



Role of Gender Equality Strategies in Enhancing Social Inclusion in a Public Sector Institution: A Case of Gasabo District, Rwanda (2021–2025)

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Abstract: This study examined the role of gender equality strategies in enhancing social inclusion within public sector institutions in Gasabo District, Rwanda. Specifically, the study assessed the role of gender mainstreaming strategy, women's leadership strategy, and anti-gender-based violence strategy in enhancing social inclusion within the district. The study employed descriptive and correlational research designs using a mixed-methods approach. Correlation analysis findings revealed that gender mainstreaming strategy had a strong positive relationship with social inclusion ($r = 0.794$), followed by women's leadership strategy ($r = 0.706$), and anti-gender-based violence strategy ($r = 0.670$). The regression model summary showed that the independent variables explained 74.7% of the variation in social inclusion (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.743$). Regression coefficient results revealed that gender mainstreaming strategy had a positive and statistically significant effect on social inclusion ($\beta = 0.554$, $p < 0.05$), while anti-gender-based violence strategy also had a positive and statistically significant effect on social inclusion ($\beta = 0.492$, $p < 0.05$). However, women's leadership strategy had a positive but statistically insignificant effect on social inclusion ($\beta = 0.026$, $p > 0.05$). The study concluded that gender mainstreaming strategy and anti-gender-based violence strategy significantly contribute toward enhancing social inclusion through promoting participation, representation, equality, and inclusion of marginalized groups within Gasabo District. The study recommends that Gasabo District should strengthen awareness creation regarding gender equality support services, improve women's participation in governance and leadership activities, and strengthen accessibility and effectiveness of GBV reporting systems.

Keywords: Gender Equality Strategies, Gender Mainstreaming, Women's Leadership, Anti-Gender-Based Violence, Social Inclusion

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1. Introduction

Gender equality strategies are increasingly used in public institutions to improve equitable participation, representation and access to services. In Rwanda, such strategies form part of wider efforts to integrate women and marginalized groups into public decision-making and service delivery. Gender equality initiatives within the public sector are therefore closely connected to the broader objective of social inclusion, particularly where institutional practices determine who participates in

governance and who benefits from public programmes (Uwizeye & Niyonsaba, 2020).

Gender mainstreaming is one of the principal mechanisms through which gender considerations are incorporated into policies, plans, budgets and service-delivery processes. Rwanda's local-government institutions are expected to integrate gender concerns into planning and implementation, while gender-responsive practices are intended to reduce unequal access to opportunities and public resources (Ministry of Local Government, 2022; Mugabo & Habimana, 2022).

Women's leadership strategies complement mainstreaming by increasing women's representation and influence in governance structures. Leadership development, mentorship and representation measures are intended to strengthen women's participation in institutional decision-making and make public programmes more responsive to diverse community needs (Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, 2023; Mukarukaka, 2022).

Anti-gender-based violence strategies are equally important because violence, harassment and discrimination can limit participation even where formal opportunities exist. Prevention measures, reporting mechanisms, awareness programmes and institutional protection contribute to safer environments in which women and marginalized groups can participate more effectively in public and community activities (Manirakiza & Uwase, 2022; Hakizimana, 2022).

Despite Rwanda's progress in institutionalizing gender equality, the thesis identified continuing challenges at the local level, including uneven awareness of support services, limited active participation of women in some decision-making processes, and restricted participation of women and marginalized groups in local security structures. These conditions created a need to examine how gender equality strategies operate in practice within Gasabo District and how they relate to social inclusion.

The general objective of the study was to examine the role of gender equality strategies in enhancing social inclusion within the public sector in Gasabo District, Rwanda. Specifically, the study assessed gender mainstreaming strategy, women's leadership strategy, and anti-gender-based violence strategy in relation to social inclusion.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews the theoretical literature relevant to gender equality strategies and social inclusion. The study was grounded in Social Role Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory and the Human Rights-Based Approach. For each theory, the manuscript retains the introductory theoretical paragraph and the paragraph linking the theory directly to the study.

2.1 Social Role Theory

Social Role Theory was developed by Alice Eagly in 1987 to explain how gender differences in behavior and social expectations are shaped by societal norms (Sergei, 2023). Eagly argued that men and women are assigned different roles based on cultural expectations, which influence how they behave, the responsibilities they assume, and the opportunities available to them. The theory has since been widely applied in psychology, sociology, and organizational studies to understand gender disparities in professional and social contexts (Johnson & Parker, 2022).

In relation to this study, Social Role Theory is particularly relevant for understanding the importance of gender mainstreaming strategies in public sector institutions. By recognizing how traditional gender roles limit women's participation, policymakers can implement interventions that create equal opportunities, reduce gender biases, and promote social inclusion. The theory provides a conceptual lens to assess how integrating gender perspectives into policies, programs, and decision-making processes can enhance equitable participation in governance within Gasabo District (Johnson & Parker, 2022).

2.2 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory was first introduced by James MacGregor Burns in 1978 and later refined by Bernard Bass in 1990 (Williams & Carter, 2022). The theory focuses on leaders who inspire, motivate, and empower their followers to achieve higher levels of performance while contributing meaningfully to organizational objectives. Unlike transactional leadership, which relies on hierarchy, rewards, and punishment to achieve compliance, transformational leadership emphasizes vision, collaboration, and the personal development of followers. The approach has been widely applied in organizational studies, public administration, and governance to explain how leadership can drive change, foster innovation, and create inclusive work environments (Davis, 2023).

In the context of this study, Transformational Leadership Theory is particularly relevant to the women's leadership strategy in public sector institutions. By promoting female leadership, the strategy ensures that women have opportunities to influence policy, participate in decision-making, and contribute diverse perspectives to governance processes. Transformational leadership provides a conceptual framework for understanding how women leaders can inspire their teams, promote equity, and foster social inclusion within public sector institutions. Applying this theory in Gasabo District helps explain how empowering women in leadership positions can enhance institutional effectiveness, improve public service delivery, and ensure inclusive participation in governance (Sebastiano, 2023).

2.3 Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) Theory

The Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) provides a framework for integrating rights, equality, accountability, participation and non-discrimination into governance and institutional practice. It treats equitable access, protection and participation as rights that public institutions are responsible for respecting and advancing (Garcia, 2023).

In the context of this study, HRBA is particularly relevant to the anti-gender-based violence strategy. Gender-based violence within public sector institutions is a violation of

fundamental human rights that limits women's and marginalized groups' participation in governance and service delivery. Applying HRBA enables public institutions to establish policies, reporting systems, and preventive measures that protect employees, create safe workplaces, and foster social inclusion. By emphasizing rights, accountability, and empowerment, this theory provides a conceptual framework for assessing how anti-GBV strategies contribute to equitable participation and inclusive governance within Gasabo District (Terry, 2023).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study used descriptive and correlational research designs and combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. The descriptive design was used to present respondents' views on gender mainstreaming, women's leadership, anti-gender-based violence strategies and social inclusion, while the correlational design examined the strength and direction of relationships among the study variables.

3.2 Target Population and Sample Size

The target population comprised 449 participants: 18 administrative staff in Gasabo District, 4 MIGEPROF officers involved in policy implementation and service delivery, and 427 community committee representatives. Using Yamane's (1967) formula at a 5% margin of error, the study obtained a sample size of 212 respondents, consisting of 9 administrative staff, 2 MIGEPROF officers and 201 committee representatives.

3.3 Sampling Techniques

Within each stratum, simple random sampling was used to select respondents. This method allows every individual in the stratum an equal chance of being chosen, reducing selection bias and enhancing the representativeness of the sample. By combining these techniques, the study captured diverse perspectives on the implementation of gender equality strategies, providing reliable and generalizable insights on how these strategies influence social inclusion in public sector institutions within Gasabo District.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

The study used questionnaires, semi-structured interview guides and documentary review. Questionnaires were administered to committee representatives to obtain quantitative evidence on the study variables, while interviews with administrative staff and MIGEPROF

officers provided detailed qualitative information. Documentary review covered relevant government reports, policy documents, MIGEPROF publications and other records on gender equality and social inclusion.

3.5 Pilot Study, Validity and Reliability

A pilot study was conducted with 21 respondents, representing approximately 10% of the sample. Content validity assessment produced a CVI of 0.90 for the questionnaire, 1.00 for the interview guide and an overall CVI of 0.93. Reliability testing produced Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.812 for Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, 0.798 for Women's Leadership Strategy, 0.845 for Anti-Gender-Based Violence Strategy and 0.826 for Social Inclusion, with an overall coefficient of 0.820.

3.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics summarized respondents' views, while Pearson correlation and multiple regression were used to examine the relationships and effects of the independent variables on social inclusion at the 0.05 level of significance. Qualitative interview data were analyzed thematically and used to complement the quantitative findings.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The study obtained the necessary academic and institutional permissions before data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, participation was voluntary, confidentiality and anonymity were protected, and respondents retained the right to withdraw without negative consequences.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

The study sampled a total of 212 respondents composed of community representatives, Administrative Staff, and MIGEPROF Officers in Gasabo District. Among the sampled respondents, 201 community representatives were issued questionnaires, while 9 Administrative Staff and 2 MIGEPROF Officers were interviewed using interview guides. Out of the 201 questionnaires distributed to community representatives, 186 were successfully returned and completed, while 15 questionnaires were not returned. This represented a response rate of 92.5%, which was considered adequate for data analysis and interpretation.

Table 1: Response Rate

Category of Respondents	Questionnaire Given	Questionnaire Returned	Questionnaire Not Returned	Response Rate (%)
Community Representatives	201	186	15	92.5
Total	201	186	15	92.5

Source: Field data, 2026

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting, 60% is good, and 70% and above is considered very good for research purposes. Therefore, the response rate of 92.5% achieved in this study was considered excellent and adequate for data analysis and interpretation.

4.2 Presentation of Findings

This section presents and analyzes the findings of the study on the role of gender equality strategies in enhancing social inclusion within public sector institutions in Gasabo District, Rwanda. The presentation

of findings is organized according to the study objectives and variables, including gender mainstreaming strategy, women's leadership strategy, anti-gender-based violence strategy, and social inclusion. The analysis is based on respondents' views obtained through questionnaires and interviews, and it focuses on how these gender equality strategies contribute to inclusive participation, equitable access to services, and representation of marginalized groups within the district. A scale of 1–5 was used to express the opinions of respondents, where 5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 4 = Agree (A), 3 = Neutral (N), 2 = Disagree (D), and 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD). This analysis helps to understand how gender mainstreaming strategies contribute to enhancing social inclusion within public sector institutions in Gasabo District.

Table 2. Level of agreement of Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

Views of respondents	N	M	SD
The district has policies that promote gender equality for all community members.	186	3.94	.907
Gender equality is considered in planning and implementing community programs.	186	4.29	.872
The district provides sufficient resources to support gender equality initiatives.	186	4.29	.908
Community representatives are aware of resources and support available for gender equality activities.	186	1.38	.658
District staff receive training on gender equality to better serve the community.	186	4.27	.938
Valid N (listwise)	186		

Source: Field Data, 2024-**Key:** M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

The results presented in Table 2 indicate respondents' perceptions regarding gender mainstreaming strategy within Gasabo District. The findings reveal that respondents agreed that gender equality is considered in planning and implementing community programs, as shown by a mean score of 4.29 and standard deviation of 0.872. This implies that gender considerations are integrated into community development activities and public service programs within the district. The findings further suggest that the district recognizes the importance of gender-responsive planning in promoting equal participation and inclusive governance.

Similarly, the statement that "The district provides sufficient resources to support gender equality initiatives" obtained a mean score of 4.29 with a standard deviation of 0.908. This indicates that respondents agreed that the district allocates resources toward supporting gender equality activities and programs. The findings imply that institutional support and resource allocation contribute positively toward strengthening implementation of gender

mainstreaming strategies and promoting equal opportunities for community members.

The study further found that respondents agreed that district staff receive training on gender equality to better serve the community, as indicated by a mean score of 4.27 and standard deviation of 0.938. In addition, respondents agreed that the district has policies that promote gender equality for all community members, reflected by a mean of 3.94 and standard deviation of 0.907. These findings imply that the district has established institutional frameworks and capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening gender equality and improving service delivery to the community.

However, the statement that "Community representatives are aware of resources and support available for gender equality activities" obtained the lowest mean score of 1.38 with a standard deviation of 0.658. This indicates strong

disagreement among respondents, implying that many community representatives are not adequately informed about the available resources and support mechanisms related to gender equality activities. The findings suggest that there is a need for increased awareness creation, communication, and dissemination of information regarding gender equality support services within Gasabo District.

From the findings, the study revealed that gender mainstreaming strategies play a significant role in promoting gender equality and strengthening inclusive participation within Gasabo District. The study established that integration of gender considerations into community programs, availability of institutional support, and gender-related training contribute positively toward improving service delivery and enhancing equal opportunities for community members. However, the findings also revealed challenges related to limited awareness among community representatives regarding available gender equality resources and support mechanisms, indicating the need for improved communication and sensitization efforts within the district.

During the interview with one of the staff members from Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), when asked about how gender mainstreaming strategies contribute to social inclusion in Gasabo District, the respondent stated that the district has continued to integrate gender considerations into community development programs and public policies in order to

ensure equal participation of both men and women. The respondent further explained that training programs and awareness campaigns have helped improve understanding of gender equality issues among community members and local leaders. However, the respondent noted that despite the progress achieved, challenges still exist in terms of limited awareness among some community representatives regarding available gender equality support services and resources. The respondent emphasized the need for continued sensitization, capacity building, and stronger community engagement to further strengthen gender equality and social inclusion within the district.

Similarly, another administrative staff member, when asked about the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming strategies in enhancing social inclusion within Gasabo District, reported that the district has made significant efforts to promote equal participation of all community members through gender-responsive policies and programs. The respondent explained that gender equality initiatives have improved the involvement of women and marginalized groups in decision-making processes and community activities. The respondent further noted that regular gender training and collaboration with local leaders have strengthened awareness and reduced discrimination within the community. However, the respondent emphasized that continuous monitoring and increased dissemination of information are still necessary to ensure that all community members fully benefit from gender equality programs and support services.

Table 3. Level of agreement of Women’s Leadership Strategy

Views of respondents	N	M	SD
Women hold leadership positions in community decision-making bodies.	186	4.28	.894
The district provides leadership programs to empower women in the community.	186	4.55	.720
Women actively participate in decisions affecting community development.	186	1.19	.438
Women leaders ensure that marginalized groups are represented in community programs.	186	4.27	.880
Women’s leadership has improved access to public services for all community members.	186	4.30	.909
Valid N (listwise)	186		

Source: Field Data, 2024-**Key:** **M**=Mean, **SD**=Standard Deviation

The results presented in Table 3 indicate respondents’ perceptions regarding women’s leadership strategy within Gasabo District. The findings reveal that respondents strongly agreed that the district provides leadership programs to empower women in the community, as shown by a mean score of 4.55 and standard deviation of 0.720. This implies that the district has established initiatives and programs aimed at strengthening women’s leadership capacity and participation in community affairs. The findings further suggest that women empowerment programs contribute positively toward promoting inclusive governance and social inclusion within the district.

Similarly, the statement that “Women’s leadership has improved access to public services for all community members” obtained a mean score of 4.30 with a standard deviation of 0.909. This indicates that respondents agreed that women leaders contribute significantly toward improving service delivery and ensuring equal access to services within the community. The findings imply that women’s participation in leadership positions enhances fairness and inclusiveness in the provision of public services.

The study further found that respondents agreed that women hold leadership positions in community decision-making bodies, as indicated by a mean score of 4.28 and standard deviation of 0.894. In addition, respondents

agreed that women leaders ensure that marginalized groups are represented in community programs, reflected by a mean score of 4.27 and standard deviation of 0.880. These findings imply that women’s leadership contributes positively toward representation, participation, and inclusion of vulnerable groups in governance and community development activities within Gasabo District.

However, the statement that “Women actively participate in decisions affecting community development” obtained the lowest mean score of 1.19 with a standard deviation of 0.438. This indicates strong disagreement among respondents, implying that despite the existence of women leadership programs and representation in leadership positions, women’s active involvement in decision-making processes affecting community development remains limited. The findings suggest that there is still a need to strengthen women’s participation and involvement in decision-making activities within the district.

From the findings, the study revealed that women’s leadership strategies play a significant role in promoting social inclusion and improving representation of women and marginalized groups within Gasabo District. The study established that leadership empowerment programs and women’s representation in leadership structures contribute positively toward improving inclusive governance and equitable service delivery. However, the findings also revealed that women’s active participation in community decision-making processes remains limited, indicating the need for additional efforts to strengthen women’s engagement and influence in governance and development activities.

During the interview with one of the staff members from Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), when asked about how women’s leadership strategies contribute to social inclusion in Gasabo District, the respondent stated that the district has continued to encourage women to participate in leadership and governance activities through empowerment programs and awareness campaigns. The respondent further explained that women leaders have contributed positively toward representing marginalized groups and promoting equal access to community services. However, the respondent noted that some cultural and social barriers still limit women’s active participation in decision-making processes, especially at the community level. The respondent emphasized the importance of continued sensitization and leadership training to strengthen women’s confidence and participation in governance activities.

Similarly, another administrative staff member, when asked about the effectiveness of women’s leadership strategies in enhancing social inclusion within Gasabo District, reported that women’s representation in leadership positions has improved over recent years and has contributed positively toward inclusive governance and community participation. The respondent explained that women leaders play an important role in advocating for vulnerable groups and ensuring fairness in service delivery. However, the respondent further noted that although women occupy leadership positions, their influence in some decision-making processes is still limited due to existing societal attitudes and traditional beliefs. The respondent emphasized the need for stronger support systems and policies to enhance women’s active involvement in leadership and community development initiatives.

Table 4. Level of agreement of Anti-Gender-Based Violence Strategy

Views of respondents	N	M	SD
The district has effective policies to prevent and address gender-based violence.	186	4.60	.691
There is an accessible system for reporting cases of gender-based violence in the community.	186	2.23	.496
Community members are aware of how to report GBV cases safely and confidentially.	186	4.38	.728
The district conducts GBV awareness programs and training for staff and community members.	186	4.27	.938
Anti-GBV strategies have improved the participation of women and marginalized groups in community activities.	186	4.38	.666
Valid N (listwise)	186		

Source: Field Data, 2024-Key: M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

The results presented in Table 4 indicate respondents’ perceptions regarding anti-gender-based violence strategy within Gasabo District. The findings reveal that respondents strongly agreed that the district has effective policies to prevent and address gender-based violence, as shown by a mean score of 4.60 and standard deviation of 0.691. This implies that the district has established institutional frameworks and regulations aimed at preventing GBV and protecting community members

against violence and discrimination. The findings further suggest that the implementation of anti-GBV policies contributes positively toward strengthening safety, equality, and social inclusion within the district.

Similarly, the statement that “Community members are aware of how to report GBV cases safely and confidentially” obtained a mean score of 4.38 with a standard deviation of 0.728. This indicates that

respondents agreed that awareness regarding reporting mechanisms for GBV cases has improved among community members. The findings imply that sensitization programs and awareness campaigns have contributed significantly toward increasing knowledge on GBV prevention and reporting procedures within the community. Increased awareness further promotes confidence among victims and encourages reporting of violence-related cases.

The study further found that respondents agreed that anti-GBV strategies have improved the participation of women and marginalized groups in community activities, as indicated by a mean score of 4.38 and standard deviation of 0.666. This suggests that anti-gender-based violence initiatives contribute positively toward creating safer and more inclusive environments where vulnerable groups can actively participate in governance and community development activities. In addition, respondents agreed that the district conducts GBV awareness programs and training for staff and community members, reflected by a mean score of 4.27 and standard deviation of 0.938. These findings imply that awareness creation and training programs are important tools for promoting understanding of gender-based violence issues and strengthening inclusive participation within the district.

However, the statement that “There is an accessible system for reporting cases of gender-based violence in the community” obtained the lowest mean score of 2.23 with a standard deviation of 0.496. This indicates disagreement among respondents, implying that although policies and awareness programs exist, accessibility of reporting systems for GBV cases remains a challenge within the community. The findings suggest that some community members may still experience difficulties in accessing support services or reporting channels due to fear, limited information, or institutional barriers. This indicates the need for improved accessibility, confidentiality, and responsiveness of GBV reporting mechanisms within Gasabo District.

From the findings, the study revealed that anti-gender-based violence strategies play a significant role in promoting social inclusion, protecting vulnerable groups, and strengthening participation of women and marginalized groups within Gasabo District. The study

established that anti-GBV policies, awareness programs, and sensitization initiatives contribute positively toward improving community safety, reducing discrimination, and encouraging inclusive participation in community activities. However, the findings also revealed challenges related to accessibility of GBV reporting systems, indicating the need for stronger support mechanisms, improved reporting channels, and increased community trust in GBV response services within the district.

During the interview with one of the staff members from Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), when asked about how anti-gender-based violence strategies contribute to social inclusion in Gasabo District, the respondent stated that the district has continued to implement policies and awareness campaigns aimed at preventing GBV and protecting vulnerable groups within the community. The respondent further explained that training sessions and community sensitization programs have improved awareness about GBV prevention and encouraged victims to seek support and report cases confidentially. However, the respondent noted that despite the progress achieved, some challenges still exist regarding accessibility and trust in reporting systems, especially in remote areas. The respondent emphasized the need for stronger collaboration between local leaders, security institutions, and community members to improve accessibility and effectiveness of GBV response mechanisms.

Similarly, another administrative staff member, when asked about the effectiveness of anti-gender-based violence strategies in enhancing social inclusion within Gasabo District, reported that anti-GBV initiatives have contributed positively toward creating safer environments and encouraging participation of women and marginalized groups in community development activities. The respondent explained that awareness programs and legal protections have reduced fear and discrimination among vulnerable groups, leading to increased confidence and participation in governance activities. However, the respondent further noted that some victims still hesitate to report GBV cases due to stigma, fear of retaliation, and limited confidence in reporting systems. The respondent emphasized the importance of strengthening confidentiality measures, improving support services, and increasing public trust in GBV reporting and response systems.

Table 5. Level of agreement of Anti-Gender-Based Violence Strategy

Views of respondents	N	M	SD
All community members have equal access to public services.	186	4.24	.846
Community members participate actively in local decision-making processes.	186	4.27	.938
Marginalized groups are represented in community leadership and programs.	186	3.93	.913
Community programs encourage participation from all groups, including vulnerable members.	186	4.29	.872
Community members, including women and marginalized groups, are engaged in local security services.	186	1.31	.625
Valid N (listwise)	186		

Source: Field Data, 2024-Key: M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

The results presented in Table 5 indicate respondents’ perceptions regarding social inclusion within Gasabo

District. The findings revealed that respondents agreed that community programs encourage participation from

all groups, including vulnerable members, as indicated by a mean score of 4.29 and a standard deviation of 0.872. The relatively high mean score suggests strong agreement among respondents that community development initiatives within the district promote inclusive participation. This finding is supported by reports from MIGEPROF (2024), which indicate that gender equality and social inclusion programs have been integrated into community development activities across districts in Rwanda to enhance participation of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups. The findings imply that implementation of gender equality strategies has contributed positively toward reducing exclusion and promoting equitable participation in development programs within Gasabo District.

Similarly, respondents agreed that community members actively participate in local decision-making processes, as reflected by a mean score of 4.27 and a standard deviation of 0.938. The findings suggest that local governance structures increasingly provide opportunities for citizens to engage in planning and decision-making activities. This observation is supported by national governance statistics which show that women occupy 45.2% of District Council positions and continue to participate actively in local governance structures (MIGEPROF, 2024). These statistics provide evidence that efforts aimed at promoting inclusive governance have strengthened participation of women and marginalized groups in decision-making processes at local government level.

The study further found that respondents agreed that all community members have equal access to public services, as indicated by a mean score of 4.24 and a standard deviation of 0.846. In addition, respondents agreed that marginalized groups are represented in community leadership and development programs, reflected by a mean score of 3.93 and a standard deviation of 0.913. These findings indicate that social inclusion initiatives have improved fairness in service delivery and representation of vulnerable groups within governance structures. Supporting this finding, reports from the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO, 2024) indicate that women constitute over 60% of parliamentary representation in Rwanda and continue to exceed the constitutional minimum requirement of 30% representation in decision-making organs. Such achievements demonstrate Rwanda's commitment to inclusive governance and equitable representation of marginalized groups.

However, the statement that community members, including women and marginalized groups, are engaged

in local security services obtained the lowest mean score of 1.31 with a standard deviation of 0.625. This indicates strong disagreement among respondents and suggests that participation of women and vulnerable groups in security-related activities remains limited. Despite progress in governance and public service participation, barriers still exist in security structures. Interview findings support this observation, as respondents from MIGEPROF and Gasabo District reported that cultural attitudes, limited awareness, and lack of confidence continue to hinder active participation of women and marginalized groups in community policing and local security committees. These findings indicate the need for additional empowerment initiatives and targeted inclusion measures within security and protection structures.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that gender equality strategies have significantly contributed toward strengthening social inclusion within Gasabo District. The relatively high mean scores recorded on access to public services, participation in decision-making, representation of marginalized groups, and inclusive community programs suggest that respondents perceive substantial progress in social inclusion. However, the low mean score relating to participation in local security services highlights an area that requires policy attention and institutional intervention. During interviews, officials from MIGEPROF and Gasabo District confirmed that while notable achievements have been realized in promoting participation and representation, additional efforts are required to ensure that women and vulnerable groups are fully integrated into all governance and security structures.

4.3. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between gender equality strategies and social inclusion within Gasabo District. The analysis focused on the relationship between gender mainstreaming strategy, women's leadership strategy, anti-gender-based violence strategy, and social inclusion. Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine whether the independent variables had a significant relationship with the dependent variable. Correlation coefficients range from -1 to +1, where values closer to +1 indicate a strong positive relationship, values closer to -1 indicate a strong negative relationship, and values close to 0 indicate a weak relationship. The findings from the correlation analysis help to determine how gender equality strategies influence social inclusion within public sector institutions in Gasabo District.

Table 6. Correlation between Independent and dependent variables

		X1	X2	X3	Y
Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (X1)	Pearson Correlation	1	.823**	.463**	.794**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	186	186	186	186
Women's Leadership Strategy (X2)	Pearson Correlation	.823**	1	.494**	.706**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	186	186	186	186
Anti-Gender-Based Violence Strategy (X3)	Pearson Correlation	.463**	.494**	1	.670**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	186	186	186	186
Social Inclusion (Y)	Pearson Correlation	.794**	.706**	.670**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	186	186	186	186

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results presented in Table 6 indicate the relationship between gender equality strategies and social inclusion within Gasabo District. The findings reveal that gender mainstreaming strategy (X1) has a strong positive relationship with social inclusion (Y), as indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0.794. This implies that improvement in gender mainstreaming strategies contributes positively toward enhancing social inclusion within the district. The findings further suggest that integration of gender considerations into policies and community programs promotes equal participation and representation of different social groups.

Similarly, the findings indicate that women's leadership strategy (X2) has a strong positive relationship with social inclusion (Y), with a correlation coefficient of 0.706. This implies that strengthening women's leadership and participation in governance activities contributes significantly toward improving social inclusion within Gasabo District. The findings suggest that women's involvement in leadership positions enhances representation, inclusive decision-making, and equal access to opportunities within the community.

The study further found that anti-gender-based violence strategy (X3) has a positive relationship with social inclusion (Y), as shown by a correlation coefficient of 0.670. This indicates that implementation of anti-gender-based violence strategies contributes positively toward improving social inclusion within the district. The findings imply that GBV prevention initiatives, awareness

programs, and protection mechanisms help create safer and more inclusive environments for women and marginalized groups.

Overall, the findings indicate that all gender equality strategies have positive relationships with social inclusion within Gasabo District. Among the variables, gender mainstreaming strategy showed the strongest relationship with social inclusion, followed by women's leadership strategy and anti-gender-based violence strategy. This implies that strengthening gender equality initiatives contributes significantly toward promoting participation, representation, equality, and inclusion within the community.

4.4. Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of gender equality strategies on social inclusion within Gasabo District. The analysis focused on determining how gender mainstreaming strategy, women's leadership strategy, and anti-gender-based violence strategy influence social inclusion. Multiple regression analysis was used because it helps to determine the extent to which each independent variable contributes to the dependent variable while controlling for the influence of other variables. The results of the regression analysis include the model summary, ANOVA results, and regression coefficients, which help to explain the predictive power and significance of gender equality strategies on social inclusion within Gasabo District.

Table 7. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.865 ^a	.747	.743	.23275

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, Women's Leadership Strategy, Anti-Gender-Based Violence Strategy

Table 7 presents the model summary of the multiple regression analysis conducted to examine the effect of gender equality strategies on social inclusion within Gasabo District. The findings show that the model has a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.865, indicating a very strong positive relationship between the independent variables namely gender mainstreaming strategy, women's leadership strategy, and anti-gender-based violence strategy and the dependent variable, social inclusion. The R Square value of 0.747 implies that 74.7% of the variation in social inclusion is explained by the combined effect of the independent variables included in the model. In addition, the Adjusted R Square value of 0.743 indicates that after adjusting for the number of predictors in the model, the independent variables still explain a large proportion of the variation in social inclusion. The standard error of the estimate of 0.23275

further suggests that the regression model has a relatively small prediction error.

The findings imply that gender equality strategies play a significant role in enhancing social inclusion within Gasabo District. The high R Square value indicates that gender mainstreaming strategy, women's leadership strategy, and anti-gender-based violence strategy collectively contribute greatly toward promoting participation, representation, equality, and inclusion within the community. This further suggests that strengthening implementation of gender equality policies, empowerment initiatives, and anti-GBV programs can significantly improve social inclusion outcomes within public sector institutions and local communities.

Table 8. Anova Results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.173	3	9.724	179.500	.000 ^b
	Residual	9.860	182	.054		
	Total	39.032	185			

a. Dependent Variable: Social Inclusion

b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, Women's Leadership Strategy, Anti-Gender-Based Violence Strategy

Table 8 presents the ANOVA results of the multiple regression analysis conducted to determine the effect of gender equality strategies on social inclusion within Gasabo District. The findings indicate that the regression model was statistically significant, as shown by an F-statistic of 179.500 and a significance value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. The regression sum of squares was 29.173, while the residual sum of squares was 9.860, giving a total sum of squares of 39.032. The findings further show that the mean square for regression was 9.724, while the mean square for residual was 0.054. This indicates that the independent variables included in the model significantly explain variations in social inclusion within the district.

The findings imply that gender mainstreaming strategy, women's leadership strategy, and anti-gender-based violence strategy collectively have a significant effect on social inclusion within Gasabo District. The significance value of 0.000 indicates that the regression model was reliable and appropriate for predicting social inclusion based on the selected independent variables. The findings further suggest that strengthening implementation of gender equality strategies contributes positively toward improving participation, representation, inclusion, and equal access to opportunities within the community.

Table 9. Coefficients Results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.665	.189		-3.519	.001
	Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (X1)	.554	.062	.593	8.935	.000
	Women's Leadership Strategy (X2)	.026	.058	.030	.448	.655
	Anti-Gender-Based Violence Strategy (X3)	.492	.056	.381	8.786	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Social Inclusion

Table 9 presents the coefficients results of the multiple regression analysis conducted to determine the effect of gender equality strategies on social inclusion within Gasabo District. The findings indicate that gender mainstreaming strategy (X1) had a positive and statistically significant effect on social inclusion, as shown by a beta coefficient of 0.554, t-value of 8.935, and significance value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This implies that an increase in gender mainstreaming practices leads to an improvement in social inclusion within the district. Similarly, anti-gender-based violence strategy (X3) had a positive and statistically significant effect on social inclusion, with a beta coefficient of 0.492, t-value of 8.786, and significance value of 0.000. This indicates that strengthening anti-GBV initiatives contributes positively toward enhancing participation, safety, and inclusion of vulnerable groups within the community.

However, the findings reveal that women's leadership strategy (X2) had a positive but statistically insignificant effect on social inclusion, as indicated by a beta coefficient of 0.026, t-value of 0.448, and significance value of 0.655, which is greater than 0.05. This implies

that although women's leadership contributes positively toward social inclusion, its influence was not statistically significant within the regression model. The findings further show that gender mainstreaming strategy had the strongest influence on social inclusion, followed by anti-gender-based violence strategy. Overall, the results imply that effective implementation of gender mainstreaming and anti-gender-based violence strategies significantly contributes toward improving social inclusion within Gasabo District.

4.5 Hypotheses Testing

This section presents the testing of hypotheses developed in Chapter One of the study. The hypotheses were tested using regression analysis in order to determine whether gender equality strategies significantly influence social inclusion within Gasabo District. The decision for accepting or rejecting the hypotheses was based on the significance level (p-value) of 0.05. A hypothesis was accepted when the significance value was less than 0.05 and rejected when the significance value was greater than 0.05.

Table 10. Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypothesis	Beta	Sig.	Decision
H01: Gender Mainstreaming Strategy has no significant effect on Social Inclusion in Gasabo District.	0.554	0.000	Rejected
H02: Women's Leadership Strategy has no significant effect on Social Inclusion in Gasabo District.	0.026	0.655	Accepted
H03: Anti-Gender-Based Violence Strategy has no significant effect on Social Inclusion in Gasabo District.	0.492	0.000	Rejected

Source: Field Data, 2026

The results presented in Table 10 indicate the hypotheses testing results regarding the effect of gender equality strategies on social inclusion within Gasabo District. The findings reveal that gender mainstreaming strategy had a

positive and statistically significant effect on social inclusion, with a significance value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that gender mainstreaming strategy has no significant effect

on social inclusion was rejected. This implies that gender mainstreaming strategies contribute significantly toward improving social inclusion within the district.

Similarly, the findings indicate that anti-gender-based violence strategy had a positive and statistically significant effect on social inclusion, with a significance value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that anti-gender-based violence strategy has no significant effect on social inclusion was rejected. This implies that anti-GBV strategies significantly contribute toward enhancing participation, inclusion, and protection of vulnerable groups within Gasabo District.

However, the findings reveal that women's leadership strategy had a significance value of 0.655, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that women's leadership strategy has no significant effect on social inclusion was accepted. This implies that although women's leadership strategy positively influences social inclusion, its effect was not statistically significant within the regression model used in this study.

In conclusion, all the hypotheses were tested and verified using regression analysis. The findings revealed that gender mainstreaming strategy and anti-gender-based violence strategy had statistically significant effects on social inclusion within Gasabo District since their significance values were less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypotheses related to these variables were rejected. However, women's leadership strategy was found to have a statistically insignificant effect on social inclusion because its significance value was greater than 0.05, leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis. Overall, the findings indicate that gender equality strategies play an important role in enhancing social inclusion through promoting participation, representation, equality, and inclusion of vulnerable groups within Gasabo District.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that gender mainstreaming strategy is a key driver of social inclusion within Gasabo District. The analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between gender mainstreaming strategy and social inclusion, with a coefficient of 0.554 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that integration of gender considerations into community programs, provision of gender equality policies, allocation of resources, and gender-related training significantly enhance participation, representation, and inclusive governance within the district.

Furthermore, the study concluded that anti-gender-based violence strategy plays an essential role in enhancing social inclusion within Gasabo District. The regression results showed a positive effect with a coefficient of 0.492

($p < 0.05$), highlighting that anti-GBV policies, awareness campaigns, and sensitization initiatives contribute significantly toward improving safety, reducing discrimination, and encouraging participation of women and marginalized groups in community activities.

On the other hand, the study concluded that women's leadership strategy had a positive but statistically insignificant effect on social inclusion, as evidenced by a coefficient of 0.026 ($p > 0.05$). Although women leadership programs and empowerment initiatives contribute positively toward improving representation of women and marginalized groups in governance structures, the study found that their effect on social inclusion was relatively weak compared to other gender equality strategies.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, several recommendations were formulated to address the key issues identified and to enhance the effectiveness of the practices examined.

1. To Gasabo District Management and Planning Unit: The district should continue strengthening gender mainstreaming strategies by ensuring that gender considerations are fully integrated into the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of community development programs.
2. To the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) and Gasabo District Authorities: Efforts should be intensified to strengthen women's leadership strategies through provision of leadership training, mentorship programs, and empowerment initiatives targeting women at community and local governance levels.
3. To Gasabo District, MIGEPROF, and Rwanda National Police Community Policing Structures: Anti-gender-based violence strategies should be strengthened by improving the accessibility, confidentiality, responsiveness, and effectiveness of GBV reporting mechanisms and support services.
4. To the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), Gasabo District, and Community Development Committees: Stronger social inclusion initiatives should be implemented to ensure equal participation of women, persons with disabilities, youth, and other marginalized groups in governance, community development activities, and local security structures.
5. To the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO): The office should strengthen monitoring and evaluation of gender equality and social inclusion programs at district level by conducting regular assessments and providing feedback on the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming, women's leadership, and anti-gender-based violence interventions.

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