

Intrafemale Civility: Sisterhood in Ellen Sirleaf's "This Child Will Be Great"

Joseph Olita Omekede, Dr. Joseph Musungu*, Dr. Felix Orina

Department of English, Literature, Journalism and Mass Communication, Kibabii University, Kenya

**Corresponding Author*

Abstract: This paper interrogates sisterhood in Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's text "This Child Will be Great" (2008). Because of the desire to continue othering the female gender, the phrase "Women are their own worst enemies" found footing in human relations, this has called for a response from women to this negation of them. The objective in the paper is to highlight women supporting women in the text under study. Looking at Sisterhood at the family, friendship and mass action levels, this study argues that the idea and practice of sisterhood, understood as political, social and economic solidarity amongst women, enhances their capacity to promote social transformation in societies. The main source of the primary data is the selected text and it involves the close reading of the text and eventual analysis of women sorority. The data collected has been analysed and evaluated within the text in relation to sisterhood. One of the findings of this paper is that autobiographical works by African women propound sisterhood as it is a major ingredient in women's quest to their preferred feminist discourse and subversion of patriarchy. This paper concludes that women have realized the strength in their unity and thus the need to work together in a society that has otherwise relegated them based on their gender. Just like a mother opening her arms to embrace her child, this research is crucial as it serves as a rallying call to women to hold each others hand in the quest for women empowerment in the society

Key words: othering, sisterhood, feminist discourse, sorority.

I. INTRODUCTION.

The African continent has had contestations of gender for a long time where men and women are treated differently. During this period, the prominence accorded to patriarchy has given men all the limelight while relegating women to the fringes of human existence. Women appear to have become impostors in a male dominated world. This scenario has send women back to the drawing board where they have had to consider their options so that their voices can be heard. One of the major steps taken towards this front is embracing the aspects of women working together and supporting each other in their joint and individual endeavors leading to the birth of sisterhood. Sisterhood is the feeling of shared interests and support among women; it serves to remind women that their potential is not limited by their gender (Smith and Julia 2001). Women of the 21st century have shown major shift towards helping each other through economic empowerment for example self help groups, social empowerment in times of relationship breakups, divorces, loss of employment, financial crises, illnesses and political empowerment in cases where they vie for elective positions.

Sisterhood Encourages women to support each other in order to end sexism, a practice where there is prejudice or discrimination based on sex or gender especially against women (Britannica Online Dictionary). Spivak (2008) discusses the need to give power and authority to marginalized groups. Sisterhood recognizes that women themselves can be sexist when they are competitive and try to bring each other down. Manay, D. Moganey, M. (2014) looks at how sisterhood encourages women to reach out to each other and end their own sexist behavior by being nicer to other women. Sisterhood has found its way to social media with hashtags that support or defend women rights trending for example #MyDressMyChoice which was an online campaign by women that arose as a result of the events of September 19, 2014; a Kenyan middle-aged woman was waiting for a bus at a stop in Kenya's capital, Nairobi. When the bus stopped, a group of men surrounded her, and started to strip and assault her for wearing a miniskirt in public. She screamed and cried out for help, she was helped by a few people but the damage had been done. The women of Kenya came up in drones to condemn the events of the day and surely their voices were heard as the event caught national and international attention. Coleman, J. (1988) focuses on how the medium of technology helps women to relate to others, form relations of trust and bond as allies in the virtual world over their common concerns in the real world. Adopting a phenomenological perspective, the research aims to study the experiences of women sisterhood networks and its impact on their professional lives. This paper will not only focus on women support on the professional world but also on their political life.

Evans (2015) asserts; "Sisterhood emphasises relationships between women that are horizontal instead of vertical, avoiding the hierarchy inherent in the mother/daughter trope" Opara (2016) defines sisterhood as "a path to each other." This path leads to many avenues and opportunities in life. Sisterhood has its lenses on women and sees to it that women are at ease with each other and support them. Tamika (2020) looks at sisterhood as "women empowering other women without judgment. They are comfortable enough to point out the other woman's strengths and weaknesses with love and honesty. They honor and celebrate each others accomplishments and lift each other up through tribulations."

For a long time, women have been considered to be enemies of their own. Kreiner and Sheep (2006) propound this by their questioning of where is the me among the we? This paper has

the main objective of looking at the modern day steps and measures taken by women to have the scale tilt their way by them supporting each other. The women have to be strategic and effective planners to achieve this, (Tom and Diem, 2007) and (Alvesson 2002). This study uses the autobiography by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf "This Child Will be Great" to bring to the forefront women unity and support towards each other. Nderi (2018) posits,

So I say to all women to love themselves and pull each other up. In as much as the woman to woman relationship needs improving, Women are their own worst enemies is a lie that has been peddled to justify a lot of unrelated issues.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the author, was born in Liberia. Sirleaf (2008) details her life; her studies, marriage, family, friendship and her rise through the ranks to hold various senior positions in Liberia and abroad. She involved herself in nonviolent women's movement in Liberia that forced corrupt leaders out of the country. In 2006, after Liberia government was restored, Sirleaf became the 24th president of Liberia and the first elected female head of state in Africa. Throughout her career, Sirleaf has demonstrated her compassion and commitment, fighting for the rights of women and advocating for education, justice, and equality to provide a successful future for her country. Sirleaf foregrounds sisterhood in her autobiography, she pays tribute to female family members, friends and the general women population of Liberia. In 2011, Sirleaf and two other women were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of their non-violent struggles for women's rights.

This paper helps amplify women voices and help put their head above the waters that are infested with many things patriarchal. The women endeavors to rise are hampered by a male dominated society, just like in Angelou (1969), all indications point to a contemporary society that tends to cage women hence suppressing their voices. Suppression of women voices takes the form of physical and sexual violence, arbitrary killings, torture, forced marriage and political isolation. This paper foregrounds the attempts espoused by women to break free from the cages and unite for the better of themselves and the society in the only way they know how. Ocasio (2018) says, "they'll tell you you're too loud, that you need to wait your turn and ask the right people for permission. Do it anyway" This is true of women enslavement in the African continent. By highlighting and documenting the gains achieved by women when they come together as sisters, this paper has the vision of serving as a reminder and a wakeup call to all women to unite for the good of the society.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

Bell Hooks (1984) highlights the need for sisterhood in her writing "Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre". Bell argues that male supremacist ideology encourages women to believe they are valueless and obtain value only by relating to

or bonding with men, "Women are taught that our relationships with one another diminish rather than enrich our experience. We are taught that women are "natural" enemies, that solidarity will never exist between us because we cannot, should not, and do not bond with one another." Bell urges women to learn their lessons well. They must unlearn the cultural ideal forced on them by society if they are to build a sustained feminist movement, "We must learn to live and work in solidarity. We must learn the true meaning and value of Sisterhood." Bell Hooks proposed to replace the idea of 'common oppression' for one of 'shared strengths and resources' that could create an inclusive movement that empowered women daily: 'We can be sisters united by shared interests and beliefs, united in our appreciation for diversity, united in our struggle to end sexist oppression, united in political solidarity' (Hooks 1984). Bell's calls for unity among women forms the backbone of this paper; on the backdrop of the African woman political autobiography, the unity among women is discussed. Bell's work focused on the unity of the American woman, this study, on its part, has its lenses directed to the African woman in the African continent.

Bank and Kahn (1976) state that "sibling interaction is an often overlooked aspect of family functioning. Individual development and many family behavior patterns may be attributed to autonomous activities within the sibling sub-system." They explore a number of phenomena in which siblings have profound influence upon one another. Siblings, most specifically, female siblings, collude and align with each other, at times help each other resist negative influences. Other sibling systems serve to enmesh the youngsters even more with parents. Important sib-behavior patterns include: the death or departure of siblings; the interplay between the sibling sub-system and the parenting system; and the roles that sisterly love plays in growth of the women. They see sisterhood in sibling relationship as a life-long process, highly influential throughout the life cycle. Bank and Kahn (1976) is important to this paper as it helps provide information to the discussion of sisterhood among family members that aid Ellen Sirleaf in her identity development. This study goes a step further by highlighting how sibling support in the family when effectively utilized leads to political, economic and social emancipation.

Keller (2015) looks at sisterhood as a call to mass action. She draws attention to the increasing trend of young women who engage with social media as they see the need to protest as a unit on matters female and their empowerment. The origin of women voicing a united front through social media can be traced back to Morgan (1970) quoting Kate Millet and her motto "Women of the world, unite!" In the lenses of Pereira (2017), this trend is also followed by women across Africa. The virtual world, of twitter, face book, instagram and whatsapp, provide an open platform where they can interact with other like-minded individuals, breaking their sense of isolation. This helps to compile important information for the discussion on the unity of women as a mass action. This research adds to the rallying call of Keller (2015) and

Mohanty (2003) by documenting the heights that can be achieved by the African women when they unite and support each other.

Gbowee (2011) details how she helped organize and then lead the Liberian Mass Action for Peace, which brought together Christian and Muslim women in a nonviolent movement that engaged in public protest, confronted Liberia's ruthless president and rebel warlords, and even held sex strikes to force men into prioritizing the peace and stability of Liberia. With an army of women she had brought together, Gbowee brings to the fore the need for women to work together in changing society for the better. Gbowee's efforts were not in vain as Liberia eventually earned her peace and to cap it off Gbowee was awarded a Nobel prize for peace in 2011 for her efforts. Just like Sushama (1998), Gbowee's works reflects the objective of this paper of championing for the unity of women in their struggle for equality. This paper adds to Gbowee's works by showing the example of Ellen Sirleaf who became Africa's first elected female president.

The analysis of Ellen Sirleaf's postulations on sisterhood in this paper is guided by the liberal feminist theory. Liberal feminism advocates for equality of men and women through legal and political reform. This theory was inspired by the scholar Mary Wollstonecraft. It is a form of feminism that focuses on women's ability to demonstrate and maintain their equality through their own actions, choices and the values they espouse. In this theory, personal, social, economic and political unity is believed to be the glue that binds the society together. The theory uses the interactions between women as a platform for the transformation of society. To liberal feminists, all women are capable of demonstrating their ability to achieve equality without altering the structure of society. This theory pays attention to issues of sexual harassment, voting, education, equal pay for equal work and affordable health care for all. The liberal feminist theory is important in this study as it helps to highlight the life of the author; Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who is female and the associations she has with fellow women as she works for the transformation of her society.

The theory of Liberal feminism in Africa is represented by the Black women feminism movement. The Black women feminism proponent is the Nigerian Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi. Ogunyemi (1985) contends that the black woman is in need of a revolutionary feminist mechanism that is different from that of the white woman. Ogunyemi propounds that the African women fights on two fronts, one for being black which is considered an inferior race and two for her female gender which is subordinated in the African context. She defines Black

Woman feminism as is being black centered; it is accomodationist. It believes in the freedom and independence of women.

Maduka (2009) argues that Womanism, according to Ogunyemi serves as the rallying point of the women of

African ancestry in their struggle to effectively assert their humanity in the face of the malevolent attitude of the Menfolk towards their self-fulfillment in life. Ogunyemi argues that Black Womanism does not make a lesser man but it encourages the men to accept to live with women by first abandoning their self-perception as superior partners in the collective struggle of the race for a better society. Black Women feminism calls for total liberation of African women without neglecting the male who are a significant part in that change. Ogunyemi believes in understanding between men and women in ending marginalization of African woman.

III. METHODOLOGY

The researcher was able to obtain information from the close reading and analysis of Sirleaf's text "This Child Will be Great" (2008). The paper embraces a Descriptive research design. Oranga (2016) presents descriptive research design as one that describes the status of a people, attitudes and progress in their present condition. This method allows the researcher to obtain the target information that is peoples' attitudes, reactions and progress towards existing socioeconomic structures in society. It further examines the relationship between the women in the text and the propounding of the same by the author.

The research used the selected text: *This Child Will be Great* and secondary sources like the internet and documented reports to collect data hence, library based research. The researcher used purposive sampling to select the texts for the study.

Data analysis was based on the conceptualization of women agency in relation to the feminine discourse in the text. Therefore through content analysis, a comprehensive synthesis and interpretation of data gathered from the reading of the primary text and secondary sources was undertaken. These findings were then analyzed in relation to the postulations of liberal feminism. Conclusions and recommendations were finally drawn.

IV. FINDINGS.

Introduction

This paper interrogates sisterhood in Sirleaf's political autobiography "This Child Will be Great". The paper analyses sisterhood at three levels as presented in the text: the family level, the level of friendship and finally sisterhood at the level of mass movement of women.

Sisterhood at the family level.

The type of relationship that women political leaders have with their other women family members has a significant role in the hierarchy of sisterhood. When there is a solid and positive relationship between them, the women leaders are more likely to feel freedom in making crucial decisions about their lives. Cooney (1999) asserts "the nature and types of relationship in families affect identity formation". Damayanti, D. Pramesti, T. (2020) affirms "sisterhood has a positive

impact that can make a person have a more godly thought than before.” A strong family relationship gives Sirleaf the courage to make crucial decisions that define her life positively. For example Sirleaf finds herself in an abusive violent marriage, the husband, James Sirleaf, a former military officer is a drunk and more often violent while on it. Sirleaf makes the difficult decision of divorcing James despite them having four young sons together. The family comes in strongly to support Sirleaf at these hard times:

My family was nothing but supportive. My sister offered encouragement. My mother took me in for a time, both literally and figuratively, praying all the while. And so I began moving on with my life. (P. 41).

Sisterhood offers encouragement that leads to AWPAs dropping vices that would otherwise affect them negatively in the short or long term. Sirleaf for example, drops the habit of smoking following the advice from her sister Jenny. They are best of friends and Sirleaf can simply not ignore her advice. This happens during their sail home from the United States on July 3rd 1971:

I was smoking a cigarette at the time, having become a pack-a-day smoker while burning the midnight oil at Harvard. My sister was appalled at my habit. “Smoking is terrible for you,” she would say over and over again.

....., “You need to stop.”

“Okay,” I said to her. “This cigarette I have will be the last cigarette I ever smoke in my life.” I finished the cigarette, enjoying its taste. Then I put it out and never smoked another one. (P. 62)

The female family members stand up to advocate for the rights and freedoms of the women. Sirleaf’s Sister Jenny, with the help of other women, does everything within her power to get her sister out of jail during the Samuel Doe regime in Liberia. This was in 1985. Sirleaf narrates how Jennie and others had rallied people all over the world to her cause. Jennie lobbied for and attended interviews on several major American news programs so as to highlight the tribulations of her sister Sirleaf. Eventually, the pressure rose and President Doe gave in. In a radio speech to the country he announced the pardon of Sirleaf in the name of national reconciliation and to promote “peace and stability” in the country.

Alazzawi, A. (2018) looks at the family members as a support system that serve as role models to women political leaders, the women politicians draw their strength and courage from them, this is further propounded by Cooney and Mortiner (1999). Sirleaf’s mother, Martha, inspires her daughter in many ways. This inspiration serves as a springboard for Sirleaf’s entry and engagement in the political arena. Even in very difficult times during her political career, the inspiration keeps her going:

Sometimes I think about how frightening the events of my life must have been to my mother. But she never broke down, never crumbled, and never told me to stop doing what I had to do. She was a very strong woman, and she believed with all her heart in the power of prayer. She prayed for me unceasingly. I believe I got my strength from her. (P. 126).

It is also through familial sisterhood that Ellen Sirleaf is able to refresh as much memory as possible during the penning of her autobiography. Her sister Jenny comes in handy. Sirleaf’s says,

My sister, Jennie Bernard, who helped refresh my memory of the countless childhood experiences we shared. You’ve always given so freely without regard for what you’d get in return. Please know that my story, in so many ways, is a joyous one because of you. (p335).

Familial ties, especially from mother and sister, play a crucial role in the development of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as a person and later as a politician. Through this ties Ellen illustrates how women liberation can be achieved by women themselves when they work together. Liberation and unity is a key element in the theory of liberal feminism; allow the women have space to do their thing and let’s see what comes out of it.

Sisterhood at the friendship level.

Sisterhood helps women become the best they can be by pushing them to grow and develop in many spheres of their life. In times of struggles and feelings of defeat, women can help encourage one another to achieve things that at the individual level might not have been possible.

Tamika (2017) highlights friendship among women, she asserts “when a woman needs to talk or commiserate, she usually calls on another woman. She can be a sister, cousin, aunt, mother, friend or colleague. Who understands a woman better than a woman?” Washington reiterates that sisterhood is our path to each other. Also, it is a path to relationships, bonds, and empowerment. Women need each other in good times, okay times and not so good times.

Sisterhood is a driving force for gender equality, showing that women can be innovative and make immense economic differences through their unity of purpose. Traditionally, women are expected to carry out household duties and raise the children while husbands go out to work. However, sisterhood challenges this stereotype by proving that women can be effectively involved in empowerment programmes. Ellen Sirleaf in her autobiography foregrounds how female friendship leads to empowerment and development. Sisterhood can help personal wellbeing through female connections to help individuals thrive. Having a strong Sisterhood can help improve a woman’s life through the strong emotional bonds that are formed.

Living in a male-dominated world, women need to band together and create a strong community (Allen 1986).

Sisterhood can create strong connections that last forever, whilst also bringing a sense of belonging to people who might feel isolated and alone. Having a sense of belonging is important to all women and girls, and the acceptance from the group can help individuals show acceptance and growth within themselves.

Bell (1984) discusses friendship and sisterhood. She argues that much greater emphasis was placed on the idea of support which meant upholding or defending a position one believes is right. The value of friendship emerges from the emphasis on shared victimization. Identifying themselves as victims, women were acknowledging that individually they will be helpless and powerless therefore the need for support and working together as sisters. Through friendship, Sirleaf is able to come to the realization of the risk her life faces in her marriage. Her friend Clave who had with her long enough tells her “Ellen, he’s going to kill you if this keeps up. You have to let him go.” In her acknowledgement, Sirleaf identifies Clave as a true friend and a confidant who helped her in the development of her autobiography. She says:

Clavenda Bright Parker, a true friend and confidant, for helping me convey intimate details of some of the more challenging times in my life. Thanks for encouraging and pushing me to share the whole truth about my journey. (P 335).

On women cooperation, Okello (2020) says “Women should build healthy relationships with the mindset that we need ourselves in one way or the other. No man is an island; supporting each other should be reciprocal. Arndt, S. (2002) discusses women unity in gender development, Women should learn to mentor others and have a teachable spirit. When we work together as a team, we achieve more,” Sirleaf’s mother, Martha is taken in by a settler woman named Cecilia Dunbar after she is mistreated by the first family that she lives with as a foster child. “When word got out in Monrovia that this fair-skinned child was being mistreated by her settler family, a woman named Cecilia Dunbar... stepped up and offered a settlement”. Sirleaf goes ahead to highlight how Cecilia loved her mother unconditionally and brought her up as a mother would her own. Cecilia gives mother an education that included travelling to study abroad. Later, she supports Martha in her journey of marriage to Carney Johnson. Cecilia love for Martha ran deep to her children.

Above all else Grandma Cecilia was a lady, with all that the word implies, and she wanted us to be ladies and gentlemen too. All that she had given my mother she also gave to us, teaching us how to dress, how to speak properly and politely, how to eat at the table with good manners and dignity. So close did we remain to Grandma Cecilia that our oldest brother, Charles, was actually raised as much by her as by my mother. (P 45)

While at Harvard for her studies, Sirleaf admits that she did spent most of her time in the library. Her worthy moments though are when she was with her new found friend Olubanke

King Akerele who was granddaughter of Liberian president Charles B King. “She and I spent many hours addressing the unacceptable policies and practices of the past.” This sisterhood grows up to their career world where they work together at United Nations Development Programme and later Olubanke serves as Foreign Affairs Minister in Sirleaf’s government. Sirleaf remains to be the God mother to Olubanke’s children. It sure is incredible what sisterhood can do.

Sisterhood reminds women to stop concentrating on their differences and look for what they have in common. Rinkanya (2019) discusses the emerging trends in women interactions and focuses on forgiveness as a major ingredient to long lasting friendships among women. Sirleaf presents sisterhood as an aspect that does not keep a record of wrong. Jewel Taylor, wife of former warlord Charles Taylor becomes friends with Sirleaf and supports her presidential bid. Sirleaf was greatest critic and oppose to Taylor regime. She worked hard to ensure the end of Taylor’s brutal regime. For sisterhood, Taylor chooses to take a universal call for the “unity and solidarity of the female gender” Hooks (1984) by siding with Sirleaf at a time when the odds for this union were very low. This is an illustration of the sacrifices sisterhood can make. Later during her succession Sirleaf supports Jewel’s quest to become vice president by deputizing George Weah.

Sirleaf has international women friends who demonstrate love and friendship towards her. Two such examples are Condeezeza Rice and Laura Bush. They fully support Sirleaf leadership and help her find footing in governance affairs. They both attend Sirleaf’s inauguration as president of Liberia in person.. Condeezeza Rice was so moved by the spectacle that up to today she attributes the swearing in of her fellow woman, Sirleaf, as the most moving of her life. (Sirleaf 2008). This attendance was key since the United States and Liberia shared a very deep past of friendship and cooperation that had turned cold during the period of the civil war. This attendance by the first lady and the secretary of state of the United States was a symbolic gesture for the reestablishment of the strong ties between the two countries.

Sisterhood as women’s mass movement.

Sisterhood seeks to contribute to establishment of an authoritative, robust, and diverse African feminist network as a vehicle for advancing gender equality and women rights. It works to ensure existence of a feminist movement that is reliable, resilient, effective and visible. Through sisterhood, the feminist spaces are made more accessible, inclusive, safer and welcoming so as women can exercise full control over their lives. Achievements, no matter how big or small, can help to inspire women collectively, and with the support of a powerful group who have each other’s best interests at heart, it can help to build confidence to reach new heights together. A woman alone has power, collectively they have impact (Zalis, 2019). An example is where the women of Africa have come together through informal self-help groups where

members contribute an agreed monthly sum of money with the aim of helping each other grow economically; this is popularly known as Chama. Akello (2020) defines it as thus “informal self-help groups where members contribute an agreed monthly sum of money with the aim of helping each other grow economically.” These women in groups pull their resources together and take it in turns to spend it on useful ventures as agreed by the members. The women groups have grown to become microfinance savings and loans companies that enable women to escape the bureaucracy of banks, whilst also forming strong community ties and social bonds.

Okello (2020) talking on women involvement in the politics of Uganda comments; “Women's organizations engaged in joint action to raise awareness and foster country-wide participation of women in the process.” The contribution of women friendship is crucial for the adoption of a progressive legal framework that guaranteed women's rights to 'equality, freedom and security of the person, freedom from violence. Tom (2007) adds to the discussion of women engagement in politics highlighting the imperative role played by women friendships as a basis to jumpstart and push forward the ambitions of women who choose to become politicians.

As a woman, Sirleaf was broken by the Liberian civil war, a brutal conflict that destroyed her country and claimed the lives of countless people she knew at a personal level. Sirleaf (2008) admits that the women suffered the most “During the years of our civil war, they bore the brunt of inhumanity and terror. They were conscripted into war, gang raped at will, forced into domestic slavery.” Propelled by their realization that it is women and girls who suffer most during trouble and conflicts, this army of women had the courage to turn their bitterness into action. The women together formed the Mano River women's Network for Peace who labored and advocated for peace throughout. Pasaribu, E. (2021) looks at how sisterhood aided women in times of pandemic in Indonesia, it is clear that women working together helps them conquer all adversary.

Women are choosing to work together to change the world rather than tear each other down to get ahead. Elizabeth (2015) pushes for all round women who do not bulge due to pressure exerted by men but rise on account of the support offered by fellow women. Sirleaf attributes her rise to political leadership to the strong women constituency of Liberia.

We re-mobilized our secret weapon—the women of Liberia—and sent them out campaigning. These indomitable women were the real force behind this election, the fuel on which we ran. Singly, in pairs, and in groups they went village to village, door to door, street to street encouraging people to put aside ethnic and tribal allegiances and vote for one Liberia. They held rallies and distributed T-shirts. They walked and danced and marched. More than anything, it was the women of Liberia who turned this election, for me and for themselves. (P 264)

The market women are not left behind either. They help Sirleaf ‘play away from the ball’ during her campaigns to become president,

..The amazing market women who mobilized on my behalf, could campaign even in my absence. They went from village to village, meeting place to meeting place, handing out stickers and posters and raising my profile. (P 255).

Sisterhood implies that the bond between women is forever and unconditional through all phases of life. A true Sisterhood not only celebrates the merry times but also supports and comforts during tough times.

V. CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it is indeed propounded that there is enough shine for everyone at the top, and as such women must work in solidarity to achieve a common cause because together they are able to scale hurdles together. The notion of enmity often comes up around women in politics and high places, which is as a result of the patriarchal nature of the African society, where a woman is seen as the other's enemy because of the fear that if women bond together, that may obstruct existing patriarchy. So, it's a deliberate plan to place women against themselves. Of great importance is cooperation, women Cooperation helps to achieve goals easily and quickly. Women must work with greater diligence to confront patriarchy and the subordination of women with the understanding that sustained committed struggle will lead to their liberation and a uniform feminist agenda for women.

Sisterhood provides support in women's lives when they need it most and knowledge and experiences are exchanged within the bond of sisterhood leading to development of Friendships and relationships. A strong sisterhood gives one inspiration, accountability and a path to success. A woman's personal and professional life needs the strong bond of sisterhood. Women unity is a great support system. Sisterhood is the key to empowerment, social change and freedom.

REFERENCES

- [1] Alazzawi, A. (2018). A Feminist Perspective in Ngugi wa Thion'go's *Petals of Blood*. *International Journal of English Literature & Social Sciences*, Vol. 3 Issue5, <https://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijels.3.5.27>.
- [2] Allen, G. (1986). *The Sacred Hoop. Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Beacon Press.
- [3] Alvesson, M. (2002). Identity regulation as organizational control: Producing the appropriate individual. *Journal of Management Studies*.
- [4] Angelou, Maya. (1969). *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*. Random House.
- [5] Arndt, S. (2002). Perspectives on African Feminism: Defining and Classifying African-Feminist Literatures. *Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, No. 54 (2002), pp. 31-44. Taylor & Francis, Ltd. on behalf of Agenda Feminist Media
- [6] Bank, S, Kahn, M. (1976). *Sisterhood Is Powerful: Sibling Subsystems and Family Therapy*. Family
- [7] Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 94, 95-120

- [8] Cooney, T, Mortiner, JT. (1999). Family structure differences in the timing of leaving home. Exploring mediating factor. Journal on research on adolescence.
- [9] Damayanti, D. Pramesti, T. (2020). Sisterhood in Ann M. Martin's Belle Teal. *Anaphora: Journal of Language, Literary, and Cultural Studies*, 3(1), 47-53. <https://doi.org/10.30996/anaphora.v3i1.3552>
- [10] Elizabeth, H. (2015). The Female Apologetic Behavior Within Canadian Womens Rugby: Athlete Perceptions And Media Influences. *Sport in society*.
- [11] Evans, E. (2015). The Sisterhood: Inclusivity and Spaces. In: *The Politics of Third Wave Feminisms. Gender and Politics Series*. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137295279_6
- [12] Gbowee, L. (2011). *Mighty Be Our Powers: How Sisterhood, Prayer, and Sex Changed a Nation at War*. Barnes and Noble.
- [13] Hooks, B. [1984] 2015. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. Routledge.
- [14] Kreiner, G and Sheep, M. (2006). Where is the “me” among the “we”? Identity work and the search for optimal balance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49: 1031–105
- [15] Manay, D. Moganey, M. (2014). Rethinking Academic Sisterhood: Reflections On Relationships Between Women. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265643458>
- [16] Masequesmay, G. (2021). Sexism. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topics/sexism>.
- [17] Mohanty, C. (2003). *Feminism without Boarder: Decolonizing Theory Practicing Solidarity*. Duke University Press.
- [18] Nderi, Sarah (2018): Women are There Own Worst Enemies? <https://psiloveyou.xyz/women-are-their-own-worst-enemies-ffa8f8d8b335>.
- [19] Ocasio, A. (2018) Twitter Post. <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/features/a4056/empowerin-g-female-quotes/>
- [20] Okello, Anne. (2020). Chama Membership: Enhancing Women Empowerment Through Participation In Micro-Enterprises In Kariokor Market. *Maters Thesis University of Nairobi*.
- [21] Opara, I, Omolade D. (2016). Womenfolk: as own enemies or friends. *The Guardian*.
- [22] Pasaribu, E. (2021) Feminist Knowledge, Self-Empowerment and Sisterhood, and Safe Space: How the “Perempuan Berkisah” Community Group Empowers Indonesian Women in the Pandemic Era. *Journal of International Women's Studies: Vol. 22: Iss. 12, Article 10*. [: https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol22/iss12/10](https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol22/iss12/10)
- [23] Rinkanya, A. (2019). Some trends in Kenyan women’s novel of the 21st century. *Journal of Language, Technology and Entrepreneurship in Africa*, 10(2), 31-51
- [24] Sirleaf, E. (2009). *This Child Will be Great*. HarperCollins Publishers.
- [25] Smith S. and Julia W, eds. (2001). *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. University of Minnesota Press.
- [26] Spivak, G. (2008). *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Ed. Bryden. (IV), 1427-1628
- [27] Sushama, S. (1998). *Women and Empowerment- Approach and Strategies*. Discovery
- [28] Tamika C. (2017). *Sisterhood. A Path to Relationships, Bonds and Empowerment*. <https://www.sustah-girl.com/sisterhood-our-path-to-each-other/>
- [29] Tom, S and Diem N. (2007). *Strategic Transformation: Cultural and Gender Identity Negotiation in First-Generation Vietnamese Youth*. *American Educational Research Journal*.
- [30] Tom, S. (2007). *Women Engagement with Power and Authority in Re-writing East Africa*. *Africa Development*, No. 4, 2010, pp. 1–18.
- [31] Tripp, Ali M. (2000). *Women and Politics in Uganda*. Fountain Press.
- [32] Zalis, S. (2019). *Power of the Pack. Women Who Support Women are Powerful*. Forbes.