GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICIES INFLUENCING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN ATTAINMENT OF PEACE IN NAKURU AND NAROK COUNTIES, KENYA

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment for the Requirements of the conferment for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Peace and Conflict Studies of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

October, 2025

DECLARATION

I declare that this research thesis is my original work, and to my knowledge, it has not been submitted to any other College or University for the award of any certificate or degree.

Signature …… Date……

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CPC/H/01-57881/2016

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology a thesis entitled; "**Gender Mainstreaming Policies Influencing Women's Political Participation in Attainment of Peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya**".

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my parents, Mr Ali Onamu Apidi and Mrs Nesila Achieng Onamu, who are also my mentors.

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I would like to thank Almighty God for giving me the power and strength to begin this work. I am sincerely grateful to the management of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST), particularly the Directorate of Graduate Studies and the School of Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (SDMHA), for offering me an opportunity to pursue this doctoral degree programme. I am particularly grateful to my supervisors, Prof. Frank Matanga and Rev. Dr Elijah Onyango Standslause Odhiambo for walking me through this journey.

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ABSTRACT

From a global perspective, gender mainstreaming has been embraced as a strategy to magnify and propagate women's rights to achieve gender parity. The United States has been hailed to be making significant progress in advancing gender equality. However, it continues to grapple with endless gender inequalities despite the enormous progress. From Africa's perspective, gender mainstreaming has received a significant attention as exemplified by the implementation of gender-related policies. However, the implementation has been weak as women continue to be constrained by socioeconomic, political and cultural hurdles and Kenyan women are not an exception. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, women's political participation in the Rift Valley area is notably low compared to other regions. Despite having similar gender mainstreaming policies, Nakuru County has more women in political representation than Narok County. This study aimed to uncover the reasons behind these disparities. The study's objectives were to examine the nature of gender mainstreaming policies, evaluate the extent of women's political participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok counties, explore opportunities for women's political participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok counties, and investigate the challenges to women's political participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok counties. The research was grounded in radical feminism theory, structural violence theory, and political development theory. Philosophically, the study was grounded in pragmatism philosophical approach. The study deployed descriptive survey research design which was aided by both qualitative and quantitative methods. The target population comprised of 384 household heads, derived through Fisher's formula and sampled using simple random technique, key informants including the security personnel, county officials dealing with gender issues, CSO officials, elected and non-elected political leaders and conflict management experts who were purposively sampled. Data was collected using questionnaires, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Qualitative data collected was analysed thematically and presented in verbatim quotations while quantitative data was analysed using inferential and descriptive statistics with an aid of SPSS version 28 and presented in frequencies, percentages, graphs, tables and pie charts. The results found that socially constructed ways of life negatively affected gender mainstreaming to promote peaceful coexistence and did not accord women equal opportunities, as a gendered approach to peace building was lacking in Narok. Women in the study areas still face several hurdles including underrepresentation, strong cultural and social norms, and weak legal structures pertaining to gender mainstreaming. These factors not only hinder their participation in politics but also in peace building. The study also found that women's political participation presented untapped opportunities including the need for women's empowerment, strengthening of the existing genders mainstreaming policies and the potential for collaboration of both genders to attain peace and enhance effective political participation of both genders. The study concluded that there are progress and on-going challenges in achieving gender parity in political representation. A stronger political will and better support systems have seen more women participate in politics, while Narok requires more effective implementation of gender mainstreaming policies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACHRR	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CEEC	Central and East European Countries
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EFA	Education for All
EU	European Union
FIDA	International Federation of Female Lawyers
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GM	Gender Mainstreaming
GoK	Government of Kenya
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic and Social &Cultural Rights
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ILO	International Labor Organization
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
KIPPRA	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis
LGAP	Local Gender Action Plan
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

SID	Society for International Development
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WID	Women in Development

OPERATIONALIZATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Gender equality: A state where all people regardless of their sexes have access to equal opportunities, responsibilities, and rights. Within the context of the study, it describes a state where all men and women in Nakuru and Narok Counties have equal opportunities in political, economic and social spheres.

Gender mainstreaming: Strategy that pertains to policy formulation and its implementation to cater for the needs of all persons regardless of their gender. In this study, it specifically means that all policies take a gender-focused approach to have equal outcomes for both men and women in Narok and Nakuru Counties.

Gender mainstreaming policy: A strategy to enhance the quality of public policies, projects, and programs to create an equal distribution of benefits to both men and women in Nakuru and Narok Counties.

Marginalized communities: Communities that have been accorded discrimination and exclusion from social, economic, and political participation opportunities. In this study it refers to communities in the study areas particularly Nakuru and Narok Counties.

National education policy: A strategy/action plan that seeks to refine, enhance and impact education in a country. In the context of this study, it implies both males and females having equal opportunities in education.

Policy: A course of action proposed and pursued by individuals, or organizations to attain certain outcomes. In this study it refers to gender mainstreaming policy and other supportive policies.

Political participation: Within the context of the study, it refers to engagement in political activities and action. It is the involvement of women in political affairs of the country ranging from taking active part in all political activities such as civic education, demonstrations, attending rallies and political conferences, voter registration, party campaigns, party elections, national campaigns, national elections, to their active involvement in the legislative debates.

Public Participation: This refers to the act of taking part with others in some activity. This can be in social, economic or political spheres of life. In the context of this study, it entails the participation of both men and women in decision making processes in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the general and specific objectives of the study, the research questions, the justification of the study, the scope of the study and the chapter summary.

1.1 Background to the study

The concept of gender mainstreaming traces its origin to the Third United Nations (UN) Conference on Women which was convened in Nairobi in 1985 (UN, 1995). As per the UN, gender mainstreaming connotes a process of how laws and policies influence women and men at all angles across all sectors (UN Economic & Social Council, 2024). As an approach, it ensures that both genders, male and female are accorded equal treatment, especially during the formulation and implementation, assessment and appraisal of procedures and projects in all spheres (UN, 2020). Additional commitments on gender mainstreaming include the Sustainable Development Goal number five (Gender Equality), the United Nations Security Council, the Commission on the Status of Women alongside national, regional and international action plans on gender mainstreaming whose overarching objective is to amplify gender issues to enable their acceptance (Gekura, 2024 & Musango, 2024).

Following the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, world leaders overwhelmingly authorized the execution of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which considers the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs (Mwaka, 2020). The aim of these goals are but are not limited to poverty reduction, hungers as well

as inequality, anchoring action on climate change and ameliorating health accessibility and establishing healthy institutions and partnerships for the next one and a half decades.

The enshrining of goal number 5 that seeks to address gender equality alongside the refocusing of gender and the integration the incorporation through the 16 auxiliary resolutions remains a vital achievement of the global agenda, especially for the female gender by the international community (UN, 2020). It is worthy to note that these goals come in the backdrop of gender equality which remains a persistent menace with women and girls continuing to lag behind compared to men with regard to fundamental rights, opportunities and welfare globally (Mwaka, 2020 & UN women, 2023). Gender inequality jeopardizes women and girls from attaining their full potential and by extension impacts global development. This makes the realization of sustainable development a contingent on permitting women their legal entitlements in all occupations (Xiang *et al.,* 2023).

Conceptually, gender mainstreaming was initially effectively introduced into the international public policy as an instrument for global gender equality policy at the global level during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, where it was adopted as a key element of the Platform for Action (Isaacs, 2014). This implied that all UN member states that supported the mechanism were expected to develop a concept for the use of gender mainstreaming in their own national strategies for gender equality. Contrary to the equal treatment or positive action approaches, gender mainstreaming is not only an approach to ensure gender equality through gender equality policy, but also to

ensure gender equality in all other policy areas such as health and economic development, agriculture, and security.

As further elucidated by Isaacs (2014) and UN, (1995), the overarching objective of gender mainstreaming is the reinvention of policy design, implementation and evaluation to ensure that gender-specific interests and values of both genders are incorporated in the policy-making process. Put differently, gender mainstreaming is designed to elevate gender equality policy units to the mainstream of policy-making. In so doing, gender mainstreaming requires that all actors involved in decision-making bear the responsibility of promoting gender equality policy (UN Women, 2023). It can also require alterations within the decision-making structures and procedures of an organization, changes which culminate to decision-making structures and processes that should be conducive to the promotion of gender equality (UNDP, 2023).

In the same vein, the European Union (EU) conceptualizes gender mainstreaming as the (re)organization, development, improvement and evaluation of policy processes to ensure the incorporation of gender equality perspective in all policies, programmes and projects at all levels by actors that engage in policymaking. In view of this, citing Jacquot (2020), gender mainstreaming is connected to the promotion of gender equality through the systematic incorporation of all policies, processes and procedures as well as systems, structures and organizational culture making it a strategy whose ultimate objective is to achieve gender equality.

From a global perspective, gender mainstreaming has been embrace as a strategy to propagate females' rights and achieve gender parity. Its execution is underscored, guided and reinforced by mandates elaborated by the members of the United Nations (UN

Woemen, 2023). However, the execution of gender mainstreaming varies across the globe. For example, despite the remarkable efforts made by the United States of America (USA) towards the advancements of gender equality, the US continues to grapple with the challenge of gender inequality which reveals that gender mainstreaming in the US remains a work in progress. Citing Bellitto (2021), Gekuria (2022) note that gender mainstreaming that has manifested in the form of gender inequality is apparent in spheres such as women's political representation and participation, occupational segregation, healthcare, sexual harassment, workplace inequalities, biases in the criminal justice system to mention but a few (UNDP, 2022).

In Europe, in the recent years, the European Union (EU) has made significant advancements towards the realization of gender parity. The accomplishment has been made possible through the inclusion of gender lens into all EU member states' national levels strategies and initiatives. This is underscored by the 2022 Global Gender Gap Index which indicated that the top-lists for gender equality globally were made of the EU countries. Citing Jacquot (2020), Gekuria (2024), states that significant efforts attributed to gender mainstreaming initiatives are evidenced in the high significant portion of women in the labor markets, heightened economic independence between men and women, declined gender pay gaps, intensified support in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) and increased promotion of women's rights across member states. However, despite these remarkable achievements in most of the European countries, gender inequality continues to be a challenge which further reinforces the assertion that gender mainstreaming is an emotive activity within the European Union (EU) (UNDP, 2022).

As further noted by Gekuria (2024), in regions such as the Middle East, South Asia and Northern Africa, the status of gender mainstreaming remains a worrying trend. In particular, the dismal scores on gender mainstreaming in these regions are attributed to heightened marginalization in labor markets; political leadership, participation, representation; career advancements; wealth accumulation and access to healthcare. Notably, this has been enabled by the lack of political vigour from the responsible governments which culminates in lack of a legislative anchorage, lack of adequate resources towards gender mainstreaming initiatives, deep-seated socio-religious beliefs and norms coupled with patriarchal structures of most of the societies in these regions.

As observed by Chouchou (2022), the rights of women globally can be seen as one of the vital barometers against which measure of the well-being of the global community is attained. The persistent political under-representation and exclusion from key decision-making positions remains a failure of the contemporary democracies. From the context of Africa, she notes that the reluctance by women to run for the political positions is constrained by a complex cultural prohibition on women who are active in community activism. Citing Kamlongera (2008), she elucidates that the exiting practices and beliefs remain quite hostile to women's political engagement. For instance, she points out that in the 1960s, Africa had the lowest female participation in politics, however, today; it is witnessing fastest growth rates of women in politics. Nonetheless, despite various strides made by Africa towards the realization of full women's political representation, a plethora of challenges still persists that constrain the achievement of gender equality.

From a regional perspective, gender mainstreaming has confronted several challenges in the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region. Despite a few sub-Saharan African countries including Rwanda, Namibia and South Africa posting a relative performance in gender mainstreaming if the measure by the gender equality gap index is something to go by, most of the counties in the region still lag behind in the central tenets of gender mainstreaming indicators (World Economic Forum, 2023). The dismal performance by SSA has been attributed to women's increased marginalization in areas including leadership, participation, empowerment and employment opportunities (UN Women, 2023), women's exposure to increased gender-based violence, unfulfilled sexual and reproductive health needs and pervasive poverty to mention but a few (African Development Bank, 2023).

In the recent years, gender mainstreaming has been gaining popularity as a strategy to realize gender parity. Kenya is a signatory to a myriad of UN deals and goals that pertain to gender mainstreaming including the Beijing Stage for Activity (UN, 1995), the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination against Women, CEDAW (UN, 1995, 1979, 2010), the 1997 Financial and Social Board (ECOSOC), the 2030 plan for Reasonable Turn of events and the African Contract on Human and People groups' Privileges on the Freedoms of Ladies in Africa (Kivoi, 2014; Kauria, 2018).

Indeed, Kenya has been making strides towards realising gender equality and equity. There have been policies designed to promote it that are regularly reviewed or updated to strengthen the system and address the gaps. The National Policy for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence from 2014, the Kenyan Constitution from 2010, the

National Gender and Equality Commission, and the State Department of Gender Affairs are some instruments that illustrate this (Gekuria, 2024). The 2010 Constitution underscores the recognition of human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, equity and social justice as the compass direction for state policy, legislation and the behaviors of the citizens coupled with attitudes towards each other (Kauria, 2018). It further provides both affirmative action and gender equality as guiding principles for state which it alongside public institutions must ensure they are adhered to in all spheres of the society. Notably, significant successes have been posted regarding the ability of women to own and inherit property as well as fair employment practices. Nonetheless, a lot needs to done prior to Kenya being proud of its record on gender parity.

According to Shulika (2016), the agency of women's role in peace building is recognized internationally by various policy documents. Their involvement in peace building is an imperative that can never be overlooked. This is informed by the fact that the vision of a sustainable peace is profoundly contingent on the active involvement of a fraction of the women in the society. Their participation in the attainment of peace processes presents them with a platform to convalesce their human security fractured during conflicts and by the entrenched discriminatory societal practices that are embed in gender. According to McCarthy (2011) as cited by Shulika (2016), women are agents of change and have unique and strategic abilities to resolve conflict peacefully. In the same vein, they have the ability to marshal actors transversely and coax warring parties to forfeit their indifferences for the greater spirit of peace. These assertions epitomized that indispensable piece required for the attainment and advancements of peace in the society (Shulika, 2016).

An observation by Agbalajobi (2009) is that the in the recent past, there has been a growing concern by the government, international organizations and civil society of the vitality of gender equality and empowerment of women in the perpetuating struggle for equality, democracy and human rights, as well as for poverty eradication and development. Significant efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment has been an on-going endeavour in nearly every country and region around the world despite the fact that this process has been punctuated by unevenness with gains remaining fragile (UN Women, 2023). A great challenge that the world grapples with currently is the growing violence against women and girls in armed conflict. In the contemporary conflicts, they are not only the victims of hardship, displacement and warfare, they are directly targeted with rape, forced pregnancies, and assault as deliberate instruments of war (UN Security Council, 2022). Women are deeply affected by conflicts, which they have had no role in creating (UNDP, 2022).

Conflicts are characterized by profound human rights ramifications for all the parties including children, women and men (Agbalajobi, 2009). The impacts of conflicts on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of women, in particular, are often devastating (UN Women, 2023). In spite of the fact that conflict has a high level of impact on the lives of women, it is disheartening to note that they are not fully involved in the peace building process because of its gendered nature (UN Security Council, 2022). Women's interests have been neglected by the peace process, which has resulted in male-centred approaches to peace and security. The intrinsic role of women in global peace and security has remained unrecognized since the creation of the United Nations (UNDP,

2022). Building of a forever peace that sustains post-war economic, political and development is pegged on the full participation of all citizens (UN Women, 2023).

Unfortunately, the role of women in post-conflict settings has continuously received a worrying policy attention. Women play a vital role in the process of peace-building as activists and advocates for peace, women wage conflict non-violently by pursuing democracy and human rights. Secondly, as peace keepers and relief aid workers which make them to contribute to the minimization of direct conflict. Thirdly, they act as mediators, trauma healing counsellors and policymakers, making one to cautiously conclude that women work to transform relationships and address the underlying causes of conflicts thus, the attainment of peace and stability. Lastly, as educators and participants in the development process, women contribute to building the capacity of their communities and nations to prevent violent conflict (UN Women, 2023). This is made possible as a result of socialization processes and the historical experience of unequal relations and values that women bring to the process of peace building (Agbalajobi, 2009). Women's political participation in Narok and Nakuru Counties in Kenya is influenced by various factors, including historical context, legal framework, electoral representation, women's participation in local politics, challenges and barriers, success stories and initiatives, women's representation in decision-making, public participation and attitudes, and prospects.

Historically, the political landscape in Kenya has been male dominated. This is rooted in the colonial legacy and the traditional patriarchal structure of many Kenyan communities. Women's participation in politics has been limited due to these historical factors (Cheeseman *et al.,* 2016). However, Kenya has made strides in promoting gender equality

in politics. The 2010 Kenyan Constitution includes provisions for gender equity, requiring that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies should be of the same gender. This legal framework has created opportunities for women's participation (Kenya Constitution, 2010).

Despite legal provisions, women in Narok and Nakuru Counties still face challenges in gaining equal electoral representation. There is a gender gap in political offices, with men holding most positions, which hinders women's political participation (Wekesa *et al.* 2019). Women in these counties increasingly participate in local politics, contesting for various positions. However, cultural and societal norms can hamper their engagement, and women often face resistance and discrimination (Kamau, 2018). This is more in women's political participation in political development in these Counties, including cultural and traditional norms that limit women's political engagement, gender-based violence against women in politics, and limited access to campaign finances (UN Women, 2019).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, women constitutes a little more than half of the country's combined population are a crucial component in the amelioration of the democratization of the country's political framework (Koome *et al.*, 2021). However, the information available is that these issues are yet to be addressed in the political and strategic position of public authorities. This may suggests that the issue of sexual orientation in the constituent legislation and regulation are yet to be accorded due consideration and review. This has provided a prior advantage for their male partner. Many a times, women are placed on the periphery of political authority. Owing to many social obstacles, they have become underestimated simply because they are women.

Gender inequality in Narok County remains a persistent challenge. Notably, profound incidences of sexual gender-based violence, high rates of teenage pregnancies and early marriages, low number of women in elective political positions both at the County and at the national levels, lack of women's rights to land ownership and the low economic empowerment have persisted despite the implementation of the gender mainstreaming policies. These challenges have been attributed to harmful cultural beliefs, traditional practices and the entrenched patriarchal social order (Kauria, 2018). The manifestations of gender inequalities in Narok County illuminate the exiting potential gaps with regard to the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the County. Despite its cosmopolitan's nature, Nakuru County too is not insulated from the persistent of challenge of gender inequality which continues to jeopardize women's political participation.

In spite of the providence of gender mainstreaming policies at the national and local levels, women's participation in politics is relatively poor and, therefore, the question "why?" The 2010 Kenyan Constitution incorporates various international human rights declarations and includes specific measures such as the two-thirds gender rule to ensure equal representation. Article 81(b) and Article 27(8) of the Constitution mandate that no more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender and obligate the state to adopt legislative measures to enforce this principle.

However, these constitutional protections have not translated into substantial political participation for women. Many women encounter severe challenges, including physical and psychological violence, sexual harassment, and even death, as they engage in politics. High-profile cases, such as the targeting of Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai by state operatives, highlight the risks women face. Moreover, disparities in political participation

are evident across different regions. For instance, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2019) reports lower female political participation in the Rift Valley compared to other areas. This suggests that women and men do not have equal access to resources and opportunities in the political arena.

Despite numerous studies conducted in this field, there exists scanty knowledge on the gender mainstreaming policies influencing peace and stability. For instance, scholars such as Bochaber (2013), Mwatha (2013, Lund (2021) to mention but a few have attempted to examine gender mainstreaming and women's contribution to peace and stability. These studies have largely focused on macro-level with little disregard of this policies from a local perspective. It is against this backdrop that the study intends to fill this gap by assessing how these policies influence women's involvement in politics towards the realization of peace and stability in both Nakuru and Narok Counties which share similar policies and geographical proximity but exhibit different levels of female political participation.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 The general objective of the study

Assess gender mainstreaming policies influencing women's political participation in attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

Explicitly, the specific objectives of the study will be to:

i. Examine the nature of gender mainstreaming policies in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya.
ii. Evaluate the extent of women's political participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya.
iii. Explore opportunities to women's political participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya.
iv. Investigate challenges to women's political participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya.

1.4 Research Questions

i. What is the nature of gender mainstreaming policies in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya?
ii. What is the extent of women's political participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya?
iii. What are women's political participation opportunities towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya?
iv. What are women's political participation challenges towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya?

1.5 Justification of the study

The justification of the study cuts across the academic, policy, and philosophical justifications while considering key characteristics of selected study areas of Nakuru and Narok Countries for the study examining the Gender mainstreaming policies influencing Women's political participation towards the attainment of peace.

1.5.1 Academic Justification

The investigation significantly advances our understanding of gender dynamics in public organisations (Guthridge *et al.,* 2022). Through the presentation of strong theoretical and scholarly arguments, the research significantly influences public sector practices and opens new research directions relating to gender issues (Catuogno *et al.,* 2022). Scholars and researchers can rely heavily on the insights obtained from this study, which has greatly expanded the body of information on gender mainstreaming (Hervías & Radulović, 2023). The study's conclusions are also helpful to academics since they highlight important areas where gender mainstreaming practices might be improved.

The research's recommendations and conclusions provide a solid foundation for further studies into gender mainstreaming in the public sector. The study has enhanced current policies and frameworks by identifying and correcting the weak points in performing gender mainstreaming, guaranteeing that the aspirations and needs of both men and women are adequately met.

1.5.2 Policy Justification

The scholarly contributions of the study through theoretical implications were to promote effective and remarkable policy formulation in gender mainstreaming in the following ways. Firstly, the study equipped public institutions with a better understanding of gender mainstreaming, its contributions and the various policies that can be adopted to invigorate gender mainstreaming into their practices (Mwendwa, 2020). For instance, organisational

and/or institutional practices such as recruitment, promotion, salaries, and training would be based on components of gender mainstreaming, such as inclusivity and equality.

This study also helped identify the challenges that gender specialists face in their endeavours to implement gender mainstreaming policies. These challenges helped gender-focal personnel to develop better policies for gender mainstreaming, hence turning the challenges into opportunities.

1.5.3 Philosophical Justification

The study was anchored in the pragmatism approach to research. Pragmatism traces its philosophical foundation in the historical contributions of the philosophy of pragmatism and embraces a plurality of methods. It originated in the late 19th century as a philosophical movement in the United States of America and as an antithesis to traditional assumptions about the nature of reality, knowledge and enquiry. It proposes that researchers should adopt a philosophical and methodological approach that works best for a particular research problem. This approach's leading proponents include John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, and Bentley (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019).

According to this approach, human actions are inseparable from previous experiences and their beliefs, making human actions intrinsically interlinked to action. Pragmatists assert that human actions and beliefs are found in their consequences and that reality is not static. As a research paradigm, pragmatism holds that there can be single or multiple realities that are open to empirical inquiry. It underpins that both knowledge and reality are based on beliefs and habits that are socially constructed. As underpinned by pragmatists, reality is

true as it aids in acquiring satisfactory relations with other parts of people's experiences. The approach assumes that knowledge is based on experience, with much of this knowledge being socially shared, and it's conceived from socially shared experiences.

As an approach to research study, pragmatism is found in the centre of the paradigm continuum in terms of more and inquiry. Most significantly, this approach gives the researcher the power to make choices and decide on the vital research questions and effective methodologies, which, according to this approach, are certainly influenced by the aspects of the sociopolitical location of the researcher, his or her personal history and beliefs (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). Within the context of the current research, the formulation of gender mainstreaming policies is done by individuals and is largely influenced by the existing societal practices, most of which have insufficiently favoured the female gender.

Most of these policies have been formulated to aid in addressing the wider gender disparity gaps and injustices meted out to women in masculine-dominated societies. Furthermore, given its flexibility, this approach allows the researcher to adopt several research methods, and this will help acquire in-depth information on the impact of gender mainstreaming policies that affect women's participation in the political space. It will also help obtain the existing realities, especially from women, regarding challenges they face while contesting for political positions in the Nakuru and Narok Counties.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study investigated Gender Mainstreaming Policies Influencing Women's Political Participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya, between 2010 to present. The

rationale for the stated period was that most of the gender mainstreaming reforms came after the promulgation of the constitution in 2010. Therefore, the study explored the positive peace aspects by Galtung (1964). Gender mainstreaming policies are linked to positive peace by Galtung (1964), which involves human integration in society. Human integration is all about ending structural violence in society. The gender mainstreaming policies introduced by the 2010 constitution and implemented from 2013 aim to reduce structural violence in the country by eradicating discrimination, promoting inclusivity, and ensuring equal representation and access to political opportunities for everyone.

The two counties were chosen due to disparities in women's participation in political development, despite both regions failing to meet regional and national expectations for women's political participation. During this period, the progressive Kenyan 2010 constitution, which provides for the two-thirds gender rule which states that no more than two-thirds of an appointive or elective body shall contain members of the same gender, began to be implemented.

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which promote gender equity, also allow for tracking progress towards gender equity. Nakuru County has the highest female political representation, while Narok has the lowest in the region (IEBC, 2022), providing an opportunity to compare the dynamics despite having the same policies. The scope was limited to local community members, elected leaders, civil society members. These areas have significant untapped potential, and the study aimed to chart a path for helping the region attain political, social, and economic empowerment through an elaborate evaluation of gender mainstreaming policies. The study allocated adequate time to collect relevant

data on gender mainstreaming and various policies and to create the needed recommendations to enhance equal political participation.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the concept of gender mainstreaming and various policies while providing a background of national, regional, and global situations of gender mainstreaming. The approach created a foundation for discussing the research problem and the significance of the study and formulating key research questions and objectives. The research questions and objectives guide the overall direction of the study. The chapter further discusses the justifications of the study under academic, policy, and philosophical justifications. Finally, the chapter discussed the scope of the study to emphasize the target region and rationale for selecting the region of study. The subsequent section aims to conduct a literature review analysis based on the study's research objectives.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter entails a review of previous studies. The literature review was anchored on the four objectives of the study, which include assessing gender mainstreaming policies on women's political participation, analysing the extent of women's political participation, exploring opportunities and challenges associated with women's political participation and investigating challenges to women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya. It also includes the theoretical framework, conceptual framework, study gaps and a chapter summary.

2.1 The Nature of Gender Mainstreaming

The United Nations (UN) (1995) contends that gender mainstreaming (GM) emerged as an international strategy during the Fourth International United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Since then, it has been pushed as a crucial component of government policies and initiatives in all social and economic development fields. Although it was not well understood at the theoretical or practical levels at the time, in the late 1990s, the official strategy for integrating women and gender into development was announced (Rees, 2005). As the UN's development division, the UNDP has been a particularly ardent supporter of GM.

According to Moser and Moser (2005), GM is the process of evaluating how any proposed action, such as laws, regulations, or programs, will affect both men and women in all domains and at all levels. Furthermore, the UN (1995) declared that GM is a tactic utilized to attain gender equality in society. Similarly, Bacchi and Eveline (2009) contend that it is a tactic to increase the (gender) equality and/or awareness of states, organisations, or corporations. Council of Europe (1998) describes it as the process of (re)organizing, improving, developing, and evaluating policy processes to ensure that the usual actors participating in policymaking include a gender equality perspective in all policies, across all levels, and throughout all phases. The approach calls for continuous, concurrent activities to change institutions to empower women and men equally and guarantee their participation in significant institutional and political decision-making processes.

Global acceptance of the idea of gender mainstreaming is widespread. The global south uses it, and organisations like the UN and EU adopted it in the mid-1990s (Verloo, 2005). Madsen (2011) points out that it is also used within the European Union (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000). Many different real-world applications have resulted from the widespread adoption of gender mainstreaming. Additionally, there are notable variations in the degree to which the women's movement participates in the institutionalisation and mainstreaming of gender into the state apparatus, with extremely low levels in Sweden and very high levels in Taiwan (Peng, 2015). Given the variety of gender mainstreaming approaches that exist globally and the approach's effectiveness and scope, this serves as an example of a concept that spreads swiftly (Knapp, 2005).

When applied to other contexts or mediated through agencies, gender mainstreaming takes on diverse forms and changes. The several levels of public administration, including

regions, local government, and national sub-levels, are not distinct entities; gender mainstreaming has been applied and adjusted for each. Through the introduction of gender mainstreaming, local governments try to operate and implement gender equality within the framework of a convergence of global concepts, local self-government, governmental policy-making, and feminist ideology demanding change. There are conflicting opinions in the literature on the capacity of local governments to execute gender equality policies; some contend that it is easier to do so in local contexts while others contend that it is less challenging at the federal level (Outshoorn & Kantola, 2007).

According to Okumu (2012), gender equality has been a hot topic in the development discourse ever since the Second World War ended. Consequently, it has been designated as a major development goal by the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, and the International Labor Organization (ILO) (Polo, 2019). Starting in 1945, it provided the framework for gender mainstreaming. In the UN charter, gender equality is already acknowledged as a means of fostering global cooperation and maintaining respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all individuals, irrespective of race, gender, language, or religion (Okumu, 2012).

Furthermore, throughout the first decades of the 1950s and 1960s, women's issues were regarded largely through the lens of human rights. As a result, they were exclusively addressed by the UN General Assembly's Third Committee on Social and Humanitarian Affairs and the Commission on the Status of Women. The Women in Development (WID) strategy rose to popularity in the 1970s as a means of achieving equality, and in 1979, a consensus was reached to end all forms of discrimination against women. The UN decade of women, which ended in 1985, marked the beginning of the integration of women in

development (WID). As a result, hundreds of women's organisations and networking opportunities were established globally. Over the next ten years, the tendency picked up speed.

Ronald and Norris (2011) stated that the 1993 Vienna World Conference declared women's rights as human rights. Women's health and empowerment were prioritised in the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development, which set the standard for sustainable development initiatives (UN, 1994). Two years later, the fourth International Congress on Women in Beijing approved a platform to support and defend the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women (UN, 1995). Over time, several strategies have been employed to promote gender equality globally, including women in development, gender and development, and gender mainstreaming (UN Women, 2023).

Polo (2019) avers that throughout the previous 20 years, the United States has seen the greatest overall changes. Bolivia leads the region with women's representation of lower chambers at 53.1 per cent. The average percentage of women in the region's parliaments increased from 12.7 per cent in 1995 to 26.4 per cent in 2015. Polo (2019) reports that during the same time span, the proportion of women serving in national parliaments in European countries increased significantly from 13.2 per cent to 25 per cent. For example, Kristina (2012) claimed that Bosnia and Herzegovina's Gender Action Plan (GAP) is a plan for empowering women and promoting gender equality in the nation.

The plan is founded on international agreements and texts, including the national legal framework for gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, CEDAW, Beijing Declaration, and Platform for Action (UN Women, 2023). To

coordinate action plans and strategies at the entity level on domestic abuse, the introduction of gender-responsive budgeting, the progress of women in rural areas, and the response to natural disasters, these frameworks and papers on gender equality are centred on the entities of RS and FBiH. Moreover, the right to work, women's entrepreneurship, and gender-responsive budgeting are some of the top concerns for advancing progress for girls and women in BiH through laws, policies, and programs (Agenda for Gender Equality of Bosnia & Herzegovina, 2023).

Wangamati (2012) focused on gender mainstreaming in peace building among the Sabaot community in Mt. Elgon. Her work highlights the critical role of integrating gender perspectives in peace building efforts to ensure sustainable peace and development. By addressing the unique needs and contributions of women in conflict and post-conflict settings, her research underscores the importance of inclusive approaches to peace building. However, she notes that it is important to ensure that gender considerations are included in formulating, implementing, and evaluating policies. There is also the need to address economic disparities by promoting equal opportunities for women in the workforce.

Increasing awareness and education on gender issues will enable society to change societal norms and attitudes towards women. She also emphasised the need for monitoring and evaluation. That is, there was a need to establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the impact of gender mainstreaming initiatives. UNW (2021), the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the SIDA inked a unique agreement in 2018 dubbed the FIGAP Program to support the execution of the GAP BiH 2018-2022. Through governmental decisions, the program seeks to enhance socioeconomic conditions and equal

opportunities for men and women, girls and boys. State, entity, and cantonal/municipal legislative and executive bodies comprise the network of institutional frameworks for gender issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is the Committee for Equal Opportunities of the National Assembly of the RS, the Gender Equality Committee of the House of Peoples, and the Gender Equality Commission of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the entity level (Kristina, 2022).

2.1.1 International and Regional legal frameworks on Gender Mainstreaming

As postulated by Kaimenyi and Muriungi (2015), international legal frameworks act as benchmarks for state parties with regards to their assessment of the obligations made and responsibility in matters pertaining to human rights for the enjoyment of the citizenry. Member states commit themselves to embracing these frameworks and guard citizenry rights through the application and the enforcement within their national borders. This implies that as a state party, Kenya is bound by the rules enshrined in these international legal frameworks which she has signed and ratified.

2.1.1.1 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The Convention was adopted by the UN member states in 1979 and has been widely applauded as the first ever instrument in the UN history that is dedicated exclusively to the women's rights globally (Kaimenyi & Muriungi, 2015). The Convention defines discrimination against women as any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex, which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition,

enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

The domestication of this framework is largely reflected in the 2010 Constitution that guarantees equality and freedom from any form of discrimination by both men and women. Article 27 (3) of the Constitution provides equal treatment of all genders including equal access to opportunities in political, economic and sociocultural spheres while Article 45 guarantees married couples equal rights at the time of marriage, during and after dissolution. Additionally, Article 81 (b) provides the room for two-third gender rule where women are expected to be accorded spaces in the electoral process. While these provisions are tailored towards according women space to rejuvenate and giving them opportunity to develop, the provision of longer maternity leave and an acknowledgment that they should not forfeit annual leave on account of having been on maternity leave is attestation that additional special attention should be accorded to women.

2.1.1.2 The Beijing Platform for Action (BPA)

It was adopted in 1995 by the women representatives from not less than 180 UN member countries including Kenya in Beijing, China. This was during the Fourth World Conference on Women which witnessed the signing of the BPA, a document that underscores issues and concerns of the world's women. The Declaration enshrined an item that boldly renounced discriminatory treatment of women and men in economic and other matters. The Declaration recognized the lack of gender perspectives in governmental decision making particularly in educational systems as a challenge to women (UN, 1995). It asked organizations, including trade unions to push governments to commit themselves to

numerous actions including researching gender issues and taking appropriate actions to address them. Although the BPA is not binding and has no mechanism for redress, implementing it would be an effort for Kenya to enhance national development in line with Vision 2030 and other instruments. What remains is to find out the extent to which the Declaration at this conference has been implemented and the practical implications of their suggestions (Kaimenyi & Muriungi, 2015).

2.1.1.3 International Labor Organization (ILO) Gender Equality Policy

Aiming to promote gender equality in the workplace, the International Labor Organization (ILO) is mandated to do so by the Constitution of the organisation and relevant international labour rules. The four primary ILO agreements on gender equality are Equal Remuneration (No.100), Maternity Protection (No.183), Workers with Family Responsibilities (No. 156), and Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) (No. 111). Two more of the eight fundamental conventions, 100 and 111, explain the principles and rights in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) promotes gender equality through mutually reinforcing policies in personnel, substance, and structure (Director-General's Circular No. 564, 1999). To do this, gender equality is mainstreamed into every aspect of ILO operations. GED/ILOAIDS has endorsed this approach for use throughout the workplace. The finances and programs of the ILO, for which the entire organisation is accountable, show how gender equality has evolved. Mainstreaming gender equality is given more attention in all ILO activities, including the Decent Work Country Programmes and national strategies and initiatives for poverty reduction. To support stakeholders in this process, the ILO works in conjunction with its gender specialists and gender focal points.

The organisation has operationalised the ILO's 1999 policy on gender equality by developing a single, comprehensive ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality. As per the June 2009 Resolution that prioritises gender equality in decent work, the Action Plan additionally aids in the efficient and gender-sensitive execution of the Decent Work Agenda. All five ILO Regional Offices and the sub-regional and national offices have created gender policies and strategies specially tailored to local and governmental situations. This will facilitate the effective promotion of gender equality in the pertinent initiatives, particularly in the Decent Work Country initiatives.

2.1.1.4 Protocol to African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

It was adopted in Maputo in 2003 and ratified in 2005 by African countries including Kenya (Kaimenyi & Muriungi, 2015). The Protocol is cognizance of culture, traditions and customs as major hurdles in the attainment of full enjoyment of women's fundamental human rights. It requires that the State Parties shall adopt positive actions such as enacting laws that are explicitly encourage the participation of women in the political landscape of their respective countries on equal footing with men. The aforementioned affirmative actions, national legislation and other measures should guarantee women's participation void of any discrimination as equal partners with men at all levels of development and the execution of policies and programs.

State parties are further required to ensure effective participation and representation of women at all levels of decision-making. The protocol calls for the member states to enact laws to guarantee equal opportunities for women and men in work and career advancement

and access to other economic opportunities. This can be realized through equal access to employment, equal pay for jobs of equal value and encouraging women working in informal sector to have social security. Additionally, the Protocol requires state parties to adopt the necessary measures to recognize the value of the work of women in the home and recognize that both parents bear the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of children. Such adoption is aimed at protecting women against the oppression created by patriarchy which delineate women into domestic work that cannot usually be quantified in economic terms (Kaimenyi & Muriungi, 2015).

2.1.1.5 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004)

This Declaration was adopted by African heads of state in 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to further reaffirm their commitment to gender equality. Article 5 of the Declaration underscores the commitment by the government to expand and promote the gender parity at all levels in their respective countries. To aid in the accountability by the member states, Article 12 of the Declaration requires members to report and deposit on yearly basis the progress made towards the attainment of gender mainstreaming. The motive behind the adoption of this Declaration was to monitor the members, synergize each other and embrace accountability regarding the implementation of gender mainstreaming actions (Kaimenyi & Muriungi, 2015).

2.1.2 National Legal Frameworks on Gender mainstreaming

This section reviews literature the national legal frameworks on gender mainstreaming.

2.1.2.1 National Gender Policy-2021

The integration of gender-responsive solutions and the resolution of gender inequality must be prioritised in current global development strategies. Numerous international treaties, such as the CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights of Women in Africa, which our country has ratified, specifically declare this. Similarly, Article 27 of our robust 2010 constitution and the National Gender and Development Policy from 2000 demand freedom from discrimination and fair treatment (UNICEF, 2023).

This policy outlines certain strategies that offer pertinent directives for organising, funding, and implementing development projects in a way that takes gender equality into account. I firmly believe that this approach will connect county government initiatives with the goals of men and women, boys and girls, and other demographic groups at the departmental level. A county that welcomes equal access to public services and the absence of discrimination in employment opportunities has enormous promise because of engrained promises, action plans, and strategies (GOK, 2021).

2.1.2.2 National Policy on Gender and Development 2019

Gender equality and women's empowerment are the policy's goals, which aim to enhance the involvement of men and women, boys and girls, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, and women in national development. Policies, regulations, and administrative procedures are implemented to close the inequalities that still exist in women's empowerment and achieve equality (Muigua, 2020).

The policy delineates crucial domains: labour and employment, education, health, land, housing, agriculture, environment and natural resources, peace and security, governance,

power and decision-making, ICTs, human rights, sexual and gender-based violence, and the girl and boy child. This ensures that gender equality and women's empowerment are integrated into sectoral policies, planning, and initiatives (GOK, 2020). The policy acknowledges that collaboration between all stakeholders is necessary for gender equality and women's empowerment. The federal and local governments, independent offices, faith-based organisations (FBOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), constitutional commissions, and the commercial sector are all urged to work together in this area according to the strategy.

2.1.2.3 Public Participation Policy

State parties were urged by Article 7 of CEDAW to take appropriate measures to end discrimination against women in political arenas by guaranteeing that men and women have equal access to voting, public office holding, policy formulation and implementation, and participation in non-governmental organisations (Hellum & Aasen, 2013). In addition to CEDAW, two major international initiatives to create universal guidelines for gender equality in political participation are the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. According to Polo (2019), the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) approved a goal of thirty per cent for women to participate in decision-making in 1995.

Furthermore, to address past injustices and disadvantages experienced by either groups or individuals, the Senate must design and implement legislative and other measures, such as affirmative action programs and policies, per Article 27(b) of the constitution (GoK, 2010). To advance the two-thirds gender rule idea, a few laws have been created and put into effect since the Constitution was put into effect. Two important examples of these laws are

the Elections Act of 2011 and the Political Parties Act of 2011. As per the constitution, the Women's Representative position was created because of the affirmative action program's duty to recognise women and reserve specific seats for them (Polo, 2019).

Notably, this resulted in sixteen women being nominated by political parties, forty-seven (47) women being elected to the national assembly, and one woman being elected to the senate to represent youth and people with disabilities. As a result, from 9.8 per cent in the tenth parliament to 20.7 per cent in the eleventh, women were more prevalent in political leadership positions (SID, 2018). The percentage of women in the country is still lower than the legally required 30 per cent even in 2019 (Polo, 2019). Locally and nationally, the rise in women's political representation over the last few decades appears to be a global trend (Lovenduski, 2000). The Inter-Parliamentary Union reports that women's political representation in the lower house is 18.7 per cent worldwide. There is a notable regional variation, too, with values in Rwanda exceeding 50 per cent and Saudi Arabia falling at 0 per cent (Nilson & Blomgren, 2010).

Gender stereotypes and overt discrimination in society are the two main causes of gender inequality (Koobak & Marling, 2014). Gender inequality originates in families and spreads through institutional structures, with the job market, education, and political spheres exhibiting the greatest domination. Ultimately, this results in women's disempowerment (Koobak & Marling, 2014). Equal rights are, therefore, a fundamental idea in international legal practice. Thus, attaining gender equality has become a global concern. As a result, several international treaties have been established to address fundamental freedoms and human rights, the most important of which is the 1979 CEDAW. Every democratic society

that strives for social justice and human rights must start with equality, according to CEDAW (Raday, 2012).

The lawmakers tasked with making the constitutional protections statutory have taken a lot of heat. The 10th Parliament could not agree on implementing the gender representation quota. Therefore, it was referred to the Supreme Court, which ordered that it be implemented gradually rather than all at once. The 11th Parliament made another attempt to put the gender principle into practice in 2015 but was unsuccessful this time around. The reason given was that there was not a quorum for the voting procedure (Kihiu, 2018; Polo, 2019). The two-thirds gender modification bill. Similarly, most women's labour in the economy is still unpaid, extremely unstable, and informal. According to research by Bradshaw et al. (2013), most women are viewed as "a reliable, productive, and cheap labour force, which makes them the preferred workforce for transnational corporations in the textile and electronic industries." Despite a steady increase in representation around the globe, it remains below the 30 per cent threshold set by the UN to reach a "critical mass" (NDI, 2017).

They are important to the environmental sector since they deal with it frequently, yet their knowledge is frequently disregarded, and they are not recognised as change agents (SIDA, 2016). Despite making up nearly half of the world's population, women account for an astounding 70 per cent of the world's impoverished (UN, 2015). Millions of women experience a never-ending list of injustices, discrimination, and barriers in their lives that prevent them from meeting their basic needs for employment, education, safe childbirth, and good health (UN, 2015). Women's interests and wishes must be prioritised to overcome these disparities and guarantee that women gain from progress.

Many African countries still value culture greatly since it shapes social structures and defines gender roles for men and women. One's mother after having children, followed by someone's wife after marriage, is some of the roles and stereotypes associated with women. This implied that women were denied the opportunity to forge their identities. A woman was supposed to have as many children as possible in practically every culture; in some, this was and still is seen as a sign of respect. However, in many societies, a woman is held in higher regard if she has more males than girls because certain groups view girls as useless (Kerr *et al*. 2004).

2.1.2.4 Education for All

The UNESCO-mandated EFA (Education for All) aims to exemplify international educational strategies beyond gender mainstreaming. The World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 established the six EFA goals, which are Encouraging the development of life skills in adolescents and young adults; Encouraging the elimination of gender disparities by 2005; Encouraging the achievement of gender equality in education by 2015; Promoting the expansion of adult literacy by 50% by 2015; and - Enhancing educational equality (Mulugeta, 2012).

According to Orodho *et al.* (2013), marginalised and low-income families still struggle to get their children educated and that this problem gets worse in communities where women and girls are pressured to work as domestic helpers despite Kenya's efforts to reform education policies for gender mainstreaming. This indicates a lack of support for gender mainstreaming in educational programs, which ultimately results in low political involvement and increased social, economic, and political segregation among marginalised and impoverished people.

According to Subrahmanian (2004), gender mainstreaming has resulted from educational policies that raise knowledge of proper gender mainstreaming methodologies, as well as improved education policies for inclusive cognitive development among girls and women. However, Subrahmanian (2004) contends that it is difficult to determine how educational policies have evolved because of gender mainstreaming in countries because bureaucratic systems persist and impede mechanisms that maximise the benefits of the interrelationship between gender mainstreaming and educational policies. In this way, the existence of bureaucracies implies that political involvement has not yet reached the necessary thresholds to eliminate institutionalised rigidities in the government.

A study by Klasen and Pieters (2012) found that one of the main factors influencing women's engagement in the labour force is their level of education. According to Carroll and Sanbonmatsu's (2013) argument, women are likely to hold political office in states and areas where the legislative branch is less desirable, and politicians are less professional. Ball (2012) concurred as well, stating that women's political engagement and leadership are influenced by education. Formal education is strongly linked to political cooperation for both men and women (Ball, 2012).

Since political parties are the most effective means of enabling women to speak up, Inglehart (2018) said that education has contributed to the participation of many women in society in political parties. Research conducted in Asia indicates that low levels of education and illiteracy pose a significant obstacle to women's advancement (Sraboni *et al.* 2013). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014), women make up two-thirds of the world's illiterate population. Of the 135 million children worldwide between the ages of 7 and 18, 60 per cent are girls,

and only one in four girls who start primary school continue for four years. Girls' access to education remains limited despite the introduction and provision of free and compulsory primary and secondary education due to cultural beliefs and high dropout rates (estimated at 80,000 per year) from pregnancy and early and forced marriages.

According to surveys conducted in Nigeria, most customs favour sending male children to school over female children, who are supposed to have siblings and get married off. This makes it harder for women to compete with their male counterparts in politics and somewhat increases the number of illiterate women (Amadiume, 2015). Researchers in India, Iyer *et al*. (2012), found that women's performance in political institutions is significantly impacted by literacy. According to Fafunwa (2018), women in Nigeria are likely to be more and desire to be involved in political leadership roles if they have had an education. Most academics concur that women become more powerful via education because it increases their capacity to earn a living, gives them the courage to take on new challenges, and improves their capacity to make political decisions that affect society and themselves.

Many Kenyan women do not only lack a basic education, but they also lack the political training necessary to engage completely and successfully in the political process. As a result, even when women declare their candidatures, they are rarely treated seriously. Giroux (2015) noted that an informed electorate is essential for democracy. The public cannot effectively participate in questions of governance in the nation if they are ignorant or misinformed.

According to Chambers (2014), many Kenyan career women prioritise their families over their careers. This is not because they don't care about their careers; rather, it's because they

have been taught that a good woman puts her family first. Enloe (2014) discovered that many women would prefer to put off making significant career decisions, including pursuing a doctorate, until their children had reached adulthood. The study involved senior university women in Kenya. This unequivocally demonstrates how cultural norms impede women's access to education, but if addressed, they can help women balance their pursuit of education with other cultural obligations. Additionally, Kenya passed an education act that guarantees pregnant girls the opportunity to finish their education before and after giving birth. Pregnant girls are still being expelled from schools despite the Act (The Federation of Women Lawyers [FIDA], 2012). These academics paint a convincing picture of how education influences women's interest in politics and plays a role in the current political battle. They also concur that the plan being put into place to guarantee women's educational empowerment needs to be addressed with goodwill to overcome new obstacles.

According to MoE (2020), the overall gender parity index (GPI) in pre-primary school enrolment in Kenya was 0.96 in the year 2020. The gender parity index is highest in Isiolo County at 1.05, while Mandera, Wajir and Garissa have the lowest at 0.66, 0.80 and 0.81, respectively. On the other hand, the overall gender parity index in secondary school enrolment was 1.01, showing a trend favouring girls more than boys. These high indices may be attributed to measures put in place to attract more girls to school, e.g. school feeding, free primary education and, in some cases, free sanitary pads. Mandera, Wajir, Turkana and Garissa Counties have the lowest gender parity indices at 0.54, 0.58, 0.62 and 0.68, respectively. Counties in Arid and Semi-Arid areas generally tend to have higher disparities in favour of boys than in other areas. According to UNESCO (2023), a GPI

below 0.97 and above 1.03 is considered a disparity in favour of boys and girls, respectively. Table 2 shows the counties surpassing the recommended GPI range and their corresponding indices in primary school enrolment.

Table 2.1 Gender Parity Indices for Pre-Primary and Secondary School Enrolment

No.	County	Gender Parity Index in Pre-primary School Enrolment	The Gender Parity Index in Secondary School Enrolment	Difference
1.	Vihiga	1.00	1.20	0.2
2.	Elgeyo Marakwet	0.98	1.12	0.14
3.	Machakos	0.97	1.11	0.14
4.	Meru	0.98	1.11	0.13
5.	Kisumu	1.01	1.10	0.09
6.	Kirinyaga	0.94	1.10	0.16
7.	Kitui	0.97	1.10	0.13
8.	Busia	1.03	1.09	0.06
9.	Uasin Gishu	0.99	1.08	0.09
10.	Tharaka Nithi	1.00	1.08	0.08
11.	Kakamega	1.00	1.07	0.07
12.	Kwale	0.97	1.07	0.1
13.	Bungoma	0.98	1.06	0.08
14.	Kiambu	0.99	1.05	0.06

15.	Nyandarua	0.95	1.05	0.1
16.	Nairobi	1.01	1.04	0.03
17.	Nakuru	0.99	1.04	0.05
18.	Makueni	0.96	1.04	0.08
19.	Kajiado	0.94	1.03	0.09
20.	Nandi	0.99	1.03	0.04
21.	Muranga	1.01	1.03	0.02
22.	Laikipia	0.97	1.02	0.05
23.	Baringo	0.96	1.01	0.05
24.	Taita Taveta	1.01	1.01	0
25.	Kericho	0.98	1.00	0.02
26.	Nyeri	0.96	1.00	0.04
27.	Bomet	0.97	0.99	0.02
28.	Embu	0.95	0.99	0.04
29.	Nyamira	1.00	0.97	-0.03
30.	Kisii	1.00	0.97	-0.03
31.	Migori	1.01	0.97	-0.04
32.	Siaya	0.99	0.97	-0.02
33.	Trans Nzoia	0.99	0.97	-0.02
34.	Marsabit	1.03	0.96	-0.07
35.	Mombasa	0.99	0.95	-0.04
36.	Kilifi	0.98	0.92	-0.06
37.	Homa Bay	1.00	0.90	-0.1

38.	West Pokot	1.00	0.90	-0.1
39.	Lamu	0.93	0.87	-0.06
40.	Tana River	0.90	0.83	-0.07
41.	Narok	0.98	0.82	-0.16
42.	Isiolo	1.05	0.79	-0.26
43.	Samburu	0.90	0.74	-0.16
44.	Garissa	0.81	0.68	-0.13
45.	Turkana	0.94	0.62	-0.32
46.	Wajir	0.80	0.58	-0.22
47.	Mandera	0.66	0.54	-0.12

Source: (MoE, 2020).

The skew in favour of girls indicates there may be a need to formulate measures to attract more boys to schooling. It can be noted that only Isiolo County has surpassed the UNESCO-recommended gender parity in education with a GPI of 1.05. However, for secondary schools, it is noted that eighteen (18) of the 47 counties have surpassed with Vihiga County holding the first position with a GPI of 1.2, which implies that there are 20% more girls in secondary schools than boys, a difference that can be considered very high.

The level of literacy among the genders may influence their ability to play the various assigned roles in different social, political and economic spheres. However, gender disparities in education have remained a major challenge in rural areas of many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, where a tradition of viewing a boy's education as being more important than for girls is prevalent. This may hinder girls from accessing adequate

education where resource and cultural hindrances exist. The result is a higher illiteracy rate among women than among men and a lower level of education among women of employable age. According to KNBS (2019), in a population of eligible persons comprising 49.32% and 50.67% male and female, respectively, the segment that had completed schooling comprised 13.51% and 12.93% males and females, respectively (KNBS, 2019).

According to Wamahiu (1999), pastoralist communities in Kenya go to the extent of not sending their girls to school since the risk of eventually dropping out is very high due to cultural practices such as early marriages and female genital cutting as a rite of passage. The Maasai community, in particular, which is predominantly found in Narok County, holds cultural norms and values that subdue girls and women in their respective societies (Heather, 2009). Teenage pregnancy, the negative influence of culture, poor access to education facilities and drug and substance abuse have been cited as some of the issues that affect young people's education in Narok County (NCPD (2017). The NCPD report further stated that at the secondary school level, most girls drop out of school, thus expanding gender disparities in higher levels of learning.

2.1.2.5 The Basic Education Act 2013

The right to free and compulsory education is guaranteed to all students with disabilities under the Basic Education Act 14 of 2013. However, the Act continues to make Kenyan disabled children a target of discrimination. First, by neglecting to provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities in the classroom, the law discriminates against them. As mandated by CRPD article 24, an inclusive educational system is not guaranteed by the law. According to a system established by the Basic Education Act, all

students with disabilities must attend separate schools solely because of their disability (GOK, 2013).

Although implementing an inclusive education system in Kenya might not be feasible in the short term, the law does not go far enough to ensure equitable educational opportunities for children with disabilities, as mandated by the CRPD. We believe that the right to an education in the least restrictive environment should be granted to children with disabilities and that this is something that can be done immediately. It is assumed that children with disabilities can learn in a setting with the fewest limitations (GOK, 2013).

A study was done by Mirara and Ngechu (2024) on Gender Literacy as a Determinant of Decision-Making in National Government Constituency Development projects in Narok. The study aimed to establish the role of literacy on gender participation in decision-making in National Government Constituency Development Fund Projects in Narok County, Kenya. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was employed, and a census was carried out on 66 respondents, comprising 6 officials in charge of NG-CDF projects, 48 committee members, 8 chairpersons of the projects, and 4 government representatives. Data was collected using questionnaires where a questionnaire return rate of 93.9% was realized (Mirara & Ngechu, 2024).

The key findings of the study were: the gender distribution of participants involved in the management of NG-CDF projects did not reflect the gender distribution in the population of Narok County; there was an association between the gender and age of the respondents where there were more female than male participants among the younger respondents and more male than female participants among the older respondents; there was no association

between education levels and the gender of respondents; and there was gender indifference and non-discrimination in decision making in NG-CDF projects in Narok Sub-County. The study, therefore, concluded that formal education among different genders is not necessarily the classical measure of successful participation in project decision-making (Mirara & Ngechu, 2024).

2.1.2.6 Kenya Education Training Gender Policy

According to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (2015), national education policies have been carefully chosen to favour girls and women and improve equality among boys, girls, and women. These regulations highlight the need for balanced educational policies in the nation that support long-term gender mainstreaming action plans. In this instance, the strategy establishes a framework of cooperative endeavours involving both sexes to improve political advancement. Bell (2020) provides arguments that corroborate the intuition, suggesting that the effectiveness of education policies depends on their continuous restructuring and change for improved enactment and expanded benefits of political development.

2.1.2.7 Free Primary Education Policy

The six EFA goals and the Millennium Development Goals, which promote universal access to primary education, were agreed upon during the World Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000. In 2003, Kenya likewise implemented a program of free elementary education (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019).

In January 2003, the NARC government which assumed power in December 2002 introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) in Kenya. After a prior failed attempt to

implement the program in post-colonial Kenya in the 1970s, this was trying number two. Heeding the advice of UNESCO, which declared, "In compliance with Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, every child shall be entitled to free basic education." Recognising that education directly impacts societal development, the government deliberately stepped up efforts to meet the UN's recommendation on children's right to an education (UNESCO, 2018).

A substantial body of previous research has been conducted on the many gender mainstreaming strategies that influence women's political engagement. Most studies on gender mainstreaming, the researcher points out, were carried out in other nations. The writers focused primarily on industrialised nations where the government and other stakeholders have given gender mainstreaming much attention and policy support. The gender mainstreaming policies and political engagement of women from the Rift Valley region, specifically the counties of Narok and Nakuru, has not been the subject of prior research.

2.1.3 Implementation of gender mainstreaming

In Europe, Freidenvall and Ramberg (2021) study focused on the implementation of gender mainstreaming in Swedish model municipalities. Their study discerned two municipalities in Sweden to unravel the challenges that confront gender mainstreaming. Their research was considerate of the existing ideas on policy execution, focusing on comprehending, resources and the commitment thereof. The study further examined the resistance towards the attainment of gender equality within these institutions. The study established that

complacency, a belief that gender equality has already been achieved and competition that emanated from other priorities were the major obstacles.

Additionally, the study by Bakhuis (2019) established that at times, lack of political will jeopardized the progress, something that was evidenced in the sampled municipalities. Similarly, the study focused on a comparative study pertaining to the implementation of gender mainstreaming in Netherlands and Sweden. This research explored a range of factors that influence the implementation of gender mainstreaming and the differences that exist on their respective approaches and the underlying reasons behind their approaches. The study's findings suggested that social and cultural norms, along with a country's political landscape and recent events, are the main factors explaining the variations between their implementation of gender mainstreaming policies.

In Africa, Nigeria in particular, Adeoti (2021) conducted a scientific enquiry to examine the bottlenecks of gender mainstreaming in river basin-level water resources management. The main objective of the study was to unravel if the subsequent policies and legal frameworks guiding the functional mandate of the countries water resources at the basin level. The study reveals that gender mainstreaming was poorly executed, especially in the country's river basin development authorities and generally the water sector. This was attributed to the absence of legislation and policies that anchor gender mainstreaming in the industry.

The study further established that fundamental reforms to the primary water policies and legal instruments as well as the institutional policies were fundamental in the realization of gender mainstreaming in the Nigeria's water sector. The current study differs from the

Adeoti's (2021) because it focuses on the intersection between gender mainstreaming and women's participation in the political landscape and how this can enhance peace and stability. Also, Adeoti's study utilized mainly extracted data from the desktop review while the current study will utilize both extracted data from the secondary sources and primary data collected through key informant interviews, focused group discussions and questionnaires alongside observation to reinforce the findings.

Still in Nigeria, a study conducted by Kelly (2019) focused on the enablers and the obstacles for women's participation in Nigeria's governance system. The aim of the study was to offer evidence regarding Nigeria's women's participation in governance and politics coupled with the facilitators and the obstacles. The study revealed insufficiency with regard to women's participation and representation in Nigeria politics. The study noted that while Nigeria has successfully ratified international agreements and implemented national policies to heighten women's participation in the political sphere, little has been done to translate these policies into actions. This was attributed to the absence of effective government action in terms of legal and administrative measures to encourage gender mainstreaming in the political arena was blamed for the poor engagement of women in governance and political issues.

A study by Vyas-Doorgapersad and Bangani (2020) in South African conducted an empirical probe focusing on the implementation of gender equality perspective within the public sector from a period ranging from1994-2019. Adopting a theoretical approach and deriving its content from secondary data sources, the study found that there were significantly more women in the lower management levels in South Africa's public service compared to women in the high-ranking management positions which indicate significant

gaps in the implementation of gender mainstreaming in South Africa's public service. The study suggested that the existing social changes in gender roles at community and family levels were needed to address identified gaps in gender mainstreaming integration in the country's civil service. The current study deviates from this study as it utilized data gathered from primary sources instead of documentary sources. The current study also focuses on the general participation of women in the wake of the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

Kelkay (2022) examined the mainstreaming of gender in handful organizations in Fogera area, Ethiopia. The study examined the technique and sourced for opportunities as well as any serious practical issues that constrained effective gender mainstreaming integration. A case study research design was adopted with participants selected purposively. The study established that the implementation of mainstreaming of gender was largely sub-optimal in the surveyed government agencies in the district. The study also noted that there were limited tools and techniques for implementing gender mainstreaming in government agencies in the area. Further, it was noted that while most of the participants were aware of gender mainstreaming, they contested that it promoted gender equality. The current study differs in that its participants were selected using a stratified random sampling method and also applied quantitative research methods which was aided by a comparative survey research approach to bring about the comparison regarding the implementation of gender mainstreaming in both Narok and Nakuru Counties.

In Kenya, Gachoki and Mulu (2023) investigated the impacts of legal frameworks on gender mainstreaming which they found to be a complex interplay between progressive constitutional provisions and gender-specific laws that echo a commitment to gender

equality and women's rights and the pragmatic constraints associated with the implementation, resource constraints and cultural obstacles. The study noted that while Kenya's legal framework offers a solid foundation in addressing gender-related issues including the principle of two-third gender rule, clear prohibition of gender discrimination and gender-specific legislation, there are still gaps in catapulting these legal instruments into a solid amelioration of women and marginalized gender groups.

The implementation of gender mainstreaming in Kenya is often hindered by the lack of a concrete political will, resource allocation and weak enforcement of the exiting gender mainstreaming policies. The study findings indicate that the legal frameworks in Kenya notably the Constitution alongside gender-specific laws were found to be comprehensive and progressive in tackling gender-related issues which reflects the commitment to gender equality and women's rights. However, implementation gaps, resource constraints, and cultural barriers posed significant challenges in translating these legal provisions into tangible improvements for women and marginalized gender groups. The study highlighted the presence of political will and commitment within the Kenyan government, as demonstrated by policy pronouncements and international commitments. However, challenges in resource allocation and political resistance hindered the effective translation of this commitment into concrete actions and policies aimed at advancing gender mainstreaming.

Also, a study by Mwendwa (2019) probed how gender mainstreaming affected women's involvement in the enforcement of County development projects in Kilifi County. The study chose a total of 109 respondents who were sampled from county government employees and members of the Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs). The evaluation

of data was done descriptively and inferentially after the answering of a standardized questionnaire. The study findings reveal that women's involvement in the execution of County projects in Kilifi County was significantly low revealing peculiar gaps in the County's efforts to mainstream gender issues. As noted by the study, in as much as affirmative action-related laws and policies are present in the County's development project policies, there was insignificant adherence to these policies during the execution of the county development projects. The study thus called for enforcement action on affirmative action policies and guidelines in the execution of development projects in the county. Rather than exploring the influence of gender mainstreaming, the current study focuses on factors challenging its implementation in the devolved units.

As noted by Gachoki and Mulu (2023), the government's expression of political will and commitment to gender as echoed in policy documents and international commitments symbolizes a vital step towards promoting gender equality and women's rights. Through the signing and ratification of international agreements such as CEDAW, Kenya has demonstrated its dedication to tackling gender discrimination and inequalities on a global scale, making itself compatible with broader international framework for gender equality. Additionally, the National Policy for Gender and Development underscores the government's commitment to mainstreaming gender considerations across various sectors of the country's development agenda, emphasizing the importance of women's participation in decision-making processes. These policy pronouncements reflect a willingness on the part of the government to advance gender mainstreaming as an integral aspect of its governance and development strategy.

According to Githae *et al.* (2022) as cited by Gachoki and Mulu (2023), while the political will is vital, the effective translation of this commitment into solid actions and policies remains a sophisticated challenge. This is informed by research which indicates that there can be discrepancies between policy intensions and their actual execution on the ground. Resource constraints, bureaucratic hurdles, and entrenched cultural norms can hinder the full realization of gender mainstreaming goals. Additionally, achieving gender parity in political representation, as mandated by the two-thirds gender principle in the Kenyan Constitution, has faced significant challenges in practice, highlighting the gap between policy rhetoric and implementation. Therefore, while political will is a necessary foundation, it must be complemented by comprehensive strategies, resource allocation, and continuous monitoring to bridge the divide between policy intent and actual impact in advancing gender mainstreaming in Kenya.

They further noted that the peculiar gap between political will and effective implementation of gender-related policies and actions in the country remains a persistent hurdle towards the promotion of gender mainstreaming. Citing empirical studies such as Ojwala (2023), Gachoki and Mulu (2023) observe that there exist discrepancies between policy pronouncements and the allocation of financial resources on gendered programs. Limited financial commitment from the government has been identified as a significant hindrance to the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming initiatives. This underscores the need for a more substantial and sustained investment in gender-related programs and policies to bridge the gap between rhetoric and action. Also, the realization of the principle of two-gender rule has been challenged by lack of political good will.

Despite the existence of policy commitments to ensure women's equal political representation in key decision-making institutions in the country, the rule has confront significant challenge on the political front. Political resistance and weak enforcement have hindered the achievement of meaningful representation for women. This further pinpoints the sophisticated nature of translating political will into solid outcomes, especially within the contexts of deep-seated cultural and political norms that may continue gender disparities. This makes it essential to unearth innovative strategies and governance mechanisms that can be profitable in bridging the gap between political commitments and the attainment of gender mainstreaming objectives.

Citing Nyangweso *et al*. (2020), Gachoki and Mulu (2023) add that the creation of institutions like the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) is a kind gesture by the government to commit to gender mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equality. The NGEC, as an independent commission, was created with the specific mandate to oversee the implementation of gender-related policies and advocate for gender equality within the country. It was seen as a step towards institutionalizing gender mainstreaming efforts and ensuring dedicated oversight of gender-related issues. This establishment signifies recognition at the governmental level of the importance of a specialized body to drive gender equality initiatives (Gachoki & Mulu, 2023).

2.1.4 Gaps in Gender Mainstreaming Policies for attainment of Peace

In Kenya and elsewhere, there are noticeable gaps in the integration of gender perspectives into policy-making processes despite the goal of gender mainstreaming policies. Even though gender mainstreaming rules are in place in Kenya, they are frequently not consistently implemented or enforced (UN Women, 2023). This has resulted from weak

institutional systems, lack of finances, or political will. Tracking advancements and pinpointing areas needing improvement is also challenging due to the frequent lack of gender-disaggregated data (Wanjiru, 2020). Gender mainstreaming strategies are less successful due to ingrained cultural and social norms impeding them. These standards may reinforce discrimination and gender stereotypes.

Most of the policies ignore how gender intersects with other elements like class and disability; it results in a one-size-fits-all strategy that falls short of meeting the needs of all women (Wanjiru, 2020). Although Kenya has robust laws and progressive policies, such as the 2010 Kenyan Constitution, its policies are frequently poorly carried out. This is because institutional systems are insufficient, disorganised, and underfunded. There is also still a sizable gender difference in economic prospects, especially in industries such as manufacturing, notwithstanding initiatives designed to increase women's engagement in the workforce. The representation of women in political decision-making positions still remains low.

Despite policies promoting gender equality in governance, their effectiveness has been restricted. In addition, there are still gender differences in health and education outcomes. For instance, women experience greater rates of maternal mortality, and girls are less likely to finish secondary education. The other issue is gender-based violence. Although there are legal protections for women, gender-based violence is still a major problem. Laws prohibiting this kind of violence are frequently not consistently enforced. All parties involved the government, the commercial sector, and civil society must work together to close these gaps (National Gender and Equality Commission [NGEC], 2021).

2.2 Women's Political Participation

This section reviews literature on women's political participation.

2.2.1 Conceptualization of Political Participation

According to Kamila (2025), participation of women in politics is providing conducive environment for women through reinforcing their capability in the decision-making process not only for their betterment but also for the society. Such participation is enhanced by refining women's socio-economic, legal and political muscles to give them equal rights and place them in a position where they can effectively claim these rights. As argued by Mwaka (2020), women's participation in politics empowers them and widens their choices and invigorating their capacity to avow their expansion in the society. Their participation is vital for the achievement of their rights and goals which encompasses reduction of poverty, economic improvement, health, education and welfare to mention but a few.

According to Gachoki and Mulu (2023), full participation of women in politics is pegged on understanding the status of women in politics and the ramifications associated with the gender differences thereof. They further aver that the participation of women in politics not only benefit women in isolation but also society in general. They add that it solidifies the capacity of women to realize their well-being, minimizing gender inequality, intensifying policies that are geared towards bettering them and heightening their efficiency and practice of policies that pertain to their concerns. Koome *et al*. (2021) further asserts that there are a plethora of reasons to emphasize women's participation on politics since it is one of the most powerful avenues for women to realize their full potential and

advance their rights because the female gender constitutes the majority of the world's poor population.

According to Mwatha *et al*. (2014), several proposals have been made pertaining to the concept of political participation which makes the term to lack a universal definition. Citing Riley *et al.* (2010), Mwatha *et al.* (2014) stipulate that political participation has often been used synonymously with terms like "political engagement" or "public involvement in decision making". Political participation is connoted to engagement with traditional decision mechanisms within the political system such as voting and joining political organizations. It can as well be described as an activity by the private citizens designed to influence the decision making of by the government. Similarly, it can as well be conceived as an activity with the intent or effect of influencing governmental action either directly by affecting the execution of public policies or by indirectly influencing the selection of people who design these policies. Therefore, it can be argued that political participation incorporates a set of rights and duties that involved formerly organized civic and political activities or membership of a political party.

Other scholars have conceptualized political participation with respect to the degree to which a state's population exercises their right to engage in political activities, such as protests, free speech, and voting, influencing or other form of involvement. Chouchou (2022) defines political participation as giving equal opportunity for women to engage in the vital decision making process at the apex of political leadership.

Theoretically, women's equal rights may imply to unfetter participation in national politics at all levels but in practice, this can only be possible if their cause is promoted and facilitated. The point of departure is how to enable people to change their destiny. It is well

grounded that empowered individuals are highly likely to get involved in organizations, striving to carve out the requisite equality in this case. One could argue that both participation and empowerment are vital in forming an accurate and unified approach to establishing equality among people. This makes participation as the sole step that breeds some potential initial changes but also culminate in long-term positive outcomes in various ways.

The capacity of Africa towards the actualization of its development agenda is dependent upon its ability to make good use of its resources coupled with unutilized capacities (Rinyiru and Nyang'au, 2024). This capacity can be enhanced by engaging women in social, political and economic life. To attain this, intense efforts to dismantle discrimination and promote equality are required from all stakeholders. The commitment which has been demonstrated by African governments needs to be reinforced by strong support from the wider international community. This framework perpetrates the clear allocation of responsibilities and clear mapping-out of specific steps and measures to curtail inequality.

Citing UN Women (2018), Mwaka (2020) highlights that the research conducted out in Sub-Saharan Africa has indicated a higher likelihood of women to be poor compared to the male gender in 22 out of the 25 countries. For instance, women in Malawi confront discriminatory cultural practices and religious beliefs. In African culture, men are seen as superior and better suited to public roles, side-lining the need to actively involve women in order to realize their full potential. Kamila (2025) elucidated that every country deserves to have the best possible leader and this implies according women chance to compete. If

they are not allowed to compete in electoral processes and decision-making then the countries are really robbing themselves of a great deal of talent.

Countries like Rwanda and South Africa have depicted significant progress by increasing the number of women in political power. Rwanda features 53.9% of its parliamentarians being women, followed by South Africa with 40.4% (Mwaka, 2020). Despite varied perceptions about the capabilities of women in Africa, women's participation in politics at the community, district, regional, and national levels have been met with some challenges. The culmination has been the springing up of women groups advocating for a fairer representation of women in decision-making processes both in the district and national sphere.

While illuminating on the historical trends pertaining to women's participation in politics in Kenya, Kenyatta (2023) observes that Kenya's political landscape has been significantly shaped by women since the colonial era. This is despite the entrenched patriarchal and deep-seated resistance towards the inclusion of women in politics. For instance, during the colonial epoch, which marked the continued struggle for independence, women engineered peaceful protests that put their lives at risk for example, Mary Muthoni Wanjiru while others such as Priscilla Abwao engaged in talks that eventually led to the country's independence.

Citing Kamau (2010) and Kabira (2012), Kenyatta (2023) states that colonial and post-colonial regimes were cognizance of the power held by women and utilized them for their political mileage. For instance, then colonial government formed the "Maendeleo ya Wanawake" (national women's development organization) which later fell under the control by then government to marshal women nationwide for state support. In as much as

this organization contributed to the empowerment of women economically through enhancing capacity building, however, it failed to venture into empowering them to take up active roles in politics, and the patriarchal culture made them believe that political participation was a preserve of men only.

According to Kabira and Kimani (2012), following the onset of the democracy in the wake of 1990s which birthed pluralism politics, the 1992 National Women's Convention was held, which became a landmark in promotion of women participation in politics. Women were able to organize themselves and fight for the expansion of democratic space in politics. Several women legislators made efforts to contribute towards the gender principle. For example, Hon. Phoebe Asiyo, in 1997 sponsored the first affirmative action motion that recommended parties' proposals of women who would compete for elective seats at the two levels of governments and set a goal for women's seats in parliament to a minimum of 18. Similarly, Hon. Beth Mugo in 2000 sponsored a motion that promoted women's involvement during the constitutional process on the gender principle. Unfortunately, both proposals failed. This pointed to the fact that absence of political commitment by the state leaders is a major hindrance to gender parity.

Citing the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IIDEA, 2021), Kenyatta (2023) notes that in East African region, Kenya continues to lag behind with respect to the representation of women at both the National Assembly and the Senate compared to Rwanda which has 61%, the highest score in the region. Other East African countries including Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda are having a score of 38%, 37% and 35% respectively. Interestingly, South Sudan which is the youngest country in the regions performs better than Kenya with a score of 28%.

As asserted by Koome *et al*. (2021), the worrying participation and representation of women in national public and political institutions such as the Senate, the National assembly and the County Assembly invalidates the values enshrined in the 2010 Constitution. Kenya has invited self in the stage of equality of sexual orientation with respect to various United Nations (UN) goals like CEDAW. It also retains the 1966 contract on civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. In 1985, the country was at the center of the sexual orientation equality initiative in promoting the development of a forward-looking strategy for the advancement of women in Nairobi, and was at the forefront of arrangements for the African Continental Conference.

Citing Githinji (2010), Koome *et al.* (2021) highlight that in as much as Kenya has agreed to bear the brunt of this claim globally, gender mainstreaming remains subtle. Kivoi (2014) recognized some deterrent factors that hinder women's interest in political issues around the world. They include different factors such as low level of education and ability, low access to monetary assets, social mentality and generalization, religion and socialization. Mwaka (2020) established that women face pressure in work, family and friendly environments. In addition, women are expected to acquire male initiative qualities and board skills, such as strength and self-confidence, to master their own careers.

2.2.1.1 Conflicts and women's involvement

According to Kihara *et al*. (2024), the world has perpetually experienced the absence of peace which many a times manifests in terms of conflicts. Majority of these conflicts are internal often occurring between different identities groups' within the state over political and economic marginalization, identity, ethnic discrimination, resource scarcity and injustice. They noted that despite the rise of conflicts and its devastations, conflict has

remained a gendered issue as it affects men and women differently with the latter suffering the most. Women and men takes different roles are differently targeted on the basis of gender. In particular, men and women often grapple with different and dynamic gender norms and roles during the phases of conflicts.

Kihara *et al*. (2024) note that gender dimensions in peace building manifests in three ways namely; gender as an analytical tool, an approach and a goal. As an analytical tool, gender analysis of conflict and peace processes brings to light the experiences of women and men during and after conflict, assess their needs and show how gender relations change during peace and conflict. For instance, gender analysis can illuminate on sexual and gender-based violence of a conflict prone community. As an approach, gender in peace building is seen in terms of engendering peace building by incorporating women in decision making processes and empowering women as decision makers in peace building processes. However, it also involves better appreciation of the specificities of men, women, boys' and girls' needs, situations, roles and interests in peace processes. As a goal, gender in peace building is seen in the aspect of gender equality and peace. Attainment of peace is believed to lead to greater gender equality while the establishment of gender equality is believed to lead to peace.

As further explained by Kihara *et al.* (2024), whereas the UN expressly appeals for women to be incorporated in peace building activities, gaps still exist in terms of approaches to gender mainstreaming that has been embraced by global and regional actors as well as domestic actors in Kenya. Peace interventions by state and non-state actors vary in terms of the involvement of women in that some interventions are gender blind, while others only involve women to a limited extent.

Citing Taylor (2020), women, for instance in the UN which is the main propagator for global peace and gender equality, remain underrepresented in most senior levels of leadership which indicate that gender mainstreaming in peace building remains significantly low. This makes the UN calls for gendered peace to be ineffective with regard to mainstreaming policy debates embedded these agendas are conspicuously weak in engaging either in advancing gender equality goals or in supporting women's role in peace building processes. This is evidenced by the glaring gender disparities that continue to exist in peace building agreements and negotiations across the globe. For instance, in Africa, the AU Commission on Women, Peace and Security recommends the mainstreaming of women, peace and security into national strategies.

Having ratified these laws and resolutions by the UN, countries have endeavoured to domesticate these gender mainstreaming efforts through the establishment of gender desks, commissions, laws and policies. Nationally, the Kenyan Government has made significant efforts to domesticate the UNSCR 1325 by developing the first Kenya National Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and Related Resolutions in 2016 and the second one KNAP II (2020-2024). This indicates that the government has tried to be aligning with international requirements calling for gender mainstreaming in peace building activities. In addition, 2010 Kenyan Constitution and Vision 2030 as well as the establishment of the National Gender and Equality Commission and hiring of gender officers across the 47 counties indicate the government's commitment to promote and achieve gender equality.

As underscored by Kimemia (2021), African continent have been epitomized by conflicts as informed by its proneness to civil conflicts, discord, strife, civil wars, and cases of

genocide. As the world bed farewell to inter-state conflicts following the end of the Second World War, some regions, notably Africa were already bracing for new forms of conflicts despite the intense urgencies mounted by the respective governments to quench them down. To-date, the number of conflicts and fatalities continue to rise, while strive and tensions on the basis of different social cleavages jeopardize any chance for political stability and economic boon in some countries.

Kimemia (2021) notes that since 1990s, Africa has witnessed a reduction in the prevalence of civil wars despite the high prevalence of violent activities. The recession of conflicts could be attributed to countries with long and consequential histories of conflict settling for peace due to both exogenous and endogenous factors. In view of this, he contends that after being embroiled in conflicts for quite a significant period, countries such as Angola, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Rwanda are steadily geared towards the attainment of political stability and economic growth. As per Bujra (2002), there are several types of internal conflicts and these are presently the majority of conflicts in Africa, especially since the demise of the post-Cold War epoch; those conflicts in which the state is a party to the conflict; these are therefore politically driven or instigated conflicts, and conflicts between groups within the country and which the state is not a party to.

While focusing on the political conflicts in Africa, Kimemia (2021) postulates that such conflicts have a complex history, multi-dimensional process, multiple and multifaceted causes and ramifications in a complex environment. These makes such conflicts not to be explained or defined by a single causal factor without reducing them into a simplification of gigantic issue, making it difficult to develop along-lasting solution. In light of this, he

points out that for instance, major conflicts lead to instability, damage infrastructure, undermine production industries, and affect the distribution of goods and services.

Literature clearly shows that a wide range of social, economic, political, and individual factors are involved or associated with political conflict in Africa. Citing Zeleza (2008), he avers that these conflicts are rooted in the complex constructions and conjectures of Africa's political economies, social identities, and cultural ecologies, as configured by specific local, national, regional, and historical experiences, as well as patterns of insertion into and engagement with an ever-changing world system.

Generally, the underlying causes of conflicts can be narrowed down to systemic and proximate factors or opportunity and grievance. In this regard, systemic causes include factors that are embedded in institutions, whether political, economic or social. These constitute the root causes which encompasses long-standing issues (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). Systemic causes connote the underlying structural and deep-rooted factors such as economic disparity, historic oppression, political and economic marginalization, and abuses (IMF, 2024).

Proximate causes are those factors or issues that can further escalate violence (Urdal, 2006). These are factors that contribute to a fertile ground for violence which in some cases are more visible and symptomatic of a deeper problem. There are also triggering factors that further the escalation of the conflicts (Wilkinson, 2006). Furthermore, Kimemia (2021) notes that systemic causes can be categorized as both internal and external factors but this is dependent on the genesis of the conflict. Endogenous factors spring from within the nation, while external factors are mainly influenced by international forces which transcends beyond national borders. Among the external actors are the legacies of Cold

War policies, arms flows, and military aid; internal factors include geographical conditions, poverty, militarization, competition for state power, ethnic and religious divisions, and socio-economic inequalities.

Notably, the causes of conflicts are many. However, it is worthy to note that most of the conflicts experienced in most parts of the African countries can be attributed to a weak government characterized by weak institutions which makes it possible for conflict to onset and sustains (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). In particular, a weak government is likely to have a weak military that is ill-prepared to dispel any rebellion. This makes it possible for rebels to calculate their chances of overcoming the military which is relatively high. The confrontation over power and resources become dangerous when coupled with a fragile government and military prowess (Hentz, 2019).

Unequal access to state power inevitably creates conflict, as those in power attempt to consolidate it and those outside the circle fight to get in. Socializing the means of production means that the state will provide the main channel to the accumulation of personal wealth and securing privileged positions (Adeto, 2019). This causes a brutal competition for power and position, in which groups and individuals feel that they must win at any cost to society or individual life. Fragile or weak states grapple with a diverse range of threats, both internal including armed factions and minority rebellions, and external, such as from regional actors or spill over fighting from neighbouring states (Farole, 2019). Weak governments are characterized by weak political institutions. When a government is weak, rebels can expect to win (Notshulwana, 2011).

As underscored by Kenyatta (2023), Kenya is a signatory to various global and regional agreements that promote the participation of women in politics. Among them being the

1995 United Nations World Conference in Beijing that provides a platform for action, compelling the states to adopt strategies geared towards the promotion of women's equal and complete participation in leadership. Also, the 1945 United Nations Agreement affirmed gender equality as blue print for development agenda and recently embeds it in the current 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially on gender parity and women emancipation. She however observes that despite Kenya's international and regional commitment to empower women in all spheres, from a regional perspective, it has posted a worrying performance when it comes to the promotion of women's political participation and representation not to mention it being a regional economic hegemon in the Eastern Africa.

Citing Ouma & Maina (2010), she notes that gender inequality is still prevalent in Kenya owing to the fact that the country is numerically ranked at position 134 out of 162 countries if the 2018 Global Inequality Index is anything to go by. In her analysis, Kenyatta does not hesitate to pinpoint numerous prevailing factors ranging from social, economic and political that instigates the persistent exclusion of women in Kenya's political landscape. In as much as the gender principle was partially implemented both in 2013 and 2017 general elections, she contends that seemingly, Kenya is yet to acknowledge and appreciate women's capabilities in political leadership owing to the failure to achieve the constitutional minimum of one-third female representation in most of the governmental institutions.

2.2.1.2 Women and the Attainment of Peace

As observed by Adjei (2019), women's contribution to the resolution of conflict mad peace building processes has significantly gained scholarly attention over the last two decades.

Despite their significant role in halting conflicts and forging peace, they have been largely ignored in the discourse of peace and praxis. It was not only the beginning of 2000s when the UN passed the Security Resolution 1325 (UNSCR, 1325) that scholars and practitioners began to accord attention to women's contribution to peace and stability. Resolution 1325 became the first of a kind to explicitly advocate for the inclusion of women in the peace process while underscoring their distinctive contribution in search endeavour.

For the past three decades, the promotion of gender equality and the inclusion of gender perspectives has remained a rallying call for those seeking to transform global governance so that women's interest are also considered, especially the feminists (Domingo *et al.,* 2014). The UN Resolution 1325, Women Peace and Security (WPS) which were conceived on the 2000 have contributed to the wider recognition and appreciation of women's roles in international peace and security. The UN Resolution 1325 is the first of the 8 Resolutions that constitute the WPS agenda which serves as the global normative framework. The WPS agenda is the result of years of campaign by feminists and women rights activists who felt that women's experiences where absent from international relations policy making, and in the responses to conflict. This global framework thus seeks to achieve gender justice for women by strengthening their participation and assuring their protection especially against sexual violence in violent conflict ultimately to build inclusive peace.

As further explained by Domingo *et al*. (2014) the WPS is embedded in four pillars; Participation; Prevention; Protection; and Relief & Recovery. The Participation pillar calls for the holistic participation and representation of women at "all levels of decision-making, including peace-processes, electoral processes and the broader social-political sphere." Prevention focuses on integration gender perspectives and allowing women to participate

in the prevention of violent conflict. Importantly, this is intended to be adopted by each country represented in the UN through National Action Plans (NAPs) applied to both national and foreign policy, and also by regions through Regional Action Plans (RAPs). Of these pillars, protection remains the most visible pillar. The pillar mandates the UN and its affiliated agencies to protect the rights and the needs of women and girls ion both conflict and post-conflict environment. These practices of protection include the reporting and prosecution of sexual and gender-based violence. The pillar of Relief and Recovery extends the protection focus by prioritizing the access that survivors of sexual and gender-based violence have to health services and trauma counselling.

According to Somo and Nyandoro (2024), women bear a profound burden during violent conflicts, experiencing higher rates of gender-based violence, displacement, and trauma. Acknowledging women as victims of conflict underscores the urgency of their participation in peace-building efforts to address their specific needs and experiences. Additionally, citing recent researches conducted by Paffenholz and Spurk (2020) and Reilly (2021), they emphasize the remarkable resilience and agency of women in conflict-affected societies, highlighting their crucial roles in community support and post-conflict reconstruction. Furthermore, citing researches by Klot *et al*. (2019) and Buhaug and Urdal (2021), Somo and Nyandoro (2024) reaffirm the positive impact of women's inclusion in peace processes, leading to more inclusive agreements, increased implementation, and longer-lasting peace. Harnessing the agency and perspectives of women is therefore crucial for effective and sustainable conflict management, promoting social cohesion, addressing underlying causes of conflict, and ensuring gender equality and human rights. Therefore, involvement ensures

that the conflict management process addresses the specific needs of women, fosters social justice, and promotes comprehensive and lasting solutions to conflict.

The involvement of women in conflict management is vital to promoting sustainable peace and security. Evidence shows that when women are included in peace processes, there is a greater likelihood of success and a reduction in the recurrence of conflict (UN Women, 2021). Moreover, the inclusion of women in peace-building efforts can lead to more comprehensive and lasting solutions, as women bring unique perspectives and expertise to the table. For example, a study conducted in Liberia found that women's groups played a significant role in advocating for peace and disarmament during the country's civil war (West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, 2024). These groups mobilized women across ethnic and religious lines and used nonviolent methods to push for peace. The inclusion of women in the peace process in Liberia also led to the adoption of a gender-sensitive disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program, which recognized the specific needs of female ex-combatants (Reilly, 2021; West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, 2024).

A study by Krause *et al*. (2018) focused on women's participation in peace negotiations and durable peace. In their study, they note that is an emerging consensus that the participation by women on peace negotiations contributes to quality and durable peace, however, such assertions remain empirically untested. By employing a mixed-method design, their statistical analysis reveals a robust correlation between peace agreements signed by female delegates and durable peace.

The study further found that agreements inked by women demonstrate a significantly high number of peace agreements provisions which are tailored towards political reforms and

higher implementation rates for provisions. They argue that the nexus between women signatories and women civil society groups explain the observed positive impact of women's direct participation in peace negotiations. Collaboration and knowledge building among diverse women groups contributes to better content of peace agreements and higher implementation rates of agreement provisions. The findings of this study support the assumption that women's participation in peace negotiations increases the durability and the quality of peace.

In Colombia, Salazar-Escalante (2024) examined the engendered peace processes and women's political participation. The study highlights that Columbia armed conflict has been the longest in the Western Hemisphere, lasting for over five decades. This conflict which pitted state and the guerrilla groups notably the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) reached a melting point in 2012 after the onset of peace negotiations between the government and FARC which later culminated in the signing of the Final Peace Agreement in 2016. The fact that the Peace Agreement is hailed from across the globe as a benchmark for gender mainstreaming in the peace process is attributed to the participation of women alongside their organizations in the negotiations and also for incorporating the gender provisions in all aspects.

Focusing on the gender quota in the electoral process, the findings of the study suggest that the structures that consolidated the country's war system has persisted and they significantly affect both women's political participation and efforts for an engendered peace building. To corroborate the assertions, she demonstrated that peace process provisions on gender and politics have been insufficient owing to the fact that Colombia has a shy gender quota that falls short in consolidating parity in electoral bodies. Also, the

country also preserves low numbers of women in power both at the national and the local level. Secondly, she points out that reforms have failed to address the structural dynamics of the armed conflict in the post-conflict political landscape. This is because war dynamics were domineered by traditional political parties, family clans, patronage, corruption, clientelism and disparities that shore up the influence and control of economic elites. These same dynamics persist today, and profoundly structure women's electoral participation. Moreover, the political participation of women has been affected by the current patriarchal system, and narratives of submission and discrimination based on gender roles predominate. Existing reforms have proved limited in their capacity to dismantle these dynamics.

In the Middle East, particularly Afghanistan, a study by Nazary *et al*. (2020) examined women's involvement in peace processes. They contend that new evidence shows that when women groups were able to influence the process, a peace agreement was almost always reached with the highly likelihood that it would be implemented. Examining the roles of women's groups and other groups in peace and transition process, the study established that women's participation, especially when women were able to influence the process increases the likelihood that an agreement will be reached in the short term while also making it more likely that the peace that results will be more sustainable.

Across contexts, and regardless of the models and mechanisms being used, those seeking to strengthen a peace or transition process by advancing women's meaningful participation can leverage four key strategies: build coalitions based on normative and strategic arguments; establish a credible selection process; create the conditions to make women's voices heard; and keep power politics and the public in mind (Nazary *et al*., 2020). Given

the evidence of women's impact and the changing mediation landscape, a broader reimagining of peace processes is needed, so that those shaping and participating in them can work with the multiplicity of actors involved to both end violence more effectively and build a more durable peace.

In Africa, particularly in South Sudan, Sabala (2017) examined the extent of women's participation in the Intergovernmental Authority of Development (IGAD) peace talks and the issues pertaining to them in the final peace agreement. The study highlights that the 2015 peace agreement provides some clear provisions on women's participation and issues, especially those related to the execution of the agreement, composition of the transitional government and economic development. He observes that the extent to which women will participate in the implementation of the peace agreement is largely pegged on how they are able to influence the creation and the establishment of the transitional mechanisms.

Sabala (2017), further warns that failure by the women to cease this opportunity will make them unable to infuse their concerns into the substantive implementation of the broader agreement. Additionally, the paper observes that despite the participation of the women in IGAD and membership in other bodies engaged in peace processes such as civil society organizations, faith based organizations and the government; women's issues are not adequately echoed in the final agreement. He attributes this to women's participation being at the lower levels of the negotiation process. In relation to South Sudan, women were largely excluded from the initial stages of negotiations where the rules and agenda for successive negotiations were inked.

The limited provisions on women's participation and shallow infusion of women's concerns in the final agreement can be partly attributed to the fact that the mediation

structure was male dominated. The IGAD Summit, the IGAD Special Envoys, the IGAD Council of Ministers, and the negotiating teams were predominantly men. Also, the main protagonists to the conflict, who were men, dominated the peace process at the expense of other stakeholders in South Sudan.

In Kenya, Somo and Nyandoro (2024) sought to identify the current levels of women's participation and conflict management in Wajir East in Wajir County. The study was grounded in social learning theory and institution theory. Mixed-method design supplemented by quantitative and qualitative data from interviews was deployed. The study sampled 177 women drawn from a population of 24,620 who were above the age of 18 years. Questionnaires and interview schedule were used to collect the primary data. Construct validity and content validity were both used in this study. The reliability of the study tool was determined using Cronbach's alpha and evaluated at 0.70. The data collection procedure involved obtaining informed consent from participants.

The data collected was cleaned and entered in SPSS for analysis. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics. The qualitative data was analysed using a thematic approach. These findings suggest the existence of recognition of women's active participation in decision-making processes and engagement in peace activities, challenges persist regarding the integration of their perspectives, representation in leadership roles, and access to resources. However, varied responses reflect the complex socio-cultural context and underscore the importance of addressing barriers to ensure more inclusive and effective peace-building efforts.

Achieving gender parity in leadership roles and political authority is necessary to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. However, data shows that gender parity in

politics is still a long way off and that women are underrepresented in decision-making at all levels globally (UN Women, 2023; UN Women, 2024). As of September 15, 2023, 28 women serve as Heads of State or Government in 26 nations. It will take an additional 130 years to attain gender parity in leadership positions if current trends continue (UN Women, 2024). There are just sixteen countries with a female head of government and only fifteen with a female head of state (UN Women, 2024). According to data given by UN Women, as of January 2023, women accounted for 22.8 per cent of Cabinet members who hold major policy area oversight responsibilities or are ministers. Only thirteen nations have at least 50 per cent of their cabinet ministers in charge of significant policy areas (UN Women & IPU, 2024; WEF, 2024).

Female cabinet ministers most commonly hold the five ministries of women and gender equality, family and children affairs, social inclusion and development, social protection and social security, and Indigenous and minority affairs. Women currently only comprise 26.5 per cent of lawmakers in the lower or single chamber, despite an increase from 11 per cent in 1995. The lower houses of parliament in just six nations have at least 50 per cent female representation: Rwanda (61%), Cuba (53%), Nicaragua (52%), Mexico (50%), New Zealand (50%) and the United Arab Emirates (50%) are the only other countries that have this status. Twenty-three more nations six from Africa, three from Latin America and the Caribbean, one from Asia, and thirteen from Europe have attained or exceeded the 40 per cent threshold (Balakrishnan, 2023).

Less than ten per cent of legislators in single or lower houses are women in twenty-two states worldwide, and in one lower house, there are none. Gender equality in national legislatures will not be reached until 263, given the current rate of progress. Women in

Latin America and the Caribbean have 36 per cent of the legislative seats, compared to 32 per cent in Europe and North America. Eastern and South-Eastern Asia ranks second in terms of female legislators, with 22 per cent, followed by Oceania (20%), Central and Southern Asia (19%), Northern Africa and Western Asia (18%), and Sub-Saharan Africa (26%).

Moreover, 3 million (35.5%) of the elected members of local deliberative bodies are women, according to data from 141 countries. Only three nations have attained the 50 per cent threshold, while 22 more have more than 40 per cent of women working in local government (UN Women, 2024; UN Women, 2022). As of January 2023, regional inequalities regarding women's representation in local deliberative bodies are also examined. Women accounted for 41 per cent of the global population in Central and Southern Asia in 2022, with the remainder being distributed among Europe and North America (37%), Oceania (32%), Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (31%), Latin America and the Caribbean (27%), sub-Saharan Africa (25%), Western Asia and Northern Africa (20%), and Latin America and the Caribbean (27%) (UN Women, 2024).

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action set the global goal of equitable political involvement and power distribution between men and women in decision-making. Even though gender parity has not been attained in most countries, gender quotas have been essential to progress. Countries with such legislation have higher percentages of women in parliaments and local administration than those without; the differences range from five to seven percentage points (Bekele & Nigatu, 2023).

A growing body of research has demonstrated the positive effects of women's leadership in political decision-making processes. Indian research on panchayats (2023) found, for example, that drinking water projects were 62 per cent more common in districts governed by women than by men. In Norway, the percentage of female town council members and the availability of childcare are positively correlated. Women show political leadership by advocating for gender equality and working across party lines in legislative women's caucuses, even in the most divisive political environments. These include, among other things, the abolition of gender-based violence, maternity leave and childcare, pensions, laws promoting gender equality, and changes to the election process.

Numerous factors have been cited to explain why women have made such slow progress in obtaining political office worldwide. These factors include their lack of time for politics due to household responsibilities; their lack of socialisation for politics; their lower social capital and weaker asset base than men because of discrimination in the workplace and schools; their marginalisation within male-dominated parties; and their inability to overcome incumbent and male bias in particular electoral systems (Desa, 2016).

Most of the time, the number of women in formal politics and elected public office is used to gauge the level of women's political participation. The tendency to restrict this incredibly crude measure to the number of women in the national main legislative house makes it even more so limiting (Krook & Norris, 2014). This excludes not only the number of women in regional and local government, but also the number of women elected to the position of magistrate, members of the boards of public bodies like schools and health facilities, and similar positions (Tripp, 2015). The use of this measure is motivated mostly by convenience.

The number of women serving in local governments and other subnational elected bodies is severely lacking in data, and the governance structures of subnational communities and public bodies differ so greatly from one another that they are hardly comparable (Waylen, 2014). There is no required correlation between the number of women in representative politics and the degree and intensity of women's political participation, hence this is not the best way to measure the former (Lovendusku, 2004). When single-party regimes discouraged women's autonomous civil society engagement, a comparatively high proportion of women were discovered in politics in communist nations (Tripp, 2019).

Even if the women's movement can be weak at these levels, there are still comparatively substantial numbers of women in some nations' municipal governments, such as Uganda or France. Furthermore, the proportion of women holding national office is among the lowest in India and the USA, countries with the biggest women's movements globally in terms of the sheer quantity and diversity of women's organisations (Aldrich & Daniel, 2020). A more accurate measure of women's political participation would be the number of women involved in women's organisations or the total number of women's organisations in a nation. It is best to define women's political engagement more broadly than the number of women holding elected office or, for that matter, the number of women's organisations, as women can express their political interests by joining a wide range of civic and political organisations (Liu & Banaszak, 2017).

This definition covers a variety of activities such as voting, supporting political parties through other campaigns or membership drives, writing or calling policymakers directly, participating in protests, joining political advocacy organisations, working informally to address issues in the community, and volunteering for local boards of education or zoning.

This definition is obviously culturally specific; ideas of citizen lobbying of representatives or political campaign participation work best in democratic environments free from political violence and corruption, especially during elections, and with well-organised political parties that have distinct agendas and positions. Additionally, feminist political scientists have criticised this restrictive definition for omitting women's preferred modes of public engagement and for being unduly focused on individual political acts.

According to a recent cross-national study involving 146 countries, gender imbalance in political representation has no bearing on the quantity of national women's political organisations (Aldrich & Daniel, 2020). This suggests a role model effect that encourages women to enter politics and a cultural effect that the political sphere becomes less hostile to women the longer it is exposed to them. This pattern is consistent with other studies of women's political participation: the longer women have had access to the political sphere, the greater the number of women in politics. One study demonstrates how political violence and corruption have a depressing effect on women's political participation, even in multi-member elections that ought to encourage it (Barnes & Holman, 2020).

Overly, broad definitions of political engagement are problematic since it is difficult to quantify certain behaviours, especially private acts of resistance, and there are just no data comparable across national boundaries. Given differences in political institutions and cultures, investigations and explanations of gender disparities in political action in other cultures must consider the various political participation chances. The number of women in office is now the only reliable and consistent data source demonstrating differences in women's political engagement. Thus, we rely on it to measure the quantity and type of women's political participation across national boundaries, given the challenges in doing

so. It is not wholly unrelated to the issue of women's relative political efficacy, even though it is by no means an ideal measure of women's political activity (Liu & Banaszak, 2017).

The fact that there are more women in politics than the global average which is 15 per cent of lower houses currently (IEBC, 2023). It should be a sign that some of the numerous barriers to women's political engagement have been removed. In part, overcoming these barriers depends on how well the women's movement and other civil and political organisations are able to combat the prejudices that cause men and women to be chosen for different positions in social, economic, and political institutions and that result in the unfair treatment of women when they do get in. Consequently, the strength and accomplishments of women's political involvement must at least partially be reflected in the number of women holding elected office.

The endeavour of ensuring that involvement in the public sphere advances women's interests does not negate the importance of paying attention to the proportion of women in office. Evidence from around the globe shows that women legislators, even in stark minority, contribute to directing political discourse in parties and legislatures towards issues important to women and children (Aldrich & Daniel, 2020; Yadav, 2020). This is true even though women in office are almost always social and political elites without ties to the women's movement. The right to political participation refers to a citizen's ability to pick representatives and organisations, seek collective decision-making, and attempt to influence public affairs without prejudice. This is to enable women to participate in and be a vote-taker in elections; to exercise political authority over the legislative, executive, judicial, and other branches of government; to impact the creation and execution of public

policy at the local, regional, national, and international levels; and to enjoy unhindered democratic action.

Adeleke (2014) empirically investigated Nigerian women's political involvement at the local government level. During the study, fieldwork on the significance of women's grassroots political engagement, barriers to women's political participation, and strategies to improve women's political participation was done in Oka and Akungba, Akoko South-West Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria. More than 180 copies of the questionnaire were randomly distributed to the respondents, and the results demonstrate that, given the opportunity, women can increase their political experience at the local level, increasing their efficacy at a higher level of decision-making. The report also outlines barriers to women's local political engagement, chief among them being patriarchy.

Innocent (2020) investigated five women's action groups in Ghana and Nigeria's online advocacy activities. The study used computer-mediated discourse analysis, grounded on contemporary social movement theories, to qualitatively analyse the content found on these groups' websites and social media platforms. Results indicate that social media gives women's advocacy groups a voice that frequently challenges intimidation and conventional patriarchal assumptions to demand women's rights to political leadership. Protest discourses employ discursive frameworks such as urgent statements or direct actions that call for change at all costs. By means of internet activism, advocacy groups expand their reach to national and worldwide audiences and communities, while also providing support to the most marginalised and vulnerable rural women. However, the lack of Internet

connectivity among rural women limits their ability to participate in online activism in cities and metropolitan regions.

2.2.2 Forms of Political Participation

As noted previously, becoming involved in politics involves more than just voting and holding office. Residents can engage in various activities depending on their interests, abilities, and resources. Sorting these activities into traditional and non-conventional means and legal and criminal participation is crucial. Illegal forms are prohibited, whereas those authorised by the law are (Ngara & Ayabam, 2013). While non-conventional forms are considered anomalies, conventional means are the mainstream forms. Among the more well-known traditional methods are participating in political campaigns, becoming a member of political organisations, giving money to political candidates or causes, getting in touch with political figures, volunteering in the community, and holding local office positions, such as school boards. Even if they are more passive, other ways to get involved in politics are through supporting activities like going to concerts or playing sports. Some actions, however, are essential types of political activity and are typically connected to opposition. According to Milbrath and Goel (1977), these unconventional methods of expressing disagreement with the government's stance include rioting, protests, and demonstrations. It's clear from the list that practically anyone can get involved in politics, regardless of socioeconomic standing or gender. Next, we examine a few of these endeavours in greater detail.

2.2.2.1 Conventional Methods

These involve rather standard political actions through representational avenues of government. They can be divided into two groups: (a) supportive, in which participants

formally pledge allegiance to a nation or government (b) Influencing: in this scenario, participants seek to change or undo a specific stance or policy of the government. Participants' supportive actions could be intended to get a particular government reward. Voting is one way to influence behaviour, as is exercising strong initiative to achieve benefits for the group.

2.2.2.2 Voting

This may be the most common method of getting involved in politics and the one that most people worldwide use. It is a prime example of democracy and the people's right to pick their government. In general, democracy is defined as the existence of four essential components, which are as follows: (a) a political system that allows for the free and fair election of governments; (b) active citizen participation in civic and political life; (c) protection of all citizens' human rights; and (d) an equally applicable legal system. Africa and other emerging nations were primarily exposed to Western-style democracy through the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS), which were started in the wake of the early 1970s oil crisis (Tripp, 2019). To receive financing to revive failing African economies, developing nations were required, albeit somewhat, to adopt democracy by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and Western nations.

Voting is special because it gives more people's opinions a voice than any other activity. The fact that each person receives one vote, regardless of socioeconomic or political standing, makes it an equalising factor (Dahl, 2000). In environments where free and fair elections are the norm, this guarantees that those holding political office are legitimate and that most voters will accept the election winners (Norris, 2014). Naturally, the location of the election and the percentage of eligible and registered voters who cast ballots affect how effective voting is (Lijphart, 1997).

According to Otieno (2013), in developed democracies such as the United States, nine out of ten individuals concur that voting is a citizen's duty. Not much has changed in Africa, where 79 per cent of South Africans believe voting is a citizen's obligation (HSR, 2015). This does not imply, however, that every registered voter participates in elections in these democracies; a sizable fraction of registered voters nevertheless abstain from doing their civic duty. Elections are typically less free and fair in underdeveloped nations, particularly those in Africa. Voting irregularities are a problem that might lead to violence and ethnic tensions. For example, following the 2007 presidential election in Kenya, there was post-election violence that resulted in over a thousand deaths and an estimated 600,000 displaced persons (Gabrielle, 2009). With their poorer institutions, marked marginalisation of certain communities, and deeply ingrained ethnic distrust, emerging democracies such as Kenya require fundamental changes that can be successfully accomplished at the polls. Therefore, it is quite unsettling that rather than bringing Kenyans together, the voting process intended to address these issues is dividing them. Not everyone in a nation can vote; some prerequisites must be met, such as becoming a citizen and reaching majority age. One must, moreover, be registered as a voter for them to be allowed to vote.

Political engagement can, therefore, be categorised into two categories: autonomous and mobilised (Zainuri, 2007). Additionally, the diversity of political engagement activities reflects varying participation dynamics and complexity. This framework defines women's political participation as their engagement in any or all the political actions listed above, ranging from the straightforward one of casting a ballot in an election to the more sophisticated one of becoming members or leaders of parliament. It is harder for women to participate in more complex activities. Numerous studies (Maherul & Puri, 2019;

Muslimat, 2017; Sahi, 2016) have examined the low level of women's political participation in Indonesia. This is particularly true of their representation in parliament.

Additionally, these researchers found that at least three variables caused the low level of women's political participation in Indonesia. First, women's increased participation as members of parliament was hampered by the absence of party support. The percentage of female members of almost all political parties was lower than that of males. Second, there was still the prevailing cultural belief that women belonged primarily in domestic roles, particularly as housewives, and had no business involved in politics, much less leading political parties. These cultural constraints hampered women's participation in politics. Furthermore, there was a perception that women who participated in politics typically lacked confidence. Third, women had not seized officially available chances to engage in political activity.

In Indonesia, women's political participation is still considered a "big dream" for many, although it is an open space. One clear indicator of this issue is the representation of women in formal political institutions, such as central and regional legislatures, as demonstrated by the data from the most recent election results of 2019. The representation of women in the legislature is still inadequate as only 111 individuals, or 19 per cent of the total 575 positions in the House of Representatives (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, or DPR) in 2019, are women. The figures show a little increase from the preceding period, even if the percentage of women in DPR has not yet reached thirty percent. About 97 women were elected in the 2014 election (KPU, 2014), making up about 17% of the 552 elected DPR

members. According to this data, there appears to have been no discernible rise in Indonesian women holding parliamentary seats over the previous five years.

It is impossible to comprehend political dynamics including those of women without also comprehending the political culture that society has accepted (Mukarom, 2008; Nurudin, 2006). Cultural values, conventions, and perceptions are inextricably linked to an individual's involvement and participation. In this instance, gaining accurate information and depictions of cultural elements that likely contribute to the low level of women's political participation requires an awareness of portraits and conditions of political culture.

2.2.3 Women's Political Participation

Despite the history of women's equal engagement in politics in nations such as Republican Rome, ancient Greece, and the few European democracies that developed, women were completely denied the ability to vote by the end of the eighteenth century. Women's rights to equality in education and civil possibilities are proclaimed in Wollstonecraft's 1792 A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (Brody, 2000). According to Brody (2000), it is now recognised as one of the founding texts of liberal feminism.

Nevertheless, even when voting rights were expanded in the UK in 1832, women were not granted the ability to exercise any of their rights. The fight for women's voting rights did not begin until the 19th century, primarily in the United States and Great Britain. When battling for their right to vote, American women led the world. Similarly, women's voting rights were secured in most liberal democracies in the West through persistent struggle against the system. The British Government gave people in the United Kingdom the right to vote based on factors like education, property, and marital status. Women did not gain

the ability to vote in national elections until the early 1900s in the following countries: New Zealand (1893), Australia (1902), Finland 1906, and Norway (1913). In Sweden and the US, women had been granted the ability to vote in certain local elections.

Women's suffrage significantly increased during and after World War I, especially in European countries. On August 26, 1920, Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby signed the 19th Amendment into law, granting American women the right to vote. Women triumphed in the fight for equal voting rights with men in nearly 28 nations between 1914 and 1939. Women were first allowed to vote in municipal or other local elections, or perhaps in provincial elections, in several countries; equality was only extended to them later. And other nations, including China, Italy, and others, joined this club just after World War II. After World War II, almost all of these nations gained independence and enshrined equal voting rights for women in their constitutions; as a result, the total number of countries that had done so surpassed 100 in only ten more years. By 1971, women in Switzerland had full and equal voting rights in federal and most cantonal elections; in 1973, women in Syria were also granted these rights. Still, women are not allowed to vote equally in several conservative Arab nations that border the Persian Gulf. Accordingly, women's engagement in various aspects of civic life was minimal in certain Muslim nations (Chaudhary, 2002).

In 1949, the Indian government amended the Constitution to allow women full voting rights on an equal footing. In 1956, Pakistan's government also granted women full voting rights in national elections. As women gained the ability to vote in most nations, their fight for greater political representation in decision-making began to receive attention. The concept of women's participation in politics including voting and other political activities

took a new turn in the 1960s with the rise of feminism in the United States. The prominence of women participating in politics has grown dramatically in subsequent decades among political scholars and philosophers. Many research institutes and institutions have recently been formed to expand the understanding of women's political participation.

In the pre-colonial period in Africa, many institutions existed where women's authority and political power were exercised, but these varied from society to society. Certain civilisations, such as the Mande in Sierra Leone, placed women in prominent positions as paramount chiefs. At the same time, other societies had women's responsibilities restricted, such as the Igbo people in Nigeria, where women were responsible for household chores. According to O'Barr (1984), African women were active in decision-making before the arrival of the Europeans and their colonial system. Hunting and gathering customs in southern Africa portrayed men and women as having equal political power. Both genders primarily focused on their areas of activity, and leadership responsibilities were regularly exercised. Whether patriarchal or matriarchal, women's authority in African agricultural communities stemmed from their roles in several sectors, such as marketing, trading, farming, and home chores. Women also possessed distinct establishments that allowed them to curtail male dominance and establish independence.

According to Kanogo (2005), women were classified based on class, social standing, and race and shared the same gender traits throughout the pre-independence era. Pre- and post-independence periods differed primarily in those women had access to the tools of production and the common ways of allocating resources. Elder councils governed the local communities before the British arrived in Kenya in 1895. The primary tasks performed by women and girls were farming, harvesting, caring for children, cleaning the house, and

helping their husbands. Women's economic empowerment was achieved by selling food items and other agricultural products in the market. Nevertheless, in most communities, men and the elder council made decisions (O-MakDwallo, 2010). Although women in Kenya had gained some influence during the pre-colonial era, the patriarchal nature of the country's traditional culture meant that men continued to rule the majority. To this degree, the claim is that women were oppressed, overworked, and positioned in inferior roles throughout the pre-colonial era due to societal inequality.

Colonialism intensified women's marginalisation and brought about gender inequity, which has permeated modern politics. Under British colonial rule, repressive political, economic, and religious policies were introduced. These policies propagated the idea that women belonged in the home and that their minds were weaker than men's in fields like business, science, and politics (Onsongo, 2004). As a result, men were appointed to the newly formed roles of chiefs and administrators, increasing their privilege and authority at the expense of women. Because of the patriarchal system used by the colonial government to exercise power, almost all administrative positions were filled by men. Midamba (1995) states that women's status in Kenya deteriorated during the colonial era. While women were still subservient under traditional norms, gender roles were complementary prior to the arrival of British rule. This resulted in transferring communal land ownership to men and denying women property rights. Onsongo (2004) further notes that formal education, cash crops, and the monetary economy all contributed to the dismantling and changing of women's roles during colonial rule. Women continued to work in rural regions producing food, while men found work as clerks in offices or on farms.

Formal schooling hindered women's prospects of participating in contemporary commercial transactions by rendering them illiterate while men remained literate. It was believed that domestic labour was inappropriate in the colonial government structure. The migration of males into cities and towns as labourers left women in charge of most rural families, leading to a rise in poverty. According to Maathai (2008), oppressive colonial regulations prevented women from entering the cities. It was believed that single people who experimented with being unmarried would cause problems by upsetting conventional values and upsetting families. In the initial phases of colonial governance, single women's mobility was restricted to maintain them in rural areas, facilitating men's mobility to these places. As a result, employment was always available in urban and rural locations. Because of this division in labour, men became the primary breadwinners, and women depended on them (Kamau, 2008).

The formal education system of the colonial era greatly impacted Kenyan men and women. Education for girls was viewed negatively by the elders, who believed that sending young girls to boarding or mission schools would encourage bad behaviour. They thought educated ladies would not make suitable spouses. Even though schooling was criticised a lot for imparting positive attitudes on girls, one of the goals of the curriculum was to teach them household skills in preparation for becoming moms and brides. In both the mission and the villages, women were prohibited from pursuing careers and marriage simultaneously. These policies, such as how politics and the workplace are organised, have continued to hinder women's professional advancement (Maathai, 2008).

Kenyan women may have high levels of education, but they are expected to fulfil traditional duties as subservient spouses and mothers while also pursuing professional

advancement. Unfortunately, political and workplace traditions do not support the blending of public and household responsibilities; this typically poses a challenge for professionally connected women who are able to strike a balance between the two (Onsongo, 2004). When women enter politics, these conventional norms put them in difficult situations about how they are viewed or how they carry out their legislative responsibilities.

Women's under-representation continued throughout the post-independence era when colonialism ceased. Kenyan women contributed significantly to the independence movement but were and are still not acknowledged in political leadership positions. Women did not make significant progress in political leadership during the first few years of independence until 1970 (Maathai, 2008). Women were only allowed to hold one or two elected seats throughout the colonial era. Furthermore, the opposition's 1963 introduction of a bill to defend women's rights resulted in a humiliating loss in parliament. In Kenya's first parliament, which convened from 1963 to 1969, no single woman was nominated or elected.

When Grace Onyango was elected the first female Member of Parliament in 1969 and another nominated, things began to shift. Women were not given any of the designated seats that were set out for them in 1965. The period from 1970 to early 1980 saw a more significant number of women elected to parliament five were elected, and two were nominated—but even so, the percentage remained unrepresentative, at 3:18 per cent compared to men's 96:82 per cent up until 1983 (Midamba, 1995). In 1983, there were only two women elected to parliament out of a total of 198 males. This indicates that even after 20 years of independence, only 10 women served in the assembly. Table 2.2 shows the women's historical representation in Kenya’s parliament.

Table 2.2 Women's historical representation in Kenya's parliament

Parliament	Period	Total No. of Constituencies	Total no. of elected women	Total. No. of slots for nomination	No. of nominated women
1ST Parliament	1963-1969	158	0	12	0
2nd Parliament	1969-1974	158	1	12	1
3rd Parliament	1974-1979	158	4	12	2
4th Parliament	1979-1983	158	5	12	1
5th Parliament	1983-1988	158	2	12	1
6th Parliament	1988-1992	188	2	12	0
7th Parliament	1992-1997	188	6	12	1
8th Parliament	1997-2002	210	4	12	5
9th Parliament	2002-2007	210	10	12	8
10th Parliament	2007-2012	210	16	12	6
11th Parliament	2013-2017	290	16	12	3
12th Parliament	2017-2022	290	23	12	5

Source: Nyokabi, Kamau (2010)

When section 2A of the independence constitution was repealed in December 1992, much was expected of the following multiparty elections, as they had prevented single-party rule in Kenya ten years earlier. Numerous groups emerged and garnered backing from both the domestic and global world to advocate for gender equality. Women's spirit of representation advanced after section 2A was removed because democratic space was

increased, and societies were reorganised to make room for more women (Yambo, 1994). It was argued that women's low political engagement had cost them significant rights and possibilities in society and that politics would help open doors to previously closed opportunities. Political parties nominated nineteen women for parliamentary seats and one hundred and twenty for civic seats in the 1992 election.

On the other hand, men had to develop new strategies to offset the growing power of women. For political purposes, they accused women of abandoning their families; widows were charged with killing their own husbands; and divorcees were called immoral. Women-focused on social issues that had afflicted the average citizen for over thirty years while males focused on trivial matters such as inadequate health facilities, clean water for all, access to education for the poor and the ailing agricultural sector. Women stated in their campaigns that male domination in politics had neglected people's issues, which is why the conditions still exist (Yambo, 1994).

The 1992 election results were far better despite the coercion and mistreatment. Six women were elected, while roughly fifty more secured municipal seats. Out of the six elected women in parliament, one was appointed to a full ministerial cabinet position and the other to an assistant minister position, suggesting a minor improvement in women's representation compared to previous years. In the 1997 elections, more women were running for parliamentary and local office because of the better results in the 1992 general election. Many consequently joined women's and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that organised voter education workshops and raised knowledge of women's rights as voters and candidates (African Woman and Child, 2013). Election politics in that particular year (1997) did not favour the women despite all their education and sensitisation. The

former Kitui County Governor Charity Kaluki Ngilu lost the presidential contest, while internationally renowned environmentalist Wangari Maathai lost the parliamentary and presidential elections. Furthermore, Nyiva Mwendwa, Kenya's first and only female cabinet member did not advance past the party nomination stage. The rationale for this was that the Beijing Platform for Action, which aimed to support the fight for women's political rights, was still hesitant to be implemented by the then-president, Daniel Arap Moi.

Since 1969, when Kenyans elected their first female member of parliament, the 12th parliament had the highest representation of women with more elected to save the presidency's seats. Despite these improvements, the percentage of women in the workforce still falls short of the UN's 2005 target of 30 per cent. The African Regional Congress of Women in Politics of 1995 recommended that since there are not enough women in decision-making positions in Kenya or throughout Africa, more support should be given to girls' education and political participation. It advocates reorganising municipal politics to lessen gender parity by identifying obstacles to women's political engagement and making recommendations for empowerment (Were & Jane, 2003). Of the 17 per cent of members who introduced motions in the August House during the 2002–2003 legislative sessions, 18 per cent of the legislation was from men, compared to 5.6 per cent from women. Of the 90.8 per cent of MPs that contributed to matters of motion in parliament, 94.4 per cent were female, compared to 90.5 per cent of male MPs. This suggests that women paid more of the household's bills than men. In the area of orders raised in the house, where they nearly tied men at 61.7 per cent for women and 69.7 per cent for males, they also outperformed men (Mwangi, 2008).

Women's political advocacy efforts may have contributed to the success mentioned above. To guarantee that NARC won the 2002 elections, a combination of NGOs close to the Kenya Women's Political Caucus, activists, and professionals organised a forum (NARC Women Congress) in November 2002. It participated in presidential campaigns and election monitoring, arranged and even conducted training for party agents, and obtained party materials and presidential campaigns (Mwangi, 2008). To include gender equality in their new constitution and the country's governance, the agreement called for integrating women as equal partners in a power-sharing arrangement. Sadly, this promise was never kept, and the only thing that women accomplished was to be given five nomination slots out of the seven that the NARC had nominated (Nzomo, 2003).

In conclusion, women have been actively promoting democracy in Kenya through various lobbying endeavours since the emergence of multi-party politics. However, they suffered a significant political split in 2002, which made it difficult for them to impact political tactics during and after elections for significant political positions and to participate in various decision-making processes in the nation. As a result, they were largely silent in politics for the majority of 2002, which hurt their chances of doing well in the following elections. Kenyan women's active engagement in parliament is proof of their good political empowerment and readiness to participate on par with males. Their capacity to use their position of authority to resolve disputes within the community and support legislation addressing issues facing marginalised groups in society is proof of this (Nzomo, 2003).

The adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in November 1996, sped up by a motion made by Hon. Charity Ngilu, the Kenyan minister of health at the time, made her the first woman from Kenya to have introduced a women-friendly resolution. This accomplishment prompted the government to start translating, interpreting, streamlining, and clarifying this Platform for Action for women through the use of conferences, workshops, and funding allotments to enhance the social welfare of women. In addition, women have been able to present many motions and guarantee the passage of some, such as the Equality Act Motion of 1999, the Sexual Offences Bill of 2005, and the Affirmative Action Motion of 1997 and 2000 (Nzomo, 2003). Despite their low representation in the legislature, women have largely succeeded in levelling the playing field with men regarding house processes and motion filings.

Zaenal (2022) researched political communication strategies in Indonesia to expand the prospects for women's political representation in the Indonesian Parliament. The study's main objective was to understand and map three important topics on the dynamics of political communication among women. The study specifically addressed women's political engagement, characteristics of political culture that support women's involvement and political communication marketing tactics aimed at promoting and boosting women's involvement in politics. The case study technique was utilised in this research to ascertain the dynamics of political communication among women. Case study techniques were used as they involve a thorough, detailed, and in-depth investigation of a specific institution, organisation, or phenomenon. The events investigated included female legislators' political actions and communication styles following the case study methodology.

The West Java Regional People's Representative Assembly (DPRD) was the legislative body under investigation since it was thought to be a dynamic representation of national politics. Furthermore, the West Java DPRD had more female legislative members than other provinces. Management and politicians from various political parties were the research subjects in this study. The data collection used participant observation, focus groups, and in-depth interviews. As the primary informants for the in-depth interviews, a few female lawmakers from the Democratic Party of Java (DPRD) provided information through discourse. A focus group discussion (FGD) was held to gather information for comparison and analysis. Eight people participated in the FGD: two male and four female politicians, an academic, a communication practitioner, and four female politicians. An on-site observation of five issues or topics was conducted as part of the participant observation process. 1) Actors or female politicians; 2) Activities performed by female politicians; 3) Acts or female politicians' actions on their communication style; 4) Events or female politicians' sequence of activities; 5) Feelings or female politicians' emotions conveyed during their activities.

The West Java Parliament, which represents the dynamics of national politics, served as the study's representative. The study discovered that alternative approaches, such as mainstreaming gender, pushing affirmative action to have at least 30 per cent women's representation, and providing political education to women through civic education or women's organisations, were used by women politicians in their current political communication campaigns. According to the report, political parties used various media and political strategies, such as messaging and a combination of political marketing tactics.

In Malawi, Mbilizi (2013) conducted a study titled "When a Woman Becomes President: Implications for gender policy and Planning in Malawi." The study examined the National Gender Machinery within the context of having a gender activist as president. The research sought to answer whether the president's passion for gender equality made a difference for gender policy and planning in Malawi. In-depth document analysis, consultations with representatives from the MoGCCD and important sector ministries, international development partners, Community Service Organisations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and qualitative interviews with important stakeholders was some of the methods used to collect data for this study.

A comprehensive semi-structured questionnaire was administered to 50 government, international development, NGO and CSO organisations to understand the capacities, performance, coordination, and challenges of the National Gender Machinery. Subsequently, the principal consultant conducted individual qualitative interviews with prominent policymakers in the government, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, and the global donor community to investigate obstacles encountered in developing and executing gender policies and initiatives.

Several information gaps about the state of the National Gender Machinery were found during the first data analysis. This led to a need to authenticate the data and gather the missing information by conducting in-depth interviews with significant actors in the National Gender Machinery. Most of the data presented in this report resulted from this exercise, where the principal researcher carried out all the follow-up qualitative interviews. The researcher worked with the UNDP and the main consultant to design an interview protocol. Thirty significant stakeholders were chosen through a purposeful sample

approach from the government, local and international NGOs and CSO, development partners, and donor organisations. The principal researcher used email and phone calls to schedule meetings with the sampled participants. The researcher interviewed the participants for an hour in their offices in Blantyre and Lilongwe. The questions were designed to allow respondents to freely share their knowledge on the National Gender Machinery and offer criticism and recommendations for improving it. The interviews were meticulously recorded, comprehensive notes were written, and the results were integrated into the final report, which was initially showcased at a nationwide stakeholder validation session (Mbilizi, 2013).

Many issues of concern were identified in the report for Strengthening the National Gender Machinery in Malawi. However, this review focuses on three major findings from the qualitative interviews with key stakeholders: lack of leadership and clarity on mandates, roles, and responsibilities; fragmented and weak coordination mechanisms; and lack of capacity for gender programming. The findings of this study indicate that Malawi's National Gender Machinery lacked dedicated and passionate leadership to advance the gender agenda.

Gender was not given a voice in the political and policy spheres. The Parliamentary Women's Caucus was not officially recognised as a Parliamentary Committee until 2010, meaning it operated on a volunteer basis without any budgetary allocation. Consequently, no one advocated affirmative action policies or gender equality in the national budget. The MoGCCD vision and mission statements were extremely vague and did not specifically aim to influence a shift in power relations or empower women. The ministry's primary functions were to implement donor-funded gender projects rather than create policies. Most

stakeholders surveyed believed the ministry should have supported the gender agenda but didn't. Most of the issues in the ministry came from the top down; no one was there to map out the concerns strategically (Stacki & Baily, 2015). The results showed that the MoGCCD lacked visionary leadership to steer the country's gender agenda. In actuality, the ministry was controlling the gender agenda. This demonstrates that the MoGCCD was unaware of its responsibility to coordinate the gender mandate rather than carry out gender projects.

Also, despite the ministry's leadership position in the gender mandate, there was a perception that its authority was restricted. A participant expressed their desire to place gender at the centre of power. Expanding the list of people who can impact the gender agenda is necessary. Placing the gender agenda where it counts. Every industry needs to consider gender (George *et al*., 2020). Those in charge of gender management needed to hold a senior position. Gender programming circles were being rocked by politics, which suggested that people with "know-how" should be on the front lines.

This research confirmed the widespread view that chauvinistic and male-biased individuals were shaping gender messaging. The gender inequality issues were seen to be mainstreamed within the Department of International Development (DfID) country strategy because of resistance to a specific gender strategy at the policy level, both within Malawi and in the wider environment. DfIDM's overarching approach was changed from a human rights-based to a poverty reduction strategy due to external factors linked to donor harmonisation over the Malawi Poverty Reduction Approach Paper (MPSRP). As a result, the government of Malawi changed its focus from equality in 1998 to issues on vulnerable communities. More general economic, social, and cultural perspectives on gender relations

impact the MPRSP. The MPRSP was subject to the broader economic, social, and cultural perspectives on gender relations in Malawi (Stordahl, 2012). The National Gender Policy's emphasis on equal participation rather than inequality exemplifies resistance to the gender equality movement. The primary barrier to change is not so much a lack of information as it is a lack of dedication or "political will" to deal with the problem. There is no denying that conventional ideas about the place of men and women in society, as well as masculine bias, are having an impact on Malawi's gender agenda.

Participants mentioned that the MoGCCD lacked credibility due to lacking resources and manpower to complete tasks. Participants expressed that there was a lack of awareness of the gender ministry. It was not disclosing to others what it was doing. No document outlining the ministry's plans to support gender mainstreaming was seen or shared. The ministry did not take the initiative. For the ministry, the mandate was too large. The capacity is modest. Staffing, systems, and capability were lacking at the district level. The ministry lacked the resources to spearhead gender mainstreaming in government institutions (Stacki & Baily, 2015).

There was patronising demeanour from government civil servants towards that ministry among government civil servants, NGOs and donors. It appeared as though no one thought the ministry could fulfil its duties. The Ministry of Finance, which ought to be a major backer of the MoGCCD, showed no definite commitment to the gender mainstreaming concept. There were no gender budgeting standards in place at the ministry. It recommended that sectors incorporate gender considerations into their budgets but lacked the means to compel adherence. The ministry's officers responded, "There is a lack of clarity on what constitutes gender," when asked why the ministry had not adopted the

MoGCCD's gender budgeting standards. They explained that they knew exactly what results they would get when they invested in rural development, agriculture, and education. But when it came to gender, they were unsure what they were funding.

The ministry of gender itself is the source of the issue. This was due to their lack of clarifying their objectives. The issue was not allocating the ministry money without the finance ministry knowing how they planned to utilise it. Gender was one of the cross-cutting concerns considered when donor monies were distributed. However, there was no gender policy or guidelines; sectoral ministries were responsible for including gender issues in their budgets. It was evident with Ministry of Finance personnel that although they completely comprehended the significance of creating the budget, they were hesitant to accept the idea because of cultural, political, and structural constraints. There was an impression that important members of the government and society did not support gender equality, and that the ministry had little say over the allocation of funds.

However, certain ministries successfully assisted the National Gender Machinery. Within a department headed by a director, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) included a gender component. The Department of Secondary Education in the ministry has a Gender Focal Point, and there were Gender Officers in every other department (10). There was a gender officer at the district level and in each division. Its budget included provisions for 50-50 selection in Form 1, the construction of female hostels, the installation of toilets (because of inadequate sanitary facilities in schools, girls dropping out of school), school food programs, and incentives for girls pursuing science.

Overall, the MoEST received substantial funding for gender programs from foreign NGOs and CSOs, as well as UNICEF, DfID, the World Bank, and the African Development Fund. Given that most development initiatives strongly emphasise girls' education, it is not unexpected that the ministry was at the forefront of gender mainstreaming.

It has been successful for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS) to incorporate gender in its policies and initiatives. As a cross-cutting issue and budgetary consideration, gender was emphasised significantly in the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach to Programming (ASWAP). The ministry held gender training at different levels and established Gender Focal Points at its division and headquarters. Women were specifically encouraged to pursue advancements to decision-making positions within the workforce, with a target of 30 per cent representation (Tschirley, 2022).

Program work plans emphasised gender analysis. The ministry had a results- and action-oriented monitoring and evaluation structure, as well as a gender and HIV/AIDS policy and program strategy for 2010–2015. The ministry's focus on reducing poverty and the areas where gender mainstreaming (MoEST and MoAFS) occurred appeared strongly correlated. Regarding gender programs that directly affect the MGDS, the government is more inclined to invest. The impression that the administration is genuinely interested in changing gender relations or empowering women is that women and girls are being utilised to mobilise donor funding (Chitiga, Fofana & Diallo, 2020).

Apart from government departments, this study found that the National Gender Machinery received significant support from NGOs and CSOs with gender-specific mandates. Most foreign non-governmental organisations, such as Trocaire, Oxfam, Concern Universal, Care Malawi, Plan Malawi, and Water Aid, had gender officers and mainstreamed gender

issues (Gondwe *et al*., 2020). Most of them either already had a gender policy in place or were working on one. Nonetheless, it was clear that, in tackling gender issues, each NGO and CSO found a unique niche depending on its objectives and financial opportunities. While they were not directly communicating with the MoGCCD, a few followed guidelines from the National Gender Program.

A coordinated approach to gender programming seems essential, especially because NGOs can now obtain financing directly from funders. Yet, no system existed for cooperation between the MoGCCD, important government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and other stakeholders. To provide other ministries and non-governmental organisations with data for planning and programming, the MoGCCD did not publish an annual report on the state of gender equality with indicators and outcomes (Tschirley, 2022). Ministry-to-ministry consultation on gender-related issues was insufficient. The coordination of the gender agenda was not completely institutionalised despite the existence of gender focal points in several ministries.

The Development Assistance Gender Group (DAGG) is a networking group established by the MoGCCD. Trocaire, UNICEF, Concern Universal, GIZ, the Royal Norwegian Embassy, and Oxfam were among the DAGG members represented in the sample. While DAGG successfully disseminated information and expertise on gender policy and programs, most members said they did not gain much from it. There was insufficient high-level attendance at DAGG meetings by the Minister of Gender and the Principal Secretary. In addition, very few people showed up for meetings (Kendall & Kaunda, 2015). A lack of follow through on meeting agreements, an inability to sway choices made by member organisations, a lack of tangible assistance from donors, and terms of reference that conflict

with the organisation's goals were among the other DAGG flaws mentioned. So, to effectively serve as a coordinating body for all development partners, DAGG still needs to establish its strategic positioning.

The most well-known organisation working with the MoGCCD on gender policy and activities is the Non-profit Gender Coordinating Network (NGO-GCN). However, the network was mostly run by a single individual who provided secretarial services and represented numerous organisations (Neuman, McConnell & Kholowa, 2014). The network had minimal validity because it was not created by a parliamentary act, even though it was registered under the Trustees Incorporation Act of Parliament. Furthermore, the NGO-GCN provided very little support to the informal groupings of NGOs that made up its membership, and they were also not coordinated.

Due to a lack of coordination, most CSO and NGO projects were carried out in the districts and areas each organisation chose. Numerous establishments were carrying out the identical action. Gender research, gender budgeting, gender analysis, and gender mainstreaming all received scant attention. At the MoGCCD, no policies governed the activities and programming of NGOs or CSOs. "CONGOMA" is a coordinating body that "represents and promotes collective interests and concerns of NGOs in Malawi," according to the NGO Act of 2000 (Government of Malawi, 2001). Although CONGOMA has done a great job of keeping up a database of non-governmental organisations in Malawi, it has not been able to fulfil its duty as coordinator or increase the capacity of its members. The only reason NGOs registered with CONGOMA, according to them, was to satisfy the government's regulations so they could continue operating lawfully.

The MoGCCD and the private sector have a few connections. The ministry addressed private sector concerns such as terms and conditions of work, women's limited access to credit and markets, and unequal unemployment opportunities in conjunction with pertinent line ministries. Nevertheless, there was no private sector Gender Coordination Network to prioritise women's access to and benefits from the private sector (Gunnlaugsson *et al*., 2018).

The report further showed that The MoGCCD's ability to coordinate gender programming and set strategic priorities was lacking. For instance, the ministry failed to establish indicators with distinct financing sources for the different programs, which prevented the National Gender Program from being properly implemented. Because the MoGCCD failed to get the paper approved by the cabinet when it expired in 2009, the National Gender Policy was out of date. The Ministry of Gender was severely understaffed, and there was a dearth of basic ICT (information and communication technologies) infrastructure due to a lack of financing. The Department of Gender Affairs employed just ten people. Only one of the five master's degrees held by the staff had anything to do with gender (Tschirley, 2022). A shared pool of civil servants was used to select the ministry's Principal Secretary and Directors, none of whom had professional training specific to gender issues.

Gender focal points (GFP) were an inadequate approach to coordination. These were ministry employees who, except occasionally attending monthly briefing sessions or trainings, had little to no interaction with the Department of Gender. This was because the MoGCCD lacked sufficient funding to cover the costs of the monthly meetings. Gender-related concerns were barely mentioned in the job descriptions of the GFPs (Stacki & Baily,

2015). The Department of Gender was not consulted or given any input when the Principal Secretaries of the GFPs chose or nominated them. Most of them were middle-level civil service officers who rotated through the ranks.

Malawi's higher education establishments did not devote enough resources to developing gender planning and programming capacities. Previous initiatives were either sponsor- or individual-driven. None of the institutions or universities offered gender-specific undergraduate degrees (Mbilizi, 2013). Due to lacking financial and management support, the Gender Studies Unit at Chancellor College, University of Malawi, founded in 1996, was abolished in 2006 (Gondwe, *et al*., 2020). Due to the dearth of native gender consultants, foreign consultants conducted most of the nation's gender training. The establishment of a resource centre with gender training materials and the strengthening of higher education institutions to offer a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in gender with an emphasis on mainstreaming and programming were suggested in the 2004–2009 National Gender Program report. No further action had been taken at the time of conducting the study.

More significantly, MoGCCD officers appeared unsure of what gender work involves. When creating gender policies and programs, they adopted the beliefs and philosophies of their international development counterparts without placing the challenges in the context of the local community. For instance, development partners have embraced the idea that gender is a cross-cutting issue, which is currently being promoted by gender theorists in the West. This approach may work well in affluent nations, but in Malawi, treating gender as a multifaceted issue detracts from the severe gender disparities that persist as a result of sociocultural limitations (Chitiga, Fofana & Diallo, 2020). In Malawian society, women

continue to face discrimination irrespective of their educational attainment or unique abilities.

Most research participants believed that gender should continue to be a key consideration in development planning in Malawi. "Gender has not been included as a key thematic area or priority area in the 2010 draft MGDS document," noted one participant. Rather, it is viewed as a trans-disciplinary problem with minimal gender-specific indicators and outcomes in the paper. Most participants think that the gender agenda should remain a top priority for the MGDS, with strategies, targets, indicators, and results focussing on gender (Mbilizi, 2013). There is concern that the gender agenda may be overlooked or watered down by treating it as a cross-cutting problem without clear recommendations on mainstreaming it at the sectoral level. To sum up, increasing capacity is essential to fortifying the National Gender Machinery that exists now. Gender needs to be well-defined and comprehended by a range of stakeholders prior to being included in mainstream development planning.

The study recommended that the issues addressed by the participants in the qualitative interviews mentioned above be addressed. These issues include a lack of leadership and clarity regarding mandates, roles, and responsibilities; weak and disjointed coordination mechanisms; and a lack of ability for gender programming. The Ministry of Gender, Child and Community Development (MoGCCD) needs a capable Minister and Principal Secretary who will actively promote gender equality through lobbying, fundraising, education, and sensitisation of all relevant parties on the importance of women's empowerment and gender equality in the development process.

There was an urgent need for all parties involved in the gender agenda and the civil service to increase capacity for gender programming. Gender training should be provided to all MoGCCD professional personnel and government Gender Focal Points (Mbilizi, 2013). Creating a centre for gender studies ought to be a top priority for the country. Third, by an Act of Parliament, the government should re-establish the National Council for Gender and Women. This will support the MoGCCD's advocacy, lobbying, and campaigning for gender mainstreaming and mobilising resources for the gender agenda.

Sindhuja and Murugan (2018) analysed the gender challenges, gender influence in leadership styles, gender roles and responsibilities of the elected panchayat leaders in Sivagangai district. Objectives of the study were to study the socio-economic and political profiles of the respondents, to explore the gender roles and responsibilities of the respondents, To find out gender challenges faced by the respondents in the study area, and to provide suggestive measures for effective participation of women in rural local governance. A descriptive research design was adopted for this study. Census sampling was adopted to collect the data from a sample size of 50. Interview schedules and focus group discussions were adopted for data collection. The Harvard Analytical framework was used to study the gender role differences among the elected women and men panchayat leaders.

The study found that a key determinant of leadership roles was gender. It also demonstrates that women respondents are still under-empowered to assume leadership roles and are unaware of their roles. The results also showed that men and women fulfil vastly different domestic roles. While men mostly carry out conventional gender-specific roles, women handle jobs including cooking, weeding, harvesting, and childcare. Because of this, women

needed the support of their families to carry out their responsibilities, and gender-segregated domestic roles needed to be broken down through programs for both men and women to become more gender-neutral (Kendall & Kaunda, 2015).

Women respondents mentioned that to get past the obstacles they face during their tenure, they need to build their self-confidence and exercise self-initiative. Women's lack of confidence was evident in their speech in front of an audience, in their ability to carry out their duties after being elected, and in their dread of losing. Approximately 86% of men who responded said they needed to improve their communication skills. They clarified that a local leader must communicate with people at all levels, address the public straightforwardly and courteously, voice opinions, and attend to the welfare of the populace.

Abdulai *et al.* (2021) analysed the supply and demand-side framework on women and local government elections in Turkey. The study sought to find out how women perform in Turkish local government elections. This was because prior studies have delved into the subject of participation and representation of women in political activities, and the main concern has been to assess the factors responsible for the underrepresentation of women in politics. However, previous studies have largely focused on the representation of women in national legislative assemblies, seemingly asserting that their political representation is confined to national politics and their representation in local governments is largely overlooked. The study sought to fill the lacuna in the literature by focusing on the participation and representation of women in local government in Turkey. By using the supply and demand-side framework, sought to understand factors that have contributed to the low representation of women in local governments in Turkey.

The study showed a grim picture of the inequality concerning political representation in Turkey's local governments. Women were significantly underrepresented in the local government, a tendency that could be construed as a hindrance to their contribution to local and national development, which in turn affects Turkey's ranking in gender inequality indexing. In this regard, this study is consistent with the literature on women's representation in local governments. It acknowledges that the negligible presence of women in politics is inconsistent with the belief that women cannot rule and govern.

According to Dolunay (2023), due to the critical nature of women in governance and democracy, various stakeholders, especially political parties must address the challenge of women underrepresentation in local governments. Local governments are simply a microcosm of the nature of women's participation and representation at the national level. Using the supply and demand-side framework, this paper presents the stakeholders with the main factors that stand in the way of women's representation and participation in political activities at the local level (Dolunay, 2023). It should not be forgotten that local-level politics provide a unique avenue not only for political parties to select potential candidates but also for women to hone their political skills in preparation for the political contest at the national level. This paper also acknowledges that women have a greater role in increasing their numbers in the local government's political positions. According to Cinar (2024), the supply-side factors can be inculcated in women by women themselves, and therefore, women should strive to equip themselves with the necessary resources and skills that would make them appropriate candidates for various positions at the local level of politics.

However, as Cinar (2024) points out, it is imperative to underscore that political parties and other political infrastructures, like the electoral bodies in Turkey, operate in multifaceted contexts in which cultural norms, traditions and patriarchy have a greater influence on the selection of candidates. Therefore, it is the role of Turkish society, without forgetting political leadership, to create a conducive environment that would attract more women to political contests (Abdulai, Ceter & Nyadera, 2021). This could be in terms of increasing women quotas and formulating gender-sensitive policies at the local and national levels to combat the challenge of women's underrepresentation.

From the reviewed literature, the study has ascertained that the extent of women's representation is based on various indicators in this section. The basic indicators included the number of political positions occupied by women at the county level, the number of political positions occupied at the national level, the number of nonpolitical positions at both the county and national levels, the gender corrective mechanism, the scope of women's interactions in the public realm and political empowerment initiatives of women. Others include the level of political inequality between young men and women, the legal and political obstacles to gender equality and crimes against women and the level of discrimination (Grasso & Smith, 2022).

2.2.4 Gender Corrective Mechanism

Bezzina *et al.* (2022) conducted a quantitative survey as part of a bigger parliamentary gender balance reform drive in the EU island nation of Malta to find out how people saw the gender corrective mechanism. More women on the electoral commission, childcare centres, and full-time backbenchers were among the measures preferred by a representative sample of Maltese voters (n=435). They also supported increased gender representation

(88.5%) and the inclusion of the gender corrective mechanism (66.5%). Consequently, if the selected measures are not suitably addressed, the reform bears the risk of failing to achieve sustainable development. The study contributes to our understanding of how individuals engage with more representative legislatures by applying constitutional amendments.

2.2.5 Interactions in Public Realm

Alizadeh *et al.* (2022) investigated women's standing in Kurdish society and their range of contacts with the public. Kurdish women are seen as superior to their neighbours since they are generally more accepting of society, except for the traditional gender rule, which has its origins in the Kurdish tribal structure and somewhat restricts the visibility of women in society. This includes their prominence in public settings, aptitude to occupy highly esteemed societal positions, and capacity to entertain guests while their husbands are away. Recent political and socioeconomic developments have raised the status of Kurdish women in society, making them a symbol of a significant transformation in the Middle East's gender norms. Although the Kurdish region of Iraq received some opportunities for national liberation in 1991, and the Rojhalat region saw the first steps toward Kurdish women's emancipation in 1946, the research indicated that the Bakur movement in Turkey can be considered a success because it established a sustained strategy for the liberation of Kurdish women from patriarchal structures. During the northern Syrian Rojava Revolution, this movement showed that it might naturally build resistance to Western-style egalitarian communities.

2.2.6 Adherence to Women's Political Rights

Awoa *et al.* (2022) looked at the detrimental consequences of natural resources in emerging nations and how women are becoming more powerful in politics. Modern states are placing a growing emphasis on women's political rights. Women make up over half of the world's population. However, they only represent 25% of national parliaments worldwide. This study examines the empirical relationship between the number of natural resources and women's political empowerment between 2002 and 2017 using a large panel of 130 developing nations. The literature on the "resource curse" serves as its foundation. The overall political empowerment of women and the total resource rent per capita have a substantial inverse connection, according to the results of the two-step system GMM. Examining the sub-indices for women's civil rights, women's political participation, and women's role in civil society independently yields similar results. Depending on a nation's institutional robustness, researchers also discovered significant variations in the association between resource abundance and women's political empowerment.

Kelkay (2022) studied "Gender mainstreaming challenges and opportunities in government agencies in selected government offices in Fogera district, Ethiopia". The study's primary goals were to evaluate the gender mainstreaming policies at chosen government offices in Ethiopia's Fogera district and identify the potential challenges associated with doing so. In particular, the study goals were to evaluate and examine the gender mainstreaming technique, to pinpoint chances for gender mainstreaming, and to investigate the primary real-world issues that stand in the way of gender mainstreaming. Focus group discussions (FGDs) and semi-structured interviews were the primary data collection instruments the researcher created and used to maximise the depth of information gleaned from the

respondents. Twelve people were interviewed ten men and two women who were specifically chosen from the study offices. The interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes in each discussant's office.

Another method the researcher used to acquire qualitative data for this study was focus group discussions. Four different FGDs were conducted from the chosen offices to achieve these goals. Twenty-four people participated in the discussion (16 men and 8 women). There were six discussants in each focus group. Participants in the FGD were planners and professionals in the office. The results showed that most participants employed in research offices comprehend the ideas of gender and gender mainstreaming, but they were unclear about the importance of fostering gender equality. Furthermore, the study officers did not properly utilise various instruments and methods for gender mainstreaming. The results also indicated a lower availability of gender and gender mainstreaming training and retraining possibilities for the study office participants. The main obstacles were found to be decision-making bodies' lack of dedication and focus, as well as their inability to provide gender awareness and sensitivity training consistently.

Okumu (2012), using a case study method, conducted a study on gender mainstreaming and promoting gender equality at the Swedish Cooperative Centre, Vi-agroforestry project, Kisumu-Kenya. The study's primary goal was to evaluate how gender equality has been achieved at the Swedish Cooperative Center-Viagroforestry project-Kisumu (SCC-VI) using gender mainstreaming as a strategy and technique. A thorough background study of the Swedish Cooperative Center-Viagroforestry project was done to gather pertinent data. Field staff members were interviewed using predetermined, semi-structured question

guides, and targeted focus groups with the various farmer groups involved in the project were held.

Later, as part of the study, the focused group discussions and the interviews were transcribed. The conversations in the focus groups, which took place in Luo, were translated into English. The primary conclusion was that although SCC-Vi as a project is dedicated to mainstreaming gender in its operations, the staff's mainstream abilities were restricted (Okumu, 2012). Similarly, it was evident that the quantitative rather than the qualitative dimensions of equality received more attention. The inference made from this is that, while mainstreaming may result in gender equality, its effectiveness mostly depends on how it is carried out, the staff's level of expertise, and their understanding of the structural causes of inequality. However, it was not able to demonstrate from this research that gender mainstreaming has resulted in equality.

2.2.7 Gender Disparities in Participation in Activism

Grasso and Smith (2022) examined youth data gathered from nine European nations in 2018. To offer a comprehensive depiction of the gender gaps in political activism that currently exist among young people in Europe, they looked at gender variations in the engagement in various traditional and non-conventional forms of activism, along with associated attitudes, wider political involvement, and significant cross-national factors. Their results show that there is less of a political divide between young men and women than one might anticipate, which is in line with contemporary theories on gender differences.

When it comes to aggressive protests, gender differences in political participation are minimal or non-existent; yet young women are more likely to take part in boycotts, petitions, and community service (Grasso & Smith (2022). On the other hand, young males are more involved in politics than young women in most of the nine nations that are the subject of this study. This is particularly true for more formal forms of political engagement associated with parties and organizations, various forms of online political engagement, and more broad measures of political engagement such as internal political efficacy and consuming political news via multiple channels (Andersson, 2018). However, compared to young women, young males also seem to be more dubious about at least certain facets of democratic practice.

2.2.8 Ratio of Women to Men

The Effectiveness of gender policies in achieving gender equality in ocean science programs in public universities in Kenya was examined by Ojwala *et al.* (2022). The study looked at the effectiveness of institutional gender policies in public universities that grant degrees in ocean science. The gender ratios of enrolled students and hired staff in fields connected to ocean science were examined, and existing policies were analysed using the Gender Integration Continuum. The analysis found that several policy measures were out-of-date, even though some featured gender-transformative tactics to raise the number of women taking science-related courses. Female staff members and students held fewer managerial positions than their male counterparts, according to data that was broken down by gender. Women were also more likely to hold non-tenured positions than men, and the proportion of women in academic posts decreased with seniority of employment level.

Matfess *et al.* (2022) investigated political violence against women in Kenya and political representation there. It is debatable whether social norms and political interests can change at the same rate as the distribution of legislative seats, but quotas and other initiatives to encourage women's political participation can significantly alter the descriptive representation of women in a short period of time. Rather than seeing the rise of women in politics as a step toward a more pluralistic and representative form of government, some women in politics may turn to violence and discrimination as a result of their reluctance to give up their privilege.

According to the Krook (2017), the percentage of female seats in the lower chamber has increased while political violence against women has increased. Policymakers and intellectuals should pay more attention to patriarchal hostility to women's success considering the possibility that increasing the number of women in political power may trigger a violent backlash against women in general.

In Narok County, Kenya, Kabeer (2005) attempted to determine the extent to which gender-based violence (GBV) affects the implementation of gender policies on women's empowerment. Ex-post-facto and descriptive survey designs were used in the study. Stratified, simple, random, purposeful, and systematic sampling techniques were used to collect the samples. Data was gathered through surveys, interview schedules, and focus group discussions. Descriptive statistics like frequency percentages and correlation statistics were used to assess quantitative data. Based on predetermined themes, qualitative data were transcribed and debated.

According to Kabeer (2005), policies are in place to support women's empowerment and free them from poverty and social exclusion, but these policies are not being implemented. GBV had a significant cultural impact on how gender policies for women's empowerment were implemented. FGM, early marriage, culture, strong traditional institutions, patriarchal society, and male chauvinism were cultural elements impacting the execution of gender policies on women's empowerment. Other factors were cultural norms, limitations placed on women, and reliance on husbands. The study suggests that gender policies on women's empowerment should be fully implemented and that it is necessary to combat the notion that girls and women are of lower social, economic, and political importance than men.

Despite overwhelming evidence of the significance of women, ensuring gender equity and equality remains a major challenge for police agencies worldwide. Kenya's gender equity strategy to policing was studied in 2022 by Onyango and Natarajan: Lessons, Challenges, and Prospects. In addition to describing a theory shift to create gender-equity tactics for improved recruiting and retention of women in the police force, this study looks at the non-Western problems faced by women in law enforcement. Data for the survey were gathered from 455 Kenya Police Service officers, both male and female. Results corroborate the body of research on women in international police, demonstrating that, aside from a small percentage of line duties, women officers are equally capable of handling most responsibilities as well as or better than men (Onyango & Natarajan, 2022). However, the organizational culture and prevalent cultural norms show that women face substantial obstacles in the police force because of their family obligations, the focus placed on

physical strength to advance, performance standards based on male expectations, and the attitudes of their male superiors.

Article 27 (3) of the Kenyan Constitution of 2010 upholds the ideal of equality and non-discrimination by ensuring equitable treatment for both sexes to achieve gender parity and women's empowerment. The same constitution's Articles 27(8) and 81(b) also prohibit more than two-thirds of the same gender from holding elected or appointed government positions. Therefore, the Kenyan Constitution promotes women's participation in politics and leadership, addressing the historical exclusion of women from politics and supporting the attempts to mainstream gender that began in the 1980s (Kenyatta, 2023).

2.2.9 Representation of Women's Interests

Women's interests are underrepresented because they are underrepresented in organisations that influence policy (this also applies to other vulnerable and marginalised groups in the country). Researchers believe that women legislators speak for the interests and aspirations of women in a country. Women's participation in the legislature is correlated with the way in which their problems are handled. Article 100 of the Kenya's Constitution, which grants Parliament the power to enact laws that enhance the representation of marginalized groups, has remedied this shortcoming (Dar & Shairgojri, 2022).

Although the gender equality principle was partially applied in the 2013 and 2017 general elections, most governmental institutions still did not have the minimum one-third female representation required by the constitution, suggesting that Kenyan society still does not recognise women's rights and leadership abilities. Thus, social norms, financial capability, political party structures, and gendered violence are the four most persistent structural

obstacles that prevent women from entering politics at both the local and national levels of government. These barriers are mapped out in this research. Additionally, it argues that one of the most significant determinants is a country's political resolve to properly implement its legal and policy frameworks and encourages gender parity (Sidha *et al.* 2023).

Kenya still trails Rwanda in East Africa regarding the proportion of women in both houses, with only 22 per cent, according to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2021: 177). Rwanda has the highest percentage score, at 61 per cent. Burundi, Tanzania, and Uganda are other East African nations with percentage scores of 35, 37, and 38, respectively. Surprisingly, South Sudan, the newest African country and a member of the East African Community, fares better than Kenya at 28 per cent.

Many regions of the world continue to struggle with the issue of emotional abuse against women. According to Onyango and Natarajan (2022), emotional abuse has an impact on a person's socioeconomic growth in society. The violent relationships of many women have left them maimed or dead, and the demands of running the home have a detrimental effect on their life. In Luanda Sub- County, Vihiga County, Kenya, Awino and Ngutu (2022) investigated the impact of emotional abuse on women's socioeconomic development. Ex-post-Facto research design was used in the study, and both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. The study included 384 women as a sample, along with 4 chiefs and 7 women's groups. The sample was of 384 women in randomly chosen, whereas 4 chiefs and 7 groups of women were chosen through purposeful sampling. Data from women and chiefs were gathered via questionnaires and interviews, respectively. Focus group discussions confirmed data from the questionnaires. Using the SPSS software, quantitative

data was compiled into descriptive statistics displayed as percentages, frequency tables, bar graphs, and pie charts. Content analysis was done to analyse and document qualitative data from questionnaires and interview schedules. The research found that most women experienced domestic violence, regardless of their income and educational status.

Kwon and Otieno (2022) contend that devolution must be considered while analysing Kenyan women's political participation. The 2010 Constitution of Kenya (CoK) revolutionised Kenyan politics by instituting a devolved system that distributed governmental power and resources from the presidency and all-or-nothing politics to the newly devolved forty-seven counties. Women's rights activists worked tirelessly to get provisions benefiting women included in the 2010 Constitution. The approval of this Constitution was a watershed moment for Kenya since it boosted the representation of women in the administration. The one-third gender requirement was employed to establish a foundation for women to demand involvement in government and to create a limited, intensely contested political war inside the counties.

2.2.10 Role Model Effect

The representation of women in parliament may also serve as an example. A study by O'Neil *et al.* (2015) emphasized how crucial it is for people of all genders to see women as role models to normalise "the idea and practice of women holding power." According to a 2012 Indian study, the gender disparity in educational results had eventually been eliminated or reversed, and the presence of female village leaders had reduced the "aspiration gap" between girls and boys by around 25 percentage points. In regions where women occupy more leadership positions in the village, girls likewise started devoting less

time to home chores (Beaman *et al.,* 2012). These role models can significantly impact the future depiction of women. Women now constitute 20 per cent of the Parliament of Fiji, a record high for the nation following the 2018 general elections. This is explained by the first female speaker of the house having a role-model influence.

2.2.11 Gaps in the literature on the extent of women's participation

The gaps identified in this study result from geographical underpinnings on where most of these studies were carried out. Most of these studies were conducted outside Africa, in places with different population compositions from Kenya and, by extension, Nakuru and Narok. These places also have clear-cut policies for dealing with legislation lapses effectively. In Kenya, after the promulgation of the 2010 constitution, there is a set of timelines that have been expected to have been met by now but continue to be ignored. The literature has failed to show the measures that should be invoked to aid women's political participation in places like Narok or Nakuru.

2.3 The prospects for women's political participation

Although there has been some improvement, there are still big obstacles for women to overcome in Kenya regarding political engagement. The proportion of women in political posts is still comparatively low, even with the strong regulation in Kenya's Constitution stipulating that no more than two-thirds of any elected or appointed body should be of the same gender (Mohamed, 2023). While there were gains over the previous year's general elections in 2022, Kenya continues to lag behind the rest of the region regarding women's political participation. The following looks at the opportunities that can enhance women's political participation.

2.3.1 Politics as a means of empowering women

The effect that female representation will have on women's political participation in the future is a significant topic of inquiry. How voters view women, how they view themselves and their place in society can all be significantly impacted by their exposure to female representation. Initially, female legislators might dispel long-standing prejudices and demonstrate their value. In India, when mandatory reservations are in place, parents typically have higher expectations for boys. Beaman *et al.* (2012) examine this phenomenon in the context of parental aspirations. The gap between parents' ambitions by gender narrowed considerably after two election cycles in which a female leader was elected. Similar findings are made by Bhavnani (2009) and Beaman et al. (2009), who show that voters' opinions of female leaders are enhanced by exposure. Women are more likely to be elected to village council positions in Indian villages that had previously chosen a female leader.

On the other hand, there is conflicting information regarding the long-term impact and prospects for the success of female politicians in developed nations. In the German context of open-list local council elections, Baskaran and Hessami (2018) demonstrate, on the one hand, that female candidates are elected from their original list rankings in municipalities where a female mayor was narrowly elected. The percentage of female council members rises because this effect spreads to nearby communities. Gender quotas on candidate lists in Swedish towns, according to O'Brien and Rickne (2016), expand the pool of female politicians viewed as capable of holding high positions in government. Furthermore, as demonstrated by De Paola *et al*. (2010), Italian municipalities subject to previous

temporary gender quotas elected a greater proportion of female mayors even following the quota's repeal.

However, Geys and Sorensen (2019) found no evidence of any impact of a candidate list quota for the local executive board in Norway on women's political representation in various local-level posts, contrasting with the findings from the three earlier studies. Similarly, Bagues and Campa (2017) discovered that women in Spain still do not hold important positions like mayor or party leader following three rounds of local elections with quotas on candidate lists. Ferreira and Gyourko (2014) also find no long-term effects of electing a female mayor in the US on the political success of other female mayors or candidates for Congress. Second, younger generations of women may aspire to enter politics after being motivated by their contemporary role models. Wolbrecht and Campbell (2007) found that adult women and teenage girls are more likely to discuss and engage in politics in nations with higher proportions of female lawmakers. In addition, exposure to Indian female leaders causes adolescent girls to become more ambitious and alter their parents' expectations (Beaman *et al.,* 2012).

According to Bhatra *et al.* (2018), there is no correlation between the election triumph of female lawmakers and a rise in the number of female candidates at the state level of politics. Third, female politicians can reduce current obstacles to women's engagement in society at all levels and in all domains through the creation of policies (Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler, 2005). According to research by Beaman *et al.* (2007), women participate more actively in general assemblies led by women. They are more inclined to speak up for issues that affect them and support policies that advance women's interests. For example, Ghani *et al.* (2013)

demonstrate how, in India, a new national public works program has improved the assignment of working hours to women due to female representation.

Chauraya (2023) studied gender politics and Zimbabwe Universities: facets, contexts, and consequences. The main aim of the study was to determine the lived experiences, sentiments, ideas, and viewpoints of female middle managers of academic faculties at three universities in Zimbabwe about gender equality in the performance of their duties. Due to its social focus, the interpretive paradigm served as the study's orientation. A qualitative technique was adopted in the selected paradigm because an insider's perspective was sought. The female faculty leaders in this study were the insiders since they worked in a biased and prejudiced atmosphere against women. The semi-structured interview was selected as the data collection method for this study since it was consistent with the interpretative approach (Chauraya, 2023).

The interview questions were posed in a way that prompted the deans to consider their personal experiences managing their faculties daily. When additional clarification was required to fully comprehend the deans' perspectives, beliefs, and viewpoints, follow-up questions were asked. The deans were urged to consider certain events by these follow-up questions. As the deans recounted their personal experiences, these follow-up questions prompted them to consider certain instances that they felt were crucial. This was quite helpful since it made it possible to establish a comprehensive, contextualised picture of the experiences of the deans. The seven deans were interviewed in their offices between March 26 and April 10, 2021, while following and conforming to COVID-19 regulations.

Chauraya (2023) found that; the advancement of women into deanship positions did not result in the elimination of discrimination against them based on their gender; there was a

deficiency of a more comprehensive understanding of gender equality, which hindered deliberate attempts to address all aspects of gender equality; no gender training, sensitisation, or awareness was conducted at the institutions; consequently, a culture of conscious gender inclusion was not cultivated; the mainstream attitudes and relations that once kept women at bay were never questioned when these female deans were hired. Gender equality, as enshrined in some of the universities' mission statements, remains rhetoric rather than reality.

This suggested that mainstreaming women into leadership as part of the integrationist agenda lacked a transformative ethic or revolutionary potential; the female deans' productivity, efficiency, and sense of self-worth were all negatively impacted by gender imbalance (Chauraya, 2023). This study found that despite efforts to attain gender parity, hegemonic masculinity was still very much felt and experienced by women deans. This study concludes that there was a need to have universities' aspirations for gender equality into accomplishments and excellence in terms of middle-level leadership. It highlights the nature, context, and consequences of the exclusionary tendencies towards female deans.

2.3.2 Gender and Political Quotas

Gender quotas, also called political quotas, are a well-liked method of increasing the representation of women in politics. To boost women's presence in politics, 130 nations have implemented political quotas. There are now three forms of political quotas, notwithstanding variations in quota legislation (Krook *et al.,* 2009; Berry *et al.,* 2020). These are reserved seats, candidate quotas, and political party quotas.

Research indicates that post-conflict nations have made quick strides towards increasing women's engagement in politics and that nations with political quotas have, on average,

25.6% more women in politics than nations without quota laws (Tripp, 2016). For example, after the implementation of a quota policy in 2008, women's representation in national politics in Nepal increased from less than 5 per cent in 2006 to over 33 per cent in 2008. This was a significant gain because women comprised 41 per cent of those elected to local governments in the 2017 local elections (Yadav, 2020).

Despite being one of the most contentious policies, research from many nations indicates that gender quotas have transformative effects that go beyond simply "the number" of women (Liu & Banaszak, 2017; Mastracci, 2017). Increased participation of women in legislative settings can "not only open the door" or "even" improve the experience of legislators in the European Parliament, according to a study that looks at the impact of gender quotas on that experience the arena for women elected to office, but it might also, on a broader scale, raise the calibre of the lawmakers in attendance (Aldrich and Daniel, 2020). Additional research demonstrates the causal relationship between progressive policies and political quotas. For example, higher representation of women is linked to improved democracy, better governance, and greater focus on social justice (Walsh, 2013; Weeks, 2018); women's leadership is linked to gender-friendly institutional norms and organisational culture (Liu & Banaszak, 2017).

Election gender quotas have the potential to change political networks, political parties, and the way both men and women view political power, according to a study of 1,700 lawmakers in Argentina's subnational government (Barnes & Holman, 2020). They contend that political quotas broaden the pool of women, as opposed to the claims made by earlier research (see O'Brien and Rickne, 2016; Barnes & Holman, 2020). Furthermore, they claim that quotas force political parties to alter their eligibility pools and how they

recruit and run their operations. Additionally, they contend that quotas alter the representation of both men and women in politics (Barnes & Holman, 2020). Additionally, the Taiwan example points to a relationship between quotas and rising female involvement, including a steady rise in the number of female candidates (Huang, 2015). Jankowski and Marcinkiewicz (2019) report that a study conducted in Poland indicates that the implementation of a gender quota has a favourable effect on both the number of elected female candidates and candidate nominations.

According to research done across eight Middle Eastern nations, "women's involvement in politics alone was challenging the traditional norms of their role in society" (Lu, 2020). According to this study, electoral quotas support the substantive representation of women in politics as opposed to only their symbolic representation. But it also asserts that cultural barriers outweigh those caused by political institutions (Lu, 2020). In addition, Lihi Ben Shitrit (2016) makes the case that political quotas have a "tremendous symbolic effect" while addressing the Middle Eastern setting. According to her, political quotas change how people view women in politics and their place in the political system. Tan (2015) asserts that in contrast to South Korea and Taiwan (Yoon and Shin, 2015), where the governments dealt with significant criticism from women's organisations, Singapore achieved significant success in raising the percentage of women in the workforce from 0 per cent in 1980 to 32% in 2011 thanks to a quota system. Recent elections have shown an improvement in the credibility and electability of women due to their increased representation in Singapore's parliament (Tan, 2015).

This research has proven that political quotas have several revolutionary effects. These studies, however, don't delve further into the causes and mechanisms of these changes.

Furthermore, women's lived experiences especially the less concrete and dynamic nuances of these experiences that take place both inside and outside of the political institutions that act as catalysts for social change are not considered in most studies on gender quotas, which are quantitative investigations that aim to establish causal links.

2.3.3 Successful Women Globally

What is known how women negotiate power in the Global South is explored by Brulé in 2023. According to the dominant theory, women have more authority in the Global North than in the South. Nevertheless, at all analytical levels, the developing world offers illuminating examples of women asserting their power that go against conventional notions of political and economic growth. The subjugation of women has played a crucial role in the development of liberal democratic states or political systems at the macro level of state development, according to the study. Here, data analysis offers additional proof that the most successful political alternatives to patriarchal systems are emerging from the developing globe (Brulé, 2023). Developing-world states are more likely to acknowledge and harness the power of women than developed-world states at the meso level of the policy-making processes. Finally, on a micro level, it is in poor countries that patriarchal power negotiations within families are most active and have the greatest potential to further our knowledge of larger power structures that govern states, policies, and welfare.

2.3.4 The Constitution of Kenya

Kenya's 2010 constitutional changes decentralized the political system and introduced a quota intended to guarantee a certain percentage of women in the executive branch. Bouka, Berry, and Kamuru (2019) map these enduring barriers to women's political inclusion using

data from both the national and county levels. They make the case that in order to increase women's political power; the constitution must be fully implemented as well as a wider analysis of how power is exercised and consolidated.

Castillejo (2022) examines how women impacted Kenya's land and constitutional reform initiatives, how foreign players supported these reforms, and the extent to which these reforms reinforced gender equality outcomes and frameworks. The study concludes that because women have been organising in Kenya for a long time, there are powerful movements with distinct missions that are well-positioned to take advantage of possibilities that occur after political violence and forward the goals of gender equality throughout reform processes. Worldwide support for women's mobilisation was crucial in enabling women to have an impact on various reform processes, especially in the case of constitutional revision. However, this support should have been more coordinated and strategically smart.

2.3.5 Gender Sensitive Leadership

Studies show that women's issues usually get more attention when more women serve in parliament. Gender equality and true democracy depend on women's political participation. It guarantees that women will be held more accountable and promotes their direct participation in public decision-making (Sidha *et al*. 2023). Increasing the proportion of women in positions of decision-making is the first step toward women's political accountability, even though it's not the last one. To increase the efficacy of all elected officials in advancing and upholding gender equality in public policies, gender-sensitive governance reforms are necessary (Bernhard *et al.,* 2021).

There is a sizable amount of prior research on women's political participation opportunities. However, the researcher notes that most studies were conducted in other countries. More specifically, the authors concentrated on developed countries where women's political participation is at an advanced level; thus, the challenges may vary from those experienced by women in Kenya. Previous studies have not focused on women's political participation opportunities in the Rift Valley region, particularly Narok and Nakuru Counties.

2.3.6 The Global Focus on Women

The World for Women and Girls Annual Report 2019-2020 states that supporting women and girls has a broad effect that benefits not just the individual women but also their families, communities, and nations. Studies show that increasing women's political participation raises educational investment and increases the return on investment for businesses with female board members. Research suggests that having equal representation for women in politics and the workplace may triple global GDP growth by 2025 (UN Women, 2020).

2.3.7 A Third of Each Gender in All Government Positions

In addition to requiring the state to take action to implement the gender principle, which guarantees at least a third of each gender in all government positions, the Constitution also calls for greater political representation, highlighting the democratic scope of women's participation in politics under Articles 27(8) and 81(b). Unfortunately, neither house has passed legislation to alter the gender concept. In particular, the national legislature and the Supreme Court continue to have lower female representation than the required one-third

(Kenyatta, 2023). Furthermore, there is non-compliance in the national cabinet, which comprises appointed posts. Despite the creation of four additional cabinet positions, there was the same number of female appointments among the cabinet secretaries appointed at the beginning of 2018. Out of the 22 cabinet secretary positions, just six women were appointed, less than one-third of the constitutional requirement (Kamaru, 2018).

For appointed posts, county-level compliance is minimal. Since elected women make up just 9% at both the national and county levels, the county legislatures conform to the one-third gender criterion. This achievement can be credited to the nomination of female candidates. As a result, the devolution of political and economic power brought about by the new constitution opened new prospects for the nation's underprivileged sections, including women. Additionally, it achieved the goal of widening the democratic space for women's political involvement, which is dependent not only on affirmative action but also on various other structural and functional variables that develop and influence the path of their political journey (Kenyatta, 2023).

In Laikipia-Samburu Station, Kenya, Nyambura *et al.* (2023) explored the barriers preventing women from participating in the SDA hierarchy. Utilising a qualitative descriptive survey design, the study examined the patriarchal theory. It targeted 1,080 laity members of the SDA church in Laikipia-Samburu Station and pastors, church elders, and department heads. With 278 participants, the study used a proportionate purposive sampling method. Descriptive statistics and document analysis were used to analyse the data. The survey found an unbalanced representation of men and women in the church hierarchy. The survey also found that SDA does not have a specific policy against

ordaining women; however, after completing their theological education, women are commissioned, while males are ordained and licensed.

There is a sizable amount of prior research on the various indicators of women political participation However, the researcher notes that most of the studies on the extent of women political participation were conducted in other countries. More specifically the authors concentrated on developed countries where women political participation is perceived much differently from the African perspective. Previous studies have not focused on the extent of women's political participation in the Rift Valley region particularly in Narok and Nakuru Counties.

2.4 Women's Impact on Policy Choices

Disaggregated results and a careful examination of the legislative process are common features of observational research. Research generally indicates that female legislators are more likely to offer and pass important measures about issues affecting women (Schwindt-Bayer, 2006). Issues that directly and unduly affect women are referred to as women's issues (Berkman & O'Connor, 1993). Other concerns, such as family aid and child support laws, are primarily affecting women because of traditional gender roles (Besley & Case, 2003). Cross-national research indicates a significant correlation between the promotion of several women-friendly policies linked to maternity and childcare leave and the representation of women (Kittilson, 2008).

Weeks (2017) demonstrate the positive correlation between policies that support maternal work and an increase in the proportion of women lawmakers following the implementation of gender quotas in various European nations. There are localised relationships that are

comparable. According to Bratton and Ray (2002), day-care coverage and the proportion of women in local councils in Norway are related. Similarly, Svaleryd (2009) links the percentage of women serving on Swedish local councils to the amount spent on education and childcare.

Women may, however, be concentrating on these concerns because they have no other option in legislatures controlled by men, rather than because they choose to (Heath *et al*. 2005; Schwindt-Bayer, 2006). Indeed, if given the opportunity, women might have an impact on national security and aid policies, among other areas of policy. Research indicates that a greater percentage of female representatives is associated with increased public health spending (Clayton & Zetterberg, 2018) and development assistance (Hicks *et al.,* 2016). By contrast, it seems that as the percentage of female MPs increases, conflict behaviour and defence spending go down (Koch & Fulton, 2011). Moreover, in the United States, the proportion of women in the workforce significantly influences state workers' compensation policies (Besley & Case, 2000) and social welfare financing (Holman, 2014).

Feminine political representation does, in fact, matter for many policy decisions, according to most of the early research using a selection-on-observables methodology. The research, however, might not conclusively pinpoint the cause of the relationship between female lawmakers and policymaking. A difficult empirical problem is presented by the assignment of women to political offices without randomisation. Unobserved national or municipality factors may be the endogenous cause of the election of female politicians. Policy decisions may be mistakenly attributed to the gender of the policymaker rather than the unique characteristics of the districts that elect women if there is no exogenous fluctuation in the

number of female legislators. To get around this issue, researchers are turning to quasi-experimental regression techniques and environments where the representation of women varies (quasi-) randomly.

The Indian Mandatory Reservation System is a setting that garners significant attention. Since 1993, a gender quota has given women the right to hold the leadership post in randomly chosen village councils and one-third of the seats in all village councils. Researchers can link variations in policy results to the existence of a female village chief because the assignment procedure is random. It has been seen that villages with a female leader provide more public goods (Beaman *et al.,* 2007), which are of at least as high quality as those in unreserved villages and better represent women's preferences (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004). As a result, children in villages led by women experience better health outcomes, girls spend less time doing household chores, and the gender gap in educational attainment and school attendance narrows more in these villages than in those led by men (Beaman *et al.,* 2007 & 2012).

Indian state politics are given significant significance in addition to municipal politics in India. Due to the lack of a reservation system at the state level, research typically use variance from close elections with mixed genders to determine causality. The percentage of female politicians who win close elections with mixed genders is used by Clots-Figueras (2011) as a proxy for the proportion of female politicians in state assemblies. The findings imply that state spending is influenced by legislators' social standing and gender. In particular, there is a gap between female lawmakers from lower socioeconomic origins and those from higher castes, despite the fact that female legislators invest more on health and

education than their male colleagues. The former prioritise women-friendly legislation and redistributive policies, and they invest more in health and early education.

Using a similar methodology, Clots-Figueras (2012) shows that constituencies that elect women gain from higher education investments, and Bhalotra and Clots-Figueras (2014) demonstrate that women are more likely than men to fund public health infrastructure (the provision of prenatal and paediatric health services), which significantly lowers infant mortality. Unlike the findings in Clots-Figueras (2011), these conclusions are independent of the social standing of female politicians. Overall, these studies show a direct relationship between increased spending on health and education and more female representation in India. In order to evaluate these policies' effects on the economy, a new study by Bhalotra *et al.* (2018) examines the impact of female representation on economic expansion. The authors, in contrast to other research, focus on a regression discontinuity design (RDD) and use data on tight elections to state legislatures in India that are near to gendered. According to the findings, constituencies that barely elect women outperform those that barely elect males in terms of GDP growth.

The experiences of one nation, India, with regard to female representation might not apply to other emerging nations or to the developed democracies of the West. This seems to be accurate because, contrary to earlier conclusions, researchers looking into the effects of a rise in the percentage of female legislators in industrialised nations discover no influence on the decisions made regarding public policy, particularly when it comes to the makeup of public spending. In evaluating the effects of implementing a gender quota on candidate lists in Spain, Bagues and Campa (2017) use population thresholds and RDD projections.

They discover no effects of higher female representation on the amount or makeup of public spending.

Using tight mayoral elections in the US that are near to both genders within a regional development district (RDD), Ferreira and Gyourko (2014) conclude that gender is irrelevant when making policy decisions about the amount and makeup of municipal spending. Using variation in the shock in female representation for the various municipalities, Geys and Sorensen (2019) take use of gender quotas on candidate lists for the local executive board in Norway and discover that this has no effect on local spending patterns. The structure of public spending was unaffected by an 18-percentage point rise in the proportion of female local councillors brought about by an election reform in Italy, according to Baltrunaite *et al.* (2019).

Two recent research, however, indicate that if one focusses just on the amount or makeup of public spending as the main outcome variable, the impact of female legislators may be underestimated or disregarded. Evidence for a considerable impact of female political representation on policy choices is shown by Baskaran and Hessami (2019). The authors take use of Bavaria's open-list election system and perform RDD regressions focused on mixed-gender races to determine which party will ultimately win the last council seat. It has been shown that a female victory in a mixed-gender contest accelerates the growth of public childcare by 40–50 per cent. By utilising comprehensive data from council sessions, the writers additionally demonstrate that having one more woman on the council encourages more talks about childcare and encourages all female councillors to speak out more frequently. This emphasises how crucial it is to focus on specific policy areas and delve deeply into the political system and the conduct of female politicians.

In turn, Lippmann (2019) uses quasi-random variation in women's admission into the French Upper and Lower House through tight elections including mixed genders and affirmative action to examine legislative modifications. Lippmann (2019) reports that compared to male legislators, female legislators are significantly more likely to author amendments on matters pertaining to women, children, and health. This result emphasises how crucial it is to examine officeholders' actions in greater detail when examining their (possible) influence on policy.

Scholars postulate that disparities in rent-extracting behaviour between genders may cause gender disparities in policy choices and policy outcomes. Analysis of corruption and bribery through surveys supports this notion in part: Using survey data from sizable samples of rich and developing nations, Dollar *et al.* (2001) and Swamy *et al.* (2001) discover a negative correlation between female representation and various indicators of corruption. Women are less inclined to support corruption and take bribes. However, environments with higher percentages of women in political posts may be less corrupt due to their welcoming nature, which may also help to mitigate the official and informal hurdles to female representation, glass ceilings, and unequal chances. For example, a recent cross-country study by Debski *et al*. (2018) provides evidence of how cultural variations may lead to misleading associations between corruption and female representation. There is currently limited causal data about the relationship between gender and political corruption in developing nations.

According to research by Beaman *et al.* (2007), people who live in Indian villages with female-reserved councils are less likely to be bribed to get access to public programs or a water connection. Additionally, female state lawmakers are much less likely than male

state legislators to have criminal cases pending against them and to amass wealth while in office, according to Baskaran *et al.* (2018). Additionally, despite greater electoral incentives, female MPs are less susceptible to political opportunism in the form of increased effort. Using data from mayoral elections, Brollo and Troiano (2016) conducted RDD calculations in Brazil. They discovered that, as objectively determined by random audits of local administrations, female representation harmed corruption. This finding is supported by the fact that female mayors recruit fewer temporary public servants during election years and get lower campaign contributions. These observations imply that female mayors are less prone to favouritism and less vulnerable to financial or political pressure from the corporate sector.

It's crucial to remember, nevertheless, that compared to most women, women pursuing careers in politics may possess unique qualifications and aspirations. Research indicates that having more female politicians in the political field raises the calibre of the group (Baltrunaite *et al*., 2014; Besley *et al*., 2017). Furthermore, several empirical studies have examined whether the qualifications of male and female politicians in charge of political institutions differ. The results indicate that female politicians possess the same qualifications as male politicians (Bagues & Campa, 2017), and that women elected through quotas are equally qualified as their counterparts who are elected by popular vote (Weeks & Baldez, 2015). Consequently, it is unclear if, in a situation where female politicians are not as positively selected as they currently seem to be, the estimates for the impact of female politicians on policy outcomes and the calibre of institutions might be validated.

2.5 Consequences of Women's Political Representation

There should be enough women in politics for both symbolic and equitable reasons, including professional growth in the political sphere. It is particularly undesired if powerful men's and women's tastes and decisions diverge significantly. There is indeed a gender difference in social priorities and preferences, with women consistently supporting greater redistribution than males, according to experimental and survey-based research. Researchers Eckel and Grossman (1998) discovered that in dictator games played in a lab, recipients matched with women earn twice as much as recipients partnered with males. According to Andreoni and Vesterlund (2001), men are more interested in maximising efficiency, whereas women are more concerned with achieving wage parity. A field study conducted in India also documents gender variations in social choices and fairness concerns, demonstrating that matrilineal societies offer more public goods than patriarchal ones (Andersen et al., 2008). Women in the US and Europe are growing more left-wing (Edlund & Pande, 2002; Edlund *et al*., 2005), suggesting that Western cultures are even moving towards a gender difference in social preferences. Gender differences in political choices are probably caused by these gender differences in social preferences (Ranehill & Weber, 2017).

Observational and survey-based research consistently shows gender differences in the priorities and preferences for policies. Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004) use data on policy-specific complaints by male and female village council members in India to find gender disparities in policy preferences. Based on a US study, Alesina and La Ferrara (2005) demonstrate that women are generally more in favour of redistributive policies than men. Funk and Gathmann (2015) use poll data collected soon after Swiss federal referendums to

demonstrate that there are notable differences between gender preferences in several sectors, including welfare policy, defence spending, health, and the environment. Finally, Slegten and Heyndels (2018) provide survey evidence showing within-party disparities in policy preferences for welfare, culture, and crime; Belgian women legislators exhibit more left-wing views in these policy areas than do their male counterparts.

2.6 Gaps in Literature for Opportunities

Multiple auspicious prospects exist to augment women's political engagement in Kenya. The literature on opportunities for women's political participation has some gaps, such as in legislative quotas. Despite the expected good returns on observing the legislative quota, which is presumed to be on women's presence in political offices, the literature is silent on where there are more women than men in some positions, like in Nakuru County. Capacity building and training; several training and capacity-building sessions have been conducted, especially in the two counties.

The information mostly passed to women is information and abilities needed to successfully engage in politics and run for office by offering them training and capacity-building programs. These courses frequently cover campaign management, public speaking, and leadership development. However, the effectiveness of these trainings and how to deal with other issues that can affect their political participation has not been documented. In mentorship and networking, women in politics are put in touch with seasoned leaders who are expected to provide direction and counsel, and networks and mentorship programs established to assist them have not been reviewed, and their successes are documented in this study.

2.7 Obstacles to Women's Political Participation

Scholarly research reveals that women are less likely than men to enter competitive settings when running for office. This is supported by a body of literature that suggests women are less capable than men in competitive settings, particularly when competing against members of the opposite sex (Gneezy *et al.,* 2003). Eisenkopf *et al.* (2015) also find evidence in the classroom to support this theory.

From a global perspective, a plethora of strategies have been formulated to make it possible for women to participate in political leadership, yet the level of women's participation in this field remains low (Kauria, 2018). This is attributed to several challenges that continue to strangle women's quest for political participation and representation. One of the main challenge women faces politically is confronting the patriarchal nature of their societies. For instance, women in Malawi are discouraged and undermined by men and their parties from vying for parliamentary positions and given a hostile treatment by men during campaigns, which include verbal abuse and harassment which contributes to women lagging behind in political participation. In Zambia, pressure is mounted on parties to engage women candidates, but on the other hand, there is fear that they would be unable to win elections and are placed in constituencies where they will compete against each other.

Similarly, in Kenya, patriarchal structures that discourage women from overwhelming participation in the political scene is largely blamed to have contributed to the political under-representation. This could as well be translated to both Nakuru and Narok Counties

where the patriarchal nature of society may be influencing women from active participation in political leadership. In her study Kivoi (2014) points out that stereotype belief on women leadership is traceable to socially constructed cultural factors. She further contends that quite often, the roles of male gender tend to be empowering and domineering while the female gender seems to be less domineering and subservient in nature. These she argues constraints the participation of women in politics. In Kenya, cultural practices and perceptions are the major hurdles that hinder the women's participation on political governance and decision making.

2.7.1 Competition among the Gender

The experiment, which took place naturally in Switzerland, involved assigning female high school students at random to coeducational and single-sex classrooms. In single-sex classrooms, female pupils score better in mathematics, a competitive subject. Niederle and Vesterlund (2007) demonstrate that, despite the lack of a gender difference in performance, males continue to prefer competition at a significantly higher rate than women. This suggests that the gender gap in competitiveness is conditional on performance. Despite these results, the comparison of patriarchal and matrilineal groups by Gneezy *et al.* (2009) compellingly shows that women can be raised to be more competitive. Conventions and gender roles in society most likely have a part to play in women's reluctance to compete.

According to research by Fox and Lawless (2004), women who are just as qualified and experienced as males end up not running for office as frequently. This is essentially because men are openly urged to run for office, but women are not. These findings suggest that policies that support women's participation in politics may be required to level the playing

field because women generally detest competition, which means there aren't as many female candidates as possible. If this begins at the candidature level, female politicians will remain under-represented even if they are as successful as men in elections or within-party contests.

Voters' possible bias against female candidates is a second factor contributing to the under-representation of women in political office (Frechette *et al.,* 2008). Research from both rich and developing nations firmly backs up this assertion. For instance, Beaman *et al.* (2007) discover that Indian villagers, both male and female, are less content with female leaders despite a degree of public goods supply that, both in terms of number and quality, at least equals and occasionally exceeds that of male leaders. In the context of French parliamentary elections, Le Barbanchon and Sauvagnat (2019) demonstrate a negative correlation between voter bias (measured by unfavourable voter attitudes towards women and the local gender earnings gap) and the percentage of female candidates. Baskaran and Hessami (2018) offer indirect evidence of anti-female voter bias in the context of German local council elections.

The party leaders' prejudice towards women is a third theory. Esteve-Volart and Bagues (2012) demonstrate how Spanish party leaders, who have traditionally been men, force fewer women to positions on ballots or seats than voters would prefer. Likewise, Casas-Arce and Saiz (2015) demonstrate that the Spanish parties most impacted by the 2007 introduction of a gender quota greatly enhanced their electoral performance, indicating that parties were not optimizing their performance prior to the quota. In addition to these supply, and demand-side theories, scholars have recently focused on institutional impediments to female representation as a fourth theory. After noticing that majoritarian

systems have a significantly lower percentage of women elected, Profeta and Woodhouse (2018) investigated the Italian system, which has used both majoritarian and proportional elections at the national and subnational levels since 2005. The writers attest to the fact that women are more likely to be elected under proportional criteria. Gender quotas on candidate lists and gender-conditional double preference voting were implemented in Italy in 2013 because of another reform. Profeta *et al.* (2019) investigate the effects of this policy. The authors discover a noteworthy 18 percentage point rise in the proportion of female councillors, mostly due to a rise in the number of preference votes given in favour of women.

2.7.2 Intimidation and Abuse Directed at Female Politicians

Women in politics are facing a significant barrier to their ability to participate in politics due to the increasing recognition of violence against them following a startling increase in reports of harassment, threats, and abuse aimed at female politicians. However, conceptual uncertainties remain about the exact limits of this phenomenon. Krook and Sann (2020) aimed to enhance the theoretical, empirical, and methodological foundations. It was proposed that bias against women in positions of power had different origins from other forms of political violence since it begins with cultural violence, travels through structural violence, and culminates in symbolic violence. The paper concentrated on sexual, psychological, physical, and economic violence against women in politics, along with three methodological issues regarding inter-sectionality, underreporting, and comparing men's and women's experiences.

2.7.3 Women's Personal and Professional Lives

Teixeira *et al*. (2021) provide information about the personal and professional life of women. The investigation proved that women's issues were and remains distinct. White women fight for the right to work while juggling their roles as mothers, wives, and homemakers, while black and impoverished women fight for survival and dignity. Consequently, the film research illustrated the relationship between women's desire for a different social standing and a fundamentally cultural element. It is significant to remember that this fight persists today and is typified by the concealment of women's social function.

Women's engagement and success in the job market in developing nations are hampered by cultural norms, according to Jayachandra (2021). The author discusses the relationship between economic growth and female employment he makes the case that cultural norms contribute to the explanation of the stark variations in female employment among nations with comparable levels of development. The author then discusses a few gender-related societal norms that restrict women's employment and offers instances of legislation designed to remove these obstacles. While other programs aim to alter the norms, some are created to work around them and help women succeed in the workforce despite them. According to the available research, both strategies can boost women's employment and incomes. A viable strategy for reducing gender disparities in the job market is policy-making sensitive to cultural norms.

Maseda, Iturralde, Cooper, and Aparicio's (2022) mapping of women's involvement in family businesses produced five thematic clusters, including (1) female entrepreneurs and

family firms, (2) women in family-firm governance, (3) family-business dynamics, (4) women in business succession, and (5) temporal and spatial dimensions of women's involvement.

2.7.4 Underrepresentation

According to Lundberg, Shelly, and Jenna Stearns (2019), women continue to be underrepresented in economics and discuss why women's advancement in economic processes is stumbling. Just under 35% of PhD students and 30 per cent of associate professors were women by the middle of the 2000s, and these percentages have essentially been the same ever since. Women's advancement in academia has slowed during the previous two decades, and there hasn't been much of an increase in the proportion of female junior faculty members or graduate students in recent years. Although there has been a resurgence of interest in women's status and future in economics as well as the obstacles to their professional achievement, no agreement has been reached as to why.

Daminger (2019) asserts that cognitive labour entails anticipating needs, finding solutions to satisfy them, coming to conclusions, and monitoring advancement. Because this kind of labour is hard and often invisible to both partners and cognitive labourers, couples often dispute it. According to the study, women complete more cognitive activities in general and more anticipatory and monitoring tasks specifically. This implies that gender also plays a role in cognitive labor. But the cognitive labor function most closely associated with power and influence is decision-making, which is a skill that both men and women largely share. The findings identify a little-known but potentially important cause of gender

inequality at the family level and propose a new direction for research on the distribution of labor in households.

2.7.5 Significant Gender Gap in Positions of Power

Kassa (2015) investigated the challenges and potential for Ethiopian women's political engagement. Globally, women's participation in politics has been regarded as a crucial measure of their position inside a country. Women's participation in politics and decision-making has, therefore, attracted a lot of attention in recent years. Still, there is a considerable gender disparity in positions of authority. The study's findings, which analyze the barriers and opportunities facing Ethiopian women seeking political office, show that a range of incidental factors economic, religious, social, and cultural ones among them have a deleterious effect on women's political participation in the country.

According to the study, political participation also ensures that the national, regional, district, and local levels of government are accountable, open, and effectively combat rent-seeking. It also enables women to address their basic problems and needs in their communities. It is true that women make up more than 50% of the global population. In contrast to their counterparts at all levels of government, they do not have access to political decision-making.

Cassese (2019) examined the representations that form the basis of widespread group stereotypes that influence public opinion and voting behaviour. Intersectional stereotypes are stereotypes that overlap with different group categories. This viewpoint recognizes that rather than assessing preconceptions connected to certain social groups separately, group-based characteristics must be investigated collaboratively as mutually developing categories, for example, racial stereotypes versus gender stereotypes.

One of the most vulnerable social groups, homes headed by women face numerous issues and difficulties. Lebni *et al.* (2020) conducted a study in Kermanshah, West Iran among families with female heads. Semi-structured interviews with 26 female-headed families were used to gather the data. These households were chosen by theoretical and intentional sampling. The software MAXQDA-12 was utilized to organize the data, and traditional qualitative content analysis was used for data analysis. To assess the calibre of study findings, the four Global and Lincon criteria credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability were observed. Female-headed families encounter numerous difficulties that may pose a serious threat or present a great opportunity. Therefore, by providing additional economic support, assisting them in raising their social status, and helping them adjust to new and varied occupations, their health can be improved.

2.7.6 Esteem Factors

Unlocking women's sustainable leadership potential: Shinbrot *et al.* (2019), in their qualitative study, revealed several themes. First, their research reveals a strong worry regarding patriarchal institutions that are believed to keep women out of leadership roles. Second, their research reveals complex issues that are often ignored, like low self-esteem, which is believed to keep women from rising to leadership positions, and gender-specific issues that make it difficult to provide universal solutions.

Finally, they touch on issues sometimes overlooked in this context, such as males and masculinity, and emphasise the crucial support that men can offer female leaders in sustainable development. Their study serves as a crucial call to action for male allies and international movements for women to join forces in the fight against oppression and dominance in hierarchies and, more crucially, to alter perceptions and structures.

2.8.7 Policy Gaps

Plagerson *et al.* (2019) look at how South Africa's social policy changed between 1994 and 2017 and whether policy levers allow for cross-border policy transfer to address today's challenges in social development. The tension between the market-oriented residual paradigm and the statist transformational paradigm is said to have led to the compromise they reached on the present course of social policy. Conversely, a transformative policy perspective is grounded in human rights and sees redistribution as a means and a condition of economic growth. Conversely, the residual paradigm views redistribution as a secondary function contingent upon economic growth. A few instances when this conflict is evident are provided, along with the implications for social policy throughout the policy cycle. Legislation, the creation of social compacts, the selection and execution of social programs, gender mainstreaming, and the participation of the private sector in social policy are some examples.

2.7.8 Cultural and Religious Factors

The difficulties faced by women in educational leadership in Ghana's Tano North Municipality, Ahafo Region, were examined by Djan & Gordon in 2020. This study used a qualitative case study methodology. A planned selection process was used to choose the 15 female educational leaders participating in the study. Semi-structured interview guides were the instruments used to collect the data. The data were examined using thematic analysis. It was found that due to their cultural and religious backgrounds, as well as the way women are often perceived, some teachers do not treat female administrators with the required respect. The intense workload associated with their new occupations posed

challenges for women in leadership positions in the education sector. Research has shown that women in leadership perform better when receiving administrative support, professional development opportunities, and mentoring. The Tano North Municipal Education Office and other gender-based organisations are advised to regularly host leadership development programs or seminars for women to professionally prepare them for leadership roles.

The lack of representation for women in politics has been one of the main obstacles to economic growth in recent years. Orisadare (2019) conducted a study titled "Assessment of the Role of Women Groups in Women's Political Participation and Economic Development in Nigeria" and discovered that although the members of these groups accept government favours and appointments, they generally have goals that are not aligned with any political agenda. The members of women's groups appear to have a high incidence of illiteracy, and most of them are unaware of affirmative action policies or national or international legislation promoting gender equality. As a result, it is challenging for them to engage in politics and lend their voices to political issues. The author concludes those women's groups' current grassroots roles may not be sufficient to encourage more women to participate in politics and impact economic development. Therefore, to encourage more women to get involved and be relevant in politics, they must pick up their efforts and embrace political problems. Consequently, the research suggests that governments and other stakeholders emphasise increased empowerment projects that target grassroots women's groups, especially in political engagement and decision-making.

2.7.9 Patriarchal Culture and the Political World of Women

Social culture, which depicts a nation's citizens' lifestyles, gives rise to political culture. According to Kollo (2017), in Indonesia, the predominant culture is patrimonialism, in which a person or group controls the government (Sakina & A., 2017). Because of its strong patriarchal society, women are viewed as inferior. A patriarchal system is defined by men who generally have more power than women because they are considered a lower social class (Nurcahyo, 2016). Men have the authority to decide what must be done in this system, which is regarded as a fair gendered distribution of labour. Domestic roles are the priority for women in patriarchal cultures.

The roles of men as the heads of households, decision-makers, and breadwinners are assumed to be part of the political arena, connected to their roles as policymakers. A typical member is a man because men have sought political empowerment. This culture creates an unequal view of relations between women and men, with women bearing heavier responsibilities in household management, caregiving for children, the elderly, and the sick, and formal and moral education of children (Sihite, 2007). Women's role as breadwinners and active involvement in community organisations and political parties are only considered secondary roles.

Party organisational structure also has a strong influence on patriarchal society. Because of their inferiority to men, women have fewer opportunities to occupy important roles in the policymaking process. Women in politics are frequently limited in their influence on issues on women. Men and women continue to experience tension based on gender (Fromm, 2000). Women's resistance to men's dominance is inextricably linked to the unfair patriarchal structure that views women as men's shadows. Men are considered at the top of

the political, economic, industrial, financial, and religious hierarchical structures in patriarchal cultures (Nurudin, 2006). A nation with a patriarchal culture supports and upholds actions that subject women to systematic and direct oppression (Saraswati, 2004). The way that households and families are structured, as well as the laws that govern these domains, demonstrate how oppressed women are. Policies typically restrict women's freedom or practise discrimination. Women in West Java are treated as second-class citizens, and their primary responsibilities are limited to household work. "Tilu Ur" (three "ur"), namely "sumur" (well), "dapur" (kitchen), and "kasur" (mattress/bed) realms far away from politics is a phrase used by the Sundanese tribe in West Java to refer to women. A strong indicator of patriarchal culture and political ideology is masculinity. Men create political norms, control the political sphere, and establish evaluation criteria. Moreover, attitudes and beliefs associated with masculinity govern political life.

According to Aleksandrova, Omelchenko & Popovich (2018), Confrontation and competitiveness are the fundamental concepts of politics. Thus, it is difficult for independent women to be recognised in politics. Women find it harder than men to succeed in politics since their political aspirations are perceived as non-feminine behaviour. Women are, therefore, not used to participating in decision-making in the public sector. Furthermore, it is believed that women are unfit to enter the male-dominated sphere of politics (Aleksandrova, Omelchenko & Popovich, 2018). The reason for this is that people expect women to be soft-spoken and incapable of being strong. Even if women have acquired high levels of education and ability, they are still viewed as unsuited to be leaders of political parties and organisations.

Sum (2015) argues that this patriarchal culture confines woman: thus, they have no interest in participating in politics or running for office in the legislature. The political culture significantly influences the community's political orientation, particularly regarding political parties' efforts to appoint legislative candidates and cadres. At the central and regional levels, political orientation is a crucial factor in the election of legislative candidates (Sum, 2015). Because of these unfavourable opinions about women in politics, women's political orientation also comes out to be unfavourable, which keeps women out of the pool of candidates running for legislative office. For men, however, the opposite is true.

2.7.10 Legal and Political Obstacles

The legal and political obstacles to gender equality and crimes against women in Turkey were examined by Güneş and Ezikolu (2023). Despite significant legal and political advancements for women's rights under the AKP government, such as becoming the first government to ratify the Istanbul Convention, crimes against women have sharply increased in Turkey over the past two decades. This is an important advancement for women's rights, particularly regarding violence against women.

Eldein and Elmonaim (2023) investigated how frequently women utilized social networking sites to reflect on their cultural identity to ascertain whether political empowerment of women results in improved human development. Pooled ordinary least squares (OLS) fixed effects regressions use objective indicators of child mortality under five years old and female school completion to quantify human capital development, as well as indices of pro-poor development policy such as equal access to health and

education. They offer strong proof that improved human capital and women's political empowerment are positively correlated. These results demonstrate that women's empowerment has more benefits than democracy and good governance. They are statistically significant and considerable (Eldein & Elmonaim, 2023). The structural underpinnings of democracy and economic advancement are what propel women's political empowerment; gender empowerment's independent impact on the benefits of democracy and institutional quality suggests that the former play a significant role.

2.7.11 Gaps in Challenges for Women's Political Participation

From the literature, it has emerged that despite considerable advancements, women's political engagement in Kenya encounters numerous obstacles. The following are significant gaps: Gaps in Law and Policy: While Kenya's Constitution and other regulations promote gender equality, implementation is still lacking (Eldein & Elmonaim, 2023). Persistent gender inequities result from the incomplete enforcement of numerous laws and policies which affect both men and women. Social Norms and Cultural Barriers: Women are frequently discouraged from entering politics by traditional gender roles and societal norms.

Women who do choose to run for office usually encounter stigma and opposition from society. This is problematic as other families encourage women to get involved with politics (Chemutai, 2024). Financial Restraints: One of the biggest obstacles facing many women is the high expense of running for political office. Significant financial resources are needed for campaigns, which women frequently lack compared to males. The studies have been silent on cases where women are financially stable. Most of the studies look at

women as the only weak people to have financial ability (Aleksandrova, Omelchenko & Popovich, 2018).

Political Party Structures: Women are under-represented in leadership roles in Kenyan political parties, which men frequently dominate. This reduces women's ability to influence parties and their prospects of receiving candidature nominations (Wanjiru, 2018). There are cases where there are women-led parties. Gender-Based Violence: Women in politics are particularly vulnerable to physical, psychological, and cyber bullying. Many women are discouraged from entering or remaining in politics by this violence. Political violence is not only faced by women politicians, but sometimes they are perpetuated by non-local politicians (Chemutai, 2024). This leads to them not participating in politics. Absence of Support Networks: Women frequently lack the advocacy groups and mentorship programs essential for navigating the political system. A multimodal strategy is needed to close these gaps, including increased adherence to the legislation, societal shifts, and financial support for female candidates, and stringent anti-violence measures.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

The three relevant theories for evaluating gender mainstreaming and educational policies for political participation are the theory of radical feminism, liberal theory and Political development theory. The conceptual framework augments and explains the link between various theoretical arguments of the subject matter in the study.

2.8.1 Radical Feminism Theory

This theory is attributed to the works of Catherine Mackinnon and Mary Daly (Cottais, 2020). The development of feminism can often be divided into three phases. The nineteenth

and early twentieth centuries saw the first stage wave; the 1960s and 1970s saw the second; and the 1990s to the present saw the third. However, the study is anchored on the second strand, which occurred in the 1970s to 1980s. It is important to note that the theory experienced a considerable expansion during the second wave, which took place in the 1970s and 1980s, when scholarly interest in how gender shapes every element of the human experience increased. Feminist radicalism predominated in scholarly writing at this time, with Catherine Mackinnon's legal scholarship receiving most of the attention.

Radical Feminist Theory is one of the major contemporary sociological theories that are confined to the analysis of women's status in the society. The theory was developed by Grossman in the late 1950s, precisely 1957 (Kauria, 2018). The attempt by this theory is to expound the existing societal differences between men and women. For instance, cultural feminists are confined to exploring values that are connected to womanhood and femininity as the basis why men and women experience the social world distinctively. Other feminist theorists posit that different roles assigned to either gender within institutions can help in explaining the gender differences which perpetuates the entrenched marginalization of women within the patriarchal cultures. This makes female gender to be treated as an object and is denied an opportunity to realize self. This assertion could help in explaining why women are continuously denied access to opportunities including that of political participation simply because they are seen as the properties of their husbands and have little to no voice in most of the societal issues. The current study attempts to establish nexus between the feminist theory concerns and how they relate to women coupled with various hurdles that hinder the effective participation of women in governance.

The feminist theory offers significant insights regarding the differences between women and men and its main concern is to accord a voice to women and highlighting various mechanisms through which women have contributed to the society if participation is something to go by (Kivoi, 2014). The Radical Feminist theory has failed to offer detailed and specific remedies to marginalization, oppression, discrimination, how to alter the existing laws that discriminate against women, education and socialization to increase women's participation in governance. Nonetheless, the current study adopted this theory because it helps in addressing the societal ailments on the basis of gender, race alongside other social related factors that are instrumental in influencing women's participation in governance.

The theory exudes some weaknesses. Foremost, it simplified the issues and is quick to suggest that men are the perpetrators of women's marginalization with women being the obvious victims. However, in reality, not all women are victims and not all men are corrupt. The theory downplays and largely ignores race, class and sexual orientation which are vital in comprehending gender differences. The theory also proposes the dismantling of traditional social roles and the complete overhaul of patriarchy and offers scanty remedies on how equal power distribution cam be achieved by both genders and how women can effectively triumph this hurdle to participate in political leadership. It is because of these underlying reasons that the study adopts other theories to bring about the effective theorization of the research problem.

2.8.2 Structural Violence Theory

This theory was pioneered by Johan Galtung in his 1969 seminal work where he divided violence into direct, structural and cultural violence. In his article titled "*Violence, Peace*

and Peace Research," published in 1969, Galtung stated that while revealing the relationship between violence and peace, it is vital to conceptualize violence first. In this context, he defines violence as the effects applied to people to fall behind their physical and mental potentials and draws a several frameworks from economic inadequacies to wars, from ideological pressures to threats (Galtung' 2008). He also explains his views on violence comprehensively by emphasizing the difference between forms of violence while focusing on physical and psychological violence on the one hand and the presence of an object and what or who the subject is on the other.

Galtung conceptualizes violence as any avoidable assault on the basic needs. According to him, these basic needs are survival, well-being, freedom and identity. The threat of violence against these basic human needs also constitutes form of violence since individuals are able to establish a meaningful relationship with their environment which is pegged at meeting their basic needs. As conceptualized by Galtung, structural violence is triggered by political mechanisms, processes and institutions that enhance identity satisfaction (Dilts *et al.*, 2012) Structural violence can be conceptually divided into three major pillars: social marginalization, political exclusion and economic exploitation. Violence being built in social structures or institutions includes but is not limited to unequal power; asymmetric opportunities between citizens for political, social and economic activities are social injustices. These are situations that trigger human misery such as poverty, repression, and social alienation, reduction of quality of life by unequal access to education, medical services, and social welfare and among others.

Galtung's conceptualization of the concept of peace is one of the most widely accepted definitions in the discipline of international relations. In his study *"What is peace*

research?" published in 1964, Galtung describes negative peace as the absence of human violence and war, positive peace as the absence of structural violence (Galtung 2009). It is possible to say that Galtung's views on negative and positive peace developed and matured over time, as in the concept of violence. In simple terms, peace is conceptualized as a political condition that guarantees peace and social stability through formal and informal institutions, practices and norms. This makes peace to be more than just a mere absence of war. Peace is best understood through positive and negative peace. Negative peace connotes the absence of violence and is fondly used in the Global Peace Index (GPI). On the other hand, positive peace is the attitudes, institutions and structures that when fortified can culminates in peaceful societies (Ercoşkun, 2021).

Within the context of the study, structural violence theory can be applied to explain social marginalization of women, their political exclusion and by extension economic exploitation. The existing social structures and institutions tend to deny women the chance of political participation which in turn causes gender inequality and may eventually result in conflict. Borrowing from Galtung's ideas on peace, allowing women to participate in political affairs and strengthening the existing institutions may bring about positive peace which in turn may lead to peaceful societies. However, the theory is only restricted to structural violence and societal structures can be enhanced to achieve a peaceful society. It does not however provide the means and mechanisms how women can be involved in politics and how such contributes to a peaceful society.

2.8.3 Political Development Theory

Many academics, including Pye (1966), Huntington (1971), Finer (1988), and others, have advanced the political development hypothesis. The model or theory that academics or

students of developmental studies, democratic studies, etc., frequently use or embrace is political development theory. Political development theory connects a nation's political development to its overall development. Often, the theory is used to describe how democracies form.

Political development theory is as old as democracy itself, even though it hadn't even been thought of when it started. The premise is justified by the fact that democracy is known to have absorbed the bulk of known traits of political evolution. The idea is relevant in describing the developmental process of most African countries, particularly Kenya, given that most of them currently practice democracy. Consequently, political development expands the populace's capacity to hold their rulers responsible for their political behaviour. The theory principles are consistent with democracy and thus applicable to this study.

The idea's proponents offered the fundamental principles of political development theory. According to Finer (1988), political growth is determined by the level of political culture. Finer believes that the level of political growth will ultimately determine the level of advancement. Mass engagement and public participation in political activities are necessary for political progress. According to Pye, a nation cannot progress until most people engage in political activity.

The political development theory's tenets include: 1). Institutional development and modernisation: Political development theory frequently concentrates on the modernisation and political institution-building processes. It highlights how crucial it is to create inclusive, stable, and effective political systems. Economic growth and political stability: According to the theory, political stability and economic growth are related. It implies that

political stability can result from economic growth and vice versa. Democratisation: Encouraging democratisation is fundamental to political development theory. It makes the case that democratic institutions and practices are necessary for both the advancement of society as a whole and political development. 4). Social Mobilisation: The idea emphasises how important social mobilisation is to the evolution of politics. It implies that heightened social mobilisation may result in higher levels of political engagement and the creation of more inclusive political structures.

The theory is applicable in gender mainstreaming in the following ways: 1). Inclusive political systems: The significance of inclusive political systems is emphasised by both gender mainstreaming and political development theory. In order to create inclusive political institutions, gender mainstreaming aims to incorporate gender considerations into all policy-making elements (Graham & Hoffman, 2022). Democratisation and gender equality: The emphasis on democratisation in political development theory supports the goals of Gender Mainstreaming in advancing gender equality. Both strategies support women and other marginalised groups in political processes and decision-making. Social mobilisation and gender advocacy: Political development theory and gender advocacy heavily rely on social mobilisation. Economic and Political Stability: By addressing gender disparities that could spark social discontent, gender mainstreaming can help maintain political stability.

Gender mainstreaming serves the larger objectives of political development theory, such as political stability and economic prosperity, by advancing gender equality. Institutional Development: The significance of institutional development is emphasised in both strategies. Building strong and stable political institutions is central to political

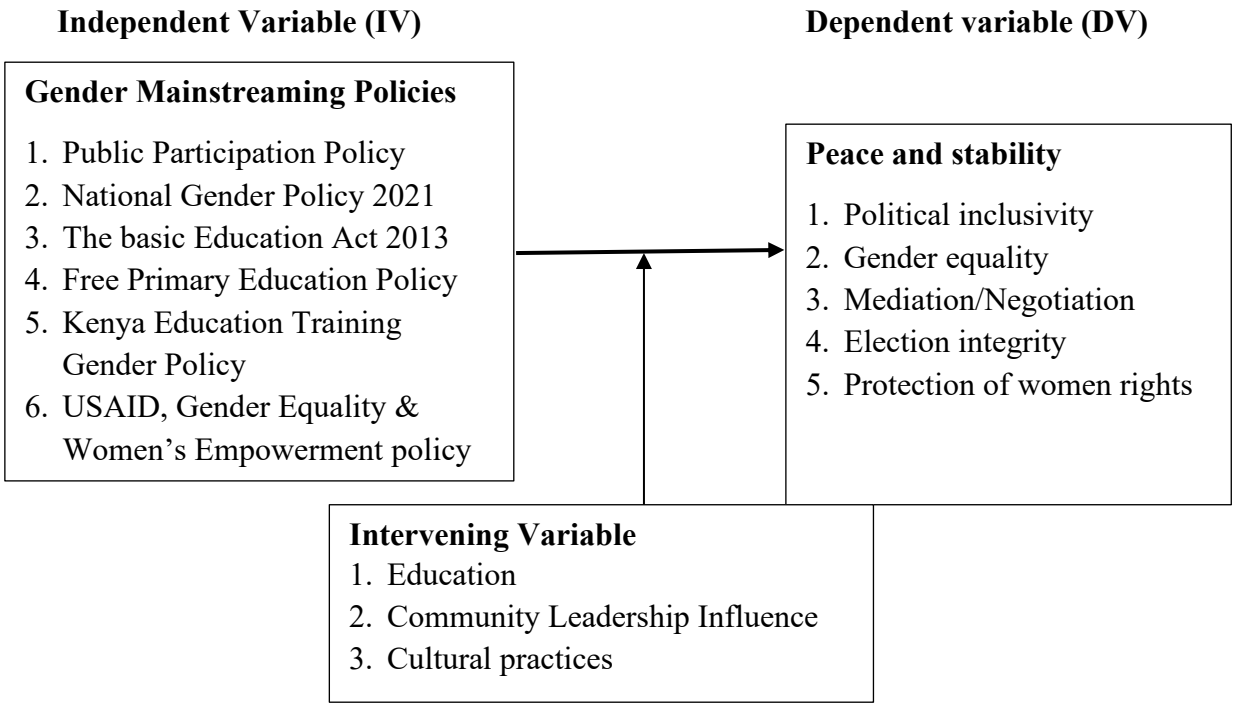
development theory, and gender mainstreaming aims to guarantee that these institutions are inclusive and responsive to gender differences (Musili, 2024).

In conclusion, promoting inclusive political systems, democratisation, and social mobilisation are shared objectives of political development theory and gender mainstreaming. While Gender Mainstreaming primarily aims to integrate gender perspectives into all parts of life, political development theory concentrates on more general modernisation and institutional development processes.

2.9 Conceptual Framework Model

The following conceptual framework, Figure 2.1, conceptualises or represents the relationships between variables in the study and presents them graphically or diagrammatically (Orodho, 2008; Mugenda, 2008). The study sought to assess how gender mainstreaming policies influence women's involvement in politics in these two Counties. These variables in the conceptual framework were derived from theories identified and literature from different scholars in the study. The independent variables of the study selected based on the research questions and objectives are gender equality policy, public participation policy, and national education policy. The selected dependent variable of the study is political development. It is expected that gender equality policy, public participation policy, and national education policy will positively impact political development.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework



Source Researcher, 2023

The conceptual frame shows the linkages and relationships between the study's independent and dependent variables. The selected based on the research questions and objectives are gender equality policy, public participation policy, and national education policy. The study's selected dependent variable, political participation, is expected to result from gender equality policies to empower women and ensure their representation in political processes. This can lead to more inclusive decision-making and policies that reflect the entire population's needs.

2.10 Variable explanation

Gender mainstreaming policies are one of the strategies that various countries across the world have adopted to address the existing gender disparities in socioeconomic and political domains. Their adoption has been largely influenced by the persisting obstacles

faced by women, especially those from male-dominated societies who have constantly been subjugated based on their sex. Notably, one of the objectives of these policies is to address the persistent political underrepresentation of the female gender with the motive to solidify their political muscles and voice in male-dominated political spaces. For instance, policies like the National Gender Policy (2021) advocate for equal political representation of both genders and embrace the quota system's introduction. Through this system, women's participation in the political processes has improved, as attested by a slight increase in women parliamentarians in the recent general elections. Furthermore, this policy also provides for non-discrimination against Kenyans based on gender, providing a safe haven for women's participation in Kenya's political landscape. However, despite the existence of these numerous gender mainstreaming policies, women still face cultural-related obstacles that tend to hinder effective participation in the political processes.

2.11 Research Gaps

This section explains the research gaps in terms of conceptual, methodological and contextual gaps.

2.11.1 Conceptual Gaps

These are holes in the theoretical or conceptual foundations of the subject. For example, further research can be needed to understand how two concepts relate to one another or to strengthen a theoretical framework. Other than the political advancement of women, gender mainstreaming has been examined in many situations by prior writers. Awoa *et al.* (2022), for example, examined the curse of natural resources in developing countries and the political empowerment of women. Ojwala *et al.* (2022) assessed the efficacy of gender

policies in attaining gender equality in ocean science programs in Kenyan public institutions. The effect of emotional abuse on women's socioeconomic growth was examined by Awino and Ngutu (2022).

2.11.2 Methodological Gaps

These are gaps in the methods used to study a particular subject. Previous authors used various research methods and methodologies to get their results. For instance, Bekana (2020) used embedded qualitative research to examine the key messages of the data obtained for a study on gender equality policies in Ethiopia. In a study by Bustelo (2003) on the evaluation of gender mainstreaming, a meta-evaluation of eleven evaluation processes was used. In a study by Gill and Stewart (2011) on the relevance of gender-sensitive policies, the main resources used were several policy documents and international and national databases that are freely accessible to the public. One university served as the case study for a paper by Loots and Walker (2015) titled shaping a gender equality policy in Higher Education.

2.11.3 Contextual Gaps

When there is a sizable amount of prior research on a given issue, but none circumstances or area, there is a contextual gap. The researcher notes that most of the studies on gender mainstreaming were conducted in other countries. More specifically the authors concentrated on developed countries where gender mainstreaming has received much attention and policy support from the government and other stakeholders. Other authors have focused on developing countries while those in Kenya have not focused on Gender mainstreaming policies and the women from the rift valley region.

For instance, in order to examine perceptions of the gender corrective mechanism as part of a larger parliamentary gender balance reform program in the EU island nation Malta, Bezzina, Brown, and Marmarà (2022) conducted a quantitative study. In Narok County, Kenya, Kabeer (2005) attempted to determine the extent to which gender-based violence (GBV) affects the implementation of gender policies on women's empowerment. Awoa *et al.* (2022) examined how women are becoming more influential in politics and the negative effects of natural resources in developing countries. Grasso and Smith (2022) looked at youth data that was gathered from nine European nations in 2018. Their aim was to present an accurate depiction of the gender gap in political activism among youth in Europe by analysing gender variations in the engagement in various traditional and non-conventional forms of activism, along with associated beliefs, wider political involvement, and significant cross-national factors.

2.12 Chapter Summary

The literature review chapter discussed various arguments and background on gender mainstreaming. The rationale for the approach was to get adequate knowledge of the concept and weigh various scholarly takes on gender mainstreaming. Subsequently, gender equality policy was linked to gender mainstreaming to explain the two concepts' nexus on political development. Also, other concepts, such as public participation and national education policy that form the study's independent variables, were discussed critically while considering their influence on political development. A literature review has also been carried out on the extent of women's political participation and the challenges.

The chapter has also presented the conceptual framework model depicting the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the study. Additionally, the section discussed feminism, liberal theory and political development theory that adequately and directly reflect gender mainstreaming policy, public participation, and national education policies. The theories emphasise equality, especially for women, and all make sense when addressing the impact of independent variables on political development. The next chapter entails research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the approaches and methods that used to conduct the study. The study area and study population have also been described in this chapter. The chapter also describes the sampling strategy and sample size, data collection instruments, data analysis and presentation, reliability and validity of data collection instruments and ethical consideration in the study.

3.1 Research Design

In scientific research, research design has been used in a broader sense to describe the overall conception of the study which encompasses description of all concepts, variables and categories, the relational propositions and the methods of collecting data and analysis. Therefore, a research design refers to the process followed by the researcher from the inception to completion of the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). Kothari (2012) conceptualizes research design as an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis if data in a manner that is coherent to the research purpose with economy in procedure. According to him, a good research design is characterized by flexibility, appropriateness, and efficiency and economical.

As further postulated by Bryman (2019), a research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. The choice of a research design is embedded in the priority given accorded to a range of dimensions of the research process. This study adopted

descriptive research design. According to Kothari (2012), descriptive research studies are mainly concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or a group. Additionally, the design provides detailed account into what, where, how, who when of employee participation strategies and employee performance. In view of this, the study employed descriptive survey design to establish gender mainstreaming influencing the attainment of peace and stability with reference to Nakuru and Narok Counties. As defined by Creswell (2014), descriptive survey design is a method of collecting data with an aid of interviewing or administering a questionnaire to the sampled population. This design intends to describe the traits of a large group of people, objects or institutions through questionnaire. Additionally, the study adopted this design given its descriptive nature to aid the researcher in collecting data from the sampled participants for the purpose of estimating the population parameters.

According to Kumar (2019), research method connotes a knowledge search through the utility of both objective and systemic methods which encompasses a variety of inquiry strategies, analysis and interpretation tailored towards finding a solution to a research problem. For the purpose of this study, mixed method approach was adopted because it allows the researcher to use both qualitative and quantitative approaches to tackle a research problem. Mixed-method approach is characterized by great flexibility with respect to the methodological approach adaptable to many study designs such as randomized trials to yield additional information that can be obtained mainly through quantitative research (Creswell & Plano, 2017). Qualitative approach was enhanced by both key informant interviews and focused group discussions (FGDs) while quantitative approach was aided by the questionnaires.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in both Nakuru and Narok counties of the Rift Valley region of Kenya. These two counties were selected because of the following reasons. Firstly, both counties have a significant presence of Indigenous communities, such as the Maasai in Narok and Nakuru, in addition to the Maasai, Kalenjin and other communities whose traditional gender roles and power dynamics can provide valuable insights into the intersection of gender mainstreaming policies and political development (Mutahi, 2019). Moreover, these countries have experienced significant political transformations and have influenced the country's political landscape (Mburu & Mukunyi, 2017). For example, Nakuru is considered a "swing county" with diverse political affiliations and has more women's representation than Narok County despite having the same policies, making it an important region for understanding the dynamics of the disparities in gender and political participation. Additionally, both counties have active civil society organisations and women's groups advocating for gender equality and political empowerment, providing ample opportunities for engagement and collaboration in research initiatives (Kabura & Orora, 2019). Conducting research in Nakuru and Narok counties offered a rich context to explore the complexities of gender mainstreaming and women's political participation in Kenya.

Nakuru County is in the Rift Valley region of Kenya. It covers an area of approximately 7,509 square kilometres and is situated between latitudes 0°15' and 1°20' South and longitudes 35°36' and 36°20' East (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2019).

The county is known for its diverse economic activities, climatic conditions, ethnic groups, natural resources, and physical features. The main economic activity is agriculture. The region is known for its large-scale commercial farming, focusing on crops such as maize, wheat, barley, vegetables, and fruits. Livestock rearing, including dairy farming and poultry keeping, is also significant. Additionally, Nakuru is a major hub for manufacturing and industrial activities, with several industries and factories operating in the county (Kairu, 2018).

Nakuru County experiences a temperate climate with distinct wet and dry seasons. The long rains occur from March to May, while the short rains are experienced between October and December. The average annual rainfall ranges from 700 to 1,000 millimetres. Temperatures vary throughout the year, with average highs of 26-30°C during the hot season (January-March) and average lows of 10-14°C during the cold season (June-August) (Muriuki *et al.,* 2017).

The County has significant mineral deposits, including limestone, fluorspar, diatomite, and soda ash. Limestone mining is particularly important, with large-scale quarries operating in the region (Kairu, 2018). The mining of these minerals contributes to the county's economic growth and provides employment opportunities. It is also home to several ethnic groups, with the majority being the Kikuyu, Kalenjin, Luo, Luhya, and Maasai. Other communities such as Kamba, Kisii, Meru, and Somali also reside in the county. The diversity of ethnic groups contributes to the cultural richness of the region (Mwenda, 2019). Moreover, Nakuru County is in the central part of the Rift Valley province of Kenya. It is bordered by five counties: Baringo to the north, Laikipia to the northwest, Nyandarua to the west, Narok to the south, and Kericho to the southeast (KNBS, 2019). The County has

eleven constituencies: Nakuru Town East, Nakuru Town West, Nakuru Town North, Njoro, Gilgil, Naivasha, Kuresoi North, Kuresoi South, Rongai, Subukia, and Bahati. The total population is approximately 2,162,202 people (KNBS, 2019).

As of the 2022 general elections, Nakuru County had 1,054,856 registered voters (IEBC, 2022). The county has both elected and nominated leaders. Nakuru County is characterized by diverse physical features. The Great Rift Valley traverses the county, with notable features such as Lake Nakuru and Menengai Crater. Lake Nakuru National Park is a renowned conservation area and a significant tourist attraction due to its abundance of flamingos and other bird species. The county also has various hills, including the Menengai Crater, the second-largest volcanic crater in the world (Nyandiga *et al.,* 2021).

Nakuru County is prone to natural disasters such as floods and droughts. Heavy rainfall during the rainy seasons can lead to flooding, causing damage to infrastructure, displacement of communities, and loss of lives. On the other hand, periods of prolonged drought can result in water scarcity, crop failure, and livestock loss, affecting agricultural productivity and livelihoods (Kiboi *et al*., 2017). The people of Nakuru County have diverse cultural beliefs and practices influenced by the various ethnic groups in the region. These cultural beliefs include ceremonies, rituals, traditional healing practices, and cultural celebrations. For instance, communities such as the Maasai have cultural practices associated with livestock rearing and initiation ceremonies, while the Kikuyu have customs related to agriculture and rites of passage (Owiti *et al.,* 2021).

Nakuru County has a variety of natural vegetation types, including grasslands, shrubs, and patches of indigenous forests. The vegetation supports a rich diversity of flora and fauna. Lake Nakuru National Park is particularly known for its unique ecosystem, with acacia

woodlands, Euphorbia forests, and grassy plains. The park is home to numerous wildlife species, including rhinos, zebras, giraffes, buffalos, and various bird species (Muasya *et al.* 2018). Nakuru County is blessed with several rivers and lakes that play a vital role in supporting agricultural activities and ecosystems. Lake Nakuru, located within Lake Nakuru National Park, is a soda lake known for its abundant birdlife, including flamingos. Other significant lakes in the county include Lake Elementaita and Lake Naivasha. The rivers in Nakuru County include the Malewa, Gilgil, and Njoro rivers, which provide water for irrigation and domestic use (Mburu *et al*., 2021).

On the other hand, Narok County covers an area of approximately 17,944 square kilometres and has a population of about 1.3 million people. The county is known for its diverse ethnic groups, natural resources, and unique geographical features. Narok County is situated in the southwestern part of Kenya, bordered by five counties: Kajiado to the east, Nakuru to the northeast, Bomet to the northwest, Migori to the west, and Nyamira to the northwest (KNBS, 2019). Its coordinates range from approximately 1°6' S to 1°40' S latitude and 35°40' E to 36°55' E longitude. The main economic activity in Narok County is agriculture, particularly livestock farming and crop cultivation. Livestock rearing, including cattle, sheep, and goats, is a significant source of income for the local population. The county also has vast arable land suitable for crop farming, with maize, wheat, potatoes, and beans being the major crops grown (Narok County Government, 2019). Additionally, tourism plays a crucial role in the county's economy, thanks to its proximity to popular wildlife reserves such as Maasai Mara National Reserve.

Narok County experiences a semi-arid climate with two rainy seasons: long rains from March to June and short rains from October to December. The average annual rainfall

ranges between 500 and 900 millimetres (Kenya Meteorological Department, 2020). The temperatures are relatively high throughout the year, with average highs of 26-30°C and lows of 10-15°C. The County is rich in mineral resources. Some minerals mined in the region include soda ash, gold, limestone, fluorspar, and gypsum (Kairu, 2019). The mining industry contributes to the county's economy and provides employment opportunities for the local population.

The county is predominantly inhabited by the Maasai community, known for their rich cultural heritage and pastoralist lifestyle. Other ethnic groups in Narok County include the Kipsigis, Luo, Kikuyu, Luhya, and Kisii (KNBS, 2019). Narok County is divided into six constituencies: Narok North, Narok South, Narok East, Narok West, Emurua Dikirr, and Kilgoris. As of 2019, the county had a population of approximately 1.3 million people (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). The County had 433,320 registered voters as of the 2022 general elections (IEBC, 2022). The perspective towards women's leadership and empowerment in Narok County has been evolving. While traditional gender roles have historically limited women's participation in leadership positions, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of women's involvement in decision-making processes and development initiatives. Efforts have been made to promote gender equality, increase women's representation in leadership positions, and empower women through education and economic opportunities (Njeri & Kuria, 2019).

Narok County is characterized by diverse physical features. The county is part of the Great Rift Valley, with the eastern edge of the Rift Valley Escarpment running through it. This creates a picturesque landscape with stunning views. The Maasai Mara National Reserve, located in Narok County, is famous for its vast savannah grasslands and is home to an

abundance of wildlife, including the annual wildebeest migration. Narok County is susceptible to various natural disasters. Flooding is a common occurrence during the rainy seasons, leading to displacement of people and destruction of property (Otieno, 2018). The county also experiences occasional droughts, which can severely impact agriculture and livestock rearing (Ongwenyi *et al*., 2019). These natural disasters pose challenges to the livelihoods and well-being of the local population.

Several rivers traverse Narok County, and it is home to a few small lakes. The major rivers include the Mara River, which forms part of the border between Kenya and Tanzania and is famous for the wildebeest migration, and the Ewaso Ng'iro River, which provides water for irrigation and supports local communities (Gachene *et al.,* 2019). The lakes in the county include Lake Magadi, known for its soda ash deposits, and Lake Natron, which lies partially in Tanzania. The Maasai community, the dominant ethnic group in Narok County, has strong cultural beliefs and practices. They have a deep connection to their livestock and practice pastoralism as their way of life. The Maasai people have a rich oral tradition, with storytelling, music, and dance playing important roles in their cultural heritage. They also have distinct traditional attire, such as the colourful Shuka (Maasai blanket), beaded jewellery, and elaborate hairstyles.

Figure 3.1 Map of Nakuru and Narok Counties

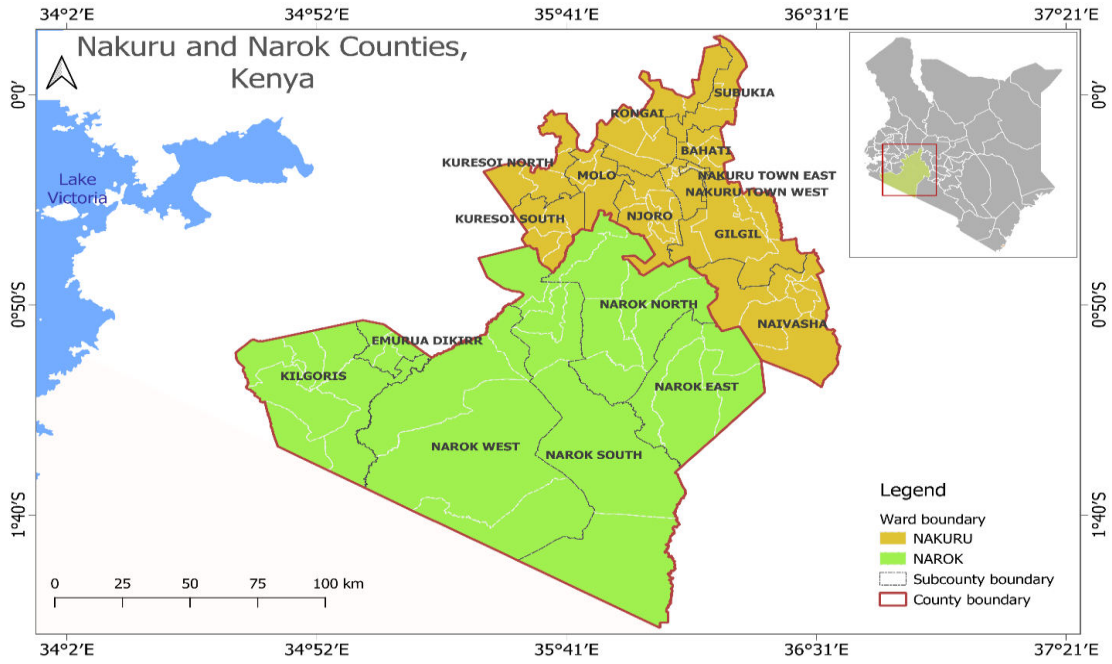


Figure 3.1 Map of Nakuru and Narok Counties

Source: GIS Expert (2018).

3.3 Study Population

The research population refers to the specific group of individuals or subjects that are the focus of a research study (Taherdoost, 2016). It represents the target population from which a sample is selected to gather data and draw conclusions about a particular phenomenon. Selecting an appropriate research population is crucial for ensuring the generalizability and validity of the study findings (Omair, 2014). As reinforced by Mugenda (2008), population connotes the entire group of individuals, objects, items, cases among others with a common attributes or characteristics. The study population included the total the total registered voters in the selected sub-Counties of the study areas. In Nakuru County, the study sampled

two Sub-Counties namely Nakuru West and Njoro. From Nakuru West sub-County, two wards were sampled namely; Shaabab and Mau-Narok while Lare Ward was selected in Njoro sub-County. As per the KNBS Census Report (2019), there are a total of 26,914 registered voters. On the other hand, in Narok County, the study sampled Narok North and Kilgoris sub-Counties. In Narok North, Kasirir and Naisoya and Osinoni wards were selected while in Kilgoris, and Shankoe and London wards were selected. Similarly, as per the KNBS Census Report (2019), there are a total of 40,463 registered voters. Therefore, the study population was 67, 377 registered voters.

3.4 Target Population

The target population for this study was sampled from the registered voters of Nakuru and Narok Counties who included randomly sampled household heads, some successful and unsuccessful politicians. This included some Members of Parliaments (MPs), Members of the County Assemblies (MCAs). The study also targeted county officials dealing with gender issues, security personnel including assistant county commissioners, chiefs and assistant chiefs, CSOs dealing with gender issues and conflict management experts. This target group acted as key informants because of their deep knowledge and understanding with respect to the gender mainstreaming policies influencing peace and stability in Nakuru and Narok Counties.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size Determination

This section explains the sampling techniques applied, and how the sample size was determined.

3.5.1 Sampling Techniques

According to Bryman (2008), sampling techniques involves the steps that the researcher takes in choosing a part of the population as respondents. The best sample size is that which is flexible, reliable, well-represented and efficient in the research study. This study adopted both probability and non-probability sampling. Regarding the probability sampling, the study adopted simple random sampling and stratified random sampling techniques. Random sampling techniques give an equal chance of selection and inclusion in the sample (Kothari, 2004). On the other hand, regarding the non-probability sampling technique, the researcher adopted purposive random sampling. As defined by Creswell (2014), purposive sampling aims to select sample cases and study respondents in a strategic way and restricts the researcher from generalizing the population. Additionally, the technique allows the researcher to sample with his or her research goals in mind.

Simple random sampling technique was used to sample households from both Nakuru and Narok Counties. On the other hand, purposive random sampling was used to select elected leaders and non-elected leaders, village elders, chiefs and assistant chiefs, assistant County commissioners, and county government officials dealing with gender issues, civil society organizations' (CSOs) officials dealing with gender advocacy, conflict management experts, and gender experts. The study employed a stratified random sampling method to select two constituencies per county. Narok North, Kilgoris from Narok County, and

Nakuru West and Njoro from Nakuru County. Stratified random sampling was employed to select these sub-counties from the numerous sub-counties in each county (Taherdoost, 2016). The sub-counties were stratified into 2 strata, one for urban and the other for rural sub-counties. Then, for each stratum, one sub-county was selected. The same was done when selecting wards from the sub-counties.

3.5.2 Sampling Size and Determination

According to Cooper and Schindler (2014), the sample size is the number of respondents who are a subset of the target population and will be carefully selected to reflect the population. The sample size helped the researcher reach reliable conclusions on the study's goals.

3.5.2.1 Sampling of Household heads

Households from the 2 selected sub-counties participated in the study. As per the KNBS census report (2019), the two sub-Counties have a total population of 67, 377 registered. Therefore, since the target population is greater than 10000,

The desired sample population was determined using Fisher's formula for sample size determination (Fisher *et al*., 1983 cited in Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999:43). The formula is stated below.

$$n=\frac{z^2pq}{d^2}$$

Where n=desired sample size (the target population is greater than 10,000).

z=the standard normal deviate at the confidence level of 95% is 1.96.

p=the proportion of the target population estimated to have characteristics being measured is set at 50%

q=1-p (probability of non-success)

d=level of statistical significance set at 0.05

$$n=\frac{(1.96)^2*0.5*(1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

n=384

Therefore, the study targeted 384 household heads from the two sub-Counties.

3.5.2.2 Sampling of Key Informants

On the other hand, to arrive at a sample size for County government officials dealing with gender issues, CSOs officials, elected and non-elected leaders, deputy County commissioners, chiefs and assistant chiefs, conflict management the researcher adopted the utility of percentage of accessible population as recommended by Kothari (2004). He emphasized that a sample size of between 10% and 30% of the population is considered adequate for an in-depth study. This is further reinforced by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009) who argued that 10% to 30% is permissible in descriptive research but indicate that the higher the sample the better. For the purpose of this study, 10% of the study population will be target. Summary of study population, sampling and data collection instruments are shown in Table 3.1;

Table 3.1: Summary of study population, sampling and data collection instruments

Respondents	Total population	Method of sample size determination	Sample size	Sampling method	Method of data collection
Household Heads	67,377	Fischer's *et al. formula*	384	Simple random sampling	Questionnaires
Key Informants					
Deputy County Commissioners	2	100%	2	Purposive random sampling	Interviews
Chiefs and Assistant chiefs	50	10%	5	Purposive random sampling	
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) dealing with gender issues	80	10%	8	- Purposive	Interviews
Elected leaders and non-elected political leaders	150	10%	15	Purposive Simple Random sampling	Interviews
Conflict Management experts	50	10%	5	Purposive	Interviews
Village elders	150	10%	15	Purposive	FGDs
County government officials dealing with gender issues	50	10%	5	Purposive	Interviews
			419		

Source: Researcher: 2023

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

As per Creswell (2014), data collection refers to the process of gathering information from the subjects of the study. For the purpose of this study, both primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data refers to a type of data which are collected afresh and for the first time which makes it authentic in nature while secondary data refers to those which are

already collected by someone else and passed through the statistical process and can be referred upon. Primary data was collected by use of the questionnaires guide, key informant interviews guide, focused group discussions (FGDs) guide, and observation.

3.6.1 Interviews

As defined by Creswell (2014), interview as data collection tool involves the presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply with respect to oral-verbal responses. The method can be utilized through personal interviews and by extension, telephone interviews. Interview can as well describe a set of assumptions and understanding about a situation which is rarely associated with causal conversation (Denscombe, 2010). The method is essential when the researcher wants to understand deeply people's opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences. This study utilized semi-structured interviews which embrace flexibility and allow the key informant to develop ideas and speak elaborately on the raised issues. The semi-structured interview questions were developed to allow the study participants to elaborate certain issues. Specifically, interviews were administered to elected and non-elected political leaders, CSOs officials, chiefs and assistant chiefs, deputy county commissioners, conflict management experts and county officials dealing with gender issues.

3.6.2 Questionnaire

According to Kothari (2004), questionnaires consist of sets of questions which individual respondents are required to answer on their own in the spaces. Kothari (2012) opined that

questionnaires are popular research methods because they offer a fast, efficient and inexpensive means of gathering large amounts of information from sizeable sample volumes. These tools are particularly effective for measuring subject behaviour, preferences, intentions, attitudes and opinions. As further postulated by Kumar (2019), the best method of data collection using the descriptive research design was conducting interviews and administering questionnaires to samples of individuals. The current study adopted semi-structured questionnaires because they are simple to administer and relatively inexpensive to analyse.

The questionnaires were distributed to targeted households within the study areas. The questionnaires were presented in a 5-point Likert Scale to show the level of agreement by the respondents (1 Strongly Disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Neutral, 4 Agree and 5 Strongly Agree).The questionnaire comprised of five sections; demographic data, nature of gender mainstreaming in Nakuru and Narok Counties, extent of political participation of women towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties, opportunities to women's political participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties, challenges to women's political participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties. The 'drop-and-pick' approach of administering the questionnaires ensured efficiency and convenience in data collection.

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

As defined by Kumar (2019), Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) are semi structured group discussions which yield qualitative data on the community level by facilitating interaction between participants. Focus group discussions (FGDs) refer to qualitative

research methods that involve small groups of individuals coming together to discuss specific topics or issues under the guidance of a skilled moderator. FGDs aim to gather in-depth insights and understanding by fostering dynamic interactions among participants, exploring diverse perspectives, and generating rich data (Creswell, 2014). The strength of an FGD is the forum it creates for discussion between participants, thus eliciting new ideas and explanations, which would not have come up during an individual or a household interview. He further opines that the main purpose of focus group research is to draw upon respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a way in which would not be feasible using other methods, for example observation, one-to-one interviewing, or questionnaire surveys.

The main purpose of focus group research is to draw upon respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a way in which would not be feasible using other methods, for example observation, one-to-one interviewing, or questionnaire surveys (Mugenda,2008). This tool helped the researcher to gain an insightful perceptions, opinions and feelings of the study subjects as well as the beliefs they hold regarding the research topic. In the current study, the tool was used to acquire information from village elders and men. Each group comprised of 5 village elders. One separate FGD was conducted on men to get their perceptions, opinions and feelings about the gender mainstreaming policies and how they contribute to the attainment of peace in the study area. The researcher was the moderator and sought for the respondents' permission to record the discussions for future references.

3.6.4 Secondary Data

The researcher used secondary data to identify important grey areas the study attempted to fill and enhance the primary data. The secondary data comes from government ministry statistics, internet reports, journals, and publications. The secondary data helped to complement the research findings.

First, the researcher prioritised sources that directly addressed the research topic and provided information specific to gender mainstreaming policies and political development in the region. Second, secondary sources published within the last five years were utilised to ensure the data collected reflects current developments and research findings. Thirdly, the credibility and authority of the sources were assessed by considering the reputation of the authors or organisations and the context of publication or production. Fourthly, sources that offer in-depth analysis, comprehensive coverage, and empirical evidence to enhance the study's depth of understanding were selected. Finally, the researcher sought diverse perspectives and viewpoints in the selected sources to obtain a well-rounded and comprehensive understanding of the topic.

3.7 Reliability and Validity of the Research Instruments

This section explains the reliability and validity of the research instruments.

3.7.1 Reliability of the Research Instruments

According to Creswell (2014), research reliability regards consistency of findings firmness and dependability of the analysis of data. The instruments, according to him, are trustworthy and accurate to the levels where any individual using them or subjecting to

similar measurements to measure would acquire same results. The implication is that the data becomes reliable and brings out similar outcomes on different tests and occasions with same respondents. As further conceptualized by Mugenda (2008), reliability describes the accuracy of a measuring instrument as well as the extent to which results are consistent overtime. He further opines that high level of consistency and accuracy solves the problem of unreliability. To test for reliability of the research instruments, a pilot study involving 10% of the sample size was conducted and the results were analyzed using Cronbach alpha. As asserted by Creswell (2014), Cronbach's alpha is a reliable predictor of reliability and a coefficient of below 0.7 is unacceptable and the data collection instrument should be revised. This was computed using Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 30.0. The Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the research instruments. Cronbach's alpha measures the degree of correlation between items within questionnaire. The formula adopted a correlation coefficient that was used to describe the strength of the relationship between responses at two administration times. The correlations that were found were above 0.7, which signifies high reliability (Coolican, 2016).

3.7.2 Validity of the research instrument

Validity is a significant requirement of any given research. Validity has to conform to a specific standard to be measured in reference to the quality of threshold or study specifications (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). Neuman (2018) states that validity tells us how well the conceptual and operational definitions match with one another. The validity will help scrutinize the instrument to judge the appropriateness of the items and recommend any modifications that are needed to achieve the objective of the study. In this study, the following validity was tested: content validity, construct validity, and criterion validity.

Content validity was employed by ensuring the questionnaire covers the key aspects of the study variables. Logical, accurate, and contextual systematic assessments are vital in achieving validity. The study relied on the help of the supervisors and peers to interrogate the research instrument to remove any face validity and ensure the question in the instrument measures the desired objectives. This was continuous to ensure that all questions are standardized for easy analysis.

Construct validity focuses on whether the research instrument accurately measures the theoretical constructs or concepts it intends to assess. To establish construct validity, the researcher performed factor analysis to examine the underlying structure of the instruments and ensure that items were loading onto the expected factors or dimensions. Lastly, Criterion validity assesses whether the research instrument can accurately predict or correlate with an external criterion considered a gold standard or benchmark; in this study, criterion validity involves comparing the scores obtained from the research instrument to other established measures of political development or related outcomes.

3.8. Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher requested a letter of introduction from Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, which was given to the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) for the issuance of research permission. The region administrators were then given the research permit. The research population in the study area received the questionnaires. After three weeks from

the distribution date, the questionnaires were collected to allow respondents enough time to complete them and provide feedback.

Interviews were conducted either in person or remotely through phone calls and Google forms. FDGs were conducted in person where the researchers gathered a diverse group of participants, including community leaders, activists, and individuals affected by the policies, to engage in interactive discussions on their experiences, perceptions, and observations regarding the influence of gender mainstreaming policies on women's political participation.

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis involves a process of acquiring and searching for meaningful information collected by the researcher to present it in a better and a presentable manner to id in clear understanding (Mugenda, 2008). As postulated by Kothari (2012), data analysis is a technique for reducing and arranging data to yield conclusions that must be interpreted by the researcher. The study yielded both qualitative and quantitative data.

3.9.1 Quantitative Data

Data analysis was performed to reflect major components of the research discoveries for those variables that were addressed, and the relation between them. Quantitative data was yielded from semi-structured questions in the questionnaire guide. The quantitative data was coded, entered and analysed by means of both inferential and descriptive statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 30 and Microsoft Excel, which are recognized for their ability to handle large amounts of data efficiently. The findings were presented in the form of tables, bar graphs, pie charts and percentages and

means to give a clear knowledge on the influence of gender mainstreaming policies towards the attainment of peace and stability.

3.9.2 Qualitative Data

The qualitative data yielded from key informant interviews, focused group discussions and questionnaires were processed and analysed. The interviews were recorded, transcribed in verbatim and translated after each session. Both the thematic deductive approach and content analysis were adopted to evaluate data from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs).

3.10 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

According to Creswell (2014), limitation of the study is a set of traits inherited either from the research methodology or design that constrain the meaning and interpretation of the research outcome. Such obstacles are faced by the researcher during the actual study and may alter the meaning and interpretations of the study. In light of this, since the researcher may encounter legality and ethical concerns, prior to data collection, the researcher overcame this limitation by obtaining an authorization letter from Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) and used it to acquire license from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). This dispelled any fear of illegality.

The second limitation of the study pertained to the unwillingness of some of the respondents to participate in the study fearing their privacy. However, the researcher addressed this limitation by ensuring the respondents that the information they give was to

be treated with utmost privacy and also the study was voluntary giving them the room to opt out if need be. The third limitation of the study is the scarcity and the biasness of some of the secondary sources. The study overcame this limitation by carefully selecting the secondary sources and thoroughly synthesized the information to minimize potential biasness. Also, primary data was collected to further help in achieving the desired objectives of the study.

The fourth limitation of the study pertained to time constraints given that the study period was limited. The researcher overcame the tightened research duration by readjusting by ensuring proper planning and limited time bound of the study. The fifth limitation was related to language barriers since the study was conducted in ethnically diverse Counties. To overcome this limitation, the study employed translators who acted as research assistants during data collection.

3.11. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are employed by the researcher to protect the research participants' rights, enhance validity and maintain scientific integrity (Creswell, 2014). The study involved voluntary participation of the respondents, consent of the participants, privacy and anonymity and acknowledged the works of other researchers through citations of all their works. Upon research proposal is approval, the researcher asked the Director of Post-Graduate Studies (DPS) at MMUST for an introductory letter. This letter was presented to the National Council for Science and Technology (NACOST) to obtain permission to conduct the research. Once the research permit is granted, the researcher then informed the

relevant authorities in Nakuru and Narok Counties, including the Governor, County Commissioner, County Police Commanders, and Assistant County Commissioners, about the intention to conduct the study in their areas. This dispelled potential problems pertaining to legitimacy of the research that may arise.

The researcher ensured that the participants' personal details were not captured on the data collection instruments. This enhanced their anonymity and privacy during the entire research period. The researcher ensured that all the information obtained from the participants were kept in secret and was solely used for the purpose of the current study. Proper citation of information from other scholars' works was ensured to avoid plagiarism. These measures aimed to mitigate potential negative impacts of the project and maximize positive impacts, based on the principles of free, prior, and informed consultations with the participants.

3.12 Chapter Summary

The study sought to attain high levels of data accuracy and make valid conclusions from the analysis. In this case, a concurrent mixed methods approach was used where secondary and primary data were collected to augment various arguments on the subject matter. Snowball and Purposive sampling techniques were used to choose the participants of the research.

The collected data underwent reliability and validity tests to measure accuracy, trustworthiness and internal consistency. The dependent variable of the study was political development, while the main independent variable was gender mainstreaming policies such as education policy, public participation policy, and gender equality policies, which

may act as moderating variables for the study. In general, the chapter covered the study research design, sampling strategy, data collection approach and instruments, data analysis, limitations of the study, and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FOUR

NATURE OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICIES IN NAKURU AND NAROK COUNTIES, KENYA

Introduction

The study sought to examine gender mainstreaming policies influencing women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya. This chapter focuses on the analysis of data collected in the field using questionnaires, interview guides, focus group discussion guides, and later corroborations from earlier relevant studies. The analysis was carried out using the following software: MS Excel and SPSS version 30.1; the results were given in both tabular, graphical, and narration formats. The chapter was divided into four major sub-sections: an introduction with an analysis of the response rate, a descriptive analysis of the respondents' demographic information, an examination of gender mainstreaming

policies and women's political participation, and finally a candid discussion of the results in light of previous related studies.

4.1 Response Rate

From the research design, the targeted sample size if the household heads as 384 respondents. Questionnaire guide tool was used to collect data. The researcher administered a total of 384 questionnaires to the household heads, out of which 335 respondents managed to fill and returned the dully filled questionnaires. This represented 87.23% response rate of the targeted population. The unaccounted 49(12.77%) of the responses was due to various reasons. In view of this, some of the respondents that did not return their questionnaires cited lack of time to fill them and misplacement of questionnaires. Others cited that such information was private and that they were not sure if the results would be used for academic purposes only.

The validity of the findings are met since according to Collis and Hussey (2009), a study with a return rate of 70% or above is classified as exceptional, while a return rate of 60% is considered good and 50% is adequate for analysis. Furthermore, the findings corroborate with Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who asserted that a response rate of 50% is adequate for data analysis, interpretation and reporting of the findings; a response rate of 60-69% is considered to be good while that above 70% is considered excellent and outstanding. Therefore, the study aligns with Mugenda & Mugenda recommendation as evidenced by an excellent response rate.

The second group of the study included elected and non-elected political leaders, deputy county commissioners, chiefs and assistant chiefs, village elders and CSOs officials dealing

with gender issues and conflict management experts which constituted 35 respondents. From the 35 respondents targeted by the study, 20 respondents were interviewed. This study corroborate with Acharya *et al.* (2013) who pointed out that the number of key informant interviews should not be below 15 and exceed 35. The response rate for household is as shown in Table 4.1;

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Category	Administered	Returned	Response rate
Questionnaires	384	335	87.23%

Source: **Field Data, 2024**

4.2 Social Demographic Information of Respondents

This part of the chapter three contains information about the respondents' demographic characteristics. The primary purpose of demographic information in the survey was to provide a general sense of respondents' demographics. It also ensures that the study outcomes reflect diverse ideas, beliefs, and lived experiences across demographics. The information sought included the respondents' gender, age group, and educational level, how long they had lived in the neighbourhood, marital status, and religious connections. The results are offered as percentages and frequencies, as well as in tabular and graphical formats.

Including respondents' social demographic information is important because it provides background information on the population under study. This gives readers insight into the

background and surroundings of the research subjects by providing data on age, gender, income, education, and other topics (UN Women, 2022). Patterns and trends in the data can be found by examining demographic features. For instance, particular demographic groupings may have a higher prevalence of behaviours or consequences. Demographic information aids in locating and correcting any biases that might exist in the study. The results and interpretations of the study may be impacted if particular groups are under-represented.

4.2.1 Respondents' Gender

Gender analysis offers the information and data required to incorporate a gender perspective into projects, programmes, and policies. Gender analysis, the foundation for gender mainstreaming, identifies the distinctions between and among men and women about their respective societal roles and the allocation of opportunities, resources, restrictions, and power within a particular setting. This makes gender analysis a useful tool for developing treatments that target gender inequality and cater to the distinct needs of men and women. This is because people make choices and exercise their individuality within the limits and constraints imposed by personal circumstances, the structural distribution of rules, norms, resources, and the inequalities of power and privilege they generate (Kabeer, 2016). The other aim was to ensure that the results represent the perceptions and understanding of gender mainstreaming policies affecting women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok counties. As a result, the respondents were requested to indicate whether they were male or female. Figure 4.1 presents the results.

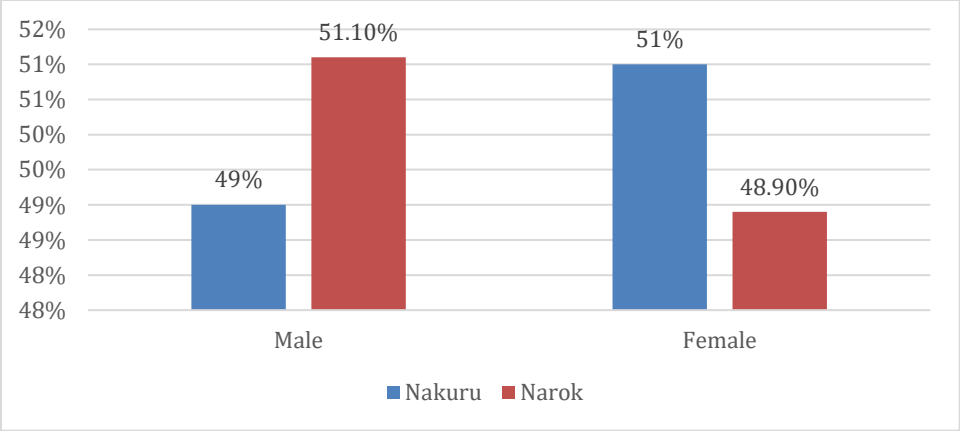


Figure 4.1: Gender Distribution

Source Field Data, 2024

Comparatively, according to responses by gender, male respondents were 98(49%) in Nakuru County compared to 68(51%) in Narok County. For the females, Nakuru had 103(51.1%) while Narok had 66(48.9%). The statistics show that the percentage of males in Narok is slightly higher than that of Nakuru. The percentage of women in Nakuru was also slightly higher than that of Narok. The gender differences in Nakuru could be explained by the fact that Nakuru is a metropolitan region and that women are equally involved to their male counterparts. On the other hand, the ratio of males in Narok is higher than in females due to the patriarchal nature of the where men are more involved than women. Therefore, from the study areas, males were 166 (49.6%) while females were 169 (50.4%). This suggested that the female gender were slightly higher than their male counterparts and the study managed to capture the perceptions of both genders regarding the study subject. Therefore, the findings of the study were based on balanced opinions, feelings and reactions from both genders.

The findings corroborate with Ndirangu (2018), Kivoi (2014) and Mwaka (2020) whose studies attained a slight gender balance to achieve gendered perspectives. The findings also

align with the demographic survey of Narok County (2023), which showed a ratio of 50% for men and 50% for women, respectively. In their Nakuru county demographic survey, the Kenya Bureau of Statistics (2023) also indicates 50.4 per cent for females and 49.6 per cent for males.

4.2.2 Distribution by Marital Status

Understanding the relationship between marital status and political participation is essential for promoting gender equality. In this case, marital status analysis is important for understanding the power dynamics and role relations in homes and communities and who does what and why. It also helps identify the susceptible groups. For example, widows or single mothers could experience more difficulties than married women. Using a gender lens guarantees a more thorough comprehension of the study. The findings of this variable are presented in Figure 4.2.

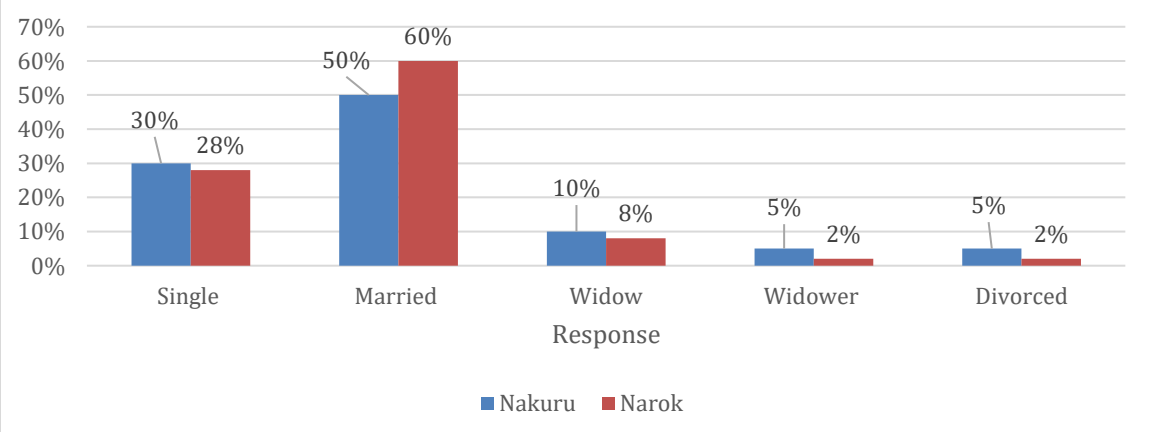


Figure 4.2: Distribution by Marital Status

Source Field Data, 2024

Narok County presented the highest number of married respondents 81(60%) followed by single 35(26%), widowed 11(8%), widower 3(2%) and divorced 3(2%). Married respondents at Nakuru County were 101(50%) followed by single 60(30%), widows at 20(10%) while the widower and divorced were 10(5%) each. The findings show that the marriage institution was more stable in Narok County than in Nakuru County. This could be because of the norms and values attached by the dominant community. Marital status can be associated with stereotypes and assumptions about women's roles and capabilities. Analysing the distribution by marital status can challenge these stereotypes by highlighting the diversity of women's experiences and the various factors influencing their political participation.

These findings are consistent with Kauria (2018) who elucidates that most societies from across the globe still hold firm in family and marriages as a predominant feature in a societal settings. Additionally, as asserted by Kivoi (2014), The slightly lower percentage represented by widows may be associated with some practices of certain ethnicities in the study areas that still hold firm to wife inheritance. As reinforced by Mwaka (2020), marital status also enhance trust of these women in their work because of the integrity and respect they enjoy being in marital unions.

4.2.3 Distribution by Religion

The gender variable was important in this study as it is central to most religious orders. Religions, in turn, greatly affect gendered relations that promote both gender equality and religious freedom. Analysing the distribution by religion allows policymakers to ensure that policies uphold both principles and do not inadvertently marginalise or discriminate

against women based on their religious identity. By promoting religious freedom and gender equality simultaneously, policymakers can create a more inclusive and equitable political environment for all women, regardless of their religious affiliation.

Table 4.2: Respondents Distribution by Religion

Response	**Nakuru County**		**Narok county**	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Christian	128	63.7	98	73.1
Muslim	70	34.8	34	26.4
Other	3	1.5	2	1.5
Total	201	100	134	100

Source: Field Data, 2024.

Table 4.4 shows that Christians in both counties comprise most of the respondents. However, the percentage is higher in Narok County 98(73.1%) compared to Nakuru County 128(63.7%). Muslims are the second-largest group in both counties, with Nakuru County having a higher percentage of Muslim respondents (34.8%) compared to Narok County (26.4%). The category labelled "Other" is very small in both counties, with 1.5% each. This indicates that religions other than Christianity and Islam are not significantly represented among the respondents. The higher percentage of Christians in Narok County might influence the cultural and social dynamics differently compared to Nakuru County, where there is a relatively higher proportion of Muslims. It is also valuable for promoting interfaith dialogue and cooperation, especially in areas with significant religious diversity.

These findings corroborate with Mwaka (2020) who argues that the higher number of Christians is a reflection of Kenya which is predominated by Christian owing to the aggressive penetration of Christian faith and size of the Christian faith which puts it at

greater advantage compared to other faiths. These findings may have an influence on gender mainstreaming policies influence on peace and stability in the study areas in line with the Lomong' *et al*. (2023) that religion is a significant source of beliefs across many countries. Arguments about women's inferiority to men are present across all dominant religions, and religion has long been used to exclude women from aspects of social, political, or religious life around the world.

As further contended by Ndirangu (2018), women tend to be more religious than men by most measures but religious women tend not to elevate in politics. She argues that such discrepancy is puzzling, suggesting that religion may have different effect on political mobilization of men and women. As further contended by Kauria (2018), The religion has long been used to exclude women from aspects of social, political or religious life around the world indicating that women's inferiority to men prevail across all dominant religions.

4.2.4 Distribution by highest level of education

Respondent education is another determinant in gender policy success and women's political participation at various levels. Education can act as both a facilitator and a barrier to political participation. While higher education levels may empower women to participate more actively in politics, disparities in educational access and attainment can exclude marginalised groups of women from political processes. Analysing the distribution by education level allows researchers to identify educational barriers hindering women's political participation and inform targeted interventions to address these disparities. The findings of this variable are presented in Table 4.3

Table 4.3: The highest level of education

		Level of Education					
		None	Primary	Secondary	College/ Diploma	University	Total
Nakuru	Male	0	3	29	40	26	98
	%	0.0%	3.1%	29.6%	40.8%	26.5%	100%
	Female	1	4	34	48	14	101
	%	1.0%	4.0%	33.7%	47.5%	13.9%	100%
Narok	Male	1	12	13	18	24	68
	%	1.5%	17.6%	19.1%	26.5%	35.3%	100%
	Female	3	19	17	14	13	66
	%	4.5%	28.8%	25.8%	21.2%	19.7%	100%

Source: Field Data, 2024

According to Table 4.5, most of the respondents in Nakuru 88(88.3%) were diploma holders. Of these, 48 (47.5%) were male, with 40 (40.8%) females. This is contrary to the respondents from Narok; 24 (35.3%) and 18(26.5%) reported they had university and secondary levels, respectively. More female respondents from Narok had 19(28.8%) secondary education, followed by 17(25.8%) with 17(25.8%) and 14(21.2%) with secondary and university level of education, respectively.

These findings show that more male respondents were educated and well-informed than women. The study's results are consistent with the previously published Narok County profile (2013), which showed that women's literacy is 31% lower than men's at 69%. According to UNESCO (2011), women comprise about two-thirds of the 796 million illiterate adults worldwide. Generally, the relatively high literacy recorded by the study may be attributed to the fact that most of the educational policies in Kenya prioritize education to all. For instance, Education Act calls for mandatory and free primary education. Also, the 2010 Constitution, specifically Article 55 (a) challenges the

government to ensure that every Kenyan youth is accorded basic education (Tuguro, 2024; Waiswa & Phelps, 2017).

4.2.5 Distribution by Age

Distribution by age is a critical aspect in analysing gender mainstreaming policies and their impact on women's political participation for several reasons. Age intersects with gender to shape individuals' experiences and opportunities. Different age groups of women may face unique challenges and barriers to political participation due to factors such as educational attainment, family responsibilities, career trajectories, and societal expectations. Analysing the distribution by age allows policymakers to understand these intersecting dynamics and design more inclusive policies that address the needs of women across various life stages. The findings are depicted in Figure 4.4.

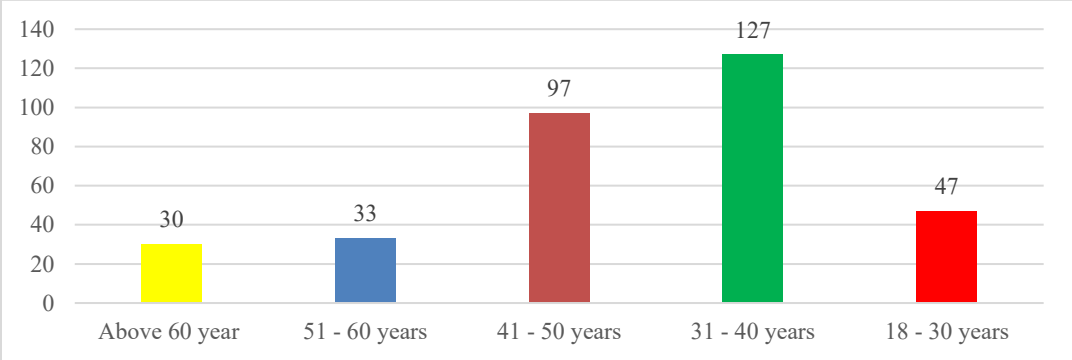


Figure 4.3: Distribution by Age

Source: Field Data, 2024

The age of both men and women is an important factor in political participation. By age, most of the respondents were 31-40 years 127(38%), followed by 41-50-year-olds 97(29%), and 18-30 years 47(14%). Others were those aged 51 – 60 years 33(10%) and above 60 years 30(9%). The analysis shows that most of the respondents were middle-

aged. Different generations of women may have varying levels of exposure to gender biases, educational opportunities, and socio-economic conditions. For instance, younger women might be more familiar with concepts of gender equality and have different aspirations compared to older generations. By examining the distribution by age, policymakers can identify generational trends in political engagement and tailor interventions to address different age cohorts' specific needs and preferences.

According to Tambellini (2023), political participation is influenced by life events and transitions, such as entering the workforce, starting a family, or retiring. These transitions can impact women's time, resources, and priorities, affecting their ability and willingness to engage in politics. Analysing the distribution by age enables policymakers to take a life course perspective, understanding how women's political engagement evolves over time and identifying opportunities to support their participation at different life stages.

Understanding the distribution by age helps policymakers target interventions more effectively. For instance, policies to increase young women's political participation might focus on initiatives such as youth leadership programs, campus outreach, or digital engagement strategies. In contrast, interventions for older women might prioritise issues such as elder care support, flexible volunteering opportunities, or targeted messaging on issues relevant to their life stage (Lim-Soh, & Lee, 2023). Gender mainstreaming policies to enhance women's political participation should consider the long-term implications across different age groups. By examining the distribution by age, policymakers can assess the potential long-term impact of their interventions on shaping women's political engagement and leadership trajectories over time.

4.3 Awareness of Gender Mainstreaming Policies

The study focused on the awareness of gender mainstreaming policies, which is crucial for understanding how these policies impact women's political participation (MGFP, 2021). This awareness is particularly significant as gender mainstreaming policies have notably influenced women's political involvement in Nakuru and Narok Counties. Table 4.4 shows the political involvement.

Table 4.4: Involvement in politics

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	146	72.6	89	66.4	235	70.1
No	55	27.4	45	33.6	100	29.9
Total	201	100	134	100	335	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2024

Data in Table 4.4 shows that 235(70.1%) of the respondents indicated they were aware of gender mainstreaming policies, and 100(29.1%) were not aware of gender mainstreaming policies. Of those aware of gender mainstreaming policies, 146(72.6%) and 89(66.4%) were from Nakuru and Narok, respectively. Of 100(29.9%) of those not aware of gender mainstreaming policies, 55(27.4%) were from Nakuru, with 45(33.6%) from Narok. The findings suggest a relatively high level of awareness of gender mainstreaming policies in both counties, with Nakuru showing slightly higher awareness than Narok.

4.4 Respondent Familiarity with Gender Mainstreaming

The study sought to rate the respondents' familiarity with gender mainstreaming. This is essential because it enables understanding, identifying training needs, advocating for

policies, monitoring progress, and ensuring inclusive decision-making processes in efforts to promote gender equality and women's political participation. Therefore, the variable was assessed by posing, “I am familiar with gender mainstreaming”. The findings are presented in Table 4.5

Table 4.5: Respondents' familiarity with gender mainstreaming

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	48	23.9	28	20.9	76	22.7
Agree	86	42.8	38	28.4	124	37
Neither Disagree nor Agree	30	14.9	36	26.9	66	19.7
Disagree	29	14.4	24	17.9	53	15.8
Strongly Disagree	8	4	8	6	16	4.8
Total	201	100	134	100	335	100

Source: Field Data, 2024

From the findings, the majority, 124(37.0%) of the respondents agreed they were familiar with gender mainstreaming aspects. Of these, 82(42.8%) were from Nakuru, while Narok had 38(28.4%). Table 4.5 also shows that 76(22.7%) strongly agreed they were familiar with gender mainstreaming aspects. Of the total, 135(40.3%) respondents reported that they “neither agreed nor disagreed,” “disagreed”, or “strongly disagreed”. A key informant from Nakuru County pointed out the following;

> I understand that gender mainstreaming is one of the strategies that are being adopted by the governments across the world to ensure that women voices are heard just like men. This is informed by the fact that women have largely been excluded from social, economic and political aspects and this remains a serious concern. This is why Kenya has demonstrated the political will not only to ratify the international agreements but also legislating on the national policies that advocate for gender mainstreaming. Within the context of Nakuru, I am aware that the County has been helping the national government in implementing gender mainstreaming at the County level. To this end, most recently,

> the County launched its own gender policy…a remarkable move towards the realization of gender mainstreaming (Key Informant Interview with CSO official held on 12th June, 2024).

These assertions regarding the familiarity with gender mainstreaming was reinforced by one participant from FGDs held with elders. He postulated the following;

> "We know or let me say I know what gender mainstreaming. Even before the launch of the strategic plan, I had been invited to a seminar where we were taken through on what gender mainstreaming is all about. It is not just about women empowerment. It is about giving equal opportunities to either gender. Not to have one gender (sex) dominate the other". (FGDs with elders held at Nakuru west social hall, 10th April 2024)

These suggestions reveal that the most of the residents in Nakuru County were familiarized with gender mainstreaming. This may have been informed by cosmopolitan nature of the County where most people are well exposed and informed about a variety of societal issues. The findings corroborate with Bakhuis (2019) who asserted that it was highly likely for gender mainstreaming to take shape in the wake of globalization which is often punctuated with rapid urbanization, advanced communication and information technologies that has increased sharing of information and ideas. Therefore, it was highly likely for most people from urban settings to be familiarized with gender issues.

In Narok, which is mainly patriarchal society, women are relegated and or regarded as inferior, and most of the positions of dominance and privilege are held by men, and this has been the norm in the community. Those who were knowledgeable about gender mainstreaming were those in positions of power and were in universities or colleges. Data from the field suggest that the level of familiarity with gender mainstreaming was quite low as compared to Nakuru County. This was asserted during focused group discussions where some of the study participants revealed that they were not largely aware about gender

mainstreaming aspects. Such assertions were echoed by a member from FGDs in Narok who had the following opinion pertaining to familiarity with gender mainstreaming.

> Gender mainstreaming may be a good thing because I have heard about it. However, in Narok County, I think the County has not done enough to amplify it and that is why most of the residents in this County are not that much familiar with it. Honestly, I am yet to familiarize myself with it (FGDs with village elders held on 12th June, 2024).

Another member added the following;

> I also belief that gender mainstreaming policies only exist on a paper but I reality things are different. Most of the communities in these areas still hold firm to patriarchy where men rule over women…this has made women to be submissive to men. In as much as some people claim that the government is doing enough to implement the so called gender mainstreaming policies, I am yet to feel its implementation in the County. The fact that women continues to be marginalized in these areas is a testament that most of them, including myself are yet to be familiarized with gender mainstreaming (FGDs with village elders held in Kisirir, Narok North, 12th June, 2024)

These revelations suggest an uneven distribution of familiarity with gender mainstreaming in Kenya. Despite the robust initiatives made by the national government in amplifying gender mainstreaming, such initiatives have been welcomed differently across the country and this may further impede the full attainment of gender equality. It is evidenced that certain devolved units were moving at a slower pace in integrating gender mainstreaming in their strategic development plans making people to lack awareness about gender mainstreaming.

These findings show that gender mainstreaming is a familiar concept to respondents in Nakuru County and Narok County, respectively. This is in line with the findings of (Agbevanu *et al*., 2021), who noted that gender mainstreaming is a complex concept that involves integrating gender perspectives into all policies, programs, and projects. The

findings also affirm that familiarity with gender mainstreaming can influence decision-making processes at various levels of governance (Nhlapo, 2020).

4.5 Gender mainstreaming Policies identified by Respondents

Gender mainstreaming policies are designed to integrate gender perspectives into all policy-making levels, ensuring that both women and men benefit equally from development initiatives. These policies address and reduce gender disparities by promoting equality in various sectors, including political participation, education, and employment (MGFP, 2021). Figure 4.4 presents the main policies identified by the study respondents.

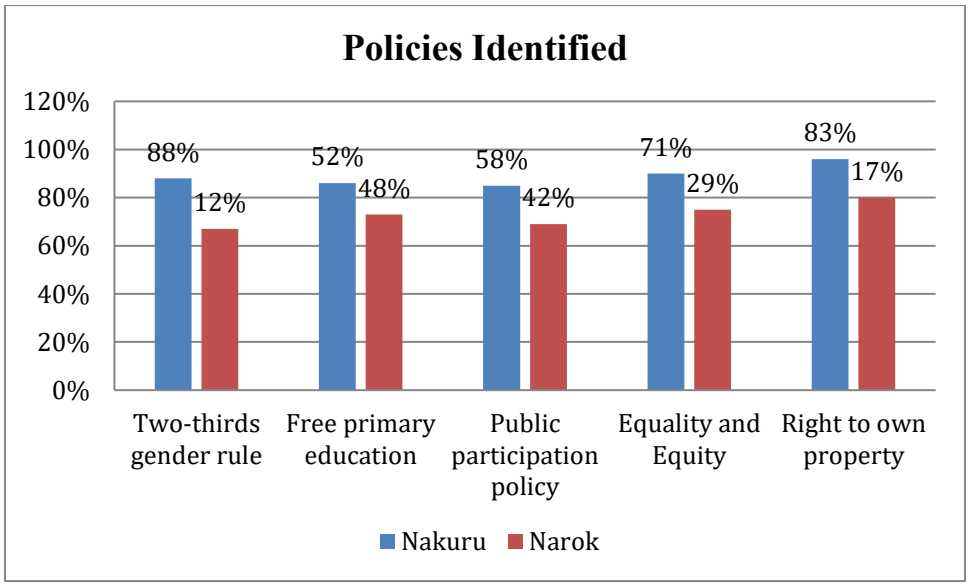


Figure 4.4: Main Policies Identified

Source Field Data, 2024

The data Figure 4.4 reveals significant differences in the awareness levels of various gender mainstreaming policies between Nakuru and Narok Counties. For instance, the two-thirds gender rule is known by 88% (294) of respondents in Nakuru, compared to 12% (41) in Narok. Similarly, awareness of the free primary education policy stands at 52% (175) in

Nakuru and 48% (160) in Narok. These figures suggest that Nakuru County has a higher level of awareness regarding these policies, which could be attributed to more effective communication and implementation strategies. In Nakuru, a key informant reinforced the following;

> The high level of awareness regarding gender mainstreaming policies may be attributed to the initiatives by both national and county government of Nakuru. As one of the elected members of the county assembly of Nakuru, I have been proactively involved in raising awareness about the benefits of gender mainstreaming policies at my locality. As county government, I think we have done so much with respect to amplifying these policies. However, a lot still needs to be done. I believe raising awareness helps the people to familiarize themselves with gender mainstreaming policies and adopting them. Moving forward, I think we must mount our awareness campaign and reinforce it with implementation (Key informant interview with a member of the County Assembly held on 13th April, 2024).

Another key informant added the following;

> The reason as to why the County has high level of awareness regarding gender mainstreaming policies is because in most cases, it involves public participation where the citizens are invited and their voices are heard. For instance, recently, during the launch of the County's gender mainstreaming policy, most of the Nakuru residents participated in the launch. Besides, sometimes, the county government in collaboration with the national government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) sponsor workshops and trainings on issues relating to gender mainstreaming (Key informant interview with CSO official in Njoro held on 15th April, 2024).

The plate below shows the researcher interacting with a section of CSO officials in Njoro, Nakuru Couty.

Plate 1: A researcher with a section of CSOs officials in Njoro, Nakuru County

Source: Field Data, 2024

These assertions reveal that Nakuru County has done relatively well in mainstreaming gender policies and this inform the higher responses regarding the awareness of gender mainstreaming. This may be attributed to the political good will that has enabled the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies. However, these findings contradict Kung'ung'u and Ichani (2023) whose studies revealed weak implementation of gender mainstreaming policies in Kenya owing to lack of political will by the rulling elites. They lament that despite the existence of a plethora of gender mainstreaming policies coupled with awareness, women have been constantly marginalized virtually in all spheres including economics, politics and social life.

Interestingly, in Narok County, the general awareness about gender was relatively compared to Nakuru County. This is not surprising because a significant percentage of the participants were less familiarized with gender mainstreaming. Nonetheless, the findings

suggest that such awareness was slowly taking shape in Narok County. This was echoed by a key informant in Narok who postulated the following;

> As the department dealing with gender issues at the county level, we have tried our level best to create awareness to the people about the existing gender policies though we are yet to reach as many people as people and that is why the level of awareness has been slow. This may be attributed to lack of resources, especially finances and manpower. I think the county government can do well if it allocates resources that may facilitate the awareness campaign so that we can be able to conduct mass training, organize for workshops that are centred on the familiarization with gender policies (Key Informant Interview with County gender Director, Narok held on 13th, April, 2024).

Further analysis shows that 58% (195) of respondents in Nakuru and 42% (140) in Narok recognise the public participation policy. The equality and equity policy also follows this trend, with 71% (240) awareness in Nakuru and 29% (95) in Narok. These policies are crucial for promoting inclusive governance and ensuring that men and women have equal opportunities to participate in decision-making processes. The higher awareness levels in Nakuru indicate a more robust engagement with these policies, potentially leading to better outcomes in terms of gender equality.

The right-to-own property policy has the highest awareness among the respondents, with 83% (280) in Nakuru and 17% (55) in Narok. This high level of awareness is essential for empowering women and ensuring their economic independence. In Nakuru and Narok Counties, awareness of gender mainstreaming policies has significantly influenced women's political participation. The data indicates that most respondents know these policies, underscoring their critical role in promoting gender equality and empowering women to engage more actively in political processes (MGFP, 2021). The disparity between the two counties highlights the need for targeted efforts to increase awareness and

implementation of gender mainstreaming policies in Narok. Overall, the data underscores the importance of these policies in fostering gender equality and the need for continuous efforts to enhance their awareness and effectiveness.

4.6 Manifestation of Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a strategic approach to achieving gender equality by integrating gender perspectives into all policies, programs, and projects. This approach ensures that women and men benefit equally, and that inequality is not perpetuated. The manifestation of gender mainstreaming can be seen in various sectors, including education, healthcare, and political participation. For instance, policies such as the two-thirds gender rule and public participation policies promote women's involvement in decision-making processes, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society (MGFP, 2021; UN Women, 2022).

In Nakuru and Narok Counties, the impact of gender mainstreaming policies is evident in women's increased awareness and participation in political and social spheres. The high levels of awareness of policies like the right to own property and equality and equity policies highlight the effectiveness of these initiatives in promoting gender equality (MGFP, 2021). These policies empower women and contribute to the community's overall development by ensuring that both genders have equal opportunities to contribute to and benefit from societal progress (UN Women, 2022).

4.6.1 Two-thirds gender rule

The two-thirds gender rule has been a debate and contention in Kenya since promulgating the 2010 Constitution. While it represents a significant step towards gender equality, its

implementation has faced challenges, including its awareness. This study was conducted to determine the respondents' awareness of the rule. The findings of this variable are shown in Table 4.6;

Table 4.6: Manifestation of gender mainstreaming by observing 2/3 gender rule

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	132	65.7	88	65.2	220	65.7
Agree	59	29.4	36	26.7	95	28.4
Neither Disagree nor Agree	3	1.5	4	3.0	7	2.1
Disagree	2	1.0	2	1.5	4	1.2
Strongly Disagree	5	2.5	5	3.7	10	3.0
Total	201	100	135	100	335	100

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 4.6 shows that the awareness of the two-third gender rule was high, and 315(94.1%) respondents were knowledgeable about it. In Nakuru, 191(95%) were aware of it, and in Narok, 124(91.9%) aware of it. In both counties, 10(5%) and 11(8.1%) in Nakuru and Narok, respectively, lacked knowledge of the two-thirds gender rule in the country. This was demonstrated during key informant interviews within the study areas. For instance, in Nakuru, a key informant elucidated the following;

> The principle of the two-third gender rule is the most controversial one in the country. As articulated by the 2010 Constitution, the principle requires a balanced representation of both genders in any appointive positions. To this end, the national assembly is yet to provide a legislation to reinforce this principle. We have seen several initiatives by the parliament to enact a law but this has not been forthcoming due to unnecessary reasons. The national government, especially the parliament has failed us. However, to some extent, we have somehow noticed that this principle is adhered to but not to our expectation…and things could

> have been much better if we had a law in place. In Nakuru County, the issue of two-third gender rule seems to be taken seriously. However, in the absence of a national law to reinforce it, its implementation in Nakuru County has been relatively slow. For instance, I was privileged to serve as county MCA from 2013-2017, but even then, the Assembly did nothing about the two-third gender rule… the County government cannot legislate on it without a proper legislation by the national assembly (Key informant interview with a former MCA held on 13th, April, 2024).

Similarly, in Narok County, despite the growing awareness about the two-third gender rule, lack of implementation by the national government has impeded its operationalization as revealed by one of the key informants who asserted the following;

> In a county where most communities still hold on to the patriarchal values in virtually all spheres, achieving two-third gender rule is far from possible. Things could have changed supposedly we had a national legislation that anchors its practice. Familiarity with the principle exists but we tend to focus on how the national government implements it rather than what we can do as a county to effect it. I think the big challenge is lack of implementation. However, the situation is worse, especially in appointive positions because most men in this region feel that they should not be led by women…we must continue our fight for the implementation of the two-third gender rule and at the same time, try and root out the entrenched cultural practices that make women unfit to rule (Key informant interview with CSO held in Narok on 12th April, 2025).

This notwithstanding, the great awareness of the rule could be due to the Kenyan judiciary, which has played a significant role in interpreting and enforcing the two-thirds gender rule as enshrined in the Kenyan constitution. Courts have issued rulings and directives to compel compliance with the provision, including deadlines for legislative action to enact enabling laws.

In addition, civil society organisations and women's rights advocates have been actively involved in promoting the implementation of the two-thirds gender rule. They have conducted awareness campaigns, lobbied policymakers, and engaged in litigation to uphold

the principle of gender equality in governance. Further, the two-thirds gender rule in the Kenyan Constitution reflects a legal commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. It provides a framework for promoting women's participation in politics and public life.

Wangamati (2012) notes that women have unique needs and contributions and should be included in approaches to peace building. She notes that it is important to ensure that gender considerations are included in formulating, implementing, and evaluating policies. There is also the need to address economic disparities by promoting equal opportunities for women in the workforce. This is similar to Lodupo (2021), who points out that implementing the two-thirds gender rule has faced challenges. Political parties have struggled to meet the requirement of nominating and electing women to ensure compliance with the rule. This has led to debates and legal battles over the interpretation and enforcement of the provision. Over the years, various legislative efforts have been made to operationalize the two-thirds gender rule. These include proposed amendments to electoral laws and discussions on reserved seats for women in parliament and other public bodies. However, achieving consensus as the best approach to implementing the rule has been difficult.

4.6.2 Free Primary Education Policy

The Free Primary Education policy in Kenya represents a significant step towards achieving the goal of universal primary education and promoting equity in access to education. However, ensuring the quality and sustainability of education provision remains a continuous challenge for the government. The findings are presented in Figure 4.5.

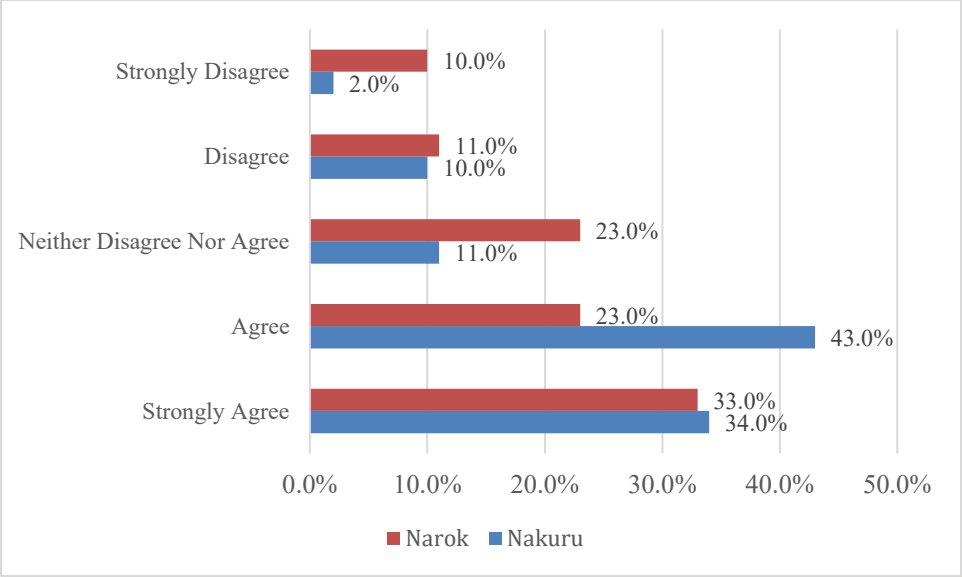


Figure 4.5: Awareness of Manifestation of Free Primary Education Policy

Source Field Data, 2024

Awareness on free primary education policy was very high at 165(43%) followed by high at 149(39%) and moderate at 69(18%). The respondents in both Nakuru county and Narok county demonstrated that the free primary education policy was popular among them. The great awareness is because the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy in Kenya is a significant government initiative to ensure access to primary education for all children, regardless of their socio-economic background. The policy was officially introduced in 2003 by the Kenyan government under the leadership of President Mwai Kibaki. It represents a response to the constitutional mandate to provide all children with free and compulsory basic education. The findings were reinforced by a key informant who explained that;

> Education they say is the key to success. In view of this, the government has taken seriously the right to education. It is enshrined in the 2010 Constitution and has further been reinforced by a number of legislations by the parliament. Through these policies, both genders have explicitly been granted equal opportunity when it comes to accessing education.

> With the coming of devolution, we have seen the gradual devolution of education where the county governments are now mandated with the provision of pre-primary education which again aligns with the Education Act (Key informant interview with Gender officer held on 11th April, 2024).

In Narok County, despite the respondents showing significant awareness about the free primary education policy, some of the study participants had different opinion as demonstrated by one member of a focussed group discussions who opined the following;

> It is true that primary education policy seeks to provide universal access to education to every Kenyan youth. I am also aware that the implementation of this policy has been going on well in some counties. Surprisingly, in this county, access to basic education is still low because some of us are yet to take it seriously. I think one of the reasons as to why access to education still remains low is because of marginalization of some areas. The distribution of educational resources has been skewed including the employing of teachers and the provision of learning materials for the learners. The consequence is that our growth and development is jeopardized because of this. We may be aware of this policy but its implementation in this county remains weak (Focused group discussions with elders of Narok held on 15th April, 2024).

Researcher's interactions with a section of village elders are shown in the following plate;

Plate 2: Researcher conducting FGDs with a section of village elders in Narok County

Source: **Field Data, 2024**

These revelations suggest that the implementation of free primary education in Kenya is skewed despite the strong push by the government to enforce it. Other regions still receive little to no resources which are vital in the implementation of the free primary education. Moreover, in as much as county governments have joined hand in ensuring the universal implementation of free primary education, others are still constrained by lack of adequate resources to implement this policy at the County level.

The primary objective of the FPE policy is to ensure universal access to primary education. By eliminating tuition fees and related costs, the government aimed to remove financial barriers preventing many children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, from attending school (Tembo, 2022). The policy led to a significant increase in primary school enrolment rates across Kenya. Prior to the introduction of FPE, many families could not afford to send their children to school due to the cost of fees and other expenses. With education becoming free, more children were able to enrol in primary schools. FPE has contributed to improving equity in education by reducing disparities in access based on socio-economic status. Children from low-income families, who were previously marginalized from formal education, now can attend school without financial constraints.

On the other hand, Mwaniki and Miuna (2023) indicate that while FPE has had positive impacts, its implementation has faced challenges. These include inadequate infrastructure, shortage of qualified teachers, lack of instructional materials, and issues related to the quality of education. Additionally, the sudden increase in enrolment strained existing resources and infrastructure in many schools. The FPE policy requires substantial financial investment from the government to cover the costs of tuition, instructional materials,

teacher salaries, and infrastructure development. Over the years, the government has allocated a significant portion of its budget to support the implementation of FPE.

Despite the increase in enrolment, concerns remain regarding the quality of education provided under the FPE policy. Critics argue that the focus on quantity (increased enrolment) has sometimes come at the expense of quality, leading to overcrowded classrooms, teacher shortages, and inadequate learning resources. Ensuring the sustainability of the FPE policy remains a challenge for the government. While the policy has successfully increased access to primary education, sustaining the gains achieved and addressing on going challenges require long-term planning, investment, and policy adjustments (Vagnini *et al.,* 2023).

4.6.3 Public Participation Policy

Public participation in Kenya refers to the involvement of citizens in government decision-making processes at various levels, including policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. Public participation is enshrined in the Kenyan Constitution of 2010, which recognises it as a fundamental principle of governance and requires public involvement in matters affecting them. Table 4.7 below presents the extent to which respondents in Nakuru and Narok counties were familiar with the Public Participation Policy.

Table 4.7: Awareness on manifestation of public participation policy

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very High Extent	174	51
High Extent	108	32
Moderate Extent	30	9
Low Extent	20	6

Very Low Extent	3	2
Total	335	100

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 4.7 shows that nearly half of the respondents 51% (174) indicated a very high level of awareness about the Public Participation Policy. Table 4.7 also shows that 32% (108) of respondents reported high awareness. Combined with those with a very high extent of awareness, 83% (282) of the respondents are either highly or very highly aware of the policy. Another smaller segment, 9% (30) indicated a moderate level of awareness. About 6% (20) of respondents reported low awareness, with 2% (3) indicating low awareness. This suggests that a significant portion of the population is well-informed and likely understands the importance and mechanisms of public participation in governance. The findings were reinforced by a key informant who asserted the following;

> Proper and effective governance requires the involvement of its citizens. To this end, Kenyan government has managed to involve its citizenry in most of the critical issues that have wider implications on the lives of the citizens mainly through public participation. Notably, you will find that public participation has been devolved following the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution that ushered in devolution. To this end, the citizens from their respective counties have and continue to involve in matters that affect them. In as much as such participation varies from county to county, at least it is widely practiced (Key informant interview with CSO official from Nakuru held on 12th April, 2024).

The high level of awareness is because the Constitution of Kenya, promulgated in 2010, lays down the foundation for public participation in governance. Article 10 of the Constitution outlines national values and principles of governance, including public participation, accountability, and transparency. Additionally, Article 174 emphasises devolved government and the importance of public participation at the county level.

Apart from the Constitution, various laws and regulations provide a legal framework for public participation in Kenya. These include the County Governments Act, Public Finance Management Act, and Environmental Management and Coordination Act, among others. These laws mandate that government institutions involve the public in decision-making processes related to their respective jurisdictions. Ireri (2024) points out that Kenyan counties have also enacted legislation to operationalise public participation at the local level. County governments must develop mechanisms and structures for engaging citizens in budgeting, planning, and service delivery. These mechanisms often include public forums, consultations, citizen advisory boards, and participatory budgeting processes.

Government institutions at national and county levels are responsible for facilitating public participation. This includes ministries, departments, agencies, county assemblies, and county executive committees. These institutions are mandated to create opportunities for citizens to provide input, feedback, and suggestions on policies, projects, and programs (Mmene, 2021). Further, Civil society organisations and NGOs are crucial in promoting public participation in Kenya. They often serve as intermediaries between citizens and government institutions, mobilising communities, providing civic education, and advocating for inclusive decision-making processes.

On the other hand, despite the legal framework and institutional mechanisms, public participation in Kenya faces several challenges. These include limited awareness and capacity among citizens to engage in governance processes effectively, insufficient resources allocated for public participation initiatives, lack of inclusivity and

representation, and sometimes tokenism or superficial engagement by government institutions (Ireri, 2024).

Public participation can potentially enhance accountability, transparency, and legitimacy in governance. By involving citizens in decision-making, policies and programs are more likely to reflect the needs and priorities of the people they serve. Additionally, public participation fosters civic engagement, empowerment, and ownership of development processes (Weisiko, 2023). Public participation is a fundamental principle of governance in Kenya, enshrined in the Constitution and supported by various laws and institutional mechanisms. While progress has been made in institutionalising public participation, there is still a need for greater awareness, inclusivity, and effectiveness in engaging citizens in governance processes (Mmene, 2021). In conclusion, while the overall awareness of the Public Participation Policy is high, there is still room for improvement. By addressing the gaps and enhancing outreach efforts, it is possible to ensure that all citizens are well-informed and empowered to participate in governance processes. This will contribute to more inclusive, transparent, and accountable governance.

4.6.4 Equality and Equity

The concepts of equality and equity are fundamental to achieving social justice and inclusive development. Equality refers to treating everyone equally, while equity involves recognising differences and providing resources and opportunities to achieve fair outcomes. Based on survey data, this analysis explores the awareness of equality and equity in Nakuru and Narok counties. The data reveals varying levels of awareness and attitudes towards these concepts, which are crucial for understanding the socio-political dynamics in these regions. In Kenya, as in many other countries, there is a distinction between

equality and equity, both of which are crucial concepts in social justice and development. As shown in Table 4.8, the respondents had various views regarding the extent to which respondents in Nakuru and Narok counties were familiar with equality and equity in Kenya.

Table 4.8: Awareness on manifestation of equality and equity

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	38	18.9	18	13.4	56	16.7
Agree	66	32.8	38	28.4	104	31.0
Neither Disagree nor Agree	66	32.8	48	35.8	114	34.0
Disagree	24	11.9	22	16.4	46	13.7
Strongly Disagree	7	3.5	8	6.0	15	4.5
Total	201	100	134	100	335	100

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 4.8 shows that In Nakuru, 18.9% (38) of respondents strongly agree with the awareness of equality and equity, compared to 13.4% (18) in Narok. This indicates a higher level of strong conviction towards these concepts in Nakuru. The higher percentage in Nakuru could be attributed to more effective awareness campaigns, better educational programs, and a more progressive socio-political environment that promotes gender equality and equity.

A significant portion of respondents in both counties agreed to their awareness of equality and equity, with 32.8% (66) in Nakuru and 28.4% (38) in Narok. This suggests that many people in both Counties recognise the importance of these concepts, even if they do not feel as strongly about them as those who strongly agree. The slight difference between the two counties might reflect variations in the implementation of policies and the effectiveness of local governance in promoting these values.

The largest group of respondents falls into the category of neither disagreeing nor agreeing, with 32.8% (66) in Nakuru and 35.8% (48) in Narok. This neutrality could indicate insufficient information or understanding about equality and equity. It might also reflect a sense of ambivalence or uncertainty about the practical implications of these concepts in their daily lives. This highlights the need for more targeted educational and awareness programs to bridge the knowledge gap and foster a deeper understanding of equality and equity.

In Nakuru, 11.9% (24) of respondents disagree with the awareness of equality and equity, compared to 16.4% (22) in Narok. This higher percentage in Narok suggests more significant barriers to accepting these concepts in this County. These barriers could include entrenched cultural norms, resistance to change, and a lack of effective communication about the benefits of equality and equity. Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach that involves community engagement, policy reforms, and continuous advocacy.

A small percentage of respondents strongly disagree with the awareness of equality and equity, with 3.5% (7) in Nakuru and 6.0% (8) in Narok. Although these numbers are relatively low, they indicate the presence of strong opposition to these concepts in both counties, particularly in Narok. This opposition could stem from deeply rooted patriarchal beliefs, fear of losing traditional power structures, and misinformation about the goals of equality and equity initiatives. Overcoming this opposition necessitates persistent efforts to challenge and change these beliefs through education, dialogue, and inclusive policymaking.

Almost half, 104(51.7%) of the respondents from Nakuru, were aware of the distinction between equality and equity, while the others, 97(48.3%), were unsure, disagreed or

strongly disagreed with the statement that they were aware of the difference between the two. In Narok, 56(41.8%) were aware of the difference, while more than half, 78(58.2%), were unsure, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. From the discussions and interviews, it was evident that they did not understand the subject well.

The awareness of equality and equity in Nakuru and Narok counties varies significantly, with Nakuru showing higher levels of strong agreement and lower levels of disagreement than Narok. These differences highlight the need for tailored approaches to promoting these values in each county. Equality refers to equality, especially in status, rights, and opportunities. In Kenya, the principle of equality is enshrined in the Constitution, which prohibits discrimination based on various factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, or social status (Baraza 2021). Conversely, equity refers to fairness and justice in distributing resources, opportunities, and outcomes. While equality focuses on treating everyone equally, equity recognises that different individuals and groups may require different support or assistance to achieve equal outcomes (van Möllendorff, 2022). Most of the respondents were unable to differentiate between the two. This study, therefore, found that while Kenya has made progress in promoting equality and equity, significant challenges remain in addressing systemic inequalities and achieving inclusive development (Warfa & Mumo, 2023). Continued efforts are needed to advance social justice, protect human rights, and ensure that all Kenyan citizens have equal understanding and opportunities to thrive and participate fully in society.

4.6.5 Right to Own Property

The right to own property is a fundamental human right recognised globally. It is enshrined in various international conventions and national constitutions, including Kenya's.

However, awareness and exercise of this right can vary significantly across different regions and communities. This analysis delves into the awareness of the right to own property in Nakuru and Narok counties based on survey data collected in 2024. The data provides insights into the levels of awareness and the factors influencing these perceptions in the two counties. The survey data comprises responses from 335 individuals, with 201 from Nakuru and 134 from Narok. The responses are categorised into five levels of agreement: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Disagree nor Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The findings in this variable about rights to own property in Kenya are presented in Table 4.9

Table 4.9: Awareness of manifestation on the right to own property

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	117	58.2	78	58.2	195	58.2
Agree	44	21.9	22	16.4	66	19.7
Neither Disagree nor Agree	26	12.9	14	10.4	40	11.9
Disagree	6	3.0	12	9.0	18	5.4
Strongly Disagree	8	4.0	8	6.0	16	4.8
Total	201	100	134	100	335	100

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 4.9 shows that most respondents in both Nakuru and Narok strongly agree with the awareness of the right to own property, each accounting for 58.2% (117) of their respective populations. This strong agreement suggests a robust recognition of property rights in both

counties. The parity in these figures indicates that awareness campaigns and educational efforts regarding property rights might have been equally effective in both regions. Table 4.9 also shows that in Nakuru, 44(21.9%) of respondents agreed that they were aware of the right to own property, compared to 22(16.4%) in Narok. Though not vast, this difference highlights a slightly higher level of general agreement in Nakuru. This could be attributed to better access to information, more effective local governance, or more proactive civil society organisations in Nakuru compared to Narok.

The percentage of respondents who neither disagree nor agree with the statement on property rights awareness is relatively close in both counties, with Nakuru at 12.9% (26) and Narok at 10.4% (14). This neutrality might reflect insufficient information or understanding about property rights. It could also indicate ambivalence or uncertainty about the practical implications of these rights in their daily lives. This highlights the need for more targeted educational and awareness programs to bridge the knowledge gap and foster a deeper understanding of property rights. Table 4.9 also demonstrates that in Nakuru, 3.0% (6) of respondents disagree with property rights awareness, compared to 9.0% (12) in Narok. The higher percentage in Narok suggests more significant barriers to accepting these rights in this county. These barriers could include entrenched cultural norms, resistance to change, and ineffective communication about the benefits of property rights. Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach that involves community engagement, policy reforms, and continuous advocacy.

A small percentage of respondents strongly disagree with property rights awareness, with 4.0% (8) in Nakuru and 6.0% (8) in Narok. Although these numbers are relatively low, they indicate the presence of strong opposition to these rights in both counties, particularly

in Narok. This opposition could stem from deeply rooted patriarchal beliefs, fear of losing traditional power structures, and misinformation about the goals of property rights initiatives. Overcoming this opposition necessitates persistent efforts to challenge and change these beliefs through education, dialogue, and inclusive policy-making. In Nakuru County, one of the key informants had this to say regarding the right to own property;

> Nationally, we have seen government legislating laws that guarantee the right to own properties, especially by women. Though not devolved, such rights have received enormous attention from the residents of Nakuru County. To this end, women have been allowed to own properties including land, a departure from the past where strong cultural practices that discriminate women hindered them from owning properties. This has been further enabled by the onset of modernity coupled with rapid urbanization that is taking shape in this region. Despite the fact that some communities still restrict women from owning property, at least currently, such is improving. However, this does not mean that gender equality has been achieved with regard to property ownership but at least we are making progress (Key informant interview with gender director in Nakuru held on11th April, 2024).

The situation is relatively different in Narok County. Despite an overwhelming awareness regarding the right to own property, other respondents felt this is yet to fully materialize as was explained by a member of FGDs who noted the following;

> "In theory, everyone is entitled to property ownership regardless of the gender in the country. However, this is not the case with most places within Narok. People are aware of the right to property ownership but on the ground, things are different. Some of the communities in these areas still bar women from owning property citing some cultural practices which dictates that women have no legal right to own property. Yes the policy is there but in places like Narok County, culture prevails. I have seen women suffering when their husbands die, they have to fight hard to inherit part of their husband's properties and sometimes they lose and are chased away. (FGD discussion at Kilgoris Catholic church hall 13th June 2024).

These findings corroborate with Bassett (2020), who notes that due to the policy, individuals and entities can acquire land through purchase, lease, inheritance, or allocation

by the government. This is expected as various laws, including the Land Act, the Land Registration Act, and the Land Control Act, govern land ownership in Kenya. The Constitution vests all land in Kenya in the people of Kenya, with the government holding land in trust for future generations.

On the other hand, Rugadya (2020) states that despite legal protections, there are challenges related to property ownership in Kenya, including land tenure, land grabbing, corruption in land administration, and inadequate access to justice for marginalised communities. Efforts to address these challenges include land reforms, digitisation of land records, strengthening of land administration institutions, and public awareness campaigns on property rights.

The awareness of the right to own property in Nakuru and Narok counties varies significantly, with Nakuru showing higher levels of general agreement and lower levels of disagreement than Narok. These differences highlight the need for tailored approaches to promoting these values in each county. Factors such as educational attainment, cultural norms, government policies, media representation, and community engagement are crucial in shaping public awareness and attitudes. To enhance the awareness and acceptance of property rights, it is essential to implement targeted educational programs, culturally sensitive policies, and effective media campaigns. Strengthening government initiatives and adopting community-based approaches can create a more inclusive and equitable society. By addressing the specific barriers and leveraging the opportunities in each county, it is possible to foster a deeper understanding and commitment to property rights, ultimately leading to more just and inclusive local governance.

4.7 Government role in shaping gender mainstreaming policies in Kenya

The study sought to determine the government's role in mainstreaming gender in the country. This was by rating the statement, “I am familiar with the government's role in shaping gender mainstreaming in Kenya”. The findings of this are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Government role in shaping gender mainstreaming

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	122	60.7	68	50.7	190	56.7
Agree	48	23.9	24	17.9	72	21.5
Neither Disagree nor Agree	17	8.5	19	14.2	36	10.7
Disagree	6	3.0	14	10.4	20	6.0
Strongly Disagree	8	4.0	9	6.7	17	5.1
Total	201	100	134	100	335	100

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 4.12 shows that the majority, 262(77.2%), agreed that they were aware of the government's role in shaping gender mainstreaming. The awareness levels were high in Nakuru (84.6%) and Narok (78.6%). Those unaware of the government's role in shaping

the gender mainstreaming aspects were 31(15.5%) in Nakuru and 42(30.3%). This shows a great awareness of the role of the government in gender mainstreaming. This is hinged upon the premise that gender equality contributes to economic efficiency and the achievement of other key development outcomes (Razavi, 2012). As such, it is the government's role, together with other actors such as the World Bank, the United Nations and its agencies, civil society organisations, donor countries, and national governments, to formulate strategies committing themselves to advancing gender equality and women's rights (Østebø & Haukanes, 2016).

From the findings, the majority agree that the government has significantly shaped gender mainstreaming policies in Kenya. The Kenyan government has established a legal framework to promote gender equality and mainstream gender perspectives into policies and programs (Novovic, 2021). The Constitution of Kenya, promulgated in 2010, includes provisions that guarantee equality and non-discrimination based on gender. Additionally, laws such as the Sexual Offenses Act and the Employment Act contain provisions to protect women's rights and promote gender equality. In addition, the Kenyan government has developed a National Gender Policy to guide gender mainstreaming efforts across various sectors. The policy outlines strategies for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in education, health, employment, and political participation. It emphasises the importance of mainstreaming gender considerations into all development planning and implementation (Ojwala *et al*., 2022).

4.8 Chapter Summary

Understanding familiarity with gender mainstreaming policies is essential to gauge how well respondents can contribute to discussions on gender equality. Gender mainstreaming involves integrating gender perspectives into all policies, programs, and projects to ensure both women and men benefit equally. In Kenya, the government has significantly shaped these policies, promoting gender equality across various sectors.

Key policies identified by respondents include the Two-thirds Gender Rule, Free Primary Education Policy, Public Participation Policy, Equality and Equity Policy, and the Right to Own Property. Each policy has advanced gender equality in different ways, despite facing implementation challenges. For example, the Two-thirds Gender Rule ensures women's representation in political positions, while the Free Primary Education Policy has increased girls' school enrolment by removing financial barriers.

Factors influencing the success of these policies in Nakuru and Narok counties include cultural attitudes, political will, institutional capacity, and the role of civil society organisations (CSOs). Cultural shifts and strong political will in Nakuru have led to higher women's political representation than in Narok. Institutional capacity, including resources and trained personnel, is crucial for effective policy implementation. CSOs are vital in advocating for gender equality and supporting policy implementation.

Despite progress, challenges such as resistance to change, limited resources, and patriarchal norms persist. Addressing these challenges requires legal reforms, cultural shifts, and targeted support programs. Legal reforms, like those in the Constitution of Kenya 2010, promote gender equality, while cultural shifts involve raising awareness and educating communities about gender equality's importance. Initiatives in Nakuru and

Narok, including community dialogues and media campaigns, aim to promote positive cultural changes and support gender mainstreaming efforts.

Therefore, understanding familiarity with gender mainstreaming policies is crucial for gauging respondents' ability to contribute ideas on the subject. The Kenyan government has significantly shaped these policies, which have advanced gender equality in various ways. By promoting gender-friendly political cultures, challenging patriarchal norms, and providing targeted support and training, women can be empowered to take on leadership roles and contribute to the political process. This holistic approach is essential for achieving gender parity in politics and ensuring women's voices are heard in decision-making.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE EXTENT OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENT OF PEACE IN NAKURU AND NAROK COUNTIES, KENYA

Introduction

Women's and men's relative positions within society's institutions, structures, policies, programs, and initiatives are all part of gender (Yartey, 2012; Odame, 2010; Apusigah, 2004; Allah-Mensah, 2005). It concerns how society's processes and structures evaluate, account for, and depict men and women's social roles, duties, and expectations. The roles that men and women play in society as rich or underprivileged, superiors or subordinates are determined by their gender. Gender is a socially created phenomenon that revolves around the politics of social relations and interactions, the degree to which men and women are accounted for or not, powerful or weak, and present in all areas of society. Issues of

voice, opportunities, and outcomes/benefits fundamentally shape gender. This study sought to assess gender mainstreaming policies influencing women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya.

5.1 Number of Women Elected Nakuru and Narok at Various Levels

The number of women elected at various levels in Nakuru and Narok Counties highlights both the strides made and the on-going challenges in achieving gender parity in political representation. Over recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of women elected to positions such as Members of Parliament, County Assembly Members, and other local government roles. This positive trend underscores the impact of gender mainstreaming policies and targeted support programs designed to empower women and enhance their participation in politics (NGEC, 2020; KIPPRA, 2021).

Despite these advancements, disparities remain between the two counties and across different levels of government. Nakuru County, for example, has consistently seen higher numbers of women elected compared to Narok County. This discrepancy can be attributed to factors such as stronger political will, more effective implementation of gender policies, and better support systems for women candidates in Nakuru (NGEC, 2020). Understanding these factors is crucial for developing strategies to further improve women's political representation and ensure that both counties can achieve true gender equality in political participation (KIPPRA, 2021). This study sought to determine how women participated in politics in Nakuru and Narok. The study findings for this variable are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Elected positions in the Counties

Elected position	Nakuru	Narok
Governor	1	0
Senator	1	0
MP	11	1
MCAs	55	1

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 5.1 shows that in Nakuru County, more women were elected to elective positions than in Narok. Nakuru County had the governor, a senator, an MP, and 55 MCAs elected, while Narok had only 2 elected representatives, 1 MP and 1 MCA. This was explained by the study respondents being the socio-political nature of the two counties. Nakuru and Narok are two counties that differ in several ways. Nakuru is a cosmopolitan county with more than one tribe dominating, as opposed to Narok County, which is predominantly composed of one tribe, the Maasai, who are patriarchal. In view of these findings, one of the key informants from Nakuru had the following to say;

> In Nakuru, women are actively taking part in political representation and this is informed by the fact that the top leadership of the County is headed by a woman. I think women have come to believe that just like men can lead which is an exemplary move. The rise of women to political positions have been influenced by the diminishing cultural practices that have discriminated upon women for quite a long time…with the urbanization process taking shape, traditional values and customs that barred women from engaging in political affairs are diminishing. Another reason why women are fairly represented in Nakuru is because of they are being inspired by the achievements of other women who have demonstrated that it is possible for women to govern (Key informant interview with a former member of the County Assembly held on 13th, April, 2025).

These assertions corroborate with Ndirangu (2018) who asserted that women in the metropolitan settings were likely to be involved in politics because they face little resistance from deep-rooted cultural practices that prioritize men over women in political governance. Similarly, a study by Mwaka (2020) found that women were making progress and developing appetite for political leadership which in turn has been reflected in the slowly rising number of women in political leadership.

Regarding Narok County, to help in explain the worrying number of women's representation, one member of a focused group discussions had the following to say;

> The truth of the matter is that women's political representation in this County is worrying; however, we bother less because we believe that women cannot rule over men. We believe that women can have some little power but that power should be applied at the household level, though not fully because men are still technically in-charge. Besides our strong cultural beliefs that hinder women from participating in politics, I think most of them are reluctant to engage in this endeavour given the expensiveness of politics…politics require financial resources minus which you are doomed to lose. Now, with most of our women still economically dependent on us, I think contesting for these political seats is a tall order (Focused group discussions with elders held in Narok on 17th April, 2024).

The above assertions corroborate with Kauria (2018) whose studies investigated the factors that influenced elite women from participating in politics among the Maasai community in Narok County. The study established that historical trends in the Maasai have an effect on the participation of elite women in politics. It also noted that elite women participation in politics is influenced by the socio- cultural factors, demographic factors and economic factors. This suggests that cultural practices among certain communities in Narok County affected women's participation in politics.

Bari (2005) notes that in the past few decades, numerous nations; Kenya included, has enacted legislation or voluntarily established gender quotas to strengthen this vision. Though the issue is still challenging in many counties like Narok, it can be argued that the gender quotas system has lessened extreme injustice and democratic inadequacies in Nakuru. This is in line with Nzomo (2012), who suggests that the quotas were utilised to boost the number of female legislators in elective positions, which improved gender equality and ultimately resulted in benefits for women in politics. Notwithstanding these successes, there is still strong opposition to quota systems from those who contend that more women in politics do not always translate into a more egalitarian system. That is to say, some women enter politics not because they are worthy of the roles but rather because it suits the leaders of the day politically, as witnessed during nominations. Accordingly, the gender gap in politics cannot be closed by merely adding more women to the system; rather, it must be addressed by combining quota systems with other initiatives, such as economic and civil redistributive justice. Women, who are denied civil and economic rights will, as was previously said, be unable to exercise their political rights (Bara, 2005; Paxton *et al*. 2010; Gouvs, 2008). According to Lowe-Morna (2004), certain women from rural areas may suffer despondency and disempowerment because of their lack of political experience and education, making politics intimidating for them.

5.2 Perception of Representation of Women in Politics

The study sought the perception of the study respondents about whether they were satisfied with the representation of women in politics in their respective counties. The results are presented in Table 5.2

Table 5.2: Rating on perception of representation of women in politics

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	88	43.8	25	18.7	113	33.7
Agree	86	42.8	44	32.8	130	38.8
Neither Disagree nor Agree	14	7.0	18	13.4	32	9.6
Disagree	8	4.0	36	26.9	44	13.1
Strongly Disagree	5	2.5	11	8.2	16	4.8
Total	201	100	134	100.0	335	100

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 5.2 shows that 25 (18.7%) respondents in Narok strongly agree to the statement as compared to 88 (43.8%) in Nakuru. There were 113 (33.7%) respondents in total who strongly agreed with the statement. Of the study respondents, 86 (42.8%) in Nakuru and 44 (32.8%) in Narok agreed with the statement that they were satisfied with the representation of women in politics. Of the total respondents, 130 (38.8%) concurred. The Table further shows that in Nakuru, 14 respondents (7.0%) and in Narok, 18 respondents (13.4%), indicated that they were neither in agreement nor disagreement. This was 32(9.6%) of the respondents in the total combined. Eight respondents (4.0%) in Nakuru and 36 respondents (26.9%) in Narok expressed disagreement; in total, 44 (13.1%) respondents disagreed overall. Table 5.2 also shows that 5(2.5%) of the study respondents in Nakuru and 11 (8.2%) in Narok expressed strong disagreement.

These findings in Narok contrast with Mlambo and Kapingura (2019), who suggest that a gender-balanced political decision-making process accurately reflects the composition of society. As such, it may enhance the legitimacy of political processes by making them more democratic and responsive to the concerns and perspectives of all segments of society

(Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019). Women are equal citizens and, therefore, should share equally with men in public decision-making failure to which a democratic deficit will ensue. According to Tremblay (2007), representative democracy presents itself as an ideal that includes marginalized sections of society, such as women, in the political decision-making process (Tremblay, 2007).

5.3 General Perceptions regarding Women's Political Participation

Equal rights for men and women aim to allow both sexes to fully engage in the political process, which is increasingly important as a demand for open justice and democracy (Phillips, 2002). It may also be argued that there is no intellectual interest in equal political involvement for women. It appears that the goal is to guarantee that women hold the positions that are rightfully theirs in every aspect of life, including politics. Therefore, this study sought to determine women's perceptions of political participation. The findings are presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Perceptions regarding women's political participation in Nakuru

Statement	SD N.%	D N.%	N N.%	A N.%	SA N.%
Men and women need equal opportunities to participate in politics	34(16.9)	12(6.0)	20(10.0)	74(36.8)	61(30.3)
Women possess leadership qualities for political positions	24(11.9)	12(6.0)	46(22.9)	64(31.8)	55(27.4)

Women's participation in politics is key to national development	34(16.9)	8(4.0)	14(7.0)	67(33.3)	78(38.8)
Elected women address issues affecting women adequately	45(22.4)	45(22.4	21(10.4)	56(27.9)	34(16.9)
Men support women seeking to participate in politics	55(27.4)	44(21.9)	20(10.0)	39(19.4)	43(21.4)

Source: **Field Data, 2024**

Table 5.3 shows that of the respondents, 34 (16.9%) think that men and women do not require equal opportunity, 12(6%) stated they disagree. There were 20 respondents (10.0%) who did not agree or disagree with 74(36.8%) who think that equal opportunities were essential. In addition, 61(30.3%), favour equal opportunity for men and women strongly. Table 5.3, shows that 11.9% (24), strongly disagree that women possess leadership qualities for political positions, 12(6.0%) disagree to the statement, with 46(22.9%) respondents said they were unsure. Of the total, 64(31.8%) concurred and 55(27.4%), strongly agreed to the statement.

Table 5.3 shows that 34(16.9%) of respondents strongly disagree that women's participation in politics is key for national development. It also shows that of those surveyed, 8 (4.0%) disagree and 14(17%) respondents, were unsure. A further 67(33.3%), concur to the statement, 78(38.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed. Of the respondents who gave their opinion on whether elected women address issues affecting women adequately, 54(22.4%) disagree strongly, 45 (22.4%) disagree, and 21(10.4%) respondents

were undecided. In addition, 89(44.8%) of the respondents agree with the statement, with 34(16.9%) strongly agreeing. On the question of whether men support women seeking to participate in politics, 99(49.3%) disagreed, with 55(27.4%) strongly disagreeing. Twenty (10%) of the respondents were unsure, with 39(19.4%) agreeing, and a further 43(21.4%) strongly agreeing. These findings were reinforced with key informant interviews and focused group discussions. For instance, in Nakuru, a key informant postulated the following;

> People have different perceptions about women's participation in politics and peace building. There are those who strongly feel that women are capable and can make good leaders when given a chance. On the contrary, others feel that women are weak and cannot govern a society that is dominated by men. Notably, these perceptions are simply socially constructed and are shaped and reshaped by our cultures. For instance, here in Nakuru, you can see that there are high perceptions that women can govern and that is why you can see their numbers are growing in the political scene. Arguably, we can argue that those that think so are not deeply rooted in culture that bar women from leading (Key informant interview with a political aspirant held in Nakuru on 17th April, 2024).

Another key informant added the following;

> The reason as to why you see some people agreeing that women should participate in politics is because they feel that women are generally loving and kind people and can serve their interest passionately compared to men. These are the same people who think that both women and men should be given equal opportunity to participate in politics. I have seen male politicians providing financial support for women to contest. I think this is the best way to go…women should not be barred from participating in politics because those who have been offered a chance have proved that women's leadership is the best option (Key informant interview with gender officer held in Nakuru held on 14th April, 2025).

The assertions above align with Lomong' *et al*. (2023) whose study established that with the advent of gender mainstreaming policies that advocate for women's political representation, perceptions regarding women's abilities to govern is growing rapidly despite the existing hurdles. Despite their slow and weak implementation, these laws have sensitized about the significance of women's political leadership.

Table 5.4: Perceptions regarding women's political participation in Narok

Statement	SD N.%	D N.%	N N.%	A N.%	SA N.%
Men and women need equal opportunities to participate in politics	52(38.1)	16(11.9)	20(14.9)	24(17.9)	23(17.2)
Women possess leadership qualities for political positions	46(34.3)	25(18.7)	22(16.4)	18(13.4)	23(17.2)
Women's participation in politics is key to national development	56(41.8)	24(17.9)	14(10.4)	22(16.4)	18(13.4)
Elected women address issues affecting women adequately	35(26.1)	35(26.1)	21(15.7)	23(17.2)	20(14.9)
Men support women seeking to participate in politics	65(48.5)	30(22.4)	9(6.7)	12(9.0)	18(13.4)

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 5.4 shows that of the respondents, 52(38.1%) think that men and women do not require equal opportunity, 16(11.9%) stated they disagree. There were 20 respondents (14.9%) who did not agree or disagree with 24(17.9%) who think that equal opportunities were essential. In addition, 23(17.2%), favour equal opportunity for men and women strongly. In the Table 5.4 it shows that 46(34.3%) respondents strongly disagree that women possess leadership qualities for political positions, 25(18.7%) disagree to the

statement; with 18(13.4%) respondents said they were unsure. Of the total, 18(13.4%) concurred, and 23(17.2%) strongly agreed with the statement.

Table 5.4 shows that 56(41.8%) of respondents strongly disagree that women's political participation is key for national development. It also shows that of those surveyed, 24(17.9%) disagreed, and 14(10.4%) respondents were unsure. A further 22(16.4%) respondents concur with the statement, with 18(13.4%) respondents strongly agreeing. Of the respondents who gave their opinion on whether elected women address issues affecting women adequately, 34(26.1%) respondents disagreed strongly, 35(26.1%) disagreed and 21(15.7%) respondents were undecided. There were 23(17.2%) respondents agreed to the statement, with 20(14.9%) strongly agreeing. Regarding whether men should support women seeking to participate in politics, 65(48.5%) strongly disagreed, with 30(22.4%) disagreeing. Nine (6.7%) of the respondents were unsure with 12(9%) agreeing with a further 18(13.4%) strongly agreeing. The findings were reinforced with FGDS with a section of the Narok elders where one of the members stated the following;

> "You see, the development issues are a man's work. The governor will do wonders even if you are not seeing anything happening now. But if it was a female governor there is a possibility maybe we could be witnessing same stuff as is happening in Meru County. This is why I prefer a man to a woman for a position like that of a governor?" (FGDs with elders at Shankoe-Kilgoris on 12th June 2024).

Similarly, another member of the FGDs added the following;

> "When you compare with a county led by a woman it is not the same as a county that is led by a man. Men are the heads of families and so a county is just a like a family, the way it has been set-up. In the county

> one is working with County Executive Committees (CECs) who one treats like his kids just like in a family. You see when the governor goes to places like the hospital in this area and they are lacking some essential and basic things, he is able to demand or direct them to be availed as soon as possible as he would have done in his family" (FGD discussion 12th June 2024 Kisirir-Kilgoris Catholic church grounds).

The above assertions contradict a study by Lomong *et al.* (2023) whose findings suggested positive perceptions about women's involvement in politics with the advent of gender mainstreaming policies. Seemingly, this study disregarded the existence of strong cultural practices that perpetuate negative perceptions about women with respect to their participation in politics. For instance, in Narok County, some communities still hold to certain cultural practices that curtail women's participation in governance. This was further echoed by a participant of the same FGDs who postulated the following;

> "Men and women are always treated equally by a man. Women getting into politics are not good for her and the family which now includes the community and the society. When you ask whether women should be in politics, I will say without doubt no. Look at the women who have been elected in any elective post. They have become strong headed. They have stopped respecting men and maybe even their husbands. Most of them are either not married or if married not staying with their husbands"(FGDs with the elders at Kisirir-Narok Naorth, 12th June 2024).

The above assertions however corroborate with Kauria (2018) whose study established that in Narok County, strong cultural practices among the Maasai community in Narok County significantly influenced women's participations in politics. She noted that such practices were often intoned by negative perceptions about women's ability to lead.

In developed democracies in Europe and North America, women are more likely to participate in politics than in developing democracies in Africa (Stockemer 2014). However, the factors that predict women's political participation differ depending on the

context. Townley (2019) notes that given the contextual variations between the regions, predictors of women's political participation in European, American, and sub-Saharan African countries are unlikely to be the same. Despite this, the literature that is currently available seems to ignore this difference and keeps explaining women's political participation in Africa using conventionally defined predictors. Since many countries have diverse populations, within-country variations in women's political participation should also be expected.

5.4 Satisfaction with the performance of Women in politics

The study sought to find out how the respondents from the two counties rated women's performance in politics.

Table 5.5: Rating of satisfaction of the performance of women in politics

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied	38	18.9	18	13.4	56	16.7
Satisfied	66	32.8	38	28.4	104	31.0
Neutral	66	32.8	48	35.8	114	34.0
Dissatisfied	24	11.9	22	16.4	46	13.7
Very dissatisfied	7	3.5	8	6.0	15	4.5
Total	201	100	134	100	335	100

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 5.5 shows that almost half 104(51.7%) of the respondents from Nakuru were satisfied with the performance of participation of women in politics while the others 97(48.3%) were either not sure, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the performance of participation of women in politics. In Narok 56(41.8%) were satisfied with the performance while more than half 78(58.2%) were unsure, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the performance of participation of women in politics in Narok. In Nakuru for instance, the participants

interviewed demonstrated their confidence in women's leadership as was evidenced by the except;

> I believe that women can do wonders when give a chance. In view of this, I am satisfied with the performance of women's leadership in Nakuru. It is barely two years since they were elected and already, we are feeling their impact. For instance, the governor has launched several projects most of which are on-going and others have been completed. From empowering youths and young women through table banking, constructing modern markets, supplying drugs and medical equipment to health facilities, promoting basic education through employing pre-primary education teachers, constructing classrooms and so many things. This means that women leaders are development oriented and when accorded additional time, I'm very much confident they will deliver (Key informant interview with CSO official in Nakuru held on 14th June, 2024).

However, a member of a focused group discussions had the following opinion;

> I have heard so many times women leaders in this County being praised for their good track record in terms of development. However, I feel that they have not done enough because as common wananchi, we continue to confront so many challenges that stem from the poor governance. For example, most of our youths are still unemployed, nepotism is rampant when providing job opportunities, corruption is alive and well...honestly, I am less satisfied with their leadership. But maybe, let us give them time, they may deliver (Focused group discussions with elders in Nakuru West held on 14th June, 2024).

These assertions reveal a mixed satisfaction with respect to women's leadership in Nakuru County. This suggests that either women were not doing enough when provided with the opportunity to lead or were average performance. The findings corroborate with Kauria (2018) who contended that satisfaction with women's leadership have been gradually growing and this further informs their growing numbers in the political scenes. She however cautions that women must strive to deliver on the promises they made to their electorates in order to enhance trust from the citizens. With regard to Nakuru County, one

member of a focused group discussions revealed dissatisfaction with women's leadership by opining the following;

> "How can you be satisfied with the performance of our women leaders when we have not heard any one of them contributing even in parliament?" He added, "At least everyone in Kenya has heard of honorable Susan from Nakuru, but here who even know their names outside Narok, Maybe Soipan Tuya who has been a cabinet secretary for …is it environment?" (FGD with Narok Elders 14th June 2024 Kisirir-Kilgoris Catholic church grounds).

These assertions corroborate with Ndirangu (2018) and Kauria (2018) who pointed to strong cultural beliefs that still hinder the recognition of women's leadership, especially in communities which are still lean on patriarchy. The dissatisfaction may stem from certain cultural values that still hold that women cannot hold political leaderships.

5.5 Predictors of women's political participation

We examined three independent variables to determine the characteristics influencing women's political participation in the counties. The frequency distribution of the variables from the female respondents from Nakuru and Narok is shown in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Predictors of women's political participation

	Indicators	Nakuru	Narok
		(%)	**(%)**
Religious affiliation	Christian	170(85)	113 (85)
	Muslim	31(15)	21 (15)
Education	No or less than secondary education	30(15)	46(34.3)
	At least secondary education	137(68)	56(41.8)
	At least a university education	34(17)	32(23.9)
Employment	Not employed	170(85)	64 (48.8)
	Employed	31(15)	68 (51.2)

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 5.6 shows that 170(85%) and 31(15%) of the study respondents in Nakuru indicated they would vote for a woman who was a Christian and a Muslim, respectively. This was hinged on the various belief systems and faiths. Some believed that Christians make better politicians, while others thought a Muslim would make a better politician. Table 5.5 also shows that 113 (85%) and 21(15%) respondents from Narok reported that they would vote for a Christian and a Muslim, respectively.

The study also sought to determine the ease the respondents felt it was for women to be involved with politics. The findings of this variable are presented table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Ease of entry to county politics than national

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	48	23.9	28	20.9	76	22.7
Agree	86	42.8	38	28.4	124	37
Neither Disagree nor Agree	30	14.9	36	26.9	66	19.7

Disagree	29	14.4	24	17.9	53	15.8
Strongly Disagree	8	4	8	6	16	4.8
Total	201	100	134	100	335	100

Source Field Data, 2024

From the findings, the majority, 124(37.0%) of the respondents, agreed that it was easier to enter county politics than national. Of these, 82(42.8%) were from Nakuru, while Narok had 38(28.4%). Table 5.7 also shows that 76(22.7%) strongly was easier to enter county politics than national. Of the total, 135(40.3%) respondents reported that they "neither agreed nor disagreed," "disagreed", or "strongly disagreed". This was evident from the FGDs that were held with the members of the community. Indeed, during FGD, one of the participants said,

> "At the local level, say MCA it is easy to have many people who know your name and possibly know where you stay. They might also be knowing your family as well as the clan. In the national politics who knows you?" FGD 010 (FGD discussion on 13th April 2024 at Njoro AIC church grounds).

Another member added that;

> "The way our politics are, it is easier to get elected or be in politics at the county level than at the national level. In the national level there is more competition than at the local level" she posed. (FGD discussion on 13th April 2024 at Njoro AIC church grounds).

From the above, it is demonstrated that they disagreed it was not easy to enter into county politics than national politics by 135(40.3%). Most of those who did not think it was easy to enter into county politics than national were from Narok, 68(50.7%) followed by Nakuru 67(33.3%). Those who thought it was easy to enter county politics than national were more in Nakuru, with 134(66.7%) respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement. In

Narok 66(49.3%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed. This was affirmed by the different KIs and FGDS that were carried out in the counties. One KI said,

> "Nakuru is a cosmopolitan county. Here other than where you come from anyone has equal chances of being elected. What one needs to do is to be seen to be doing something at the county level or sub-county level". (Key informant interview with gender officer held on 12th April 2024 at Nakuru West subcounty).

From the various FGDs, one participant said,

> "We know, or let me say I know, what it means to seek an elective post. At the local level, the dynamics in play are many, like who you are, where you reside, how you carry yourself within the county, and whether you are politically well-aligned with the party of your choice. These among many others." FGD 008 (13th April 2024 at Njoro AIC church grounds).

In Narok, which is mainly a patriarchal society, women are relegated and or regarded as inferior, and most of the positions of dominance and privilege are held by men, and this has been the norm in the community. Those who said it was easier to enter county politics than national were those in positions of power and were in universities or colleges. A key informant interview with gender expert in Narok revealed the following;

> "Here, the locals believe that it is easier to enter into county politics than national because we are linked by clans here in Narok; it is easier to enter into local politics because everyone seems to know each other either through marriage relations, church activities and such things". (Key informant interview held on12th June 2024 at the Gender offices in Narok North Subcounty).

These findings indicate that local politics may be more approachable, as indicated by the greater proportion of respondents who agreed that getting into county politics is simpler. This might promote increased involvement at the county level, resulting in more varied representation. Nonetheless, the noteworthy proportion of participants who express neither agreement nor disagreement suggests the necessity for additional research on the obstacles

encountered by prospective participants. The disagreement and strongly disagree replies draw attention to the obstacles that must be removed to improve political inclusion. This is similar to Zeddy *et al.* (2018) in their study "Elite Women Participation in Politics among the Maasai of Narok South sub-county, Kenya: a social, cultural Perspective", who found that the social and cultural background of their community has an impact on the Maasai elite women. This affects their socialisation and, consequently, their involvement in politics.

5.6 Respondents' Views on the Importance of Women's Participation in Local Politics

Public participation in Kenya refers to the involvement of citizens in the decision-making processes of government at various levels, including policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. Public participation is enshrined in the Kenyan Constitution of 2010, which recognises it as a fundamental principle of governance and requires public involvement in matters affecting them. Table 5.8 presents the rating of the respondents' views on the importance of women's participation in local politics in Nakuru and Narok counties.

Table 5.8: Rating of respondents' views on the importance of women's political participation in local politics

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	45	22.4	30	22.4	75	22.4
Agree	52	25.9	24	17.9	76	22.7
Neither Disagree nor Agree	57	28.4	64	47.8	121	36.1
Disagree	42	20.9	12	9.0	54	16.1

Strongly Disagree	5	2.5	4	3.0	9	2.7
Total	201	100	134	100.0	335	100

Source Field Data, 2024

According to Table 5.8 more 184(54.9%) from both counties reported that they were unsure, disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that respondents' views on the importance of women participation in local politics. Of these 104 (51.7%) were from Nakuru County with 80(59.7%) respondents being from Narok. These findings show that in Nakuru it was almost half of the respondents were divided on the importance of women participation in local politics. This divide can be explained by the Nakuru County being cosmopolitan unlike Narok which is rural county.

In both counties the study participants had mixed views on the on the importance of women participation in local politics. To them it does not matter on who participates in local politics since men and women have equal rights and that corruption is a personal choice and not a group choice. It was recurring theme neutrality on the importance of women participation in local. A respondent during FGDs had the following remarks:

> "What is the use of having women participate in the local politics? Politics is for everyone who wants to do politics, not just women or men. If they get into politics the better for them as they will have gotten a job." FGD 020 (FGD 11th April 2024, Nakuru west Subcounty social hall).

Another member said that;

> "Yes, it is important for women to participate in local politics. But to give more importance than men? For us what we need is good leadership and not which gender. When women participate some of them become big headed while others take care of their families. But there are others who do the complete opposite." FGD 018 (FGD 11th April 2024, Nakuru west Subcounty social hall).

The above shows that it was important for women to participate in local politics; what they disliked was some women going against the established order of first taking care of their families. This agrees with Ihemeje (2013), who emphasizes this by saying that women's place in governance is relevant in relation to their role in nation-building. To achieve a balanced gender representation of 50/50 men and women at all levels of organizations', he proposed that it is necessary to "attribute ownership," forcing each process participant to consider gender issues from a personal perspective and introducing guidelines and indicators to promote women to decision-making positions. As Minoletti (2014) opines, international policymakers and researchers have been paying more attention to women's engagement in governance due to reasons related to equity and performance.

5.7 Chapter Summary

The empirical data demonstrate that political participation at the local governance level has been differentiated along gender lines, with men dominating the local government system regarding representation, inclusion, and contribution. This suggests that women have suffered various forms of discrimination that have hindered their participation in local governance. The analysis validates the literature that women have been disadvantaged in their political participation, even at the local government level.

CHAPTER SIX

OPPORTUNITIES TO WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENT OF PECAE IN NAKURU AND NAROK COUNTIES, KENYA

Introduction

While there might be disparities in women's political participation, there are various opportunities, as evidenced by the number of women who have successfully vied for political positions locally and nationally. Women comprise roughly half of the population, and their perspectives, experiences, and needs should be represented in political decision-making processes. Providing opportunities for women to participate in politics ensures that diverse voices are heard, and policies reflect all constituents' interests. The findings in this section relate to opportunities for women's political participation. These are presented in ranking format starting with the highest to the lowest according to the respondents

6.1 Opportunities for Women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties

Providing opportunities for women's political participation is a matter of social justice and human rights and essential for achieving effective governance, sustainable development, and inclusive societies. The findings in this section present respondents' views on presence of opportunities favouring women political participation in Nakuru and Narok counties.

Table 6.1: Presence of opportunities

	Nakuru		Narok	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	181	90	119	89
No	20	10	15	11
Total	201	100	134	100

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 6.1 shows that in Nakuru, 181(90%) of the respondents indicated there are opportunities for women to participate in political activities with 20(10%) failing to see any of the opportunities for women to participate. Similarly, a high per centage, 119(89%), respondents reported that there were opportunities for women to participate in politics as opposed to 15(11%). The high visibility of prospects in both Narok and Nakuru point to availability of opportunities. This is in line with Zeddy *et al*. (2018) and Cowper-Smith et al. (2017), who found that despite under-representation of women in politics, there was still hope for opportunities to be engaged in politics.

The study sought to determine the environment that would enable women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok. These are discussed in the following sections.

6.2 The policies in place support women's political participation

Policies play a crucial role in supporting women's political participation by creating an enabling environment that addresses barriers and promotes opportunities for women to engage in politics. Enforcement of these policies is important if women will participate in the political sphere. Therefore, the study sought to find out the opinion of the respondents in the two counties by rating the statement, “enforcement of policies affecting women

representation will result in increased women representation in politics." The findings of this statement are presented in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: The policies in place to support women's political participation

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	88	43.8	25	18.7	113	33.7
Agree	86	42.8	44	32.8	130	38.8
Neither Disagree nor Agree	14	7.0	18	13.4	32	9.6
Disagree	8	4.0	36	26.9	44	13.1
Strongly Disagree	5	2.5	11	8.2	16	4.8
Total	201	100	134	100.0	335	100

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 6.2 shows that 25 (18.7%) respondents in Narok strongly agree to the statement as compared to 88 (43.8%) in Nakuru. There were 113 (33.7%) respondents in total who strongly agreed to the statement. Of the study respondents, 86 (42.8%) in Nakuru and 44 (32.8%) in Narok agreed that enforcement of policies affecting women's representation will increase women's representation in politics. Of the total respondents, 130 (38.8%) concurred. The Table further shows that in Nakuru, 14 (7.0%) and in Narok, 18 respondents (13.4%) indicated that they were neither in agreement nor disagreement. This was 32(9.6%) of the respondents in the total combined. Eight respondents (4.0%) in Nakuru and 36(26.9%) in Narok expressed disagreement; in total, 44 (13.1%) respondents

disagreed overall. Table 6.2 also shows that 5(2.5%) of the study respondents in Nakuru and 11 (8.2%) in Narok expressed strong disagreement with the statement that enforcement of policies affecting women's representation will result in increased women's representation in politics.

The results show that although Nakuru has more optimism regarding the positive impact of policy enforcement on women's representation, there are differing opinions or possible obstacles to implementing such policies in Narok, as evidenced by the higher percentage of disagreement and lower agreement in that city. This was reinforced by a key informant who had the following to say;

> "As we speak, we have many women in elected positions currently than ever before. Continued enforcement of policies affecting women representation will definitely result into more women getting into leadership positions. For now, the governor is a woman. And several other women elected in the county as MCAs (Key informant interview with the gender officer held on 13th April 2024 at Njoro AIC church grounds).

In Narok a FGD participant said,

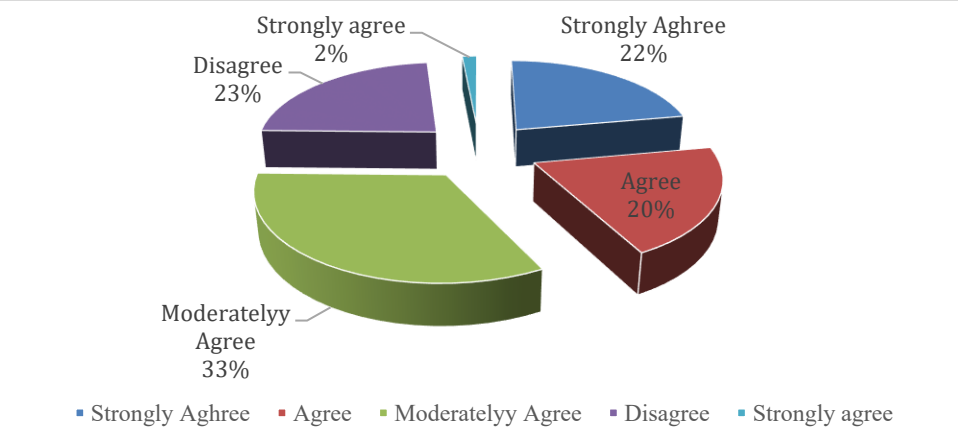
> "Do you think these men will relinquish their hold on power? Don't you know that power of being called a mheshima is addictive? Don't you know why they target women and mudsling them? The answer is simple so as not to have competition from them because they know when they are the majority and they are could decide to gang up against men." FGD 0013 (FGD discussion at Kisirir-Narok North).

Putting in place gender quotas either party imposed or law mandated can boost the proportion of women in public office. To ensure a more equitable allocation of political power, quotas can be used to set minimum percentages of female candidates on electoral lists or reserve seats for women in legislative bodies. A key part is played by the introduction of electoral reforms like preferential voting or proportional representation

schemes that support gender equality. Through the removal of obstacles associated with winner-take-all elections and the promotion of more inclusive electoral procedures, these reforms can increase the likelihood that women will be elected. Governments may establish more equitable and inclusive political systems that enable women to actively engage in decision-making, support democratic governance, and promote positive social change by implementing these policies and initiatives.

6.3 There are positive cultural shifts in favour of women participating in politics

Positive cultural shifts can create a supportive environment for women's political participation in several ways. Cultural shifts that challenge traditional gender stereotypes and roles can dismantle barriers that limit women's political participation. When societies recognise and value women's leadership abilities and contributions to public life, it encourages more women to pursue political careers. The findings in the figure below present responses on whether there are positive cultural shifts in Narok and Nakuru counties. Figure 6.1: Cultural shifts in favor of women participating in politics



Source Field Data, 2024

Figure 6.1 shows that 84(25%) agree that there is cultural shift to enable the accommodation of women into politics. The Figure 6.1 also shows that 111(33%) moderately agreed to the statement 84(25%) disagreed. Of those who disagreed 7(2%) strongly disagreed that there was cultural shift embracing women into political participation. This is supported by Campagna *et al.* (2020) who notes that cultural norms that encourage civic engagement and active citizenship can motivate women to participate in politics and public affairs. The researchers note that when communities prioritize democratic values, inclusivity, and social justice, it creates conducive environment for women's political activism and leadership. Cultural shifts that promote supportive social networks and solidarity among women can facilitate their entry and advancement in politics. When women receive encouragement, mentorship, and networking opportunities from peers and allies, it enhances their confidence and resilience in navigating political spaces.

6.4 Women's involvement with volunteer organisation

An emerging theme in the discussion was the involvement of women in volunteer organisations. The study participants, some of whom were politicians, shed light on how their prior engagements with community organisations shaped their participation in politics. The study revealed that women's involvement in volunteer organisations and their political careers were related in any way. A key informant said the following;

> "I have never regretted being a peer educator." The group has helped me develop my individuality and sense of self. Though I was naturally shy, I was now able to blend in with the group despite my inability to do so before. I walk about chatting to individuals as a peer educator, whether they be young adults, seniors, or kids. I now know how to speak in public like an orator. You can't beat me when it comes to public speaking, now.

> In all honesty, even though I was a new member, I was granted the position of organiser for my constituency in my party because of my ability to speak. I participate in debates and express my opinions during meetings. People started asking questions like "Who is this girl?" but I didn't mind at all because I am asked that in my group a lot."(Key informant interview with a conflict expert held on 13th June 2024 Kilgoris Catholic Church).

Another participant said,

> "I believe that I was appointed to the assembly because of my performance in my group. My writing, diligence, and communication skills all contributed to my appointment. I learnt how to write the minutes of meetings when I was the secretary of my association during a session I went to on behalf of the organisation. I write the reports and make sure to read them prior to the start of our next meeting. The majority of people, even at the assembly level, are unaware of how to accomplish this. In our assembly sessions, I have been able to ensure that this is completed. As you can see, I have no credentials, but I did learn how to write minute. Secondly, I've really benefited from learning how to be time conscious in my association. At assembly committee meetings, I'm usually the first to take a seat. You see, as the secretary, I had to make sure that I was present when the meeting began, and I also instilled in myself the value of respecting time in other spheres of my life. My ability to be organised is something else significant I've learnt from my association. I was once again nominated to the assembly to serve on the women and children subcommittee, and we are working really hard. I am very good at organising and planning things, especially gathering women for a program." FGD 012 (FGD discussion on 13th June 2024 Kilgoris Catholic Church).

Another participant said,

> "Since I've already held a leadership role, I don't see any issues with pursuing a more senior political post. By the grace of God, I can speak clearly, I can encourage people to vote for me, and my experience in the PTA has shown me that I can compete for party chair or PTA positions as effectively. It all comes down to having confidence in your skills. I have therefore gained confidence in my abilities and myself through my involvement in the PTA and the Women's Fellowship. That even encouraged me to approach the female organiser of the party." FGD 006(FGD discussion on 13th June 2024 Kilgoris Catholic Church).

Media outlets can actively seek out and feature stories about women leaders and candidates, highlighting their achievements, experiences, and perspectives. By giving women visibility in news coverage, the media can counteract the underrepresentation of

women in political discourse and contribute to a more inclusive public narrative. Media portrayals of successful women leaders can serve as role models and inspiration for other women and girls, encouraging them to pursue leadership roles and engage in political activism. By showcasing diverse examples of women's leadership, the media can challenge stereotypes and expand the possibilities for women in public life (Hickey & Cui, 2022).

According to Sanni (2025), the media can humanize women leaders and candidates by presenting their personal stories, motivations, and challenges. By highlighting the personal struggles and triumphs of women in politics, the media can foster empathy and understanding among the public, helping to build connections and support for women's leadership.

Media coverage can play a role in challenging gender bias and stereotypes that undermine women's credibility and effectiveness as leaders. By avoiding sensationalism, objectification, and discriminatory language, the media can promote fair and respectful portrayals of women in politics, contributing to a more equitable public discourse. Media outlets can provide platforms for women leaders and experts to offer analysis, commentary, and insights on political issues and current events. By amplifying women's voices in public debates and discussions, the media can showcase their expertise and contributions to shaping public policy and governance (Krook, 2022). The media can help draw attention to the policy priorities and agendas of women leaders and candidates, ensuring that their perspectives on critical issues are heard by the public. By covering women's policy proposals and initiatives, the media can facilitate informed public discourse and contribute to more inclusive policymaking processes.

Media platforms, including social media, websites, and podcasts, can provide interactive spaces for women leaders and candidates to engage directly with the public. By leveraging these platforms to share their ideas, interact with constituents, and mobilize support, women can bypass traditional media gatekeepers and reach broader audiences. The media plays a crucial role in holding political leaders and candidates accountable for their actions and decisions (Sanni, 2025). By scrutinizing the performance and behaviour of women in politics, the media can help ensure transparency, integrity, and accountability in governance, ultimately strengthening democratic processes.

6.5 Interventions supporting women's participation in politics

Several international, national, and regional organisations have intervened to support women's political participation in Kenya. The study sought to find out the views of the study respondents concerning these organisations in Nakuru or Narok. Responses in this part include what respondents in Nakuru and Narok counties had to say on the statement that "International, national, and regional organisations interventions support women's participation in politics." The findings are presented in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Rating of the effect of organizations' interventions supporting women's participation in politics

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	117	58.2	78	58.2	195	58.2
Agree	44	21.9	22	16.4	66	19.7
Neither Disagree nor Agree	26	12.9	14	10.4	40	11.9
Disagree	6	3.0	12	9.0	18	5.4

Strongly Disagree	8	4.0	8	6.0	16	4.8
Total	201	100	134	100	335	100

Source: Field Data, 2024.

Table 6.3 shows that more than three quarters, 261(77.9%) of the respondents agreed that international, national, and regional organisations' interventions support women's participation in politics in both countries. In Nakuru, 161(80.1%) reported that they supported international, national, and regional organizations' interventions to support women's participation in politics, with 40(19.1%) being unsure, disagreeing and strongly disagreeing with the statement. Narok had 100(74.6%) respondents in support of the International, national, and regional organizations' interventions to support women's participation in politics, with 34(25.4%) being unsure, disagreeing and strongly disagreeing with the statement.

In Narok, the respondents and the study participants were in praise of what the interventions from the various organizations had achieved in the county. Through these organizations tremendous results had been realized. During an FGD one of the participants said,

> "The international, national, and regional organizations interventions support women's participation in politics have made it possible for women to compete with men and to some extent beat them, look at Nakuru how many elected members they have. Here in Narok, as much Honorable Soipan Tuya is not elected now, she has been in politics as the women representative of Narok in the senate." (FGD with Narok elders held on12th June 2024 Kilgoris Catholic church Hall*).*

The study sought to know how those who had been elected to political seats how they managed it. This is simply because it is every woman's path to political office is different, this study identifies three primary avenues for women to enter the field: personal merit, reserved seats quota, and family ties. The quota gave all the research participants the chance to pursue careers in politics. Regarding the remaining the MCA seats, some were obtained by women MCAs through personal services to their communities, and others as a result of familial relationships. One of the key informants asserted the following;

> "My father-in-law has been the community leader for a long time," the woman stated. “As his eldest son, he is the one who ought to be running for mayor, or my husband. But our party nominated someone else for governor. Owing to the quota laws, one of the important positions, it was up to me to fill the female applicant because our male family members were unable to.” Key informant interview with political aspirant held on 14th June, 2024).

Despite having no prior political experience, she was given the chance to enter the field due to the quota set aside for women. She stated,

> "My spouse works overseas, so I live with my in-laws. My father-in-law once wanted to see my identification documents when he came over from somewhere in the afternoon. As it is considered impolite to speak with one's father-in-law in the Masaai culture, I am unable to speak with him directly, so I asked my mother-in-law to find out why he was requesting my identification and qualification papers. My mother-in-law then questioned him, "Why do you need them?" He yelled at us, saying, “Please just grant my request”. My mother-in-law received the identification and qualification papers from me, and she subsequently provided them to him. I didn't know [why he needed them] until he one day returned home beaming and said, "You've grown into a leader in the community." Prepare for a triumphal procession. Usually, I have to cover my face when I walk out, but this time, I was advised not to because everyone wanted to see me as the leader.” (MCA office 12th June-Narok North).

According to a 2018 Asia Foundation survey involving (169)190 local members from 20 urban and rural towns spread over seven provinces, the majority of women delegates (89%)

were already engaged in community service, such as social work or development initiatives, before the election; however, just (8)4% of the women had ever held political office before being chosen for their current positions. This data implies that the majority of female politicians were already involved in their communities before entering electoral politics, irrespective of how they got into the field.

These findings demonstrate the effects of the various bodies in the empowerment of women and girls in both the counties. For example, United Nations Women has been actively involved in supporting women's political participation in Kenya by providing capacity-building programs, advocacy for gender-responsive policies, and support for women's rights organizations (Kenyatta, 2023). On the other hand, UNDP has implemented projects in Kenya aimed at strengthening women's leadership and political participation, including support for electoral processes, women's empowerment initiatives, and gender mainstreaming in governance (Opongo, Muthui & Ondeng 2021).

International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has worked with Kenyan election authorities and civil society organizations to promote women's participation in electoral processes, enhance women's leadership skills, and address gender-based barriers to political participation. National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) which is a statutory body in Kenya has the mandate to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination. It has been involved in advocating for policies and legal reforms to enhance women's political participation, monitoring progress on gender equality goals, and providing support to women candidates. Kabira *et al.* (2022) found that Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) which is a caucus of women members of parliament in Kenya that advocates for women's rights and interests. It has played a

significant role in advancing gender-responsive legislation, supporting women candidates, and promoting women's leadership in politics. Federation of Women Lawyers Kenya a non-governmental organization that focuses on promoting women's rights and gender equality as also played a major role towards women empowerment and entry into politics (Micheni, 2020). It has been active in advocating for legal reforms to address gender-based discrimination, providing legal aid to women facing political barriers, and conducting civic education on women's rights. Regional Organizations such as the EAC has initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in member states, including Kenya (Opongo, Muthui & Ondeng 2021). It has supported efforts to enhance women's political participation through regional frameworks, capacity-building programs, and advocacy for gender-responsive governance.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) is a network of women parliamentarians from Commonwealth countries, including Kenya. It has facilitated knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, and networking opportunities for women MPs to enhance their effectiveness and influence in politics (Loitareng'an, 2023). These organizations, among others, have played critical roles in supporting women's participation in politics in Kenya through various interventions, including capacity-building, advocacy, legal reforms, and networking initiatives.

6.6 Perception of Women Potential for Political Roles

Over the years, women have made significant strides in their participation in political realms, ranging from grassroots action and civic engagement to competing for high-ranking jobs. Nonetheless, there are still on-going obstacles to overcome to increase the

political influence of women and enable them to assume senior positions in the government. In respect to this the study sought to find out the respondents' perception of women potential for political roles in the two counties. The findings are presented in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Perception of Women's Potential for Political Roles

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	88	43.8	25	18.7	113	33.7
Agree	86	42.8	44	32.8	130	38.8
Neither Disagree nor Agree	14	7.0	18	13.4	32	9.6
Disagree	8	4.0	36	26.9	44	13.1
Strongly Disagree	5	2.5	11	8.2	16	4.8
Total	201	100	134	100.0	335	100

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 6.4 shows the responses about women's leadership potential in Nakuru and Narok counties. In Nakuru, 48 (43.8%) respondents strongly concur that women have leadership potential. In Narok, 25 (18.7%) people strongly concur to the statement about women's leadership potential. Overall, 113 (33.7%) highly agree with 86(42.8%) respondents in Nakuru concurring to women's leadership potential. In Narok, 44 (32.8%) respondents concur and 130(38.8%), agreed. On not being sure to women's leadership potential, 14(7.0%) respondents in Nakuru said they were neither in agreement nor disagreement. In the case of Narok, 18 (13.4%) respondents did not agree or disagree. In total 32(9.6%) of

the total respondents, said they were neither in agreement nor disagreement. In Nakuru, 8(4%) respondents, disagreed with 36 (26.9%) respondents in Narok disagreed. There were 44 (13.1%) respondents who disagreed overall. Further, 5(2.5%) in Nakuru strongly disagree. Of the respondents in Narok, 11 (8.2%) strongly disagreed. In total 16 (4.8%) respondents strongly disagreed. These answers are reflected on what the study participants said was being done at the local level.

During the interviews various participants had these to say,

> "When a young woman sees a female administrator or leader in her community who she looks up to, who is shattering stereotypes and succeeding in her industry, it gives her the confidence that she too can reach those higher levels." She added, "What a man can do, a woman can do better." (Key informant interview with CSO official held in Narok, 13th June 2024).

Key informant from Nakuru state as a matter of fact,

> Individuals are receiving training in both hard and soft power, which is essential for developing their leadership skills. Along with hard effort and confidence, effective leaders also possess the soft power qualities of communication, adaptability, and patience." She continues, "We also use role modelling, which has an undeniable impact on women in leadership. It gives women in leadership a sense of identity and belonging and strengthens their bonds with one another. A woman can manage a company through turbulent times if a male can have a prominent position and be trusted with making difficult decisions." (Key informant interview with gender officer held on 10th April 2024 at the Nakuru West Subcounty offices).

The study revealed that women bring diverse perspectives and experiences to political roles, enriching policy debates and decision-making processes. As half of the population, women offer unique insights into issues that affect their lives, families, and communities, leading to more comprehensive and effective policies. Women have historically played pivotal roles in advocating for social justice, human rights, and gender equality. Many women leaders prioritize issues such as healthcare, education, poverty alleviation, and

gender-based violence, demonstrating a strong commitment to advancing the well-being of marginalized populations.

Further, Women leaders serve as role models and inspiration for other women and girls, encouraging them to pursue their ambitions and engage in political activism. Seeing women in positions of power challenges stereotypes and empowers future generations to envision themselves as leaders. These findings concur with Adeleke (2014) and Stauffer (2012 who found that it was important to have programs that provide female leaders the chance to become more influential in politics so they may engage in more effective negotiations. These projects include non-profit organisations and groups run by or connected to female leaders.

6.7 Re-socialization of the community

The study sought to find out what was needed to promote the participation of women in politics in the counties. In both the counties the issue of re-socialization of the community was one of the main topics for discussion. Social conventions and attitudes play a major role in determining who should hold positions of authority in many African nations. According to George (2019), societal norms that shape larger social structures frequently define women's political representation, or their capacity to participate in politics. An established patriarchal structure in which men manage the household and make decisions is fundamental to the limitations faced by women (Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019). Even though women have made progress towards full and active participation in politics, according to Mandela and Kapingura (2019), their identity is still primarily perceived as domestic in nature, which acts as a barrier to women's entry into formal politics.

During the discussions in FGD a participant said,

> "Women's role in society is still viewed as being submissive to men; women should prioritise raising and caring for their families above everything else. You see in the Maa community women are there to take care of the children and the husband and not get into politics. You know once they get into politics most women take to forget or neglect their families and the chores that they are supposed to be carrying out in the homestead" (Focused group with elders held on 13th June 2024 Kilgoris Catholic Church).

Another member added that;

> "In actuality, women are seen negatively by society as a whole. It affects both those with and without education. Because of customs and conventions, society is resistant to women assuming leadership positions. This calls for campaigns to alter communities' mindsets." (Focused group discussions with elders held on 13th June 2024 Kilgoris Catholic Church).

The study maintains that hurdles to women's representation in the legislature are caused by cultural presumptions regarding their perceived identities. But as Krook and Mackay (2015) point out, society can be "re-gendered" even if it is gendered as an institution. We propose a renewed perspective and agency based on feminist institutionalism, which holds that a gender lens is necessary to better understand the formal and informal institutions that control women's political careers. The goal of gendering society is to gradually change society and institutions. The panellists also underlined the necessity for awareness-raising to re-socialize society to guarantee increased participation of women in the legislature.

One participant's quote that exemplifies this viewpoint is as follows:

> "Gender disparities can only be closed if society's cognitive patterns are altered. Ladies are capable of leadership. It is possible for women to be leaders. Women, however, do not think of themselves as capable of being leaders. Why is it that there are more women than men in every county, but men make up the majority of lawmakers like here in Narok? This is a result of shifting societal standards and people's perceptions." (Focused group discussions held with elders on 13th June 2024 Kilgoris Catholic Church).

Bourdieu (1985, 1986) asserted that a person's cultural capital determines their worth, or what they are capable of doing, including whether or not their actions are accepted in a particular setting, such as their community or place of employment. Family dignity is also linked to cultural capital. Therefore, setting limits on what women can and cannot do is crucial, especially in Nakuru and Narok where there are cultural norms governing women's behaviour and output. Because politics was seen of as a profession reserved for men, it was impossible for the majority of women in the two counties of Nakuru and Narok to enter the field until recently.

It was assumed that women who participated in political activities and movements were viewed as deviant and unconcerned with their families' honour (Yadav, 2016). They were so dissuaded from attending political rallies in person. However, as more women enter politics, their opinions shift. In KI 011's instance, her new role has also enhanced her cultural capital, and her family's dignity is no longer dependent on her hiding her face or abstaining from public events. Her labour will now determine its honour. Her social connections have grown stronger because of her new role, which has created an atmosphere that allows her to express her agency. The way that others view her has also evolved. She is now a community leader rather than just a wife and daughter-in-law. People pay attention to her. They seek her counsel and assistance.

The aforementioned instances indicate that the elected women's social and cultural capital was promptly enhanced by their new role; yet, they still had to establish their credibility in order to gain the community's trust. For example, Rabina (not real name), who was chosen to serve as deputy chairman in her chama, stated:

> "At first, people didn't want to hear from me." They believed that I was ignorant, and that the quota was the only reason I was given this chance. Nevertheless, people began to respect me once they observed me putting in a lot of effort and demonstrating my abilities at work. Those who previously doubted my abilities are now approaching me for assistance." (Key informant interview with CSO official held on 13th June 2024 AIC church grounds, Njoro).

People did not initially think that women were capable of carrying out their new roles because of habitus, the embodied social rules and norms that shape how we view the world. However, with a significant increase in women's involvement in and contributions to politics, this perception has slowly started to change, consistent with the findings from the Middle East (Shitrit, 2016; Lu, 2020). According to a 2020 Inter Disciplinary Analysts (IDA) poll of over 7,000 people from 75 districts in Nepal, the majority of people in the country support women entering politics and even holding leadership positions. Furthermore, it appears that crises hasten these changes. As MCA doctor stated:

> "When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, many wondered, "What are these women going to do? They are unable to go out alone at night. I did, however, work really hard. I oversaw quarantine centres and gave them all the assistance they required. After I demonstrated my superiority over all males, people's opinions of me have shifted." (Key informant interview with a member of the County Assembly held on 12th April 2024, Nakuru West MCA's office).

Additionally, female politicians stated that the pandemic gave them a chance to establish their credibility and gain the confidence of their voters. Furthermore, women's changing roles have significantly altered their cultural capital, which has a knock-on effect. For example, the rise of female legislators has led to a greater number of women participating in public affairs because, unlike in the past, families now feel comfortable sending their daughters and daughters-in-law to public events. Deputy chair stated:

> "Previously, ladies were unwilling to attend any of the activities we planned because their families would not permit them to do so. Still, a

> growing number of women are coming out and attending our activities."(Key informant interview with CSO official held on 13th April 2024, NGOs office Narok).

The prevailing beliefs about what women can and cannot accomplish have likewise evolved. School attendance is promoted for girls. Among female youth (ages 15–25), the literacy rate has significantly grown, rising from 32.67% in 1991 and 80.21% in 2011 to 90.88% in 2018. After assuming political roles, women's economic capital has also grown. Their status in their communities and within their own families has increased since they receive a wage and have access to public funding. As an example, a ward member, said:

> "I have made a lot of contributions to my community. I led a group of ladies on an informative tour. Now that they've seen the world. This, which points to the street, was muddy when it rained. It was impossible for us to walk, so we didn't need a car! Look at me now, I created this road. Because it's concrete, we can all enjoy using it."(Key informant interview held with a member of the County Assembly on 12th April 2024, Nakuru West Subcounty offices).

The researcher contends that gender roles in politics are greatly influenced by cultural norms, values, and priorities that are created by traditions. Conversely, greater gender-neutral attitudes are linked to democracies. Along with other elements like wealth, race, and ethnicity, gender norms have historically had a significant impact on women's ability to be heard in parliament. Women have traditionally been denied their fundamental rights to actively engage in and be represented in national politics due to prevailing cultural standards around their household responsibilities. Considering this, the recommendations made by the attendees are legitimate. It becomes relevant to ask who will oversee changing society to support women's representation.

6.8 Women's education

Another theme that emerged from the discussions was education for women. Every respondent emphasised that education was necessary to improve their involvement in local government. According to the respondents, women's education equated to having the "power" to direct, sway, and be heard particularly in patriarchal countries where males hold most of the decision-making authority. Respondents also demanded a form of "political education" that would provide women the civic knowledge and mindset needed to enter politics, particularly when running for office, in order for them to be more prominent in political activities. Organising specialised training sessions for women who express interest in seeking political office was another suggestion that aligned with this idea:

> "Though I believe formal education doesn't really matter at the local level, education is still highly important. To equip them to run for office and hold positions in the assembly, women who are willing and demonstrate an interest in local politics should receive specific education in political theory or receive mentoring." (Key informant interview with a former MCA held on 13th April 2024 Njoro Sub coucounty offices).

During the focus group talks, the following viewpoint was expressed:

> "A less formal curriculum should be designed with the express purpose of preparing women who aspire to become politicians and preparing them for political engagements. This way, upon graduation, they will be equipped to assume any political role within society. As you can see, there are a lot of requirements to become a politician, and our low educational background shouldn't be a barrier. This kind of stuff needs to be done." (Focused group discussions with elders held on 13th June 2024 Kilgoris Catholic Church).

This finding agrees with Aars and Christensen (2020) who found that there is a wealth of data demonstrating how political engagement is impacted by personal education. The results of the analysis show that the educational gap is less pronounced in environments with higher levels of education and is actually eliminated in the counties with the highest

percentage of educated citizens. This strengthens the case for the relative educational model, which holds that the impact of individual-level schooling decreases with increasing environmental educational attainment. Based on our research, residents with little means are not helped by their surroundings; conversely, educated residents typically take advantage of advantageous circumstances.

6.9 Chapter Summary

While there might be disparities in women's political participation, there are various opportunities, as evidenced by the number of women who women political participation, there are various opportunities as evidenced by the number of women that have successfully vied for political positions locally and nationally. Some opportunities favour Women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties, such as positive cultural shifts in favour of women participating in politics, a perception that women have a great potential for political roles, policies in place support women's political participation and International, national, and regional organisations have had interventions to support women's participation in politics. The percentage of women in politics in the region is higher compared to other regions in Kenya. Further, women have emerged successful in previous elections and political appointments. Media is an essential tool for profiling women leaders and candidates to the public. Both men and women should be given equal opportunities to participate in politics, and Women possess leadership qualities that qualify them to vie and be elected to political positions. Electing women enables them to address issues and elect women adequately and effectively in social and economic spheres. Therefore, women should receive support from men and the community when seeking to participate in politics. The next chapter (Chapter 7) explores the challenges to women political participation towards attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok counties.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CHALLENGES TO WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TOWARDS THE ATTAIMENT OF PEACE IN NAKURU AND NAROK COUNTIES, KENYA

Introduction

This chapter investigates the challenges to women participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties. Kenya has addressed the underrepresentation and inequality of women in politics and decision-making by enacting legislation and using its constitution as a tool. The 2010 drafting of a new constitution offered a significant chance to alter the laws that had traditionally disadvantaged women. Strong women's participation in the constitution-making process produced significant recommendations that eventually resulted in the requirement to support women's participation being recognized in the constitution.

Women's decisions to engage in politics are significantly influenced by structural and functional variables. Depending on the kind of political role a woman is seeking as well as the dominant contextual factors such the cultural, socio-political, and economic dynamics in the region of participation, they either facilitate or obstruct women's inclusion in politics. However, women's participation in politics continues to be hampered by several factors which are presented in descending order. These are discussed in detail in the following sections.

7.1 Societal Norms

Cultural attitudes and social norms significantly impact women's political participation. In many societies, traditional beliefs about gender roles often portray political leadership as a male domain, relegating women to supportive roles within the private sphere. These entrenched norms can discourage women from pursuing political careers and influence voter perceptions, leading to biased voting patterns against female candidates (UN Women, 2023). The study sought to understand how customs affect women's political participation. The findings are presented in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Rating of how customs affect women's political participation

	Nakuru		**Narok**		**Total**	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	88	43.8	25	18.7	113	33.7
Agree	86	42.8	44	32.8	130	38.8
Neither Disagree nor Agree	14	7.0	18	13.4	32	9.6
Disagree	8	4.0	36	26.9	44	13.1
Strongly Disagree	5	2.5	11	8.2	16	4.8
Total	**201**	**100**	**134**	**100.0**	**335**	**100**

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 7.1 shows that 25 (18.7%) respondents in Narok strongly agree to the statement as compared to 88 (43.8%) in Nakuru. There were 113 (33.7%) respondents in total who strongly agreed to the statement. Of the study respondents, 86 (42.8%) in Nakuru and 44 (32.8%) in Narok agreed to the statement that customs affect women participation in politics. Of the total respondents 130 (38.8%) were those who concurred. The table further

shows that in Nakuru, 14 (7.0%) and in Narok, 18 (13.4%) respondents respectively, indicated that they were neither in agreement nor disagreement. This was 32(9.6%) of the respondents in the total combined. Further, 18 (4.0%) in Nakuru and 36 (26.9%) respondents in Narok expressed disagreement, in total 44 (13.1%) respondents that disagreed overall. Table 7.1 also shows that 5(2.5%) of the study respondents in Nakuru and 11 (8.2%) in Narok expressed strong disagreement.

These results support the findings of Wanjiku Kabira (2016) and Elizabeth Corrigal and Alison Konrad (2007), who found that gender inequality persists in most African countries regarding traditional tasks and work distribution. Men, therefore, handle family management. Cultural variables are thought to reverse the crucial role of women in leadership and politics since they are linked to prejudiced perceptions about women's abilities in many nations. These traditions, according to Anne Phillips (1991), limit women to private residences and the provision of reproductive services in public areas. Men are typically given preference in these male-dominated cultures, and women are pressured to accept menial jobs.

Most Kenyans have socially accepted that men should hold political posts rather than women, and election results typically reflect this. They will not support female candidates in elections because of this retrograde mentality. Women are still viewed and acknowledged as domestic workers due to gender stereotypes that have been created over many generations and are taken for granted by those in the society who absorb them; this keeps them from competing in politics. In a patriarchal society, men are associated with positive traits while women are associated with bad traits. According to Chafetz and

Dworkin (1986), women who desire to pursue political careers must contend with and overcome the traditional views that the political arena is exclusive to men.

Although Kenyans approve of women's inclusion in politics (Bouka *et al.,* 2019), the gendered and dismissive language used towards women candidates reveals how the patriarchal attitude towards women's leadership is entrenched in the community. Further, cultural beliefs tend to be cruel towards women. For example, women are expected to demonstrate that they are good spouses and housekeepers before they can be selected for elective seats, a standard that is not applicable to male candidates.

Additionally, communities with traditional institutions such as the Council of Elders are usually unwilling to back women and discourage them from vying for elected positions as they consider them to be the weaker gender, hence barring prospective women who may offer better administration (Tripp *et al*., 2014). Similarly, despite women being most voters, they tend to vote for men and sometimes against women candidates. This reflects their socialisation, as they view men as leaders and themselves as helpers. Therefore, the level of scrutiny women face in the political arena is high which tends to affect their representation levels throughout the political process as many of them are forced not to take part in politics.

Various roles for men and women have been established by African societal standards. Women's participation in politics is hampered by the perception that men's roles are empowering, and women's roles are disempowering. Similar to this, gender roles in contemporary countries have elevated males and demoted women, portraying women as inferior to men and weak. Furthermore, Yolande Bouka *et al.* (2019) point out that men are portrayed as strong and aggressive, traits that are seen to be advantageous for participating

in politics, while women are portrayed as weak and quiet. This alludes to the patriarchy, another term used by academics to describe the ladder of gender exclusion. It will be difficult for female candidates to compete on an equal footing with males in Kenyan cultures, because many societies still uphold patriarchal conventions that favour men.

7.2 Party politics, patronage, and participation of women

Political parties publicly support gender equality, but the pattern of party primaries reveal that male contenders do not provide women with equal possibilities. Given that the main platforms utilized by candidates for political office are political parties. They also play a crucial role in promoting women for appointments or elections. They choose and assist women for involvement in politics and representation as important gatekeepers for political engagement (Kittilson, 2006; Paxton *et al*., 2007). Because Kenyan political parties lack a solid ideological foundation and are instead organized around regional and ethnic difference, their organizational structures are unclear (Jonyo, 2018). Since political party insiders were viewed as the sponsorship support system prior to the start of decentralization, research indicates that they had an advantage over outsiders in the 2013 elections (Cornell & D'Arcy, 2014). This illustrates the power that political parties still have within the party and their status as "kingmakers."

This study sought to find out the party politics, patronage, and participation of women in politics among the respondents. The findings of the variable are as shown in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Party politics, patronage and participation of women in politics

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	132	65.7	88	65.2	220	65.7
Agree	59	29.4	36	26.7	95	28.4
Neither Disagree nor Agree	3	1.5	4	3.0	7	2.1
Disagree	2	1.0	2	1.5	4	1.2
Strongly Disagree	5	2.5	5	3.7	10	3.0
Total	**201**	**100**	**135**	**100**	**335**	**100**

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 7.2 shows that 315(94.1%) respondents were knowledgeable about party politics, patronage, and participation of women in politics. In Nakuru, 191(95%) were aware about it and in Narok 124(91.9%) aware about it. In both counties, 10(5%) and 11(8.1%) in Nakuru and Narok respectively did think party politics, patronage, and participation of women in politics was important in the counties. This was demonstrated in the FGDs in both the counties as responses in the meetings reviewed. For instance, in Nakuru, a member of FGDs stated the following;

> "Who doesn't know what party politics, patronage, and participation of women in politics is? Everyone can see what is happening, people are no longer dumb. For women to be in elective positions in politics is hard as political parties which are dominated mostly by men always make decisions that favour other men and not women" (Focused group discussions with elders held on 11th April 2024 Njoro AIC church grounds).

A key informant from Narok postulated the following;

> "During the party primaries, these two major alliances engaged in internal discussions, which are commonly known as "negotiated democracy" in various parts of the country. The party would gather all of the contenders for a specific position and talk about the necessity of fielding just one candidate in order to increase the party's chances of winning the seat during these negotiations. The parties polled their supporters in order to influence the negotiations in some cases. In other situations, the party would base its

> assessment of each candidate's popularity on public observation and consensus.*"(*Key informant interview with a former MCA held on 12th June 2024 at Kisirir, Narok North).

Women were found to be more disadvantaged than men in "negotiated democracy," according to the respondents surveyed for this study. The discussions happened in boardrooms, frequently without the presence of numerous female applicants. Some have claimed that women were not benefited by "negotiated democracy," which led to parties endorsing male candidates. Most women were forced to abdicate their aspiration in favour of their male counterparts, run for other offices, or wait to be appointed to government posts following the August 2022 election, making them the net losers of the primary. Certain individuals received assurances that their names would rank highest on the roster of nominees the party would submit for County Assemblies or Parliamentary seats.

Despite having made these commitments during the campaigns, many did not receive nominations. Some said that the party in Mombasa and Nakuru encouraged them to withdraw from the race in the hopes of receiving a nomination. However, "new people who were on the nomination list and were nominated were not involved in the campaigns." Some received nominations because of their friendship with the party's gatekeepers. These results are in line with the findings of other researchers, such as Kassilly and Onkware, (2010) and Kanogo (2005), who observed that women occupy positions in political parties where they have the least influence over decisions, such as deputies. This is because political parties are dominated by the openly masculinist male ruling class, which limits the opportunities for women to hold leadership positions.

7.3 Ethnic-based politics and the challenge of women participation

The researcher asked the respondents to ascertain whether ethnic-based politics posed a challenge to women's political participation. The results are as shown in Table 7.3;

Table 7.3: Ethnic-based politics and the challenge of women participation

	Nakuru		**Narok**		**Total**	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	75	40.5	30	20.0	105	31.3
Agree	81	43.8	86	57.4	167	49.9
Neither Disagree nor Agree	15	8.1	14	9.3	29	8.7
Disagree	6	3.2	12	8.0	18	5.3
Strongly Disagree	8	4.3	8	5.3	16	4.8
Total	**185**	**100**	**150**	**100**	**335**	**100**

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 7.3 shows that 272 (94.1%) respondents were knowledgeable about ethnic-based politics and participation of women in politics. In Nakuru, 156 (84.3%) were aware about it and in Narok 116 (77.4%) aware about it. As further illustrated by the findings, 29 (22.6%) respondents in Nakuru were either neutral or did not agree with the statement compared to 34 (22.6%) respondents in Narok. The findings suggest ethnic-based politics in both counties influenced women's political participation.

As was previously mentioned, many people are in favour of women serving in politics. However, the FGD discussions and interviews conducted in the counties show that stereotypes about women in politics are shaped by social and cultural values. There is a widespread belief in many societies that women should accept their place at home and

cannot lead. Some male candidates utilize this "belief" to criticize female candidates and even make the claim that it is improper for women to lead men.

Participants in focus groups in Narok County stated that their culture views women as the weaker sex because they lack the aggressive nature needed to defend the tribe and repel outsider invasions. This has been utilized in conjunction with the idea of negotiated democracy to exclude women from Narok County's decision-making processes. Every clan in this patriarchal society has a male leader. One of the participants noted that,

> "They get together and choose the best applicant for each open post. Women are not allowed to attend these meetings, which are frequently held at night, because it is assumed that they will be chosen to serve as women's representatives." (Focused group discussions with elders held on 12th June 2024 Kilgoris Catholic Church Hall).

A small number of women are permitted to participate in subcommittee meetings when certain communities choose to do so, but not in all of them. Their involvement is minimal. The Women Representative seat is the only seat for which women will receive support to run for. In Nakuru County, a distinct strategy for negotiated democracy was said to have taken place within the primaries of political parties. In this instance, a well-liked female candidate would be contacted and requested to withdraw so that a male contender from the same party might win. Among other things, the candidates would be guaranteed government jobs. Belonging to a clan or tribe also ranked first on the list of cultural barriers that women encounter. Only men are identified to run for office in areas where clan loyalty determines politics. Because they will be "married off to another clan," women are not chosen. This was mentioned a lot in Narok County as opposed in Nakuru. This issue is made worse by tribalism; hence, female voters found it easier to back a male candidate

from their tribe than one of their fellow women since they are more devoted to their clan and tribe.

The dynamics of ethnic or "tribal" identity are comparable. Instead of the candidate, they are loyal to their tribe and sense of subgroup identification. According to a focus group participant in Nakuru County,

> "The members will push you out if you belong to a different tribe than that of the party leader." They will claim that you are not one of their own and that other partygoers have requested you to leave since you belong to a different community to them, "All individuals need to be part of backyard parties. In addition, it makes no difference if you are furthering the party leader's objectives. Community party members would still wish to keep you locked out." (Focused group discussions with elders held on 12th April 2024 Nakuru West Sub County offices).

7.4 Financial Capability of Women

The study sought to establish whether financial capability of women was a challenge to their participation in politics. The results are shown in Table 7.4;

Table 7.4: Financial capability of women

	Nakuru		**Narok**		**Total**	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	117	58.2	78	58.2	195	58.2
Agree	44	21.9	22	16.4	66	19.7
Neither Disagree nor Agree	26	12.9	14	10.4	40	11.9
Disagree	6	3.0	12	9.0	18	5.4
Strongly Disagree	8	4.0	8	6.0	16	4.8
Total	**201**	**100**	**134**	**100**	**335**	**100**

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 7.4 shows that more than three-quarters, 261(77.9%) of the respondents agreed financial capability was important for participation in politics in both counties. In Nakuru,

161(80.1%) were knowledgeable, with 40(19.1%) being unsure, disagreeing and strongly disagreeing with the statement. Narok had 100(74.6%) were knowledgeable with 34(25.4%) being unsure, disagreeing and strongly disagreeing with the statement. This was affirmed by a key informant, who had this to say,

> "Everyone is allowed to contest for in any position in this county. However, how much you have as an individual in terms financial capability was important for participation in politics" You see I have seen politician like me having a lot of money to dish out around. So, if you have no financial muscle it becomes hard for you to be elected or be in any position. And you see it is only men who seem to have the financial capability which is important for participation in politics" *(*Key informant interview with a political aspirant held 12th April 2024 Nakuru West Sub County offices*).*

This finding is like Schulika *et al.* (2014) who found that economic empowerment increases their ability to fully participate in politics. If one has the means to cover election-related expenses, they can run effective campaigns. According to money has played a significant role in shaping Kenyan elections. Thus, the process that chooses the winner is a necessary evil. Furthermore, because Kenyan politics are competitive, a lot of money is needed to fund campaigns, ads, logistics, and rallies, which drives up the expense of the electoral process. According to Mueller (2011) and Bakari (2002), there is a direct correlation between wealth and political influence in Kenya, meaning that people with money control politics. Women are consequently economically unable to launch successful campaigns because they lack funding. It is believed that this disadvantage plays a major role in their low level of political participation.

Accordingly, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2020) reports that 29% of Kenyan women are emancipated and capable of participating successfully in the social, economic, and political arenas; however, 40% of these women live in urban regions compared to 22%

in rural ones. This is corroborated by the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, which reveals significant economic differences between Kenyan rural and urban communities.

The population of the nation is divided between rural and urban areas, with 68.9% of the population living in rural areas and 31.1% in urban areas (KNBS, 2019). Moreover, compared to their counterparts in metropolitan settings, the majority of women reside in rural areas and have limited access to financial resources. Furthermore, according to Wanjala and Odongo (2010), only 23% of Kenyan women are involved in community-based businesses that offer easily available financing. This often makes it challenging for female candidates to compete against male candidates in both local and national electoral politics on an even playing field.

Campaign funding is essential for political campaigns. Anyone running for political office in Kenya faces financial challenges while funding their campaigns. The gendered nature of election finance appears to have a greater impact on women's access to leadership roles (Kayuni & Muriaas, 2014). Aili Tripp *et al*. (2014) also point out that women are less likely to hold office positions and typically have less money. Despite the constitution's guarantee of property entitlement, the majority of Kenyan women have little access to it; they officially own 1% of the country's land, compared to 56% held collectively (World Bank, 2004). Furthermore, women in Kenya have access to 65% of the financial resources available to men, according to Yolande Bouka *et al.* (2019). The study therefore set to fond put to what extenT the respondents agreed to this.

7.5 The increasing cost of electoral politics

The study sought to establish to what extent the increasing cost of electoral politics hindered women's political participation. The results are as shown in Table 7.5;

Table 7.5: The increasing cost of electoral politics

	Nakuru		**Narok**		**Total**	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	110	54.7	85	63.4	195	58.2
Agree	51	25.3	15	16.4	66	19.7
Neither Disagree nor Agree	21	10.4	14	11.2	35	11.9
Disagree	6	3.0	12	9.0	18	5.4
Strongly Disagree	13	6.5	8	6.0	16	4.8
Total	**201**	**100**	**134**	**100**	**335**	**100**

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 7.5 shows respondents' agreements and disagreements on whether increasing cost of electoral politics influenced women's participation in politics. The findings reveal that 261 (77.9%) of the respondents from both counties concurred with the assertions. In Nakuru County, 161 (81%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while 40 (19.9%) of the respondents indicating neutrality and disagreement. By contrast, 100(79.8%) of the respondents in Narok agreed to the statement while 22% (34) of them reported neutrality and disagreement over the statement. The findings suggest that increasing cost of politics affected women's political participation.

For many female politicians, raising money to support their campaigns is a major obstacle. Political parties adopted strategies, including lowering nomination fees during the party primary to encourage female participation. Women were still unable to raise enough money to compete against a field dominated by male candidates of all races despite the parties' reduced fees (Johnson-Myers & Campbell, 2024). Women do, in fact, typically pay more than males. Respondents noted that women found it challenging to raise money in most counties. But because this made them noticeable, they had to hunt for money. Many were forced to rely on the generosity of their friends and relatives to raise money. In the event that the candidate was not successful after spending designated for other needs.

Through the focused group discussions many of the respondents pointed out that the perceived barrier to women's participation in elections has been the increased usage of money. A key source from Kakamega County, who has been nominated to the Narok County Assembly, stated that the 2022 elections were fully monetized when explaining why she did not participate in the just ended general election. In Narok a KI said,

> *"*In 2022, monetary handout was the reason some attended rallies. Many sought to get cash wherever they could since they were poor. When the campaign first started, giving out KES 100 was acceptable; however, by the time it was almost over, KES 200 or 300 was the standard amount. Women find it difficult to equal these figures, in contrast to men." (Key informant interview with a former MCA held on 13th June 2024, Shankoe, Kilgoris).

Similar opinions about the 2022 election cycle were expressed by a key informant in Nakuru County, who claimed it was the costliest election she had ever taken part in. A participant of FGDs noted that;

> "Obtaining knowledge, education, and communication materials was a crucial campaign tactic that every contender required to present their candidature to the electorate. Additionally, it makes them more appealing to donors who start to recognize their dedication to being involved in politics." (Focus group discussions with the elders held on 12th April 2024 Nakuru West Sub County offices).

According to these respondents, in a contested election, exposure is important, particularly when there are fewer male candidates than female ones. The financial power of female candidates also adds value.

Many of the women interviewed had to turn to other networks to raise money due to overwhelming financial demands. Among the networks that gave financial support to female candidates were the church and women's self-help/support clubs. When women faced obstacles, these networks were crucial in raising campaign finances. One participant in Nakuru observed that she understood early on that raising money was essential as "money is the main thing." One gains negotiating leverage within a political party with money. During the campaigns, her resources diminished; therefore, she had to hunt for additional funding to continue these initiatives and strengthen her standing within the party and the community.

7.6 Use of Media by Women Leaders

The researcher asked the respondents to what extent the use of media by women enhanced their political participation. The results are shown in Table 7.6;

Table 7.6: The use of media by women leaders

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	121	54.0	69	62.1	190	56.7
Agree	63	28.1	16	14.4	79	23.6
Neither Disagree nor Agree	21	9.4	11	9.9	32	11.9
Disagree	6	2.8	9	8.1	16	9.6
Strongly Disagree	13	5.8	5	4.5	18	5.3
Total	**224**	**100**	**111**	**100**	**335**	**100**

Source: Field Data, 2024

Table 7.6 shows respondents' agreements and disagreements on whether the use of media influenced women's political participation. The findings reveal that 269 (80.3%) of the respondents from both counties concurred with the assertions. In Nakuru County, 184 (82.1%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while 60 (17.9%) of the respondents indicating neutrality and disagreement. On the other hand, in Narok, 85 (76.5%) respondents agreed while 23.5% (26) of them reported neutrality and disagreement over the statement. The findings suggest that media played a significant role in women's political participation.

An emerging theme on the opportunities for women's political participation was on the use of media. On one side was the way the media cover women politicians. A KI said,

> "The way that women in politics are covered by the media varies a lot. Some women are frequently featured in the media, while others are seldom discussed. Depending on the political slant of various media channels, those who make frequent appearances are frequently presented in different ways. Social scientists have demonstrated how differently the media covers political leaders who are

> men and women. According to conventional gender stereotypes, stories about women in politics more frequently highlight their families, looks, attire, and confrontational behaviour. This kind of gender bias benefits male politicians at the expense of women." (Key informant interview with gender expert held on 12th April 2024 Nakuru West Sub County offices).

This finding is similar to Van der Pas and Aaldering (2020) on their study titled "Are journalists biased against female politicians?" They found that women politicians received about 17 percentage points less media attention. They also noted there seemed to be little gender bias in media visibility in majoritarian electoral systems. Similarly, there is an indication that the gender difference in media visibility of politicians is larger on TV than in newspapers.

Therefore, it can be concluded from the study's findings that media coverage of male and female politicians varies. For female politicians, the impact of this gender prejudice in the media is probably negative. Male politicians in PR systems have a distinct advantage over their female counterparts since more visibility of parties and candidates generally results in an increased chance to vote for that party/candidate (Aaldering *et al.,* 2018; Kiousis & McCombs, 2004). Men also benefit from the gender bias in media coverage of politicians, which tends to highlight their electability and lessen the attention on their personal lives. Additionally, they gain from their stronger associations with masculine concerns and characteristics, which are highly regarded by many in politics (Koenig *et al*., 2011). Thus, the virtually universal descriptive under-representation of women in politics that persists globally is probably a result of media prejudice.

7.7 Violence and Security

The researcher asked the respondents to ascertain whether violence and insecurity hindered women's political participation. The results are as shown in Table 7.7;

Table 7.7: Violence and security

	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	100	44.6	72	71.3	172	51.3
Agree	94	42.0	12	11.9	106	31.6
Neither Disagree nor Agree	21	9.0	8	8.0	29	8.7
Disagree	6	2.6	6	6.0	12	3.6
Strongly Disagree	13	5.6	3	3.0	16	4.8
Total	**234**	**100**	**101**	**100**	**335**	**100**

Source Field Data, 2024

Table 7.7 shows respondents' agreements and disagreements on whether violence against women influenced women's political participation. The findings reveal that 278 (82.9%) of the respondents from both counties concurred with the assertions. In Nakuru County, 194 (86.6%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while 40 (13.4%) of the respondents indicating neutrality and disagreement. On the other hand, in Narok, 84 (82.9%) respondents agreed while 17.1% (17) of them reported neutrality and disagreement over the statement. The findings suggest that violence against women coupled with their insecurity hindered them from political participation.

Focus group talks exposed a persistent concern of sexual harassment during strategy meetings which sometimes dragged on late into the night or when out on the campaign trail. They went on to say that even with modest clothing, nobody is protected. It is a

requirement for female candidates to provide sexual favours in order to receive support for their campaigns. One participant shared that she had to decline multiple approaches made to her. Many others in the counties shared her desire to work hard and advance based alone on her merits. Some claimed that in Nakuru, these forms of harassment are used by male elites in charge of political parties to discourage women from seeking public office and to draw in their female connections.

Women in Narok County asserted that they were more vulnerable to violence during election season since they were not permitted to join night-time gatherings with the same freedom as men. Political agreements and plans were made at night in isolated locations, similar to other counties, which hindered female candidates from successfully engaging in the process. Some made the decision to run as independents or to leave the party completely.

> "You see it is very inconveniencing to have to meet till very late to lay strategies on how to campaign. These meetings sometimes take a very long time to conclude and for some of us who are women we find them inconveniencing to us. Again, you have a family that is waiting for you at home. Sometimes it forces us to vacate the campaigns so as to save our marriages. Who can accept his wife to be out till very late when he is not accompanying her?" (Key informant interview with an MCA held on, 12th April 2024, Nakuru West Subcounty offices).

The above findings reveal that women's political participation was hindered by various forms of violence that made them uncomfortable to run for political positions. This suggests that some women were operating under a hostile political environment which may have made them either to withdraw from political competition.

7.8 The Various Roles and Responsibilities of Women

The researcher asked the respondents to agree or disagree on whether certain roles and responsibilities played by women hindered their participation in politics. The findings are as shown in Table 7.8.

Table 7.8: The various roles and responsibilities of women

	Nakuru		**Narok**		**Total**	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	91	53.5	80	48.5	171	51.0
Agree	46	27.0	56	33.9	102	30.44
Neither Disagree nor Agree	16	9.4	11	6.7	27	8.0
Disagree	6	3.5	13	7.9	19	5.7
Strongly Disagree	11	6.5	5	3.0	16	4.8
Total	**170**	**100**	**165**	**100**	**335**	**100**

Source: Field Data, 2024

The findings reveal that certain roles and responsibilities hindered women's political participation in both counties as illustrated by 81.44% (273) respondents. In Nakuru County 80.5% (137) agreed while 19.5% (33) of the respondents disagreeing. On the other hand, in Narok County 82.4% (136) respondents agreeing while 17.6% (29) respondents indicating neutrality and disagreement. These figures suggest that the respondents were aware about certain roles and responsibilities that hindered women's political participation.

The study found that women politicians are supposed to undertake their responsibilities without failing. This was by posing the question, "As a woman, what are some of the challenges you face in participating in politics?" One of the study participants said that there was a need to have to balance her many responsibilities. She said that,

> "My husband called me in the middle of the meeting and said he wanted to eat food that I cooked today. He insisted that I leave the conference to go cook, even though I had three children and a housekeeper who could have made him supper. I went to make dinner for him after requesting permission to depart." (Key informant interview with a political aspirant held on 12th June 2024 Narok North Sub County offices).

This is similar to several scholars such as Bawa & Sanyare, 2013; Tagoe and Abakah, 2015, who state that women cannot compete on an equal footing with males because of the various responsibilities they play as wives, mothers, and carers. Women play multiple roles, which leaves them with little to no time for political involvement.

Therefore, women must be released from some of their responsibilities in the house and community if they are to have the time to pursue chances in politics and other public offices that are dominated by men. Once more, women who aspire to hold public and political office should reject the obligations and expectations of societal norms.

7.9 Education

The researcher asked the respondents to ascertain whether educational status of women hindered them from political participation. The results are shown in table 7.9;

Table 7.9: Education

	Nakuru		**Narok**		**Total**	
Response	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	142	71.0	88	65.2	230	68.6
Agree	49	24.5	36	26.7	85	25.4
Neither Disagree nor Agree	3	1.5	4	3.0	7	2.1
Disagree	2	1.0	2	1.5	4	1.2
Strongly Disagree	5	2.5	5	3.7	10	3.0
Total	**200**	**100**	**135**	**100**	**335**	**100**

Source Field Data, 2024

The findings reveal that educational status of women was a barrier to their political participation as illustrated 94.0% (315) respondents from both counties. In Nakuru, educational status of women was significant as indicated by 95.5% (191) respondents. Similarly, in Narok County 91.9% (124) respondents agreed that educational status of women had an impact on women's political participation.

According to the survey, participant replies consistently cite participants' educational attainment as a barrier. Education was cited by all twenty respondents as a barrier to women's involvement in local government. In general, they believed that formal education and literacy were the order of the day, meaning that writing and the English language would be the mediums of communication used at these meetings. The respondents said that education empowers and gives one the opportunity to interact with a variety of individuals, hence enhancing one's interpersonal skills. As per a participant from Narok,

> "My poor English writing and speaking skills have kept me confined to this neighbourhood, where I am unable to go. I am not interested in being involved in politics, but I know someone who is very interested but is unable to pursue it because she believes she is not as good as her potential rivals. Thus, she tells herself, "I should have gone to school." FGD 009 ((Focus group discussions with elders held on 11th June 2024 Kilgoris Catholic Church).

Another assembly respondent expressed the same opinion saying,

> "If women are to engage in civic engagement activities, their education must come first. She believes education is crucial if we wish to participate in civic education activities and programs and understand our rights. To contribute to knowledge or policy in Narok today, one need just be educated. Tell me, today, how many of the wise old folks are involved in making decisions? Even illiterate leaders are occasionally ignored. In a same vein, knowledge of one's rights and participation in national policy discussions rather than just local ones are prerequisites for education. So, if women have less education, it becomes a significant obstacle for them. A strong educational foundation, in my opinion, can help a woman advance and possibly even break down sociocultural boundaries in

society.” *(*Key informant interview with political aspirant held on 12th June 2024 Nakuru West Sub County offices*).*

The above assertions reveal that educational status remains one of the greatest determinants of women’s political participation in both counties. This suggests that it was highly unlikely that women with low or no education could be trusted with political positions as well as spearheading peace initiatives in the study areas. These findings corroborate Mwaka (2020) whose findings reveal that educational status of women was an added advantage in their participation in political sphere.

7.10 Chapter Summary

Women have traditionally faced some challenges to political participation. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts at multiple levels, including changes to laws and policies, cultural shifts to promote gender equality, and targeted support programs to empower women to participate in politics and leadership roles. The political culture of the major parties is the main barrier to women's election representation. Secondly, women are usually not elected to positions of power within party structures because of gender biases of male leadership. Cultural elements at the community level impact the execution of gender policies and women's political participation. Women also prefer taking positions that are not demanding due to responsibilities at home and fear of their husbands.

However, having the official right to run for office does not ensure that a person in this case, a woman can engage in the political process successfully. Healthy, gender-friendly political cultures where women can act autonomously and are empowered to create, design, and implement policies are necessary for effective involvement in formal electoral politics. In order to do this, it is typically necessary to question established patriarchal structures

that restrict political action and participation. The only way to enable women to confront and bring about institutional and systemic reforms is through their integration into the local administration.

Given the careful consideration given to women's representation in the national parliament and county assembly, the paper finds that a number of factors, including the strong application of cultural and customary laws, traditional mindsets, and the dominance of traditional authorities, operate against women in a political domain that is friendly to them. These factors have weakened the political interests of women in Narok and parts of Nakuru. In contrast to representational democracies, women have more barriers to participating in county politics. Encouraging women in regional government could lead to gender parity in politics. Nonetheless, re-examining the articles on gender mainstreaming in the county and nation is necessary for women's integration. Women in leadership positions in local government can change prevailing gender-insensitive behaviours and conventions and promote an inclusive and egalitarian democracy by actively participating in the creation and execution of policies. Women will rarely be able to get involved in and participate in national politics unless they receive training at the grassroots level.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes, concludes and makes recommendations based on the findings of the study and suggests areas for further research. This is done according to the four specific objectives.

8.1 Summary of the Findings

The study aimed to understand the nature of gender mainstreaming policies (two-thirds gender rule, free primary education policy, public participation policy, equality and equity and the right to own property affecting women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok counties. The study found that people make choices within the constraints imposed by personal circumstances and the structural distribution of rules, norms, resources, and power inequalities. The majority, 124(37.0%) of the respondents, agreed they were familiar with gender mainstreaming aspects. Further, 262(77.2%) respondents knew the government's role in shaping gender mainstreaming.

The awareness levels were higher in Nakuru 146 (72.6%) than in Narok 89 (66.4%). Key policies identified by respondents include the Two-thirds Gender Rule, Free Primary Education Policy, Public Participation Policy, Equality and Equity Policy, and the Right to Own Property. Each policy has advanced gender equality in different ways despite facing implementation challenges. For example, the Two-thirds Gender Rule ensures women's

representation in political positions, while the Free Primary Education Policy has increased girls' school enrolment by removing financial barriers.

Among the study respondents, 70.1% (235) are either highly or very highly aware of the gender mainstreaming policies. A significant percentage of the respondents from Nakuru 58% (195) indicated a very high level of awareness about the Public Participation Policy while 42% (140) respondents reported high awareness in Narok.

The high level of awareness could be due to the sustained dissemination of the Constitution of Kenya, promulgated in 2010, laying down the foundation for public participation in governance. In Nakuru, 71% (240) of respondents strongly agreed with their awareness of equality and equity, compared to 29% (95) in Narok. This indicates a higher level of strong conviction towards these concepts in Nakuru. The higher percentage in Nakuru could be attributed to more effective awareness campaigns, better educational programs, and a more progressive socio-political environment that promotes gender equality and equity.

There was a high awareness of property ownership in Nakuru 83% (280) compared to 17% (55) in Narok. This strong agreement suggests a robust recognition of property rights in Nakuru compared to Narok. The parity in these figures indicates that awareness campaigns and educational efforts regarding property rights might have been equally effective in Nakuru County compared to Narok County. Factors influencing the success of gender mainstreaming policies in Nakuru and Narok counties, Kenya, include level of education, community leadership influence, cultural beliefs, media and religion.

Educated women are more likely to assert their rights, challenge discriminatory practices, and participate in decision-making forums, including political parties, community

meetings, and public debates. Educated women may be crucial in advocating for gender mainstreaming policies and reforms to advance women's political participation. They can leverage their education and networks to lobby policymakers, raise awareness about gender inequalities, and mobilise support for policy changes that promote women's rights and empowerment.

Factors influencing the success of these policies in Nakuru and Narok counties include cultural attitudes, political will, institutional capacity, and the role of civil society organisations (CSOs). Positive cultural shifts and strong political will in Nakuru have led to higher women's political representation than Narok. Institutional capacity, including resources and trained personnel, is crucial for effective policy implementation. CSOs are vital in advocating for gender equality and supporting policy implementation.

Based on the second objective, the study aimed to evaluate the extent of women's political participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties. The findings indicate that women's involvement in Rift Valley politics and at various levels is moderate. The high percentage in moderate is attributed to the dynamic of women's participation in Nakuru County versus Narok County. Nakuru County has a slightly higher number of women in politics than Narok County.

Measures in determining their level of political participation include the number of elected women, the number of women appointed in higher/ local positions, the discrimination of women in politics and the protection of women's rights. The number of elected women in government can be a key indicator of their level of political participation, but it's not the

only factor to consider. Generally, when more women are in elected positions, it often signifies better representation of women's interests and perspectives in policymaking.

This can lead to policies that address issues important to women, such as reproductive rights, gender equality, and childcare. The number of women appointed at both local and national levels is a measure of women's political participation. To a very high extent, the highest percentage was recorded at moderate because as the number of women in elected positions increases, it can lead to institutional changes within political parties and government structures. This may include the implementation of gender quotas, changes in party platforms, and creating policies to support women's political participation.

Based on the third objective, the study explored opportunities to women's political participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties. The study findings indicate that providing opportunities for women's political participation is a matter of social justice and human rights and is essential for achieving effective governance, sustainable development, and inclusive societies.

Various opportunities favour Women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties. Positive cultural shifts can create a supportive environment for women's political participation in several ways. Cultural shifts that challenge traditional gender stereotypes and roles can dismantle barriers that limit women's political participation. There is a perception that women have great potential for political roles. Women possess a range of leadership skills, including empathy, collaboration, communication, and consensus-building, which are valuable in politics.

The policies in place support women's political participation. For example, implementing gender quotas, such as legislated quotas or voluntary party quotas, can increase women's

representation in elected positions. Through implementing the policies and initiatives on gender mainstreaming governments can create more inclusive and equitable political systems that empower women to participate fully in decision-making processes, contribute to democratic governance, and drive positive social change.

Media is an essential tool for profiling women leaders and candidates to the public. Media outlets can actively seek out and feature stories about women leaders and candidates, highlighting their achievements, experiences, and perspectives. By giving women visibility in news coverage, the media can counteract the underrepresentation of women in political discourse and contribute to a more inclusive public narrative. There is a general perception regarding women's political participation. Equal opportunities for both men and women to participate in politics are fair and crucial for a healthy and representative democracy. When both genders have equal access to political participation, a more diverse range of perspectives and experiences is considered in decision-making processes.

Based on the fourth objective, the study sought to investigate the challenges to women's political participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties. The study findings suggest that women have traditionally faced some challenges to political participation. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts at multiple levels, including changes to laws and policies, cultural shifts to promote gender equality, and targeted support programs to empower women to participate in politics and leadership roles.

The political culture of the major parties is the main barrier to women's election representation. Political culture often reflects broader societal norms and attitudes towards gender roles. Traditional stereotypes and expectations about women's roles as caregivers

and homemakers may persist within political parties, leading to unconscious biases against women seeking leadership positions or running for office. Women may face barriers in accessing these networks, often built and maintained by male-dominated circles, making it harder for them to gain the support and resources needed to run successful campaigns.

Women are usually not elected to power within party structures because of gender biases of male leadership. Historically, many major political parties have been dominated by men in terms of leadership positions, decision-making roles, and candidate selection processes. This male dominance can create an environment where women feel excluded or marginalised, making it more challenging to rise within the party ranks and secure nominations for electoral positions. Cultural elements at the community level impact the execution of gender policies and women's political participation.

Political systems and institutions may have built-in biases or barriers that disadvantage women. These include electoral systems favouring male candidates, lack of access to resources such as campaign funding, and limited opportunities for women to advance within political parties. Many women face challenges in balancing their professional aspirations with family responsibilities. While some women may prioritise family commitments over career advancement, this decision is often influenced by personal values, financial considerations, and support systems rather than fear of their husbands.

8.2 Conclusions

Based on the first objective, the study concludes that gender mainstreaming policies have been vital in shaping and reshaping women’s involvement in both politics and peace processes. The devolved units which provide a devolved governance system has been

striving to adopt the existing gender mainstreaming policies in their respective counties to further empower women and girls. In Nakuru County, gender mainstreaming policies have been taking shape and are evidenced by the growing involvement of women in County affairs. However, in Narok, despite the awareness of the existing gender mainstreaming policies, its adoption and implementation has been slow and this was attributed to strong cultural values that favour patriarchy in most of the communities in the County.

Based on the second objective which was to evaluate the extent of women's political participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties, the study concludes that the participation of women in these Counties vary. In view of this, in Nakuru County, the study concludes that women's political participation has been growing and this was evidenced by their growing number in the political scene as well as in other County affairs. Also, their participation has been bolstered by the positive perceptions among the citizens with respect to women's ability to govern. On the other hand, the study concludes that women's participation in politics in Narok County was weak as evidenced by their poor representation in the elective posts. This may have been attributed to their reluctant to engage in political matters fearing stereotyping and victimization. Strong cultural practices that discriminate against women may have also been a major factor.

Based on the third objective which was to explore the opportunities to women's political participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties, the study concludes that there exists several opportunities that come with women's political participation. Among the opportunities established by the study included but are not limited to strengthening the existing policies on gender mainstreaming, heightened training of women through education to make them aware of their noble roles in the society, increased

positive perceptions regarding women's political participation as well as in peace processes. These opportunities were most likely to be explored varyingly across the study areas.

Based on the fourth objective which was to investigate the challenges to women's political participation towards the attainment of peace in Nakuru and Narok Counties, the study concludes that in both Counties, women continue to confront several challenges that serve as bottleneck towards the realization of their effective participation. Some of the challenges identified by the study included but are not limited to structural barriers, persisting cultural and social norms that favour the male gender and inadequate to lack of empowerment of women. The study concludes that these challenges were likely to affect women in Narok County compared to Nakuru County owing to the fact that the latter is a cosmopolitan in nature and has since been epitomized by gradual erosion of certain cultural practices which have been threatened by increased globalization.

8.3 Recommendations

Based on the first objective, the study recommends that the government should strengthen existing laws and introduce new policies that mandate gender equality in political representation. This is by carrying out a gap analysis. This is by conducting a thorough review of current laws to identify gaps and areas where gender equality is not adequately addressed. Similarly, this could be enhanced by establishing independent bodies or commissions to oversee the implementation and enforcement of gender equality laws. Then, penalties for non-compliance and incentives for political parties and institutions that meet or exceed gender equality targets should be introduced. In addition, regular audits should be carried out: Conduct audits and assessments to monitor compliance with gender

equality laws. There is also a need to ensure transparency in reporting gender representation statistics and progress towards achieving gender equality goals.

Based on the second objective, the study recommends that the introduction of several measures to bolster women's political participation such as providing training programs for women to develop leadership skills and political acumen. Training for lawmakers also needs to be done: Provide training and resources for lawmakers to understand and advocate for gender equality in political representation. Also, there is a need for support for women candidates: Offer training and support programs for women candidates to help them navigate the political landscape and succeed in elections. Awareness campaigns: Conduct campaigns to educate communities about the importance of women's political participation and gender equality. Secondly, form partnerships with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society groups committed to gender equality. These alliances can amplify advocacy efforts and create a unified front. The NGOs and civil society organisations can run awareness campaigns to educate the public about the importance of the two-thirds gender rule. These campaigns can use various media platforms, including social media, to reach a broad audience.

Based on the third objective, the study recommends that should increase awareness creation to amplify on the vitality of women's involvement in politics and peace building initiatives. This can be enhanced through mass education across the country. Women should be encouraged to actively take part in matters of national concerns. This can be enhanced by the existing political parties through inclusion of women in political decisions of the party.

Based on the fourth objective, the government should aim at promoting inter-communal dialogue on the importance roles of women in governance. This may help to water down strong cultural practices of certain communities that are against women's roles in political leadership. Also, the government should strengthen the affirmative action's plans to help with empowerment of young girls and women. Men too should be encouraged to support women's leadership.

8.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The study was restricted to the counties of Nakuru and Narok, and since most of the Kenyan societies are still practicing some cultural traditions, and the implementation of gender mainstreaming varies across devolved units, there is need to conduct a study across the country with a view of establishing how gender mainstreaming in at the national level influence peace and stability. Moreover, there is need to conduct a cross-sectional study to determine whether the newly promulgated 2010 Constitution that provide for the new legal and regulatory framework has been effective in attaining gender equality. A cross-sectional study will provide insights as to whether the country has been able to make strides and realize gains, and how to solidify the gains with the intention of realizing additional gains. Further, studies should be conducted on how best to intensify the involvement of women in peace processes as well as governance because political participation is not a means to an end, rather, political participation is perception in nature and as such women cannot be coerced to get involved.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of Introduction

Dear Respondent

I'm a PhD candidate in peace and conflict studies at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST). This questionnaire is intended to assist me in gathering information for the study that I will submit to partially complete the criteria of the aforementioned PhD. Please indicate your response to the questionnaire items by either checking the corresponding bracket with a checkmark (√) or entering the proper response in the designated slots. Your input will only be used for academic research and will be handled in confidence.

Please make sure the questionnaire does not contain your name.

Thank you for your participation.

Yours Faithfully,

Beatrice Akoth Onamu

CPC/H/01-57881/2016

Appendix 2: Research questionnaire for women in politics and other gender stakeholders

Kenya took a significant step toward implementing the new constitution in August 2010. The new constitution includes the Bill of Rights, which addresses injustices historically faced by minority and marginalized groups in Kenyan society, particularly women. This questionnaire seeks to understand the **Gender Mainstreaming Policies Influencing Women's Political Participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya"**. Its specific goal is to investigate the gender mainstreaming practices in Kenya's Nakuru and Narok counties. Assess the level of women's political participation in Kenya's Nakuru and Narok counties, investigate avenues for women to participate in politics there, and identify obstacles to women's political participation in these regions. Please complete all relevant sections of this survey. There are several possible answers for every question. The information gathered from your response will be kept private and utilized exclusively for research. Your entire assistance with this research is much valued.

SECTION 1: Demographic Data

1.Gender

Male [ ]

Female [ ]

2.Marital Status

Single

Married

Widow

Widower

Divorced

3. Religion

Christian

Muslim

Traditional

Other

4.What is your highest level of education?

None [ ]

Primary [ ]

Secondary [ ]

College Diploma [ ]

University [ ]

5. How old are you?

18 - 30

31 – 40

41 – 50

51 – 60

Above 60

6. What is your county of residence?

……

7. What is your constituency of residence?

……

……

8. What is your ward of residence?

……

……

9.How long have you been living in this area?

……

……

10. Have you ever been involved in politics?

    Yes

    No

11. If yes state the position.

    ……

SECTION 2: Nature of Gender Mainstreaming Policies in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya

Gender mainstreaming policies refers to the integration of a gender equality perspective across all government actions.

12. On a scale of 1 to 5 where indicate the extent to which you are familiar with gender mainstreaming concept.

    1. Not Familiar [ ]
    2. Least Familiar [ ]
    3. Fairly Familiar [ ]
    4. Much Familiar [ ]
    5. Very Much Familiar [ ]

13. Do you think the government has played a role in shaping gender mainstreaming policies in Kenya?

    1. Yes [ ]
    2. No [ ]
    3. Do not Know [ ]
    4. Somehow [ ]

14. Indicate the extent to which you are aware of the following gender mainstreaming policies, where **1 is VERY LOW EXTENT** and **5 is VERY GREAT EXTENT**

		Very low Extent	**Low Extent**	**Moderate**	**High Extent**	**Very high Extent**
	Two-thirds gender rule					

	Free Primary Education policy					
	Public Participation Policy					
	Equality and Equity					
	Rights to own property					

15. Assuming that gender mainstreaming policies are in place, to what extent would the following factors influence the success of gender mainstreaming policies in your county?

		Very low Extent	**Low Extent**	**Moderate Extent**	**High Extent**	**Very High Extent**
	Level of Education					
	Community Leadership Influence					
	Cultural beliefs					
	Media					
	Religion					

SECTION 3: Evaluating the extent of women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya

16. Women in the rift valley region have been involved in politics at various levels. To what extent would you rate their involvement in the politics of the region?

Issue	Very low Extent	Low Extent	Moderate Extent	High Extent	Very High Extent
Involvement of women of Rift Valley in politics at various levels					

17. The level of women's political involvement can be measured by various aspects or outcomes. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following measures in determining their level of political participation?

		Very low Extent	Low Extent	Moderate Extent	High Extent	Very High Extent
	Number of elected women					
	Number of women appointed in higher/ Local position					
	Non-discrimination of women in politics					
	Protection of women rights					

18. Which other measures would be appropriate in enhancing the level of political participation among women in your county?

……

SECTION 4: Opportunities for Women's political participation in in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya

19. For women to participate in politics, opportunities for participation are key. Are there such opportunities that favor Women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

Not Sure [ ]

20. For those saying yes **(Q14).** What opportunities favouring women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties are you aware of?

……

……

21. The following statements relate to opportunities that favour Women's political participation. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement in the context of Nakuru and Narok counties.

	Statement	**SD**	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**
	There are positive cultural shifts in favor of women participating in politics					
	There is a perception that women have a great potential for political roles					
	The policies in place support women's political participation					
	International, national, and regional organizations have had interventions to support women's participation in politics.					
	The percentage of women in politics in the region is higher compared to other regions in Kenya					

	Women have emerged out successful in previous elections and political appointments					
	Media is an essential tool for profiling women leaders and candidates to the public.					

SECTION 5: General perceptions regarding women's political participation.

22. Indicate the level by which you Agree to the following statements aimed at assessing perceptions regarding women's participation in politics. 1 – Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 – Disagree (D), 3 – Neutral (N), 4 – Agree (A), 5 – Strongly Agree (SA).

Statement	**SD**	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**
Both men and women should be given equal opportunities to participate in politics.					
Women possess leadership qualities that qualify them to vie and be elected in political positions.					
Women's participation in politics is key for national growth and development					
Electing women enables them to adequately and effectively address issues affecting women in social and economic spheres					
Women should receive support from men and the community when seeking to participate in politics.					

SECTION 6: Challenges to Women Political participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya

23. In the light of challenges to women political participation. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements in the context of Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya.

		1.Strongly Disagree	**2.Disagree**	**3.Do Not Know**	**4.Agree**	**5.Strongly Agree**
	Political culture of the major parties are the main barriers to women's election representation					
	Women are usually not elected at the position of power within party structures because of gender biases of male leadership					
	Cultural elements at community level impact the execution of gender policies and women's political participation					
	Women prefer taking positions that are not demanding due to responsibilities at home and fear of their husbands					
	The affirmative actions are not followed to the letter by the government both at national and grass root level, in that few women are elected to decision making positions					

24. Indicate other challenges to Women Political participation.

……

……

End of Questionnaire
Thank you for participating.

Appendix 3: Key Informant Interview Guide (Government)

GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICIES INFLUENCING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TOWARDS ATTAINEMENT OF PEACE IN NAKURU AND NAROK COUNTIES, KENYA

KII GUIDE (GOVERNMENT)

What is the current state of women's political participation in the country and in the county? What roles have your institution played to ensure women's participation in politics? **(Probe for policies and laws regarding gender mainstreaming for women's political participation)**

Do you feel that the community and women have knowledge of policies and law reforms regarding women's political participation? Has your organization helped sensitize women and communities to the various laws and policy reforms for political participation?

What mechanisms exist at the county/local level to ensure that women participate in politics? How effective have these mechanisms been? **(Probe for partnership with CSOs and other interventions to promote women's participation in politics)**

What are some of the challenges women face in political participation? How have these been addressed at the county level?

What opportunities exist for women to effectively participate in politics? What recommendations can be pursued to ensure these opportunities are leveraged?

Appendix 4: Key Informant Interview Guide for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICIES INFLUENCING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TOWARDS ATTAINMENET OF PEACE IN NAKURU AND NAROK COUNTIES, KENYA

KII GUIDE (CSOs)

What is the current state of women's political participation in the country and in the county? What roles have your institution played to ensure women's participation in politics? Do your areas of focus coincide with policies and laws aimed at promoting women's participation in politics? **(Probe for effectiveness of policy and law reforms, and extent to which women participate in politics)**

Do you feel that the community and women have knowledge of policies and law reforms regarding women's political participation? Has your organization helped sensitize women and communities to the various laws and policy reforms for political participation?

Has there been any support offered to you by the government to help implement activities aimed at promoting women's participation in politics? What kind of support was offered?

Have there been interventions from CSOs, government and other institutions that sought to promote women's participation in politics?

What are some of the challenges women face in political participation? How have these been addressed at the county level?

What opportunities exist for women to effectively participate in politics? What recommendations can be pursued to ensure these opportunities are leveraged?

Appendix 5: University Approval

MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (MMUST)

Tel: 056-30870
Fax: 056-30153
E-mail: directordpsf@mmust.ac.ke
Website: www.mmust.ac.ke

P.O Box 190
Kakamega – 50100
Kenya

Directorate of Postgraduate Studies

Ref: MMU/COR: 509099

27th February 2024

Beatrice Akoth Onamu
CPC/H/01-57881/2016
P.O. Box 190-50100
KAKAMEGA

Dear Ms. Onamu,

RE: APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL

I am pleased to inform you that the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies has considered and approved your PhD proposal entitled: "***Gender Mainstreaming Policies Influencing Women's Political Participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya***" and appointed the following as supervisors:

1. Prof. Frank Matanga - SDMHA - MMUST
2. Rev. Dr. Elijah S. O. Odhiambo - SDMHA - MMUST

You are required to submit through your supervisor(s) progress reports every three months to the Director of Postgraduate Studies. Such reports should be copied to the following: Chairman, School of Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance Graduate Studies Committee and Chairman, Department of Peace and Conflicts Studies. Kindly adhere to research ethics consideration in conducting research.

It is the policy and regulations of the University that you observe a deadline of two years from the date of registration to complete your PhD thesis. Do not hesitate to consult this office in case of any problem encountered in the course of your work.

We wish you the best in your research and hope the study will make original contribution to knowledge.

Yours Sincerely,

Prof. Stephen O. Odebero, PhD, FIEEP
DIRECTOR, DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Appendix 6: NACOSTI Permit

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 169260

Date of Issue: 11/March/2024

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Ms.. Beatrice Akoth Onamu of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nakuru, Narok on the topic: GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICIES INFLUENCING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN NAKURU AND NAROK COUNTIES, KENYA for the period ending : 11/March/2025.

License No: NACOSTI/P/24/33715

169260

Applicant Identification Number

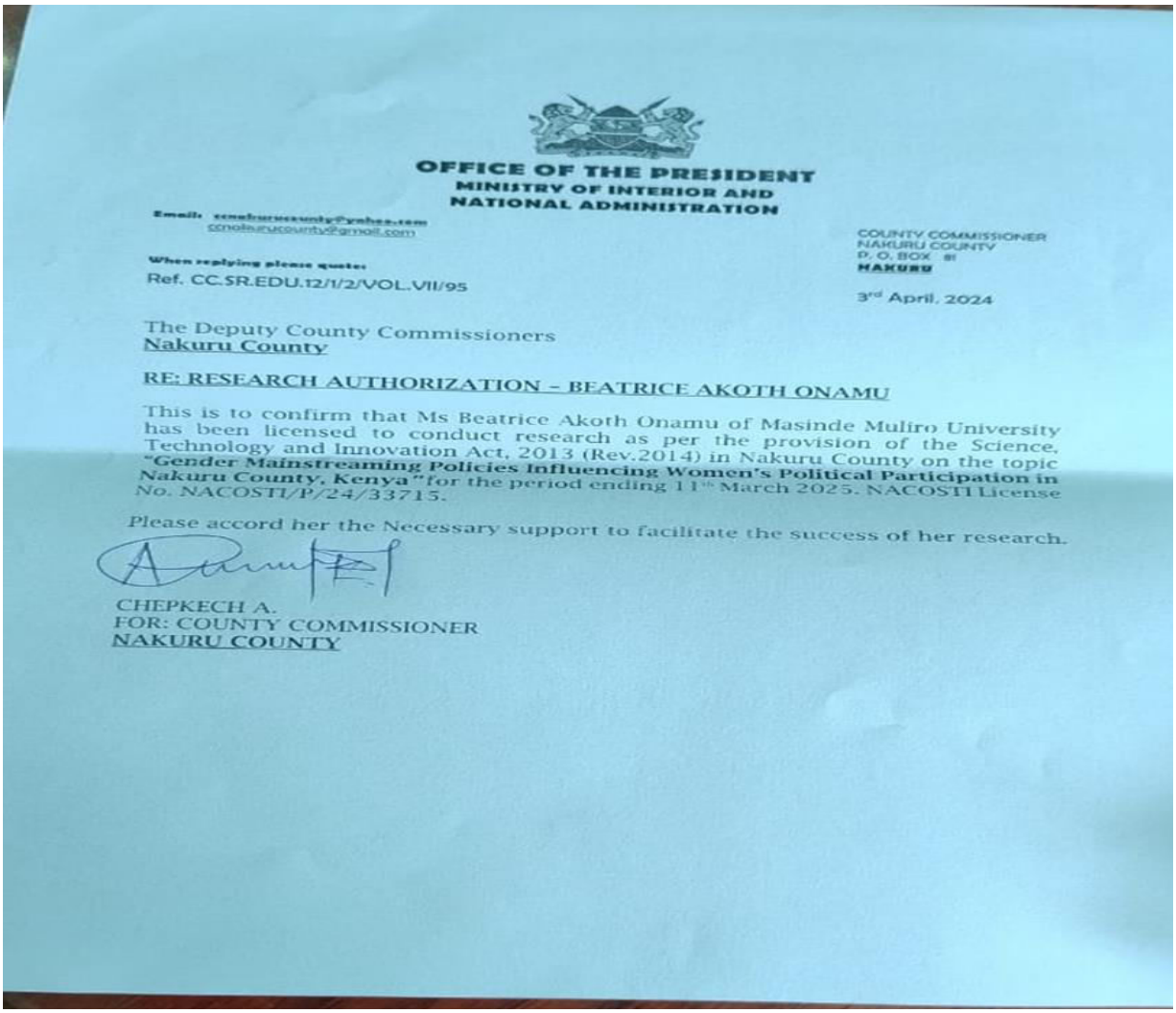
Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code

NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

See overleaf for conditions

Appendix 7: Nakuru Authorization



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND
NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Email: cnonakurucounty@yahoo.com
cnonakurucounty@gmail.com

When replying please quote:
Ref. CC.SR.EDU.12/1/2/VOL.VII/95

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
NAKURU COUNTY
P. O. BOX 81
NAKURU

3rd April, 2024

The Deputy County Commissioners
Nakuru County

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION – BEATRICE AKOTH ONAMU

This is to confirm that Ms Beatrice Akoth Onamu of Masinde Muliro University has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nakuru County on the topic **"Gender Mainstreaming Policies Influencing Women's Political Participation in Nakuru County, Kenya"** for the period ending 11th March 2025. NACOSTI License No. NACOSTI/P/24/33715.

Please accord her the Necessary support to facilitate the success of her research.

CHEPKECH A.
FOR: COUNTY COMMISSIONER
NAKURU COUNTY

Appendix 8: Narok Authorization

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Telegrams: "COUNTY", Narok
Telephone: Narok [050] 22305/22435
Email: coi@narok.go.ke
If calling or telephoning ask for the undersigned.
When replying please quote

County Commissioner's office
Narok County
P.O. Box 4[illegible] 20500
NAROK

REF: SR.ADM.15/6 VOL.II/178

31st July, 2024

Deputy County Commissioners
Narok County

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION – BEATRICE AKOTH ONAMU

This is to confirm that Ms. Beatrice Akoth Onamu of Masinde Muliro University has been authorized to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Narok County on the topic ***"Gender Mainstreaming Policies Women's Political Participation in Narok County, Kenya*** "for the period ending 11th March, 2025. NACOSTI License No .NACOSTI/P/24/33715.

Please accord her the necessary support to facilitate the success of her research.

CAROL ODHIAMBO
FOR: COUNTY COMMISSIONER
NAROK COUNTY

CC
Ms. Beatrice A. Onamu

Appendix 9: Gender mainstreaming policies

	Gender mainstreaming Policy	Sources of Policies
1	International Labour Organization (ILO) Gender equality policy	The Director-General's Circular NO.564 of 1999
2	USAID Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy 2023	USAID Regulatory Policy 2023
3	National Gender Policy-2021	Constitution of Kenya 2010, Article 27
4	National Policy on Gender and Development-2019	Sessional Paper No.2 of 2019.
5	Public Participation Policy	Article 7 of CEDAW
6	Education for All	UNESCO global educational policies of 1990. Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child.
7	The basic Education Act 2013	Basic Education Act of Parliament, 2013 to effect Article 53 of the constitution

8	Kenya Education Training Gender policy	Ministry of Education Paper, 2015
9	Free Primary education Policy	Children's Act of 2001