

## Gender equality in South Africa: Incorporating African culture into the constitution

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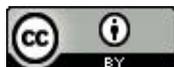
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### Abstract

Gender inequality and the marginalisation of women has been at the centre of modern debates around the globe. Civil society, government and business continue a fight for what can be viewed within a democratic state as discrimination. Some 'old-fashioned' scholars and commentators narrowly argue that the inculcation of certain rights initially denied to women are simply a Western imposition and an attempt to weaken African culture and traditions. This type of myopic thinking subscribes to a Cambodian saying that "men are a piece of gold, and women are a piece of cloth". In a democratic dispensation such as that of South Africa, this kind of utterances are an insult to women, the institution of democracy and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). Using a content analysis approach and a liberal feminism theoretical perspective, this article attempts to argue that despite various machineries aimed at redressing gender inequalities, South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in relation to women empowerment. Although culture and gender equality are various variables of unequal weights, one does not or at least should outweigh the other. That is, a balance of both gender equality and culture must be sought. This article is conceptual in nature and secondary data is collected through journal articles, books, Census and the African Development Bank statistics. The article therefore concludes that while culture, its practices and traditions remains imperative in society, they must be incorporated to human rights promulgated through the Constitution (1996), pieces of legislation and international treaties.

**Keywords:** Gender equality, South Africa, African culture, constitution.

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