

**EVALUATION OF FACTORS INHIBITING AND PROMOTING  
WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING: A  
CASE STUDY OF THE KRUGERSDORP LOCAL COUNCIL**

**ABSTRACT**

Gender equality is one of the important phenomena in development, in that uneven development results in gender inequality. In the process of development, some groups of people, especially men, benefit more than others because the structures allow them to participate more. The poor are thought of as men mainly, whereas the majority of the poor are women. There can be no sustainable development when decisions about changing the lives of people are taken without the participation of half of the very lives that have to be changed, i.e. women.

In an attempt to address gender inequality, feminist theories emphasize the need for equal treatment of men and women. The main concern is how women are encouraged to participate in development. Thus, gender approaches were introduced so as to mainstream women into development.

Again, there is increasing recognition among politicians and researchers of the importance of considering gender issues in local government policy to reduce political inequalities, and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the local government. It is extremely necessary that women should also participate in decision-making at this level of governance.

This case study was conducted at the Krugersdorp Local Council. The main objective of the study was to evaluate factors that inhibit or promote the participation of women in political decision-making. Focus group interviews were conducted, and twenty respondents participated in the study.

Some of the major findings of this study were that the community around Krugersdorp is still patriarchal and that the Krugersdorp Local Council is not yet gender sensitive. Also, the triple roles, lack of safety and not knowing the role of being a councillor inhibit women councillors from political decision-making. On the other hand, the proportional representation encourages women to participate in political decision-making.

