

# Young



# Women

## Political Participation In Kenya



A study on the experiences and challenges of  
young women in political engagement



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## RESEARCH TEAM

**T**his research has been undertaken as a collaborative effort between Women's Empowerment Link (WEL), a non-governmental organization, the Gender Roundtable Series (GRS) formerly based at Kenyatta University and the National Gender & Equality Commission (NGEC); previously known as the National Gender and Development Commission.

The organizations were able to undertake the research by tapping into the strengths of their various focus areas. The GRS contributed heavily to the

provision of the academic angle to the research while the National Gender and Equality Commission represented the government and its main contribution was advisory given its mandate as per its constitutive act.

WEL is a non-profit, non-partisan non-governmental women rights organization committed to empowering women and girls to realize their potential, worth and strength politically, socially and economically through advocating for opportunities that explore their potential. WEL has national networks where they implemented their initiatives by offering the dynamics in addressing the young women political participation.

*WEL is a non-profit, non-partisan non-governmental women rights organization committed to empowering women and girls to realize their potential, worth and strength politically, socially and economically through advocating for opportunities that explore their potential.*





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The lead research team which consisted of: Dr. Godwin Murunga, (formerly of Kenyatta University Gender Roundtable Series (GRS)) ; Mrs Grace Mbugua, the Director and Founder Women's Empowerment Link; the project leader Dr. Regina Mwatha and the Lead Assistant Researcher Mr. Ken Njenga.

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## FOREWORD

One of the major outcomes of the UN conference of 1975 in Kenya was the creation of the Women's Bureau in the Ministry of Culture and Social Services in 1976 as the national machinery for the advancement of women. Following this, other special units were set up in the Government Ministries at addressing women issues and subsequently gender concerns in their respective sectors. For instance, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources development had a department of women's education that was essentially a home economics unit. This unit was later transformed into a gender focal point and has launched a task force that has formulated an action plan for mainstreaming gender in the education sector.

This show of political will was due to a lot of concerted effort by women individually and through the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization (A national membership non-governmental organization which seeks to unify, nurture and empower women socially, economically and politically to be able to deal with the unique challenges that face them in society) seeking representation and voice at the highest decision making level. The 1975 political will shown was not showing a continuum, not even with the UN Nairobi Women's Conference of 1985. The statistics in regard to women's representation remained extremely low compared to the total population of women and in comparison to the neighboring countries in East Africa as well as the SADC region. In 1969 there were two (2 {1.2%}) women in parliament increasing to seven (7 {4.1%}) in 1974 and then going down in to (4 {2.4%}). However, in the year 2002 the number of women in parliament increased to 18 (8.1%) and to 22 (9.5%) in 2007. The increase in 2002 was tied to the increasing demand by Kenyans for good governance and transparency in both the way government conducted business as well as for transparent and just leadership and increased democratic space. In fact in 2002 one young woman was also nominated to parliament.

The promulgation of the Kenyan Constitution 2010 was not only momentous part of the Kenyan history as well as the future of both men and women of Kenya. The constitution brought on board several key rights and benefits to the Kenyan women, to the youth (women and men aged 18-35 years), persons with disability and marginalized and minority groups.



The enactment of a law is not necessarily a change of mindset of a populace, and neither does it translate in to real time enforcement. Further, Affirmative Action and gender mainstreaming are about transformation and power relations and these are not miracles that happen overnight.

Some of the critical questions posed by the women's movement at this particular time were whether political parties would put in processes what would propel women in to elected leadership positions. Indeed nobody asked about the young women. However in these, young women brought in their voice and sentiments very strongly and were well received by the older women. In spite of these whisperings, young women aspiring for political positions through election were not a major debate in the public arena. Increasingly the young women issue was becoming more and more a non-issue. This was partly because in practice, the political arena became volatile and slippery for all women. The inclusion of all women either as affirmative action or on the one third gender rule became a contentious issue both in parliament and outside parliament. At the political party level the push and shove did not give a strong grounding for young women either but the provisions of the Political Parties Act provided a safeguard for the women.

The Kenyan Constitution 2010 provides for affirmative action, not only for women but also for the youth, both men and women. This principle of inclusivity was

critical to the elections held on March 4th 2013. The structures within political parties, as well as societal attitudes and perception of voters on inclusivity of young women aged 18-35 was critical as to whether young women would be voted for in the March 4th 2013 election.

This book gives us an insight in to the minds of young women politicians and aspirants (aged 18-35 years). It brings to the fore their dreams, their networks and spaces which they operate. It also brings on board the expectations of the communities in which they come from, the mindset of the voters across gender and generations. The book points in to the challenges young women face in pursuit of political elective leadership positions. The challenges are compounded by their reproductive roles as well as cultural factors, the family setting and the community expectations.

For the first time in the Kenyan political arena and through this book, the mindsets of young women politicians and aspiring politicians are juxtaposed with the attitude, perception and expectations of the voters. The hopes, dreams and expectations of young women are also closely hinged to the constitutional provisions.

By Dr. Regina G. Mwatha  
(Ph.D, M.B.S)

*Vice Chairperson,  
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(Office of the Ombudsman)*

## POLICY ADVISORY

Coming on the back of the recently concluded Kenya general elections, this study comes at an opportune time for institutions who work on issues of political participation and representation of otherwise marginalized groups. These elections provided an important testing ground for institutions that sought to test the gains to do with the political rights of otherwise marginalized members of society. Young women constitute one such group. The study highlights the challenges that young women face in being treated as equal to their male counterparts, within political parties and by the electorate generally. It also highlights the kinds of violations that young women face in pursuing opportunities for political representation.

The NGEK has taken legal action towards the realization of Articles 27(8) and 81(b) of the Constitution in terms of ensuring the realization of the two-thirds gender principle. The NGEK also



took action to safeguard efficacy of the process of nominating individuals to Parliament and the County Assemblies, in line with Articles 90 and 177(b) and (c) of the Constitution. The NGEK also continues to monitor the processes through which individuals are appointed to positions within the national and county governments, to ensure that women are represented in decision-making positions, in line with the provisions of Articles 27(6) and (8) and Article 175(c) of the Constitution.

In line with this report, and based on the mandate of the NGEK to promote gender equality and non-discrimination, the NGEK will be advocating for a number of policy and legislative initiatives:



*The study highlights the challenges that young women face in being treated as equal to their male counterparts, within political parties and by the electorate generally*



***To promote the actualization of the two thirds gender principle:***

The NGEC will work in collaboration with Parliament and other stakeholders to develop legislation to ensure the realization of the two-thirds gender principle in line with the ruling of the Supreme Court delivered on 11th December 2012. This Law will be critical in that it will expand the opportunities for political engagement and representation for young women;

***Development of an Equality Policy:***

The NGEC will also facilitate the development of a National Equality Policy which will seek to encapsulate the aspirations of the Constitution which have to do with the promotion of the equity and equality for women, youth, person with disabilities, the elderly and other minorities and marginalized groups.

***Gender-based violence:***

The NGEC is advising on the development on a national policy on Gender-based Violence that will inform the coordination of efforts to address such violations in

public spaces, including the media, and ensure that young women have access to justice where such violations take place;

In addition, the NGEC will be monitoring and advising on the development of policies, laws and administrative measures at both the national and county levels, which will have implications of the agenda of equity and equality.

In this regard the NGEC will work together with a broad cross section of actors – in the public and private sector and we look forward to fruitful and successful collaborations.

By Winfred Lichuma

*Chairperson  
National Gender & Equality Commission*

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACA	Amani Community Africa
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMWIK	Association of Media Women in Kenya
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CDM-Kenya	Kenya Center for Multiparty Democracy- Kenya
FIDA	Federation of Women Lawyers
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HBF	Heinrich Boll Foundation
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KWPC	Kenya Women Political Caucus
KU	Kenyatta University
LKWV	League of Kenya Women Voters
NCGD	National Commission on Gender & Development,
NCIC	National Constitution Implementation Committee
NCWK	National Council of Women of Kenya
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PNU	Party of National Union
WEL	Women's Empowerment Link
WID	Women In Development
AWDF	African Women's Development Fund

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women's political participation in Kenya, especially among young women, has been one of the key areas of interest for women's rights organizations. Politics play a vital role in influencing the policy making process, and the absence of significant numbers of women in positions of influence denies them a chance to influence decision and impact policy making. Although the population of women and men at all levels is almost equally matched, political representation is heavily skewed in favor of men. Women made up barely 9.8% of the members of the 10th Parliament in 2008-2013. This compares poorly with the global average of 18.8% and the critical mass threshold of 33%. Young women are worse off, and are hardly ever represented at both national and local political levels. Despite efforts to enhance gender equality, women's participation in political activities largely consists of women voters and not candidates in elective or appointive offices.

*The study concluded that it is necessary to proactively enhance measures that address the barriers that deter and frustrate young women from benefitting from the expanded political space and legislative safeguards related to gender equity.*



This study sought to examine and understand the experiences and challenges that young women in Kenya face in their desire for political participation. Specifically, it examined the historical and current trends of political participation of young women, and analyzed the existing structures that encouraged and safeguarded the political participation of young women. It also analyzed the way patriarchy and masculinity interfaced to marginalize young women from political inclusion. Finally, the study looked at how reproductive roles of women constitute a challenge to their ascent into leadership. This analysis was done in the context of the understanding of the transitions in Kenya. The country has established legislative structures to increase the levels of women's participation. This includes a constitutional provision for 47 special seats for women in the National Assembly, the introduction of a two-



thirds gender rule for all positions, the development of gender policies and programmatic interventions by civil society organizations targeting women's political participation. This study was conducted between 2011 and 2012 and has however been informed by the 2013 elections happening in drawing final conclusions.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. Structured and unstructured interview schedules, unstructured schedules for focus group discussions and document review were used to gather data. Interviews proceeded purposively among sampled respondents, who comprised of young women aspirants, women's leaders, community elders as well as politicians across five different regions in Kenya targeted for this study.

The findings in this study demonstrate that there exists a significant gender gap in the political participation among young women in Kenya. Young women face many barriers in their pursuit of active political roles. The study established that masculinity and the patriarchal nature of politics, lack of resources, and lack of support for young women who sought to assume leadership roles, the impact of societal expectations and stereotypes, insecurity and gender-based humiliation and violence often undermine young women's political ambitions. In spite of these challenges, young women have exhibited great confidence in their ability to overcome these barriers as a result of recently enacted laws and structures meant to entrench gender equality at all levels of leadership in Kenya. The study notes that young women are politically active and quite informed as

voters, but they need to be supported to achieve more significant impacts as political leaders. The study concludes that there is still need to create and expand opportunities for young women to enable them become more active and effective participants in the national and local political activities.

The study concluded that it is necessary to proactively enhance measures that address the barriers that deter and frustrate young women from benefitting from the expanded political space and legislative safeguards related to gender equity. It is also critical to raise awareness among young women, aspiring politicians and other members of the Kenyan society to promote understanding and address the age-old stereotypes that have continued to ensure few women succeed in the political arena despite there being evidence that they could actually make better leaders. The study recommends that to address the barriers young women face, measures such as targeted strategies to address the socialization processes that exclude girls from mainstream social roles such as leadership and decision making, targeting men with gender awareness programmes, encouraging women, especially young women, to accept, embrace and support enhancement of youth empowerment programmes, promotion of leadership training programmes for young women, establishing mentorship and internship programmes for young women who are keen on leadership, reforming the culture and practices of political parties so that they can attract more young women and instilling transparency in nomination of candidates for elective positions.



## CHAPTER ONE

# BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

## INTRODUCTION

*Women have had limited access to leadership opportunities due to the prevalent patriarchal culture, past laws and policies as well as other socio-cultural and economic factors*

**A**cross many countries in the world, more and more women are actively participating in politics. The example of Rwanda and Uganda in the Eastern African region and South Africa testify to this. However, of these women in the cited countries, few qualify as young. The numbers of young women in leadership vary significantly in different parts of the world. But overall, their participation is, by every standard, still minimal. This study sought to account for the minimal participation of young women in leadership using the Kenyan example and to provide recommendations on how best to address this yawning challenge.

To provide such an analysis, the starting point would be the overall situation of women in leadership and their impact on gender friendly policy where they are adequately represented. The Kenya Constitution that was promulgated in August 2010 contains a section on the Bill of Rights. The section addresses

"Mamphela Ramphele, 'Do Women Help Perpetuate Sexism? A Bird's Eye View from South Africa, in Africa Today, vol. 37, no. 1, 1990 and Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox, 'Women Candidates in Kenya: Political Socialization and Representation, in Women and Politics, vol. 20, no. 4, 1999.'<sup>1</sup>

inequalities previously encountered by minority and marginalized groups in the society. Women in Kenya are among the groups that are marginalized in society. Although the impact of women in political leadership on gender sensitive policy making is still debated<sup>1</sup>, it is almost a truism that women are more likely to advance women's interests. By far, the one outstanding limitation to advancing women's interests in leadership is the limited number of women in

leadership which does not reach the threshold required for collective action in addressing the situation of women in Kenya. The numbers have remained woefully low, despite the National Population Census showing that there were more women than men in Kenya (KNBS, 2010). Women have had limited access to leadership opportunities due to the prevalent patriarchal culture, past laws and policies as well as other socio-cultural and economic factors.

Whereas Kenyan women have visibly championed the quest towards gender equality over the years and even hosted the 3rd World Conference of Women in Nairobi in 1985, evidence on the home-front suggests that their progress towards equitable representation, effective political participation and leadership is at best halting. Indeed, the gains from this struggle compare very badly to other countries in the region. Notably, Malawi and Liberia have women Heads of State, though the rest of the African

countries have had very low levels of women political and representation in politics. The neighbouring countries in the East African Region are faring better in terms of women's parliamentary representation than Kenya, with Uganda having 35%, one of whom is a youth aged 19 years old, Tanzania 36%, Ethiopia 27.8%, Rwanda 56.3%, Sudan 24.6 % and Southern Sudan 26.5%. These are figures of women in general. In spite of the dearth of data that aggregates women according to age, it is arguable that such representation is far lower for younger women.

The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) states that “....women's equal participation in decision making is not a demand for simple justice but can be seen also as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into

account.’ However, two decades later, the Kenyan woman still grapples with numerous challenges in their attempt to take positions of public political leadership. The 10th Parliament had only 9.8 % women representation, way below the global average of 18.8 per cent women representation in parliaments. In comparison, a number of African countries have already attained the critical mass threshold of 33 per cent women's representation in decision making, with all the neighbouring countries in East Africa having overtaken Kenya on all indices of gender equality (Kamau, 2010). With such a minimal number of women in positions of leaders, the situation for young women representation in leadership is worse. Table 1.1 presents a historical picture of women's representation in the Kenyan Parliament since 1963.

*Women Representation in Parliament in Kenya since 1963*

Period / parliament	No.of women elected	No.of Women Nominated	Total number of MPs	% of women
1963-1969 1st Parliament	0	0	124	0
1969-1974 2nd Parliament	1	1	167	1.2
1974-1979 3rd Parliament	4	2	169	1.4
1979-1983 4th Parliament	5	1	170	2.4
1983-1988 5th Parliament	2	1	170	1.8
1988-1992 6th Parliament	2	0	200	1.5
1992-1997 7th Parliament	6	1	200	3.5
1997-2002 8th Parliament	4	5	222	3.6
2002-2007 9th Parliament	10	8	222	8.1
2002 - 2012 10th Parliament	16	6	222	9.9

*Sources: Kenya Parliament Records, Nyokabi, et al. (2008) and Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK) (2011).*

The desire to address the situation of women in general is certainly not lacking. In 2006, President Mwai Kibaki issued a presidential directive that all appointments and promotions must ensure one third women representation in all government sectors. This led to an increase in number of women appointed-albeit in a few some institutional appointments made. For instance, for the first time female Vice Chancellors competed and, based on skills, were appointed in public universities. The Commissions that were established around this time such as the TJRC and IEBC had at least one third women representation. Further, budgetary allocation to the national gender machineries doubled within the period this directive was in place. However, the most important attempt at addressing this situation was the enactment of a new, more inclusive Kenya Constitution in 2010. The constitution, in Article 27 (6, 7 and 8) of the final draft that was promulgated in August 2010, has a provision that not more than two thirds of elective or appointive positions should be of the same gender. Within the government sector, this has been followed strictly in most of the appointments made especially within the constitutional commissions and independent offices. For instance, the office of the budget controller is headed by a woman based solely on her qualifications. Also, the Gender and Equality Commission and the Salaries and Remuneration Commissions are chaired by women. Within those commissions chaired by men, the vice chairpersons are women. In the Supreme Court, women are also represented and deliberate effort has been made to ensure

at least one third women representation without comprising on skills and competence. Further, parliament passed legislation to ensure that political parties only get registered when their party lists show two thirds representation of either gender. The Electoral Commission was also mandated in the legislation creating it to ensure political party conformity with the legal requirements. The National Assembly and the Senate, following the 4th March 2013 elections, ensured that either the speaker or deputy speaker in the two houses was female. The constitution provides for 47 seats reserved for women in the National Assembly, and this was achieved in the just concluded elections.

Within civil society organizations, various strategies have been adopted increase young women's political participation. These organizations have developed programmes focusing on empowering women leaders, including the Kenya Women Political Caucus (KWPC), The Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), The National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK) and the League of Kenya Women Voters (LKWV). The KWPC's mission is to enhance and facilitate the attainment of gender equity and equality in decision-making structures and elective leadership at all levels. FIDA-Kenya lobbies for democracy and women's involvement in policy making while the NCWK seeks to design and implement programmes with the aim of empowering women intellectually, socially, economically and politically to seek elective office. Further, it aims at strengthening women's access to political office.

Why the focus on leadership and especially political participation? Politics plays a vital role in influencing public policy making. If politics has something to do with the power to influence public policy making in relation to different groups and constituencies in society, women constitute a special interest group whose ideas, interests and expectations are hardly factored in public policy making. It is therefore plausible to argue that their inclusion in positions of influence will not only give them a chance to have their voice heard and interests addressed but it will also spark a new interest in political participation for younger women. The struggle for equality and women's empowerment therefore goes hand in hand with political participation and representation.

The youth in Kenya are defined as people ranging between ages 18 to 35, and they comprise 36% of the total population

in the country. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), females make up 51.2% of the population (KNBS, 2009). However, despite their number, the public discussion of women representation often fails to disaggregate women on the basis of class, age, or any other relevant social categories. The result is a failure to understand the differential experiences of women and how each influences their desire and ability to participate. Though it is assumed that young women shy away from politics and their contribution to policy making is minimal, the explanation for this is rarely given. This research begins that process of accounting for the minimal participation of young women in leadership.



*A mentorship session between senior women in leadership positions and young women leaders from across Africa during the Kenya Open Forum seeking to inspire young women to seize leadership opportunities in the all spheres*



## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study sought to examine and understand the experiences and challenges that young women in Kenya face in their political participation. The specific objectives of the study were:-

- *To examine the historical and current trends in young women political participation in the local and national political arena and discuss the challenges they face in their bid to participate in the political process in Kenya;*
- *To analyze how existing legal, political party, economic status, community and media structures that encourage, safeguard and recognize the participation of women and young women in political activities;*
- *To understand the way patriarchy and masculinity interface to enhance or marginalize young women's inclusion in leadership structures at the national and local government;*
- *To examine how young women's reproductive roles influence their ascent to leadership positions and elaborate on the strategies they develop to counter these challenges.*

# JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

It is adequately documented that the level of women's participation in politics and leadership by far pales in comparison to their numbers; this is in spite of numerous attempts to correct this disparity and ensure equitable women participation. This situation has invited many initiatives at the academic and policy levels to alter the nature of gender relations. While these initiatives are good and worth supporting, their failure to disaggregate the category of women and make a deeper inquiry into the different categories and experiences of women in relation to power and political leadership remains an important pending analytical exercise. This study is justified by the fact that it seeks to disaggregate the category of women and highlight the role that age plays in influencing young women's political participation. This focus will help policy makers concerned with gender inequity to factor in young women as an important group for policy thinking. The study examines the patterns of political participation among young women in Kenya and the experiences and challenges they face in seeking political leadership.

Towards achieving the key tasks of this study, the rest of the report is divided into four parts. Chapter 2 provides a historical background to young women's political participation in Kenya. Chapter 3 illustrates the methodology used while chapter 4 analyses the findings. Chapter 5 gives the conclusions and recommendations of the study.



## CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## INTRODUCTION

Political participation consists of activities that aim at influencing the structure of a government, the appointment of leaders and the policies they execute. These activities can have the goal of supporting the existing structures and politics or changing them and include active and passive actions, collective or individual, legal or illegal, support or pressure actions, by which one or several persons try to influence the type of government in a society, how the state is led, or specific government decisions affecting a community or their individual members are made (Conway, 2000). Different studies on political participation have confirmed that women have been less politically engaged than men in many established democracies.

## CONCEPT OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Various definitions of ‘political participation’ have been proposed, and so the term may not have a universally accepted definition (Uhlener 2001). Political participation has often been referred to as “political engagement” or “public involvement in decision making.” Riley et al. (2010) refer to political participation as an “engagement with traditional mechanisms in the . . . political system, such as voting in elections and joining political organizations.” Other scholars such as Huntington and Nelson (1976) see it as an “activity by private citizens designed to influence government decision-making,” while Verba et al. (1995) describe it as an “activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action – either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies.”

Political participation therefore encompasses a set of rights and duties that involve formally organized civic and political activities like voting or political party membership (Munroe, 2002). Other scholars have defined political participation in terms of the degree to which a state’s population exercises their right to engage in political activities, such as protests, free speech, voting, influencing or other form of involvement. All these definitions indicate that participation, as understood in this study, involves activities and exercises of a political nature within conventional norms, even though these may vary greatly from country to country, and from time to time.

A number of factors have been identified as influencing political participation. Vecchione and Caprara (2009) found that gender, education and age are significant factors affecting participation levels. Their findings compare very well with those by Stolle and Hooghe (2009). As a determinant of political involvement, it has been argued that many of the young people may feel isolated and even excluded from the political system which tends to be 'self-reproduced and often self-serving.' According to Lister

(2007), these sentiments arise since young people are often considered to be immature and financially dependent on their parents, so they are not often treated as equal members of the planning process and power arrangements. Briggs (2008) and Henn et al. (2005) differ and argue that there is a steadily increasing body of research suggesting that young people are not generally "disengaged" from politics, but instead that they have a critical attitude towards institutional politics.

## HISTORICAL AND CURRENT TRENDS OF YOUNG WOMENS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Early studies in the 1920s and 1930s of electoral behaviour in Western Europe and North America commonly observed that men were more likely to vote than women (Merriam, 1924). A survey conducted by Verba, Nie and Kim (1978) comparing 'conventional' forms of political participation such as voter turnout, party membership, contact activity and community organizing in seven European countries concluded that 'in all societies for which we have data, sex is related to political activity; men are more active than women.'

According to Nyokabi (2010), there are two domains for the exercise of power, the public and private. Private domains comprise of business leadership, civil society, professional, faith-based and community-based organizations. H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in a speech on the 10th anniversary of the African Women's

Development Fund (AWDF), explained that governance cuts across all spheres of representation and decision-making, from the community to national levels; and full political participation for women would be realized when quotas and special seats are abolished and their access to participatory institutions at political and economic arenas considered a right women no longer feel compelled to wage campaigns and stage protests for. A survey of political participation and trends in Britain conducted by Parry, Moyser and Day (1992) found that gender differences in voting participation had become insignificant by the 1980s, men continued to prove more engaged in conducting public affairs, collective action and direct action.

Mclvor (1996) argues that the history of political thought had ignored women because politics had been about the power of governments, war and diplomacy; areas where women 'could not participate' ostensibly because power was considered a masculine attribute. Discrimination against women has been noted to be widespread due to patriarchal arrangements, where the husband is the head of the household and women often have little influence in decisions affecting their lives. This has been so, despite the fact that women form a majority of the population in Kenya (51.2%) and play an active role in the development of the society. Women continue to be marginalized and discriminated against in many aspects of their lives, a situation which for a long time was attributed to the existing laws and policies as well as the socio-cultural factors. The Census report for the year 2009 did not disaggregate the population size of the people within the 18 to 35 age bracket but overall a summary of the male and female population in Kenya is given in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Women and Men's Population in Kenya

Age structure (years)	Females '000s' (% of total)	Males '000s'. (% of total)
0-14	8,398	8,173
15-64	10,180	10,505
65 +	602	730
Total	19,180 (51.2%)	19,408 (48.8%)

Source: KNBS, (2010)

The participation of women in the management of public affairs is the right of every woman and forms the heart of Kenyan democracy. Women politics can be traced back from pre-colonial times and have changed over time. Women Rights Organizations which came as early as 1952 have lobbied for women rights and created empowerment programs that would ensure involvement of women in politics and political party nomination. The Kenya political parties on the other hand have not involved women equally in their party nominations nor given them equal leadership opportunities.



A majority of political parties in Kenya are largely dominated by men, and as vehicles to political offices, often decide who will be listed on the ballot and in what capacity. The Inter-Parliamentary Union incorporated the universal declaration on democracy which says 'The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of the society in which they work, in equality and complementarity, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences. Therefore one major problem with women's underrepresentation in politics lies primarily with lack of democracy in

political parties and male domination in other leadership structures. A quick look at number of female leaders in most sectors as compared to males shows that there is more male representation as compared to female. Table 2.2 shows the number of female candidates aspiring for the various elective positions in the March 2013 elections. Following the conclusion of the process, the results showed that no women were elected to the position of president, deputy president, governor or senator. Only 16 women were elected as members of parliament.

Table 2.2: Number of Female and Male aspirants for the 2013 national elections in Kenya

Positions	Total No. Females
President	2
Deputy president/Running mate	1
Governor	8
Senator	9
Women representative	63
National Assembly	96
County representative	202
Undecided	122
Total No.	502

Sources: The Kenya Aspirants (2012)

The Global Gender Gap Index -2012 ranks countries based on measuring gaps rather than levels, and according to gender equality rather than women's empowerment. It focuses on gaps between men and women in four fundamental categories (sub-indexes): economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment. Globally, Kenya is ranked position 72 with an index of 0.6768 on all four categories, but in the political empowerment pillar alone, it is rated at position 103 with a lowly index of 0.0786 (with the highest being 1) out of 135 countries surveyed (Hausmann, Tyson, Bekhouche & Zahidi, 2012). These rankings suggest that although policies and legal frameworks have been instituted, the intended increase in the number of women engaged in leadership is yet to be realized, and therefore, more still needs to be done to entrench equality in the political arena.

There is a relationship between economic status and political participation. Many males who are involved in political activities rely on economic muscle to succeed. In a study on women's role in economic development, Boserup (2007) proved that development strategies, focused on Western and male-centred models, had not considered the role and situation of women within their societies. Therefore, instead of improving their situation, this planning error had contributed to further deterioration of women's rights and status. Boserup's

theories materialized into the "Women in Development" (WID) approaches, and later the "Gender and Development" (GAD) approach.

The WID approach focused on the exclusion of women, with an emphasis on women's activities and roles in order to promote their rights, increase their participation in development and their economic empowerment; GAD on the other hand believes that social reality is more complex, revealing that women's exclusion has its cause and effect on inequalities in gender relations and in the roles these relations assign to women and men. These theoretical underpinnings resulted in women's empowerment which is the process by which women, both individually and collectively, become aware of the power relations operating in their lives and gender integration or mainstreaming which is a cross-cutting strategy towards gender equality in all political decisions, in institutional structures and in resource allocation.

Table 2.3 summarizes the number of women in the politically influenced hierarchy of elective and appointive positions in Kenya between 2003 and 2012. It shows that women are yet to achieve the 30% proportion in all appointive or elective positions. Reliable data on young women's representation is hardly available as the ages of the women in the various offices are not publicly available.

Table 2.3: Women and men representation in leadership positions in different sectors

Positions	Period (2003-2007)				Period (2008-2012)			
	Women	Men	Total	% of Women	Women	Men	Total	% of Women
President	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
Prime Minister	-	-	-	-	0	1	1	0
Vice president	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
Ministers	1	14	15	7	6	34	40	7
Ambassadors	11	29	40	28	11	29	40	28
Permanent Secretaries	6	25	31	19	7	37	44	16
Provincial commissioners	0	8	8	0	1	7	8	12
District Commissioners	2	69	71	3	6	88	94	6
District officers	88	358	446	20	164	701	865	19
Chief justice	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
Assistant chief justice	0	1	1	0	-	-	-	-
High court judges	1	12	13	8	12	36	48	25
Chief Kadhi/Kadhis	0	17	-	0	0	17	17	0
Chancellors	-	-	-	-	1	4	5	20
Vice chancellors	-	-	-	-	2	5	7	29

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

## STRUCTURES THAT ENCOURAGE AND SAFEGUARD YOUNG WOMENS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Numerous efforts at the national and international levels have served to influence social trends towards greater gender equality and empowerment by way of instituting appropriate policy and legal structures. These have transformed women and men's lives in relation to traditional sex roles in the home and family, expanded equal opportunities for women in higher education, increased their participation in the workforce, and raised the numbers of women entering the professions and managerial ranks. The expansion of opportunities for self-expression and financial autonomy has meant that women face less restrictions in attaining status and fulfillment solely through the traditional route of family, marriage and children (The Electoral Commission, 2004).

During the last decade, women in Kenya have achieved some gains in elective and appointive offices. However, current membership and patterns of political participation among women and men are still dominated by the latter. Women have made desired differences in voicing their opinions in the public sphere (Kassilly and Onkware, 2011). The improved status of women can be seen in several domains as a result of juridical improvement and a new constitution which recognizes women.

The journalists, being part of the larger society carry with them the same gender stereotypes which affects their reporting on what is (not) news. These gender stereotypes permeate both female and male reporters who generally view women's political activities as not newsworthy and therefore making them invisible in the public scene. The role of the mass media in shaping public opinion on societal issues is an area that has been explored by scholars overtime. However some contest this view, arguing that the media simply reflects but doesn't shape public opinion (Nyokabi, 2010; Wrong, 2009; Devitt & Alday, 2001 cited in Pantti, 2006). Whether through shaping or reflecting public view, there is a general agreement that the media plays an important role in the political, cultural, social and economic aspects of the society particularly in the increasingly globalizing world. Women political aspirants/ politicians are often invited to talk about issues related to social welfare (issues that Briske, 2004, calls soft issues) as opposed to men who are often asked to discuss economic and security issues ('hard issues'). Briske (2004) argues that this selective engagement of male and female politicians may not reflect their true identities or intellectual capacity to comment on 'hard' or 'soft' issues but the message sent to the public is interpreted in that context.

Muteshi (2006) discusses the role of media in women's political participation and explains that the Kenyan media has continually allowed more women to join its ranks, thereby allowing women to influence discourse on a variety of public and private issues, though she laments that the said women have failed to rise to decision making levels. She argues that this is partly responsible for the limited attention paid to women politicians by the media in Kenya.

Cultural attitudes towards women have also shifted radically since the mid-twentieth century, with a rising tide of support for gender equality evident in most developed and developing nations. Changing attitudes have brought wider acceptance of sex role equality in the home, workforce and public sphere. However, Geniets (2010) shows that young women from low socio-economic backgrounds are among the least politically engaged compared to other groups. In-depth interviews with young women of lower socio-economic status in the UK showed that the political disengagement of those women cannot be explained away as a condition of apathy but must be viewed in a wider context of techno-social and cultural change. Geniets (2010) concluded that traditional political media do not reach young women from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, and thereby results in their exclusion from mainstream political activities.

Internationally, a series of declarations such as The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the UN Security Council's Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and the Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs) have all been designed to promote equal opportunities and women's rights. The BPfA emphasized women's equal participation in decision making as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account and set two strategic objectives; first, to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in all power structures and decision making; and secondly to increase women's capacity to participate in decision making and leadership.

The CEDAW declaration in Article 7, calls upon state parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country, and reaffirmed the importance of equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase women's role in decision making. Objective 3 of the MDGs Declaration (2000) establishes gender equality as a goal and as a condition for meeting the other goals. Indicator 3.3 of the objective 3 refers to the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament.

Kenya is a signatory to these instruments. However, the number of women in the 10th Parliament (2008-2012) account for a mere 9.8 percent despite the fact that the country is signatory of the Beijing Platform for Action that stipulates that women must account for not less than 30 percent in decision making bodies. The Political Parties Act requires that membership in respective political outfits must reflect regional and ethnic diversity, gender balance and representation of minorities and marginalized groups. Article 27 (3) of

the Constitution states inter alia that: “Women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic and cultural and social spheres. On the other hand Article 27 (8), states that “The State shall take legislative and other measures to implement the principle that no more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender.”

Comparative evidence from elsewhere in the world shows that the traditional voting gap has largely diminished, or even reversed, in other established democracies, with women now regularly casting ballots in significantly higher proportions than men (Conway, Steuernagel & Ahern, 1997). In the United States, for example, in every presidential election since 1980, and in non-presidential midterm elections since 1986, the turnout among women has been higher than that of men.

## PATRIARCHY, MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY IN THE PROCESSES THAT MARGINALISE OR INCLUDE YOUNG WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES

Power imbalance between men and women, together with the gender structures that perpetuate it is often regarded as patriarchy. Women’s response to this state of affairs has consisted of feminist approaches which have sought to expose and eliminate these social conditions, with differing degrees of success. Mclvor (1996) explains that men are dominant politically, economically, culturally, in the military, sports, academia and all other spheres of public life due to ‘willful’ blindness of the male-dominated justice system and the belief in the private-public dichotomy. This dichotomy defines women as belonging to the home and family and men as belonging to the world of power and competition; therefore, stay-at-home women are less likely to participate in politics than those who work outside. Women and men have also been socialized to associate politics with masculine values.

The legitimacy of democratic political systems is usually premised on the basis of all the citizens’ views being taken into account in political decision-making, and formation of government. In a study entitled ‘Citizen Audit,’ conducted by Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley summarising all forms of political participation, it was found that women were marginally less involved in collective political acts such as party membership and in cultural attitudes, with women proving less politically



knowledgeable, interested and engaged in political discussions. The implication of this finding is that the sex that is less politically involved fails to have their concerns, needs and interests being granted due attention as reflected in the public policy-making process.

Jennings and Markus (1988) focus on the relationship between socio-demographic variables (such as age, marital status and gender) and levels of political participation from an equally interesting perspective. Their approach is defined as the “cohort composition theory”, emphasizing the importance of cohort deprivation. The general idea is that lower participation rates found among older age groups compared to younger people (for example on on-line political participation) may be a consequence of the fact that older people generally become less well equipped, less educated and less prepared to participate. But the situation in Kenya could be much different, because a majority of the politicians are elderly, and often, many retirees resort to politics.

During the AWDF's 10th anniversary in 2010, Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia observed that despite certain gains, women continue to lag behind the men in access to education, resources and opportunities. She also noted that ‘from the beginning of their lives, female children get less attention, less education, less of everything. Girls’ education and, in some places, girls’ lives, are treated as less valuable, thereby establishing a pattern that constrains women their entire lives, affecting their ability to make decisions at all levels

of their societies.’ This indicates that there is a multiplicity of factors that constrain young women’s entry into or pursuit of political office. These would need to be clearly identified for the most appropriate strategies for addressing them to be adopted.

Women’s socio-economic condition is another factor identified by Fisher (1997). Women according to Fisher constitute the majority of the poor and the illiterate in both urban and rural areas in Africa. According to (Lamb, 2002) women in Kenya have endured ‘physical and psychological bashing, mental trauma, maiming, rape, sexual harassment and even death while participating in politics.’ Kenya being a patriarchal society, women have endured decades of humiliation, ridicule and sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). The violence against women leaders can be traced as far as colonial times where women were humiliated in many ways and others killed during Mau Mau uprising and the declaration of a state of emergency in 1952. Women politicians such as the Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai were set upon by state agents when they ventured into politics (Kassilly & Onkware, 2011).

In a critical assessment of contemporary political participation Lamprianou (2012) argues that political participation has many layers of complexity as has been well demonstrated by the typology of engagement offered by Snell (2010) which indicates that young people approach politics with more or less information, more or less trust in politicians and the political parties, more

or less sense of efficacy and more or less sense of civic duty. From this analysis, it is apparent that a lack of any one of these characteristics may cause a growing adult to remain politically inactive, thereby tipping the scale toward a majority who are disengaged and a minority who have enough of each of the characteristics to be semi-to-fully politically engaged.

Kiamba (2008) says that despite women aspiring for leadership positions, they still face barriers related to culture and cultural expectations, as well as the choice and balance between work and family. She also goes on to show that despite the strides made on women's empowerment and political recognition, fairness in both gender equality in politics and especially in leadership and women participation in decision making is largely peripheral.

## EFFECT OF THE REPRODUCTIVE ROLE OF WOMEN ON LEADERSHIP

Women have extensive roles and responsibilities at the household level. Some of the gender roles undertaken by women usually include the organizing, cooking, cleaning and minding children. Some of these engagements work towards limiting women's potential to aspire to positions of leadership. According to Sadie (2005), one of the impediments women face is a patriarchal system where decisions making and power are in the hands of males. According to African culture and beliefs, the role and status of women is below that of men and women should be involved in reproductive duties and household chores. Despite women's education and entry into the job market the traditional women's role is that of home making, which confines them to the domestic and private sphere rather than public. Another barrier to active political participation among women is the reproductive role. Tripp (2001) argues that political campaigning requires an extensive travel programme where one spends nights away from home, going into bars and public barazas, to meet supporters. These may not be readily acceptable in most African societies, including Kenya. Women who vie for political positions have to weather labels such as "unfit" and "loose" as mothers and wives. The societal attitude towards women therefore hinders women seeking leadership positions due to stereotyping and discrimination.

Studies have shown that women's family obligations, including the availability of child care, interfere with women ability to take political position. There is usually a conflict between parental roles, marital roles and political career for women (Martin

*Despite women's education and entry into the job market the traditional women's role is that of home making, which confines them to the domestic and private sphere rather than public*



& Glaine 1990). Women as compared to men receive very little encouragement to seek leadership positions, there are very few networks in Kenya both formal and informal for women aspiring leaders. The leadership position for women requires extra hard work and long hours.

This may prove to be a burden to them due to their added work of child care, home and family responsibilities. The family responsibility makes it hard for women to advance politically (Kiamba, 2008).



*Hon. Sen. Naisula Lesuuda, nominated Senator, explains a point to fellow women leaders during consultative forum with women members of National & Senate assembly on advancement of women rights in Kenya through the Kenya Women's National Charter*



### CHAPTER THREE

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



# INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the study methodology. The techniques of data collection used, the study area is also presented, as well as the study design and sampling strategy. The study was largely qualitative with some aspects of quantitative research. Further, both primary and secondary data was used

## THE STUDY AREA

Kenya's Constitution (2010) provides for 47 counties. The counties replaced the eight provinces, namely Central, Coast, Eastern, Nairobi, North Eastern, Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western. The counties are the second level of governance after the national government. Fig 1 shows the map of Kenya and the 47 counties.

*Fig 3.1: Map of Kenya showing the location of each of the 47 Counties*



## THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The study design was both exploratory and descriptive. It was exploratory in that the study had the intentions of establishing whether young women could, through the provided legal opportunities, make it to leadership positions in the country. It was also descriptive in that the study analyzed the structures which permit or challenge opportunities for young women participation in leadership positions.

## THE SAMPLING STRATEGY

Triangulation was used in the sampling design. Then random sampling was used in this study but was also complimented by snowballing in some instances.

## MULTI-STAGE CLUSTER SAMPLING

The study defined each of the 47 counties as a cluster. The study then moved to define the clusters in terms of rural, urban areas as well as counties that have a history of electing women to parliament, and those which lack such a history. The clustering of the counties was based on the former eight administrative provinces. Following this scenario, the first step was to pick five out of the eight provinces purposively. These were Nairobi, Rift Valley, Eastern, Central, Nyanza and Western. Within these clusters, every county in that original cluster was considered a unit of analysis. Second, a county or two were then picked within the cluster randomly. Nairobi city was picked as the commercial and political capital city of Kenya. Central Kenya was also picked as a cluster which rarely and reluctantly elects women to leadership through the political cleavage in spite of having produced some very entrepreneurial women in the country. In Central province, Kiambu County was picked. In the Rift Valley, Nakuru, and Elgeyo Marakwet were purposively picked. In Western Province, Kakamega County and in Eastern Province Meru County was picked. All the counties were distributable within five of the former eight counties.

The third level of clustering was within the sub-cluster where the actual study site was purposively picked. In Nairobi County, Kawangware and South C were picked for the study. South C was treated as a middle level income area while Kawangware was treated as a low income area where a woman had also been elected to Parliament for a long time. In Elgeyo Marakwet, Marakwet was picked largely because the voters had for a long time elected a woman Member of Parliament in spite of strong cultural practices that are highly patriarchal. In Nakuru County, Naivasha was picked while Mumias was picked for Western.

In total, six counties were selected for study based on the criteria discussed. The young women respondents were drawn from the IEBC list of aspirants as well as the political parties. The young women leaders who responded were 30 in total. Table 3.1 shows the respondents and where sampled from.

Former Province	Counties within province	County selected	Area where study was done
Nairobi	1	Nairobi	Kawangware, Makadara, Kamukunji, Kibera, Kangemi
Rift Valley	14 N	akuru	Naivasha
		Elgeyo Marakwet	Marakwet
Western 4	K	akamega	Mumias
Eastern	6	Meru M	eru town
Central	5	Kiambu K	iambu town

Table 3.1: Clusters of the counties as sampled

The sampling from the existing list also provided opportunity for snowballing especially with the young women aspirants because they were not many or easily located. In total 30 young women aspirants were interviewed while 300 group discussions were held with community leaders, with women leaders and religious leaders in all the sampled areas. These leaders were purposively sampled with the help of administration.

## DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Several tools were triangulated to gather the needed information. They included the structured interview schedule, the semi structured focus group discussion guide, the semi structured interview schedule administered to the media personnel and the semi structured interview guide for women parliamentarians.

## STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

The first was the structured interview schedule. This was administered to the 30 women aspirants drawn from the political party lists and the IEBC list of aspirants. The instrument solicited information relating to their aspirations, their networking within the political party as well as the community where they intended to vie.



The study had a second semi structured interview schedule administered to the media personnel. Respondents comprised of persons from AMWIK, Eve Woman, Nation Media Group and Mediamax Group. The questions were designed to establish how the media profiles young women aspirants and how it planned to profile them especially in line with the Constitution of Kenya (2010) which has specific articles addressing young people and women in particular as well as their participation in the political arena.

The third interview schedule was the semi structured interview guide for women parliamentarians. The purpose of this schedule was to establish whether women parliamentarians did support younger women in the political path. Two long serving women parliamentarians, Hon. Jebii Kilimo and Hon. Martha Karua were interviewed.

## SEMI STRUCTURED FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

This instrument was administered to 300 respondents in total from the five counties. These respondents included community elders, religious leaders and Women leaders in the different communities, CBOs and selected civil society working in the communities under study. These group discussions were held separately between men and women. Each group discussion had between 7 and 12 respondents at a time. Women group discussions were held separately from the men. The purpose was to ensure openness and confidence among respondents of different gender. In total 24 group discussions were held in the Counties under study and 288 persons participated.

## SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data was also used. This included journals, existing literature, data from the Kenya Population Census, the Kenyan Constitution (2010) and other legal and policy documents, the IEBC register as well as Centre for Multi-Party Democracy literature among other data. The literature largely focused on young women's participation in political parties and what structures are established by the parties as well as other structures existing within the societies where they network and interact for their political aspirations.

## SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the research design, the study site and the tools used to collect the information needed for this study. The findings of the study are discussed in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# STUDY RESULTS

# INTRODUCTION

*The interplay of patriarchy, masculinity and femininity are discussed in relation to the role they play in excluding or including young women political aspirants.*

**T**his chapter presents the results of the study. The characteristics of the respondents, and the challenges faced by young women aspirants are presented, followed by an analysis of the structures which exist and have potential to assist

young women aspirants achieve their potential for leadership. The interplay of patriarchy, masculinity and femininity are discussed in relation to the role they play in excluding or including young women political aspirants. Finally the reproductive role of women and how this impacts on the young women's ability to contest and also ensure that the family and reproductive roles are taken care of are examined.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

The respondents' characteristics for this study are as represented in the Table 4.1. The respondents were drawn from different ages, religions, marital status and political parties. A majority of those who responded were aged between 36 and 45 years old, while none of the respondents were aged between 18 and twenty five years old.

Table 4.1: Women leaders' respondents' characteristics

Variable R	esponse Categories F	requency P	ercentage (%)
Age	18-25	0	-
	26-35	5	16.6
	36-45	24	80
	46-55	0	-
	Above 56	1	3.3
Marital Status	Single	6	20
	Married	22	73.3
	Divorced	0	0
	Cohabiting	0	0
	Widow	2	6.6
Religious background	Muslim	4	13.3
	Christian	26	86.6
	Hindu	0	0
	Atheist	0	0
	Others.....	0	0
Political party		6	20
	ODM	22	73.3
	TNA	1	3.3
	NARCKenya	1	3.3
	POA	0	0
Dependant	Others		
	Yes	28	93.3
	No	2	6.6
Position Vied for	President	0	0-
	Senator	0	0
	Governor	0	0
	MP	4	13.3
	Women representative	16	53.3
	Ward representative	10	33.3

## CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUNG WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN POLITICS

The study sought to establish the challenge women leaders go through as they bid for political positions. All women leaders who participated in the study irrespective of age, religion or marital status noted lack of funds as the biggest impediment to political participation. The respondents reported that money is a significant and determining factor in Kenya's politics. Financial resources are needed to mount effective campaigns, pay agents, secure media slots for advertising and print posters, among other expenses. It was evident that male politicians are often more financially endowed than their female counterparts, with the situation of young women being much worse than older women because most of them are neither well established in their careers, nor do they attract adequate sponsorship. Whereas older politicians have convoys of cars and can even hire helicopters and personnel to popularize themselves, young women do not often manage to penetrate the electorate to gain much visibility.

Another significant challenge was stated to be insecurity, with 50% of the respondents saying that this posed a problem that discourages young women. In the FGDs, the respondents indicated that political gatherings often turned violent when supporters of opposing candidates met. Young women being

very sensitive to violence could not take part in the confrontations or protect themselves. Further, they found it difficult to stay out late campaigning because of insecurity. Many male politicians with the resources could easily hire their body guards and security details, an engagement many young women politicians feel incapable of. A related challenge noted by 80% of the young women aspirants was intimidation from amongst males- both politicians and non-politicians- once they declared their interest in participating in active politics. This served to discourage their political quests. Some of the respondents recounted incidences of threats directed at them either directly or indirectly.

Family obligations and motherhood was pointed at as a hindrance to young women's active participation in politics. At least 20% of the respondents argued that their reproductive cycle kicks in at a time when male counterparts become active in politics. On the other hand, 30% of the respondents noted the lack of time as a key factor affecting their political aspirations, while 11% indicated that their religion was a challenge, especially those from the Muslim faith. The FGDs revealed that stereotypes and propaganda against young women candidates were also a problem, and this was not only spread

by men, but by their fellow women – both young and old, who perceive those who express interest in politics as either women with low moral standards or incapable of offering serious leadership. These were seen to be directly related to the influence of gender inequalities and culture. Violence and intimidation of young women instills fear among aspirants, thereby discouraging them from vying or actively participating in political activities.

Gender-based violence targeting young women aspirants were found to be of the greatest concern in Meru. It was reported that women aspirants had in the past been targeted by gangs and beaten up by unknown assailants. This had served to instill fear among young women who harboured political ambitions, as the violence could be directed at them or their families. However, it was observed that women actively participate in mobilizing and voting although very few vie for political positions. The male politicians were said to have realized the power of women voters and they often engaged women in their campaigns.

The young women aspirants interviewed indicated that another key challenge that they faced was the high bar set for them before they achieve recognition. Some of the requirements for recognition include academic or professional accomplishment. It was noted that even though there is a near parity in access to education at the basic level, few women made it to higher levels. This process begins to limit how many women can achieve the necessary recognition to participate in electoral competition with their male counterparts. The same case applies to the number of women who excel in professional endeavours when compared to their male counterparts. Not only do their male counterparts dominate most sectors including education, academia and industry, this dominance carries name recognition and access to funds that can mobilize people in electoral campaigns. This finding confirms an argument carried in the Daily Nation of April 6, 2009 which pointed out that:

Their academic and professional accomplishments confirm the view that women are held to higher standards of achievement than men.

*"A distinguishing element of the women leaders who made it to parliament or any related position of leadership in Kenya is their high levels of professional achievements. Most of the women leaders were accomplished academics having reached the pinnacle of their professions. Examples include Dr. Julia Ojiambo, Phoebe Asiyo, and Professor Wangari Mathai among others."*

2Daily Nation, 6th April 2009 also posted in [HTTP://WWW.nation.co.ke/news/-/1050/557575/-/item/1/-/hyph/-/index.html](http://WWW.nation.co.ke/news/-/1050/557575/-/item/1/-/hyph/-/index.html)

## ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING STRUCTURES WHICH ENCOURAGE, SAFEGUARD AND RECOGNIZE YOUNG WOMENS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The respondents opined that young women's political engagement in Kenya has been difficult, mainly due to the dominance of males at all levels of decision making, and the inhibiting patriarchal structures dominating society. The respondents observed that though all women were free to vie, fewer younger women offered themselves for leadership positions compared to older women, who have expressed interest in and attempted to penetrate the political system. Nevertheless, few have made any headway since independence, as evidenced by the number of women members of the cabinet, permanent secretaries, provincial administration and even local government over the years. Women's participation in politics largely ends at the voting stage, where they nevertheless often voted for male candidates despite there being female candidates in the lists of contestants. Part of the reason for this state of affairs was that Kenyan politics are largely based on patronage, and few young women are able to catch the attention of party leaders or other bureaucrats; this lack of influence inevitably renders their attempts to access power and authority, or influence governance, futile.

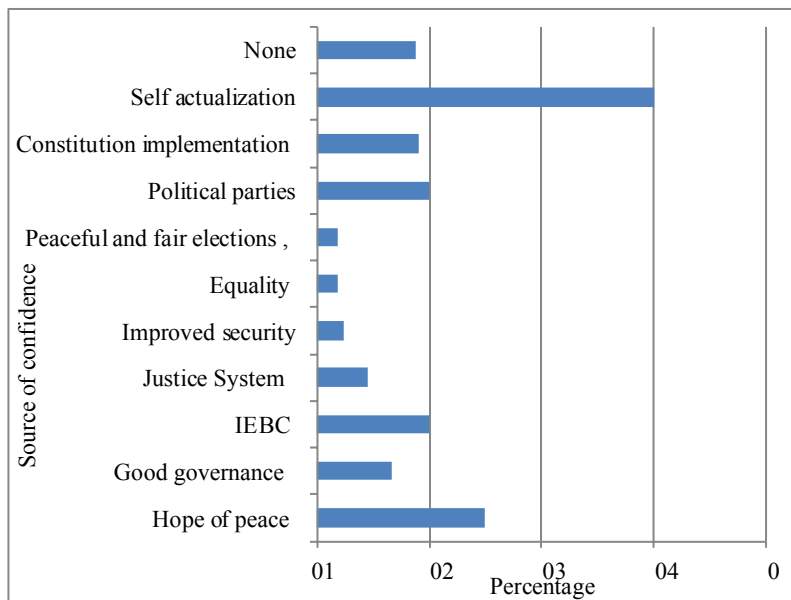
The women noted however that the Kenya constitution (2010) motivated more women to enter competitive politics. 90% of the young women political aspirants interviewed stated that the provisions in the constitution that protects individual rights, those of persons with disability, marginalized communities and women that encouraged them to participate. Also, about 90% of women representatives interviewed also expressed confidence in the current constitution and the justice system. The respondents in the focus group discussions revealed that one of the main factors that had in the past hindered the participation of young women in political processes was the old constitution which was not gender sensitive. However, they expressed optimism that the present constitution is more favourable to all women in practice, due to the provision 47 special seats for women, one from each county, and the assurance of equality and rights for all persons.

The other constitutional provisions that the aspirants singled out as lending



them the confidence to pursue political seats include the civil and political rights as provided in Chapter four of the constitution that guarantee the rights and freedoms accorded to both men and women. Constant reference was made to Section 81 (b) which states that “no more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender.” The constitution and its implementation is a source of optimism to most women many of whom 14.9% held the hope of peace during election, good governance (6.7%), confidence in the IEBC (10.0%), justice system (4.5%), improved security (2.4%), equality (1.9%), Self-actualization 30%, peaceful and fair elections (1.8%), political parties (10%) constitution implementation (9.0%), none (8.8%). This information is summarized in Fig 4.1.

Fig 4.1. What gives the aspirants confidence to vie



The women noted that the constitution did actually make violence unconstitutional in Article 81 e(ii) thus addressing one of their major fears in elective politics. Women noted too that institutions such as the NCIC were critical in ensuring that those who did not abide by the election law would be convicted.

The women aspirants also noted that the political parties had legislation and would get through that legislation finances to support the aspirants and they hoped that the fund would benefit them. However, the young women were not sure how much their parties would receive and how it would be distributed. Nevertheless, they felt that the only assured seat for young women in parliament is that of the youth representative which is a nominated. They however still felt that few young women would be able to marshal enough support and overcome the other barriers to their participation in electoral politics like finances, insecurity, motherhood, political patronage, cultural stereotypes and propaganda. Further, it was lost to most that the preferred nomination for youth is not restricted to a female as the constitution uses the youth category in a gender neutral way which could easily enable male youth to dominate in the nomination.

The focus group discussions touched on the contributions government made to empower young women to participate more in politics. Some of the strategies have included the inception of several development projects targeting women such as the Women Enterprise Fund started in 2006 to improve women's financial status and the Youth Enterprise Fund which benefits young women. Other notable measures mentioned by the respondents include access to low interest bank loans and other women-specific tailored loans. Using

these funds, women are expected to start income generating projects. The Government sponsored free primary and tuition-free secondary education were also considered to have enabled young women to access education and become politically active. Besides, other respondents commended the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) programme that has aided more young women to go through education and educate their children. Through CDF funded projects, some women have gained employment and in the process also gained exposure on participating in policy making, mobilization and political leadership.

Respondents from the media industry interviewed in the study noted that the media shaped public opinion and can could 'make' or 'break' the political ambitions of an individual. To this end, the study further sought to examine the underlying factors behind media reporting and how they portrayed young women in politics. It was found that media reporting of women's activities is guided by two main factors: the socialization of the journalists and the attitudes of the editorial and other senior managers. The journalists, carry with them the same gender stereotypes which affect their reporting on what is (and is not) news. These stereotypes permeated both female and male reporters who generally view women's political activities as not newsworthy and therefore making them invisible in the public scene.

According to the respondents, the young women politicians are in a more difficult situation because the journalists generally perceive them as 'non serious' political contenders and therefore not worth any news coverage. Within the print media, they receive more coverage on social magazines and pullouts, which in most cases, focus on their personal rather than political lives. On the other hand, the electronic media, more often than not, doesn't give much information about the young women candidates or simply trivialized their candidacy. Whereas the media was generally found to be hostile to women politicians, the same candidates were also found to be lacking a clear media strategy, to win over the media to their causes. Most of the young women candidates are media shy, a situation which is attributed to the nature of the media to prefer personal details; a prospect that scares away most of the candidates. Media researchers, in an attempt to explain this phenomenon have argued that the media focused on candidates that have realistic chances of ascending to power, and for this reason, the old and seasoned male and female politicians receive much more coverage (Pantti, 2006).

It was established that the youth in general receive little coverage in the media, and the young women politicians have to contend with being both 'youth and 'women' suffer double difficulty because of the tendency by the media to focus on seasoned politicians only. Respondents from the electronic media were particularly emphatic that they keenly weigh their options before attending press conferences or political events, and so one has to stand out to catch their attention. One senior editor interviewed in the study noted that:

*'...media also looks for where there is news, for example if you call for a press conference now, will I come? You are a nobody because you haven't developed a name. Young women must first develop a name before engaging into politics.'*



This suggests that the media plays a key role in promoting the careers of politicians and in portraying them as either strong or weak candidates. To this end, its failure to focus on young women politicians reinforces their 'invisibility' because the public rarely recognizes them. This attitude continues to ensure that young women and their political activities are relegated to the periphery. In supporting this view, White (1961), in his book, *The Making of a President* insists that the press is important in politics because it sets the agenda of public discussion and determines what people will talk and think about (The study further established that young women political candidates lacked a clear media strategy, often with no idea of what exactly the media seeks to capture. Most of the young women candidates are media shy, a situation which they attributed to the nature of the media to prefer sensationalism and personal details, both of which scared away a majority of the women aspirants. On the contrary, the study noted that the media often ignored the personal details relating to male candidates and focused on their professional or public life. A respondent from the AMWIK in explained that the few women featured by the media are critiqued more harshly than their male counterparts.

In examining the role of guests and panellists in the media and how their appearances and or contributions reflect on their political careers, the study noted that women political aspirants or politicians are often invited to talk

about issues related to social welfare (issues that Briske, 2004, calls 'soft issues') as opposed to men who are often asked to discuss strategic concepts such as the economy and security issues ('hard issues'). In criticizing this approach, Briske argues that this selective engagement of male and female politicians may not reflect their true identities or intellectual capacity even though that is the contextual image projected to the public (Briske, 2004, cited in Pannti, 2006).

Attracting and retaining the viewer market is an issue that came strongly as an intervening variable between the media companies as profit driven entities on one side and as public informers on the other. According to the respondents from the media sector, information is a core component of their commodities, and they must always consider the commercial value of whatever they provide electronic or print space for, and so the news that they carry must be able to attract the highest number of viewership or readership to maximize profit. However, they insist that all news items must meet the threshold of timeliness, relevance and national appeal. The decision as to what meets this criteria remains a preserve of the editors and other senior officials at the managerial level. A former female MP in Kenya criticized the media for marginalizing women and noted that the reporters in the field seem to have little control about what finally gets published or aired as decisions are made at the head office. She stated as follows:

*'Since most media businesses are owned by men, and even the women who work there may be gender blind, it becomes more difficult for women's positive issues to be seen as important issues worth reporting.' (Cited in Kamau, 2010)*

The respondents from the media also noted that they faced an uphill task raising awareness on women's issues within the media fraternity because Women's issues have come to be regarded as everyday issues that are no longer unique. AMWIK nonetheless insists that despite all the criticisms levelled against the media sector by young women politicians, the media has significantly continued to highlight major activities in the women's movement and 'marketed' different women candidates (AMWIK, 2006 cited in Kamau, 2010). This view is consistent with the findings of the study which noted the existence of many programs in the electronic media that are specifically tailored for women and women candidates. The print Media such as the County Edition section of the Daily Nation was found to focus more on young women and profile young women candidates. The study also noted that a number of electronic media companies are embracing women and engaging them in programs to market their candidacy.

The way in which female and male political office candidates are perceived are a factor of the influence of gender differences in media coverage, which may often significantly disadvantage women candidates (Kahn, 1994). This disadvantage may be linked to the fact that the candidate who finally attracts votes needs to be perceived by the individual (as represented by the media) as having a good chance of winning the election (Hitchon, Chang & Harris, 1997). Candidates who receive the most coverage, especially during prime time in the electronic media often appear as the aspirants with the greater potential to succeed, and therefore often draw more supporters; while those given a media 'black-out' are perceived as less likely to succeed. According to the respondents working in the media industry, male candidates often attract greater media attention than their female counterparts.

The study also found that young women politicians lacked clear strategies of handling the media. Most aspirants were media shy and feared being 'misquoted.' One of the reporters interviewed stated that young women politicians were afraid of commenting on the current issues that drew controversy because they feared being quoted and seen in bad light, or later forced to retract their position. It was explained that the media preferred those politicians who courted controversy regardless of their stand on issues.

The young women aspirants accused the media of making it difficult for women who may not have adequate financial resources to meet the fees charged for space in electronic or print media during their campaigns, especially in consideration of the fact that there are many other costs to be met during the process. One of

the parliamentary aspirants in 2007 expressed this hurdle, saying that before she declared her candidature, she used to get free air time from some of the local radio stations to talk about her work, but once they knew that she was getting into politics, she had to pay about Ksh.40,000/- for a 15 minutes slot of airtime (Kamau, 2010).

An upsurge of women focused Non-governmental Organizations formed to socially, economically and politically empower women and girls at the grassroots is also regarded to have influenced many young women to come out. According to the respondents, this exposure has promoted young women's confidence and independence, and therefore, they are no longer coerced into voting for candidates that their spouses or male counterparts prefer. Some of these organizations include FIDA-Kenya which was formed to improve the legal status of women in Kenya, Kenya Women Political Caucus which works with all women irrespective of their cultural, religious or social- economic background and established structures at the grassroots that act as a platform where women can build their leadership skills; Amani Community Africa (ACA) an NGO formed in 2001 with the goal of building community capacity to resolve conflicts constructively using dialogue and mediation; Women Empowerment Link (WEL), an organization empowering women and girls to realize their full potential, worth and strength politically, socially and economically through advocating for opportunities that exploit their potential.

## THE INTERPLAY OF PATRIARCHY, MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY IN THE MARGINALIZATION, EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION OF YOUNG WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

The study found that most leaders at the local level developed their interest in politics through Chief's barazas. However, the respondents in Nairobi noted that young people and women rarely attended or participated in such meetings, and therefore lost an opportunity to influence decisions at the community level. The barazas, it was reported, are often male dominated, and there were very few female chiefs in the communities. Most of the decisions reached in such forums were therefore considered to be male-friendly.

In some of the interviews, a notable paternal attitude was expressed. Young male respondents in Dagoretti asserted that although they were willing to elect or support young women in their pursuit of political positions, they could only do so on the condition that these were not their spouses. A similar argument was expressed in Marakwet East where the men in the FGD stated that they had no problem with their daughters joining politics but categorically said that they cannot allow their wives to vie for any political office. They argued that if they let young women to participate in politics,

then they would lose them to the already wealthy members of parliament. Further, respondents also stated that a majority of the women in these communities still subscribed to the belief that only men can offer better leadership. In Muslim societies, religion was highlighted as a key factor in political participation among Muslim women. Those in the FGDs said that women should not seek national or local leadership since they cannot be leaders in the mosque. Some Muslim women were against the 2/3rd principle enshrined in the Constitution. The respondents argued that women should 'fight' for these positions in the same way as men have 'fought' for the positions.

However, in areas where women had previously been elected into political positions, more women were seen to be attracted to also vie for leadership positions. Examples of such places were Dagoretti Constituency where Hon. Beth Mugo had been elected for two terms, Kasarani Constituency, Starehe Constituency and Marakwet East where Hon. Jebii Kilimo had also managed to vie in a party that was apparently unpopular in the area but still succeeded in being elected for two terms. It was also noted that the respondents in urban areas (Dagoretti, Kasarani and Starehe Constituencies) considered women to

be progressive, and had less bias against their leadership in comparison to the rural areas in the study. The extent to which this suggests a link between culture and young women's participation in politics remains open to debate. An example was the case of Marakwet East, where the respondents explained that in the community, female lambs are offered as sacrifices, and they had offered their female MP as a sacrifice but her development record in the first 5 years convinced the community to re-elect her.

Young men in the FGDs in Dagoretti and Marakwet East felt that once women were in leadership positions, they tended to surround themselves and fill positions that they had influence over with fellow women. An example given was in Dagoretti Constituency where most women hold the seats of the different committees in the community. Another issue noted by the respondents was that the community largely views women as weak, failures and not allowed to speak in public. Young women who were not highly educated did not stand a chance in leadership. Besides, they needed to have vast resources in order to attract the attention of men, which in the most part was considered difficult.



## THE IMPACT OF REPRODUCTIVE ROLES OF WOMEN ON LEADERSHIP

The male respondents in the FGDs in Marakwet were unanimous that they cannot vote in a young person- male or female-, one needed to marry first and have children before being considered for a political seat in the area. An example that surfaced in the area was that of a young woman who had expressed interest in vying for a political seat in the last elections but was forced to step down for an older woman because she was told that her child was too young and that she needed time as a mother to raise her child. If a woman from another community gets married in Marakwet, the community embraces her and in case she vies, she could be voted for since she is considered as one of their members. However if one hailed from Marakwet and got married to a man from a different community, then she is considered to have ceased being a member of their community.

Other factors at play in politics and leadership include one's clan. In Naivasha, one respondent explained that young women, single women and single mothers are hard pressed to win in politics because they are asked how they will 'take care of the community if they can't take care of themselves.' When asked to suggest possible solutions to the address these issues of patriarchy, masculinity and femininity so as to have more young women leaders, the respondents indicated that their perceptions had been greatly influenced by the media, where many influential and popular presenters were young women. It was also stated that women leaders who interact with the people and engage them often on local development issues had proven that there was nothing wrong with women's leadership.



## CHAPTER FIVE

# DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the summary of research findings, conclusions made from the study and the recommendations. The study was guided by the four objectives. To reiterate, these included, first, to examine the historical and current trends of political participation of

young women; second, to examine and analyze the existing structures that encourage, safeguard and recognize the participation young women in politics; third, to analyze and determine the way patriarchy and masculinity interface to enhance or marginalize young women's in leadership and fourth, to examine how reproductive roles of women challenge their ascent to leadership positions.

### THE HISTORICAL AND CURRENT TRENDS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG WOMEN

The contemporary political system in Kenya is quite fluid and unpredictable, and young women encounter many obstacles whenever they attempt to play an active political role. These challenges have hindered young women from reaching the upper echelons of political positions in the country since independence. The specific barriers that young women politicians faced included lack of finances to facilitate their candidacy, insecurity on the campaign trail which comes with targeted gender-based violence especially from men, intimidation, threats and harassment of young women aspirants by their competitors or their supporters, sexually-laden propaganda and, in some cases, religious-based intolerance or discrimination. These findings agree with those of Ghai (2002) who noted that

women aspirants encounter problems while entering the political arena due to the derogatory language used against women aspirants.

The women aspirants also felt that the challenges at present were too steep to overcome easily, and were uncertain as to whether these barriers will be overcome in the near future despite the constitutional changes and a more informed society. Archard (2009) expresses a similar sentiment in a study on Women's participation as leaders in society when she states that it will not be enough to accept that the future generations of women will be able to overcome issues on gender inequity unless there is a concerted effort from many fronts. Similarly Eagly and Carli (2007) conclude that if the percentage of

women in leadership positions is to increase, then the gender barriers that prescribe the roles of men and women in society need to be overcome. It was apparent that young women are quite informed politically, but they also seem to shy away from active political participation because of the current male dominated political style rather than a total disinterest in politics.

## STRUCTURES THAT ENCOURAGE AND SAFEGUARD AND RECOGNIZE YOUNG WOMENS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Despite the historical low level of participation and success among young women in politics, the cross section of respondents demonstrated knowledge of current structures that have been put in place to recognize and safeguard women in leadership. The respondents also showed awareness of the reasons behind legislation intended to ensure higher ratios of females in leadership at both elective and appointive positions.

Murphy (2010) observes that participation in politics is a key strategy of overcoming gender stereotypes and addressing the needs of women through policy-making. The respondents specifically noted the 'two-thirds' gender rule in all appointments, and the constitutional provision that set aside 47 special seats for women's representatives in each county. Young women as well as older women who participated in the study expressed optimism with the quotas.

For the women in general and young women in particular to succeed in politics, the media must focus on engaging them on all kinds of discourse and not just the stereotypical 'soft issues.' The Beijing platform recommended that the media should:

*....refrain from presenting women as inferior beings and exploiting them as sexual objects and commodities, rather than presenting them as creative human beings, key actors and contributors to and beneficiaries of the process of development...(UN, 1996).*

## THE INTERPLAY OF PATRIARCHY, MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY IN MARGINALIZATION, EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION OF YOUNG WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

The presence and practice of patriarchy in most communities where the participants in the study hailed from was noted to affect the chances of young women making an impact in politics. The young aspirants interviewed perceive all levels of political participation from advocacy, civic education and even party positions as male dominated and patriarchal in structure. Cases of constituencies where sons inherited their father's parliamentary seats were singled out to support this view. This finding is similar to those of Heilman (2001) and Carli and Eagly (2007), who suggested that the masculine construct of leadership and its antithetical relationship with women was a major barrier to women's leadership ambitions.

It was also found that young women as well as respondents from constituencies that had elected women members of parliament acknowledged women's leadership as better than that of previous male members, but male respondents were unwilling to support their own wives if they (their wives) expressed interest in seeking political office. The increase in the number of young women aspirants was therefore predicated upon bringing a balance of ideas and values to the political scene, as well as

exercising their rights, which agrees with Regulska's (2001) observation that "women's rights and women's participation in politics is a part of a global, universal picture of human rights issues and democratization."

This suggests that they are afraid of women who are apparently more powerful than themselves, and smacks of the traditional view where men have for long been considered as dominant over women. It was found that the masculine nature of politics creates a barrier for many women who cannot conform to such kind of a system and succeed. Many participants- young and old males- commented on the possibility of a conflict between work and the perceived domesticity of women if they sought political positions. This conflict affected women's choices between these roles and that these gendered assumptions, with the participants in the study pointing out that in many cases, female politicians were either single or divorced.

## CHALLENGES OF REPRODUCTIVE ROLE OF WOMEN TO LEADERSHIP

From the findings, it is apparent that a high premium is attached to women's reproductive role. A majority of the male respondents were of the opinion that young unmarried women politicians did not stand a chance in electoral positions in their communities. They noted that any young women who needed to vie for any position needed to marry first and have children before being considered for election. This agrees with Hašková et al (2003) who noted that women continued to be the primary carers for children and bore the primary responsibility for housework and childcare. This, they noted, virtually forced all women to devise strategies to deal with "the double burden."

The study found that the participants acknowledge the impact of evolving societal roles among men and women and the fact that the task of childbearing cannot be taken over by men. This means that young women who may want to participate in an active political role would face immense pressure to choose between political pursuits or family. However, Archard 2012 states that expectations of men and women may limit how easy it is for women to obtain those leadership positions, but definitely not their ability to be successful leaders.

## SUMMARY

The findings in this study have demonstrated that young women face barriers in their pursuit of active political roles. The study established the various points of view regarding young women's political participation from different categories of respondents in the study, as well as an understanding of the issues of gender and how they impact on young women's political careers. The findings of this study indicated that masculinity and patriarchal nature of politics, the lack of support for young women who want to assume leadership roles, the impact of societal expectations and stereotypes, insecurity and gender based violence are concerns that often impact young women's political ambitions. In spite of these, young women have exhibited great confidence in their ability to overcome these barriers as a result of recently enacted laws and structures meant to entrench gender equality at all levels of leadership in Kenya.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study suggest that there is still need to create and expand opportunities for young women to enable them become more active and effective participants in the national and local political activities. One of the necessary measures may be to proactively address the barriers that deter and frustrate them from benefitting from the expanded political space and legislative safeguards related to gender equity. It is also critical to raise awareness among young women aspiring politicians and other members of the community to promote understanding and address the age-old stereotypes that have continued to ensure few women succeed in the political arena despite there being evidence that they could actually make better leaders.

The study noted that the young women are politically active and informed as voters, but they need to be promoted to achieve more significant effects as political leaders. Consequently, the findings of this study raises the question of whether the special seats for women will benefit young women and perpetuate a culture of tokenism and inequality, or create a scenario where women will engage men in competitive politics with their assured larger numbers in governance and policymaking institutions. The historical records of women's representation in Kenya have indicated a disparity lower than the world and regional average, despite the country having led efforts to legislate on gender equality. Young women politicians in particular are missing at the national and local political positions despite their demographic size.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

A significant gender gap is evident in the political participation among young women specifically, and all women in Kenya generally. The following recommendations arise from the findings of this study, and relate to strategies that could be adopted to address the identified gaps.

- *Concerted targeted strategies to address the socialization processes that exclude girls from mainstream social roles such as leadership and decision making from early on in childhood and at school. This could be done through dismantling of those cultural practices which oppress women and make them subservient to men, cause them to have low esteem and curtail their leadership qualities and potentialities.*
- *Developing leadership training programmes designed to provide appropriate skills and experience to young women who wish participate in electoral or appointive office. Such skills could include campaign strategies, public speaking, public relations, fundraising and financial management, the constitution and policy making.*
- *Reforming the culture and practices of political parties so that they can attract and mobilize more young women to join as members, volunteers and aspirants. Development of strong young women's wings could redefine the stereotypical images of parties as masculine and 'male dominated' nature of politics.*
- *Lobbying for the enactment of laws on affirmative action to provide for a bigger proportion of seats to be set aside for the youth.*
- *Nurturing young leaders in the media, entrepreneurship and academia among other industries so as to open up opportunities for them as well as a foundation for future leadership roles and facilitate deliberate efforts to nurture and expand youth and women leadership.*
- *Development of clear strategies of engaging the media through constant and regular programmes. These should include how to handle content, public speaking skills, joining up in groups and writing memoranda to media owners or editors and senior managers to solicit for coverage space in the different media houses in the country.*
- *Young women politicians should receive training on a number of areas that directly affect their aspirations. These should include training on how to penetrate the gate-keepers in politics, culture, social systems that hinder penetration of young women leaders, campaigning and fundraising strategies; all of which should enable them shed the tag of being poor organizers or afraid to speak in rallies, press conferences or field questions from the press.*



- *Political parties do not exhibit fidelity to the letter and spirit of the political Parties Act or the IEBC Act. There is need to strengthen and enforce laws and policies that govern political party activities from nomination to the main voting processes because these were found to be flouted at will by the individual parties so as to favour particular candidates.*
- *Civic education ought to be enhanced among the electorate to build a critical mass of an informed electorate, empower them with information what to look out for in aspiring politicians as well as boost the level of participation in political activities such as elections and policy making.*
- *Developing strategies for resource building and mobilization over time so as to reduce over-reliance on last-minute fundraising efforts as a means of generating funding for campaigns and other political activities of the young women politicians.*
- *Keeping an eye on important national issues/controversial issues and issuing press statements or commenting about them. The candidates should strive to cut out their own identities and not appear to be supporting any senior candidates, otherwise their views will be lost within the general context of these 'candidates' views.*
- *Developing mentorship, coaching and leadership programmes among political parties so as to support early identification, training and development of leadership skills among female as well as male youth with the skills and potential to transform the nation. Political parties should also be mandated to spend a specific proportion of their funding on youth leadership development programmes.*
- *Targeting men with gender awareness programmes to enhance their understating of concepts related to gender equity and empowerment; that these are not threats to their masculinity.*
- *Enhance youth empowerment programmes to ensure that both male and female youths achieve political clout. This could involve peer teaching among young women leaders, and mentorship of emerging leaders by older women politicians.*
- *Encouraging women, especially young women to accept, embrace and support those among their number who aspire for political leadership positions at both local and national levels. Older, experienced women leaders should especially provide support to young women leaders, as opposed to regarding them as threats.*
- *Encouraging and sponsoring young women to take advantage of positive policies, and forums which provide a platform through which they can articulate their visions, such as through youth leadership forums, political and community debates.*
- *Available evidence from the past suggests that few young women are able to ascend to senior political positions in Kenya as a result of political patronage and dominance by the men folk. It would therefore be necessary to have a substantive policy that addresses the sharing out of nomination and elective seats in parliament across all age categories.*
- *Formulating positive action plans, mentorship and guidance to support leadership qualities among young*

*aspiring women leaders, and enforcing laws that regulate campaign budgets so as to promote fairness among all contestants and ensure that there is an even playing field.*

- *Conducting a detailed analysis of the factors and strategies that may be utilized to encourage more young women to contest elective political positions, and establish why women rarely vote for their own kind of aspirants.*
- *Political party machineries should operate more transparently and nomination of candidates should be conducted freely and fairly through enhancing awareness among young women aspirants on the selection processes and timelines so that they are not locked out on technicalities.*

*Establishing mentorship and internship programmes for young women who are keen on leadership and politics so as to provide them with relevant experience on how political parties and government agencies operate. These will also equip them with skills on how to create networks, contacts and conduct relevant research.*

## EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG WOMEN WHO VIED FOR POLITICAL POSITIONS IN THE MARCH 2013 GENERAL ELECTIONS

**Trebina Gakii Rithaa: Nakuru County**

“ I started exhibiting leadership qualities in the church setting as a Sunday school teacher. The idea to venture into politics was initiated in me through AMWIK. They came to Naivasha during the post election violence in 2008.

In 2011, they came to train us on early warnings of post election violence. After the training, I started thinking, what next after the training? I then decided to vie for a seat under the ODM party. I campaigned and during the nominations, they said that there were no ballot boxes and so they gave direct nominations to some individuals. There was favoritism when it came to nomination. I couldn't let the urge to vie go and I therefore continued pressing the party till I got nominated after tones of persistence. After nominations, a woman leader was not happy about my nomination. That's when things changed. I started being summoned for petitions every now and



*Trebina Gakii Rithaa speaks of her victory as the high court case against her nomination was dismissed. She was speaking at the Young Women in Leadership and Governance Training facilitated by WEL with support from CREA in July 2013*

again but I managed to go through. I was number two on the ODM nomination list. Complainants took me before the IEBC tribunal twice and I won the case against them. After a while I heard that the case had been taken to the High court. I was not even served with a court order! The case was dismissed. I did not even have a lawyer but requested the lady lawyer sitting next to me to listen as my case was mentioned. The petitioner had a lawyer and I asked God to stand in the

gap for me. The judge said the case had no grounds and dismissed it. I knew I was a winner and thanked God. I sent out the text message which I had typed out before hand in faith, of the case's victory."

Trebina is now a nominated member of the Nakuru County Assembly and comes from Hell's Gate Ward in Naivasha constituency. She is keen to work with women from her community on table banking to empower them economically. She also hopes through these projects she can help the women rear sheep for their milk, which is known to boost one's immunity. The Immunity is in light of the high prevalence of HIV in the region. She also hopes to work with orphaned children, who are bright and help them access bursary to pursue their education. She will use this opportunity to serve her people and prepare the ground for political leadership. 33 year old Trebina is married and has two sons.

### Caroline Chege: Kajiado County

*Caroline Chege speaks of her experience during the March 2013 general elections during the Young Women in Leadership and Governance Training facilitated by WEL with support from CREA in July 2013*



“After high school I decided to major in business courses. I went to England to study and a friend of mine decided to enter politics where she asked me to help her campaign.

She managed to get the seat. I then realized that I had interest in politics because I enjoyed the campaigns. The UK parliament then wanted shadow councilors and I was encouraged to apply by my friends. I did and I managed to go for the interviews and I passed. I was now a shadow councilor in the UK. I started climbing the political career gradually. After staying in the position for five years, I was requested to be doing speeches during meetings. I still had a passion for my country Kenya so I packed my bags and came back home. The challenges I faced

in Kenya were overwhelming. I got a job and the community members were really complaining of several problems they face in the society. Under the slogan “Pamoja Sisi Ndio Jibu!,” I then decided to venture into politics hence I vied for the county representative seat in Ngong Ward, Kajiado North constituency where

I put all my efforts and money but still I did not make it. I have decided to take part in development and not politics.”

Caroline is currently a member of both the CDF and Roads board member in the Kajiado County.

### Meymuna Haji Ali: Wajir County

“ Politics was in my heart ever since I was very young. I have always been the head girl/ captain in all levels of education. In 2006, I decided that one day I would lead this country. I told my dad that I was planning to venture into politics. My family was very religious and they avoided politics at all costs. Before this time, I wanted to be a big woman in the corporate world. My family did not support my political ambitions but I did not lose hope. In 2010, after the introduction of the new Constitution, I learnt of the new opportunities provided for and as a result I decided to vie for the woman representative position. My late dad was also a good leader though not in politics. People really depended on him and most of them said that the leadership qualities had been transferred to me. I faced lots of challenges and the major one was financial constraints. However I gave up but later applied for nominations and luckily I was nominated by URP party as



*Meymuna Haji speaks of her leadership experience during the Young Women in Leadership and Governance Training facilitated by WEL with support from CREA in July 2013*

a county representative.” Meymuna has a degree in Commerce (finance option). Her thoughts were that if you empower a woman then you empower a whole society. She hopes to serve as the Deputy President in future. Her response to people who tried to dissuade her from going for a political seat in a community where women are marginalized was “what men can do ladies can do better.”

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## APPENDIX ONE

# YOUNG WOMEN LEADERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

## INTRODUCTION

**K**enya undertook a great step in adapting the new constitution in August 2010. With the new constitution comes the Bill of Rights which addresses inequalities previously encountered by minority and marginalized groups in the Kenya's society especially women. This questionnaire seeks to understand how existing laws and policies as well as socio economic and cultural factors affects young women political participation. It also seeks to understand the challenges

and experiences young women political aspirants face while seeking political office. Kindly fill all applicable sections in this questionnaire.

All questions have multiple answers to choose from. Your response data and information collected will be treated with confidentiality and used for research purposes only. All your support in this study will be highly appreciated. Please answer the following questions in the spaces provided. You may also provide detailed data and explanations on separate sheets of paper.

### SECTION A

#### PROFILE OF THE Respondent

Provide the following information about yourself (tick where applicable)

Name of the respondent (optional)	
1. Sex of the respondent:	1. Male 2. Female
3. Position vying for	1. President 2. Senator 3. Governor 4. Member of parliament 5. Women representatives 6. Others specify .....

4. Age in years(optional)	1. 18-25 2. 26—35 3. 36-45 4. 46-55 5. 56+
5. Religious background (optional)	1. Muslim 2. Christian 3. Hindu 4. Atheist 5. Other specify.....

## SECTION B

Young women political participation/leadership (Tick where applicable)

1) How do you access information?

- a) Media (Television, Radio) [   ]
- b) Social communication Media (twitter, face book, internet) [   ]
- c) Reading (magazines, newspapers, publications, articles) [   ]
- d) Friends and family [   ]

2) What is your view on the constitution provision on women positions in the constitution?

- a) Insufficient (   )
- b) Good (   )
- c) Sufficient (   )
- d) Excellent (   )

3) How can you rate the young women political participation in the country?

- a) Insufficient (   )
- b) medium (   )
- c) good (   )
- d) Excellent (   )

4) Do you think historical and current changes in the government and the constitution has facilitated access for political participation for women?

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )

5) Do you think young women are vying for political positions?

- a) Yes (If yes go question 7)
- b) NO
- 6) Why do you think young women are not vying for political positions? (Choose multiple answers where applicable)

- a) Motherhood ( )
- b) Family responsibilities ( )
- c) Lack of money ( )
- d) Lack of experience ( )
- e) Fear ( )
- f) Others specify.....

7) Do you think young women are capable of being good leaders?

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No (if no go to question 9) ( )

8) Why do you think young women can make good leaders? Give reasons

- a) .....
- b) .....
- c) .....
- d) .....

9) Why do you think young women cannot make good leaders? Give reasons

- a).....
- b).....
- c).....

- d).....  
e).....

10) What kind of advice/suggestions would you give young women vying for political office?

- a) .....  
b) .....  
c) .....  
d) .....

11) In your opinion what is the role of alliances and networks in politics and involving men?

- a) .....  
b) .....  
c) .....  
d) .....  
e) .....

12) Is there any support which old experienced women in politics have give to young women?

- a) Yes ( )  
b) No ( )

## SECTION B

### Structure of young women political participation

1. What motivates you to engage in politics?

Tick where applicable

- |    |                         |     |
|----|-------------------------|-----|
| a) | Other women experiences | ( ) |
| b) | Policy changing         | ( ) |
| c) | Passion                 | ( ) |
| d) | Family support          | ( ) |
| e) | Husband motivation      | ( ) |

- f) Constitution ( )  
 g) Civic education and empowerment ( )  
 h) Others specify.....

2. Which challenges have you faced while participating in politics?

- a) Economic ( )  
 b) Political Party ( )  
 c) Cultural restrains ( )  
 d) Family responsibilities ( )  
 e) Others specify1 .....2, 3.....

3. How can meetings of women supporters and political parties help to make women more effective in politics?

- a) Training ( )  
 b) Support ( )  
 c) Funding ( )  
 d) Others (specify) .....

4. To what would you attribute to the increase in the number of women recently elected to parliament as opposed to the past where they were rarely elected or nominated?

- a) Women empowerment ( )  
 b) Increase of women literacy ( )  
 c) Constitution changes ( )  
 d) Customs changes ( )  
 e) Others specify.....

5. Do you think social norms hinder young women political participation?

- a) Yes ( )  
 b) No ( )

6. Do you think roles of women and men hinder young women political participation?

- a) Yes ( )  
 b) No ( )

7. Do you think social economic status of young women hinder their political participation?

- a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )

8. Do you think religion hinders young women political participation?

a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )

9. What do you think is the role of media in influencing women participation in politics?

a) Training ( )

b) Empowering ( )

c) Provision campaigning platform ( )

d) Educating ( )

e) Others specify.....

10. According to the various Kenyan cultures and societal expectations, do you think those expectations poses any limitations for women political participation?

a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )

## SECTION C

Interface between Masculinity and Patriarchy in women political participation

1. Does the concept of “men being the leaders and women the followers,” influence the involvement of women in politics?

a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )

2. In your opinion are women actively involved in the chief’s *barazas* and *kamukunjis* or committees of council of elders in communities?

a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )



3. Based on your experience, what do you think are the best strategies for including men in processes for promoting young women participation in politics?

- a) .....
- b) .....
- c) .....
- d) .....

4. What role do men play in influencing the participation of young women in politics?

- a) Educating ( )
- b) Training ( )
- c) Supporting ( )
- d) Funding ( )
- e) Others specify.....

5. Are there any lessons that women can learn from men in being active in politics?

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )

6. What are some of the lessons that women can learn from men?

- a) Persistence ( )
- b) Resilience ( )
- c) Decisiveness ( )
- d) Bravery ( )
- e) Dishonesty ( )
- f) Selfishness ( )
- g) Courage
- h) Tactfulness
- i) Others specify.....

## SECTION D

### Reproductive roles influencing women political participation

- 1) What your marital status?
  - a) Married (      )
  - b) Single (      )
  - c) Divorced (      )
  - d) Separated (      )
  - e) Widow (      )
  
- 2) Do you have children?
  - a) Yes (      )
  - b) No (      )
- 3) How many children do you have?
  - a) 1-2 (      )
  - b) 3-5 (      )
  - c) 6-8 (      )
- 4) Do you have means of income?
  - a) Yes (      )
  - b) No (      )
  
- 5) Do you have a house help to take care of your children?
  - a) Yes (      )
  - b) No (      )
  
- 6) In your opinion do you think a single young woman can be a leader, Member of Parliament or president?
  - a) Yes (      )
  - b) No (      )
  
- 7) Do you think women leaders are able to balance the responsibilities in public life, politics, family and personal life?
  - a) Yes (      )
  - b) No (      )

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR AVAILING YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION**



## APPENDIX TWO

# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

1. In your opinion has the media given women and men political aspirant's equal coverage by print and electronic media?

Yes ( )  
No ( )

2. What role do the media play in forming societal opinions on women participation?

.....  
.....  
.....

3. How has the media influenced societal perception on women political participation?

.....  
.....  
.....

4. The constitution provides for the participation of youth in politics as an affirmative action what specific programs do you have targeted for the youth (probe for programs for the youthful women)

5. Do you have any targeted program to address women's participation in politics?

Yes ( )  
No ( )

6. In your opinion do you think women strive to get their voices heard through the media?

Yes ( )  
No (if yes skip to question 9)

7. Do you think women shy away from the media?

Yes ( )  
No ( )

8. Why do you think women shy away from the media?

.....  
.....  
.....

9. Do you think women are visible in the media as compared to the males)

Yes

No

10. Do you think that young women are effectively using the media to enhance their political visibility? If yes or no, explain

.....  
.....

11. What do you think can be done to ensure women take up the media platform?

.....  
.....  
.....

12. Do you have any incentives or deliberate strategy to encourage young women to use the media as a campaign platform?

- If yes specify .....
- If no why.....

13. Do you think women are good sell since media is a business as compared to men?

Yes ( ) (if yes skip to question 13)  
No ( )

14. Why do you think women are not a good sell?

.....  
.....  
.....

15. In your opinion, has the societal expectations and attitude influenced your reporting and coverage of

- a. Women political engagement?
- b. Young women
- c. Men

If yes how?

16. How do you think that women's reproductive roles and social status (marital status, household duties, family commitments...) affect young women political aspirants' interaction with the media?

.....

.....

17. Does the socialization of a journalist and perception of women/men affect the coverage and reporting of women's political engagement?

If yes or no, explain

.....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR AVAILING YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION



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