



Research Fellows and Research Projects

Department of Science and Technology (DST) – National Research Foundation (NRF) Centre in
Indigenous Knowledge Systems (CIKS)

RESEARCH FOCUS AREA: IKS & GENDER

NAME: Juliet Kamwendo

COUNTRY OF RESEARCH: Malawi

RESEARCH TOPIC: Gender and indigenous knowledge systems: A critical analysis of Chichewa proverbs of Malawi.

INSTITUTION AFFILIATION: University of KwaZulu-Natal

RESEARCH SUPERVISOR: Dr Janet Muthoni -Muthuki and Prof H.O Kaya

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The role of indigenous knowledge system (IKS) has been identified globally as seemingly offering a way out of the development stagnation that Africa experiences. The inseparable link between IKS and African indigenous languages (AIL) has also been acknowledged by many researchers. The philosophy underlying IKS and AIL is that knowledge production occurs in every society where human beings interact with nature and fellow humans. African indigenous languages and its tools such as proverbs are therefore very important since they are not only used as a communicative tools but a carrier of society's indigenous knowledge which underscore cultural beliefs, traditions, values and norms of a specific society. Growing up as a child in the remote village of north east Phalombe district in Malawi, I have interacted with proverbs at all levels of society such as home, school and in the media. Literature available however, shows that gender issues have been marginalized within many studies conducted in Malawi about proverbs. I therefore interrogate Chichewa proverbs of Malawi as the wisdom of the people, to find out the extent to which they are an instrument promoting or hindering gender equality which may impact directly or indirectly to achievement of the United Nations sustainable development goals such as acute poverty, improved food security, nutrition and healthy, climate change, HIV/AIDS and many other.

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