, P.6), the Government of Rwanda expressed many efforts to promote Gender equality through the ratification of relevant international instruments and the Development of National legal instruments and implementation of women empowerment Policies.

This, according to the strategic plan has had a positive impact on, for instance political participation, involvement in decision making, access to Education, health, Justice Economy for women and fighting Gender based violence.

However, despite significant improvement in gender equality across the country, some key constraints are still hindering the mainstreaming process that asks for serious attention and commitment of the government for the future.

For example Nader (2016, P.16) points out that even with the progressive policies in place to ensure female participation in the public domains, there is misunderstanding of the gender equality concept including gender sensitivity and resistance in behaviour change.

According to Kagaba (2015, P.79), “men in rural areas claim that they were not catered by laws and policies of gender equality, and the social relationship with their wives was affected as results”.

Further the study conducted by IRDP in 2016 on intra family conflict reveals that the “causes of the family conflict in Rwanda are mostly associated to the factors such as psychological, social and cultural context, distribution of scarce resources and family problems”.

Kagaba (2015, p.556-557) found out that gender equality puts some women in trouble with their partners who still rely on traditional cultural beliefs that undermine women rights.

The above researches conducted in Rwanda did not clearly indicate whether perception of traditionally prescribed gender roles have changed to adapt to the new concept of gender equality or whether traditional perceptions still exist and subsequently fuel family related conflicts

Crime statistics reports of year 2015 to 2017 from the former Criminal investigation office ranked Kigali sector located in Nyarugenge District as the first sector to have family related conflicts. Statistics indicate that 718 crime cases recorded in entire district, 124 cases (17.2%) were committed in Kigali sector and most of victims were women, and men were perpetrators but no research was conducted to determine whether these crimes are linked to the perception of gender equality.

Hence the research was conducted to analyse the perception of people on gender equality; to assess the relationship between the perception about gender equality and family related conflicts; and to recommend intervention strategies for a better understanding of gender equality for harmonious family relationships in Kigali sector.

### **1.3. Objective**

#### **1.3.1. Main objective**

The objective of this research is to assess the understanding the perception of people in Nyarugenge district around the concept of gender equality and the related conflicts that understanding could cause to the family particularly in Kigali sector

#### **1.3.2. Specific objectives**

- i. To analyze the perception of people on gender equality concept by family members in Kigali sector
- ii. To assess the relationship between the perception of gender equality and family related conflict in Kigali sector
- iii. To recommend intervention strategies for a better perception of gender equality for harmonious family relationships in Kigali Sector.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

- i. How do you understand the concept of gender equality?
- ii. Does gender equality perception contribute to family related conflicts in Kigali sector?
- iii. What measures required for a better understanding of gender equality for harmonious family relationships in Kigali Sector?

#### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

Lovitts and Wert (2009) describe the significance of a study as a substantial contribution that is valuable and will have an effect at the empirical, conceptual, theoretical, or policy level; causes the community to see things differently; influences the conversation, research, and teaching; and finally has implications for and advances in the field, the discipline, other disciplines, or society.

The findings of this research therefore will be significant to the following different actors:

- i. The government of Rwanda will benefit from the findings of this research as it will be able to make an appraisal of the progress made in implementing gender equality in Rwanda
- ii. The findings of this research will also inform policy makers on relevant strategies to be undertaken with a view to improving the perception of gender equality
- iii. The findings of this research will also be of importance to other researchers and academic community in general who are interested in the field of gender related issues
- iv. The researcher will also benefit from the findings of this research by acquiring new knowledge
- v. The local leaders in Nyarugenge District will be aware of what is happening in their sectors and be able to take necessary measures to deal with family related conflicts.

#### **1.6. Scope of the Study**

This study will focus on understanding of perception of gender equality and its link with family related conflicts in Kigali Sector. Kigali sector has been chosen as one of the sectors of Nyarugenge District where family conflicts proved to be on pic according to crime statistics reports from Rwanda Investigation Bureau (former CID) year 2015-2017.

Respondents included selected households having experienced conflicts in their families as well as local leaders who dealing with family conflict related issues in their daily activities.

#### **1.7. Organization of the study**

This study will be organized into five chapters divided into sub-chapters and sections. The introductory chapter will provide the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, and signification of the research as well as the scope of the research.

The second chapter will review various academic literatures and provide evidences of what other academic researchers have already written on the same or similar subject matter.

It will strive to highlight the relations between the perception of gender equality and family related conflicts as per the findings of other researchers.

The third chapter will provide a methodological approach that will be used for this research.

It will explain the design for this research, pinpoint target population and sample size, samples selection. It will further plan for research data collection methods, their validity and reliability as well data analysis methods. Ethical considerations will also be provided in the third chapter.

The fourth chapter will present the analysis and interpretation of the findings while the last chapter will provide the General conclusion and relevant recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0. Introduction**

This chapter will indicate a review of definition of key concepts, the literature on understanding the perception of various researchers on gender equality and family related conflict.

A general overview of the level of understanding of gender equality and its relationship with family related conflict will be covered. In developed and underdeveloped countries, the role of family is very important however it is evident that expected positive relationships are becoming vulnerable due to the resistance of adaptation to the social change. Globally family related conflicts are on the rise and countries are obliged to take appropriate measures to tackle the matter to minimize consequences

According Poudel (2010, P.4)citing (Dominelli, 2005), a family is observed as collective institution where a person feels safe, secure and comfortable. Family is also perceived as an educative organization, therefore the home atmosphere should be favourable in order to develop an educative and moral individual. That is to say a family is a standardizing entity as well as a socializing one that contribute to educate children how to become good citizens for next generation.

On the same note, Poudel cites other writings from Murdock (1949) portraying family as a social group characterized the same area of residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. Family as well includes adults at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and one or more children.

### **2.1. Definition of key concepts**

#### **2.1.1. Gender**

According to UNESCO (2003, P.1), gender concept is defined as “roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures, the concept also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviour of both women and men”

Gender roles and expectations can change over time and can vary within and between cultures and systems of social differentiation such as political status, class, ethnicity, physical and mental disability, age and more, modify gender roles (UNESCO, 2003).

The concept of gender in global politics is vital because it it reveals how women’s subordination (or men’s domination) is socially constructed.

### **2.1.2. Gender Equality**

Gender Equality (GE) as defined by UNESCO (2003, P.1) refers to women and men having equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural and political development. Based on this definition, similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play, bases equality on women and men being full partners in their home, their community and their society.

### **2.1.3. Perception**

According to Nelson and Quick (1997) as cited by Unumeri (2009, p.18), “perception is a social process of interpreting information about another person”.

### **2.1.4. Conflict**

Authors provided various definitions about the meaning of the conflict. However even though the concept has been studied extensively, there is a lack of agreement among scholars, which has given rise to various definitions with combinations of conflict attributes. According to Diez et al (2006) as cited by Pia (2007, p.2) conflict is defined as a “struggle misunderstanding between people with incompatibility of needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals”.

Conflict has been considered by several authors as neither bad nor good, neither wrong nor right. What makes conflict good or bad is how it is managed or transformed, either constructively or destructively.

It has further been noted that when conflict is blocked, it can result into immobility and failure to adapt to changed circumstances and/or erode the promise of group solidarity because of an accumulation of hostility.

## **2.2. Family related conflict**

According IRDP (2016, P.19) citing Kramer et al (2006), family related conflict is referred to as a “tension or a fight among two or more persons (within family) whose opinions, values, needs or expectations are opposing or incompatible and such conflict based misunderstanding led to negative consequences towards the establishment of a strong family” . The core aspect here is what is actually meant by family related conflict, given that the word ‘intra’ simply refers to within the family.

Family conflict can as well be perceived as any open behaviour, including use of bad language or inappropriate reactions by a person towards one or more family members.

### **2.3. An overview of gender equality**

According to Dill (1975, P.1) citing Williford (1975) points out that at the end of the eighteenth century, Jeremy Bentham, a British philosopher and legal reformist, interrogated why suffrage should be restricted to men and voiced for women the right to vote and contribute equally in the legislative and executive divisions of the administration of the government. Dill stated that the right to vote is one of the fields in which gender equality has been achieved after a long fight.

Historical accounts of the advances in women's rights have often stressed that certain cultural or ideological shifts depending upon particular contingent factors within each country that act as the facilitator for extensive change in sex roles.

Inglehart and Norris (2003, P.150) shows how globalization has strengthened the international networks of women who work with local and regional grassroots associations. Some examples include the success of grassroots women's organizations in support of specific initiatives, such as the parity movement in France, equal pay in Europe, landmark legal initiatives, including passage of equal pay regulations and sex discrimination acts among others.

Of recent, Sjöberg and Österlund (2016, P.1), shows how the discussion of gender equality has also been on the agenda on an international level, and with the launch of United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015, where gender equality is found to be as the fifth goal.

It should be noted that the fight against discrimination against women can be traced back to 1979 where the General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and set up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

Domestically, Rwanda has made exceptional progress in creating gender institutions favourable to improving the foundations on which strong and positive gender relations can be constructed.

For example, the national gender policy (2010) indicates that Rwanda is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and ratified CEDAW as far as November 1981 and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994. This has had a positive impact on, for instance political participation, involvement in decision making, access to education, health, Justice, economy for women and fighting Gender based violence.

Rwanda has undertaken appropriate measures, including legislation to fight discrimination against women, to modify and/or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which embody discrimination against women as put in the National Gender Policy,

The National Gender Policy (2010, P.8) indicates that the Rwandan society was characterized by a patriarchal social structure that underlies the unequal social power relations between men and women, boys and girls. Gender inequalities have not been seen as unjust, but as a respected social normality.

The National Gender Policy states that throughout the colonial era, men's supremacy over women was reinforced, in particular weakening women's negotiating position on matters concerning their access to and control over resources and the degree of their level of participation in the development process.

Historically though, women are said to have played a key role in the Rwandan society where a mother to a king known as 'queen mother' had a lot of influence on key decisions in the management of the kingdom. On the same note, women played a pivotal role in the management of household resources and participated in decision-making at different levels.

It is apparent therefore that Rwanda government as a country has strongly expressed its commitment for the promotion of gender through the ratification of the international instruments and the development of national, legal and planning instruments which is facilitating effective implementation of the gender equality concept.

#### **2.4. Gender equality and family related conflict**

Previous research conducted on gender equality and similar concept indicates that laws and policies do not guarantee gender equality in the society because culture, social norms, and perceptions also have the power to influence the process.

The research further indicates that women may decide not to exercise gender equality rights to avoid tension between them and their partners.

For example, Kagaba (2015, P.586) her research indicated a picture of dilemma for women in rural areas in Rwanda on how to behave in front of two situations, social and cultural norms and new laws and policies related to gender equality.

It is indicated in the research that some wives confirm that laws and policies are good and protective, but enjoying these rights puts them in trouble with their partners.

Women's ability to exercise legitimate rights therefore depends not only on good laws and policies but the consideration of various social and cultural factors is also paramount.

Further research by Bayisenge (2015, P.126) indicated that a man is the head of the household and is the one who is supposed to have the last word about the management of the household's properties.

In the same research women perceptions about the power of a husband in the household decision-making still holds, and conflicts arise when husbands want to make the individual decision about the use of the family resources. Furthermore, conflicts arise when husbands attempt to sell and lease out family property without their wives' consent.

In this case if the wife attempts to oppose the decision, she might be threatened for being chased away anytime and her rights in the household are very much at risk, especially if she is not officially married. According to Kagaba (2015, P.80), men in rural areas claimed that they are not well considered by the gender equality legal provisions, and this has a negative effect on social relations in the family and the community in general. The findings painting a picture of a man who does not know which route to take. The findings further indicates that men are mostly confused and do not know what to do and how to behave in their homes and community.

This situation creates confusion in a way that collaborating with their wives will lead to loss of confidence and self-esteem, and not lack of cooperation which leads to the breach of gender equality laws.

Several researches including the aforementioned attempt to discuss immoral behaviour and bad attitude that leads to assault, injuries, separation and divorce. Verbal aggression, assault, injuries, separation, divorce even murder can be linked to negative reactions to all members of the family. Misinterpretation of a important change in cultural norms, social lives and their moods of guilt for the inappropriate behaviour and unaccepted attitude are likely to lead to better emotional difficulties (Levine and Murray, 2004 ) as cited by Poudel (2010, P.9).

The relationship between gender equality and family related conflict is illustrated by three main arguments which incorporate gender in conflict-related efforts.

One argument is that promoting women's and girls' rights in conflict-affected contexts has instrumental value. The second argument is that gender equality has intrinsic value. A third is that gender and conflict are linked in ways that are poorly understood,

Furthermore my research illustrates how much important we need deeper understanding of how gender and conflict interrelate in many situations and of gender sensitive approaches in such contexts.

Moreover, some scholars found that isolated case studies and cross-national statistical analyses have identified correlations between levels of Inequality and propensity for conflict or violence, but they cannot prove causality.

A recent review by Poudel (2010, P.43) concludes that it remains unclear whether or how gender equality fuels violence or whether gender equality may cause conflict.

Furthermore, gender equality may be part of social change of structural inequalities and cultural norms of discrimination that contribute to mobilizing groups especially women to change mind and attitude that may lead to misperception of the concept thus create conflict in families.

On the other hand scholars stated the impact of conflict on gender a range of factors, including ethnicity, age, and occupational group, may affect how people experience conflict more than differences between men and women. Nevertheless, there is consistent evidence that women, men, girls and boys experience conflict differently, and that conflict has differential impacts on men and women.

## **2.5. Family related Conflict as a social threat**

Conflict pose a very big social threat to families as according to Poudel (2010, P.46), family members who are considered as cell of a society cease to exist in a healthy manner. Family problems leave an effect on the family members, relatives, society, nation and the world at large. Such effects could have direct or indirect societal consequences. Other unfavourable social conditions can be aggravated by the problem.

Conflict within a family can be considered as an individual problem, social problem and as well a legal problem. It is not however a problem of an individual. The problem of a couple for example can cause difficulties for their children, relatives, friends, society and the nation as well.

According to Umbreit (1995, P.93) the level of misinterpretation and violence within society raises stress and economic hardships on families. Social and health related problems such as mental illnesses, alcoholism, prostitution, homelessness and street children; and crimes and disorder such as GBV, child abuse, assault, injury and murder between family members, drug abuse, have existed in every society. States have been allocating huge amount of their budgets every year to provide their citizens with treatment and rehabilitation.

Other social threats include poverty and other risks increase in the society and make a society pathetic, Citizens without family are burden for a state. In many conditions, human beings are not able to fulfil their necessities and requirements performing work alone.

According to Kurt (1948) experimental studies on individuals and groups show that one of the most important factors in the frequency of conflict and in the building up of an emotional outbreak is the general level of tension at which the person or group lives. Whether or not a particular event will lead to a conflict depends largely on the tension level or on the social atmosphere in the group.

Within families, people pursue needs, values, goals, and resources that they define as important or desirable and when not well managed conflicts may ensue.

Mari (2004, P.12) for example points out that men do not perform housework and some family members are better able to pursue their particular self-interests which shows that within families, individuals may present issues that can eventually create serious consequences to harmony within a family, which when not addressed may result into a threat that may be hard to deal with.

Family related conflict creates a situation where there is no harmonious relationship between family members. Good relationships within a family is said to help reduce social and health risks.

According to Poudel (2010), a family where each member cares for one another, each member becomes an ideal tool to minimize social problems.

## **2.6. Causes of family conflict**

IRDP (2016, P.20) citing Lorenzi (1996), states that the problems of a partner in marital affair should be viewed as arising from the relation between an individual and his surroundings. It is today widely recognized that a group is more than, or, more exactly, different from, the sum of its members. A family thus is said to have its own structure, cultural norms, own goals, and own relations to other members of the community.

### **2.6.1. Psychological factors**

These are factors that are inherent within the individual (husband, wife and child) which looks into causes such as personality characteristics, such as aggressiveness, lack of self-control, low frustration tolerance and of course mental illness, such as paranoia among others (Strauss, 2005) as cited by IRDP(2016,P.21)

When, for example, spouses quarrel among one other, as result of poverty, they develop incompatible behaviour which emanates from socio-economic grounds. Other causes may have to do with achievement of goals by spouses, failure of which may result into a member being seriously aggravated.

### **2.6.2. Social and cultural context**

The social context of causes of family conflict includes factors to be found in the way society is organized. For example, families are organized as households of couples living alone with or without children or a single parent with children. Such social settings have an impact on the conflict settings. For example, the level and/or types of conflicts cannot be the same for couples who live with children as compared to those ones who do not live with children, or with children headed households who may lack the presence of an adult who can help to give guidance and advice or who can help adjudicate conflicts or intervene to prevent conflict. Culture on the other hand is a contributing factor to family where the idealization of masculine as a the head of the family with full dominion becomes a long term cause of family conflict.

## **2.7. Family conflict in Rwanda**

According to NURC (2008) as cited by IRDP (2016, P.3), family related conflicts are reported to be the major cause of many offences and suicide cases occurring in Rwanda. It is worth noting that the psychological, social and cultural factors are interrelated and cannot be understood in isolation. The historical background of the Rwandan society and social gender norms influences some family conflicts to arise between spouses.

In a report on types of conflicts in Rwanda, the National Commission for Unity and Reconciliation, revealed that family conflicts not only affect those who are abused, but they also have a substantial effect on family members, friends, co-workers, other witnesses as well as the community at large.

In Kigali sector family related conflict including Gender-based violence (GBV) remains rampant, the scale of the problem is illustrated in Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) former Criminal Investigation Department (CID) statistics report in Nyarugenge District year 2015-2017 where 718 cases recorded in entire district 124 cases (17.2%) were committed in Kigali sector and most of victim were women and men were perpetrators. Hence the research endeavors to analyse the understanding the perception of people on gender equality perception by family members, assess the relationship between gender equality and Family related conflicts and formulation of policy and intervention strategies for a better understanding of gender equality for harmonious family relationships in this sector is required.

## **2.8. Consequences of family related conflicts**

Research by IRDP (2016, P.24) citing Cummings and Davies (2002) posits that social conflict on families depend on how conflicts are expressed with some forms having negative effects and others having benign, or even positive effects. However, conflict can be considered harmful if the security of one or all conflicting parties (spouse/child) is threatened as sometimes destructive behaviours including physical and verbal aggression that include use of insults and even violence can manifested. Such behaviours can lead to feeling of insecurity of some family members which can lead to poor relations that can contribute to family disruption, effects on children among others. Equally, constructive conflict behaviours done through calm discussions, humour, physical and verbal affection may have positive results.

### **2.8.1. Family disruption**

Hostile family contexts which are marked by high levels of parent child or spousal conflicts can be both a cause and consequence of parental divorce (Schlomer, 2010). It is easy to notice a breakdown in communication and interaction between partners which leads to withdrawal from providing the required support for a family especially children.

Conflict ridden families do not even relate well with other families and even parents find themselves investing less time with their children, do not provide emotional support and are generally withdrawn from providing parental guidance to their children,

### **2.8.2. Family Violence**

Although family conflict is said not to necessarily lead to family violence, the two are clearly related in a way that family violence is usually preceded by non-violent family conflict.

That is to say that for families that do experience violence, conflict is often the precursor to violence, and if the family were not to experience the initial conflict, one would argue that there would be no family violence. However, it should be noted that physical violence is a continuation of interpersonal conflict which may be a result of consistent psychological, physical, or sexual abuse among others.

### **2.8.3. Effects on children**

Historically, children have always become victims of family conflict as always they have no other means to do away with conflict between families. Pre-adolescent children for example are especially affected by family conflict, as compared to the young children.

Children are exposed to intense, destructive parental and experience fear, sadness, and anger and feel unsafe and are not secure in the home and outside the family (Gordis et al,2001) cited by IRDP(2016,P.27) In addition to negative psychological outcomes, children of families that frequently engage in Destructive conflict also experience problems in their peer relationships.

Noller (1995) cited by (IRDP,P.27) reports a correlation between intense parental and sibling conflict, the processes by which parental conflict causes negative outcomes for children are not exactly known. One possible explanation is that most of the psychological effects and some of the social effects stem from the fact that important security needs that children have in their relationships with their parents are unmet when parents engage in frequent conflicts.

The negative psychological consequences that children exhibit are a result of the unmet needs from parents. Eventually, children develop habits that may even be carried on into their future which leads them into having the same behaviours and attitude towards life.

### **2.9. Gender related conflict prevention mechanisms**

According to UN women (2012), conflict prevention incorporating gender into early warning analysing the differences in men and women's perceptions of security can help create a fuller picture of conflict risks. Higher levels of gender equality and women's physical security are increasingly considered to be important indicators of general stability.

According to the same UN women report, most early warning and early response systems remain gender blind which could lead to responses that are inadvertently harmful to women or detrimental to gender relations. A review of 30 early warning and assessment frameworks found that only 11 indicators out of 832 made any reference to gender or women.

Gender-sensitive conflict monitoring systems use information about women and men, gender relations, to understand conflict dynamics, identify actors and processes that would prevent conflict, and build peace in a gender-sensitive way.

However, these gender reform policies do not adequately address women's access to property, the equal share of matrimonial property between spouses is conditional on the formal registration of monogamous marriages.

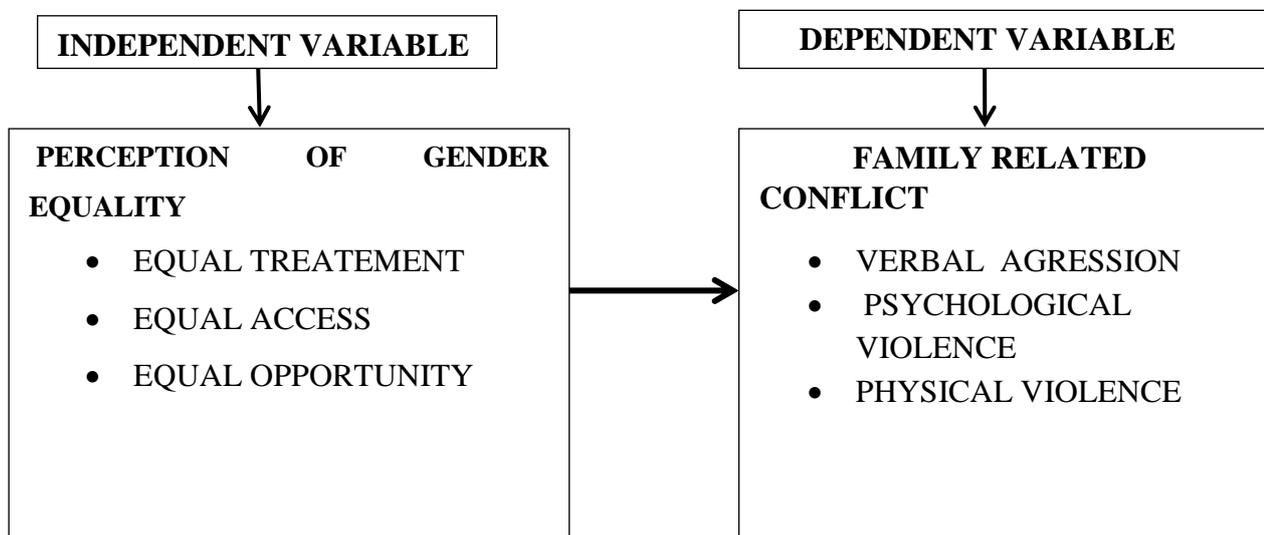
All the gender-sensitive laws and policies correlate with Article 17 of the Rwandan Constitution (2015), which recognize only a civil monogamous marriage between a man and a woman and women in consensual unions and polygamous marriages do not have legal rights to household property.

Despite these limitations, Rwanda is internationally recognized as a world leader in promoting women's empowerment and gender equality. The study conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization on land and agriculture reform indicates that Rwanda has successfully reformed its inheritance and land tenure legislation, and provides one of the best legal frameworks for gender-equal land distribution in sub-Saharan Africa. Rwanda is argued to be an exemplary nation in terms of overall women's empowerment and gender equality compared to most countries in the region according to the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

A study comparing Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania reveals that these countries have a better record than most in the region on gender equality and women's rights. However, Rwanda has integrated gender mainstreaming more systematically. For example, Rwanda has created specific gender units, gender implementers and programs of public education, and gender awareness.

## 2.10. Conceptual framework

The conceptual frame work is a diagrammatical representation showing how two variables are related



**Source: Author, 2019**

As figure 2.1: This study is looking at the relationship between two main variables, the independent and dependent variables. The independent variable is perception of gender equality while dependent variable is family related conflict. The study is attempting to get evidence to support or deny whether perception of gender equality contribute family related conflicts.

## 2.11. Theoretical frame work

According to Sjöberg and Österlund (2106, P.2) citing Connell and Messerschmitt (2005), the theory that applied to this study is developed and is branded as Hegemonic Masculinities. The core arguments in this theory are that there is a hierarchy of masculinities in-between men which influence how men choose to behave.

These provide an opportunity to outline how masculine identities and ideas of the ideal man may impact concepts of gender equality. This means that men do not naturally wish to comply with the gender equality concept.

By finding out what is the acceptable or unacceptable behavior for men, it might be possible to understand the underlying reasons why men may react negatively towards gender equality, as previous research has indicated.

### **2.11.1.Hegemonic masculinities**

The essential idea of this theory Connell & Messerschmidt, (2005) as cited by Sjöberg and Österlund (2016, P.6) is that “a plurality of masculinities exists and also a hierarchy in-between them, one is labelled "hegemonic", and this refers to the most socially appreciated features of a man, in other words explained as the “ideal man”.

The author further mentions the following on hegemonic masculinity:

“The features of the hegemonic masculinity therefore vary depending on the context. In addition the socially dominant masculinity is supported by a pattern of hegemonies which extremely relies on cultural consent and the legitimization of alternative ways of being. The theory suggests that this perception of the ideal masculinity guides the actions of men in that setting. For example, if the hegemonic masculinity puts emphasis on women's subordination to men, male actions to support that notion will follow.”

### **2.12. Conclusion**

According to the theory hegemonic masculinity men have internal feature in between them that push them for not accept to lose of power ,the theory suggest that this behaviour of ideal masculinity guide the actions of men and become a factor of resistance of change and make the to maintain over control to women and women to be subordinate. The theory indicates the need for public awareness for shifting from traditional perceptions about gender roles in order to adapt the new concept

To sum up Chapter two helped to define key terms in this study that are most used which were developed globally, Regional and in Rwanda Context. The following chapter discussed about methodology

## **CHAPTER: THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0. Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher highlighted the research design, target population of the study, sample size, data collection method, data analysis techniques and ethical issues.

### **3.1. Research Design**

According to Mwaniki(2016, P.88) citing Maykut (2003) defines research design employed as a blueprint, dealt with at least four problems: questions studied, relevant data, data collected, how the data was analysed and the research design which was adopted. Qualitative is usually more exploratory in the nature, and is concerned with human behaviour from informant participative, the qualitative design was used in this research and helped the researcher to understand the perception of people on gender equality concept and how this perception is linked with the family related conflict in Kigali sector/Nyarugenge District

### **3.2 Target Population**

According to Faustin (2018,P.22) citing Polit and Hungler (1999) defines a population as the total of all subjects that conform to a set of specifications, comprising the entire group of persons that is of interest to the researcher to whom the research result can be generalized.

Research interview guide questions were designed to address issues of great relevance to groups of individuals known as a target population.

The study targeted 25 respondents including female, male and local leaders from 5 cells of Kigali sector namely: Kigali, Mwendo, Nyabugogo, Rwesero and Ruliba. Samples were identified through purposive sample technique.

### **3.3 Sample Size**

The goal of qualitative researchers should be the attainment of saturation. Saturation occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) as cited by Thomson, S. B. (2011, p.47) recommend the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. In the same way Creswell (1998) thinks that for a qualitative study to be published, the minimum number of interviews required seems to be between 20-30. Based on this recommendation, the sample of 25 people was drawn to reach saturation and purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample. Respondents were selected at households and researcher focused of the one who were experienced conflicts in their families as well as local leaders who dealing with family conflict related issues in their daily activities who provided relevant information related to the study. This approach was cost and time effective as advantage.

### **3.4 Data Collection Methods**

The study used two methods for data collection. These include review of secondary sources/documentary and the individual in-depth interviews. The first method was used in collecting secondary data while the second was used in collecting primary data from the field.

#### **3.4.1 Review of secondary data /documentary**

In addition to the use of individual interviews to collect primary data, review of the secondary sources was used in data collection. This process involved in reviewing already existing documents published by other scholars, who contain information on gender equality and family related conflict. These documents include: Books, academic Journals and reviews, reports, dissertations, newspapers and websites.

The benefit of reviewing secondary data sources is much of the background of the work of gender equality and family related conflict has been already carried out through literature review

#### **3.4.2 Individual in- depth interviews**

According to Creswell (1998) cited by Thomson, S. B. (2011,P.46) states that the data for qualitative research is collected through interviews, field notes, observations etc., interviews is the most common data collection method.

The use of close- ended questions limited respondents from giving alternative opinions and responses which were relevant and helpful in the study and this motivated the researcher to use individual in-depth interviews with formal interview guides questions.

These interviews intended to allow the respondent to express opinions without being influenced by researcher predetermined thoughts (Foddy,1993) as cited by Nkwaya (2015, P.29)and which helped to eliminate bias among respondents.

Individual in-depth interviews is probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research and is characterized by flexibility, it also tends to be very similar to a conversation, the interviewee is then allowed to respond freely, with the interviewer simply responding to points that seem worthy of being followed up

Through these interviews open- ended questions were asked to allow respondents express their opinions and experiences towards gender equality and how it contribute to family related conflict in Kigali sectors. These interviews were asked respondent to describe or explain particular their understanding of gender equality in relation to family related conflict in Kigali sector

### **3.5. Validity and Reliability.**

Validity of data collection instruments refers to the appropriateness of instrument to measure a variable and come up with intended results (Amin, 2005) as cited by Nkwaya (2015,P.30).Reliability of measurement instrument is the extent to which it yields consistent results when the research tools are administered in different settings.

In order to increase reliability the researchers used the same template as far as possible and used static methods.

The first step taken was to perform standardized tests by administering the instruments from one person to another. And then the research instrument was administered to respondent that understand gender equality concept.

### **3.6. Data Analysis Techniques**

By individual in- depth interviews/life stories as qualitative data collection technique focus on attention shifts from what actually happened to how people make sense of what happened.

Testimonies or descriptive data obtained from individual interviews and secondary were analyzed using Narrative data analysis method.

Since a good analysis depends on understanding data, this method involved reading and re-reading data in order to extract relevant meaning (Powell and Renner, 2003) as cited by Nkwaya (2015, P.32). Aware that sometimes, information provided during interview does not add meaning or value to the data collected, reading data several times also helped to identifying quality data while eliminating irrelevant one.

After reading and selected valuable data, researcher organized research questions or objectives to be answered by that data in logical sequence, the researcher then organized the data by question or objective to look across all respondents and their answers in order to identify consistencies and differences in relation to research objectives/questions, in other words, all the data from each question together or objective were put together.

To bring meaning to the organized words, the researcher identified themes, idea and concepts used. These were then organized into coherent categories that were summarized and bring meaning to the text.

### **3.7. Administrative formalities**

To conduct the research on field especially in Kigali sector of Nyarugenge district, it requires some administrative formalities. In this perspective, the researcher had an introductory letter along with him which he got from National Police College (NPC) administration.

The letter was addressed to the respondents which included local leaders and citizens. It was clearly meant for introducing the mission and objective of the researcher and research respectively.

### **3.8. Ethical Issues**

Information collected from respondents were kept with a lot of Confidentiality and avoid plagiarism, all materials cited in the research work were acknowledged through reference.

In summary, this chapter dealt with methodology aspects where the approach like qualitative design was described as the basis of this study. Also, administrative formalities were discussed where the researcher introduced himself to the respondents and explained the purpose of the research. Furthermore, the unit of analysis in this study was different social groups who included: local leaders, and family members

In addition, sampling method was also used where the researcher referred to recommendations by Creswell (1998) in order to determine sample size. The researcher also applied techniques during data collection, which included documentary and interviews that were used to collect data which were analyzed through interpretation of the research.

Finally, the researcher emphasized some ethical behaviors like obtaining the consent of respondents through assurance of confidentiality and with secrecy.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: PERCEPTION OF PEOPLE ON GENDER EQUALITY AND RELATED CONFLICTS IN KIGALI SECTOR: STUDY FINDINGS**

The findings of the study provided the details of narratives by the respondents who participated in the assessment of understanding the perception of people on gender equality and family related conflict in Kigali sector. The narratives generate three main themes which are: People understanding of gender equality, the contribution of gender equality perception to family related conflict and the measures required for a better understanding of gender equality for harmonious family relationships.

### **4.1. RESPONDENTS BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Background information of respondents have very significant role to play in expressing and giving the responses about the problem. Keeping in mind in this study, the background information of respondent namely, age, gender/sex and level of education has been examined and presented as follows: Among 25 respondents selected, 13 (52%) were male and 12 (48%) were female, 15 respondents (60%) were in range of age between 36-41 while 10 (40%) were in range of between 30-35, further among respondents 3 (12%) had university level of education, 6 (24%) of them had College / Diploma / Certificate while 16 (64%) of them had Tertiary institution.

### **4.2. FINDINGS**

#### **4.2.1 The Understanding of Gender Equality**

Respondents narrated that according to the policy and laws, gender equality means the complementarity between women and men and equal role to play in their families.

As a woman pointed it out regarding gender equality, a man and woman can help each other in the following narrative:

“Today men can help women doing domestic activities and it is not a shame because even our parents used to help each other and this complementarity increases the income and the wellbeing of the family” [Nyabugogo Cell, Much 2019].

The above narrative indicates that the Rwandan culture encourages complementarity between men and women.

As pointed out by a man, gender equality is good as long as the woman gives respect to the man in the following narrative:

“The man respects the woman by listening to her, and the woman respects the man by acknowledging that he is the head of the family, because according to the culture the man is the one who pays dowry to the woman’s’ family and in return he is given a wife therefore the women become a property”[ Rwesero Cell, March 2019].

The narratives above indicate that some men believe that the presentation of the dowry to the family of women makes her to become his property.

Equality means women and men should fulfil their duties equally, one woman said the following:

“A Woman has the right to be given what she needs from her husband, for example the money and other basic needs when he is away, so that she can take care of the home. In case this is not done, it is obvious that it can be difficult for her to fulfil her role. In this case she would not fail in her task if the man is doing his part”[Ruliba Cell, March 2019].

Narrative above indicated that women still depend on men in order to fulfil their role at household level.

As explained by a man, a man is superior to woman:

“I agreed that it is fine for a woman to do a male task, in case the man for some reason is not present. But if a woman does male tasks, it is a sign that the man has failed or is being irresponsible”[Mwendo Cell, March 2019].

The narrative above indicates that some men still have traditional beliefs of domination over women.

Women should be involved in decision making, as one woman explained:

“Women have the right to be involved in decisions making process for family affairs, and this has a positive impact for family wellbeing. For example my husband always asks me my view before he takes a decision. However, this depend on individual understanding as some men see it as a weakness” [Kigali cell, March 2019].

The testimony above indicates that some men acknowledge the importance of involving the partner in decision making process for family matters.

As pointed out by one woman, the management of family resources should be discussed:

“As an example, when family produces a harvest and makes a decision to sell a small quantity in order to solve some domestic need, this is seen as a contribution to the whole family. However, when the husband decides to sell another small quantity of the harvest in order to address a personal problem without informing or involving the partner, this creates a conflict since I am not involved in the decision making. Equality can only be achieved when there is discussion between me and my husband. My husband should consult me whenever there is a project related to the family. However, there are decisions that a man can make without consulting me, for example general rules of the family and decision related to big project related to development of the family are the most important to discussed around the table” [Rwesero cell, March 2019].

The narrative above indicates that communication for decision making is important in the family; however there is exception in some circumstances.

Although men and women are equal before the law, this equality (gender equality) has been totally misunderstood by many Rwandans. A church leader said:

“Gender Equality does not change the responsibility of husband for being a head of family and the woman to be the heart of the household, but nowadays people tend to misinterpret this. Everyone in the family either wife or husband has his/her responsibility and the role to play, the way people believe should not contradict the law of equality because even the bible says that men and women are equal before God. And a family is an entity created by God who decided that husband is head of family. Management and decisions making must be done by the husband”[Ruliba, March 2019].

The above narratives from respondent indicates that gender equality do no change the family structure what is necessary is that every member in the family should play his/her role, but the man should remain the title of heads of the family.

#### **4.1.2. The contribution of the perception of gender equality to family related conflict**

Women's rights may be interpreted as disrespect, one woman said:

“There is a man who was always fighting with his wife accusing her of disrespect because of gender equality. The couple had a dispute about management of family assets as the husband wanted to sell a portion of their plot. The wife accepted but on condition that the husband will be paid half of the total price another half will be given to her. In the course of their argument, they fought and the wife went to the Police and raised a complaint as the consequence the husband was summoned and interrogated”[Kigali Cell, March 2019].

The narrative above indicates that women become victims when they try to claim their rights.

As explained by a woman, man domination sometimes creates tension in the family:

“There is a couple that had a dispute about family planning as the husband wanted more than three children. The wife accepted but on condition that the husband stops drinking. In the course of their argument, they fought and the wife fled to the neighbours. In revenge, the husband destroyed the neighbour's property. Local leaders intervened and instructed the husband to pay the damages”[Rwesero Cell, March 2019].

The above narrative indicates that a bad behaviour from a partner can affect the relationships and stability of the family.

Women empowerment is the source of conflicts in families as a woman narrated:

“My husband was a driver and was responsible to pay all necessary needs at home, but when I joined a business association, he failed to realize his responsibility and the dispute started. He accused me of having an affair with other men in the business association. His complaint was that my child looked like the chairperson of our association without facts but after several disputes the problem was finally resolved”[Mwendo Cell, March 2019].

The narrative above indicates that women empowerment become a challenge for the family instead of being an opportunity.

Limited communication a factor of family related conflict a man said:

“Many couples have a culture of not discussing on family issues, sometimes, many problems are beyond the capacity of one partner. Instead of discussing such problems together, one of member of the family especially husband decides on family issue without informing or consulting the wife, once the partner ask why this happened, the husband may use verbal aggression as a defense mechanism, and this sometimes leads to the assaults”[[Nyabugogo Cell, March 2019].

The above narratives obviously show that lack communication, dialogue and negotiation are contributing factors for family instability.

As explained by a woman, unequal financial power affects the relationship in the family:

“Some husbands in Rwanda especially in rural areas abandon their families completely or decide to return to their homes very late at night only because their wife does not generate income and the whole family depends on the husband for family needs”[Rwesero Cell ,March 2016].

The narrative above indicates that unequal revenues for one member of the family become a factor of bad behaviour.

Unequal incomes create a tension in the family, a man said:

“The budget planning of the family depends on the one who have the capacity to sustain the family needs if it is a husband, should be the man's decision, if it is a wife should be a wife decision”[Ruliba Cell ,March 2019].

The narratives above indicate that inequality in terms of revenue justifies the power and domination between partners.

As explained by a man gender roles at household become the source of the conflict:

“Due to the misinterpretation of gender equality, some women misbehave and no longer perform their role at home. For women who work in public sector as civil servant or the one who conduct own business, leave home in the morning and return in the evening. When they are back, some women do not check what is going on at home. All things are assigned to housemaids and the duty of the wife simply is to gives the supervision, this make husband to develops a habit of returning home late to avoid conflict”[Mwedo Cell ,March 2019].

The above narrative indicate that the failure of women to perform their role at home and absence of care towards their partners make them become aggressive.

Economic access for women becomes a threat, as a man pointed out:

“If a wife has more resources than husband it is difficult to control her. The wife believes that to have a lot of revenues gives them power for decision and control everything in family which is wrong, the access to economy by women can lead to develop their families but this does not change the role of men to be head of a family, this natural power of men becomes an obstacle for gender equality to be accepted for some men” [Nyabugogo Cell, March 2019].

The narrative indicates that men power dominance beliefs create a complex to accuse women disrespect that becomes a barrier of implemented of gender equality.

As pointed out by a woman, men fear to be exposed for their behaviour in the following words:

“There was a disagreement with my husband on family matters and he assaulted me and I reported to Kigali Rwanda Bureau of Investigation and I explained that I was beaten several times. This was not the first time as family and local authorities had intervened earlier and my husband had apologized and promised that will not repeat saying that the cause had been me misusing the money. After handing in my complaint, my husband was summoned and arrested and the case file was transmitted to the prosecution office, after the arrest of the husband

I was threatened by the family in-law and I was obliged to go to the prosecution office to request the release of my husband”[Kigali Cell ,March2019].

The above narratives indicate how women become victims and at the same time become blamed by the relatives.

The women misinterpretation of their rights may cause conflict as said by a local leader as follows:

“The problems arises when the woman start to exercise their right in a wrong way thinking that she is equal to the man. This leads to quarrels over authority in the family. But as long as she remembers her responsibility as a woman, conflict will be avoided. Man should be recognized as the head of the household”[Mwendo cell ,March 2019].

The above narrative indicated that men accuse women of making exaggeration when exercising their rights.

Women become victims when claiming their rights, as one woman narrated:

“I have been seriously beaten by my husband to the extent that I was taken to the hospital, the reason being that I asked my husband to officiate our marriage. When local leaders intervened, my husband explained that I will be chased away as I am not recognized by the law” [Rwesero Cell ,March 2019].

The above narrative indicates how laws and policies related to gender puts women at conflict with their partners when they attempt to claim their rights.

Culture should be maintained, as narrated by a man:

“A woman should keep in their mind that the husband is the head of the family. That there is a line the woman should not cross and she should always keep observing that line. A woman can be empowered, recognize their responsibilities, respect husbands, because being empowered does not mean becoming like a man”[Nyabugogo Cell ,March 2019].

This narrative above indicates men have still beliefs of domination over women.

The man to decide alone for family matter creates disputes, a woman said:

“Many families discuss together before taking any decision. Except some few cases where men continue to resist changes. But joint decision making is necessary for the benefit of the family relationships and values and management of the family assets” [Ruliba Cell, March 2019].

The narrative above indicates that some men acknowledge the necessity of joint discussion for appropriate decision at household level.

Most cases of conflicts in families is based on misunderstanding by men, as a local leader narrated:

“Most cases of conflict are based on the misunderstanding of gender equality. We have always received complaints by women and we have never received complaints of men who have been assaulted by their wives. If the husband takes a decision to sell a family property without consent of the wife and the wife refuses to sign for example, the husband becomes aggressive and tension may sometimes turn into violence”[Kigali cell, March 2019].

The narrative above indicates that women are most vulnerable despite the laws that protect them and always men are perpetrators.

#### **4.1.3. Measures for a better understanding of gender equality for harmonious family relationship.**

Narratives from respondents suggested measures required for better understanding for gender equality in families and the community in general. A woman said:

“Men should comply with changes and accept women to exercise their rights provided by the law with mutual respect”[Ruliba, March 2019].

The narrative indicates the need for men to understand the importance of gender equality and to allow women to exercise their right.

Culture should be taken into consideration as a man explains:

“In the Rwandan Culture, a man is considered as the head of the family, even in my family I have never seen my father consult my mother for family decision, but nowadays women think that gender equality came to replace the rights of men. Another big problem is that the woman can go in a different program without informing the husbands and comeback during the night, and when you ask her, she immediately calls the police. This should change because the stability of the family should be based on mutual respect.”[Mwendo, March 2019].

The above narrative indicates the need for more awareness to inform the community on the meaning of gender equality and the importance of communication between partners.

As pointed out by a man, women should avoid abusing their rights:

“Women of today behave as if they are taking revenge towards men, where some say that this is the time to enjoy our rights, gender equality is not a problem, the problem is abuse of the rights by women who are trying to destroy the Rwandan culture which empowers men to be the head of the family. There is a need to explain to community members on the importance of the gender equality in terms of wellbeing for the family and the society in general”[ Nyabugogo Cell, March 2019].

The above narrative indicates that men blame women for their behaviour when exercising their rights without consideration for culture.

As pointed out by one man, culture should be respected

“There is conflict between cultural norms and gender equality that creates tension at household level. The perception for men is that gender equality laws undermine culture which gives power to men to become head of the family. Respect between husband and wife no longer exists because today wives feel empowered and don’t need to depend on husbands as there are capable to satisfy their needs. Where in last decades, they depended on their husbands or parents for everything but now a woman can buy/build her own house and support herself without rely to anybody else”[Kigali Cell, March 2019].

From the narrative it is observed that in current Rwandan households, some wives who generate income become independent and this need more attention as can destroy the family .

Gender equality should go hand in hand with respect between family members as a woman explained:

“The misinterpretation of equal right has effects. In addition, it seems that more explanations on the concept of gender equality family members are required to change mind what may result to behaviour change too”[Rwesero Cell, March 2019].

The narrative above indicates the necessity for public awareness for better understanding of the meaning of the concept.

As narrated by a man, traditional practices to resolve family conflict should not ignored:

“Before the gender equality take place when there was a dispute between spouses the first people to intervene were members of the family which is not the case today and the solution was more sustainable, today if a dispute happen women rush immediately to the police and this reduce the trust and increase the tension. Home-grown solutions such as family meeting, mediators can be used to resolve some of the family problem problems before taken to the authorities and this create the good atmosphere for family relationship”[Kigali, March 2019].

The narrative indicated that modern way of solving the family problem should be combined with the traditional one.

Family issues should be first resolved at lower level, a man said:

“Traditionally there were mechanisms of resolving the family issues such as inama y’umuryango (family meeting), strengthening existing institution umugoroba w’ababyeyi (parents evenings and abunzi (mediators), Inteko z’abatwariye ku mudugudu (public meeting at village level) today they are ignored in resolving the family matters and institution in justice sector are more concerned it important to use to disseminate messages related to the importance of gender equality and trust them to resolve family issues, this may be a strategic tool to make community members to be aware and to facilitate the implementation of laws and policies related to gender equality concept” [Ruliba Cell, March 2019].

The above narrative sound that the home-grown solution should be enhanced to resolving family issues.

Gender equality laws should consider the culture, a man explained:

“Women may enjoy their rights provided by the laws but they should not ignore that cultural of respect between men and women is also important and they should also accept that there is always a difference between men and women to avoid conflict” [Nyabugogo, March 2019].

The above narrative indicates that men want to maintain the domination and supremacy over women.

Men should also be catered for by gender equality laws and policies as narrated by a man as follows:

“Men were not considered by policy and law, only focused on the empowerment of women and this is a gap as far as the family promotion and protection is concerned this should be reviewed and consider all parts of the community” [Mwendo, March 2019].

The above narrative indicates that men claim to be ignored thus the laws and policy should be reviewed to cater for men.

Awareness about gender equality should be conducted from grassroots level as a woman narrates:

“We faced the problems such verbal aggression and physical violence when exercising our rights because people perceive that the laws and policy were made for women only and we are blamed and labelled by the community because they do not understand the meaning of these laws it is better to conduct awareness to inform the community to the lower level of Administration” [Kigali, March 2019].

The narrative above indicates that community needs to be aware about the new concept and adapt it.

#### **4.1.4. Making sense of respondents narratives**

Based on the testimonies from respondents it obvious that gender equality policy and laws are good and played a role for family well- being. However there still exist traditional beliefs by the community members that man is superior to woman and this creates resistance for adaptation of the new concept thus efforts to mitigate the consequences are required.

According to the narratives from respondents who participated in this study, laws and policy related to gender equality created the opportunity for women to understand their rights, and participate in different activities that promote their wellbeing.

However, testimonies from respondents on other hand reveals that these policies related to gender equality empower women and disempower men and this becomes a threat to men who still have cultural beliefs of supremacy and domination over women.

This different understanding of gender equality by women and men creates tension that turns to violence sometimes, as consequences the family become unstable.

Furthermore narratives from respondents reveal that laws and policies related to gender equality are not enough for change because there are other contributing factors such as cultural beliefs and social norms that should be taken into consideration for better understanding of the concept.

In addition, narratives from respondents reveal that men still have traditional beliefs to maintain power over women which are an obstacle for implementation of the gender equality policy.

Furthermore testimonies from respondents reveal that there is need for public awareness for better understanding of the gender equality concept for the benefit of the family and the community in general.

#### **4.1.5. Summary of the chapter**

In a nutshell this chapter has presented the data in the way that was collected from the field through participants interviews, the main findings were reported in the language of respondents and testimonies from respondents indicates the relationship between perceptions of people on gender equality that leads to family related conflict.

Narratives from respondents who participated in this study further , indicates that laws and policy related to gender equality created the opportunity for women and helped them to understand their rights to participate in different activities that promote their wellbeing. However, testimonies from respondents on other hand reveals that these policies related to gender equality empower women and disempower men and this become a threat to men who still have cultural beliefs of supremacy and domination over women.

This different understanding of gender equality by women and men create tension that turns to violence sometimes, as consequences the family become unstable. Furthermore narratives from 16 respondents out of 25 (64%) who participated in this study indicated that lack of communication and dialogue between couples becomes a source of conflict at household level. Thus the findings achieved the objectives of the study

## **CHAPTER FIVE: GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents general conclusion and recommendations from the research findings. The chapter is presented in themes with respect to the study objectives. These themes include: i) perception of people on gender equality ii) contribution of perception of people on gender to the related family conflict ,( iii) intervention strategies for a better perception of gender equality for harmonious family relationships.

### **5.1 GENERAL CONCLUSION**

This study aimed at analysing the perception of people on gender equality in Kigali sector, assessing the relationship between the perception of people on gender equality and family related conflict in this sector, and to recommend intervention strategies for a better understanding of gender equality for harmonious family relationships. In achieving the above objectives, the study used a qualitative method, where individual in- depth interviews method was used for data collection. The study was conducted in Nyarugenge District, Kigali sector. The participants were selected from family members and local leaders.

A stable society requires a good relationship between community members and the members should be protected against any kind of violence or threats, all member should be equally treated without any discrimination that leads to the harmony, security and peace of the society

The findings of the research revealed that individual behaviour is more responsible for family conflicts compared to other factors. Individual behaviour may influence dishonesty and disrespect between partners, the failure to communicate between spouses also affects the decision making process at household level.

Respect for the women rights and human rights in general, avoiding harmful practices between partners, exercising equal responsibility and power, self-control, personal conduct and effective communication are contributing factors to form a stable family.

The narratives from participants of the study points out that equal rights, equal responsibilities and equal power is not well exercised within family life because of resistance of change and failure of adaptation of new concept which have impact to the family stability.

The findings of this research indicate that respondents express that gender equality concept is not well understood in the same way by women and men in Kigali sector, men feel disempowered while women feel empowered. This misinterpretation creates tension between men and women that lead to the disputes and sometimes violent behaviour.

The findings show that women still face challenges while enjoying their right due to cultural norms and traditional beliefs by men, which becomes a barrier for them to exercise their rights.

Respondents in this research especially men argued that laws and policies related to gender equality did not consider the cultural norms that gives men the power to be head of household and this created the confusion for women to think that they are equal to men ,as consequences a relationship at household level are affected.

This is an indicator that related gender equality laws and policies are not welcomed by men and thus the need for more sanitization for better understanding.

Despite these challenges faced by women their narratives indicate that gender equality plays a big role to empower them and this helps them to use their capacity to contribute to the development of their families. Narratives further indicate that men claim that laws and policies related to gender equality favours only women and did not consider the cultural norms which are the foundation of construction of Rwandan society and this have negative effects in one way or another to family stability.

Some respondents who participated in this study agreed that gender equality brings a positive changes even though it conflicting with cultural, in the same line narratives from men indicates that gender equality laws and policies become a source of tension between couples, not because how are formulated, but because of how they are interpreted by women, thus a need for more explanations on its meaning is required.

The narratives from the participants revealed that causes for family related conflicts between couples are based on misunderstanding, misinterpretation of the concepts of gender and the resistance of change, which resulted to poor relationship between members of the family especially during decision making process. As a consequence, the verbal aggression and physical violence take place.

There are common views of men and women that are equals in some aspects, for example in performing the same job and discussing with each other.

However few men said that women should not be considered equal, as there are some tasks that are performed by men and cannot be performed by females and vice versa.

The respondents described a cultural interpretation of gender equality which they could feel positive about, it was still extremely important for them however, to maintain the status as the head of household.

Built on the information from the respondents, it is appropriate to consider that gender equality would have a sustainable impact on gender relations in families if the cultural practices would be taken into consideration during formulation and the implementations of the laws and policies related to gender. It is also necessary to take note that respondents views reveals that family could be sustained merely if traditional unequal power changes into an equal power with consideration of deep awareness on the meaning of the new concept.

## **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

After analysis of Perception of people on gender equality and family related conflict in Kigali sector Nyarugenge District the following interventions strategies were recommended:

Rwanda's home-grown entities such as *inama y'umuryango* (family meeting), *umugoroba w'ababyeyi* (Parents' evening meeting), *inshuti z'umuryango* (family friends forums), *inteko z'abaturage* (community forum) *abunzi* (local mediators) should be enhanced and empowered in order to mitigate the conflict in family and community in general through regular dialogue and discussions on the meaning and the benefits of gender equality.

Opinion leaders should be engaged to mobilize community to attend discussions related to gender equality matters and cultural values.

Ministry of Gender and family promotion should support the above forums and use them to disseminate message for better understanding of the real meaning of the gender equality concept.

GMO should evaluate if laws and policy related to gender equality have impacted to the mind change of the society and advise police makers for necessary intervention strategies.

Nyarugenge District and other concerned institution jointly should engage local leaders at all level to include gender equality awareness in their performance contract to support the promotion gender for family development.

## **5.3. SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The research had limited time to cover in detail the impact of gender equality to the Rwandan society. As a result, it is recommended that further study be conducted on the positive aspects of gender equality concept to the family in Rwanda.

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## ANNEXES

Annex A: Introductory letter

UNIVERSITY OF RWANDA

Centre for peace and conflict Transformation

E-mail: murigocorneille@gmail.com

Tel: 0788516802

March, 2019

Dear Respondents,

I am student of the University of Rwanda- Centre of Conflict Management pursuing a master's degree in peace studies and conflict transformation. I am conducting a study on understanding the perception of gender equality and family related conflict case of Kigali sector. I am requesting you to kindly answer the following interview guide questions to the best of your knowledge that provide to me the necessary information on the research that am conducting.

I promise you that your information has to be used in confidential way and only for academic purpose.

Sincerely

MURIGO Corneille

### Interviews and its Guided Questions

#### **Introduction**

My research is on “*Understanding the Perception Of People on Gender Equality and Family related conflict : A case of Kigali Sector, Nyarugenge District, Co K* ”. Two methods of data collection will be used and these are *Documentary* and *Individual in -depth Interviews*.

#### **Type of interview intended to be carried out**

My interview consisted on *Individual –in depth Interview*. The interviews were carried out between me, as the researcher and **twenty five (25)** selected respondents

#### **Nature of the interview carried out**

This type of interviews was *unstructured* using open-ended questions, This is variety depended mainly on various kinds of respondents ( female and male, local leaders).

#### **Language of the interview and guide questions**

All my respondents were Kinyarwanda language speakers therefore; the interview were conducted in Kinyarwanda though interview guided questions that were drafted in English language. While on the field, were translated from English to Kinyarwanda.

<b>Interview guide questions</b>
<b>How do you understand by gender equality?</b>
<b>Does gender equality contribute to the development of the family</b>
<b>Does husband and wife decide together for family issues?</b>
<b>Does gender equality a cause of family related conflict?</b>
<b>How family related conflict resolved?</b>
<b>Does gender equality laws and policies affect the culture?</b>
<b>What are the impacts caused by laws and policies to family relationship?</b>
<b>Does gender equality have a challenge for implementation?</b>
<b>What are measures that required improving the good understanding of gender equality?</b>

