INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem:

The aim of the study is to examine different theoretical approaches of Rwandan Ethnicity and Rwandan feminism. This study also focuses on adverse effect of the Ethnic conflict induced displacement and its effects on Rwandan women in particular. The later part of the study focuses on the transformation of Rwandan society in the post-Genocide period and the role of women in particular in that society.

Ethnicity is a matter of cultural differentiation and its identification and always involves a dialectical interplay between similarity and difference. Ethnicity is defined as a group of people, who share a common cultural and historical identity, typically linked to a belief in common descent. Ethnicity is a sentiment of loyalty towards a distinctive population, cultural group or territorial area; bonds that are cultural rather than racial. Different approaches to understanding ethnicity have been used by different social scientists while trying to understand the nature of ethnicity as a factor in human life and society. The causes of ethnic conflicts are debated by political scientists and sociologist who generally fall into one of five schools of thoughts: Primordialist, Epiphenomenalist, Ascriptive, Instrumentalist and Constructivist. This thesis successfully focuses on the applicability of different approaches for Primordialist approach, Epiphenomenalist approach, Ascriptive approach, Instrumentalist approach and Constructivist approach in Rwandan context.

An ethnic culture encompasses values, traditions and practices, but crucially it also gives a people a common identity and sense of distinctiveness, usually by focusing on their origins and descent, but sometimes other factors also plays an important role. Hence one cannot comprehend the reality by simply focusing on the ethnic situation in Rwanda; one has to take account of whole range of factors which may not appear to be relevant at the first instance while seeking to grasp perhaps the most volatile African polity. In other words, since Rwanda has become probably the most complex African territory, it is incumbent on the analysts not to lose sight of both domestic
circumstances and the exogenous influences that seem to have further complicated ethnic equations for obvious reasons. One has to be extremely careful while striving to analyze the complex ethnicity in Rwanda because a simplistic reading of the situation will surely lead to a truncated understanding and ambiguous interpretation of socio-economic circumstances which are partly inherited, but largely created for reasons connected with the consolidation of a globalizing world. Ethnic division, differentiation and rivalry have been the dominant features of Rwandan society since independence in 1962. Rwanda in particular is perhaps illustrative of a historical trend in human civilization showing that ethnic separation may not always be a triggering factor; what is most critical is the circumstances in which ‘the natural differences’ among various ethnic groups occupying same socio-political geographical space are politically nurtured to fulfill the agenda-specific goals of exclusion. In order to grasp the historical processes leading to ethnic-antagonism in Rwanda, this thesis is a modest attempt to provide a contextual interpretation of the peculiar socio-economic and political circumstances responsible (or otherwise) for strife in an African polity by drawing on the major theoretical inputs relating to ethnicity. This study also focuses on the adverse effect of Ethnic conflict induced displacement and its effects on Rwandan women in particular.

The thesis also interpreted the feminist theories in context to Rwandan women. Rwanda represents the unique case of feminist theory which explains the relevance of the ethnic induced displacement changes in gender and generational relations feminist theories, somehow in the different time & situation applicable to the country in specific. Feminism remains a positive, movement-based term, with which every woman is happy to be identified. It signals a refusal of oppression, and a commitment to struggling for women's liberation from all forms of oppression—internal, external, psychological and emotional, socio-economic, political and philosophical. We cannot understand Rwandan feminism without the context of historical background of ethnic conflict, Rwandan genocide, racial and colonial influence on Rwandan women. Rwanda represents a very unique case for all feminist theories. In case of Rwanda, just like any other African polity, a uniform feminist theory does not appear to be applicable. Rwandan feminism builds upon a solid tradition of female inclusion in a
wide variety of social roles in African cultures. The crises in African economic and political life have caused serious hardship for women since the 1980s, but this has also generated a new burst of African feminism.

The later part of the study focuses on the transformation of Rwandan society in the post-Genocide period and the role of women in particular in that society. The main aim is to explore real nature of women, which always construct and nurture life. Rwandan women have proved themselves as the life line of Rwanda, which has given a new meaning to their life. The ethnic conflict have changed the role, responsibilities, priorities of Rwandan women, forcing them into what traditionally were men’s responsibilities and many of them are demonstrating remarkable ability to handle the problems of the aftermath. Beyond ethnicity, there are other values of humanity and family ties, marriage and friendship that are stronger than ethnicity. Rwandan transition needs to amend & apply them into behavioral cultural practices of different laws in favours of women especially in context to property, land, inheritance, marriage, settlement, reproductive rights and child adoption laws. If Rwanda is to progress then men and women alike must join hands as partners to rebuilds it. The government laws and policies should actively encourage this. It can be described as the time of social and political innovation, in which governance takes on more benign, transparent and accountable face. Rwanda has become known throughout the world for its high percentage of women in parliament. Women parliamentarians are among a pioneer generation, challenging traditional gender roles, taking on new responsibility, embracing high profile positions, and advocating for their rights. Like pioneers in other fields, their contributions and achievements are met with heightened scrutiny. The different initiatives taken by Rwandan women, conglomerate themselves, unite themselves and motivate themselves for the huge change in their ideology, thinking, and living pattern. They fought against the worst situation during genocide and created the history of development in limited time period. That’s creating a wonderful example before the world. Rwandan women faced the time of separation, potential fragmentation, and alienation, at the same time that it was a period of profound change for women. After the genocide, gender roles in the society have changed; new cultural practices and norms have been acquired by the Rwandans. Women who lost
their husbands and children became the head of households and hence they migrated to urban cities searching for jobs to improve their income. Women started doing formal, informal, traditional, non-traditional all kinds of activities for the sustainable development of the society. Males automatically accepted this new role of women. This changed situation opened the new door for women forever with full freedom, development, and progress. Women came forward with full vigor and proved as the agent of change. After all this happened men in Rwanda also automatically accepted the new rules and regulation in context to gender equality. Women in conflict and post-conflict situations show themselves willing to learn and apply new skills, even in non-traditional areas. In post-genocide era, women have started working as decision makers, administrators, exporters, reporters, nation builders, project managers, NGOs coordinators. Women have also seen in intellectual roles in teachers, academicians, thinkers & philosophers. Women’s contribution to the income generation has been observed to be crucial for the growth of the society ie they have been associated with NGO’s, rehabilitation projects, micro credit institutions and also with informal sectors like handloom and handicrafts items. In response to the precarious economy, women tended to group themselves to secure a land, build houses and formulated in savings and credit clubs and schemes to finance their reestablishment. The numbers of women who are professionally educated have been increasing and they are associated with fields like law, medicine, education & training, the civil bureaucracy, and informal business in production and services. Rwandan women achieved the unbelievable success in limited time period, in various fields and their role in upliftment of the post-genocide society has been remarkable.

Objective of the study:

• Define Ethnic conflict induced displacement
• Gender dimension of Ethnic- conflict induced violence on women
• Displacement and Refugee problem
• Reconciliation, resettlement and Reconstruction done by women after the Genocide
• Transformation of the society by Rwandan women in Post Genocide society
Hypothesis:

• Displaced Rwandan women were the worst affected due to ethnic conflict in Rwanda, nevertheless women have always had immense power for the transforming the society.

Research Methodology:

The methodology used in the thesis is an empirical study based on real time experience of women in Rwanda. It also includes historical incidences, government & Human rights reports, newspaper headlines, interviews of eye witnesses, interviews of neighboring villagers and NGOs. Women associations have conducted direct interactive interviews with the women who suffered during the Genocide. In the process I have consulted different libraries like Rattan Tata, JNU, ICWA, DU, Central Reference Library; DU African Studies Departmental library consulted the Rwandan Embassy and read different books, electronic journals, magazines and daily newsletters.

Justification of the study:

I have chosen this topic because being a woman I would like to work towards the development and empowerment of women and secondly Rwanda is the only country in the world which has fifty percent seat reserved for women in the parliament. They are actually fulfilling the responsibility whole heartedly indeed. Rwandan women always inspire me to do some great work for other women so that we can change their position & status of women in the world. This thesis tries to capture few series of tragic moments of 1994 genocide in Rwanda. It represents the historical events which have turned the future life of Rwandan women. This thesis is basically focused on different dimensions & events of genocide which ultimately led to huge massive displacement of refugees towards neighboring countries. This thesis gives a different interpretation and symbolic representation of the ethnicity in particular context of Rwanda. Rwanda is an ethnically-fragmented socio-political unit that has continued to draw the global attention.
Presumably due to long drawn ethnic strife, that has crippled the efforts in development especially in relation to women. Ethnicity, ethnic conflict induced displacement, gender, migration, citizenship issues, question of identity and government policies continue to be of great importance in the Rwandan politics. Recently the debate on these matters has intensified due to the fact that it had started when the entire Rwanda was governed by colonial politics. The growing importance of women participation in Rwanda in post-genocide society has transformed the intellectualism & thinking process for women at large. Where at one side ethnicity is used to be the prime dominating factor in Rwanda’s history but at the same time at present, women and gender has taken those positions in contemporary times. Despite the fact that the needs and strengths of women in ethnic conflict induced displacement are not yet fully addressed in Rwanda, the move towards a more gendered approach has focused attention on wider issues. The aim of this thesis is to influence gender role to eliminate inequalities, problem of poverty, to resolve migration and displacement issues and simultaneously a greater attention needs to be paid to the impact of policies and programmes on the displaced population in general, and women in particular.

Relevance and Scope of the Study:

Women are the one who suffered the most and at the same time women have immense power for transforming the society. Secondly, male female relation is equally important for the transformation of the society. Gender is basically not about woman and man as separate and independent categories but it is a relational concept. Here the study focuses on what women do during and after the wartime has revealed that conflict has directly and indirectly opened up spaces for women to develop agency, affecting structural social transformation and producing new social, economic and political realities that redefine gender in ethnic countries and how women has emerged in Rwanda as ambivalent empowerment as it is born out of loss and devastation.
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE


This book is well written and clearly organized focuses on ethnicity and its changing nature in the contemporary world. The cross-cultural and cross-national approach to ethnicity and race analyzes how do race and ethnic identity are socially constructed, institutionalized and maintained. Throughout, the authors use contemporary examples from across the world, including extended case studies of ethnic/identity construction in the former Yugoslavia, South Africa and New Zealand. Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann demonstrate why ethnic and racial boundaries over the last 30 years and contrary to earlier, optimistic predictions have become stronger and more strident under the pressures of modernization, mass communication and secularization. The book concludes by discussing how the downward spiral of hate and separateness can be halted, and even reversed.


This article begins with a depiction of these alternative perspectives and an enumeration of often mutually incompatible theories of ethnic conflict. It then advances a view of ethnicity that is grounded in a deep sense of sociality, buttressed by the birth nature of the affiliation, the sense of similarity among group members, and their sense of difference from others. The article argues that this view of the ethnic group is compatible with changing ethnic boundaries and other claims of social constructionists, although the latitude of elites to steer the process is limited. A powerful affiliation such as ethnicity would certainly attract the interest of those who wish to use it instrumentally, and so ethnic-group behavior is likely to be both passionate and calculative. The recurrent tendency of groups to cleave from other
groups and claim a disproportionate share of rewards fits remarkably well with the incentives to bifurcate that typically obtain in democratic politics. This tendency and these incentives make it both easy for political leaders to mobilize along ethnic lines and difficult to break the centrifugal tendencies that prevail in divided societies. In ethnic relations generally, and democratic politics in particular, maximal inclusiveness is a strongly disfavored outcome.


According to the Horowitz understand ethnic conflict is an ambitious task, but by focusing on the logic and structure of conflict and discussing measures to abate it, he brings important insight into urgent issues that affects all strata of society everywhere. This book represents the politics of ethnicity and a historiography of various political movements and efforts that have both ameliorated and exacerbated ethnic tensions. Nonetheless, this book is an excellent foundational text for ethnicity and ethnic conflict. Ethnic conflict of course a recurrent phenomenon shifting contexts make ethnicity now more, now less prominent. Certain worldwide ideological and institutional currents have also underpinned the growth of ethnic conflict. The character of ethnic conflict opens opportunities for groups and movements to become part of broad and respectable current. The ubiquity of the phenomenon provides the basis for comparative analysis, for ethnic conflict has common feature.


Richard Jenkins reassesses the concept of ethnicity by examining critically, developing and expanding the anthropological model. He situates power relations and social categorization alongside group formation as necessary and interrelated aspects of the process of ethnic identification. He points out as a major weakness of established views the failure to take serious account of the local, cultural content of ethnic identity.

The second edition and revised version of the book is a welcome and brilliantly crafted, quickly established overview of this ethnicity field. It represents a major advance in our understanding of how ethnicity works in specific social and cultural contexts. The second edition will be an invaluable resource for both students and researchers alike.


This book synthesizes the leading sociological interpretations of ethnic relations and provides a coherent theoretical framework for its analysis. In this thoughtful and accessible text, Sinisa Malesevic assesses the explanatory strength of a range of sociological theories in understanding ethnicity and ethnic conflict. While acknowledging that there is no master key or blue-print to deal with each and every case of interethnic group relations, The Sociology of Ethnicity develops the best strategy to bridge epistemological and policy requirements for interethnic group relations. 'Malesevic has written a masterwork of the ethnicity in sociology. Indeed, this book is rapidly become required reading, especially for those seeking an introduction to the field. Its structure and style promise to make it appealing and useful in a range of courses. According to the author, ethnicity is a diverse, illusive and fluid phenomenon. It compares and contrasts the different leading sociological theories of ethnicity by identifying the principal differences and their main points of using the example of the Rwanda genocide of 1994, this book briefly assesses the explanatory strength of each perspective demonstrating how all the eight theories of ethnicity are able to provide a coherent but often mutually opposed interpretation of the Rwandan catastrophe.

Gérard Prunier provides a historical perspective that Western readers need to understand how and why the brutal massacres of 800,000 Rwandese came to pass. Prunier shows how the events in Rwanda were part of a deadly logic, a plan that served central political and economic interests, rather than a result of ancient tribal hatreds -- a notion often invoked by the media to dramatize the fighting. Prunier demonstrates how the struggle for cultural dominance and subjugation among the Hutu and Tutsi -- the central players in the recent massacres -- was exploited by racially obsessed Europeans. He shows how Western colonialists helped to construct a Tutsi identity as a superior racial type because of their distinctly "non-Negro" features in order to facilitate greater control over the Rwandese. Prunier stresses the urgent question of how this horror could have occurred in our time. Considering modern theories of violence and ethnic strife, Prunier concludes that the genocide served as a vehicle for self-identification: to preserve "a certain vision [the Tutsi and Hutu] have of themselves, of the others and of their place in the world." It also occurred, he says, because of blind obedience, fear, self-interest, and overpopulation. The last will emerge ever more prominently in future wars, Prunier predicts. "Genocides are a modern phenomenon--they require organisation--and they are likely to become more frequent." If genocides are indeed the wave of the future, this may become a primary textbook for understanding why.


This article was earlier focused on the Rwandan women who were missing and underrepresented in politics and could not participate in political and administrative debates women couldn’t make any decisions for herself. The percentage never rose above 17% within local government, there were no female prefects, and only 3.2%
sub-prefects were female. Within private sector, only 12-18% employees were women. In the government sector women were majorly presently only in lower ranking and lower paid positions (Powley, Elizabeth, 2003). Till 1985, women constituted only 12% of the parliamentarians and 2% in the diplomatic services. Before 1994, women political participation never rose more than 18%. Women were faced many taboos related with the culture and tradition of Rwanda that she was not supposed to involved in cattle milking, cutting of firewood work and decision making authority regarding farm house management and economic activities. Suddenly after 1994 genocide, the demographic change in Rwandan has got a huge ‘U’ turn for women at social, economic and political level. Women came out forward for reconstruction out of necessity. After genocide, women started participating and starting taking initiatives in different political activities. The urgent need of Rwanda amends the constitution in favor of women. The transformatory phase began in 1999 when the inheritance and martial property law gave women and their daughters the right to inherit property from their husbands and father. Different women friendly laws have taken the important position in new amended constitution in 2003.


This article aims to explain the role of women in reconciliation, reconstruction and resettlement of life immediately after the 1994 Genocide. During that period how women were forced to take the charge of the responsibilities. Women were need to be supported and encouraged in their new roles as heads of households, as public representatives, as agents of reconstruction, and as peace builders by the society. The Ministry of Gender and the Promotion of Women's initiatives to reform discriminatory laws and improve the status of women should continue to be supported, even prioritized, by the government of Rwanda and the international community. Women's position in Rwandan society is rapidly changing in response to the new roles they must adopt to survive. While social change is always slow, the
post-conflict crisis in Rwanda has ironically resulted in a situation not only of great challenges but also of great opportunity for Rwandan women. Immediately after the genocide, the Rwandan government publically estimated that 70% of its population was female. The article also focuses on how women took shoulder a greater burden of economic activity and reconstruction activities in Rwanda. As the large majority of the working adult population, women are shouldering most of the tasks of non-traditional and physical reconstruction. During that time Rwandan women have organized themselves into socio-professional associations, cooperative groups, and development associations. At the local level, women are creating or re-constituting self-help groups, or cooperatives, to assist survivors, widows or returned refugees, or simply to meet the everyday needs of providing for their families. In the end, Rwandan women achieved the unbelievable success in limited time period, in various fields and their role in upliftment of the post-genocide society has been remarkable.

**Broad study area covers the role of women in the transformation of the Rwandan society which majorly includes:**

- Gender dimension of Ethnic- conflict induced violence on women
- Ethnic conflict induced displacement
- Displacement and Refugee problem
- Reconciliation, resettlement and Reconstruction done by women
- Transformation of the society by Rwandan women in Post Genocide society

**Central questions:**

- What is an ethnic conflict induced displacement?
- What are the adverse effects of Rwandan genocide on Hutu and Tutsi women?
- How are women coping with these adverse situations?
- What are the best ways to increase women’s participation at social, economic, political, Judicial and cultural level?