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## **WOMEN AND THE POLITICAL MOSAIC IN KENYA: PATTERNS AND TRENDS OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS SINCE INDEPENDENCE**

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# **WOMEN AND THE POLITICAL MOSAIC IN KENYA: PATTERNS AND TRENDS OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS SINCE INDEPENDENCE**

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose:** To analyze the women and the political mosaic (patterns and trends) of women participation and representation in post independence Kenya.

**Methodology:** The study utilized a mixed research design.

**Findings:** Results revealed that women participation in the electoral process is very low. The results also revealed that there has been a gradual increase in the level of women representation in parliament. The results also reveal that women do not have a full understanding of the constitution since their responses were not in tandem with what the Constitution of Kenya 2010 states. Further, results revealed that women participation and representation in post independence Kenya came along with many benefits for the women. Results also revealed that there are various challenges attributed to women participation and representation in post independence Kenya. These challenges included discrimination by the community and male politicians, abuse by male politicians during campaigns, financial incapability, lack of support by their spouses, families and the community at large and lack of support by fellow women.

**Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy:** The research was timely since political participation and representation of women is yet to reach the minimum one third constitutional requirements. The outcome of the research would be of relevance to the government policy-makers on the advantages of involving women's participation and representation in political leadership at all levels. It aims to serve as a tool for reference to all those who would work to increase women participation and representation in political leadership roles in various countries. This study would also stimulate policy reorientation towards increased gender mainstreaming. It is hoped that this research would lead to further policy measures that inform legislation to enhance the representation of women in political governance and gender mainstreaming as envisaged in the Constitution which advocates for equal gender participation and representation. The study would also lead to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030.

**Keywords:** *Women Participation, Political Leadership, Post Independence, Patterns, Trends Constitution of Kenya 2010*

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

Political participation in a democracy can take many forms, ranging from voting for representatives at regular intervals to voting on policies in referenda, forming political groups, and engaging in legal or illegal protest. The individuals engaged in such participation likely expect - or at least hope - that these actions will have some impact on the content of government policies (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003). According to Igwee (2002) political participation is the degree and forms of involvement of citizens in governance and related institutions of society, such as the economy and culture). It thus involves participation in political campaigns and debates, attending strategy meetings of political parties, voting during elections, vying as candidates for elections, and holding of key government and political party positions.

Women's representation and participation in politics has been an uphill task throughout the world. Since Ester Boserup's (1970) pioneering work of women and development in the Third World, studies continue to confirm her finding that women are not equal beneficiaries with men of the fruits of so-called modernization and development. Campbell (2010) agrees that across the world there seem to be barriers to women's participation in politics than men. This is demonstrated by underrepresentation of women in the political arena. In cases where women get a chance to lead, they are often seen as unreal men. For instance, Margaret Thatcher of Britain as "Iron Lady" or Golda Mier of Israel as "the only man in the cabinet" (Campbell, 2010). Yoon (2004) observes that on a global survey, only about 39 states have elected a woman president or prime minister.

According to the UN report titled, "The World's women 2000: Trends and statistics", women comprise "... less than one-tenth of the world's cabinet ministers and one-fifth of all sub-ministerial positions", United Nations (2000). In this report, sub-Saharan Africa is ranked lowly number five in the ranks, while Nordic regions followed by the Americans are rated comparatively high. The reports indicate that percentage of women in parliament in sub-Saharan Africa is just below the global average.

This report seems to be corroborated by the fact that women in Africa have been excluded from most of the important positions until 2003 when Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was elected president of Liberia (Hay & Stitche, 1995). Even though they have been represented in the legislative organs their number has remained minimal compared to their male counterparts. This is despite the resolutions passed in the UN Decade Conference of Nairobi in 1985 and the Abuja Declaration.

The Beijing Declaration in the year 1995 also identified critical areas of concern and outlined actions to be taken in each of these areas in order to create a better world for women. The role of women in power and decision making was among these areas of concern. In calling for 'gender balance' in 'governmental bodies', 'public administration entities' and 'the judiciary', two broad objectives were outlined: take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation

in power structures and decision making; and increase women's capacity to participate in decision making.

In the recent past, the political arena of some Eastern African countries has made some strides in terms of women inclusion in political participation (Okoth, 2000). Meena (1992) states Tanzania was the first African country in 1998 to include 30percent quota representation in her national constitution. Tanzania was followed by Rwanda and crossed the gender parity in women participation in politics as UNIFEM (2008/09) illustrates. Kenya is one of the countries with observably low participation of women in political processes. Kariuki (2010) observes that even though women make up to about 52percent of the population, decision making organs have remained largely minimal and marginal to women since independence.

It is estimated that the percentage of women's representation in the legislature ranges from 16.8 percent in the European parliaments to 4.6 percent in the Arab States (Randall, 1987). In Africa, the average percentage of seats occupied by women parliamentarians was 12.8 percent in 2002. This is in stark contrast with other statistics on women. In Africa women constitute slightly over 50 percent of the world population. They also account for 65 percent of the world working hours. In the economic front, women make vast contributions through agricultural work, marketing and wage labor, contributing 80 percent of productive agricultural labor worldwide. In rural areas of Third World countries such as Kenya, women provide 60-80 percent of agricultural labor (Boserup, 1970). Yet women receive less than 10 percent of the world's salaries and own less than 1 percent of the world's real estate (Brydon, 1989). In fact, only 14 percent of elected members of parliament (both upper and lower houses) in the world are women (Halley, 1996).

The apparent invisibility of women in politics is a worldwide phenomenon (Gugin, 1986). Poor representation and low level participation is not a recent trend in Kenya: women make up to about 52 percent of the population and they are always the majority voters with a turn out exceeding 55 percent in polling stations countrywide (Angelique, 1993). In spite of these statistics women participation has been minimal at the public policy and decision-making levels. For instance, during the drafting of Kenya's independence constitution at the Lancaster conference, out of the 70 Kenyan legislative council members who were appointed to participate, only one, Ingasiano Abwao, was a woman. She was a nominated member of the Legislative Council (LEGCO). Even then, her role was not clearly established and documented. The first post-independence parliament had no woman elected representative (Ndegwa, 1996).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Women's engagement in political participation and representation is a global concern because in virtually all societies political participation and representation is male dominated. Kamau (2010) posited that equal political participation of both genders is one of the critical pillars of good governance which entails freedom of expression, freedom of association among other fundamental rights. Nyakwaka (2012) also noted that Kenyan women constitute a vital national resource whose ideas, creativity and concerns for social cohesion can help bring about positive change in all spheres of the society. However, despite the fact that women play an important role in the society, women in Kenya have been marginalized and underrepresented in organs of decision-making and in governance structures of the country since independence. Kenya's Constitution (2010) offers a framework to address this historical marginalization. Even though a

number of women have made great strides in politics in the country, women representation is far below the minimum one third public service requirement of Article 27(3) of the Constitution of Kenya (2010). The marginalization can be attributed to traditional beliefs, perceptions and stereotypes which depict women as being inferior (Kivoi, 2014). In addition, despite subscribing to international commitments to empower women, Kenya still lags behind in terms of women representation in politics and decision making in East African region (Kamau, 2010). Hence, the study sought to assess how gender relations, power and control over political platforms impact on women access to political leadership.

### **Research Objective**

The purpose of this research was to access and analyze the women and the political mosaic of women participation and representation in post independence Kenya.

### **Specific Objectives of the Study**

- To establish the patterns of women participation in political leadership in post independence Kenya parliament.
- To establish the trends of women participation in political leadership in post independence Kenya parliament.
- To examine the effectiveness of Constitution of Kenya 2010 in supporting women's participation and representation in the political process since independence.
- To determine the perceived benefits and challenges of women participation and representation in political leadership since independence in Kenya.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

This study was guided by gender equality theory and social exchange theory.

### **Conflict Theory**

According to conflict theory, society is defined by a struggle for dominance among social groups that compete for scarce resources. In the context of gender, conflict theory argues that gender is best understood as men attempting to maintain power and privilege to the detriment of women. Therefore, men can be seen as the dominant group and women as the subordinate group. According to conflict theory, social problems are created when dominant groups exploit or oppress subordinate groups (Ritzer & Goodman, 2004).

In most cultures, men have historically held most of the world's resources. Until relatively recently, women in Western cultures could not vote or hold property, making them entirely dependent on men. Men, like any other group with a power or wealth advantage, fought to maintain their control over resources (in this case, political and economic power). Conflict between the two groups caused things like the Women's Suffrage Movement and was responsible for social change (Ritzer & Goodman, 2004).

Friedrich Engels, a German sociologist, studied family structure and gender roles from a Marxist perspective. Engels suggested that the same owner-worker relationship seen in the labor force could also be seen in the household, with women assuming the role of the workers. This was due



to women's dependence on men for the attainment of wages. Contemporary conflict theorists suggest that when women become wage earners, they gain power in the family structure and create more democratic arrangements in the home, although they may still carry the majority of the domestic burden (Ritzer & Goodman, 2004). This theory was relevant to our study since it focuses/advocates for gender equality which ensures women representation.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory was introduced in 1958 by the sociologist George Homans with the publication of his work "Social Behavior as Exchange" (Karen & Erick, 1958). He defined social exchange as the exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons (Homans, 1961). The theory emphasized the individual behavior of actors in interaction with one another.

Social exchange theory views exchange as a social behavior that may result in both economic and social outcomes (Lambe, Wittmann & Spekman, 2001). Social Exchange Theory has been generally analyzed by comparing human interactions with the marketplace. The study of the theory from the microeconomics perspective is attributed to Blau (Karen & Erick, 1958). Under his perspective every individual is trying to maximize his wins. Burns (1973) stated that once this concept is understood, it is possible to observe social exchanges everywhere, not only in market relations, but also in other social relations like friendship. Social exchange process brings satisfaction when people receive fair returns for their expenditures. Unlike economic exchange, the elements of social exchange are quite varied and cannot be reduced to a single quantitative exchange rate. According to Stafford (2008), social exchanges involve a connection with another person; involve trust and not legal obligations; are more flexible; and rarely involve explicit bargaining.

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

This study used a mixed research design which was qualitative in nature. The study population comprised of all the women who have been involved in politics in post independence Kenya parliament and county assembly. The study used a non-probability sampling technique whereby the study used purposively sampling to select 14 key informant interviewees guided by the geographical representation and the political periods. Similarly, the study purposively sampled 32 participants for focus group discussion. Participants for the FGD were drawn from two counties namely Nairobi to represent the urban region and Nyandarua to represent the rural region. The study used secondary data which was quantitative in nature and primary which was qualitative in nature. To collect secondary data the study used a check list. To collect primary data the study used a focus discussion group and a key informant interview guide. Specifically, the study held 4 focus discussion groups, 2 in Nairobi County and 2 in Nyandarua County. Each FGD comprised of 8 women who have been involved in politics. Further, the study conducted 7 interviews in each county.

### **RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

The discussion in this section is based on the results from two phases of the study. The results are presented in both qualitative and quantitative sources. The first phase of data collection

focused on secondary data obtained from the Kenya Gender Audit (2013) / parliamentary records and other literature sources using a checklist (See Appendix 1). Phase two mainly involved collection of primary data which was qualitative in nature from sources such as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The FGDs and KIIs were conducted in two different counties (Nairobi and Nyandarua) to enable equitable representation of the rural and the urban areas.

### Patterns of Women Participation on Political Leadership

Results show that participation is even lower for regions where marginalized communities live. As shown in the map central and western regions have a better participation compared to northeastern, eastern and coastal regions. It is apparent that Nyanza (Western Kenya) have dominated the election of women into parliament as shown in Figures 1, 2 and 3.

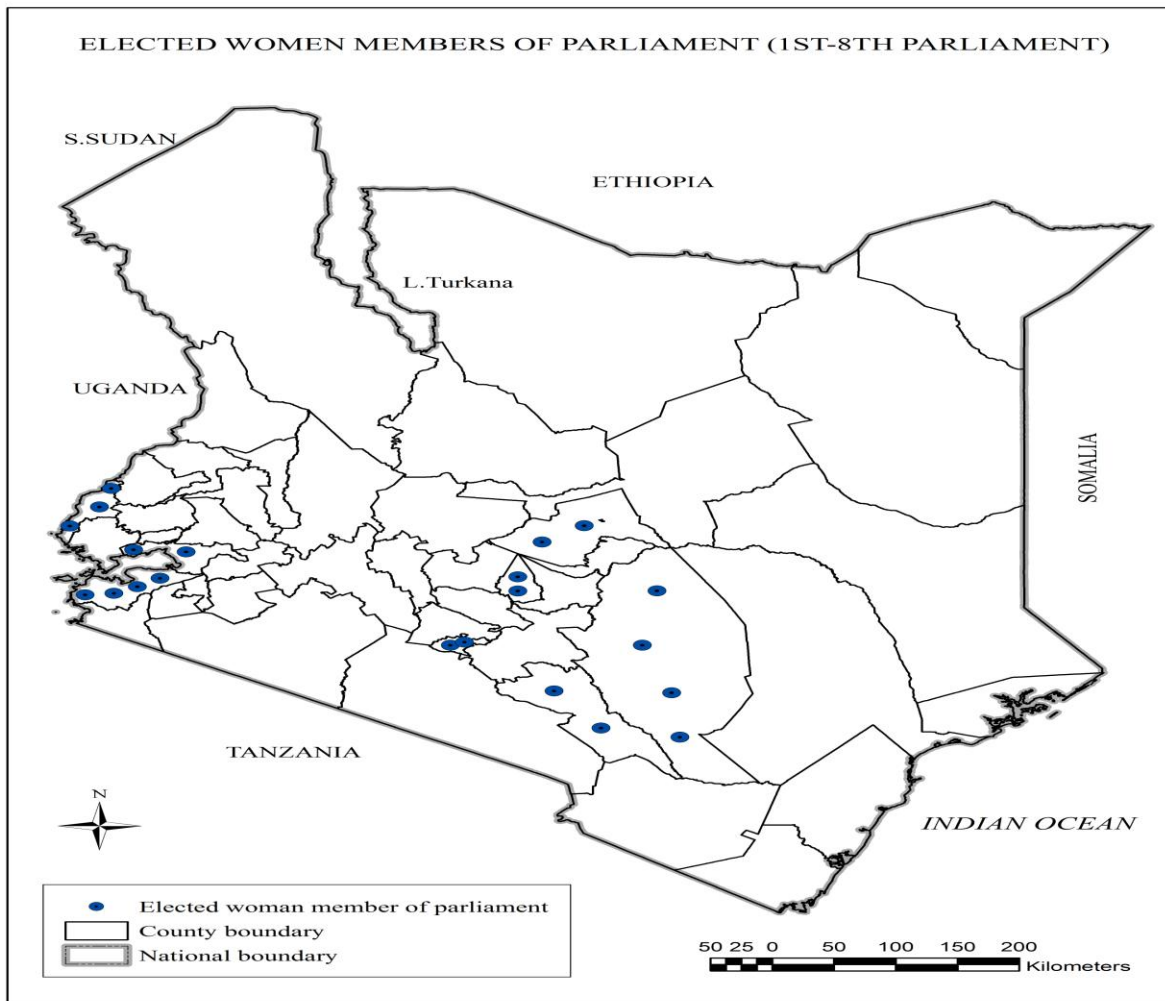
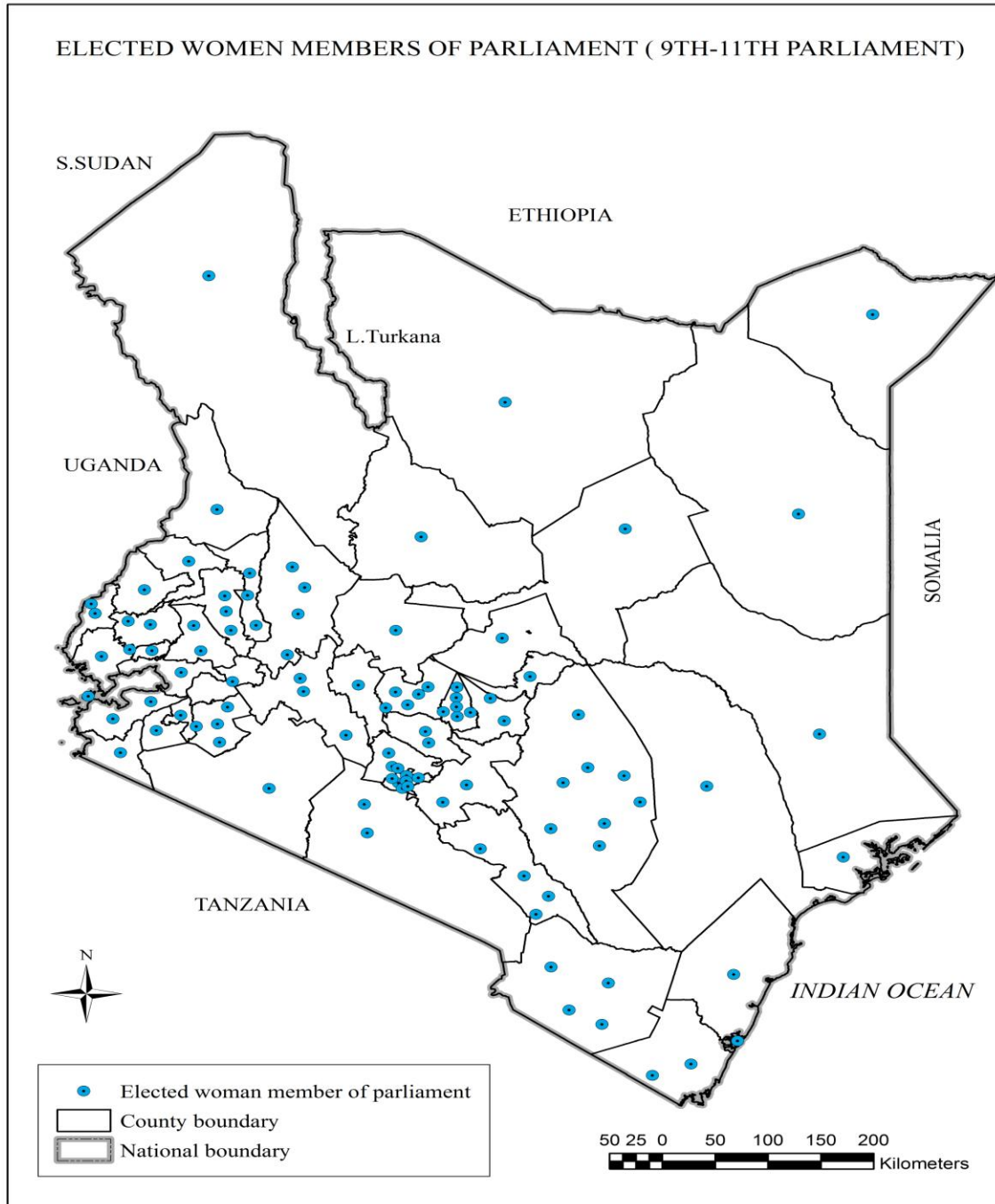
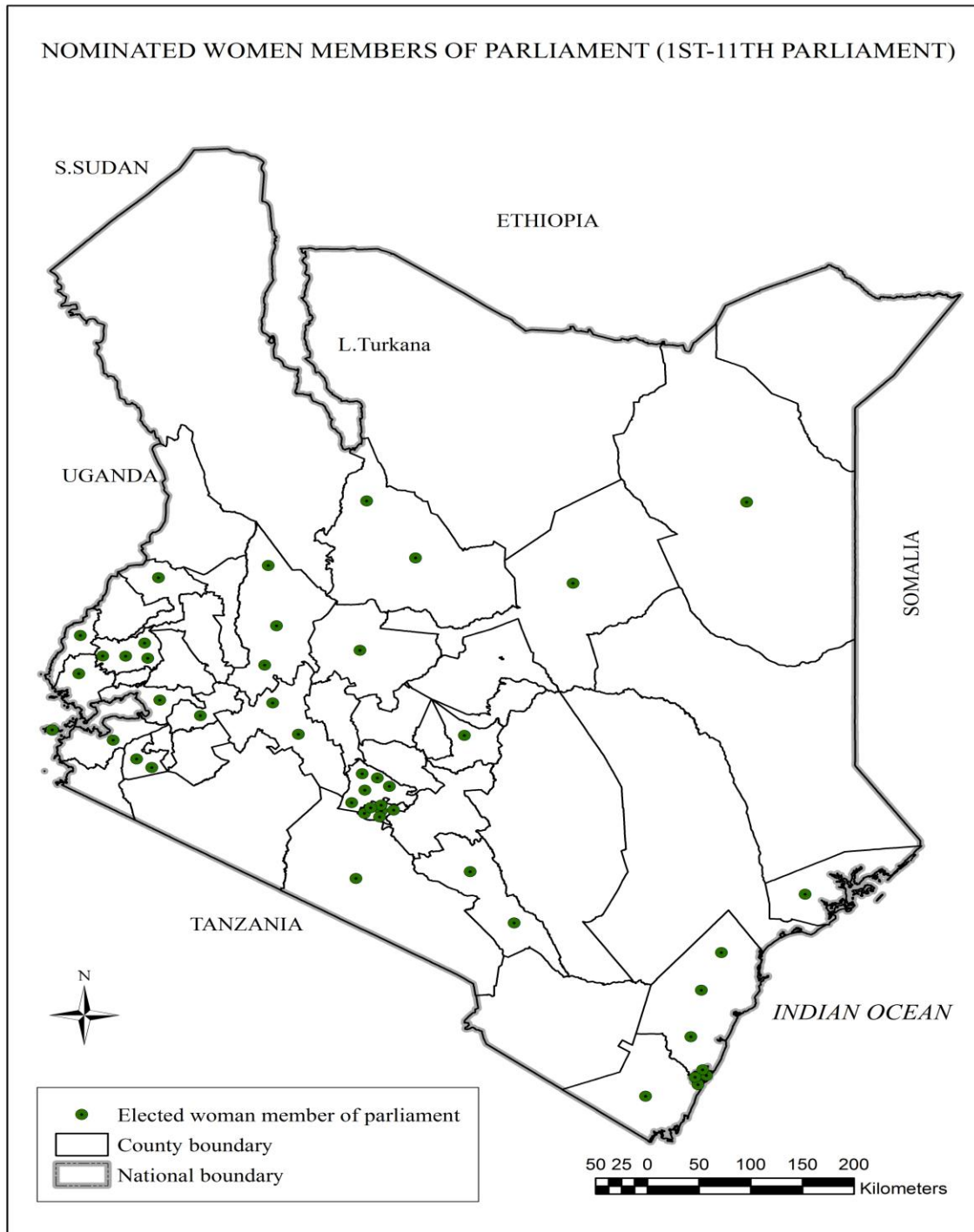


Figure 1: Elected Women Members of Parliament (1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Parliament)



**Figure 2: Elected Women Members of Parliament (9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament)**





**Figure 3: Nominated Women Members of Parliament (1<sup>st</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament)**

### Trends of Women Representation in Post Independence Kenya

Since Kenya's independence, some 53 years ago, women's representation in the area of parliamentary electoral politics has registered marginal but gradual increase in the number of women involved in politics. The study sought to assess the trends of women representation in post independence Kenya. Results in Table 1 and 2 show that in the first election (held in the year 1963) in Kenya no woman was elected while in the second election only 2 women were in parliament one being an MP while the other one was a nominated MP. In the third election 5 women were in parliament, 4 having been elected as MPs while one was a nominated MP. In the fourth election 6 women were in parliament whereby 5 were elected as MPs and 1 was a nominated MP. In the fifth election 5 women were in parliament whereby 3 were elected as MPs and 2 were nominated MPs. In the sixth election 2 women were in parliament having been elected as MPs. In the seventh election 6 women were in parliament having been elected as MPs. In the eighth election 9 women were in parliament whereby 4 were elected as MPs and 5 were nominated MPs. In the ninth election 17 women were in parliament whereby 9 were elected as MPs and 8 were nominated MPs. In the tenth election 22 women were in parliament whereby 16 were elected as MPs and 6 were nominated MPs. Finally, in the eleventh election 86 women were in parliament whereby 16 were elected as members of the national assembly, 47 as women county representatives, 5 were nominated members in the national assembly, 16 were nominated members in the senate, 1 was nominated as a youth representative and 1 was nominated to represent the people with disability.

**Table 1: Trends of Women in Parliament from 1963 to date**

Election	Women in Parliament	Constituency	Women Representative
1963	0	-	-
1969	2	1	-
1974	5	4	-
1979	6	5	-
1983	3	2	-
1988	2	2	-
1992	6	6	-
1997	9	4	-
2002	17	9	-
2007	22	16	-
2013	86	16	47

*Source: Kenya Gender Audit, 2013*

**Table 2: Trends of Women Elected and Nominated from 1963 to date**

Election	Women Elected	Women Nominated
1963	-	-
1969	1	1
1974	4	1
1979	5	1
1983	2	1
1988	2	-

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1992	6	-
1997	4	5
2002	9	8
2007	16	6
2013	16	23

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*Source: Kenya Gender Audit, 2013*

### **Participation in Politics**

The study sought to find out how long the interviewees had been involved in politics. The responses revealed that all the interviewees had been involved in politics in the past, one out of every nine interviewees are involved in politics currently and eight out of every nine interviewees are planning to get involved in politics in future whereby they have intentions to vie for various political seats such as national assembly members, women county representative and MCAs.

### **Effectiveness of Constitution of Kenya 2010**

The study sought to examine the effectiveness of constitution of Kenya 2010 in supporting women participation and representation in political process. To achieve this objective the study examined various aspects of the constitution of Kenya 2010 that address women participation and representation. This included the understanding of the 2/3 gender principle, effectiveness of the 2/3 gender principle, new constitution and status of women and the perspective of men with regard to the 2/3 gender principle.

The various women groups involved in the FGD had varied perspectives of what the 2/3 gender principle means. The focus group results revealed that the 2/3 gender principle facilitates entry of women into politics. Secondly, the understanding of the 2/3 gender principle is that ladies should occupy 1/3 of the government offices while others posited that their understanding of the 1/3 gender rule is that 1/3 of all the members holding government offices should be women. Further, the fourth group reiterated that their understanding of the 1/3 gender rule is that not more than 1/3 of one gender should be elected to the government offices. They also explained that the Kenyan Constitution of 2010 has equal chances for both men and women to be elected in the government offices.

The key informant interviewees also gave their views. The results revealed that all the key informant interviewees indicated that in the national government 1/3 women should be elected. One of the key informant interviewee noted that her understanding of the of the 1/3 gender rule is that in the County government 1/3 women should be elected while others noted that their understanding of the 1/3 gender rule is that in all positions there should be 1/3 jobs, elective, procurement contracts, school boards in any institution allocated to women.

In establishing the effectiveness of the 2/3 gender principle the researcher discussed with the FGD members about their understanding of the effectiveness of the 1/3 gender rule. The focus group results revealed that 2/3 gender principle is not that effective in Kenya although we have specific seats for women in parliament. This is because men in parliament are more than 2/3 and women are less that 1/3. Results also posited that the 1/3 gender rule is not fully effective because in Kenya people have not yet accepted that women can lead as men do. Further, the

respondents reiterated that the 2/3 gender principle in Kenya is still in the process of being implemented since in the last general elections there were specific seats allocated for women only. Finally, the results indicated that the 2/3 gender principle is not effective in Kenya since in the current government men are more than women. The results revealed that all the focus group members were in agreement that the 2/3 gender principle is not effective.

Results revealed that all the key informant interviewees were in agreement that the 1/3 gender rule is not effective in Kenya. In their explanation they gave various reasons for its ineffectiveness. These included: - parliament was unable to pass the 1/3 gender rule because of few numbers, men are very opposed to the 2/3 gender principle as they fear women may rule over them, elected women are not given funds to initiate development projects, women who are nominated cannot be head of committees, not many women vie for electoral positions, nominations are on nepotism such that most of those nominated are girlfriends and concubines, women in government are not 1/3 of the total numbers and opposition in its implementation.

The study also sought to establish how the enactment of the new constitution of Kenya 2010 has assisted to raise the status of women political participation and representation in post-independence Kenya. The focus group results revealed that all the groups were positive that the enactment of the new constitution of Kenya 2010 has assisted to raise the status of women political participation and representation in post-independence Kenya. The results revealed that women are now able to present their problems in government with immediate effect and action is taken. Also, women in politics have encouraged people to start money generating projects and thus women are able to share their own ideas and also generate income. Further, the results showed that women are now able to influence decisions in the parliament according to the challenges they have knowledge about. Finally, the results showed that women are now able to hold seats of the same status, pay and quality as men.

Results from key informant interviewees revealed that the new constitution of Kenya 2010 has assisted to raise the status of women political participation and representation in post-independence Kenya. They gave various reasons to back up their agreement. These included: a number of women came up to vie for posts in the 2013 elections; it has encouraged women because they feel supported by the constitution; the new constitution has created post for women only hence creating income and also employment in their offices. This raises the status of women in politics; women are given their own specific seats to vie for compared to the past; women are free to participate in politics without fear; women now feel recognized and appreciated. Women are now able to implement huge projects; women have been encouraged by government and therefore raising their living standards; and women have been empowered to educate their children through the funds donated or raised by programmes initiated by women.

The study sought to establish whether men have embraced the 2/3 gender principle of the Constitution of Kenya 2010. The responses from the focus groups disagreed that men have embraced the 2/3 gender principle of the constitution of Kenya 2010. The participants posited that men have not yet put in mind that women can engage in politics. Other participants reiterated that men have not embraced the 2/3 gender principle of the Constitution 2010 as they despise women in politics. For example, men say that women are best fit for home jobs than government jobs. Further, the participants asserted that men have not embraced the 2/3 gender

principle since they still underrate women in parliament while other participants reiterated that most men underrate the women in power and they believe that they cannot be led by women.

Results from key informant interviewees revealed that men have not embraced the 2/3 gender principle of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 while other responses showed that men have embraced the 2/3 gender principle of the constitution of Kenya 2010. Those who disagreed supported their answer by stating that taking long to pass the bill in parliament, men have not yet accepted that women can be leaders, men believe that women are not supposed to be in parliament, men still hold the belief that they are the heads of everything and men believe that women are not fit to lead in public. Those who were in agreement argued not all men feel threatened by empowerment of women.

### **Benefits of Women Participation and Representation**

The study sought to establish whether there are benefits that can be attributed to women political participation and representation in post-independence Kenya. The focus group results revealed that there are benefits that can be attributed to women political participation and representation in post-independence Kenya. Results revealed that the benefits included: education promotion through provision of bursaries, scholarships and organizing of harambees, girl child empowerment, disclosing of problems facing the community, and writing proposals to the government about the demanding projects. Other benefits included: women are able to generate income through government support; women are able to make public decisions which benefit them and their children; and women in politics are able to promote women rights. Further, the participants stated various benefits which included: promotes children's rights like right to education and safety, promote community development projects like Chama's and NGO's; and encourage the eradication of female genital mutilation FGM. Other participants noted the benefits which included: women in politics are able to address the challenges facing women, children and disadvantaged groups; increased number of women in politics; and formation of many NGO's through linking local campaigns and global actions.

Additionally, the participants indicated other benefits that can accrue from better women's political participation and representation in post independence Kenya. These benefits included; giving out great ideas, building of the community through self help groups and reinforcement of girl child empowerment and education.

Results from key informant interviewees revealed there are benefits that can be attributed to women political participation and representation in post-independence Kenya.

The focus group results revealed that 8 women pointed out the benefit of initiation of development projects, 9 women mentioned creation of employment/ source of income as one of the benefit while 4 women cited attainment of donor agents as one of the benefits. Other benefits included; good presentation of problems facing community to the government as supported by 6 women, great decision making in the government by 4 women, improved living standards of families as supported by 6 women, good leadership as women are more courteous than men as supported by 3 women, women empowerment to get involved in politics as supported by 1 women, enhanced education to needy children as supported by 1 woman, appreciation and recognition of women as supported by 5 women, girl child empowerment as supported by 4 women and ending of bad practices like female genital mutilation as supported by 1 woman.



Results from key informant interviewees revealed that majority of the participants indicated that there aren't other benefits that can accrue from better women's political participation and representation in post independence Kenya. However, a few informants agreed that there are other benefits that can accrue from better women's political participation and representation in post independence Kenya. These benefits were that women issues may be addressed, women can benefit from their day to day chores such as harvesting things like tea and coffee and dairy farming without having men deny them the right to get the money, women can sensitize others on the importance of electing a woman e.g land inheritance and equal property rights and that this can empower other women e.g through fund sourcing loans and have joint activities for income generation and socialization.

### **Challenges of Women Participation and Representation**

The study also sought to determine the perceived challenges of women participation and representation in post independence Kenya. The focus group results revealed that there are challenges attributed to women participation and representation in post independence Kenya. Some responses indicated that women experienced challenges such as bias during debates in the parliament, women are viewed as minor, men in politics don't believe in ideas given by women and some men don't allow women to give out ideas during parliament sittings. Other responses pointed out the challenges faced by women to include; discrimination by public during campaigns and other women in office, challenge of balancing of family and political life, discrimination in political parties where men are given first priority and opposition from their fellow women during campaigns. Further, the responses posited that women experienced challenges such as a belief that politics are for men and thus when women engage in politics, some people view it as a weird behavior, and abuse from fellow women who hate their fellow women naturally. Finally, the responses cited challenges such as violence and intimidation by men and the community at large, lack of information about politics and lack of community and family support.

Results from key informant interviewees revealed that there are challenges attributed to women participation and representation in post independence Kenya.

One interviewee indicated that only women from loyal (renowned) families are nominated, another interviewee indicated that loyalty makes them not fit because somehow to be a politician you have to be crooked while 8 interviewees posited that they experienced the challenges of financial incapability. Further, 2 interviewees reiterated that they faced the challenge of sexual harassment, 9 interviewees asserted that they experienced discrimination by the community and the male politicians while 5 interviewees argued that they faced the challenge of lack of support from the fellow women. Other challenges included: lack of support from spouse family and community as supported by 3 interviewees; lack of required education as supported by 8 interviewees; accusation and abuse by men as supported by 8 interviewees; failure of government to implement women empowerment project as supported by 1 interviewee; wrong perception that women should not engage in politics as supported by 1 interviewee; cultures denying women participation in politics as supported by 2 interviewee; women stigmatization as supported by 1 interviewee; and underrating of decisions made by women or ideas as supported by 2 interviewees.

On establishing that there are challenges attributed to women participation and representation in post independence Kenya, the researcher was implored to determine whether the challenges are related to some cultural, economic, educational, political or relation beliefs that discriminate or promote women's political participation and representation. The focus group results revealed that challenges are related to some cultural, economic, educational, political or relation beliefs that discriminate or promote women's political participation and representation. Some responses indicated that it is a cultural belief that women should be necks but not the heads and that nowadays, women are more educated than men due to the motivation. Other responses indicated that it is a culture that men are still viewed as superior than women despite the having the same level of education and leadership skills and again women belief that another woman can't lead people well and this is a culture which has been taking back the women empowerment program. Further, the responses indicated that men don't belief in being ruled by women while other responses indicated that it is a cultural belief that women can't have more power in the world than men.

Results from key informant interviewees revealed that majority of the interviewees agreed that the challenges are related to some cultural, economic, educational, political or relation beliefs that discriminate or promote women's political participation and representation while a few interviewees disagreed. Those who were in agreement supported their response with various reasons. These included; culturally men are born leaders and women cannot lead, they are related to cultural economic beliefs, clergy in the Catholic discourage women from electing women leaders and discrimination by community is cultural because some communities believe that woman are not supposed to engage in politics and its viewed as a kind of rudeness.

### **Suggestions for Enhancing Women Participation and Representation**

The existence of challenges implored the researcher to establish what can enhance women's political participation and representation in post independence Kenya. The focus group results revealed that women political participation and representation in post independence Kenya can be enhanced through; encouraging women to engage in politics, educating them on the best strategies of politics, government to effect fully on the 1/3 gender rule and programs to encourage women participation in politics. Some responses indicated that women political participation and representation in post independence Kenya can be enhanced through; educating the public that anyone can lead the nation, teaching men that women have power to lead with all due respect observed and by mentoring young girls to be courageous in life. Other responses indicated that women political participation and representation in post independence Kenya can be enhanced through; women empowerment to engage in politics, give women support both from the government and the community, and holding campaigns to stop intimidation of women in politics. Further, the responses indicated that women political participation and representation in post independence Kenya can be enhanced through; having a program to empower women to engage in politics, educating people the importance of women in politics and the benefits involved and empowering girl child education.

Results from key informant interviewees revealed that 2 interviewees considered funding women for civic education in relation to importance of electing women for campaigns as a remedy to enhancing women political participation and representation in post independence Kenya. One interviewee argued that the church to preaching in support of women political participation and

representation as a remedy to enhancing women political participation and representation in post independence Kenya while another 1 interviewee pointed out giving quotas to Chama's by political parties e.g ensuring that 1/3 of their candidates are women during nominations as a remedy to enhancing women political participation and representation in post independence Kenya. Other remedies cited by the KIIs included: elimination of discrimination in all stages as supported by 12 interviewees; financial support from government, sponsors and family should be provided to women in politics as supported by 8 interviewees; women empowerment programs for women to participate in politics as supported by 4 interviewees; mobilize for support from spouse, family and community as supported by 4 interviewees; passing of the 1/3 gender rule in parliament as supported by 2 interviewees; heavy fines and penalties to men who abuse and accuse women in politics; government to sponsor women to get the desired education as supported by 3 interviewees; discourage down rating of women decisions and stigmatization of women as supported by 3 interviewees; abandon cultures that deny women participation in politics as supported by 2 interviewees; and encourage support by fellow women as supported by 2 interviewees.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that women participation in political leadership in post independence Kenya is very low compared to the demographic reality. The study concluded that there has been a gradual increase in the level of women representation in parliament. The study also concluded that women do not have a full understanding of the constitution since their responses were not in tandem with what the Constitution of Kenya 2010 states. It was evident that the new constitution has benefited women by improving their status even though they are faced with a myriad of challenges.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study suggested various remedies for enhancing women participation and representation in post independence Kenya. These included; Encouraging women to engage in politics which can be achieved through consistent political participation and engagement in leadership activities and training to overcome women's low political socialization, Educating women on the best strategies of politics. This can be achieved through frequent attendance at social and political gatherings where political information is likely to be shared, as well as engaging in a wide reading of any available political literature and media articles, with a view to beefing up one's bank of political information, government to effect the 2/3 gender principle fully and develop programs to encourage women participation in politics and educating people on the importance of engaging women in politics and the benefits accruing from women empowerment.

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