



EFFECT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, CASE
OF MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, YOUTH AND GENDER AFFAIRS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to find out whether implementation of affirmative action has any impact on the employment of women in the National Government. The researcher used the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs as the case study since it is the one mandated to mainstream gender in the national development processes and to champion the socio-economic empowerment of women. The research had sought to determine if affirmative action can be achieved by ensuring that there is equality, diversity and inclusion, integration and empowerment of women who are working with the national government. This research established that Kenya has now a strong legal and policy frameworks that outlaw all forms of discrimination at the workplace but that has not translated into full implementation of affirmative action. Bias against women employees continue to be witnessed. The research adopted descriptive survey design. A questionnaire with closed and open-ended questions was used to collect the required data that was analyzed and presented. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics by means of SPSS which is a statistical software package. The researcher demonstrated that if Affirmative Action is implemented, gender equity would be realized in the national Government and available opportunities would be shared equally and promotion at the workplace would be made on the basis of an individual's competence, skill, qualification and merit as opposed to gender. Further the research showed that the implementation of the Affirmative Action is necessary since there is no legal or any other justification at all for discriminating against women employed by the national government. Lastly, the researcher recommended that the national government should set up a commission to take audit of the state of implementation of affirmative action in across all sectors with a view to ensuring compliance and in default there be consequences against the defaulting employer.

Keywords: Equality, diversity, integration, empowerment, employment of women

INTRODUCTION

Affirmative Action programs are work place policies and practices that are designed to redress or reduce historical forms of discrimination based on demographic distinctions among employees (Harrison, Kravitz, Meyer, Leslie & Lev-Arey, 2006; Resendez, 2002). They serve to increase the number of individuals in traditionally disadvantaged groups in areas in which they have been underrepresented (Resendez, 2002). These programmes also enable organizations to detect ongoing discriminatory practices as they make individuals within an organization responsible for monitoring the issue. This is done through systematically collecting relevant data, examining the aggregated data for trends, identifying the cause of the trend (the problem), and correcting the problem (cosby, Lyer & Sincharoen, 2006).

The term “Affirmative Action” originally developed in America as a means of countering racist barriers that gifted, qualified, talented and able blacks faced and prevented them from getting good jobs and attending good schools, just like their fellow whites. Affirmative Action was intended to eliminate the bias/discrimination against blacks over whites and afford equal opportunity to both the black and white Americans so that blacks could succeed at the same rate as white. Therefore Affirmative Action policies initially focused on improving opportunities for African Americans and mainstreaming in employment and education.

On March 6, 1961 President J.F Kennedy issued Executive Order 10925, which created the Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity with the view to ensuring that hiring and employment practices were free of bias (Sithole, Dastoor and Ippolito, 2006). The Executive Order mandated that Federally funded projects “take Affirmative Action” to ensure that their hiring and employment practices were untainted by racial bias (Sithole, Dastoor and Ippolito, 2006). Stating that discrimination was “contrary to the Constitutional principles and policies

of the United States,” the Executive Order held that “it is the plain and positive obligation of the United States Government to promote and ensure equal opportunity for all qualified persons, without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin, employed or seeking employment with the Federal Government and on government contracts (Sithole et al, 2006).

This Executive Order was superseded by executive order 11246 in 1965 that was issued on September 24, 1965 by president Lyndon B. Johnson, prohibiting employment discrimination based on race, color, religion and national origin by those organizations receiving federal contracts and subcontracts (Hutchings et al, 1995). He said “you do not take a man who for years has been hobbled by chains, liberate him, bring him to the starting line of a race, saying ‘you are free to compete with all the others,’ and still justly believe you have been completely fair, not just equality as a right and theory, but equality as a fact and as a result” (Brunner, 2007).

In 1967, President Johnson amended the Order to include gender to the anti-discrimination list (“Affirmative Action: History and Rationale.” Clinton Administration’s Affirmative Action Review: Report to the President. 19th July 1995). It also required federal contracts to take Affirmative Action to promote the full realization of equal opportunity for women and minorities. In 1969 President Nixon further strengthened Affirmative Action through Executive Order 11478, which required Government contractors to develop goals for increasing representation of historically disadvantaged groups and timetables for achieving them (Federal Register: accessed June 20, 2011). As amended in subsequent years, these executive orders eventually required all government agencies and contractors with annual contracts of \$10,000 or more to undertake Affirmative Action. They also required agencies and contractors with 50 employees and government business of \$50,000 or more to have written Affirmative Action plans (US Department of Labour:

"The Executive Order 11246" accessed February 14, 2012).

In Africa the role of women was to farm the family land, harvest, care for the children, maintain the homestead, and tend to their husbands. In South Africa, the apartheid government, as a matter of state policy, favoured white-owned especially Afrikaner-owned companies. The aforementioned policies achieved the desired results, but in the process they marginalized and excluded black people. Skilled jobs were also reserved for white people, and blacks were largely used as unskilled labour, enforced by legislation including the Mines and Works Act, the Job Reservations Act, the Native Building Workers Act, the Apprenticeship Act and the Bantu Education Act ("Job Reservations Act". South End Museum) creating and extending the "colour bar" in South African labour ("White Workers and the Colour Bar". Sahistory.org.za. Achieved from the original on 19 March 2014). This caused disparities in employment, occupation and income within labour markets, which provided advantages to certain groups and characteristics of people. This in due course was the motivation to introduce affirmative action in South Africa, following the end of apartheid (Stokes, 2010).

Problem Statement

Despite the fact that Kenya has a strong legal and policy framework against discrimination at the workplace and notwithstanding the fact that she has more women than men data available shows that employment and promotion of women in the public service is still tilted in favour of men (GOK, 2010). The Constitution, 2010 has a strong focus on equality, right to non-discrimination and special provisions on the protection of rights of particular groups vulnerable to discrimination (GoK 2010). Similarly the enactment of the Employment Act, 2010 which has a robust equality means that legal protection from discrimination at the workplace has been significantly enhanced (GoK 2010). Further, the Population and Census done in 2009 showed that Kenya has more

women than men, that is, 19,417,639 female and 19,192,458 male (GOK, 2014). Therefore if number was to count at the workplace, women ought to get the lion's share of the job opportunities available. However, that is not the case on the ground. The reverse is the position, that is, men are more than women at the workplace and the rate of promotion of male workers is higher than that of the female workers. Furthermore in some instances women employees earn less than their male counterparts while they are at the same job group, possess similar qualifications, have the same experience and have equal responsibilities. They are also more prone to sexual harassments at the workplace compared with men. The researcher wanted to find out what it is that causes the disparity since there is no logical and justified reason considering that both men and women are equally accessible to education, resources and opportunity. The researcher also wanted to find out whether implementing affirmative action at the workplace would be the panacea to the existing disparity. The researcher chose the Ministry of Public Service, Gender and Youth Affairs as the case study since it was the one that had the department of gender affairs that was created from the Ministry of Devolution and Planning in November 2015 to promote gender mainstreaming in national development processes and to champion socio-economic empowerment of women.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study was to find out the impact of Affirmative Action on the employment of women in the national Government, case study, Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs in Kenya. The specific objectives were:-

- To determine the impact of equality on the employment of women in the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs in Kenya.
- To examine the impact of diversity and inclusion on the employment of women in the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs in Kenya.

- To establish the impact of integration on the employment of women in the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs in Kenya.
- To determine the impact of empowerment on the employment of women in the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Feminists' Theory

Feminists theory focuses on analyzing gender inequality. They believe that both men and women should have the freedom to develop their human interests and talents, even if those interests and talents conflict with the status quo. For example, if a woman wants to be a mechanic, she should have the right and opportunity to do so. Feminists oppose laws and cultural norms that limit income, educational and job opportunities for women. They attempt to explain the societal and cultural differences between men and women.

Socialist feminism is a movement that calls for an end to capitalism through a socialist reformation of economy. It argues that capitalism strengthens and supports the sexists' status quo because men are the ones who currently have power and money and are more willing to share them with other men which means women are continually given fewer opportunities and resources. This keeps women under control of men (Saqib, 2016). Cultural feminism is a movement that points out how modern society is hurt by encouraging masculine behavior, but society would benefit by encouraging feminine behavior instead. Masculine behaviors include traits like being aggressive and competitive. Cultural feminists point out that by encouraging these behaviors, we are also encouraging the negative aspects of competition and aggression, such as the suppression of feelings, crimes like assault and murder and even social issues, such as domestic violence.

Social Contract Theory of Justice

The theory of justice revolves around the adaptation of two fundamental principles of justice, which would, in turn, guarantee a just and morally acceptable society. The first principle guarantees the right of each person to have the most extensive basic liberty compatible with the liberties of others. The second principle states that social and economic positions are to be to everyone's advantage and open to all (Nussbaum, 2000). According to this principle, inequalities in society are deemed to be okay only if they are arranged so that the inequalities actually help out the least fortunate persons in society. The inequalities are connected to positions or offices or jobs in society that everyone has an equal opportunity to attain. The inequalities Rawls is talking about are firstly in the distribution of income, jobs and wealth and secondly, the inequalities set up by institutions that use differences in authority and responsibility or chains of command. Suppose all the political doctrines teach, as some do today, that men and women are fully equal as citizens (Piccard, 2004) then that means, according to Rawls theory, all people must be treated equally not only in such matters as voting and political participation, but must also be treated equally in distributing all primary goods and secondary goods (Rawls, 2002). In other words, there should be no differences except those that can be justified on grounds of efficiency (Piccard, 2004).

The theory is therefore applicable to this research in that it advances that everyone deserves to be treated equally and be offered the same opportunities. There should be no differences in recruitment except those that can be justified on grounds of competence. This theory advances that inequalities in society are acceptable only if they are arranged so that they actually help out the least fortunate persons in society. The theory further seeks to integrate both men and women at the workplace since it outlaws gender as a basis of consideration in recruitment at the workplace. Affirmative action is a practice that redresses inequality in society and seeks to integrate

both men and women and is therefore meant to promote justice.

Liberal Theory

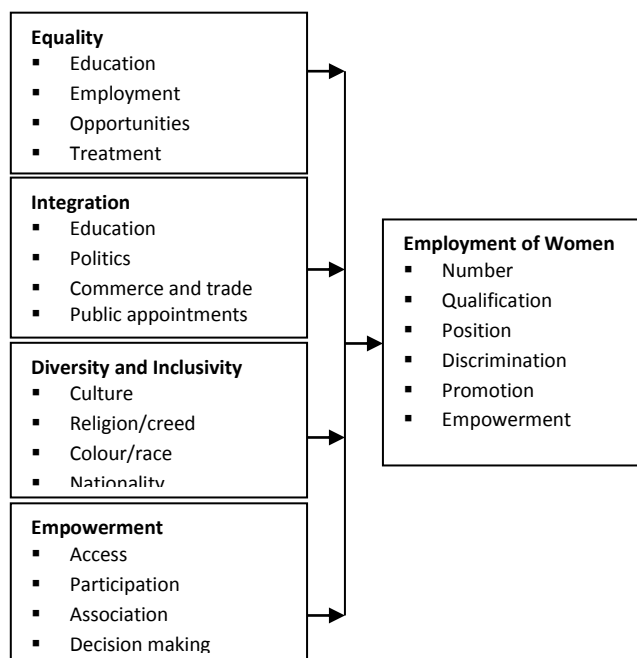
Liberal feminism focuses on women's ability to maintain their equality through their own actions and choices. Liberal feminists argue that society holds the false belief that women are, by nature, less intellectually and physically capable than men; thus it tends to discriminate against women in the academy, the forum, and the market place. Liberal feminists believe that "female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that blocks women's entrance to and success in the so-called public world". They strive for sexual equality via political and legal reform (Tong, Rosemarie, 1989. Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction. Oxon, United Kingdom: Unwin Human Limited. Chapter 1). This theory will therefore be applicable to this research in that it advocates for empowerment of women and seeks to integrate them at the workplace and equalize them with men. Feminists do not see any justification for any bias against women in favour of men.

Radical feminism

Radical feminism is a movement that believes sexism is so deeply rooted in society that the only cure is to eliminate the concept of gender completely. Radical feminists suggest changes such as finding technology that will allow babies to be grown outside of a woman's body, to promote more equality between men and women. This will allow women to avoid missing work for maternity leave, which radical feminists argue is one reason women are not promoted as quickly as men. They further argue that the entire traditional family system is sexist. Men are expected to work outside the home while women are expected to care for children and clean the house. Radical feminists note that this traditional dichotomy maintains men as economically in power over women, and therefore, the traditional family

structure should be rejected. This theory advocates for empowerment of women and equal access to opportunity and resources.

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables **Dependent Variable**
Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Review of Variables

Affirmative Action

Equality on affirmative action

Education is a tool for national development. It is also a fundamental human right as every child is entitled to it. It is critical to our development as individuals and as societies, and it helps pave way to a successful and productive future. When we ensure that children have access to a right-based, quality education that is rooted in gender equality, we create a ripple effect of opportunity that impacts generations to come. We should consider the wise statement by visionary Ghanian educator who stated, "the surest way to keep a people down is to educate men and neglect the women. If you educate a man you simply educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you

educate a family” (Tembon & Fort, 2008). These sediments are shared by Wamahiu (2011) who when giving a talk on ‘Educate more girls today for better Kenya’ said, “you educate a girl you educate a nation”. There is adequate evidence that educating women is beneficial at the national, community, family and individual levels (MOE, 2007).

Integration on affirmative action

Sturm and Guiner (2001) argue that affirmative action is still needed to rectify continued exclusion and marginalization. In addition, Sturm and Guiner marshal considerable evidence showing that conventional standards of selection exclude women and people of colour, and that people who were excluded in the past do not yet operate on a level playing field. However, this response has already been reactive (Sturm and Guiner, 2001). Proponents typically treat affirmative action as a crucial but peripheral supplement to an essentially sound framework of selection for jobs and schools. They hail affirmative action as a panacea to address the imbalances of the past whereas McElroy (2003) perceives it as reverse discrimination.

Diversity on affirmative action

Currently, affirmative action is used as a method of attaining a diversified and integrated workforce. Kreitner, (2001) is of the view that, “affirmative action is used as an artificial intervention aimed at giving management a chance to correct an imbalance, an injustice, a mistake or outright discrimination” and that it does not foster a need to change leadership’s thinking about diversity management. Jeffrey, (2014) argues that although affirmative action and black economic empowerment is necessary, the private sector should be allowed to focus on wealth and economic opportunity creation rather than just giving jobs. Gobler, (2003) states that for an organization to value diversity it must first understand the differences between valuing diversity and employment equity. The fundamental difference is

that employment equity is enforced by legislation. The management values diversity due to its desires to gain competitive advantage by using the talents of diverse workforce.

Empowerment on affirmative action

The Millenium Declaration commits all UN member countries to promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease, and as necessary means to stimulate development that is truly sustainable. Persistent and pervasive gender inequalities hinder access to and control of resources while perpetuating equal distribution of resources with greater bias against women.

This in effect contributes to social insecurity, lack of opportunity and instills a deep sense of powerlessness, lowering the quality of life for both men and women. Women empowerment and equality between women and men are issues of human rights and justice not just women’s issues. Sen (2000) postulates that educated women are likely to participate more in household decisions and to stand for themselves thus reducing their vulnerability to domestic violence. El-Gabaly (2006) reports a study that revealed that in Egypt, women with secondary education are four times more likely to oppose the practice of Female Genital Mutilation.

Employment of Women

Number in employment of women

According to the Kenya Population and Housing census done in 2009, Kenya has more women than men, that is, 19,417,639 female and 19,192,458 male. This is a difference of 225,000 (GOK, 2014) and if number was to count, women ought to get the lion’s share of the job opportunities available. But on looking at the reality on the ground, women are still fewer at work places. Men are still the majority. It is calculated that women could increase their income globally by up to 76 percent of the employment participation gap and the wage gap between women

and men are closed. This is calculated to have a global value of USD 17 trillion (Action Aid, 2015, “close the gap! The cost of inequality in women’s work,”). Women are more likely to work in informal employment (UN Women, Progress of the World’s Women 2015-2016 chapter 2).

Discrimination in employment of women

Gender discrimination remains a persistent issue for many women in the workplace. This discrimination can come in the form of sexual harassment, withholding promotions, giving a different job title to a woman and preventing women from participating in training opportunities. A woman might attempt to conceal a pregnancy for fear of being passed over for a promotion due to leave-time to which she is entitled to under the law. Similarly a pregnant woman might choose not to disclose her condition during an interview because of the assumption that she will be unable to work long hours after her baby is born. In some instances, a female is the victim of discrimination because of her clothing or physical appearance. An employer might hire an attractive woman over other qualified candidates simply because he believes she is likely to bringing more sales. In contrast, that same women might not get hired because the employer is afraid of a sexual harassment law suit based on the number of males in the workplace.

Promotion in employment of women

Statistics show that the higher up in the corporate hierarchy, the lower the female representation throughout the European Union (EU, 2008). The low representation may be considered paradoxical since women today are more educated than men and represent a majority at universities (Tilastokeskus, 2011). Women lag behind when it comes to promotions into executive management and beyond. The gender disparities in promotion are a complex issue and a result of multiple different factors. It has often been suggested that the promotion gap is as a

result of choices professional women make, they simply do not aspire to senior management positions or they give up their career ambitions to start families (Anna Klaile, 2013). Another central factor that affects promotion chances is educational choices and work orientation. Women differ from men both in their educational choices and work orientations, which has an effect on promotions and wage differences (Confederation of Finnish Industries, 2013).

Empowerment in employment of women

Increasing women and girls’ education contributes to higher economic growth. Increased educational attainment accounts for about 50 percent of the economic growth in OECD countries over the past 50 years, (OECD, Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship: Final Report to the MCM 2012) of which over half is due to girls having had access to higher levels of education and achieving greater equality in the number a of years spend in education between men and women (OECD, Gender Equality in Education Employment and Entrepreneurship; Final Report to the MCM 2012). But for the majority of women, significant gains in education have not translated into better labour market outcomes (UN Women, Progress of the World’s Women 2015-2016). Over the years, Kenya has made great strides towards promoting and increasing women’s participation in national development across the economic, political and social factors. This has been through governmental interventions such as Free Primary Education, Free Day Secondary Education introduced in 2003 and 2008 respectively. The national government has also created finance institutions to provide women access to funds in developing and growing their business ventures. Under this category, fall affirmative funds, with core being Women’s Enterprise Fund (WEF). Another economic platform the government is tapping to empower women is under the legislative policy that states that 30 percent of public

procurement is set aside for women and youth (Public Procurement Act).

Empirical Review

This research revealed that despite the great strides that have been made to ensure gender equality and to empower women, women still remain under-represented in the job market and in particular in the national government. On public policy the study will reveal that Kenya has a strong gender equality policy as contained in the Constitution, 2010, Employment Act, 2007 and as expressed through the creation of a department dealing with gender in the Ministry of Public Service, Gender and Youth Affairs and the enactment of the Gender and Equality Act. As a result more and more women are accessing formal employment opportunities and their welfare at work is safeguarded and under continuous improvement. Regarding education the research shows that despite the fact that gender inequalities in educational enrolment at the primary level have narrowed to almost parity following the introduction of Free Primary Education, disparities in secondary and university education persist. As a consequence thereof secondary school education has been subsidized, girls entry points into universities and other tertiary institutions and for a number of courses have been lowered compared to that of the boys. In respect of the effect of politics, the study established that the number of women participating in elective politics has increased in every election since 1998 and there is hope of maintaining the increase towards gender parity. Based on the findings of this study there are numerous effects of Affirmative Action on the employment of women in the national Government Ministries in Kenya.

Lack of discrimination in the distribution of opportunities of employment, promotion, training and career opportunities is attributed to the affirmative action policy. This means that the implementation of affirmative action programs lead to an improvement in the employment of women in

the national Government Ministries in Kenya. Kilonzo & Ikimari, 2015 did a research on “The Impact of Affirmative Action on Equality of Service Delivery in the Public Service Sector of Kenya, A Comparative Case Study of the Ministry of State in the Office of the President and Ministry of Higher Education” and their research revealed that implementation of an affirmative action policy in the public service sector impacts positively on the quality of service delivery. It further revealed that the quality of service delivery as indicated by cost effectiveness, accountability, employee participation, productivity and transparency was higher in the ministry of higher education than in the ministry of state in the office of the president. Chi-Square data analysis revealed that there is a significant relationship between affirmative action implementation in employment, promotion, training and career progression and the quality of service delivery in the public service sector of Kenya. Kaimenyi, Kinya & Chege, 2013 did a research on “Analysis of Affirmative Action, Two-Third Gender Rule in Kenya”. The research revealed that affirmative action can ensure equality in the political leadership of Kenya and in the process ensure that the two-thirds gender rule is implemented. It further revealed that affirmative action can achieve in the easiest and best ways as well as shortest possible time rights denied over a period of time. Symwene & Kindiki, (2015) did a research on, “Women Education and Economic Development in Kenya, Implications for Curriculum Development and Implementation Process”. The study revealed that more educated women tend to earn more income, raise healthier families, effectively participate in activities, participate in political decision making, control population growth and participate in the labour market. It further revealed that all this translates to women empowerment and eventually to improved sustainable economic development and implementation processes which if adopted can effect desired changes in our education system in favour of women education in our country.

Gwada, 2012 did a research on “The Influence of Girl Child Educational Development on Boy’s Enrolment in Public Mixed Secondary Schools in Kisumu East District”. The research revealed that the curriculum was biased towards female students. It also revealed that 95% of female students had received gender awareness trainings with no such trainings for male students. It further established that most female students were enrolled with lower marks compared to their male counterparts. The study further revealed that the various strategies of women advocacy, affirmative action, gender mainstreaming and gender parity in education negatively influence boys’ enrolment.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopted descriptive survey design. The aim was to collect information from Respondents on their attitudes and opinions in relation to the effect of affirmative action on the employment of women in the national government, with Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs as the case study as was done by Simiyu in 2016 in her research project done about the factors influencing implementation of government affirmative action projects, with Uwezo Fund projects in Embakasi East Sub-county as the case study. The research focused on women employed in the national government but zeroed-in on the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs as the case study. Questionnaires were used as the method for data collection for this study. To analyze the data in this study, SPSS, a statistical software package was used.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Study

The data was analyzed to assess the general responses to the questionnaire statements on the variables as they were originally defined for the study. This analysis was necessary to assess the perception of women on barriers to career progression in government as identified in the

literature review. The results which include the mean scores on a 5 – point scale, standard deviations (SD) and the average percentage of disagree versus agree responses, of these analysis are reported next. The results are interpreted as follows: a mean score of more than 3.00 is regarded as a reasonably good assessment of latent variable; a score between 2.50 – 2.99 reflected an average assessment of the latent variable; and a score below 2.50 reflects weak areas or aspects of concern.

Hypothesis testing was also done to address each objective. This was done by use of one sample t-test where the mean response of the Respondent was tested against a standard value (3). This helped to decide whether there was a significant difference on the opinion of the Respondents as measured by the Likert scale where 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree and 1=strongly disagree. This assisted in revealing whether a particular variable was perceived as a barrier to women career progression

Gender Equality

The study sought to establish whether gender discrimination was an obstacle to women recruitment into employment and to their career progression into senior positions in Government. According to the study majority of the senior staff were men and gender related hurdles were found to be a reality impeding women from ascending to the top echelons in government. The results of the study revealed that 52% of women had the opinion that gender had not influenced their career positively. Gender problems focused on a negative attitude of men towards their female colleagues. The study further revealed that men perceived women as weaker sex and their role as caregivers and homemakers. Gender stereotypical attitudes were reported to be instrumental in impeding the entry of women into senior positions which are considered to be more appropriate for men. (Acker, 1990; Alvesson Billing; 1997; Heilman; 2001). The study revealed that attributes such as achievements, orientation, forcefulness and strength

in decision making were commonly ascribed to men. Stereotype had a major explanation for discrimination against women in the workplace. According to the studies carried out by Wood (2008); Lyness and Heilman (2006), gender stereotyping of the ideal manager fosters bias against women in managerial selection, placement, promotion and training decisions. According to this study negative stereotype is a powerful barrier to women career progression. But the study revealed that the government has gender blind promotion procedure and a strong legal framework against any form of discrimination. However, the procedures are manipulated and the legal frameworks circumvented particularly in male dominated areas. The negative attitude of men seriously hampers female progress. This forces women to stagger in one place, to lobby

extensively for merited positions or to be forced to constantly prove themselves. Women also noted male oppression and suppression as a hurdle that must be overcome. However, 45% of respondents surveyed said they had not experienced any gender-related bias which influenced their career; 54% said they had. Interview revealed that the subtle and insidiousness of discrimination to women makes it difficult to assert, with confidence, that one has experienced definite gender bias. Hackett (2009), wrote on the social and psychological attributes of women and said that “women underrate their success and perceive any discrimination they meet as a result of their own shortcomings”. The variable gender inequality was analyzed using eight items (see Table 1).

Table 1: Items analysis of the variable gender stereotype

	N	Mean	SD
Men have a positive attitude towards women	249	2.73	1.08
Men judge women fairly	250	2.63	1
Women's ideas are seriously listened to and implemented at the workplace	248	2.83	0.996
Men perceive women as weaker sex	249	3.72	
Stereotype dictates the appropriateness of various occupations for females and males	241	3.32	1.18
Attributes such as achievements, orientation, forcefulness and strength in decision making are commonly ascribed to men	241	3.4	1.214
Good manager is described predominantly in masculine terms	241	3.22	1.264
Women are considered caregivers and homemakers and men as breadwinners and leaders	241	3.57	1.293
Average	245	3.35	1.244

Gender related hurdles were found to be a reality impeding women from ascending to the top echelons in government. The study results revealed that 52% of women had the opinion that gender had not influenced their career positively. Gender problems focused on negative attitude of men towards their female colleagues. The study further revealed that

men perceived women as weaker sex and their role as caregivers and homemakers. Gender stereotypical attitudes were reported to be instrumental in impeding the women into senior positions which are considered to be more appropriate for men (Acker, 1990; Alvesson Billing, 1997; Heilman, 2001). This study revealed that attributes such as achievements

orientation, forcefulness and strength in decision making were commonly ascribed to men. Stereotype had a major explanation for discrimination against women in the workplace. According to the studies carried out by Wood (2008); Lyness and Heilman (2006), gender stereotyping of the ideal manager fosters bias against women in managerial selection, placement, promotion and training decisions. According to this study negative gender stereotype is a powerful barrier to women career progression in government. However, the study revealed that the government has gender – blind promotion procedures but the procedures are manipulated particularly in male dominated areas, and negative attitude of men seriously hampers female progress. This forces women to stagger in one place, to lobby extensively for merited positions or to be forced to constantly prove themselves. Women also noted male oppression and suppression as a hurdle that must be overcome. However, 45% of women surveyed said they had not experienced any gender-related bias which influenced their career; 54% said they had. Interview revealed that the subtle insidiousness of discrimination to women makes it difficult to assert, with confidence, that one has experienced definite gender bias. Hackett (2009),

wrote on the social and psychological attributes of women and said that “women underrate their success and perceive any discrimination they meet as a result of their own shortcomings”.

Integration

The study sought to find out if women were discriminated against at the workplace. It revealed that some recruitment policies and questions are based against women. The study further established that women are more victims of sexual harassment and that they experience the glass-ceiling effect, impacting negatively on their career progression. Men were found to have negative attitude towards their female colleagues. The variable integration was analyzed using eight items as shown in table 1 hereinbefore. Lack of integration as a barrier to women career progression was sought using Likert scale questions. This method of gathering opinion was found appropriate because under it, Respondents answered each statement included in the questionnaire. Also Likert type of scale communicates interval properties to Respondents and therefore produces data that can be assumed to be related to an interval scale. The results were as indicated in Figure 2.

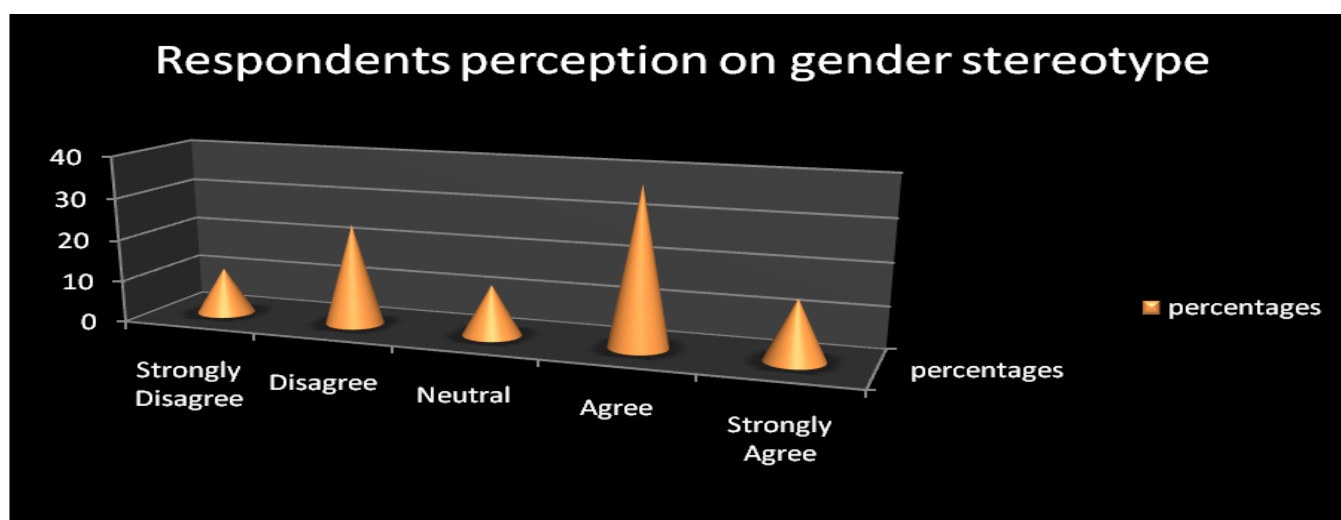


Figure 2: Respondents perception on integration

Lack of integration was found to be a reality as illustrated in figure 2. The study results revealed that 52% of women were of the opinion that lack of integration had not influenced their career positively. The study further revealed that men perceived women as weaker sex and their role as caregivers and homemakers. Lack of integration was reported to be instrumental in impeding the entry of women into senior positions since those positions are seen as more appropriate for the men (Acker, 1990; Alvesson Billing, 1997; Heilman, 2001).

Lack of integration has been found to be a major source of discrimination against women in the workplace. According to Wood (2008); Lyness and Heilman (2006), Lack of integration fosters bias against women in managerial selection, placement, promotion, and training decisions. Proponents of the hypothesis thus argue that it is important to study the perceptions individual hold in regard to integration. This study has gathered the views of women in the government who were selected as a sample from the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs and their views conform to those of other scholars that lack of integration is still very prevalent in government.

According to this study lack of integration has been a great barrier to women career progression. Studies carried out by Wood (2008); Lyness and Heilman (2006), in an attempt to account for the low representation of women in senior management positions in Ireland revealed that the assumptions that are made about female managers are that women are not seen as appropriate/fit for managerial role because of perception that females are more suited to a supportive, nurturing role such as motherhood than the decision-making role of management. This view is supported by this study. This attitude appears to undermine a lack of acceptance of women in management role and may be enhanced by lack of integration which attributes the skills of one sex more closely to the role of manager. Lack of integration is therefore

instrumental in creating a barrier to women career advancement. This negative attitude had in some cases deteriorated to sexual harassment. This was revealed by the study where respondents spoke very strongly on the discriminatory attitude of men who presently command influence and power particularly when it comes to promotion of women to senior positions.

This study further revealed that the government had gender-blind promotion procedures. However, it was found that these procedures are manipulated particularly in male-dominated areas, and negative attitude of men seriously hampers female progress. This forces women to stagger in one place, to lobby extensively for merited positions or to be forced to constantly prove themselves. Women also noted male oppression and suppression as a hurdle that must be overcome.

Diversity and Inclusivity

The study sought to establish whether women, for historical, cultural and systematic reasons have been excluded from the workplace or whether they face barriers or discrimination that limit their full participation at the workplace. The call for workplace diversity has risen part from social movements that challenge traditional patterns of exclusions in most important institutions and public employment. The study established that progress has been made in terms of ensuring that women who have previously been marginalized gain employment in the public, but upon entering the service, they have encountered new challenge in career advancement. The most three challenges faced by the Respondents in their career life were 25% discrimination due to their gender, 30% work life balance, 24% indicated lack of support from their bosses. Others included lack of support from family, lack of confidence, discouragement from friends and insufficient systems in work place as shown in figure 3. The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation (TJRC) Report, 2016 states that although Kenya has ratified many international

human rights instruments and has enacted various domestic laws that promote the rights of women, the existence of structural and systemic discrimination against women prevented them from fully enjoying their rights.

The inequalities could be attributed to various factors including past laws, policies and practices which were discriminative. To correct this management in the public service institutions should therefore strive at achieving a workforce that is representative of both men and women. Public service is required to promote diversity by reviewing its recruitment procedures, selection critical, training opportunities, promotion criteria, among other factors.

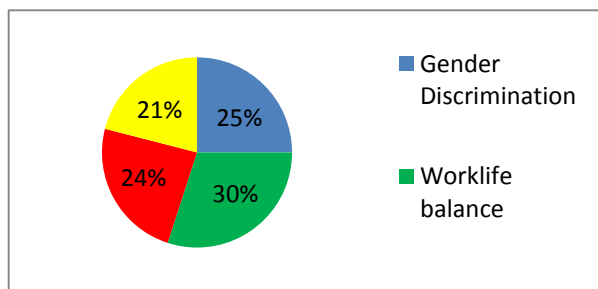


Figure 3: Challenges faced by women at work place

Empowerment

The study sought to establish whether women have been empowered and equipped enough through education, skill and training to match their male counterpart at the workplace. The study found that most women have never participated in a training course with a gender dimension. In fact most women did not comprehend the need for a gender dimension in training. The study revealed that 57% of women had never attended a training; 20% said they had, 1 to 2 times; 14% said they had, 3 to 5 times while 9% said they had, 6 to 10 times. See figure 4. Further the study established that women are underrepresented in decision-making positions and that they have less access to education, land and employment. To correct this imbalance focus must be on eliminating gender irregularities in traditional social norms and

attitudes that effectively under value women's roles. These are norms that keep goals out of classrooms and women away from the workplace, and are often expressed through violence. In September 2017 at a global meeting on Gender Equality in New York, President Uhuru Kenyatta stressed that; "development cannot be rapid and resilient, unless it is also inclusive an equitable given that half of humanity are women, their empowerment is a must, not an option"

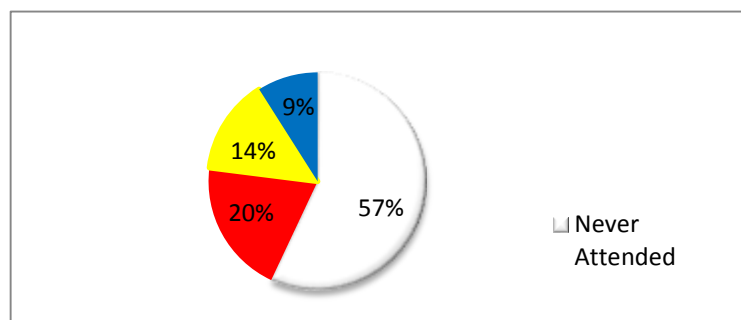


Figure 4: Training with Gender Dimension

Employment of Women

The study sought to establish whether women are under represented at the workplace. The study revealed that majority of employees in government are men and that there is no significant number of women in senior positions of decision making. Women mostly occupy junior ranks as secretaries, clerical officers and messengers as demonstrated in figure 5. They are still grossly underrepresented in senior management and public decisions making positions. However, women are making significant strides to develop their careers in the civil service and to enter previously male dominated professions and positions.

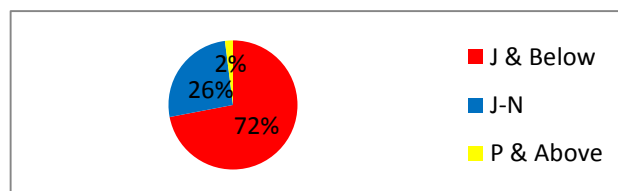


Figure 5: Distribution of women working in the government

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Several conclusions were made from this study. The study revealed that women's recruitment and career development in the Government was hampered by gender inequality, unfavorable public policy framework, lower education levels and discriminatory politics.

All the Respondents interviewed agreed that the barriers were still prevalent in Government and that women yearn for ideals such as equal treatment and favorable public policy framework support that would promote them into the top posts by merit. Although they accepted that women had certain roles and responsibilities to play in their lives they believed that these roles and responsibilities should not act as barriers to their involvement at the workplace. Furthermore, to promote women's progression, significant transformation is needed in the societal and organizational structures. The study revealed that Kenya has a strong legal framework that addresses gender equality. That include the Constitution and other legislations and they seek to remedy the traditional exclusion of women and promote their full involvement in every aspect of growth and development. However, women are still underrepresented in government and especially at management level, senior positions and generally in decision-making positions. They also have less access to education, land and employment. And with that state of affairs sustainable development cannot be achieved without the participation of both gender.

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The study shows that integration is integral if the government is to achieve sustainable development. It is also an important strategy to achieving equality and equity for men and women at the workplace. And although the government has created a ministry to oversee gender integration, the study shows that a lot needs to be done before the same is achieved.

The study has reviewed that more and more women have acquired enough education and knowledge to compete favourably with men when it comes to recruitments in government at all cadres including senior positions and other decision making levels. Further the government has put in place the legal framework and policy to ensure level playing field and equal opportunity to both men and women and the same are being implemented though with challenges. Employee diversity enhances productivity and service delivery.

The study established that there has been a number of major improvements to the legal and policy framework with regards to discrimination in Kenya. The new Constitution, 2010 has a strong focus on equality, a much improved right to non-discrimination and has special provisions on the on the protection of rights of women. The Employment Act, 2007 also seeks to protect all workers. Also the government has a national gender policy that seeks to mainstream gender and empower women. Accordingly the government has created an environment that is equally favourable and enabling to both men and women at their workplaces.

The study revealed that overall figures for recruitment of men and women in the public sector are that women make 30.9% and men 69.1% of the workplace (GoK, 2011). Thus women remain underrepresented at the workplace and in policy-making and management level positions. Secondly, women occupy very few of the jobs that offer opportunities for advancement to positions of greater

decision-making, authority, responsibility, prestige, self-fulfilment and higher pay at workplace. Thirdly, women employees tend to be less likely to receive further training either off-the-job or on-the-job.

Recommendations

After carrying out the research herein the researcher has a number of recommendations to make as follows. That recruitment in government should be based on performance and not gender-affirmative action. Further the government should provide more educative programs about affirmative action to ensure that the policy is well understood by the public.

The government should open a public dialogue about how to implement the gender quota clause in the Constitution and probably establish a Commission to carry out audit on the status of implementation of affirmative action by employers. Such Commission would identify employers who have not implemented affirmative action and require that there be compliance in line with the provisions of the Constitution and other existing legal frameworks. The Commission could also be vested with powers to ensure and enforce compliance.

The Study's Contribution to Theory

The research showed that there was a relationship between the implementation of affirmative action in the national government and the quality of service

delivery, rate of production, the cost involved and the manner in which that was achieved. The research showed that implementing affirmative action policy would lead to improved quality of service delivery, higher production at low cost in an accountable, transparent and inclusive manner in terms of employee participation.

The research underscored the importance of Affirmative Action policy that puts into consideration gender criteria. The research also sought to identify the gender disparity that existed at the workplace and the reasons why the inequality existed and suggested possible solution(s) such as basing recruitment on competence, skill, training, qualification and performance other than gender. This study had provided a useful basis upon which further studies on affirmative action can be conducted. It is also available for reading to gain knowledge on the subject of study.

Areas for further research

Further research is required to establish the link between career development of women, education and training, the link between gender inequalities and economic development and to assess if 30% of all civil service jobs that are Constitutionally supposed to be reserved for women have actually been allocated to women in all the public service bodies including parastatals especially at middle and senior levels.

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