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Women's rights and the well-being of the Rwandan family

Abstract

The main objective of this study was "How the promotion of the rights of women can lead to the improvement of the well-being of the family in Rwanda." Human rights are fundamental entitlements adopted to protect the dignity and worth of the human being. Despite this, worldwide, women have been and are still discriminated against. With the development of the human rights law, the struggle to promote equal rights between men and women has taken centre stage. There are significant obstacles affecting gender relations, the family well-being and the role and the place of women in the Rwandan society, including inside the family. These problems hinder full enjoyment of women's rights. The study focused more specifically on how the well-being of the family is affected by the situation of women. Empowerment theory and the Human Rights-Based Approach have all been used. This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews and documents analysis for data collection. A total of thirteen respondents, including key informants participated in the study conducted in Rwanda. For analysis purposes, qualitative content analysis was used. The study revealed that those who understand the meaning and importance of women's rights promotion realized that women's rights contribute a lot to the well-being of the family and in maintaining positive gender relations. But for those who do not understand this, especially men and some women who misuse these rights, the promotion of women's rights can trigger violent conflicts in the family. The study highlighted some of the obstacles that hinder women's rights promotion such as resistance to change, illiteracy and ignorance, poverty, problems related to land and property and children born outside wedlock. The study further revealed that cultural and religious values can play an important role in promoting women's rights and in protecting the family. The study underscored that cultural values are weakening because of history of genocide against Tutsi and because of globalization. Furthermore, it revealed that men do not participate in the activities and programs for women's rights promotion. The study examined the different mechanisms put in place by the government of Rwanda for women and family rights promotion. They include legal frameworks, policies and institutional frameworks for women and family rights promotion. To protect the gains and rectify the shortcomings in the promotion of women's rights and family well-being, the study gave recommendations to the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion and its stakeholders. They include intensifying women's rights awareness campaigns; to encourage and support dialogue between spouses in the family; safeguard the cultural values; engage men in women's rights and gender related discussions, programs and activities; be contextually and culturally sensitive in the elaboration and implementation of policies; strengthen the education sector and adult literacy.

Title: Women's rights and the well-being of the Rwandan family

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Key words: empowerment, family, gender relations, human rights, Rwanda, family well-being, women's rights.

Dedication

To the Almighty God for all the blessings

To my beloved husband HABINEZA Jean Paul for your unconditional love

To our beloved children HABINEZA JURURYERA Rita Charisma, HABINEZA ZIGAMUKWEMERA Eden Francis and HABINEZA JABIRO David Kairos

To my parents, brothers and sisters

To my family in-law

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UWIHANGANA Consolée

Acronyms and abbreviations

- art.: article(s)
- CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
- CERD: International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- CRC: Convention on the Rights of the Child
- GMO: Gender Monitoring Office [Rwanda]
- FARG: "Fond d'Assistance aux Rescapés du Génocide" Assistance Fund for Genocide Survivors
- FAWE: Forum for African Women Educationalists
- HRBA: Human Rights-Based Approach
- ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- ICESCR: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- IFSW: International Federation of Social Workers
- ILO: International Labor Organization
- MIFOTRA: Ministry of Public Service and Labor
- MIGEPROF: Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
- MINECOFIN: Ministry of Economy and Finance
- MINEDUC: Ministry of Education
- MINIJUST: Ministry of Justice
- NASW: National Association of Social Workers
- OHCHR: Office of the United Nations High commissioner for Human Rights
- RWAMREC: Rwanda Men's Resource Center
- UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- UN: United Nations
- UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization
- VTC: Vocational Training Centres
- WE-ACTx: Women's Equity in Access to Care and Treatment

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Human rights are fundamental entitlements adopted to protect the dignity and worth of human beings. Women's rights are about the human rights which all human beings are entitled to by virtue of being human beings without discrimination based on sex or on gender roles. Despite this, worldwide, women have been and still are discriminated against. With the development of the human rights law, the struggle to promote equal rights between men and women has taken centre stage. These obstacles remain difficult to overcome and affect gender relations, the family well-being and the role and the place of women in the society, including inside the family. These problems hinder full enjoyment of women's rights.

This study examines the relationship between women's rights and the well-being of the family in Rwanda. More specifically, it focuses on how the well-being of the family is affected by the situation of women. It highlights the progress made, challenges and future prospects ahead when it comes to protecting and promoting women's rights, including benefiting the family at large and the broader community.

The following chapter provides the background and justification for the study, its objectives, the research questions, the methodology to be used and the nature of the study at large.

1.1 Background of the study

In many traditional societies, the place of women is confined to the private sphere: taking care of the husband, raising children, responding to the domestic needs and related social roles. The husband is regarded as the breadwinner, especially because he is the one who generally paid work but in reality both the man and woman contribute, and the work of the woman inside home is invaluable. This makes the role of the women in the family of a paramount importance for the well-being of the family. The Rwandan sayings depict this reality: "umugore ni umutima w'urugo" (a woman is the heart of the family): comparing her place and role to the heart of the human body. It demonstrates how important she is for the family. When she is well, the family is well and when she experiences hardships, the whole system suffers just as the body suffers with heart problems. To use another saying, "Ukurusha umugore akurusha urugo" (he who has a better wife has a better family). This means a husband with a friendly wife with social connections, creates a family that is strong, which contributes to the development of the family. "Akabura ntikaboneke ni nyina w'umuntu" (the biological mother is irreplaceable) relates to this same idea underscoring the importance of a mother for the upbringing and the development of children.

There is another saying that says"(...) if you educate a woman you educate a family (nation)" (Kwegyir, 1999). An educated woman is able to use her knowledge to benefit her children, her husband and her community fellows, making everyone better informed. Women are those who get in contact first with children: starting during pregnancy, then in the very first stage of their

infancy and then in the process of upbringing of the children. If they have good health and are educated, they could play a key role to the benefit of the children and the whole family.

Gender equality and the development of women's rights also benefit the society at large. The participation of women in politics, in businesses and other activities outside their homes all benefit the nation in the end. Women's enjoyment of the rights to education, to paid work, to political participation benefits to the society in many ways. If democracy is a noble goal, one cannot afford to leave women behind in all these fields.

Women' rights have been criticized by some who consider it as the means for gaining more power to dominate men; in the sense of leading men or undermining the stability of the family. This thought has even triggered conflicts and gender based violence (Women for Women International, 2004). Spousal violence has already been a concern to women since men use it to ensure male dominance. When dominant men feel they are losing power, they become more violent. Gender-based violence causes emotional and physical harm and affects the well-being of families and societies (RWAMREC, 2010). It could lead to separation, divorce and even deaths (Igihe, 2012).

Family conflicts also compound the existing problems, including the worsening of poverty since it leads to family disintegration. In extreme situation such as in the case of murder, the offender may end up in prison. This means there will be no father or mother to participate in the financial advancement of the family and to care for the children. This can even lead to revenge among family members, destroying the social fabric.

Rwandan society is characterized by a patriarchal social structure that underlies the unequal social power relations between men and women, as well as boys and girls. This has translated into men's dominance and women's subordination and gender inequalities have not been seen as unjust, rather as respected social normality (MIGEPROF, 2005, p.8).

With the socio-economic development and the continued awareness of women's human rights, especially the notion of equality and the prohibition of discrimination based on gender, sex, religion, etc., women's rights are becoming more prevalent. In many places, the traditional role of women (reproduction, production) is changing as women get paid job which gives them the opportunity to earn income and compete with their male counterparts on the labour market.

As human rights are now given increased attention and priority in Rwanda, the implementation of women's rights is on the rise. This has improved all spheres of women's lives, especially in decision-making processes. A good example is their representation in the law making process in the parliament:

> In 2003, Rwanda elected a record number of women MPs, moving ahead of Sweden, which had previously had the world's highest proportion. Almost 50 per cent of MPs in Rwanda's lower chamber and 30 per cent of appointed members in the upper house are women, transforming the political landscape (Terry, 2007, p.76).

In the elections on September 16, 2013, women secured "an overwhelming majority with 51 out 80 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, that is 64% [...] of seats in the lower house of parliament" (Republic of Rwanda, 2013). To what extent this development will solve the age long problems of women's equal rights in the family and in the society is to be seen. It is equally important to investigate other sectors of the Rwandan life such as health, education and the economy to assess the gains made.

The turning point for this positive achievement is the post 1994 genocide policies adopted by the Rwandan government. The 1994 genocide against Tutsi left a large number of women as head of their households. The horrific atrocities committed then brought about an alarming number of widows and single mothers simply because their husbands were either in prisons or in exile. These women found themselves with the responsibility of raising their children and responding to the economic needs of their families on their own. Many of them had no education and therefore were unable to find well paying work. They had no skills that would have allowed them to work. This was a very difficult problem which needed special attention. The nation could not afford to go the old way by preserving the old age cultural, traditional structures and hurdles faced by women. According to MINECOFIN (2014, p.13), today, 29% of households are headed by women. This means that the latter are the sole breadwinner.

The government of Rwanda took the needed bold and significant measures to confront this challenge. This task was assigned to the Ministry of Women and Family Promotion to devise the formula for the reconstruction of the Rwandan society. This led to the adoption of a series of legal and other measures to promote equal rights and opportunities to strengthen families and to repair the Rwandan community at large. It raised the perceived value in regard of women's capacity by providing them with better opportunities and increased self-esteem.

One of the most significant legal reforms made at the time was the adoption of the 2003 Constitution of Rwanda. In its preamble, this Constitution affirms the commitment to ensure equal rights between women and men. In the Rwandan Constitution, art.9 (4) highlights the role of the government to promote equality to all Rwandans, including by ensuring that women get at least thirty per cent of the posts in the administration decision-making at all levels. Art. 185 established the Gender monitoring Office to monitor the process for all gender related issues, for example to combat gender discrimination and to ensure gender equality in all fields. The National Council of Women which was established on the basis of art. 187 now plays a key role in advancing women's rights (Republic of Rwanda, 2003). The succession/inheritance law which was adopted in 1999 offered to women and girls the right of inheritance (Republic of Rwanda, 1999).

According to art.27 of the Rwandan Constitution, the family is considered as the foundation of Rwandan society. Practical measures were taken in promoting women's rights as one of the ways to strengthen and protect the family and that way, the Rwandan society's foundation. These steps follow the socio-economic changes that have been taking place in many places of the world improving positively social structures. The family is the fundamental unit of the society deserving protection. This is clearly recognized in numerous human rights instruments (UDHR art. 16 (3), ICCPR art. 23 and ICESCR art. 10).

It is within the family that the socialization of children takes shape. This is done within the framework of parents and guardians, relationships and ties, all of which will be helpful for the growth and strength of a child's behaviour in the society.

Although Rwanda has registered a lot of progress in the direction of promoting human rights in general and women's rights in particular, there is a need to do more including in strengthening the sustainability of the Rwandan family and ensuring the well-being of the family. It is within this context that this study examines the problems areas and challenges facing women's rights promotion and the well-being of the Rwandan family.

1.2 Objectives of the study

a) **The main objective:** How the promotion of the rights of women can lead to the improvement of the well-being of the family.

b) **Specific objectives**
1. Demonstrate the importance of women's rights to the well-being of the family
2. Investigate the obstacles and challenges in the way of women's rights and the consequences on the family in general.
3. Demonstrate the significance and respect of women's rights to gender relations and family harmony.
4. Assess the contribution of cultural and religious values to the promotion of women's rights and family well-being.
5. Explore the contemporary mechanisms put in place to promote women's rights and their relevance to the well-being of the family.

1.3 Research questions

The research questions are intended to cast light on what the Rwandan women in selected places feel about the theme of this study.
1. How can respect of women's rights contribute to the well-being of the Rwandan family?
2. What are the obstacles to the promotion of women's rights and family well-being?
3. How do violations of women's rights affect gender relations in the family?
4. How do cultural and religious values affect the promotion of women's rights and family well-being?
5. What are the measures taken by the government of Rwanda to protect and promote women's rights? Are they adequate? Have they produced tangible results in improving family well-being?

1.4 Justification of the study and relevance to social work

The idea of conducting this study came out of the realization that not a lot of research has been conducted linking the family as an institution and the promotion of women's rights in Rwanda. Inequality creates tension in family life. Women cannot enjoy their rights in the fullest if they still face discrimination problems preventing them from thriving and contributing to the family.

Obviously, interesting research has been conducted addressing the rights of women, specifically those concerning land tenure and property rights. Likewise, others have focused on the past status of women and their problems relating them to political and economic empowerment. Hereto, the impact of these issues on the family has been neglected. Therefore, what remain to be explored is how women's rights contribute or do not contribute to the well-being of the family and what the significance of the contemporary developments is.

The topic means a lot to the researcher because she is very concerned about the challenges Rwandan women face, especially after the 1994 genocide. The researcher has also been inspired by the positive gains made during the post-genocide period, making the country a leading example in Africa. Most of all, the topic is chosen for this Master's thesis because the discipline of social work is very much concerned with human rights, social justice and the eradication of inequality. "A primary mission of the social work profession is to advocate and work on behalf of vulnerable population" (Reichert, 2003, p.158). As women are included in this category, this research looks into how the respect of their rights can lead to their empowerment and to the well-being of the family.

1.5 Social work and human rights

1.5.1 Defining social work and social justice

The social work profession is inseparable from human rights. It is concerned with the well-being of people, especially the poor, the marginalized and all people whose rights are violated. It seeks to empower them so that they may find a just place in the society. The motivation and inspiration of social work action is defence for and the promotion of human rights to meet real human needs (UN, 1994). This is why social workers are keen to struggle for social justice.

According to the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW, 2014),

> "Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing […]".

To use the words of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), "Social work is a practical profession aimed at helping people address their problems and matching them with the resources they need to lead healthy and productive lives" (2012)

The above references show the clear link among social work, social justice and human rights. Without social justice and respect for the rights of people, especially vulnerable ones, women included, there will not be democracy, stability or genuine progress. "Social justice is the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities. Social workers aim to open the doors of access and opportunity for everyone, particularly those in greatest need" (NASW, 2012).

The role of human rights advocators, of public and private actors, and the public's willingness to change such situation are key for this. Social workers' intervention is indispensable in this regard. It complements to make sure the provisions of the international human rights instruments are translated into the everyday life of the population to respond to their most urgent needs (UN, 1994).

The focus of social work profession is on the human needs and the requirements for social justice. This needs approach goes hand in hand with the rights approach creating the link between social work and human rights. The respect and enjoyment of these rights are achieved through the collaboration between social workers and the public, as well as with private actors (UN, 1994). Of particular importance are the special needs and wants of women who experienced war and genocide which constitutes a major concern for the social work profession. The Rwandan women are one such group.

1.5.2 Social work contribution to women's rights and family well-being in Rwanda
1.5.2.1 Social work development in Rwanda
The social work profession is new in Rwanda. As stated by Kalinganire (2003), the development of professional social work in Rwanda is linked to the recent historical, social and cultural changes which took place in the country during the last few decades.

In pre-colonial time, the kinship and community self-help structures provided support to those affected by death, disease, hunger or other social needs. In other words, the family and community were the main providers of social services. Formal structures emerged during colonization with Belgian Missionaries stimulating the empowerment of women to take care of their families, including their husbands.

Education and the practice of 'social work' started with high schools offering 'Social Action' as a subject. The objective was to train Assistant Social Workers (ASW) with minimum knowledge and skills. They would work in fields like poverty alleviation, mental health, child care, welfare domain and social development in general.

In the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, NGOs began offering short trainings to different agents in addition to the low number of Assistant Social Workers. They were needed to assist the increased number of the victimized social groups. In order to train qualified professionals capable of dealing with the consequences of the tragedy, a Bachelor's program was gradually introduced in the Department of Social Sciences at the former National University of Rwanda (now University of Rwanda) (Kalinganire, 2003). There are two private institutions of higher learning that offer a BSW. A lot has been achieved but there is still work to do in terms of harmonizing the curriculum, getting highly qualified teaching staff and teaching materials. However, there is a need to increase the visibility and recognition of the social work profession.

1.5.2.2 The role of social work in promoting family well-being in Rwanda
The use of social workers in public and private institutions and NGOs has brought significant changes in the field of social welfare services. These actors take part in social policy issues and

elaboration, and work as direct service providers. They have also taken an active role in the promotion of human rights.

Social workers are needed as advocates for the rights of vulnerable groups, especially for women and children. Great progress has been made in assisting vulnerable groups, but there are still many who do not know where to seek help from, especially people in rural areas. Social workers are needed to raise public awareness in this regard and to assist those whose rights have been abused, so that they may find remedies.

Social workers can also play a crucial role in collaboration with policy makers and other human rights actors to match the requirements of international human rights instruments with the local situation so as to offer the best services possible to the population, especially to women whose rights are violated due to cultural stereotypes. Empowerment in the context of women's rights also requires addressing socio-cultural barriers and the consequences of the genocide to self-fulfilment.

Payne (2003) suggests empowerment measures and advocacy practices in communities as good ways to contribute to social development and practice macro social work. He gives examples of how this can work at three different levels. First, if a group of women from the minority is assisted with having access to better resources for their families, this can lead to empowerment. On the second level, some empowered women may gain self-confidence to play an active role in campaigning organisations for women's rights, which has an emancipatory outcome or result. Third, women may also get information to influence policy or the welfare system, which could lead to a transformational outcome or result (Payne, 2003).

This shows that the role of social workers can be at the micro, mezzo and macro levels. They provide women with the necessary information about their rights so that when empowered, they are able to contribute to the well-being of their families. Social work intervention is needed to empower women so that they can make informed and proper choices. Social workers need to assist women to better understand and contextualise all the changes that are taking place. Globalization has made information sharing easy through phones, the internet, social networking, etc. Within that, there should be tendencies to relate to what is happening on the global scene, thus, confrontation with the local values, norms and principles occur.

1.6 Rationale of the present research in the current discourse

As the title of this thesis suggests, this study examines the link between the promotion of women's rights and the well-being of the family. This requires looking closely into the status of the Rwandan women and what their rights and needs are. In addition, it investigates whether the promotion of their rights and needs, as well as the failure to do so, affect family well-being positively or negatively.

The study highlights the importance of having strong families where men and women aware of the importance of women's rights to the family. Based on the findings, the researcher will suggest possible solutions for the promotion of women's rights and the protection of the family. The recommendations could be of help to policy makers and community leaders who are

concerned for the promotion of women's rights. It is also hoped that this could help create awareness to enable women know their rights and to use them to benefit their families.

1.7 Conceptual clarification

There are numerous concepts used in this study. They include, gender relations, human rights, the principle of equal rights and non-discrimination, family well-being and women's rights. In what follows, the reseacher will clarify their meaning and how there are used in this study.

1.7.1 Family

Murdock (1949) defined the family as "a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction." He added that the family includes "adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children.[1] There is also one or more children, offspring or adopted by the sexually cohabiting adults (Haas, 2004; Cheal, 2008).

Lately, the understanding of the family has been broadened to include a wider range of social structures (Cheal, 2008). Murdock's (1949) work contributed a lot in recognizing that there is more than one type of family structure. The first type is the nuclear family; the second one is a family with polygamous character. There is also a third type of family which represents the extended family (Cheal, 2008).

The criterion based on common residence has been questionable since there are families in which one or more family members spend extended periods of time elsewhere for different reasons, e.g. due to travelling regularly. The relevance of reproduction has been questionable as well. Childless couples have become increasingly prevalent in Western societies as fertility rates have fallen. They are considered as family too. Furthermore, there are also single parent families consisting of one adult plus her or his children. Such families have become increasingly prevalent as divorce rates increased (Cheal, 2008).

Parsons (in Haas, 2004) views the family as a social subsystem that contributed to the overall efficiency of society. It is based on co-residence and marriage bond. Furthermore, it was fulfilled and consolidated by the raising of children, a single (presumed male) breadwinner role and the sharing of incomes between adult partners (Haas, 2004).

According to Almudena (2013, p.10), the family consists of "two or more people who share the same goals and values, are committed to one another over the long term, and usually live in the same household". While the term 'the family' is widely used to refer to a fundamental social unit, it is difficult to find a universally agreed definition that can be applied across or within societies (Haas, 2004). Family thus, remains to be a shifting concept. Whichever definition one takes, family has been and continues to be a meaningful category of human organization (Cheal, 2008).

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[1] http://www.socqrl.niu.edu/collarcounty/DEFFAMILY.html [accessed on 06/05/2014]

What the above definitions have in common is that they consider the family as the basic institution of the society, in which members share the same values, are committed to one another for mutual support. In this study, we rely on the traditional meaning given to the traditional nuclear family by the Rwandan society, namely that which is composed of a man, a woman and children, whether their own or adoptive ones. The UDHR refers to 'family' but does not define it: art.16 (1) "Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and found a family. [...]"Art.16 (3) "The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State."

Rwandan family
The family making in the Rwandan context is not exactly the same as in the western context. Even if a man and a woman take a decision by themselves to start a family, they require a *parent blessing,* which is not the case in the western countries. Family in the Rwandan context is more collective than individualistic. Traditionally, a father could decide to send his child to a relative so that the former have access to good school. The child becomes member of the new family not by *legal adoption* as can be the case in the western countries, but because it is a traditional responsibility to take care of members of the extended family for the well-being of the family.

Post 1994 genocide has put additional responsibilities to families. It was not the father deciding to send the child since the former was either dead or in prison or in exile. But the family feels the responsibility to adopt the child/children in the best interest of the child and for the well-being of the family, making it larger. It is no more the nuclear family composed by the father, the mother and their offspring, rather, a new form of family. As Chambers (2001) puts it, there are various forms of family today different from the traditional one and possessing different family values. Jamrozik and Nocella (1998) also pointed out that family structure and form are becoming more complex, although the family is still considered as a primary institution. It remains to be a key player in the functioning of the society and the state relies upon it for the functioning of the society.

1.7.2 Gender relations
Gender relations concern relations of power and dominance which characterize the relationship of women and men. It considers the relevance of the issues of power, differences and diversity, how identities are defined and constructed and the relationship is shaped (Bettina, 2006).

In our research, gender relations are perceived as relationships, cooperation and mutual help between spouses within the family setting. Gender relations in the family influence positively or negatively the enjoyment of women's rights. The dynamics between the two impacts the well-being of the family as the basic institution of the society.

1.7.3 Human rights
Reichert (2003) states that human rights define needs but also present a set of rights for each individual. Thus, the concept of human rights can be defined as "rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible" (OHCHR, 2014).

Human rights are now part of the positive law of nations by virtue of ratification of the various human rights instruments. Rwanda is one of the countries that have ratified many of the international human rights law instruments. The justification used for developing the latter is the acceptance of the dignity and worth of the human person and the recognition of equal and inalienable rights of both men and women (Preambles UN Charter, UDHR, ICCPR, ICESCR and CEDAW) (Sandy, 2012).

1.7.4 Women's rights

Women's rights are sometimes misunderstood by the critics of feminism. Women's rights are about the human rights which all human beings are entitled to by virtue of being human beings without discrimination based on sex or on gender roles. However, since political, cultural and other factors have made women vulnerable, attention is now turned to their vulnerability to end the discrimination and the difficulties facing them.

As Reichert (2003) underscored, women traditionally encountered discrimination on the basis of gender. Even in many parts of the world, they face mutilation, mental and physical abuse and other practices similar to slavery and dispossession purely on account of their sex. Because of this, it is necessary to protect their rights. They have specific needs to which the international community is progressively addressing (Smith, 2012). Responding to the problems they face by promoting the opportunity to enable them to enjoy their human rights is key not only for their own well-being but also for the well-being of the family, the community, and the world at large (Reichert, 2007).

1.7.5 Well-being, family well-being

Well-being is easier to recognize as a concept than to define. Dictionaries emphasize in general on 'health', 'happiness', 'comfort', 'contentment' and 'prosperity' (Wollny, et.al., 2010, p.7). The Oxford English Dictionary gives two definitions. The first one is "The state of being or doing well in life; happy, healthy or prosperous condition; moral or physical welfare (of a person or a community)". The second one relates to "Satisfactory condition (of a thing)." This is measured based on different levels. It has both individual and social dimensions and is established in culture, the economy and governance (Almudena, 2013). This concerns the family as well. Sociological literature has reflected on this matter using the arguments and indicators such as income, employment, health status, housing, as well as on psychological and interpersonal indicators including satisfaction, self-esteem and affect-balance (Almudena, 2013).

Well-being is also defined taking into consideration basic needs and the degree to which they are met by the family and the community. Basic needs refer to what is vital for survival, such as food, housing, healthcare, the prevention of harm, and proper functioning (Almudena, 2013). Family well-being refers to how a family functions, in being able to respond to the needs of its members in terms of food, education, health, etc. In short, it relates to how a family satisfies the socio-economic needs of its members.

Family well-being is defined as "The emotional, social and economic wellbeing of children, parents and families". It concerns also "…both physical and psychological wellbeing [of family members] as well as the quality of relationships between parents and the quality of parent-child relationships", "…the health, happiness and prosperity of the family unit as a whole as well as its

individual members" or "The ability to perform functions and practices for the benefits of the group and individuals" (Wollny et.al., 2010, p.30).

Since family members depend on one another, it is important to understand the role each one plays for the good of all, for the family, including the mother. Almudena (2013) summarizes these using two concepts of interdependence and interrelatedness that allows the smooth running of the family system. For him, the interaction and reciprocal positions and roles played by family members facilitate fulfillment of the functions of the family for its members and the needs of the society in general. By respecting values, norms and expectations, a network of family relationships grows connecting the members in ways that differentiate one family from other families and groups (Almudena, 2013). To corroborate the above, Wollny et al. (2010) state that family well-being can be understood in terms of functions, needs and their fulfillment.

1.8 Study outline

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter is about the general introduction. The second positions the study into the theoretical framework, the third one is about the literature review. The fourth chapter presents the methodology. It gives the details on the entire research process. Chapter five presents the findings in their original form while chapter six deals with the analysis of the findings in line with the guiding theories and the literature review. Chapter seven concerns conclusion, recommendations and propositions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As the basis for the theoretical format of this study, the researcher has chosen to rely on both the human rights and social work based approaches. There are many theories used to this effect. The theories identified below are one of the many ways of approaching the subject. One can see these as a solution to women's problems or the needs-based solution. Therefore, the researcher will consider the Human Rights-based Approach.

2.1 Empowerment theory

Empowerment is a key concept widely used today to address issues related to discrimination, marginalization and domination. It is an important tool used by social workers. The different definitions in use have a common factor i.e. the motivation to give power to the disempowered clients/services users, e.g. the marginalized groups such as women, the disabled, etc. It is an approach of providing power to clients by different means, both resources, education, political and self-awareness. Equally, "it is a method of enhancing interpersonal or political capacity of the individuals so that they are able to participate in the improvement of their situation" (Askheim, 2003, p.3). It is seen as a process whereby stigmatized persons are supported to gain and enhance skills to influence each other and in the exercise of important roles (Dalrymple and Burke, 2006).

For the social work profession, the aim of empowering clients is to offer them the possibility to take part in the process of improving their lives by valuing their abilities and strengths. This makes the empowerment a process whereby the social worker intervenes with the client in order to minimize the powerlessness created by stigmatization (Dalrymple and Burke, 2006).

Empowerment is furthermore defined as theory determining how people could achieve control over their lives, in order to achieve their interests as a group, and a method by which social workers enhance the power of vulnerable people (Adams, 2003).

It is recognized that when clients are involved in decisions-making concerning their lives, this increases the level of ownership of their decisions, thus, the chances of sustainable change. Appreciating this, (Askheim 2003 referring to Slettebø and Starrin) asserts that the process of empowerment builds confidence, a positive view on people's ability to decide and to take action in regard to their own lives. In this course of action, the service users become the chief experts on their lives. It gives them the abilities and the competence to know what is in their best interest (Askheim 2003 referring to Slettebø and Starrin).

According to Askheim (2003), empowerment not only has an individual but also a structural dimension. The former is concerned with activities and processes which increase the individuals' control over their lives: it equips them with self-confidence, a better perception of themselves and increased knowledge and skills. In this way, individuals will be better able to identify the barriers which decrease self realization and control over their lives. The social structures deal with barriers and power relations, which maintain differences and injustice and also decrease the

individuals' opportunities to take control over their lives. Both these individual and structural dimensions of the empowerment model thus serve as a goal and as a means of achieving a goal. It is a goal in itself, in that it opens the door to get out of their disempowering situation to be able to set up or reconstruct a new status as equal. At the same time, empowerment appears also as a means of changing the power imbalance.

The researcher's intention in the present research is to show how the promotion of women's rights becomes the means of empowering women by removing the barriers set by the culture and to appreciate the value of their abilities and strengths. Empowerment is not used here in the sense of dominating men. What women are aspiring is equality rather than to dominate men. Rwandan women have been discriminated against, and their situation is improving with the development of human rights and the post 1994 situation.

Once women gain power through education, work, improved self-confidence, improved health and awareness of their rights, they are able to have full control over their lives. They know what is good for them and for their families, thereby being able to improve the living conditions of their families. That is the individual dimension. The structural dimension deals with what the government does in terms of laws, policies and other mechanisms to offer to them the opportunities to grow and to participate effectively in the well-being of their families, including by removing the cultural and traditional hurdles restraining their development. This requires understanding what family well-being means.

2.2 Human Right-Based Approach

According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2006), the human right-based approach is a conceptual framework used in the process of human development. It is a normatively based approach that considers international human rights standards which promote progress and development. It further addresses inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and rectify discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power impeding development progress.

Within this approach, human rights principles guide all development policies, processes, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. These principles recognize human rights universality and inalienability, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness, non-discrimination and equality, participation and inclusion, accountability and the rule of law (HRBA Portal).These principles highlight clearly that the application of the Human Rights-Based Approach assures all human beings equal rights and opportunities, which are reaffirmed in international human rights instruments, including participation for full development.

Without economic, social progress and development it will be difficult for individuals to enjoy their educational, health, economic, cultural and other rights. This is why the UN underscores the significance of the right to development and social progress. According to the Declaration on the right to development, art.1 (1) "The right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized." State parties have the obligations to make this

happen and to involve women, as underscored in art.8 "States should undertake, at the national level, all necessary measures for the realization of the right to development and shall ensure, inter alia, equality of opportunity for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and the fair distribution of income. Effective measures should be undertaken to ensure that women have an active role in the development process. Appropriate economic and social reforms should be carried out with a view to eradicating all social injustices" (UN, 1986).

Furthermore, the Declaration on Social Progress and Development art.1 states that all human beings without any distinction have the right to enjoy the fruits of social progress and should contribute to it. Social progress and development aims at raising the material as well as the spiritual standard of living of all members of the society. Art.10 puts an emphasis on the goals to attain, which are among the others, the right to work, to form trade unions and workers' associations; the elimination of hunger and malnutrition; the elimination of poverty; the achievement of the highest standards of health; the eradication of illiteracy, provision of housing (UN, 1969).

The human rights-based approach fits to this case in the sense that it takes the position that development should not be pursued or achieved by ignoring gender-based inequalities. Promoting the exercise of rights by women allows overcoming some of the inequalities that have been prevailing, which prevent them from enjoying equal opportunities with men. This in turn advances the well-being of the family and national development in general. All development related policies and programs should therefore be gender sensitive with the aim to protecting women's rights.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents various researches from different scholars on the condition of women's and underscores women's experiences as far as their rights are concerned. It discusses existing literature on the topic by highlighting the internationally recognized human rights instruments prohibiting discrimination against women, which assure them the entitlement to enjoy equal rights with men. International, regional, as well as national human rights approaches in relation to women's rights and family protection are discussed.

3.1 Previous research

A lot of studies have been made by scholars and human rights activists on the condition of women in developing countries, especially in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. This is because in these regions the status of the rights of women has been of special concern, due to a number of reasons. These include economic problems or socio-cultural issues that affect women and men differently, e.g. political oppression, poverty or human rights violations, which make people vulnerable.

In the area of the right to property, a study by Benschop from UN-HABITAT (2004) has demonstrated how in many countries in Africa and South Asia, women are systematically denied their human rights to access, own, control or inherit land and property. Women's poverty is also linked to the denial of property rights, among other factors. Yet they depend on land for survival. They are either denied the right to inherit land or cannot afford to buy one. They can only access land and housing through male relatives. This makes them dependent on men and makes their security of tenure dependent on good marital and family relations.

In response to this challenge and to enable women enjoy their full rights; Rwanda has reformed its civil code, so that a great number of the widows of the 1994 genocide are able to inherit property (Benschop, 2004). This was a bold measure. It reflects the point underscored by Benschop (2004) endorsing the need for a more holistic and inclusive approach in reforming laws and policies related to inheritance and the division of marital property to laws and policies on land, housing, credit and gender.

A research carried out by Brown and Uvuza (2006) revealed that in traditional Rwanda, women did not possess land rights since land was considered a property of men. Although nowadays women have the right to land through purchase, inheritance, or gift, they still do not enjoy this opportunity fully as many still think that they do not have the right. Awareness has not caught up with the legal development. The situation is rapidly changing, benefiting many women who are heads of households. However, they still face many obstacles in relation to land rights.

A study by Isaksson (2011) also underscored that while in traditional Rwanda the rights of women to land have been negligible, tangible improvements have also been seen nowadays with a body of legislation allowing women to enjoy their rights to land. She defends her conclusion by relying on the inheritance law of 1999, the National Land Policy of 2004 and the Land Law of 2005. At the same time, she notes that even if this body of laws has brought about a progressive

first step towards protecting women's land rights, simply formulating policy and laws alone do not suffice. Institutional change comes slowly, and significant challenge remains at the level of implementation. Therefore, improvements in the land rights of women have a long way to go before they are translated into gender equality in actual land ownership practices (Isaksson, 2011).

When it comes to studies made concerning the right to political participation, one important work deserves praise: that made by International Alert (2012) in the Great Lakes Region. Africa This study focuses on women's political participation and their economic empowerment in countries emerging from conflicts. It concerns Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda. The report notes that one of the obvious results of the peace process in this region during the last decade or so has been the increased representation and involvement of women in politics and in the public sphere. This was achieved mainly through of quota systems and co-optation. The constitutions adopted by these countries provide for at least 30 per cent female representation in decision-making institutions (International Alert, 2012).

Mukankubito and Mihigo (2012) conducted a study entitled "*Promouvoir l'égalité entre les sexes dans les processus de decentralisation et la gouvernance locale: leçons du Rwanda*" (Promoting gender equality into decentralization processes and local governance: lessons from Rwanda). It notes that the quota system adopted has led to greater representation for women starting early 2000. Nevertheless, the principle of gender equality has not been properly integrated into the process, and decentralization has still to provide a space that would allow women to influence the policies defined at the local governance level.

Uwineza and Pearson (2009) conducted an interesting research aimed at exploring how history and pre-colonial culture contributed to the present high level of Rwandan's women political representation. They emphasize the need for continuous efforts to transform social attitudes. According to them, this entails constant sensitization of the general public to the significance of women's empowerment, while upholding traditional cultural principles that value and appreciate women's contributions to the family and society. Their conclusion highlights an important aspect which is more related to the present research

When it comes to women's right to employment, Bayisenge (2009) found that access to paid work did contribute to a great extent to their economic empowerment and the development of the society. Her study reveals that while the majority of women working in rural areas are able to fulfill their financial needs as soon as they get paid jobs, those in urban area do not. In other words, the empowerment of women through work depends on where they are employed (rural/urban), the status of their work (stable/unstable, formal/informal) and the amount of money earned.

On women's right to justice, one research conducted by HAGURUKA (2001) highlights the challenges faced by women that prevent them from receiving complete justice in court. This study offered interesting recommendations for eliminating gender-based discrimination and other forms of unequal treatment. This study also looked at the status of women in the traditional Rwanda in light of the customary law as well as the situation in light of the written law. In the former situation, it was revealed that women have always been dependent on men, even for

access to justice. Before marriage, a woman was dependent on her father or brothers. After marriage, she was dependent on her husband. Even when widowed, she had to rely on her brothers or on her brothers-in law. The reasons given for this practice are thoughts in regard to women's emotionality and timidity. In addition, other contributing factors may have been customs, ignorance and even poverty. With the written law, the study highlighted international as well as national laws that provide for equality in right and dignity for both men and women. However, the study found out that this principle of equality was not applied in reality, which has huge implications on the restoration of fair justice.

On measuring family well-being, a study has been conducted in the UK by Wollny et.al. (2010).The study points to the complexity of the concept of family well-being as it is difficult to define and measure it. Well-being is sometimes used interchangeably with other concepts such as "quality of life, life satisfaction, standards of living, liveability, and social quality" (Wollny et.al, 2010, p.2). Furthermore, the study underlines the impact of the rapid social change, the diverse family structures and the increasing demands placed on families and on their functioning. It further notes that there is a need to have data on family well-being that is representative, comprehensive and consistent to allow policymakers and governments' officials to understand the impact of social policy measures on family functioning. The data has to be collected in all spheres of influence to the family functioning, and on appropriate ecological levels such individual, relationships, family, the community and the society at large (Wollny et.al, 2010).

While the mentioned researches are valuable, they do not directly address women's rights affect the family's well-being. How does the right to property and paid work allow women to contribute economically in their families?

3.2 Human rights approach to the promotion of women's rights and family protection

Women's rights are grounded in the principles of equal rights and non-discrimination. This is stated in all human rights instruments, e.g. in the international Bill of Rights which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex or gender. This section is presenting this principle and highlights the important provisions from different international human rights instruments about women's rights and family protection. These instruments call on governments to protect the family and to tackle challenges affecting women's rights.

The UN has been the leading actor in defending women's rights both institutionally and conceptually. By advancing the UN Charter, a wide array of human rights instruments were promulgated by the UN and other regional organizations, by upholding women's rights and non-discrimination. Examples of these include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966), the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981), the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR, 1950), the American Convention on Human Rights (ACHR, 1969), and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (African Charter 1987). All these instruments prohibit discrimination on

grounds of sex (art.2 UDHR; art.2 ICCPR; art.2 ICESCR; Preamble and art.2 CEDAW) (Parpart et al., 2002).

3.2.1 Principle of equal rights and non-discrimination

> All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. (Art.1 UDHR)
> Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status./.../.(Art.2 UDHR)

The principles of the equality and non-discrimination are fundamental element of international human rights law. It guarantees the equal entitlement of rights and freedoms by men and women, which include the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. The Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations and its art.1 (3), 55 & 56, the UDHR art.1&2, the ICCPR art.2&3, the ICESCR art.2&3, the CRC, the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and the Members of their Families, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities all contain explicit provisions related to the equality of rights of men and women.

CEDAW defines "discrimination against women" as

> any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field (CEDAW, 2010).

Equality and non-discrimination are also two of the key principles recognized by social work. They are considered as the foundation of justice (UN, 1994). The principle of Equality and non-discrimination entails rigorous concern of "just and unjust equality and inequality based on biological factors, on psychic, social, cultural and spiritual needs, and on individual contributions to the welfare of others" (UN, 1994, p.8).

The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO, 1960) requires member states to continue and increase their efforts to provide equal education for all, without any regard to race, sex or other distinctions. It also obliges them to outlaw discrimination in education and to promote equality of educational opportunity, mainly through the elimination of barriers to the education of girls and women. This principle is also emphasized in ILO Conventions No. 111 (1958) in relation to illegality of work rights related to Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation. This is also stated in the Declaration on Social Progress and Development 1969 art.1, the Declaration on the Right to Development art.8, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action 1993 and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Other instruments, such as the CERD and minority rights instruments also underscore the point that all women should have equal rights regardless of their race.

The principle of equality can under certain circumstances oblige a state to take affirmative action in order to reduce or abolish conditions that cause or maintain discrimination. This is emphasized in art.4 (1) CEDAW and in art.4 General Recommendation No. 25 of the Committee on CEDAW. It recommends to state parties to adopt temporary special measures aimed at accelerating equality between men and women, which should be discontinued once the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved (CEDAW, 2010).

However, statements of formal equality and non-discrimination in the general human rights instruments are not adequate. This is why a long list of additional instruments were adopted dealing specifically with women. Each of these instruments reflects an international consensus on the particular problems facing women, and provide a unique insight into the approaches and strategies to be followed in meeting the challenges (Parpart et al., 2002). Unfortunately, because of the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms, these instruments have had little impact on the condition of women worldwide.

After the mid 1960s, efforts were made to develop international instruments that would conceptualize the human rights of women globally and provide concrete measures for implementation and supervision. These efforts led to the adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979. Later, CEDAW placed the concepts of 'women's rights' in a global perspective by establishing a supervisory committee that recognizes women's rights and the obligations to respect and promote them legally.

3.2.2 The universal human rights approach to the promotion of women's rights

The human rights discourse continues to focus primarily on women's role in the public and political spheres. The result is that abuses of women's human rights, many of which occur in the private or familiar sphere, are sometimes excluded from the human rights agenda and are perceived as a private, cultural or individual issue, not a political matter justifying state action. Thus, beating a 'disobedient' wife has societal sanction in some cultures. The practice of female circumcision has only recently been exposed to public attention. Despite this, to date international human rights organizations have failed to adopt a firm position on the issue (Parpart, et al. 2002; Reichert, 2007).

There are key human rights protecting women. The main concern for this study is on provisions of the instruments relevant to empowerment and family well-being. To this category, we include the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of association, freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, to education, health, work, participation and family protection.

- *Right to freedom of opinion and expression:* this entails the right to present one's view, judgement without interruption, to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media. It is stipulated in UDHR art.19 and in ICCPR art.19. This means that women are allowed to give their opinions on all matters, which allows them to value themselves, to be valued and to avoid injustice. When women have information and can pass it, they learn more. All this has an

impact on women's development and the development of their families and communities at large.

- *Right to freedom of association*: "everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association and no one may be compelled to belong to an association", stipulated in art.20 of the UDHR and art.22 of the ICCPR. The advantage of the right to association for women is that it is an opportunity for them to get together, to get the information and to learn from one another, they can also create NGOs. They gain self-confidence and support from one another in starting small income generating activities to fight against poverty. The example is the Grameen micro-lending in Bangladesh which is a group-based model, providing small loans to women in groups. It has been proved that peer pressure leads to collective responsibility and a sense of fulfilling one's responsibilities (Bantekas and Oette, 2013).

- *The right to political participation:* "Everyone has the right to participate in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives" as stated in UDHR art.21, ICCPR art.25 and CEDAW art.7&8. It requires freedom of expression, association and assembly. This is very important as women will be able to raise their voices in order to put an end to the discrimination and injustice they have been victims to for a long time. Full and equal participation of women in politics is an opportunity for them to push for the adoption of laws and policies to end these injustices and be able to enjoy their rights. Women's full and equal participation is indispensable not only for their empowerment but also for the development of the society. Furthermore, it is a characteristic of democracy (CEDAW, 1997).

- *Protection against torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*: "no one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" as specified in UDHR art.5 and ICCPR art.7. Women suffer from humiliating and cruel treatment by men in many places. Women should be protected from mental or physical treatment and punishment aimed at inflicting severe and extreme physical suffering. They should also be protected from treatment and punishment aimed at humiliating or causing shame to them. They should also be protected from whatever can cause these things. Discrimination itself is humiliating and degrading treatment and CEDAW art.2, 5, 11, 12 and 16 put the obligations to States to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women (CEDAW, 1989, 1991). CEDAW General Recommendation No. 19 explains discrimination against women under the term of violence against women. The above General Recommendation underlines the fact that gender-based violence weakens or annuls the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms; thus, preventing them from playing their role in the society (CEDAW, 1992). Therefore, all States parties are requested to eliminate all barriers, especially socio-cultural habits and acts that perpetuate violence against women or are likely to cause harm to them.

- *The right to work under favourable conditions:* implying the right to work, free choice of employment, just and favourable working conditions, equal pay for equal work without any discrimination, right to form and join trade unions, in line with UDHR art.23, ICESCR art.6, 7& 9, ILO Convention No. 100, CEDAW art.11 and CEDAW General Recommendation No. 13. Women have the right to work in order to value their competences, contribute and have power in their families. These provisions stipulate that both women and men must get equal pay for equal

work but special care must be taken for women especially in periods of pregnancy and after delivery, especially concerning maternity leave. It means that women should not be refused their salary on the ground of biological nature.

- *The right to property*: everyone has the right to own property alone or in association with others and shall not be arbitrary deprived from it, as stated in UDHR art.17 and CEDAW art.16 (h). The enjoyment of this right offers equal access to resources to both men and women and equal status in the family and society. "The right to own, manage, enjoy and dispose of property is central to a woman's tight to enjoy financial independence, and in many countries will be critical to her ability to earn a livelihood and to provide adequate housing and nutrition for herself and for her family" (CEDAW, 1997).

- *The right to education:* everyone has the right to free and fundamental education aiming at the full development of the individual. It is stated in UDHR art.26, ICESCR art.13&14 and CEDAW art.10 and special attention must be paid to rural women as states CEDAW art.14 (d). Women and girls have been lagging behind due to cultural and traditional norms and political will that favours boys and men to be educated. Education is the key to many other opportunities for the development and well-being of the people. Offering women the right to education helps to empower and liberate them so that they may be able to play their role for the education and socialization of children and be able to participate in other activities for the advancement of the family and the community. It is not only about women alone but also about the whole nation.

- *The right to health care services:* the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health including family planning, stipulated in UDHR art.25, ICESCR art.12 and CEDAW art.12. The full realization of women's right to health requires that state parties take necessary measures to ensure that women and girls get a food supply that is safe, nutritious and enough. There are societies that treat women and men differently in terms of food supply, which has a negative impact on the health and well-being of women and girls. It is of paramount importance to address health problems of women since they must be healthy enough to be able to enjoy other rights and contribute to the well-being of their families. Special emphasis must be put on women in rural areas. Socio-cultural and economic barriers that prevent women from having access to health services should be removed (CEDAW, 1999).

3.2.3 Protection of the family

The family is the foundation of the society. In the present research, this social group is composed of the husband, the wife and children. While the typical Rwandan family is also composed of a husband and wife with their own offspring, there are many families that have assumed the responsibility of taking care of children that do not belong to them either because their parents are not alive or because they live in the remote areas. In such cases, family well-being is seen to embrace the expanded family. There also other families headed by women. Therefore, the group as a whole has the right to protection as enshrined in the provisions from different human rights instruments.

According to UDHR art.16 (3), ICCPR art.23, ICESCR art.10 (1), (2)& (3), the family is entitled to be protected by the state for the well-being of its members. Family well-being is the

responsibility of its members but also the state has assumed the obligation to protect the family. UDHR art.23 (3) & art.7 (1) state that every working person has the right to just and favourable working remuneration for their well-being and the well-being of their families. UDHR art.25 and ICESCR art.11 stress on the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of the living conditions to necessary social services and to special care for mothers and children. UDHR art.12 and ICCPR art.17 stress that everyone should be protected against unlawful interference with his/her privacy, family, home or correspondence. The obligations of the states in this regard includes adoption of policies and measures aimed at facilitating how these rights will be satisfied through development strategies at different levels.

One of the preambles of CEDAW proclaims that gender- based discrimination undermines the growth and prosperity of the society and of the family and prevents women from the full development of their potential. This convention appreciates the central role of women to the well-being of the family. It also emphasizes the necessity of adopting changes to the traditional roles of men and women in the family and in the society so that equality of men and women is achieved. Furthermore, it calls for ending physical and psychological violence that many family members are exposed to, since this is necessary for the well-being of the family.

 In its preamble, the CRC also recognizes that the family is the foundation of the society and that a good family environment greatly contributes to the positive development of a child. The well-being of the children is dependent on positive relationships and the care provided in the family by their parents or the guardians. Family cohesion is central for the children well-being since hostility affects their mental development.

In short, family protection has many sides and should be understood in the broadest sense as the provisions of these international human rights instruments suggest. The commitment to protect the family and the rights of women has also been reaffirmed in numerous resolutions adopted at the end of women's conferences as the following section shows.

3.2.4 Global Conferences commitment to the promotion of women's rights and family protection

Families are strengthened when they are stable and their needs are met. For that reason, it is important to elaborate family-sensitive policies and to put in place family support systems, as it is responsible for the care and support of children. It is also important to strengthen the capacity of women as they play a crucial role in the family. This theme has been recognized in many of the international conferences of the past two decades. Examples of these include the World Summit on Children, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and Habitat II. They have focused on family-related issues, for which the major themes discussed on are human rights, strengthening families, situation and needs of the child, advancement of women and poverty eradication.

In all these conferences, participants have reaffirmed the core principle that the family is the basic unit of the society and that it needs support and protection. They further underline the relationship between family well-being and sustainable development and encouraged the importance of adopting measures aimed at promoting the integration of a family-sensitive approach to development strategies. The above conferences also emphasize that every child has the right to be raised and protected by their family and that families and society must join forces to improve the situation and defend the rights of the children.

When it comes to the empowerment of women, attention is made to the needs of ensuring the equal rights between women and men, which include opportunities, access to resources, and shared family responsibilities. Women's full participation in economic and political decision-making is also viewed as being of paramount importance. Finally, the conferences underscored the importance of tackling the causes of poverty as it threatens the capacity of families to respond to the needs of their members.

In short, many of the international conferences have either echoed or developed what the human rights instruments have provided when it comes to strengthening the family and women's rights.

3.3 The regional human rights system of Africa

The goal of protecting human rights is enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, often referred to as the Banjul Charter. This instrument was adopted in 1981 by the then Organization of African Union. It differs from other human rights instruments in that it places duties on the individual and attaches unique values to culture and the family, non-discrimination and tolerance of others (Rhona, 2012). To address properly the problems of African women, a protocol on women's rights was adopted in 2003, "to respond to the UN's Beijing principles and plan of action on combating discrimination against women and strengthening women's rights" (Rhona, 2012). In addition to this protocol, there is also the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which entered into force in 1999, which addresses the rights and welfare of the child (Rhona, 2012).

3.3.1 The promotion of women's rights in the African instruments of human rights
The principles of equal rights and non-discrimination are firmly established in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights art.2&3 respectively. Art.2 states that "Every individual shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognized and guaranteed in the present Charter without distinction of any kind such as race, ethnic group, color, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status". Art.3 provides that "(1) every individual shall be equal before the law and that (2) Every individual shall be entitled to equal protection of the law". In art.18 [3], the Charter places the duty to the States parties to "ensure the elimination of discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of the woman and the child as stipulated in international declarations and conventions." States have also the obligation to promote and protect the rights without discrimination in general.

The specific rights enshrined in the Charter include the right to participate freely in the government of the country (art.13), to property (art.14), to work under equitable and satisfactory

conditions (art.15), to enjoy the best attainable state of physical and mental health (art.16), to education (art.17[1]) and to participation in the culture (art.17[2]).

This Charter has been criticised for not properly addressing the issues facing women in Africa (Center for Reproductive rights, 2005). The shortcomings identified include the failure to define discrimination against women and the consent to marriage and equality in marriage. Other concerns raised include the references made to traditional values and practices, which have hampered for a long time the development of women's rights in Africa (Center for Reproductive rights, 2005). In response to such concerns, a protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights was adopted in 1995 dealing with the rights of women in Africa.

This instrument was intended "to ensure that the rights of women are promoted, realised and protected in order to enable them to enjoy fully all their human rights" (Protocol to the African Charter). It has been praised for being the "first legally binding human rights instrument to expressly articulate women's reproductive rights as human rights, and to expressly guarantee a woman's right to control her fertility" (Center for Reproductive rights, 2005) More specifically, it provides a more detailed account of women's right to reproductive health and family planning services (art.14) than any other global human rights instrument and is unique in addressing various problems facing women. In brief, the protocol points directly to the problems hindering women and girls' full enjoyment of their rights. As pointed out by Smith, (2012, p.141), "the rights enshrined in the protocol considerably advances women's rights by addressing issues related to abortion, female genital mutilation, and vulnerable groups such as the elderly and widowed."

The protocol has certainly strengthened the African Charter's commitment to women's equality by bringing in rights that were missing from the Charter and by clarifying governments' duties towards women. More specifically, it mentions the elimination of discrimination against women (art.2), the rights to dignity (art.3), to life, integrity and security of the person (art.4), elimination of harmful practices (art.5), protection against sexual harassment in schools (art.12 [1,c]) and at work (art.13[c]), health and reproductive rights (art.14), right to sustainable development art.19), widows' rights (art.20), special protection of women in distress (Art.24) (Center for Reproductive rights, 2005).

In addition, the protocol on the rights of women has addressed violence against women in a broad sense and in its various forms, by identifying even what happens in the private sphere (at home) as violence.

> 'Violence against women' means all acts perpetrated against women which cause or could cause them physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm, including the threat to take such acts; or to undertake the imposition of arbitrary restrictions on or deprivation of fundamental freedoms in private or public life in peace time and during situations of armed conflicts or of war (article 1[j]), Protocol to the African Charter).

The contribution of the protocol to the protection of women's rights in Africa is of great importance. There is a need to address socio-cultural challenges that hinder the full enjoyment of these rights.

3.3.2 Protection of the family in the African human rights instruments

Like other international human rights instruments, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights also emphasizes the protection of the family because it is the foundation of the society (art.18 [1]). The family is considered as "the custodian of morals and traditional values recognized by the community" (art.18 [2]). Culture and tradition play a central role in the lives of most Africans. To entrust the family the custody of these values means that the family is also valued and cherished. It needs to be saved from any harm that could prevent it from accomplishing its tasks. Consequently, it is not the State alone that has the duty to protect the family (art.18 [1]) but also the individual (art. 27[1] &29[1]).

As stated before, African women play a central role in the maintenance of the family. That is why protecting their rights is viewed as necessary for safeguarding the family. The earlier mentioned protocol to the African Charter provides for equal rights between men and women during marriage (art.6) and specifies that monogamy is the favoured form of marriage (art.6[c]). It recognizes that the woman has the right to acquire property and to manage it freely (art.6 [j]). It provides for joint responsibility of both spouses in the education and protection of children and in upholding the interest of the family (art.6 [i]).

Another element that is the key to family protection is the condition of children. In its preamble, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child recognizes the exceptional place of the child in the African society and stresses on the necessity of having secure and strong families for the upbringing of children. However, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare the child art.31places a responsibility on the child towards the family and the society, the state and other legally recognized communities and the international community (AU, 2010). Furthermore, the protocol underlines the fact that in all situations whether in case of separation with parents due to war, death, adoption or other problems such as of disability, the child should be protected in a special way and cared for in an environment alternative to the family, always in the best interest of the child. This reflects the spirit of art.3 of the CRC.

3.4 The national human rights system in Rwanda

Rwanda has ratified various international as well as regional human rights instruments, including CEDAW. This means that the stipulations made in these instruments are now embodied in the national legal system. The government of Rwanda has taken various initiatives for promoting the recognized rights to benefit all. A factor which necessitated the needs for facing the reality of the deficit of men is the 1994 genocide. That terrible experience created the basis for responding to women's rights so that they may be able to shoulder their new responsibilities. The government has shown its concern for the rights of women by elaborating and implementing their rights and opening the door for their active participation in the political and economic life of the country.

The Rwandan Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) appears to be convinced about the need of working out policies to establish a just equilibrium inside the family. It seeks to establish capacity building and strengthen responsibility, authority and resources for both genders to help them accomplish their responsibilities (MIGEPROF, 2005). The role of the Rwandan women in the family cannot be replaced. Their participation in the socio-economic life of the country has proven to be critical. MIGEPROF (2005) addresses this in the National Family

Policy, the National Gender Policy, and the National Integrated Child Rights Policy. Other laws and strategies have been adopted to meet the challenges brought by the new changes to enable women to participate in the life of the country without negatively affecting the family and the society.

In the section which follows, attention will be turned to the positive steps taken to promote and protect the rights of women in the fields of education, health, employment, property, participation, association, protection from serious abuse and family protection.

3.4.1 Implementation of women's rights in key areas

As pointed out by MIGEPROF (2010), the Government of Rwanda has taken concrete measures to promote female equal rights with their male counterparts. Besides ensuring their rights, these steps will enable them to participate on equal footing in the process of development.

- *Education:* The enjoyment of the right to education benefits women in many ways, i.e. to improve their health, their employment chances, their participation in society and the care of their family. This also benefits the whole community. In line with the Rwandan Constitution art.40, measures were taken to expand access to education. Besides the existing education system, twelve year-basic education [replacing nine-year] is under implementation and will facilitate full access to education by both girls and boys. The strategic Plan for Girls' Educational Policy is put in place by the Ministry of Education to ensure access, to combat female school drop out of girls and women at all levels. Special emphasis is put on girls' education in science and technology. In this regard, some affirmative actions were put in place including the FAWE Girls' schools and awards for girls who have performed well in class (MIGEPROF, 2010).

- *Property*: art.29 of the Rwandan Constitution and Law N° 22/99 of 12/11/1999 gives women the same rights of inheritance as men. The Land Organic Law N°08/2005 offers equal access to land for both men and women. Acquiring property enables women to become economically independent, and increases their level of confidence and self-esteem. It also helps them to contribute to family expenditures and to have a say in the family decision-making process as equal partners (MIGEPROF, 2010).

- *Employment/work*: Advancing the goal set in art.37&38 of the Rwandan Constitution, Law N° 13/2009 of 27/05/2009 was adopted to regulate labor. It contains the Women Employment Strategic Plan and creates women's guarantee funds. These laws facilitate the enjoyment by women of their rights to work and to be able to earn their living including the well-being of their families. When women work outside their homes, the incomes they gain contribute to the improvement of the socio-economic situation of their families (MIGEPROF, 2010).

Despite all this, women represent 86 % in the agriculture sector and many still suffer from poverty. This is due to many reasons. The first one is the fact that they are not in control of cash crops. The second one is because land which is an important resource for income generation is still in the hands of the men. Finally, women's participation in extension services and farming techniques is limited (MIGEPROF, 2011). All these perpetuate the sad reality of the feminization of poverty which is a serious threat to the family well-being and to sustainable development. The majority key positions in the employment sector remains in the hands of men,

leaving women under-represented. A large number of women work as supporting staff (MIGEPROF, 2011).

- *Health*: the right to health is addressed in art.41 &49 of the Rwandan Constitution. To promote health, the government appointed health advisors all over the country. Their role includes mobilizing and monitoring the implementation of health programs at the community level. A National Health insurance scheme is now put in place for the entire population. Women also benefit from the Reproductive Health Policy which was developed. Demographic and Health Survey and Gender Profiles are produced regularly to give the general health situations (MIGEPROF, 2011, p.12). When women are healthy, they can better contribute to the well-being of their families.

- *Protection against serious abuse:* Is provided by art.15 of the Rwandan Constitution. Different measures have been put in place. In the area of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), a law preventing and punishing such offences has been promulgated. Centers such as 'One stop centers' for GBV survivors' care in medical, psychosocial, legal support have been established and child protection committees from the grassroots level to the national level have been put in place. Gender sensitive laws have been enacted and a review of existing discriminatory laws conducted. In addition, a Gender Desk and a free hotline are now operational. Furthermore, a men's association (RWAMREC) has been created to sensitize the population and eradicate gender-based violence specifically violence against women (MIGEPROF, 2011).

Fighting the violence against women creates an environment where they can enjoy their rights, exercise their potential freely and participate fully in the development process of their communities. Gender-based violence, such as domestic violence could sometimes arise through misunderstanding of women's rights. These perceptions contribute to the difficulties in effectively exercising rights by women. Some men think that women want to take over their family life. Likewise, there are some women who behave as if they are on the road of taking revenge against men. This creates tensions which are sometimes manifested as domestic violence (MIGEPROF, 2011).

- *Participation in the government:* This is guaranteed as a right in art.45 of the Rwandan Constitution. Rwanda is the first country in the world to have a majority of women in the Parliament. Their ratio in the Chamber of Deputies was 56.25% in the 2008 parliament elections and 63.4% in the 2013 parliament elections. In Rwanda, like in many post-conflict countries, gender roles are now reconstructed based on new gender norms. They offer the opportunity to women to practice new roles such as becoming members of parliament (Uwineza and Pearson, 2009). The presence of women in the parliament and in other decision-making posts is beneficial since it allows the adoption of laws against discrimination, including combating traditionally harmful practices against women.

Even though the actual situation shows that a great number of women are now in decision making positions, there are socio-cultural hurdles, including certain beliefs that predetermine women's and men's social roles. Men are mostly encouraged to be decision makers in the public sphere while most women continue to perform domestic services (MIGEPROF, 2011).

- *Association:* The right to association is enshrined in art.35 of the Rwandan Constitution.
It enables women to gather in associations or cooperatives when working together for a common interest. It allows them to learn from one another, to break isolation and to improve their socio-economic situation. This leads to getting more knowledge and skills to better serve families and the society at large. There are many examples showing how women have been able to fight poverty by working through cooperatives.

Ineza is a woman's sewing cooperative in Kigali, Rwanda capital city, which produces high quality hand-made bags, accessories and home décor items. It was started in 2006 by WE-ACTx, an international NGO which offers comprehensive HIV/AIDS treatment in the form of primary care, anti-retroviral medications, mental health services and education. The women who currently own Ineza were once some of the WE-ACTx most vulnerable patients who received nutritional support. When the project ended, WE-ACTx established Ineza as a means for its clients to earn a living wage to support themselves and their families. Ineza's members have transitioned from dependency on an NGO-based food program to the cooperative management of a small business. They are now economically empowered, committed to mutual support and have improved health (Ineza Cooperative, 2011).

In addition to these types of governmental efforts, a great number of civil society organizations under the umbrella Pro-Femme/Twese Hamwe have also been playing an important role in striving for the socioeconomic advancement of women.

3.4.2 Family protection in Rwanda

The Rwandan society attaches an important place to the family. The latter has always been considered as the cradle of the future and pillar of happiness. After all, it is within the family that a child is conceived, born, educated and given to the community for the good of the society. It is also within the family that the first interpersonal relationships are developed and experienced (MIGEPROF, 2005).

The Rwandan family has always been an ideal place where social and cultural values are transmitted from generation to generation (MIGEPROF, 2005). The family plays an important role in educating Rwandan values and socialization of children. It is also a place where children benefit from the affection of their parents, an important factor for the emotional and intellectual development of children.

In order to protect this important institution, the National Family Policy has been adopted by the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) to serve as the basis for designing all programs for the protection of the Rwandan family. The National Family Policy is founded on the core objectives of the Government of Rwanda (GoR) towards vision 2020. Art.27 of the Rwandan Constitution requires the necessity of creating appropriate legislation and institutions for the protection of the family, in particular the child and the mother, so as to make sure that the family flourishes The country considers the family as an essential element for safeguarding social order, maintaining social cohesion within the society (MIGEPROF, 2005).

The 1994 genocide has affected the family functioning and integrity by shaking it to the ground. The attractiveness of modernization and globalization are also playing their parts to the

destruction of the family. Challenges facing the Rwandan family and the Rwandan community broadly include polygamy, domestic or conjugal violence, the increasing dominance of single parenthood, loss of traditional values, failure to care for the elderly, street children, unaccompanied children and juvenile delinquency (MIGEPROF, 2005). Added to this are problems such as poverty, the disintegration of social relationships, ignorance of/refusal to recognize family rights and obligations and the refusal to abandon negative traditional values that are detrimental to family development (MIGEPROF, 2011).

The new policy developed to address these challenges is designed to set an enabling environment, to protect the family as an institution, and enhance the quality of family (MIGEPROF, 2005). Beside the policy, various legislative as well as administrative measures have been put in place, especially initiatives and programs that serve to protect the family (MINIJUST, 2009). In the following, examples of such measures are presented.

Legislative measures
Awareness campaigns are carried out on the necessity to register their marriages. Couples are encouraged to legalise their union in order to protect their rights and the rights of their children. A monogamous heterosexual marriage is the only form of marriage legally recognized. For family protection, the labour law prohibits certain work by children, pregnant and breastfeeding women (art.74). The law determines the worst forms of child labour, by defining their nature and location and provides for preventive mechanisms (art.72&73). This is in line with the protection of the right to health and work under favourable conditions. There is also a law for the protection of disabled persons (MINIJUST, 2009).

Administrative measures
Various programs, policies and strategies have been put in place to reduce poverty with special emphasis on vulnerable groups as well as on the family. A policy on social assistance was developed and an estimated 7 to 10% of the national budget is allocated to social programs such as funds for genocide survivors, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups (MINIJUST, 2009).

Programs and initiatives for poverty reduction
Various programs are implemented to protect the family against malnutrition. 'One cow per family' is a project aimed at assisting poor families to fight against children malnutrition. It has proven to be effective since those families have been able to fight against malnutrition and improve their economic status by increasing their agriculture production thanks to the manure. Another initiative is 'Ubudehe mu kurwanya ubukene', a local collective action program by which local communities identify problems in their community and propose solutions. Local communities choose two less fortunate and poor families that receive support to pursue livelihood strategies. They start up income generating projects and will in turn extend the benefit to other families in need. It is a strategy of poverty reduction that involves the participation of beneficiaries (MINIJUST, 2009).

Furthermore, cooperative schemes are implemented where families have access to small loans for their economic projects to overcome poverty. Health care initiatives such the health insurance provided to indigent and other vulnerable groups, Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of

HIV/AIDS and the National Malaria Control Program are under implementation to protect the health of families (MINIJUST, 2009).

The 1994 genocide and its consequences have placed children in critical situation where a great number do not longer live in their families. Some became heads of households. Others are placed in institutions for care and in addition. Some ended up on street children who are either orphans or have problems in their family. The policy anticipates reunification of children with their families and/or placing them in appropriate alternative care. This shows that the government recognizes the important role of the family in the upbringing of children. Art.27& 8 of the Rwandan Constitution stipulate that every child needs special measures of protection by the family, society and government. It is worth mentioning the National Integrated Child Rights Policy which has been conceived to offer guidance on the promotion of the rights of the child in accordance with CRC. The Government of Rwanda commits itself to support families in providing good care for their children and making itself responsible for ensuring alternative care for children who are temporarily or permanently deprived of parents and family environment (MIGEPROF, 2011).

Furthermore, parents, guardians and caregivers have the obligation of protecting their children against all forms of abuse. Whoever fails to fulfil this obligation will be brought into court. That is done in order to offer a secure environment to children for their personal development (MIGEPROF, 2011).

3.5 Socio-cultural values and problems affecting women and family well-being

Women's human rights, as set out in CEDAW, are based on a predominantly Western liberal discourse which individualizes the rights of women to the exclusion of the multiplicity of her identities, e.g. as a product of a collective social unit. Several writers argue that this approach is premised on a combination of law, modernization theory and Western liberal feminist agenda (Charlesworth et. al. 1991; Parpart, et al., 2002). It assumes that the individual is at the heart of the recognized appropriate rights ignoring the social context and dominant values. It also presupposes that underdevelopment and gender inequality in the Third World are caused by traditional values and social structures. The prescription for achieving equality by women is therefore to address the human rights of women without reference to the cultural roots (Parpart, et. al., 2002).

The dilemma with the discourse on women's rights is to appreciate to what extent the concepts of equality and non-discrimination as understood within the Western liberal framework are equally beneficial for women in developing countries like Rwanda. This is due to the differences in social, cultural and economic contexts women find themselves in. In addition, they are largely interpreted as local civil rights shaped by political, religious, and cultural customs of each society (Reichert, 2007). Along with that, stereotyping and discrimination against women still exist, for instance in the labour market when they get pregnant. It is not easy to tackle violence against women when they are considered the property of the male whether husbands, fathers or sons (Tomaševski, in Eide et.al., 1995).

In Africa and Asia, most women see rights as entitlements embodied in family and community relationships that do not relate to the 'equal rights' language. Religion forms an important part of their identity. By disregarding their value system, religious and cultural values are sources of dignity. The monolithic and individualistic concept of abstract equality is questionable whether it is able to meet the everyday needs of such women (Parpart et. al., 2002), at least in the present context most women find themselves in. By disregarding their value system, religious and cultural values as sources of their dignity are ignored. The monolithic and individualistic concept of abstract equality is questionable whether it is able to meet the everyday needs of such women (Parpart, et.al., 2002).Talking about individual rights without collective rights is likely to fail in that context. Consequently, taking into consideration every woman's cultural context and situation can be a precondition for successful implementation of women's rights.

Rwanda is not an exception to this. Traditionally, the concept of gender was interpreted in terms of division of labor rather than as the equality of both sexes. As stated by Uwineza and Pearson (2009, p.8), concepts of gender, equality, and human rights originate from the West and are based on its individualistic system and culture. Traditional Rwanda had its own context and value systems which can hardly be compared with today's values. Collective life, respect for the tradition and mutual support are some of the cultural values and shape everyday life in the Rwandan community. The concept of gender is not generally understood in terms of equal rights. It is rather interpreted as complementarity to the roles that men and women play in the family (Uwineza and Pearson, 2009). It should relate to and be sensitive to cultural values and norms; otherwise, it will be rejected. As the role of the woman in the Rwandan family is rightly appreciated, respect for her rights should take into consideration the positive features from the perspective of her culture, to uplift her effectiveness in the development and strengthening the well-being of the family. This is not to say that all cultural behaviours should be protected. Culture is dynamic and changeable; care should be made to change the negative aspects of it in an appropriate way.

There are other aspects of gender relations in the Rwandan cultural context that were oppressive and could even today prevent women from fully enjoying their rights. Women were expected to leave the ground to their husbands in decision-making for example and were discouraged to speak in public (no freedom of expression). Rwandan women were not permitted to own land (violation of the right to property). A bride was expected to accept sexual relationships with her brothers-in-law; otherwise, she could be rejected by her family-in-law. Men could tolerably take second wives if their first wives did not give birth to boys. Gender-Based Violence remains a widespread and often hidden problem. Sexual violence is considered a private matter (violation of sexual rights) and women are forced to keep silent about what they are experiencing as a cultural feature of not revealing family matters (Uwineza and Pearson, 2009, pp.6-13). It may well be difficult to justify these negative values but they cannot realistically be changed overnight without education.

Rwanda is clearly overcoming some traditional practices sanctioning the discrimination of women. It is endorsing practices that empower women by offering them the opportunity to use their potential for their own well-being and the well-being of their families. The new laws penalizing violence against women or polygamous marriage are examples of how traditional values are being challenged.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Scope and delimitation of the study

Due to constraints of time, the study covered a selected part of the country. It was carried out in two districts of Rwanda: Huye in the Southern Province and Gasabo, in Kigali City.

Huye District was chosen for two reasons. First, since the researcher lives there, it was easier to contact the people who would participate in the research. This place is among the first in Rwanda that was in contact with religious missionaries. They have many schools and development projects in the area that influence the education of children as well as the family life of the community.

Gasabo District was chosen because the institutions the researcher wanted to work with are found there. The researcher conducted interviews in the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, in the National Women's Council and in HAGURUKA, a civil society organization for the defence of the rights of women and of the child.

4.2 Study design

The study is qualitative. According to Creswell, (2008, p.4), "Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem." Bryman (2004) underscored that it is strategy that uses words for data collection. Nigel adds that qualitative designs allow to follow cause and effect of phenomena Nigel (2008).

This approach was chosen to see experiences from participants' views and accounts of the subject under study. The information from the interviews conducted allows having more in-depth understanding of the meaning attributed to women's rights by participants in the research and how these rights relate to the well-being of the family. This helps the researcher to know the impact of women's rights (cause) to the well-being of the family (effect).

As corroborated by Engel and Schutt, "qualitative research allows researchers to obtain a richer and more intimate view of the social world than more structured methods. These methods provide a greater voice to the people being studied than do the rigid structures imposed by quantitative methods" (Engel and Schutt, 2014, pp.222-223). Creswell (2008) underscores that the motivation to apply qualitative research is to learn about the problem from the point of view of participants themselves and address it using the information from the participants.

This is also a cross sectional study because it was conducted at one point in time. This was preferred due to time and resources constraints. The researcher wanted to gain information concerning the current situation. There was no need to conduct a longitudinal study since there was no intention on generalizing or comparing findings from different periods in time. The information collected is analyzed in light of theories advanced by different scholars. A

conclusion is drawn from the response to the research questions and the assessment of the examined relevant materials.

4.3 Sample size and participants selection procedures

Qualitative research allows researchers to collect in-depth information about the subject under study. As stated by Alston and Bowels (2003, p.92) "Social work students frequently do qualitative research where sample size is not such a big issue and relates more to convenience and availability." It is concerned with the meaning assigned to social phenomena by participants in the study not with the generalization of the findings. As Bryman (2004) puts it, findings of qualitative research are generalized to theory rather than to populations.

4.3.1 Sampling design
This study has used non-probability sampling methods as they are commonly used in qualitative research. This kind of sampling focus on a very small sample that allows an in-depth description of objects under study. There are four methods: availability sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling (Engel and Schutt, 2014).

The researcher has combined availability sampling and purposive sampling. "Elements are selected for availability sampling (or convenience sampling) because they are available or easy to find" (Engel and Schutt, 2014, p.104). "In the purposive sampling, each sample element is selected for a purpose, usually because of the unique position of the sample elements" (Engel and Schutt, 2014, p.105). This was used with the key informants because of their knowledge and expertise about the issues being studied due to the positions they occupy in their respective institutions.

4.3.2 Selection of respondents
The research was conducted with respondents from different backgrounds. This was because the researcher wished to have insightful views from various sources to ensure that the findings are applicable to varied groups (Engel and Schutt, 2014, p.110). A total of 13 respondents, including key informants participated in the study. Detailed demographic information is provided in the next chapter.

 The research sample consists of two main groups. The first group of primary respondents is composed by two young people, a couple and four clients of HAGURUKA. Availability sample was used with participants who were available at the time of interview and who were interested in the study and willing to participate. The researcher met different people and talked about the objectives of the research requiring them to participate. After two months, when time for data collection started, the researcher contacted them once again. Those who were available took part.

 The researcher had been in touch with the staff at HAGURUKA from the very beginning when she embarked on the idea of studying women's rights. In the process of reading relevant documents, it was decided to expand the area to include participants from various backgrounds to have enriching information. The youth were chosen since they live in the families, benefit from their caring and support, assuming the families are 'well' and aspire to form their own in the future. They have an idea of what well-being means for them as children. Spouses were

selected to learn about the dynamics between them, how the promotion of women's rights influences these dynamics and gender relations and what they think about family well-being. Clients of HAGURUKA were interviewed as people who are seeking assistance to be able to enjoy their rights. One of the staff at the institution assisted the researcher to find the participants among many clients who had come that day to seek the institution's assistance.

The second group of key informants is made of one staff from the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, a staff in the National Women Council, a staff of HAGURUKA and three representatives of religious institutions, namely the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Muslim community. Purposive sampling was used to choose them since their knowledge and expertise, coupled with the activities of their institutions influence women's rights and the well-being of the family to some extent. The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion is in charge of coordinating all activities in the area of gender, family and children's issues (MIGEPROF, 2014), while the National Women Council's mission is to build the capacity of women and ensure their full participation in the development (National Women Council, 2011). Therefore, both are important sources of information concerning this study. Religious teachings influence family life and the position of women in the society, although religious institutions are sometimes accused of undermining women's rights. The researcher included them in the sample in order to find out their position on the matter.

4.4 Tools for data collection and analysis

4.4.1 Methods for data collection
According to Engel and Schutt (2014, p.206), "qualitative methods refer to several distinctive research techniques including participant observation, intensive interviewing, and focus groups." Nigel (2008) also believes that data from qualitative methods can be collected through interviews, focus groups, ethnographic observations, diary entries, life historical documents, or visual material.

This study used semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. After contacting the key informants and noting that some were not available for face-to-face interviews due to work responsibilities and the shortage of time, it was decided to conduct Skype interviews. Later on the research tried to reach the participants through Skype with no success due to internet problems. Since their experience, knowledge and expertise were valuable for the study, the research took the decision to e-mail them the interview guide.

4.4.1.1 Semi-structured interviews
The data was collected using semi structured interviews. Kvale (2009, p.327) defines the semi structured life world interview as "a planned and flexible interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena."

For these semi-structured interviews, the researcher set out a list of questions to serve as 'interview guide'. The respondents were free to how to respond. The order of questions does not matter as new ones were added (probing questions) in order to have more information. The questions were asked in a similar way to all the interviewees. For all the categories, different

interview guides were applied, composed by open-ended questions. One of the disadvantages of open-ended questions is that "they produce responses that may be ambiguous, wide-ranging and difficult to categorize. Answers can be time-consuming to code, interpret and analyze" (Simmons, 2008, p.193).

Face-to-face interviews were conducted in a private setting to ensure confidentiality and respect of the privacy of the respondents. Interviews were conducted in the local language (Kinyarwanda), though some could mix with either English or French, to allow participants feel comfortable. The interviews lasted between 23 to 40 minutes each. At the beginning, an introduction was given to each participant to make them feel comfortable. The informed consent was also read. After their consent the interview started and everything was recorded. This facilitated the researcher to follow the views expressed well, to probe in order to have more clarifications, to observe their facial expression, listen carefully to the intonation of their voices as they were responding and observe their body language. Body language allows interpreting the feelings of the interviewees on a given question. Face-to-face interviews help to create and maintain rapport with research participants (Engel and Schutt, 2014). The researcher e-mailed the interview guide to three key informants as they failed to have interview on Skype. The atmosphere of live interview is lost but their inputs remain invaluable.

4.4.1.2 Document analysis
The researcher made a careful search of the available documents connected to the topic and which fulfilled the documents quality criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. Authenticity refers to the genuineness of the evidence, its originality; credibility refers to the question of whether the document is free from error or distortion; representativeness is about having a representative sample of documents while meaning is whether the evidence is clear and comprehensible (Bryman, 2004; Nigel, 2008). With this in mind, the researcher chose the relevant international human rights instruments, regional as well as national human rights instruments, books, scientific publications, earlier researches and official reports that address the issues of women's rights, family well-being and children. Document analysis was done because this study could not simply rely on the information from the interviews. The information contained in these documents was useful in that it allowed the researcher to structure well the study and to enrich the information from interviews.

4.4.2 Data processing and analysis
The most important characteristic of qualitative data analysis is its focus on text, on qualitative data rather than on numbers as is the case with quantitative analysis. The text that is analyzed comes from transcripts of interviews. The researcher seeks to illustrate textual data in a way that reproduce the setting or people who produced this text in their own terms, rather than in predefined measures and hypotheses. Using an inductive approach, the researcher outlines the main categories and themes (Engel and Schutt, 2014, p.294). The recoded interviews were transcribed word by word in Kinyarwanda and field notes added where they had been taken. The researcher took time to listen again and compare the transcription and later on, translated the material in English for future use in the analysis stage.

For analysis purpose, qualitative content analysis was used in order to understand, interpret and evaluate the data collected. This is a process of organizing information into categories related to the central questions of the research and comprises an investigation of underlying themes in the materials being analyzed (Bryman, 2004). It "involves coding and categorizing text and identifying relationships among constructs identified in the text" (Engel and Schutt, 2014, p.306). All along the interview process and during transcription, the researcher was able to identify major concepts, and therefore, draw themes that could be helpful in understanding the topic under study (Engel and Schutt, 2014; Nigel, 2008). The identification of themes implies a transformation of data into meaningful, easy to manage and analysable units of data. The researcher listened to the interviews many times, took notes of major themes and grouped them together for presentation of findings and analysis.

4.5 Ethical considerations

"Ethics is a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others" (Nigel, 2008, p.146). Ethical principles are presented differently by different researchers; but there are common features. According to NASW Code of Ethics cited by (Engel and Schutt, 2014), there are four guidelines to take into consideration. Researchers should protect research subjects; maintain honesty and openness; achieve valid results and encourage appropriate application of the findings.

4.5.1 Honesty and openness

Engel and Schutt (2014) emphasize that the researchers have the obligations not only to protect participants but also to inform the scientific community on how the research was conducted and how ethical principles were applied. This means they should openly disclose their research methods under methodology and be honest in presenting their findings. All the instruments used during research, references and so on must be presented. This is very important since it makes the validity of the findings credible (Engel and Schutt, 2014).

It is the objective of the methodology chapter to reveal all the steps undertaken during the research. After the identification of the research area, the researcher has highlighted the problem area, the objectives and rationale of the research. Previous research was presented to uncover what has been covered and what need to be studied. That is how the present research came in the mind as a compliment of the previous researches. Interview guides are presented in the appendices section and the report will be publicized on a database for theses so that it is accessible to other students, researchers and whoever would be interested in the research.

4.5.2 Protection of research subjects

The research should not aim to spoil participants' welfare; the safety of participants must be taken into consideration. Researchers are advised to avoid harming research participants, to obtaining voluntary, informed consents and to maintain privacy and confidentiality of data (Engel and Schutt, 2014).

4.5.2.1 Avoid harming research participants

The results can have a negative effect on the participants. A case in point is when the researcher asks sensitive questions related to their private life (Bulmer, 2008). Family life is a sensitive issue and some of the participants may have problems in disclosing information related to their

respective families. The researcher took care to caution them not to associate the researcher with their private life and to refuse responding to any question in case they are uncomfortable in one way or the other. With this in mind, the researcher used the informed consent form.

4.5.2.2 Informed consent

This principle means that participants are free to participate in the research or not, to know in advance the nature and purpose of the research, what the expected risks are and how confidentiality of data will be ensured (Bulmer, 2008, Nosek, et al., 2002). A paper containing all the information concerning the research was presented to them. It was read to participants as a means of making them feel comfortable and to encourage them to participate willingly by knowing what the outcomes of their participation are. Since the interviews had to be recorded to facilitate the analysis process, the participants were informed about this and agreed with no problem.

Engel and Schutt (2014) underline that the informed consent is indispensable in the research as means to unveil respect for prospective participants. By providing relevant and adequate information about the research, participants who are already affiliated to an agency have to be aware that there are no negative effects if they prefer not to participate in the study (Engel and Schutt, 2014). The clients at HAGURUKA were informed that the present research has nothing to do with the services they are receiving from the agency and their participation does not does not have any impact on their relations with the agency. Those who asked if this research will speed up their cases were once again reminded that this has nothing to do with their cases.

4.5.2.3 Maintain privacy and confidentiality

In the elaboration of the interview guide and during the interview process, the researcher avoided to infringe in private lives of participants (Bulmer, 2008) as this would be a violation of their rights to privacy and it would harm them. The questions are formulated in a manner that does not require the interviewee to talk about private life and they were free to skip any question in case they do not feel at ease.

Participants were assured that none other than the reseacher has access to the information provided. They were also told that the information will be handled anonymously. This means that no names were asked to the respondents and the reseacher did not specify the positions of the key informants in their respective institutions as it would be easier to recognize them. In the same way, the researcher did not give the precise locations of the religious institutions where the interviews were conducted (Engel and Schutt, 2014). Even though the interviews were recorded, participants were told from the very beginning that it was done in order to facilitate the interaction during interviews and to make the transcription and analysis easier and that this will be destroyed after the study has been concluded.

4.5.3 Achieving valid results

In this research, validity has been achieved by triangulation of data, i.e. by using more than one method to have well-founded information from different sources of data (Bryman, 2004). Questions of 'what, how and why' were used in data collection to have adequate information on the topic considered. W*hat* questions necessitate description, *how* questions lead to process, change, intervention and outcomes and *why* questions involve causes, reasons, relationships and activities (Nigel, 2008).

As stated by Engel and Schutt (2014, p.13), "validity is achieved when our statements or conclusions about empirical reality are correct". The rationale behind social work research is not to arrive at satisfactory conclusions for the people, to gratify employing organizations or for the researcher's liking. On the contrary, "social work research is about: a) conducting research that leads to valid interpretations of the social world; b) making useful conclusions about the impact of social policy; and formulating valid conclusions about the effects of our practice with clients".

The present research has collected information concerning what participants think about women's rights and how these rights influence the well-being of the family. The hope is that the conclusions will highlight the gaps that need to be filled by social workers and other stakeholders in order to uphold women's rights and strengthen the Rwandan family.

As Engel and Schutt (2014, p.13) have underscored, there are three characteristics of validity that should be taken into consideration, namely, measurement validity, generalizability and causal validity.

Measurement validity: the researchers should pay attention to use the appropriate measure suitable for subgroups in the population. LeCompte and Goetz (1982) talk about internal validity and external validity. The former refers to checking if researchers' interpretations are equivalent to the theoretical information they develop. Put the other hand, external validity refers to the extent to which findings can be generalized across social settings LeCompte and Goetz (1982). The researcher compared as much as possible the interpretation of the data to existing theories and relevant literature to come up with valid conclusions.

Generalizability concerns the extent to which the findings can be used to inform us about people, places or events that were not studied. Findings based on the use of a small sample in the qualitative design are not meant to be generalized to the whole population. Rather, it is to inform the public on some aspects to emphasize in order to remedy the weaknesses and sustain the good achievements.

Causal validity or internal validity refers to the accuracy of the assertion that A causes B (Engel and Schutt, 2014). The present research seeks to identify if promotion of women's rights influences the well-being of the family.

4.5.4 Encouraging appropriate application

Engel and Schutt (2014) warn researchers to consider the possible implications of their research. Some research findings are likely to be used for advocacy. Others can be used to convey changes in policy or support existing policy (Engel and Schutt, 2014). This will be achieved by using objective methods, accurate and honest reporting leading to credibility of the conclusions. This research can be used to inform policy makers and other stakeholders, especially social workers, on what should be emphasized when it comes to the promotion of women's rights, what the gaps are and how the well-being of the family can be advanced.

4.6 Challenges

After agreeing with the supervisor to conduct field work, the supervisor offered an introduction letter to the institutions and individuals that will be interviewed together with the informed consent as an official proof to conduct the research. The researcher was confident that these documents were enough to facilitate the conduct of the field work. In one of the public institutions the researcher visited, she was told that she must get a research permit from the Ethical Board of the Ministry in charge of Education. It took some time to get these documents signed and distributed to the different institutions where the researcher had to collect data. Eleven interviews were conducted before coming back to Sweden to continue with the thesis writing, but one interview was deleted by mistake. The three remaining interviews were to be later on conducted through Skype. Unfortunately, the connection was not good. The interview guide was sent through e-mail to be responded in writing and it has been successful.

The lesson learnt through this experience is that researchers must be informed about all the requirements to conduct research to avoid complications that can hinder the proper conduct of their research.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings from interviews. Before discussing the findings, it is necessary to present participants' demographic information.

5.1 Demographic information of respondents

Thirteen out of fourteen conducted interviews are used for the analysis. These interviews are from nine women and four men, aged 20 to 54 years. They are designated in the research as participants:

- Participant 1: 25 years old, female, single, university student
- Participant 2: 21 years old, female, single, university student
- Participant 3: 24 years old, female, living with her male mate, four years of primary education, second hand clothes seller
- Participant 4: 26 years old, male, single, twelve years of basic education, unemployed
- Participant 5: 49 years old, female, widow, secondary education, employed in a cleaning cooperative
- Participant 6: 39 years old, male, married, three years of secondary education, driver
- Participant 7: 54 years old, female, married, Bachelor's Degree in Education, representative of the Anglican Church
- Participant 8: 47 years old, male, single, Master's in Theology, representative of the Roman Catholic Church
- Participant 9: female, married, PhD, representative of the Muslim Community
- Participant 10: 54 years old, female, married, secondary education, government employee
- Participant 11: male, married, Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, government employee
- Participant 12: 31 years old, female, married, Bachelor's Degree in Law, government employee
- Participant 13: 35 years old, female, married, Bachelor's Degree in Law, employee of HAGURUKA

5.2 Research findings

The findings from the empirical data are organized under themes.

5.2.1 Contribution of women's rights to the well-being of the Rwandan family

The views expressed by the respondents revealed different understandings of the meaning attached to women's rights in terms of equality and empowerment of women. Equality is understood in terms of equal opportunity while empowerment as ownership of ability/power to take action. Equality and empowerment shape the way women participate either in their families or in outside work. Thus, women's rights were understood in reference to the history:

Ehh, women's rights should be explained with reference to Rwandan history. In the past, women had no right to expression, had no power in the society. Respect of their rights is determining their capacity; which means recognizing that where a man can intervene, a woman can also intervene, without considering the latter as inferior, since it has been noticed that women are also capable. (Participant 2)

Some views stated emphasized equality in the decision-making at home: "[...] a woman is able to take some decisions at home regarding property and other household matters. (Participant 10) "[In a strong voice] it is the right to property you got with your husband or on your own. It is also the right to children." (Participant 5)

The relevance of freedom of expression and the right to property were mentioned by almost all the respondents.

According to me, women's rights is about the ability to express herself, having equal rights with her husband…on property, for example for those legally married, there are different ways of property management such as community of property or limited community of acquests. In case they choose among the above, I think she enjoys her rights. (Participant 6)

As Y1 saw it, women's rights are about "Freedom of expression and non-discrimination."According to participant 2, "It is when a woman is able to express herself at home, and be understood by her spouse that one can speak of her right."

For these respondents, it is obvious that freedom of expression is given special weight, which means that being able to speak their mind allows women to find their place in the society. This is how they can be valued when nobody imposes on them ideas since that are unwelcome.

The findings reveal that the equality and empowerment of women have an influence on the life of everyone in the family:

It affects everyone in the family since women's lives affect everybody in the family. When she has rights, she is a fulfilled woman to give affection to her children and they grow with more confidence in her. On the other side, she can talk freely with her husband and this leads to the development of their family. (Participant 5)

When women enjoy their rights, they are able to perform their responsibilities much better in educating their children: "Women's rights are means for improving the education of children, ensuring their well-being, the well-being of their family and even that of the community and the country at large." (Participant 12)

This respondent underscores the crucial contribution of women's education in transforming the minds and visions of the people around them. Women pass the knowledge they acquire to their children and fellow neighbours and the whole society. When women do not enjoy their right to work, it becomes a challenge to the education and the future of the children. This is why some women struggle to provide the opportunities they lost to their children:

[...] for example I am doing a small business of selling second hand clothes to prepare for the future of my children. I want them to study since I did not get the chance to study and this affected me very much. (Participant 3)

As explained by these respondents, it is obvious that the future of children depends on the education they receive from their childhood. The educating conditions of their mothers imparting this education matter:

When women enjoy their rights, children benefit. When they are mistreated by their husbands, children also may mistreat them and grow up to become poorly educated adults. In such cases, it is a big loose to the society. (Participant 1)

The above statement confirms the value attached to the woman in the family as the heart of the body: one whose presence, enthusiasm and good will affect the well-being of the family. If she is respected, assisted to progress and her views are given due value, the family will benefit. Children grow well and are comfortable when they see that their mother is treated well.

Furthermore, the enjoyment of rights allows women to become self-confident and broaden their capacities to actively participate in their families. Besides being able to educate their children, women could also get the opportunity to contribute to the household:

"The women's equal rights and empowerment allows women to be more responsible, active, and thus contribute to the development of the family." (Participant 13)
Another participant added: "When women are educated, they get work. Children are lucky if their mothers have the capacity to offer to them what they need." (Participant 5) In many cases, women pay attention to small details and basic needs while men have big and long term projects. When women work, it becomes easier for the family to respond to the basic needs and to make plans for the future.

They also enjoy equal opportunity and are free to express themselves for the advancement of the family:

Respect for women's rights contributes to the family development; there is not only the exchange of ideas but also the sharing of opportunities and equality of chances. When there is mutual support and exchange of ideas, the family is well. They can start an income generating project for the family. This promotes stability at home and she is able to exercise outside responsibilities. (Participant 13)

The enjoyment of women's rights also prevents some practices that are harmful to the family's proper functioning:

"With the new land law, all the family members are registered in the office of land. In the past, only the man was registered and could sell the land without informing his wife. Now the woman has the right to property and has a say on what is going on. She has a place in the management of family property. " (Participant 5)

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This statement shows the weight given to women's rights as a means of strengthening family stability. Women's capacity to manage family property contributes to the good functioning of the family.

Another issue raised concerns women's sociability. The enjoyment of women's rights is perceived by some as a means to open up to new people, to expand family friends and acquaintances: "[...] Women are considered as pillars of the family. They are sociable, meet many people more than men do. Therefore, respect for their rights is a gain for the family." (Participant 2)

With the promotion of women's rights, women are now combining outside work and the education of children. Some of the respondents shared their worries on how this situation affects their responsibility towards children:

> Some are very busy and do not have enough time to take care to their children. The allocated time to the child becomes very low, and that affect their socialization. Thus, women have to know how to manage that in order to ensure their education. Also, sometimes they do not have enough time to cherish their husband, so if they do not know how to manage their time, this may also end their marriage. (Participant 9)

The above assertion demonstrates the necessity to work out plans on how to combine both domestic responsibilities and the needs to work outside.

However, there are challenges that need to be addressed. How some people understand women's rights and what motivates them to start a family also have an impact on family life; especially on relationships between spouses:

"Yes, in some cases, conflicts are linked to women's rights since the rights are misunderstood." (Participant 6)

This happens in situation when one of the spouses misunderstands what the rights of women are. It can be the man who is undervaluing the wife's rights and obstructing the woman from enjoying the advantages of these rights or the woman who wants to uplift herself. In either case, this wrong perception causes conflicts. It is not uncommon to find among Rwandan women those who do not understand the meaning of women's rights well. One respondent point it out this way:

> "Women did not embrace the concept of equality as it was conceived by the government. They thought that they are given the opportunity to go up in the sense of abusing their rights or to neglect their responsibilities in the family. That is wrong on their side. There is a need for more sensitization campaigns and explanations. " (Participant 6)

Another one stated: "Misunderstanding of women's rights and abuse of these rights by women themselves cause tensions and conflicts in families. There is also substance abuse." (Participant 11)

There are indications of women who are now failing to discharge their responsibilities as mothers and as spouses or who start to despise men, claiming that 'it is their right'. All these cases demonstrate a need to continue sensitization and education on human rights in general, and on women's rights, specifically. When coupled with excessive consumption of alcohol, tension and conflicts are inevitable. There are also men who want to keep women under their control and struggle to deny them the opportunity to advance:

> Those who do not wish to see improvement of the status of women want to keep them at home, disempowered, under their control. [...] It is a resistance to change for those who think that once women know their rights, men will no longer be able to sell for example domestic animals or a plot of land, and so on. (Participant 13)

Another respondent stated how long-term mistreatment can result into putting an end to the life: "For example there are abusive men who are used to abusing their wives. They will not even hesitate to kill the wives to prevent them from reporting their abuses to the police." (Participant 3)

The above perception reveals misunderstandings of women's rights and the egoism on the men's part. The respect and enjoyments of the rights by women do not remove the respect and enjoyments of the rights by men; they complement each other.

There are other causes of conflicts between spouses that prevent women from full enjoyment of their rights, such as "infidelity, poverty, lack of love between spouses." (Participant 3)

Another respondent said:

> Poverty contributes a lot to conflict as the parties disagree seriously over the little they have. This has consequences on children as they may not be able to attend school. Parents cannot make long-term plans for the future. They cannot save as they lead a very poor life. Therefore, the family is unwell. (Participant 13)

Participant 3 added that "Misunderstandings and conflicts are caused by materialism. Some men who want to own property alone and are always harassing their wives [...]."

Men want to keep and use the property for their own interest. They do not understand why they should take advices from their wives on how to use it for the benefit of the whole family.

> That's too hard... The main cause is lack of love; spouses do no longer have time to listen to one another. Another one is materialism. People get married for the only reason to get material wealth. If they do not find it, conflicts start. (Participant 1)

The absence of love is sometimes caused by the fact that some get married without being well prepared or motivated by material gains. As revealed by one religious representative, "conflicts arise when there is absence of love between spouses who have not found their family on God, who is the true love." (Participant 8)

Even if these problems are currently observable, the youth interviewed are not discouraged. They are optimistic and aspire to start a family in the future: "I am Christian. I wish to start a family with someone I love and who loves me, with whom we can plan together. With God's help, I will succeed. " (Participant 1)

Another one added: "Yeah, there are problems, but not all families are unsafe. There are examples of those families that are doing well. I hope to have a happy family like these ones [laugh]." (Participant 2)

When women are empowered, they are able to take measures in order to tackle conflicts. This happens when women get the opportunity to become independent from abusive husbands. As one observed:

> Yes. Women have recognised their rights. Today, they have found that they can live on their own without being told by their husbands. Women have changed their minds and are not as patient to household problems as were our mothers. In the past, divorcing was considered as a shame but it is not the same as today. (Participant 9)

Domestic violence is usually more complicated than that. There are huge psychological factors involved. But it definitely makes it easier to leave when one is financially secure. In most of the cases, when women are economically independent, they do not tolerate abusive husbands and choose to live on their own. Women who are more educated get more chances to get the work. But there are cases where women are educated but are not able to find a job due to high competition or other reasons. In such cases, they stay with their husbands. With all their education, these women could stay their whole lives with violent men since they depend on the latter for survival.

5.2.2 How women's rights affect gender relations in the family

The findings revealed that there is a dynamic relationship between the enjoyment of women's rights and positive gender relations.

Recognition and enjoyment of the rights by women depends on the support they receive from their spouses. Respect for women's rights determines how the power relations are managed within the family; with advantages and disadvantages on family members: "Some men are worried that women have been given rights and they put themselves high." (Participant 3)

Those who resent this do not accept that women deserve the position they have now. They prefer the old norms which kept women subordinate. To justify this, they give examples of where women have misused the opportunity of exercising rights and how they have behaved improperly. Problems related to the exercise of power arise depending on how the society constructs relationship between men and women:

"In Muslim community, the man is considered as the most powerful. When women are exercising their rights, their roles change and sometimes disagreements begin. The husbands feel threatened and think that their wives do not respect them anymore." (Participant 9)

The above statement suggests that the Muslim community perpetuates the subordination of women. Religious teachings and values influence the beliefs and behavior of the society. This is not a problem that is seen only in Muslim societies. They often arise from cultural stereotypes and exist in other societies as well.

It is also important to look into gender roles within the family as they affect the relations between the spouses and the rights of women. Gender roles imply how society has constructed the division of labour between males and females. Traditionally, males are entitled to paid works outside home while females are supposed to take care of the housework. With changes taking place, both men and women are, more or less, performing both roles and that has an impact on their relationships and on family functioning. "I find that when a man allows his wife to work, the family prospers. There are many gains for the family." (Participant 13)

Another respondent highlighted the fact that "Women are now advancing. You may find them on construction sites working together with men, they are driving cars and their lives have improved. [...] they are contributing to the family functioning since now there are two people gaining a salary. " (Participant 6)

Women's work outside home reveals a big contribution to the development of the family. They gain self-confidence and self-esteem. They value their role for the functioning of the family. They contribute economically. When they work, they exchange ideas with co-workers; they gain new skills and knowledge to improve on the home running, especially on the education of children.

Three other participants also underlined the importance of men's work in the home. They stated that when a man performs a work that was once thought to belong to women, it shows a sign of respect and love for his wife. It makes him feel that he has done a good thing to the family and can be a role model to his sons.

Husbands who understand the value of women's rights can do whatever works at home when their wives are working outside. It strengthens their relationship and the family bond. Unfortunately, in rural areas, such men are criticised for *becoming women*. The positive outcome of such mutual help and support between spouses is exposed in the following statement:

> It is a positive achievement to have both men and women perform any role without distinction. When they understand and love each other, the family thrives as both bring money home from their different jobs. Furthermore, they help each other to take care of the children and perform other household work. But when there is confrontation and tension, misunderstandings develop and nothing can be achieved. (Participant 6)

When spouses understand each other and perform every work without distinction, the well-being of the family life improves.

Family well-being is perceived differently by different people. Some have focused on moral and physical welfare. Others are concerned with the good functioning of the family where

relationships between family members are safe, while others focus on the ability of the family to satisfy basic needs.

One participant presented his perception of family well-being as follows: "A family is well when it is morally and physically well, and there is love between spouses and between parents and children." (Participant 8) This view puts emphasis on the behaviour of the family members in relation to morality. The conduct of the family members is here measured by what the society considers as good/right and how healthy they are. A family is well when it can satisfy the health needs of its members and when the members' behaviours are in accordance with the moral values of the society.

Another participant stated that "family well-being is achieved when members are healthy, live together in peace, love, with full understanding and respect to one another. And they have faith in Jesus." (Participant 7) The above principles are necessary in the family since they allow family members, especially children to gain self-esteem and self-confidence. If human rights education is to begin in the family, these principles serve as a foundation since they educate on the respect of the worth and dignity of the person.

Beside moral and physical welfare, family well-being can also be measured by reference to the presence of good functioning. This relates to how the family is able to satisfy basics needs, such as food, clothes, education, health care, etc. A number of participants shared their thoughts on this matter. For example participant 1 interpreted this to mean "having food, health insurance, having a reasonable number of children." According to this person, when a family has adopted family planning, it is easy to satisfy the basic needs for every member, depending on available resources.

Participant 6 thought that "It is about the ability to pay for children school fees, housing, have food, and have a job …it is enough."

By satisfying the basic needs, the well-being of the family is assured. Having economic means in terms of salary for example is helpful to meet those needs. Another respondent stated that: "The well-being of the family is the good functioning of the family in all aspects: economic, financial, equality and respect of women's rights and sharing of family property." (Participant 13)

This statement highlights the significance of ensuring the equal opportunity between the spouses including the rights to property for all. These are important elements in the good functioning of the family.

Another statement that complements the above viewpoints was shared by a respondent who stated the following:

> proper education of children not only in terms of discipline but also in terms of stimulation for learning[...] and good nutrition for them and the mothers so that children grow well. Children also need protection against abuses of their rights so that they grow well without psychological problems [...] this protection is also necessary for orphans leaving in different institutions. It is also about a good family environment free from

violence and the ability of the family to respond to basic needs/.../ and save for the future. So, it is in short, good parenting, an enabling environment without violence, protection of family members and economic empowerment." (Participant 11)

The above view underscored the significance of ensuring children's need to education and protection from their early age to prepare them for the future. To achieve this, according to the respondent, an enabling environment free from violence is necessary. There should also be good communication between spouses and between parents and children. The family must have economic capacity to respond to daily needs of its members and have sustainable projects for the future.

Moreover, how family members interact among themselves determines the direction of a good functioning family and the well-being of its members. For participant 4, this means "Good understanding between the wife and the husband, living together, planning all together."

Another participant pointed out that [well-being of the family requires] "Peace, harmony and a well understanding within members of the family." (Participant 9)

Cooperation, mutual support and understanding are important since unity is power. When spouses work together, make family projects together, the family is strong and thrives. They advice each other, are able to overcome problems together in a spirit of collaboration.

Well-being has also a future dimension. As one respondent emphasized, "Family well-being is about the development and future of the family, good understanding within the family and with the neighbours." (Participant 5)

 The capacity to plan for the future and to maintain good relations with the surroundings assures the future well-being of the family. Even though the gains in the promotion of women's rights are now observable and the well-being of the family seems in better condition now, there are still obstacles to overcome to reach these goals.

5.2.3 Obstacles undermining the promotion of women's rights and family well-being

The barriers in the promotion of women's rights and family well-being such as resistance to change, ignorance and illiteracy, poverty are all familiar to the respondents. They appear to understand how all of these affect the advancement of women's rights and the well-being of the family. Other serious problems are related to land and property and to children born outside of wedlock.

Rwanda is, like many other countries, a patriarchal society. Men have been the principal authority figures, the social and political leaders, controlling property and possessing the absolute power in all decision-making. This mindset appears to be the dominant characteristic of the present society. Some people have not yet accommodated the idea of promoting women by offering them the same opportunities like men. This resistance to change constitutes a hindrance in the development of women's rights.

According to participant 11, "Patriarchal system has characterised society for many years. It is not easy to change the minds in less than a hundred years period [...]" This participant underlined

how the system that has characterized the past society still shapes the present thinking and practice in terms of how they consider women. There are people who understand the importance of equality of rights between men and women, but others do not. The different statements expressed have exposed this by demonstrating how resistance is manifested: "There are men who do not offer to their wives the chance to get paid work and want them to remain as dependant. Others do not let them exercise their right to property." (Participant 7)

Another participant went further by saying that "This resistance to change reveals more of men's selfishness." CH2. Another stated that "The reasons behind that could also be that men do not like a kind of that change." (Participant 9)

Another kind of the resistance to changes is seen in what participant 13 brought to attention when stating: "Some men who think that once women enjoy their rights, it is a kind of dominating or revenging against men and do not want it to happen."

This statement exposes the fear some men have in losing their traditional authority as 'chief'; they do not tolerate the situation of having women no longer subordinate to them. One respondent observed that this resistance to change is mostly seen within the elderly:

> The young generation, especially the educated ones understand the importance of women's rights. Only the elderly who are keeping the old tradition do not value these rights. It is an obstacle since we respect the elderly; we consider them as wise and respect their ideas. (Participant 13)

The elderly keep the old mentality as they have always lived as 'chiefs' by seeing women as their subordinates. It is not easy to change this behaviour. It may be better to educate the youth so that they do not be entrapped in the old way of thinking or even violate others' rights because of ignorance.

The above statements demonstrate how the participants interpret why some men continue to resist change or keep the old fashion of continuing to treat women as inferior.

Ignorance and illiteracy are also a hindrance to the enjoyment of rights. The right to get information, knowledge and skills helps to gain the right to work. Illiterate people are limited in getting the works they can perform: As participant 1 puts it, "Of course, illiteracy is a barrier. If you can't read it is quite impossible to be informed on what is going on."

This participant had a point in feeling that when one cannot read; he/she misses the right to information, which has a negative impact on their lives. Consequently, the advantages of knowledge and skills in reading are apparent: "Reading is a source of information, knowledge and documentation. When coupled with other sources of information such as the radio or television; the person gains enriching information." (Participant 13)

The ability to read and acquire needed information and knowledge facilitates the enjoyment of the rights, to earn respect and to respect other people's rights. Some respondents mentioned how some who deny women's rights are mostly found within illiterate rural communities. One of these respondents stated:

Many illiterate people although they do not know to read they can sign, which is very bad since they can be manipulated. Illiterate women, especially those of the rural part of the country do not have a clue on the meaning of the matrimonial regimes of property management. When they are concluding marriage, women sign without knowing the consequences of their act. And in extreme cases, their husbands who are literate make them sign leasing or credit agreements. It is only when problems arise that they understand what they did by ignorance. (Participant 13)

This shows how illiteracy compounds the problems faced especially by the rural women. Their situation differs from those in urban areas who can be informed through other channels such as the radio or television. Illiteracy is a severe handicap to development and to the understanding of women's rights. Illiterate women are easily manipulated by their husbands, especially when the latter want to exploit family property in their own advantage.

Ignorance of laws and failure to register marriages also create obstacles to the enjoyment of the rights by women, since they do not know how to proceed to seek remedy in case of violation and abuse. The government is encouraging couples to legalize their relation and discourages polygamy to reduce the negative consequences arising to women and children, especially when the husband dies or in case of separation.

In addition, lack of economic and material resources to respond to everyday needs hinders the enjoyment of human rights in general including women's rights. A striking observation made by participant 1 is that "When people are poor, they concentrate on their misery and do not pay attention to other things."

If a person is too poor, this person would be unable to benefit from the right to health, to school, to establish residence, to freedom of movement, and so on. Poverty also make people target for exploitation. These people are more concerned with finding any work and are limited in their capacity to go beyond their current status.

Poverty also contributes to discrimination. Participant 3 had a point in stating that: "In the past, when there was not enough money to send children at school, parents preferred to send a boy instead of a girl. Or if there was a problem at home, the girl was required to drop out and come to help with housework." Such practices constitute a violation of women's rights and affect the well-being of all family members in the long term.

Children born outside wedlock also present a serious problem as they are perceived as a threat to the well-being of the family. Most of the Rwandan population rely on agriculture for survival. In this connection, the right to use or title this land becomes a problem sometimes to those not counted. These children have also the right to property. It is a problem that needs to be well tackled to offer justice to both sides.

There is another problem associated with land right raised by participant 5: "With the new land registration law, sometimes people cheat by registering the land that does not belong to them", said the participant. Those that are sometimes cheated are in most of the cases vulnerable people

such as the widows, the elderly and orphans. Land being the only means of survival for these people, when they are stripped of their land, they live in misery.

5.2.4 Influence of religious and cultural values

Religious institutions are powerful in the Rwandan society as they carry moral values and norms that influence the lives of their adherents. Catholics represent 44%, Protestants 38%, Adventists 12% and Muslims 23% (MINECOFIN, 2014).

Participants interviewed feel that religious institutions regard women as central to the good functioning of the family and those religious institutions play a vital role in the protection of the well-being of the family by their teachings: "Religious institutions which consider persons as equal promote the understanding people are equal everywhere in the society." (Participant 5)

This viewpoint was especially emphasized by a church representative who, using some biblical verses explained how both men and women are created in the image of God. They are also required to live in harmony as the signs of God's love for his people. This gives hope that believers will live respecting each other, including respect for the women. Most of the participants, including the church representative hope that this serves as a role model for all.

Collaboration between churches and other institutions is central to the success of government's plans. Protecting women's and the well-being of the family follows from this. In the words of participant 11:

> We work closely with church institutions since they have a big contribution in upholding women and family rights. In whatever we do, they [church institutions] contribute a lot. But we are planning to work together to harmonize their teachings. They should not go deeper into religious aspects but also incorporate governments' initiatives since what one institution teaches may differ from what another one teaches.

Government authorities are aware of the contribution of church institutions when it comes to care for women and family rights. The fact that the two already work in partnership is a positive step. Furthermore, teachings of the churches were underlined by one respondent as being central to the sustainability of marriages:

> Churches play a central role. When they teach to love each other, they remind to couples the vows they made at the time of marriage. In my church they organize talk for the different categories: married couples, widows and youth. When you attend church, you return home enriched and blessed with joy and hope. (Participant 6)

This statement underscores the significance religion plays for the oppressed women so that both men and women live in harmony. Family relationships can be strengthened by churches through teachings, reminding Christians of their roles in the good functioning of the family.

This was corroborated by participant 2 who stressed the advantages of belonging to church: "Believing in God is one of the means to avoid conflicts. I would urge people to be part of a praying group since it serves as a guideline. Churches teach respect, self-control, tolerance and pardon."

Clearly, belonging to a religion does not end conflicts. It is merely helpful in preventing and managing conflicts, and promoting respect to one another. Christian teachings underscore respect between men and women.

It is often said that in most Muslim societies, girls and women depend on the males whether the father, brother or the husband. One of the parcipants stated that:

> According to the Quran, the woman must complete the husband. She takes care of children and the household and the husband works to finance the family. She is not the slave of the household and has the right to education.When the husband does not like his wife to work; he must give her an amount corresponding to her monthly salary. (Participant 9)

This participant added that "Islam does not accept the inequality between man and woman; that is why people must be educated on what the Quran says." (Participant 9)

These statements seem contradictory, as it is clear that women are not offered the opportunity to exercise their right fully. If women are offered the right to education, this opens a window of opportunity for acquiring the knowledge and skills and to enjoy the right to get work. Being paid by their husbands does not make sense; it is a violation of the right to work and the freedom to move, since women are expected to stay home most of the time.

Some changes are taking place inside the Rwandan Muslim community, as stated the participant. This can lead to bigger achievements in the futures.

> With the presence of women's associations, the Muslim women are becoming emancipated. They have understood that their job is not only to take care of the children and the husband but that they can give advice on project aimed at their household development. Now, the Muslim women feel responsible and are proud of that. (Participant 9)

Another important aspect of the church's role to the well-being of the family concerns the different initiatives and activities undertaken to make sure family members live in peace with one another. Religious authorities intervene to help families that are in trouble. Participant 7 for example stated: "My Church organizes family prayers, teachings and advice for those preparing for marriage, visits and advices to couples, counseling where needed, adult literacy, and so on."

Participant 8 pointed out the following: "We help couples understand first of all that they should found family on God's plan. Disrespecting this principle is causing troubles within families."
He went on to say: "We are really concerned with conflicts in the family today. They are mainly due to the fact that spouses do not respect their responsibilities in the family."

When spouses fail to honour their responsibilities in their respective families, conflicts result and the whole family is affected, especially children. Participant 6 stated: "Churches play a role of

mediator when families in trouble seek their help, before seeking the assistance from the civil authorities. Churches teach that women are not superior to men. [...]Churches try their best."

Most of participants revealed how their churches strengthen women's rights and encourage them to participate in all activities. Women who have not yet understood their rights are reluctant to enjoy this. Conservative men who are resisting to these changes take advantages of this as indicated earlier.

Cultural values were also discussed. The views of the participants concerning these values vary from those that support their positive contribution to women and family well-being to those that criticize the culture for discriminating women. Participant 6 said:

> Culture [some cultural practices] used to play a critical role in solving family conflicts. But what is being observed today with the so called 'equality' is that conflicts are increasing within families. [...]In the past, when a woman had a problem, she used to leave her husband and join her parents. The latter could listen to both sides, advice them and correct the offender [in most cases the husband]. Then, they could go back home and leave in harmony. [Laughing] Nowadays, the woman leaves her husband and goes directly to the police or other authority. They directly incriminate the husband. The authorities apply the laws and the results are the high numbers of divorce cases in courts today. You have to think about that. Women consider themselves equal to men, and men feel uncomfortable, they leave in constant hostility, it is a problem. Culture is weakening though it would be helpful.

This statement view highlights how cultural practices were used to resolve disputes between spouses without recourse to authorities. Disagreements were worked out by parents and the elderly. The spouses were encouraged to forgive one another or to pardon for the sake of strengthening their family.

Another participant raised the effects of the weakening of cultural values as a source of conflicts in families:

> [...] there is a weakness in the cultural values that used to strengthen the family...there are no more any family value. Even if there were no written laws but families organized themselves around certain values. I do not know if it is development, but today, families seem to rely on external forces rather than on their members and there is a lot of violence in the families. (Participant 11)

This participant was very concerned about the consequences of the weakening of cultural values on the family. He also felt that this may be linked to the situation the country has gone through [genocide] that has destroyed families and the capacity of the survivors to maintain family values.

There are many positive aspects of the culture that should be upheld to promote the status of women, while others are discriminating against them. When it comes to stereotypes, both men

and women have to fight against these, whether they are derived from culture, tradition or religious beliefs perpetuating the discrimination of women.

5.2.5 Mechanisms for promoting and protecting the rights and interests of women and the family

Some of informants talked about key international instruments. Others talked about national measures and programs. The international instruments referred to by the former were, among others, CEDAW, the Option Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), Beijing Platform for Actions, Resolution 1325 on Peace and Security, Resolution 1820.

The national measures that are in place and mentioned by one respondent, are classified into three major categories and the role of the MIGEPROF was appreciated by participant 11:

> [...] legal frameworks such as the inheritance law, the land law and the family law; different policies like gender policy and family policy and institutional frameworks such as the National Women Council, the National Gender Monitoring Office [...] The Ministry is in charge of coordinating all the activities and provides guidelines to other stakeholders.

This participant highlighted some of the measures in place and the role played by the stakeholders in the implementation of these mechanisms, especially the role of the Ministry as an overall body. The mechanisms in place set the ground for other activities and programs for the empowerment of women. As another respondent noted:

> There has been the creation of women's associations and cooperatives training women in handcrafts. With the skills gained, we produce various items for sale and gain money to support our families. Furthermore, it is a platform where we meet, share life experiences and learn from one another. (Participant 3)

This is one of the initiatives taken to assist women to become economically self-reliant. There are various programs aimed at encouraging women to start entrepreneurship projects and work with Banks and other financing institutions.

There are also temporary special measures aimed at speeding up equality that have been adopted. The indicators show that women's participation in decision-making positions is high and the number of girls in schools has increased: "30% has been achieved at the District level of administration and in the Parliament where women parliamentarians are above 60%. In the education sector, the number of girls and boys show that equality is being achieved. [...]" (Participant 11)

The respondent underscored the achievements made in the socio-political life of the country where the measures put in place offered equal opportunity to women and girls. This respondent recognises that it is time to review the practice resulting from these measures, to work on the shortcomings:

We have to recognize that it is time to translate from numbers into practice, especially in rural areas where the level of participation [of women] is still low. Participation and numbers do not match. [...] furthermore, there has been also a massive campaign for women promotion that men seem to have been left behind, men are not supportive, and it is a kind of 'backlash'. (Participant 11)

According to the participant, there are shortcomings that should be addressed. The non-participation of women in rural areas and non-involvement of men in women's promotion programs are examples. The respondent was pleased that all stakeholders are now working on how to involve men in all activities and programs for women and family promotion:

Men's involvement is very important. But we should first show them trust since it has been noticed that they are negatively portrayed in all what is happening, they are considered as the abusers. So, it is now time to turn to their positive side, approach them carefully to make them stakeholders/.../, granting them security since today they are abused in their families by women who frighten them, using women's rights. Men are no longer free, they are discriminated, abused. (Participant 11)

Another recommendation suggested include: encouraging and involving men to make positive contributions, especially in the family where responsibilities were earlier placed upon women. Reference was made to instances where men were victims of discrimination and gender violence by women. The mechanisms to be used should thus take into consideration what they are experiencing right now. Although the temporary special measures taken to improve women's position have been successful, they are perceived with a critical eye by some people. As underlined by one participant:

[...] decision of having 30% of women in all positions, but there is something I do not agree with [laughs], I am sorry! To admit girls into secondary schools on score below that of the boys! For me it is degrading, they should let us compete at the same level! It is one of the measures taken to promote women because we have been discriminated against in the past, but currently, there are no more obstacles that can prevent us from studying and get the same score as boys! (Participant 2)

This participant did not agree with what is going on, even if it is one of the measures required to promote women's rights in education. When the objectives of equal treatment have been achieved, those measures are terminated. This was in line with what the provisions of the international instruments prohibiting discrimination suggest.

The other programs adopted to assist orphans, widows and the elderly were also commented upon. As a respondent noted:

There are associations even if I do not know how they work, but look at how FARG assists orphans; it is a way of strengthening families, [...], when a child is in school, it is a positive development for the family. There are also associations assisting widows. I also heard that the Government is planning to assist the elderly left without children. It is a good initiative/.../ (Participant 10)

'FARG' is a Government Assistance Fund to respond to the problems faced by vulnerable survivors of the genocide. It has played a key role in assisting orphans, e.g. with school fees. Children left alone would not have been able to study without this. There are other programs dealing with housing and health insurance in order to support families.

The other positive program that was appreciated is "Umugoroba w'ababyeyi" (parents' evenings). The initiative gathers families from the same locality to discuss pertinent problems and find community-based solutions. It provides a channel to communicate information. This is mostly attended by women. This is also used to tackle violence inside the family. Participant 11 stated:

> Family mobilization by organization of family campaigns around a chosen theme representing the problem of the year. All stakeholders work hand in hand to solve this problem. Another thing is to work on long-term strategies by reviewing policies, laws and guidelines. (Participant 11)

 All such activities and programs involve families at the grassroots level. It increases their ownership of solutions as to what is perceived by them as problems. In brief, women's rights promotion is on good pace. The education and protection of children from their early age to prepare a good future for them was also highlighted as a priority and there is also a policy for child protection.

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis is carried out in light of the research questions, theories and previous researches discussed previously.

6.1 Contribution of women's rights to the well-being of the family

Women are considered as the heart and soul of the family. Enjoying their rights is important not only to women but also to their families since women play a big role within the families. Their presence, their life is exceptionally valuable; their health matters for their children, their family, their friends and the community as a whole. Responding to the problems women face by promoting the opportunity to enable them to enjoy their human rights is key not only for their own well-being but also for the well-being of the family, the community, and the world at large (Reichert, 2007).The empowerment of women must consider increasing their individuals' control over their lives, by equipping them with self-confidence and self-esteem, a better perception of themselves and increased knowledge and skills (Askheim, 2003). Therefore, how their rights are being promoted and enjoyed or violated affect how women contribute to the well-being of the family. Thus, awareness on women's rights should continue so that women and other family members could enjoy.

When women are economically empowered, they value their contribution to the functioning of the family and have power in family decision-making (Goldsmith, 1996). As noted by Baldwin (1996), women's increased workforce is not only for their self-esteem and public participation, but also for the functioning of the family since the income they gain contribute a lot for the running of the family. Consequently, when women are comfortable, the well-being of the family is assured since women are central for the good functioning of the family.

It is worth noting that some of the participants were worried that women's work outside home could prevent them from discharging well their home responsibilities. Baldwin (1996, p.9) caution that "Conditions that fragment family life and obscure the moral meaning of work within the home should be critically examined in our pursuit of family well-being.[...]Work or labour contributes to family well-being [...]" Mutual support, planning together between the husband and the wife are very important for the wellbeing of the family. When they do so, there is no work for the woman or for the man; they do everything for the development and well-being of their family. Therefore, the family functions well when all the parts (members) are well and work hand in hand for the good of the whole system. That is why women should not be reluctant to enjoy the opportunities offered to them for their development. The aim of the empowerment of women is to end discrimination and value the human being's worth and capability to be able to contribute to their well-being and the well-being of family. Empowerment should not be understood as a means to revenge against men, rather as way to end domination by raising capabilities. So, women's empowerment aims to strengthen the family as a whole for the good of all the members, especially for mental development of children.

Margaret (1996) underlines that children perform better when they are loved and cared for by fulfilling mothers, when the husband and the wife execute their respective tasks and live in peace and harmony. The family thrives, neighbours and friends feel comfortable to visit or stay there. A woman whose rights are respected will be in better conditions to impart positive values, love and guidance to her children and respect and love to her husband.

Furthermore, as the family is entitled to be protected by the state, this implies recognition of the various needs, especially the needs of the extreme poor. Otherwise the family will disintegrate with all the social and economic problems (health, malnutrition, ignorance, unemployment).

It is imperative to work on both *needs* and *rights* of women and the family. Without formal recognition of a right the social worker, will be forced to respond endlessly to needs. Having a right should be accompanied with awareness. Rights are also complemented with *obligations* to promote and respect the rights. If the 'obligations' are not delivered 'the needs' will remain. Findings show that Rwandan women have reached a milestone with the formal recognition of their human right by law. To make this practical public awareness campaign should be undertaken so that men's and women's attitudes change (culture and tradition) concerning the status and role of women. The obligation of the state to ensure the civil and political rights of women is immediate - including by taking measures to enforce the laws. Family well-being has to be among the priorities of Government activities and family policy its goal (Almudena, 2013).

6.2 Significance of women's rights to gender relations

Traditionally, gender relations are based on the hierarchical relations of domination both at the micro and macro levels of analysis. At the micro level, they define the subordinate roles women assume in a given society. [...]These relations are sanctioned by social norms and institutions, the state, as well as other institutions in the civil society, e.g. religious norms and institutions. Women are socialised to internalize these gender relations (Ghorayshi et. al., 1996).

The findings revealed that the promotion of women's rights contributes to positive relations among the spouses because they feel like they are in the same position to improve the situation of their family. The more women become economically independent, the more they have power in decision making in their family. Cheal (2008) noted that dependent wives have less power. Wives can play major role in their family's decision-making if they have paid, particularly full-time, employment.

As long as wives depend on the higher economic resources of their husbands, part of the cost to be paid is their submission to the dominant power of their husbands. Therefore, women's empowerment is important to tackle all these problems of submission and dependency. A widely held belief that the increase in the number of divorce is connected to the high number of women becoming economically independent is not true as it has been observed by Therborn (2004).

There are changes in the former roles women and men are expected to perform. This affects gender relations in the family. It was noticed for example that when men perform housework that is considered to belong to women, it is a sign of respect and love for his wife. When women

exercise paid work, they contribute economically to the functioning and well-being of their family. All these changes are happening all over the world with globalization; bringing positive as well as negative consequences on the family, even if these consequences do not have the same impact depending on differences in social and economic factors. In countries where men are always considered as heads of the family, tensions in gender relations has lead to conflicts between spouses which may even result into separation and divorce. Globalization has contributed to the reconstitution of agency and democracy. This has particularly impacted the lives of women and has affected the structures and meanings of family (Chambers, 2001).

When changes in family relations come, often the parties are not ready with how to manage these changes. This affects the family cohesion and its well-being. The strategies to tackle these problems, as highlighted in the National Strategic Plan for Family Promotion include, among others, improving the quality of family relations, developing programs aiming at reinforcing family cohesion, protecting and promoting the culture of responsibility, conciliation, mutual respect and complementarity among family members, sensitizing people on responsible relationships and ensuring the rights and privileges of the family and its members (MIGEPROF, 2011, p.6). These strategies are good but the problem remains to know how realistic and practical they are, which tangible actions are to be put in place to achieve them. It is not enough to have on paper well elaborated policies and programs. It is also important to apply them in the lives of the beneficiaries towards social change. Additionally, recognition and enjoyment of rights by women depends on the support they receive from their spouses.

6.3 Contribution of cultural and religious values to the promotion of women's rights and family well-being

Contrary to the widely held belief that religion obstructs the promotion of women's rights, our respondents felt that religious institutions uphold the rights of women, they treat both men and women as equal, as creations in the image of God. They emphasize the values of mutual respect, compassion, mutual support and complementarity. Churches play a key role in promoting family harmony, strong relationships between spouses, lasting happy marriages and acknowledge women's central position in the good functioning of the family. They also play an important role in managing family conflicts. When spouses follow the same beliefs, acknowledge that they have equal rights before God and before the law; this helps to manage conflicts and to prevent violence. This is in line with the statement of Parpart (2002) that religion form an important part of women's identity and shapes their everyday life.

In short, church teachings and activities strengthen the family while at the same time upholding the rights of women. This gives hope that those who attend church will respect each other and uphold women's rights in their families and in their neighbourhoods, serve as an example for social change. By contrast, a respondent from the Muslim religion has revealed that in their community, women are not offered the opportunity to exercise their rights fully like others. But there is hope that with women's associations playing increasingly active role, women will be slowly emancipated and enjoy their rights.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that the Government works in close collaboration with church institutions and recognizes their contribution in upholding women's rights and family well-being. Notwithstanding this, they are planning to look into how to harmonize church teachings so that they integrate some aspects of these rights and in relation to Government's initiatives. There are some aspects of reproductive rights of women, such the right to abortion, contraception use that are not accepted by the Roman Catholic Church. So, it remains questionable how the harmonization process will take into consideration the fundamental values and principles of church institutions.

When it comes to culture, there are contradictory views which have been expressed. Some blame the culture for favouring men for long, for protecting them, for resisting changes or even for perpetuating discrimination against women. Others hold that there are positive aspects of the culture that have been used to uphold the status of women. Cultural values and practices used to solve conflicts between spouses in order to strengthen the family were stressed on. The culture capacity to preserve family ties, to uphold values of tolerance and humility for both men and women needs to be preserved.

Ife (2007) suggests that cultural context must be more carefully considered before making any strong statements when it comes to the application of human rights. This means that the promotion of women's rights should take into consideration values, principles and norms of every society since these elements are important and vary from country to country. Furthermore, to be effective, gender sensitive policies, programs and legal frameworks need to be developed and implemented taking into consideration the role of women in the family to strengthen positive gender relations within the family. At the same time, regard should be made to cultural values, norms and principles of the society (Freeman, 2011). Almudena (2013) underscores that culture plays a major role in the ways families execute their tasks when it comes to development and well-being. In his view, family well-being can be understood in terms of the effectiveness of families in performing their various tasks such as socialization, social control and physical maintenance, economic and social functions at different stages of the life cycle.

Concern is also expressed over the weakening of these positive cultural values that were used to strengthen the family. This can be linked to the situation the country has gone through that has destroyed families and the capacity of the survivors to maintain family values. It can also be due to the fact that many aspire to development by adopting behaviours from other countries to the detriment of their own cultural values and principles. It is therefore necessary to safeguard positive aspects of the culture in the battle for women's rights since the goal of equality is not yet reached. Both men and women have to fight against stereotypes and other cultural features, religious beliefs and practices discriminating women.

6.4 Obstacles undermining the promotion of women's rights and family well-being

There are still practical barriers in the promotion of women's rights and family well-being such as resistance to change, ignorance and illiteracy, poverty, land and property rights. All these affect the advancement of women's rights and affect the well-being of the family. This demonstrates that, as discussed in the literature review, statements of formal equality and non-

discrimination in general human rights instruments are not adequate. Each of these instruments reflects an international consensus on the particular problems facing women and providing a unique insight into the approaches and strategies to be followed in meeting the challenges (Parpart et al., 2002). But till now, women still face obstacles and challenges preventing them from enjoying their rights. Therefore, all the barriers must be removed so that women are empowered to better enjoy their rights and participate in the promotion of the well-being of their families effectively.

It is imperative that women enjoy their rights, especially the right to education since they will be able to learn about problems threatening the promotion of their rights and preventing them from enjoying their full potential. Through education, they gain the will to act together to overcome oppressive constraints thereby enhancing their well-being (Baldwin, 1996, p.11). Various measures have been put in place by the government of Rwanda to ensure that women enjoy their rights to education, property, work, health, participation in the government (MIGEPROF, 2010) but socio-cultural barriers remain that tend to perpetuate inequality and prevent women from enjoying their rights.

Programs and initiatives put in place to reduce poverty should seek to address poverty among women as they are the most affected. Their condition affects the well-being of the family too. The role of social workers is of paramount importance to help address the real needs of women and families by transforming them into corresponding rights and for the promotion of social justice for all (UN, 1994).

6.5 Mechanisms for women's rights promotion and protection of the family

Family well-being has to be among the priorities of Government activities and family policy its goal (Almudena, 2013). The obligations of the state in this regard includes adopting policies and measures aimed to facilitate how women's rights and family well-being will be satisfied through development strategies at different levels. "Family policy is defined as all of the actions of governments that affect families, directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, intentionally or not" (Almudena, 2013, p.9).

Rwanda has ratified international human rights instruments among them, those related to the promotion of women and children's rights and those related to the protection of the family. These are among others, CEDAW, CRC, Maputo Protocol, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Participant 12). In this regards, it has also put in place different legislative measures, policies and institutional frameworks. The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the Gender Monitoring Office and National Women's Council all play a key role in facilitating the implementation, monitoring and follow up of the policies aimed at the promotion of women's rights and the promotion of the family (MIGEPROF, 2010). The government of Rwanda and its stakeholders have a common strategy for women's rights promotion and protection of family well-being, which is part and parcel of the community development agenda.

There is a need to explain the importance of women's rights when it comes to the promotion of the well-being of the family on one hand and the significance of their role in the development of

the country, on the other hand. Men should be sensitized and be engaged for successful results. Art.10, 11&12 of the Declaration on Social progress and development emphasize on the need of equal participation of both men and women in the process of development by providing them with equal protection of their rights. Furthermore, the will to empower families to find solutions through *parents' evenings* is a positive achievement as they are able to determine their needs and problems; therefore, propose themselves solutions and can influence policies (Baldwin, 1996).

In brief, all the mechanisms are inspired by a HRBA that aims at the promotion of human rights of all. Rwanda has put in place programs and initiatives to address inequalities, to fight against discriminatory practices against women and to promote a just distribution of power (OHCHR, 2006). A strong collaboration of all the stakeholders is necessary to sustain actual gains and reach further.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusion

The main objective of the study was to examine how the promotion of the rights of women can lead to the improvement of the well-being of the family. The empowerment theory and the HRBA have been applied in the context of social work.

The study has highlighted different elements to the enjoyment of the rights by women such as having the power to take decisions in the family, having freedom of expression and enjoying equal opportunity in education, health, work, and politics and having right to property. Enjoying rights is important not only to Rwandan women but also to their families since women play a big role within the families. Women are considered as the heart and soul of the family. Their health, education and work matter for the whole family.

The study revealed that the enjoyment of the rights by Rwandan women allows them to perform their responsibility in educating the children well, since they then gain more knowledge and skills to impart to children. When they exercise the right to work, they will be able to contribute economically to the functioning of their family.

The findings revealed that there are some people that are worried about women working outside home because this prevents them from accomplishing their home responsibilities. But the study revealed that this is not a problem since family is the responsibility of both spouses. The spouses can always find ways to manage the situation and to maintain the good functioning of the family and keep the gains of women's work outside home.

The study has shed the light on the contribution women's rights makes to the maintenance of positive gender relations since both spouses should complement one another in the running of the family. When men carry out housework, it is a sign of respect and love towards their wives. Thus, love, respect, cooperation and mutual understanding are important elements for success in the family functioning and they determine how gender relations are constructed and lived.

The study has shown that there are women who abuse their rights by behaving inappropriately just as there are also men who mistreat their wives. In Rwanda, these problems are found in rural as well as in the urban areas, among intellectuals and illiterate of all ages.

This study highlighted the point that family well-being is impacted by internal and external factors. Positive parenting, an enabling environment free from violence, protection of family members and economic empowerment are examples of internal factors. The interaction of the family with external environments such as the work place, neighbours, the church, the authority and other important networks influence its well-being. The well-being of the family is shaped by the interplay of these internal and external factors.

According to the study, there are many practical barriers that hinder the promotion of women's rights and the well-being of the family in Rwanda. These are resistance to change, ignorance and illiteracy, poverty, problems related to land and property rights.

The contribution of the cultural and religious values in the promotion of women's rights and the protection of the family was highlighted separately. It was noticed that religious institutions support strong bonds between spouses, lasting happy marriages and acknowledge women's central position in the good functioning of the family. They, therefore, uphold women's rights and the well-being of all family members. They also encourage spouses to fulfil their responsibilities properly for the good functioning of the family. On the other side, the study also discovered that there is still inequality between men and women especially inside the Muslim communities.

Opposing views were noted regarding the effects of cultural values. On one side, culture is blamed of perpetuating discrimination against women. On the other side, cultural values are hailed for upholding the status of women and appreciated in the past to solve conflicts between spouses in order to strengthen the family. Supporters of culture have underscored its capacity to preserve family ties, to uphold values of tolerance and humility for both men and women. Cultural values are also very important in the education of children. The study revealed furthermore a concern about the weakening of these positive cultural values. It was pointed out that this can be linked to the situation the country has gone through as well as on development and globalization.

The study found out that not many people know about international human rights instruments and that some have only a slight idea on some of the initiatives and mechanisms in place at the national level. The low level of knowledge of laws in general that should reflect human rights instruments can lead to the violation of these rights.

The study revealed that the mechanisms in place have been successful in upholding women and family rights now that women enjoy the rights to political participation, to education, to participation in associations and cooperatives to fight against poverty and the protection of children. Nevertheless, there are shortcomings to address, such as non-participation by rural women and the non-involvement of men in different activities aimed at family protection, such as *Umugoroba w'ababyeyi* (parents evening gatherings), an initiative aimed at encouraging the population to look for 'home-grown solutions'.

7.2 Recommendations

Education on equal rights should start within the family by offering to boys and girls the same education. This opens for them the same opportunities in the future. Education that underscores respect of the human being and equal rights of both sexes is a key to developing mutual support which is necessary for harmonious relations within the family and within the community. Education enables children to grow up bearing in mind that they have to respect everyone's opinion, work hard to prepare their future and explore all the good opportunities to gain

knowledge, skills and abilities to gain their lives. The researcher would like to recommend the following to:

MIGEPROF and its stakeholders
- **Intensify women's rights awareness campaigns.** Continued sensitizations on the proper meanings of women's rights and the contribution these rights bring to the well-being of all family members. Providing men and women the same information is likely to solve problems of misunderstandings of these rights. Men need to know that it is in their interest that women are educated, are healthy, can give their ideas to support a family project, can work and contribute economically to the running of the family.
- **Encourage and support dialogue between spouses in the family.** Since the family is the foundation of society, it should be developed on a strong foundation; 'none can build a strong house on the sad.' It is important to encourage dialogue and peaceful conflicts resolution mechanisms within the family as a way of strengthening the well-being of the family.
- **Involve the whole family as an institution in needs assessment, elaboration and implementation of policies and of all activities for family promotion.** The emphasis on protecting women and children caused some men to feel marginalized; and this has led to resistance, conflicts and violence. It is high time for men to understand that even if they are no longer the sole breadwinner, they are still human beings worth of respect, their dignity is not diminished by respecting the rights of the members of the family. Paying attention to the needs of whole family as an institution strengthens it and unites members more and more.
- **Engage men in women's rights and gender related discussions, programs and activities.** Women's rights should be understood and men should be involved in sensitization, teaching and implementation of these rights. It is time for them to celebrate that they are no longer labouring alone. The inclusion of all the family members in the assessment of their needs and in finding solutions strengthens the family and unites them more and more.
- **Safeguard the cultural heritage.** Keep positive features and practice of our culture and find ways of training the population on useful cultural principles. As far as the role of women in the family is concerned, build on them, and help women improve their lives, thus, improving the lives of the family. These characteristics should serve as a foundation in strengthening the capacities of women so that they may keep running the family and participate in other activities outside their homes.
- **Be contextually and culturally sensitive in the elaboration and implementation policies.** Avoid imitating what is being done in other countries without taking into consideration our milieu. The reason is that it might not fit the local realities, therefore, undermine and damage the existing positive values.
- **Strengthen the education sector and adult literacy.** Education is a key to information and awareness of rights. Therefore, there is a need to assist illiterate people, especially rural women to have basic literacy.

7.3Further research

Further research is desirable to fill the gaps left by the present study. It was revealed that some people do not understand well women's rights. Therefore, additional research should focus on attitudes, knowledge and perceptions of the population on women's rights,. Furthermore, it was noticed that in general, men are unenthusiastic about women's rights. For that reason, a study on men's perceptions on women's rights promotion is needed in order to know the real motivation of their reactions and remedy to the situation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Informed consent form

February 20, 2014

My name is Uwihangana Consolee. I am a Master's student in Social Work and Human Rights, in the Department of Social Work at Gothenburg University, Sweden. I am conducting a study as part of my thesis for the Master's Degree on the topic "***Promotion of women's rights for the well-being of the family in Rwanda: challenges and perspectives."***

I would be very grateful if you would volunteer to participate in this study, by granting an interview that covers certain aspects of this topic. All information you provide will be completely kept in confidentiality. You may decide to withdraw from this study at any time or to decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish.

I intend to make an audio recording of the interview since this makes it easier for me to document what is said for an easy and quick transcription and analysis. During the analysis, some data may be changed so that no interviewee will be recognized and will be destroyed after I finish the research.

You are welcome to contact me or my supervisor in case you have any question (Find the e-mail addresses below).

Student's name and e-mail   Supervisor
Uwihangana Consolee   Eyassu Gayim
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                                      School of Global Studies
                                      University of Gothenburg
                                      SE 405 30 Gothenburg (Sweden)
                                      eyassu.gayim@globalstudies.gu.se

Interviewee ………………

Appendix 2 Letter of Introduction

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter serves to introduce Mrs. Uwihangana Consolee, a Master's student in Social Work and Human Rights, in the Department of Social Work at University of Gothenburg, Sweden. She is undertaking a study as part of her thesis for the Master's Degree on the topic "***Promotion of women's rights for the well-being of the family in Rwanda: challenges and perspectives.***"

She would be very grateful if you would volunteer to participate in this study, by granting an interview that covers certain aspects of this topic. All information you provide is completely confidential. You may decide to withdraw from this study at any time or to decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish.

Since she intends to make an audio recording of the interview, she will seek your consent, on the attached form, to record the interview, to use the recording or a transcription in preparing the thesis, on condition that your name or identity is not revealed unless with your permission.

Thank you.
Yours sincerely,

Supervisor: Eyassu Gayim (eyassu.gayim@globalstudies.gu.se)
School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Appendix 3 - Interview guide for beneficiaries of HAGURUKA

I. **Personal identification of respondent**
   6. Age...
   7. Sex...
   8. Marital status...
   9. Education ...
   10. Occupation...

II. **Interview questions**

   A. **Women's rights and well-being of the family**

1. What do you understand by the well-being of the family?
2. What should the priorities for the well-being of the family be?
3. How women's equal rights and empowerment contribute to the well-being of the family?
4. What is the role of women, men and the community in the well-being of the family?
5. How does women's rights promotion affect the education and well-being of children?

   B. **Challenges of women's rights promotion**

1. Are there people who do not yet understand the importance of the promotion of women's rights? What may be the reasons behind that? If yes, what should be the role of men, women, the Government and other stakeholders to solve that problem?
2. What are the main problems undermining the well-being of the family?
3. What are the constraints in promoting women's equal rights? Rural/urban areas, men/women, literate/illiterate, elderly/young generations?
4. What are the consequences of undervaluing women's rights on the family well-being?
5. For how long have you been assisted by this institution? What kind of assistance are you receiving?
6. How did the assistance contribute to the promotion of your rights?
7. What improvements are you observing in your family thanks to the assistance received?

   C. **Gender relations within the family**

1. How do women's rights affect gender relations in the family?
2. What activities can men perform now which were supposed to be done by women? What are the consequences on gender relations within the family?
3. What activities can women perform now which were supposed to be done by men? How does this affect gender relations within the family?
4. What can you say about the status of women in the family after the launching of women's rights?

5. What may be the causes of the misunderstandings between spouses these days? Is there any connection with the rights of the women?
6. What could be done to resolve these misunderstandings?

D. Mechanisms for the promotion of women and the well-being of the family

1. What are the mechanisms put in place by the Government and its stakeholders for the promotion of women and the well-being of the family? What are the impacts of these mechanisms? What are the shortcomings with these mechanisms? What can you suggest as a solution?
2. What areas of concern need to be most emphasized on?
3. How do you perceive the involvement of men in the implementation of women's rights initiatives in Rwanda?
4. What should be the role of religious institutions, the private sector and NGOs in maintaining the wellbeing of the family?

Thank you!

Appendix 4 Interview guide for couples

I. Personal identification of respondent

11. Age...
12. Sex...
13. Marital status...
14. Education....
15. Position in the institution....
16. Experience in the organization....

II. Interview questions

A. Women's rights and well-being of the family

1. What do you understand by the well-being of the family?
2. What are the important requirements for the well-being of the family?
3. How women's equal rights and empowerment contribute to the well-being of the family?
4. How the denial of rights to women does affect family wellbeing?
5. How does women's rights promotion affect the education and well-being of children?
6. How does women's rights promotion contribute to the responsibility of women towards children?

B. Challenges of women's rights promotion (imbogamizi ku burenganzira bw'abagore)

1. Are there people who do not yet understand the importance of the promotion of women's rights? What may be the reasons behind that? If yes, what should be the role of men, women, the Government and other stakeholders to solve that problem?
2. How illiteracy, poverty, discrimination, tradition have undermined the well-being of the family?
3. How cultural and religious values can be used for the well-being of the family?
4. What are the constraints in promoting women's equal rights? Rural/urban areas, men/women, literate/illiterate, elderly/young generations? What are the consequences of undervaluing women's rights on the family well-being?
5. Can you share with us your personal experience on the issues undermining the well-being of the family?

C. Gender relations within the family

1. How do women's rights affect gender relations between spouses?

2. What activities can men perform now which were supposed to be done by women? What are the consequences on gender relations within the family?
3. What activities can women perform now which were supposed to be done by men? How does this affect gender relations within the family?
4. What can you say about the status of women in the family after the launching of women's rights?
5. What may be the causes of the misunderstandings between spouses these days? Is there any connection with the rights of the women?
6. What could be done to resolve these misunderstandings?

D. Mechanisms for the promotion of women and the well-being of the family

1. What are the important instruments for the promotion of women and the well-being of the family ratified by Rwanda?
2. What are the mechanisms put in place by the Government and its stakeholders for the promotion of women and the well-being of the family? What are the impacts of these mechanisms?
3. What are the shortcomings with these mechanisms?
4. What areas of concern need to be most emphasized on?
5. How do you perceive the involvement of men in the implementation of women's rights initiatives in Rwanda?
6. What should be the role of religious institutions, the private sector and NGOs in maintaining the wellbeing of the family?

Thank you!

Appendix 5 Interview guide for key informants

    I. Personal identification of respondent

17. Age....
18. Sex....
19. Marital status...
20. Level of education....
21. Position in the Institution....
22. Experience in the Institution....

    II. Interview questions

1. What are the important instruments for the promotion of women and the well-being of the family ratified by Rwanda
2. How does your institution contribute to the promotion of women's rights and the well-being of the family?
3. What are the mechanisms put in place by the Government and its stakeholders for the promotion of women and the well-being of the family?
4. What indicators prove the success of the policies, laws and other mechanisms put in place for the promotion of women's rights and the well-being of the family?
5. What are the shortcomings with these mechanisms? What are the future plans to remedy to these situations?
6. What are the constraints in promoting women's equal rights?
7. What areas of concern need to be most emphasized on? How do you perceive the involvement of men in the implementation of women's rights initiatives in Rwanda?
8. What do you understand by the well-being of the family?
9. What should the priorities for the well-being of the family be?
10. What are the main problems undermining the well-being of the family?
11. What are the causes of conflicts in the family? Is there any connection with the rights of the women?
12. What are your plans in finding solutions to these conflicts?
13. What should be the role of religious institutions, the private sector and NGOs in the promotion of women's rights and the well-being of the family?

Thank you!

Appendix 6 Interview guide for religious institutions

III. Personal identification of respondent

    23. Age...

    24. Sex...

    25. Marital status...

    26. Education....

    27. Position in the institution....

    28. Experience in the institution....

IV. Interview questions

    E. Women's rights and well-being of the family

7. What do you understand by the well-being of the family?
8. What are the important requirements for the well-being of the family?
9. What do you understand by promotion of women's equal rights?
10. How women's equal rights and empowerment contribute to the well-being of the family?
11. How the denial of rights to women does affect family wellbeing?
12. How does women's rights promotion affect the education and well-being of children?
13. How does women's rights promotion contribute to the responsibility of women in their families?
14. What are the major provisions provided by the Bible/Quran (if any) or other important teaching documents related to the promotion of women's rights? What are those related to the well-being of the family?
15. What can you say about the status of women in the church/mosque activities after the launching of women's rights? What are the changes observed?
16. What can you say about the development of the status of women in the Christian/Muslim community nowadays? What are the changes observed?

    F. Challenges of women's rights promotion (imbogamizi ku burenganzira bw'abagore)

6. Are there people who do not yet understand the importance of the promotion of women's rights? What may be the reasons behind that? If yes, what should be the role of men, women, the Government and other stakeholders to solve that problem?
7. How illiteracy, poverty, discrimination, tradition have undermined the well-being of the family?
8. How cultural and religious values can be used for the well-being of the family?

9. What are the constraints in promoting women's equal rights? Compare rural/urban areas, men/women, literate/illiterate, elderly/young generations? Ni izihe mbogamizi mu guteza imbere uburenganzira bw'abagore?
10. What are the consequences of undervaluing women's rights on the family well-being?

G. Gender relations within the family

1. How do women's rights affect gender relations between spouses?
2. What activities can men perform now which were supposed to be done by women? What are the consequences on gender relations within the family?
3. What activities can women perform now which were supposed to be done by men? How does this affect gender relations within the family?
4. What may be the causes of the misunderstandings between spouses these days? Is there any connection with the rights of the women?
5. What is the contribution of your religious institution in resolving misunderstandings in the family and in strengthening positive gender relations between spouses?

H. Mechanisms for the promotion of women and the well-being of the family

7. What are the important instruments for the promotion of women and the well-being of the family ratified by Rwanda?
8. What are the mechanisms put in place by the Government and its stakeholders for the promotion of women and the well-being of the family? What are the impacts of these mechanisms?
9. What are the shortcomings with these mechanisms?
10. What mechanisms did your institution put in place for the promotion of women's rights and the well-being of the family?
11. What are the outcomes? What are the shortcomings?
12. What areas of concern need to be most emphasized on?
13. How do you perceive the involvement of men in the implementation of women's rights initiatives in Rwanda?
14. What should be the role of religious institutions, the private sector and NGOs in maintaining the wellbeing of the family?

Thank you!