

## **Gender and African Proverbs**

**Juliet Kamwendo and Hassan O. Kaya**

*University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*

**KEYWORDS** African Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Culture. Indigenous African Languages. Patriarchy

**ABSTRACT** This paper emanates from an ongoing study. The preliminary literature review shows that some proverbs have gender connotations. The examples provided from various ethnic groups demonstrate that proverbs are used to articulate the deeply entrenched patriarchal systems of African social and cultural organization. They show the subordination of women in society. As it is not possible to eradicate the existing gendered proverbs in various societies, this study aims at documenting and interrogating the gendered proverbs associated with both negative and positive connotations. This is meant to establish how such proverbs can be used as a stepping stone to promote gender equality. The study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the Reformist African-feminist approach framework within the context of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) to analyze critically the role of African proverbs in gender construction and articulation in Southern and East Africa.