CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN IN THE PARTICIPATION OF POLITICS IN NAIROBI AND KAJIADO COUNTIES

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to discuss the challenges women face in political participation with a specific reference to Nairobi City and Kajiado Counties in Kenya. The study established that politics was an expensive affair and that for one to succeed, the aspirants must have financial resources. Huge nomination fees demanded by political parties hindered women participation in politics. Financiers of politicians in Nairobi and Kajiado County preferred male political aspirants compared to female ones based on the societal value assumption that political activities were masculine and male candidates were believed to stand better chance of winning elections. Lack of educational opportunities for women was one of the biggest hindrances in political participation. The analysis of the responses from Kajiado County revealed that low education levels had deterred women from full political participation. Underrepresentation of women in political seats or decision-making at the political party level meant that the policies formulated were not geared towards the political welfare of the women, developments in the role of women and the supportive Constitutional provisions had translated to a discernible increase in the number of women in boards in Kenya, community's perception of the female was largely negative and as such, women were regarded as mothers to an extent that this darkened their political participation and that subordination of women at the family level was more pronounced in the County of Kajiado, as the structure of these families was patriarchal meaning that they were male dominated. Societal norms were one of the biggest hindrances to women participation in politics. Marriage boosted the chances of men to win an election compared to the single marital status while it had a strong negative effect on the women. Lack of transparency during the nomination process translated to low levels of women participation in primaries. Lack of the management framework to support free, fair and credible primaries pushed women to join smaller parties, which were not known reducing their chances of emerging winners. Majority of the women did not have time to concentrate on a political career. The study recommended that political parties be pressured by women's groups, party members, and representatives to include gender equality policies into their political programmed.

Key Words: Challenges, women, participation, Nairobi County, Kajiado County

INTRODUCTION

Despite the remarkable progress of women in many professions, politics is not one of them. Indeed, around the world, women have been conspicuous by their absence indecision and policy making in government. This chapter outlines the background to the study, statement of the problem and objectives of the study. It is also in this chapter where the study is justified, and the scope of the study discussed. Feldman et al. (2015) argued that political participation involves both formal and informal channels. Broadly, it involves knowledge of the political system and the means of accessing it, the right to vote, involvement in local campaigns and governing structures, representation in national and local government, and the freedom to represent interests as a lobbying and voting bloc.

Assessing women's participation must also consider informal political activity, particularly at the community level (UNICEF, 2006), where women may be especially involved in social networks, women's organizations, and civil society, particularly where formal channels are less open to women. Such political participation may resemble political expression, including rights women possess, formally and informally, to express dissatisfaction within their political and social culture and to engage in all levels of the political process. Political participation may occur at the individual, household, and community, national, and international levels. Individual and household participation includes knowledge of the political system; domestic and spousal support for political engagement; participation in household economic, reproductive, and health-related decision-making; personal motivation for engagement in community-level organizations and civil society, and the desire to vote. Community involvement includes participation in village meetings and local campaigns, advocacy efforts for specific issues or legislation, and actual representation and

leadership in local government (Feldman et al., 2015).

As argued by Afolabi et al. (2003), women constitute over half of the world's population and contribute in vital ways to societal development generally. In most societies, women assume five key roles: mother, producer, home-manager, community organizer and socio-cultural and political activists. Of these roles mentioned, the last has been engendered by women movements, attributed to historical gender discrimination and inequality. Hitherto the emergence of these movements, gender roles, was divided between the male and female sexes. These roles can be broadly classified into- the productive and the reproductive gender roles. Afolabi et al. (2003) continued to argue that whereas the productive gender roles were mainly associated with the male sex, reproductive gender roles were exclusive to their female counterparts. This societal reality was deeply rooted in the cultural beliefs and values of societies in the world. Afolabi et al. (2003) observed "from those societies we might want to call most egalitarian to those which sexual stratification is most marked, men are the locus of cultural value. Some area of activity is always seen as exclusively or predominantly male and therefore overwhelmingly and morally important"

One may ask why is there few women entering the political sphere and why is there variation across the countries in the world? The common explanation is that culture, religion and patriarchal structures limit women participation into political leadership. Countries such as Sweden, Argentina, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda have made remarkable progress in the political representation (Paxton, 1997). Unfortunately this is not the case for many countries where the pace has been very slow and some population, religions, government remain openly hostile to the notion of women in political leadership.

Women in India constitute nearly half the population of the country, but they are poorly represented in the various governance and decision making bodies. The position depicted through the 14 general elections so far reflects a low representation of women in Parliament, State legislatures, in political parties and other decision-making bodies. Women have occupied less than 8% of Parliamentary seats, less than 6% Cabinet positions, less than 4% of seats in High Courts and the Supreme Court. Less than 3% of the administrators and managers are women. The average percentage of women's representation in the Parliament, Assemblies and Council of Ministers taken together has been around 10% (UNIFEM, 2000). Women in India raised the issue of representation in politics first in 1917. At that time it was basically a demand for universal adult franchise and political participation. By 1930 women had gained the Right to vote, which initially benefited women from elite families.

Agbalajobi (2010) while conducting a study on women's participation and the political process in Nigeria observed that women had for long suffered various forms of gender discrimination, inequality and exclusion, especially in the area of politics'. The movement for alleviation/eradication of gender discrimination is also a multiple consequence of this system of beliefs and cultural values and norms. Agbalajobi (2010) further argued that these societal beliefs, as well as ethnic and most times religious doctrines and norms, have turned into self-fulfilling prophecies. Sex role socialization assigns distinct and often unequal work and political positions to biological sexes turning them into socially distinct gender -economists see this as the sexual division of labour. This concept is central to the Nigerian political system where sexes are assigned to different complementary tasks, now inherent in the labour market and the political scene.

Turning to evidence from Western countries, leading explanations for the gender gap in participation focus on structural differences in individual resource endowments, often viewing female employment as the crucial factor Iversen and Rosenbluth, (2008) and Ross (2008). On cultural differences, often religion is the main focus (Norris, 2009). However, while in Western countries the traditional gender gap in political participation is in the process of closing (Norris, 2002), the sparse evidence available for developing countries indicates that there are still important gender differences in mass political participation. A number of recent studies exploring the patterns of political participation in Africa note that women tend to vote and participate politically in between elections to a lesser extent than men as argued by Bratton, Chu, and Lagos (2010); Isaksson, (2010); Kuenzi and Lambright (2010), yet there is little knowledge about extent to which the commonly suggested explanations mentioned above are applicable to the Kenyan context with specific reference to Nairobi and Kajiado counties. Isaksson (2010) argued that political participation tends to be unequally distributed across citizens. Thinking of political participation as citizen acts to influence the selection of and/or the actions taken by political representatives, participatory inequalities may affect what policy issues are brought to the agenda (Griffin & Newman, 2005), potentially reinforcing existing economic and social inequalities. Hence, broad-based political participation is important due to its intrinsic democratic value as well as from an inequality perspective.

The government of Rwanda has demonstrated political commitment at the highest level of leadership in pursuit of its goal of promoting gender equality in democratic governance and political decision -making. This commitment by the RPA government, which came to power in the elections following the 1994 genocide, is to transform Rwanda into a peaceful and prosperous country where the rule of law and human rights are respected. Rwanda's new constitution, adopted in

May 2003, reference CEDAW and commits to representation of women at least 30% (Jodi Enda, 2003). This quota has been met and surpassed, as women now hold nearly 49% of parliamentary seats, a greater proportion than in any other parliament worldwide. This could at least partially be attributed to the fact that women in government are now perceived by Rwandans as more approachable and trustworthy politicians than their male counterparts. They are also perceived as being better at forgiveness, reconciliation and post-conflict peace building (Jodi Enda, 2003).

In 1995, Uganda took a bold step to protect and enforce the rights of groups of people who had been marginalized in previous government systems. It put affirmative action for women, youth, and people with disabilities, within the Local Government Act of 1997, and subsequent bills and laws, has rapidly changed the decision-making environment, opening up opportunities for women in particular to enter into political leadership (UWONET, 1998). For example Uganda was one of the African countries to have a woman vice president. There are also ministers and other women heading departments in the system. The government has initiated policies that encourage women to actively enter and participate in politics; it has established institutions that directly affect the political life of women and also allows them to access those structures where political power is concentrated. Positions are reserved for women in the councils and at the national level, while other women compete with men and win on their own merit (Uganda government printer, 1993). But however Uganda just like many other countries, women are faced by many challenges such as limited command of language, cultural factors that insert fear in them, illiteracy, men's fears over power gender relations and women's domestic and reproductive activities that limit their mobility and take most of their time leaving very limited time in the public sphere (Mwaka, 1996).

In Kenya women, who form a majority of the population (52%), play an active and significant part in the development of the country. Kenya is a patriarchal society and the status of women is relatively low with gender inequality/inequity prevailing in many aspects of the Kenya society. Yet they remain marginalized and discriminated upon, a situation that is reinforced by existing laws and policies as well as prevailing social-cultural factors. In 2007, a constitutional amendment that would have created 50 special seats for women in parliament was thrown out due to lack of quorum to vote on it (Parliament Hansard, 2007). Some members of parliament have stated that creating special seats for women in parliament does not comprehensively ensure political equality between genders, arguing that women must strive to win more elective positions (Hansard 2007). But female candidates who have attempted this in Kenya face a lot of obstacles, lack of resources to campaign, inadequate information about electorate, lack of support from the political parties and even they are rejected by the community because of cultural factors that detect women to be subordinates.

Statement of the problem

In Kenya, women constitute slightly over half have the total population and form a critical portion of enhancing democratization of political system in the country. However, available data indicates that they are inadequately represented in political positions in the government. The possible explanation for this scenario could be that gender issues in electoral politics have not received due attention and redress. This gives their male counterparts a head start. Women are always relegated to the peripheries of political leadership. Burdened with guilt, women are doubly marginalized first because they are women and secondly because they are politicians. Frequently, political information is withheld from women. For instance, in the 2002 general elections many women aspirants were

locked out at the nomination stage. In their public and private lives, women have to struggle to articulate their desires and to find their own voices. For a long time, women have been seen as extensions of men: as people who cannot politically stand on their own, but have to be propped by men (Kasomo, 2012).

From statistics presented on the Kenyan 2013 general election's results, only 16 women leaders were elected as Members of Parliament (MPs) out of 290 seats accounting for 5.52% (Godia, 2013). The political parties to the national assembly have nominated another five women. The senate has no elected woman except the 16 women nominated plus another two, one youth and one disabled also joining them. All the 47 governors are men as per the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission's (IEBC) final list (Godia, 2013).

The situation is worse in Nairobi County where only 5 women were elected on 4th March 2013 during the Kenya's General election. Out of the 85 wards in Nairobi County, women were elected only in four wards women but the assembly has more than 39 female nominated representatives. The common factors that limit women participation in political leadership are culture, poverty and patriarchal structures.

In conclusion therefore, the above synopsis of the problem creates a ground for investigating women's participation in politics in Kenya with a specific reference to Nairobi and Kajiado counties. Participation of women in politics can promote women's ability to negotiate and influence policy in favour of women and possibly children's needs thus reducing poverty

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the challenges facing women in the participation of politics in Nairobi and Kajiado Counties.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Challenges Women Face in Political Participation
Sharma (2014) Observes that gender politics frames the current debate on women's role and position in Pakistani society. Women in Pakistan are in incredibly grim situation due to lack of economic opportunities, denial of access to education and health and under representation in politics and decision-making. Traditional conservative norms of female subservience are compounded by a multitude of special interest groups including Tribalists and Tahreek-eTaliban Pakistan who arguably present the giant threat to the women empowerment of Pakistani women on the grounds of deeply ingrained patriarchal mentality. However, despite the numerous efforts of women's groups like NGOs, WAF, APWA, PAWLA and more on, women status has been socially and politically remained excluded.

Ahmed and Arahial (2013) observed that the challenges facing the Jordanian Women are not isolated from any experience of other Arab an experience that lacks the maturity and stability and the weakness of the role of women in the performance of political parties and even join them and the weakness of civil society organizations and their inability to compete with men in the elections at the national level (parliament) and local (municipalities) not being able to access their full rights and this relative absence is not due to legal obstacles either constructivism obstacles and cultural. Despite reforms and political transformations that have taken place in Jordan during the past period of time is that the chances of women in politics were specific failed in the elections despite the presence of many citizens of liberal trends.

Kassa (2015) conducted a study on Challenges and Opportunities of Women Political Participation in Ethiopia. The findings of the study established that Fifty percent of the Ethiopian population comprises of women. They are actively involved in all aspects

of their society's life. However, women's share of the division of labour differs from place to place and from culture to culture, their average working day is believed to vary between 13 and 17 hours per day. Their status is low where they: (a) are generally poorer than men because they earn less; (b) are less educated; (c) are increasingly becoming heads of households, with no resources to support their dependents; (d) do not enjoy due acknowledgment for their labour contribution, particularly in agriculture, and (e) do not have decision making power. Ethiopia is a patriarchal society that keeps women at a subordinate position, using religion and culture as an excuse. These excuses have for many years, supported by laws and legislation that uphold patriarchy and women's subordination. This has brought about and maintained disparities between men and women, in division of labour, share of benefits, in law and state, in how households are organized, and how these are interrelated

Semakafu (2014) conducted a study on the challenges that women face in their endeavor to participate in the political process. The findings of the study established that inaccessibility to education, food, shelter and self-determination by women due to poverty, culture and other reasons, is a source of violation of their democratic rights to equally participate in election. In politics, women face repression because dominant image of political actors in today's world is man. Political rights and political pluralism is therefore a man's right. For that matter Democracy is brought down to mean inclusivity of men from different political parties in governance structures. Moreover, Women exclude themselves from participating in politics because of the oppressive culture, which made them to be convinced that politics and leadership is for men. Lack of resources to facilitate their participation to manage coping at family level to manage direct and indirect expenses for contesting

In Kenya, the low participation and representation of women in public and political institutions of the country like the Senate, National Assembly and County Assemblies negates the equity that is affirmed in the constitution. Kenya acceded to the gender equality platform in the context of its commitments to various United Nations (UN) resolutions, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Convention for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (CEDAW) (Nyanjom 2011). It also espoused the 1966 covenants on Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In 1985, the country was at the center of gender equality initiatives when it hosted the formulation of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, and was at forefront of continental preparations for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, a motion adopted by Parliament in 1996. However despite Kenya acceding to all these international declarations, gender mainstreaming has remained elusive. Githinji (2010) in his review of Kenya's Vision 2030 found out that persisting gender neutrality has kept women in lower paying jobs even as their share of the labor force has increased from 18% in 1966 to 30% in 2006, and a likely 55% by 2016. It should be noted that achieving gender equity as stipulated in Vision 2030 would not be easy.

Karl (2001) identifies some obstacles that hinder women's participation in political affairs worldwide. They include low education and literacy levels, low access to financial resources, cultural attitudes and stereotypes, religion and socialization, among other factors. Cooper and Karl (1982) found that women face stress while at work, home and in social environments. Women are also supposed to acquire masculine leadership characteristics and management skills like aggressiveness and

assertiveness among others so as to excel in their careers.

Scholars like Tremblay (1998); Devlin et al (2008) among others have argued that there is a strong link between increased presence of women in parliament and the representation of issues affecting women (women issues). Tremblay (1998) further argues that female members of parliament represent the needs, wishes and interests of female members of the populace in a country. According to Carroll (1994) policies concerning women are more likely to have more and wider direct impact on the population than those of men in a country. Among the issues include family planning, maternal health, education, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), violence against women.

The reason why women in Nairobi and Kajiado County were not performing well can be attributed to the challenges they face. In Kajiado County, leadership is viewed as masculine and culture has endorsed it. Arriola and Johnson (2014) blame women's dismal performance on weak financial muscle. In an attempt to narrow the gap between male and female leaders, the Constitution created a provision whose intent is to make political positions more accessible to women (Paxton & Hughes, 2016). For instance, Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, a renowned televangelist, ventured into politics in 2007 and was elected MP for Starehe on an ODM ticket. She was later appointed Assistant Minister for Housing until 2012, when she opted to vie for Nairobi gubernatorial position but was disqualified for lack of educational papers for the position. Her party then nominated her to vie for the Nairobi Senatorial position, which she lost to TNA's Mike Mbuvi. The most recent Kenyan census indicates that women comprise over 50 percent of the Kenyan population. However, the participation of women in the electoral process does not reflect this demographic reality. The reasons behind this

disparity have complex historical and cultural elements, which were never given due focus in building the nation. For instance, Kajiado County is a largely patriarchal society, which has contributed to women's subjugation in both the private and public spheres. Women have historically taken a secondary position to men, and this tradition is manifested in the practices, policies, and laws of the County of Kajiado. In the past, women have faced several challenges, and the exclusion of women from electoral and political processes is no exception. Despite the constitutional provisions outlawing discrimination on the basis of gender, women continue to suffer setbacks whenever they seek not only elective, but also appointive positions in Kenya. It is evident that, if we are to achieve equality and equity between men and women and enable women to realize their full potential, women must be fully involved in political life (Paxton & Hughes, 2016).

Besides financial constraints, women in Nairobi County failed to make noticeable influence in political participation because of the structures of political parties because create barriers that often hinder women to participate fully in party's' leadership and core management. Indeed, the nomination process conducted by political parties in Kenya confirmed that the move to increase the number of young women in political leadership still remains an uphill task unless the principle of affirmative action is respected and fully implemented. Not surprisingly, women were the greatest casualties of a mismanaged electoral process in both Nairobi and Kajiado Counties. Women suffered the blunt of violence and no wonder they performed dismally at all levels of the primaries in Nairobi County. This is a vivid confirmation of the fact that Women Representatives posts were attractive to women aspirants during the nomination phase of the 2013 elections. Hence, young women were shying away from other elective positions due to acrimonious

nature of competitive politics and lack of management framework to support free, fair and credible primaries (Rotich & Byron, 2016).

In a study conducted by Rotich and Byron (2016), it was established that participation of young women in political party activities continues to be constrained by extremely minimal financing mechanisms. The situation has been compounded with escalation of poverty, societal prejudice and stereotype against women especially in marginalized communities such as Kajiado County. The net effect is lack of finance hence low level of political participation and representation among women. As a policy imperative, it was suggested that political parties should establish a special kitty (Young Women Political Fund) within their respective financial framework towards supporting young women's activities up to adequate levels. This will motivate many potential young women into joining politics and actually participate in electoral processes.

Cultural Barriers

Many African communities' customs tend to negate the role of women in mainstream political leadership regarding them only as homemakers thus restricting them to those roles. Cultural factors are linked to stereotype beliefs about the ability and capacity of women across many communities. Also connected to cultural factors is the patriarchal ideology, which provides the context upon which women play and accept subsidiary roles. Sex stereotypes are among the most firmly entrenched obstacles to the elimination of discrimination thus largely responsible for undermining gender equity (United Nations 2000). These cultural perceptions do not encourage women at all to actively participate in politics. In most religions power and authority is believed to divinely belong to men hence subjugating women. Thus women are encouraged to play subsidiary roles since their place is in the kitchen and men are the decision makers.

In most African communities, women are not allowed to address men in public because it is considered taboo to do so. In fact most women still believe that their marital status in a home can only be cemented when they give birth to a male child. This tends to have a psychological effect and hence relegating women to subservient roles in development matters in the community.

Traditional inheritance laws in Kenya tend to favor men. Property and resources in the family are controlled and shared out by men. Women rarely inherit property from their parents. This puts women in a disadvantageous position economically. In communities still practicing retrogressive practices like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced and/or early/planned marriages, women who have not undergone this rite of passage (FGM) are regarded to be "children" and thus cannot be allowed to run for any elective position. Among pastoral communities life is structured along clan lines, which are controlled by a council of elders. These councils are the ones that select who to run for political offices. These councils of elders are often reluctant to endorse or support female candidates. This then locks out potential female candidates who may have better leadership skills and abilities. It is worth noting that over 30% of Kenyans believe that traditional leaders by virtue of them being considered the weaker sex often treat women unequally.

The electorate is thus reluctant to support them because of this retrogressive belief. In a number of Kenyan communities, single and divorced women cannot be allowed to run for political office and those who do are ridiculed and insulted in public meetings. This is so because societal norms and socialization tends to be harsh on women. Men who are divorced are never treated with contempt the

way women are. This can be traced to the patriarchal nature of most communities in this country. According to Chafetz and Dworkin (1986) women have had to contend and contest established beliefs that politics is a domain of men only. Stereotypes about women can affect women's levels of representation throughout the political process, from an individual woman's decision to enter politics, to party selection of candidates to the actual voting patterns by the electorate. Religion is another source of anachronistic cultural beliefs in many communities in the country that excludes women from mainstream leadership. Arguments about women's inferiority to men are present across all dominant religions, and traditionally religion has long been used to exclude women from aspects of social, political, or religious life around the world (Paxton and Hughes 2007).

Women also seem to be their own enemies in their own political advancement and empowerment, especially when they internalize these long held anachronistic assumptions and perceptions that politics is a dirty game thus a preserve game of men. Long held Communal stereotypes against women have tended to militate against gender equality and women empowerment. For instance, women who are politically active are labeled as "irresponsible" and therefore not fit to be "wife material" since they are "loose". For instance, men across most African communities are socialized to be aggressive, brave, autocrat, dominant and independent whereas women are labeled as emotional, sentimental and fragile. Stereotypes are most of the time negative and have been used to marginalize women in leadership and decision making organs.

Economic Barriers
Socio-economic status of women to a greater extent plays a significant role in enhancing their participation and representation in political decision-making bodies. Thus access to means of production and finances has a direct relationship and influence on the participation of women in political institutions and electoral bodies like the Senate, National assembly and County Assemblies. In most Kenyan communities women have no access to land and property rights though they are guaranteed in the constitution. This economically incapacitates them hence they cannot vie and run successful political campaigns where campaigns are highly expensive. Therefore this discrimination of access of women to means of production especially land and property rights severely contributes to this low level of their active participation in politics and governance. While highlighting many areas of women's disadvantage, Wanjala and Odongo (2010) note that women constitute a mere 23% of members of Kenyan cooperative societies, which are known to provide easier access to credit. This has in essence further marginalized women in economic empowerment.

According to Afifu (2008) poverty facing women in rural communities is their biggest hurdle in their quest to venture into elective politics. According to Census Report, (2009) there is a huge economic gap between urban and rural communities in Kenya. Kenya's rural population is 63% whereas the urban population stands at 37% (Ibid). Also majority of women live in rural areas and their access to economic resources is limited compared to their urban counterparts. This makes it difficult for them to compete on equal footing with men in national or even regional elective politics. Thus economic empowerment of women reinforced by education and access to information may guarantee women full participation in elective politics. Economic empowerment of women results into ownership of resources: Resources especially finance is critical in electoral processes for during organization of campaign meetings, publicity and payment of nomination fees to nominating political parties and

to the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC). When women are politically empowered they are in a better position to influence key policy decisions in the Executive and Legislative arm of government. The economic empowerment of women, alongwith education and access to information, will take women from the constraints of the household to full participation in politics and political elections.

Political Barriers

Jonyo (2013) argued that political parties act as agents of political socialization that entails individuals getting inducted into a society's political culture. This role has got to do with the molding of the people's attitudes towards the political system. This often has an effect of attitudinal and behavioral changes within a society culminating to an arousing of a sense of public participation. This role/function of the party would thus entail the development and institutionalization of attitudes and beliefs towards a political system. Kajirwa (2008) observed that political structures could play a significant role in women's recruitment to parliament. Among the political obstacles that women face are that Politics in Kenya has always been associated with masculinity thus "a men only affair"; men thus making dominate most political parties it difficult for women to have political networks for mobilization; most public organizations like labor unions are also dominated by men; women in Kenya have never been oriented towards politics and their training is not tailored towards political leadership representation; the electoral politics is prone to violence most of the times thus scaring away most women and that electoral related violence is also another impediment that hinders the participation of female candidates. On the other hand, La Palombara and Weiner (2015) suggested that since in most African communities women are considered a "weaker

gender", they more often than not potential targets where political thugs and hired goons target them.

Male candidates are more likely than female candidates to introduce political violence and hooliganism in their campaigns. Brazen attacks on female candidates and their families often intimidate them and make many aspiring female candidates to shun politics all together (Pridham, 2016). According to Mittulah and Owiti (2011) lack of political goodwill by their male politicians to include women in structures of political governance is to blame for limited participation in political parties. When women's needs are ignored it results in high infant and child mortality, unaccountable population growth, poor economic growth, Low agricultural yields and this directly impacts on the quality of life of citizen's women being the most affected (Abidi 192). Thus involvement of women in decision-making is a big step towards reducing poverty and reducing huge income inequalities between men and women.

The Legal and Regulatory Frameworks Barriers

Some laws may prompt indirect discrimination; for example, in Kajiado county literacy requirements may disproportionately disadvantage women. Even sound laws will make little difference unless State institutions ensure they are effectively implemented and enforced. The legal system should be set up to provide prompt and effective remedies for women whose rights have not been upheld in both Kajiado and Nairobi counties. Electoral systems are not gender-neutral; for instance, the laws put in place for the two third gender rules have not seen the right of the day. The type of system in place can have a major impact on the number of women elected to office. More women are likely to be elected in counties with proportional representation (or party-list) systems than in counties with majority (or first-past-the-post) systems. This is an essential consideration in

designing electoral systems in both Kajiado and Nairobi counties. Other aspects of election systems including types of candidate lists, district magnitude, and threshold levels significantly affect women's electoral prospects the aforementioned counties (Muna, Stanton & Mwau, 2014; Willis, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Feminist Theory

Feminism as a social theory with the main objective of emancipating of women by removal of all legal constraints on the woman's ability to act as free individuals in a society based on economic and social competition as the final step in the creation of a perfect society. The movement entails rethinking the past and future in which women are seen as active agents of change. The theory thus recognizes avenues such as organizations that enable women to take an active role in the process of change in the society. The feminists' movement is associated with the enlightenment doctrine of natural rights, which defines women's role in society. Feminism as a social movement dates back to the 16th century. The movement began as a resistance to women's oppression at their work places and denial of rights to suffrage. The theory recognizes the marginalization of women and therefore seeks to act as a shield against the marginalization. The variance in terms of participation in politics between the two genders is seen as shaped by the social environment as opposed to being natural. Indeed women organizations in Kenya emerged to enhance the socio-economic status of women and improve their political engagement. The emphasis here is therefore on the potential similarities between the sexes rather than the differences. The emphasis is thus geared towards ending the male prejudice and domination.

Feminist theory has three different strands whose main point of divergence is the source of the subordination and how to end the subordination of women. Liberal feminism follows a long history of championing for improved rights and opportunities for women; however, they neglect the existing organization of the society. Liberal feminists are concerned with concepts of justice and equality and assume that women suffer injustices because of their sex and are organized around campaigns for equality and redistribution. This strand however has a weakness in that the struggles do not seriously challenge the sources of inequalities between the sexes, and so do not recognize that relations between the sexes have specific power relations.

Radical feminists on their part are critical of the whole male dominated society. These theorists challenge the conventional assumptions by redefining the most intimate of human relations as political rather than as private. They reject the liberal notion of getting justice within the existing social order, which defines everything in male terms. Radical feminists define women as universally oppressed, as sisters in oppression, in a world owned, controlled and physically dominated by men. Radical theorists therefore view the solution to women's empowerment as entailed in abolishing all the male structures in society and excluding men in women affairs. In essence, they seek to overthrow patriarchy. This variant of feminism would advocate for organizations run by women to champion women issues only even to the total exclusion of men. It gives recognition to organizations such as LKWV, FIDA, WPA/K and MYWO. But herein lies the weakness of radical feminism. It calls for separation between the sexes and it is oriented towards Westernism.

The Marxist strand of feminism focuses on power difference between the sexes. These theorists view women subordination as a class struggle between

male and females and goes further to cluster the variance in participation to the access and ownership of wealth hence proximity to power. Marxist feminists see subordination of women through class lenses. They state that capitalism, which gives rise to economic inequality, dependence, political confusion and ultimately unhealthy social relations between men and women, is the root of women's oppression. Criticized as being too much of leftists, the Marxists view working class women as economically exploited in ways that the bourgeois women are not. To this extent, the Marxist feminists would advocate for women organizations that would eventually overturn the status quo at the national institutions such as parliament. The Kenya Women Political Caucus has as its main objective the enhancement of women access to political power.

Generally, feminist theory, irrespective of the various strands, posits that: existing relationship between male and female is structured in a manner that women are subordinated to men and this has to change; the paternal status of society that is perceived as normal and in which women have been subordinated has to be challenged; the challenge should be based on the notion that all human beings are equal and have the same potential. Feminist theory highlights the imbalanced political participation very well because it questions every aspect of power relations between men and women. Disparities in political participation are explained based on gender. It also gives suggestions on how women can improve the situation. In this respect, the theory is relevant in addressing the link between women organizations and women participation in politics.

This theory is appropriate in informing this study because it helps expound why women lag behind in political participation as opposed to their male counterparts. Secondly, it helps analyze the

existence and operation of the women's organizations in public sphere by contextualizing their activities as a function of certain historical occurrences and hence proposes corrective mechanisms. In order to understand how the marginalization is being redressed the study looks at women's organizations as a mechanism of restoring justice to rectify historical injustices that have resulted to the marginalization of women. Therefore even though the general theoretical framework of analysis will be the feminist theory, the study will have a biased leaning towards the liberal feminist strand. This is more so because in analysis the hindrance to equitable participation. By emphasizing consciousness then action, the liberal strand helps the study seek to rethink the past with a possible solution, the solution based on penetration of the society that is male dominated, a variance that is shaped by social environment rather than natural phenomenon.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The location of location of this study was Nairobi City and Kajiado Counties. This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The qualitative method was employed to compensate for the loose ends that might have been caused by open-ended questions. The target population for this study was the registered voters in the Counties of Nairobi and Kajiado. This study employed purposive sampling to select respondents from Kajiado and Nairobi Counties. Data was sourced from the leaders of both counties and this included the governors, senators, and women's representatives in the national assembly, county assembly members, committee members, community's elders and recognized opinion leaders. The study utilized a questionnaire with closed and open-ended questions. The secondary data was obtained from various documentations. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used for data analysis. A sample of 384 respondents was used for the

study. The researcher managed to collect 234 questionnaires, which were duly filled. The researcher questionnaires from the six key informants, which brought the total number, collected to 240 questionnaires. This represented a response rate of 61.5% of the sampled 390 respondents.

Findings and discussions

The researcher sought data on the challenges facing women in the participation of politics in Nairobi City and Kajiado Counties. She explored the drawbacks that women had contended with either when entering politics or upon occupying the political office. To this end, the study explored the various obstacles that hindered the participation of women in politics. These challenges were economic, cultural, and political. Against this backdrop, the study detailed the aforementioned aspects that led to poor participation in politics and in doing so, covered different themes of the three aspects with an objective of explaining the implication(s) of each challenge on the level of women participation in politics.

On economic Opportunities, the study sought to establish the association between lack of economic opportunities and its implication on the level of participation of women in politics. The analysis of the collected data revealed that politics was an expensive affair and that for one to succeed, the prospective aspirants ought to have financial resources as an approach to carrying out proper campaigns. In light of this, the study established that because women lacked solid financial backing, the said women were unable to compete with men who possessed huge financial muscle. Accordingly, majority of the respondents posited that the relatively pathetic poor financial disposition of women in the Counties of Nairobi and Kajiado was a critical challenge, which mostly accounted for their

poor participation in politics and political defeat in elections. The major political parties demand huge nomination fees, which can be out of reach for many women who are aspiring for various seats. For instance, the Jubilee Party had asked governors aspiring to run on its ticket to part with Ksh. 100,000 as nomination fee, way below the Ksh. 500,000 that the Orange Democratic Movement was demanding (Daily Nation, 8th December 2016). This is demonstrated on the tables below:

Table 1: Jubilee Party Nomination Fee Structure

Position	Nomination Fee
President	N/A
Governor	100,000
Senator	50,000
Woman Rep	30,000
Member of Parliament	30,000
MCA	20,000

Source: www.jubileepamoja.co.ke

Table 2: Orange Democratic Movement Nomination Fee Structure

Position	Nomination Fee
President	1,000,000
Governor	500,000
Senator	250,000
Woman Rep	250,000
Member of Parliament	250,000
MCA	25,000

Source: www.odm.co.ke

On level of education and women participation in politics, the researcher sought data on how the level of education or lack of it influenced the level of political participation by women. The analysis of the profiles of the respondents established that a majority of the respondents had secondary education (31.7%) followed by 29.2% who had college diploma. Further, the findings showed that 25.4% of the respondents had university education while 10.4% had primary education. It was evident that majority of the respondents did not have university education, which was a minimum qualification for aspirants going for the seat of the president, the deputy president, governors and deputy governors who were required to have degrees from universities recognized in Kenya. Moreover, under the amended law, those wishing to be nominated as members of the county assemblies must have a degree from a recognized university. In light these requirements for various elective posts, the study established that the lack of educational opportunities for women had been one of the biggest hindrances in political participation, as they were required to have degrees before they were cleared to vie. It was imperative to point out that education is a powerful predictor of political participation as it instills interest in political matters and educated women would be more adept to seek elective office.

The study established that the formal languages used in the county and national assembly was fluent English and as such, it was a requirement for aspirants to debate either in English or in Kiswahili. Accordingly, English language, which was the method of communication at the assembly level, served as an obstacle to women who possessed low level or no education to participate in the assembly election and its deliberation. Further, the analysis of the responses from Kajiado County revealed that low education levels had deterred women from full participation. Therefore, this clearly meant that most of the women did not qualify nor were they informed of issues affecting them to be able to enter and actively participate in politics or even understand and criticize issues, which affected such women entering politics. Moreover, respondents indicated that women were sometimes unable to further their education due to circumstances such as family responsibilities, which hindered women's educational and career progress. In addition, low levels of education were also cited as a key challenge, which hindered women's participation. Many of the respondents agreed that many girls in Kajiado County and a relatively smaller number from Nairobi City County dropped out of school and got married off at an early age due to economic hardships, and hence had no qualifications to compete for electoral positions.

The analysis of gathered data from the Nairobi City County in areas such as Embakasi, Dagorreti, Kilimani, Lang'ata, Kangemi, and Kasarani revealed that the urban population which was relatively well off in terms of education levels compared to the rural counterparts, acceptance of women as political participants was prevalent. Further data collected from both counties was consonant that low education levels in Nairobi and Kajiado Counties discouraged some groups in society from running for higher positions in politics. For an individual to be elected to a given position, for example, governor, one must have had attained university education, which was pretty limited among some groups who still clang to traditional practices and refused to educate their children.

About the underrepresentation of women, the study sought to establish to what extent had women's under representation in politics and decision-making affected their participation in politics. Majority of the respondents pointed out that the underrepresentation of women in political seats or decision-making meant that the policies formulated were not geared towards their political

welfare. The analysis of the present statistics indicated that the number of women elected and appointed at different levels of public decision-making had not reached the goal of 30 % representation. It is imperative to note that the most recent attempt to improve the levels of women's participation in politics and decision-making in Kenya was made in 2010. However, this had not directly translated to the realization of the two-thirds gender rule. The study established that although women remained underrepresented in the politics in both Nairobi and Kajiado Counties, there had been a distinct improvement in the number of women participating in politics since 2010, and they are increasingly active in voicing concerns relating to issues that affected them and their communities. For instance, in Nairobi County, the study established that women had made tremendous efforts in terms of participation in decision-making and this was evident as more women were being appointed to state owned enterprises. To this end, the analysis of the collected data established that the developments in the role of women and the supportive constitutional provisions had led to a discernible increase in the number of women in boards in Kenya. On top of the above, the study established that there was a tendency to recycle women who held different political offices such as those nominated, resulting in one woman being appointed to serve on multiple stages thus disadvantaging other women who had the capacity to carry out the same duties and responsibilities. Further, the analysis of the findings indicated that underrepresentation of women in political participation was a result of lack of strong networks and exposure. Women in Nairobi County lacked strong networks and exposure to existing political vacancies and visibility to placement firms, thus making it less likely for them to be identified for political positions.

On existing laws and legislation affect women participation in politics, the study sought to establish the extent to which the existing laws and legislation affected the level of women participation in politics. The study took into account that when it came to gender equality, Kenya's legislation and policies were progressive, but there was a big gap between policy and practice, with women comprising a small percentage of the national assembly, the senate and county assembly. For instance, in chapter four, the study established that out of 127 members of the Nairobi County Assembly, there are only 43 women while men consisted of the remaining percentage. Even though women consisted of one-third in Nairobi City County, their participation is way below men since many of them in the assembly are as a result of affirmative action (nominated). Therefore women remained overly marginalized in political participation. Article 81 (b) of the Republic of Kenya Constitution (2010), which referred to the general principles of Kenya's electoral system, states that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender (Republic of Kenya Constitution, 2010).

Article 27 goes further to obligate the government to develop and pass policies and laws, including affirmative action programs and policies to address the past discrimination that women had faced. To this end, the study established that the relevant government authorities had not implemented legislations as enshrined in the aforementioned legal framework. In spite of the above affirmative action measures, women participation in the 2013 general elections remained very low. There were a few women in the Counties of Nairobi and Kajiado who contested for the position of senator. However, statistics from the Independent and Electoral Boundaries Commission (IEBC) indicated that there was no woman who was elected as a governor or senator (IEBC Report, 2013). Moreover,

the study established that the major political parties in the two counties had not implemented the two thirds gender rule as their county assemblies constitutes more than two thirds of the same gender.

The majority of the respondents (75%) observed that the two-thirds gender rule had not been

implemented and this was one of the reasons why women had not realized the same level of political participation as men. Those who agreed that the rule had been implemented argued that the process was not an end in itself but a continuous process that saw full implementation required a significant amount of time.

Table 3: Implementation of the two-thirds gender rule

Response	Total	Percent
Yes	60	25
No	180	75
Total	**240**	**100**

Source: Researcher, 2016

Further to the above, the study established that the creation of the two-thirds gender rule encouraged women to vie for elective positions. Statistics from the IEBC showed that women preferred to vie for the position of the women representative, as it was a reserve of the female and this ensured that only women had the right to contest for that particular position (IEBC Report, 2013). The respondents were required to indicate whether the two-third-gender rule influenced women to vie for political positions in the last general election. According to the findings, majority of the respondents that were interviewed indicated that the two-third-gender rule influenced women to vie for political positions in the last general election. To this end, the study confirmed that the two-third-gender rule influenced women to vie for political positions in both Nairobi and Kajiado counties during the 2013 general election.

On patriarchy and women subordination affect women participation in politics, the study sought to establish the extent to which women subordination and patriarchal structures within the society influenced the level of women in politics. Majority of the respondents indicated that the society's perception of the female was largely negative and as such, women were regarded as mothers to an

extent that this darkened their political participation. Further, the study established that subordination of women at the family level was more pronounced in the County of Kajiado, as the structure of these families were patriarchal meaning that they were male.

In addition to the above, the study established that societal norms were one of the biggest hindrances to women participation in politics. The researcher interviewed women aspirants and the analysis of the responses established that women were their worst enemies. In other words, women discouraged female aspirants because the politics were considered as the reserve of the males.

The analysis of responses from the interview guide pointed out that Kajiado County was patriarchal community that kept women at a subordinate position, using religion and culture as an excuse. These excuses had for many years, been supported by laws and legislation that upheld patriarchy and women's subordination. This had brought about and maintained disparities between men and women, in division of labor, share of benefits, in law and state, in how households were organized, and how these were interrelated.

About lack of institutional political party structures, the author wanted to establish the extent to which

lack of institutional structures of the political parties had translated to poor participation of women in politics. The analysis of the responses indicated that political parties did not have institutional frameworks, which could enhance equal participation among women and men. For instance, the researcher established that women faced hurdles of being nominated to the county and national assemblies because parties did not put women high up on their candidate lists. The researcher found out that men and women were not treated equally in various political parties in Nairobi and Kajiado counties. It was also established that in the last 2013 general elections, women were not adequately considered in the manifesto pledges for political parties. The study further revealed that women were sufficiently represented in the policymaking bodies of political parties in Nairobi County compared to Kajiado County. It was also established that even though political parties promoted women's political empowerment in their campaign manifestos, these promises were never met, as this was an only campaign message. Additionally, the study revealed that political parties had not yet incorporated gender equality into their policy frameworks and procedures. It was also established that there are no party rules and regulations for identifying, selecting and nominating women candidates for leadership positions within the party.

On lack of the management framework to support free, fair and credible primaries, the study sought to establish the extent to which the lack of the management framework to support free, fair and credible primaries influenced the level of women participation in politics. Majority of the interviewed women observed that lack of transparency during the nomination process, more often than not, translated to low levels of women participation in primaries. It is imperative to point out that political parties enabled aspirants to campaign and ascribe to given models, as the said political parties

provided ideology, which the members were duty bound to follow. In that respect, once women were marginalized during the primaries, their chances of being in the ballot were limited. Further, the study established that lack of the management framework to support free, fair and credible primaries pushed women to join smaller parties, which were not known. By women joining small parties, their chances of emerging winners were extremely limited and by extension, their representation in the county and national assemblies was restricted. It was evident from the analysis of the responses that men managed most parties although there were a few women at the helm of these political parties. On top of the above, the study revealed that most of the established political parties were in the hands of leaders who wield so much power to an extent that they could pick whomever they want. Against this backdrop, the study established that most of these major political parties such as Orange Democratic Movement and Jubilee did not nominate women for the fear that women would not make it in the final contest, as men were considered strong. Therefore, these political parties did not nominate many women for senior elective posts such as the seat of the governor. The study established that there was no woman in the county of Nairobi who went for primaries in the major political parties at the time.

On marital status influences women's political participation, women's marital status and age are important factors in engaging in active politics. The study sought to establish the relationship between the marital status of women and the level of political participation. The analysis of the responses established that majority of the women did not take up politics because they would not have time to concentrate on a political career. Majority of women respondents from the county of Kajiado pointed out that they could not pursue politics because their husbands would not allow them to.

The analysis of the responses further suggested that marriage boosted the chances of men to win an election compared to the single marital status while it had a strong negative effect on the women. To this end, the study established that single women were open to participate in politics while the married ones said home chores consumed most of their time as such, they were not free to take up politics. Moreover, the study revealed that divorced women were more likely to participate in politics and this had a correlation, whereby married women were likely to divorce because of the conflict of interest between marriage and politics. Accordingly, the study established that majority of the women who took up politics in the County of Nairobi were either single, divorced, or widowed while those in the County of Kajiado were mostly married.

From the comment of this woman respondent, it was apparent that she was dedicated to politics and she did not get a suitable proposal from anyone who would agree to allow her to continue her political activities. Kotalova (1996) notes that a woman must be given in marriage at least once and more, she should be married in time. It is observed that, with marriage of women active politically, it was difficult; again there was a great possibility of sexual harassment in the case of unmarried women politicians.

her off. She eventually joined university in 1988 and completed her degree.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of the collected data revealed that politics was an expensive affair and that for one to succeed, the aspirants must have financial resources as an approach to carrying out proper campaigns. Because women lacked solid financial backing, the said women were unable to compete with men who possessed huge financial muscle. This was consistent with Arriola and Johnson (2014) who pointed out that women's dismal performance

was because of weak financial muscle. Further, the study revealed that the huge nomination fees demanded by political parties hindered women participation in politics. The study established that financiers of politicians in Nairobi and Kajiado County preferred male political aspirants compared to female ones based on the societal value assumption that political activities were masculine and male candidates were believed to stand better chance of winning elections.

The study indicated that lack of educational opportunities for women was one of the biggest hindrances in political participation. Majority of the respondents pointed out that the underrepresentation of women in political seats or decision-making at the political party level meant that the policies formulated were not geared towards the political welfare of the women. This assertion was in line with Oduol (2011) who pointed out that lack of institutional political party structures translated to low levels of women in politics and thus their limited representation in Parliament and within parties. Moreover, the analysis of the collected data established that the developments in the role of women and the supportive Constitutional provisions had translated to a discernible increase in the number of women in boards in Kenya.

The study revealed that the community's perception of the female was largely negative and as such, women were regarded as mothers to an extent that this darkened their political participation. The study established that subordination of women at the family level was more pronounced in the County of Kajiado, as the structure of these families was patriarchal meaning that they were male dominated. In addition, the study established that societal norms were one of

the biggest hindrances to women participation in politics.

The analysis of the responses further suggested that marriage boosted the chances of men to win an election compared to the single marital status while it had a strong negative effect on the women. The study findings indicated that lack of transparency during the nomination process, more often than not, translated to low levels of women participation in primaries. Lack of the management framework to support free, fair and credible primaries pushed women to join smaller parties, which were not known. By women joining small parties, their chances of emerging winners were extremely limited and by extension, their representation in the county and national assemblies was minimal.

Conclusions

The researcher observed that patriarchal structures within parties, state, and people's lives had a deleterious influence on the level of women's political participation and this hinged on the fact that despite the structures put in place such as the two-thirds gender rule, the representation of women in leadership positions was low. Conclusively, the researcher found out that in the County of Kajiado, traditional or patriarchal values remained strong and as such, the community frowned on women entering politics while in Nairobi County the researcher established that because of the cosmopolitan nature of the city, individuals' cultural predisposition did not necessarily influence their participation in politics.

Policy Recommendations

The researcher found out that political parties' internal structures did ensure that women played

critical roles because the parties were the vehicles that propel individuals into leadership. There was a strong linkage between the presence of women in party leadership positions and their numerical presence both in elected and appointed office (parties also tended to nominate from among their leadership circles). Therefore, the study recommends that political parties that seek to mobilize voters around a set of positions on policy issues could be pressured by women's groups, party members, and representatives to include gender equality policies into their political programmed.

Recommendations for Further Studies

The study was limited to the counties of Kajiado and Nairobi and since most of the Kenyan societies are still practicing some cultural traditions, and the major political parties are present all over the country, there is need to conduct a study across the country with a view of establishing how the political culture in the country influences the level of women participation in Kenya. Moreover, there is need to conduct a cross-sectional study to establish whether the new constitution that provided for the new legal and regulatory framework has been effective in realizing the two thirds gender rule. A cross-sectional study will provide insights as to whether the country has been able to make strides and realize gains, and how to consolidate the gains with an objective of forging for more gains. Further, studies should be conducted on how best to increase women representation, as political participation is not a means to an end, rather, political participation is perceptional in nature and as such women cannot be forced to participate.

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