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Effect of Social- Cultural Values on Women Leadership in Murang'a County Government

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Abstract

Women globally persist to encounter obstacles related to leadership. The challenges arise from societies and traditions where the family unit of socialization is the central organization of patriarchy which is a vital notion in displaying gender disparity. This research study is based on the thinking that appropriate and structured women empowerment in a genuine manner can alter the way the county government is run especially in Kenya. The main objective of the study was to determine how social-cultural values affect women leadership in Murang'a County Government. The study is well-versed by social conflict analysis by Karl Marx. The study also adopted descriptive research design. The population under study comprises of 159 senior government officers as well as political elite in Murang'a County Government and the legislative assemble of Murang'a. The study used purposive sampling in identifying persons with requisite knowledge of the concept of the study. The primary data was collected using the questionnaire and the secondary data was obtained from the government policy documents, gender policies annual reports, strategic plans as well as periodic reports both published and unpublished. The study findings were analyzed by use of Microsoft Excel Software and presented by use of tables and percentage for ease of data interpretation and consumption by the readers. The study established that there is a historical conviction that, women are accountable to take care of kids and do household chores than involving themselves in outside home activities like career advancement or furthering in higher education. Women are over tasked with diverse domestic roles which include but not limited to cooking, take care of kids, washing among other endless roles which have neither pay nor compensation. All these actions make women fully engaged in the family unit tasks and hamper their participation in the politics and leadership of the nation. Owing to the findings, the County governments should adopt the best practices in the field of recruitment of any government vacancy which is based on fairness and gender equity.

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Keywords: *Social-cultural values, Social conflict, Women leadership Structured women empowerment, Murang'a County Government*

1.0 Introduction

Gender equality in leadership is a practice and notion that is contested and obligatory requisite. The term gender parity has been acknowledged by mutually globally and by government Institutions. Appreciation of the impact of gender fairness is a pleasing objective required across many avenues in internationally progression practice (UN Women, 2014). According to Walby (2004), gender equality is not only seen as the re-invention in women leadership but also seen as a way to restructure and re-brand a vital feminism part in the contemporary era.

As illustrated in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) masterminded ends from 1997, the UN characterized sexual orientation balance as, "the movement of evaluating the consequences of people of any expected activity including enactment, strategies and projects in all roads and at the three levels." It is an approach for empowering ladies' like men's interests and encounters a basic part of the execution, plan, and evaluation of methodologies and projects in monetary, political, and aggregate circles with the goal that ladies and men advantage consistently and divergence isn't sustained. The pivotal reason for existing is to accomplish sexual orientation equality (United Nations, 2002).

Basically, sexual orientation fairness implies that sex disparity isn't perceived in its entire as a major aspect of regular techniques. Sexual orientation shameful issues require to be taken care of within each feature of institutional structure rather than them being a disconnected (Ravindran & Kelkar-Khambete, 2007). Over the previous years, cognizance and devotion taking into account sexual orientation equity in authority has been on the expansion. Sex can be defined as the status of both genders. Sexual orientation portrays all people in network and is eminently by physical and conceptive dissimilarities. The term 'sexual orientation' has slowly procured a mutual implication where it signifies how guys and the females cooperate in the network. The cultural significance of "sex" alludes to orchestrated mutual anticipated set of accepted rules and obligations dependent on an individual sex (Mehra and Gupta, 2006). Then again, McCall (2005) indicates that no careful sexual orientation ought to plan thoughts based on cliché duties. In this manner, individuals need not to endure sex prospect. As explained by UNESCO (2000), equality happens when people can: circulate incomparability and weight uniformly, have comparable possibilities for money related independence throughout occupation or by methods for trade, can get identical right to tutoring and the opportunity to extend singular premium and abilities where kids are illuminated from weight and sex based hostility in the work and at habitation.

Worldwide, women have frequently encounter disparities on the basis of society forced factors such as customs and religious belief. These hindrances differ depending on state. Sorrowfully, girls and women from third world countries have persistently experienced the repercussions on the basis of gender prejudice for ages (Grigorian, 2007). Gender equality in leadership has created chances for several individual living in developing countries. According to Grigorian (2007), the Asian states for example, South Korea, India, Japan, Thailand and China has included sex equality and has been acknowledged to be an important dynamic force at inspiring both female and male to discover the need of gender equality thus working together to overcome the obstacles. "In South Korea, the gender equality in leadership lobby group was acknowledged as an essential approach of ensuring women's enlightenment through issuance of the Gender

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equality in the platform for Action Statement at the 4th World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 by the United Nations” (Lee, 2016).

Regardless of sex responsibilities being customary in most societies, responsibility ascription differs from one generation to another. Gender responsibilities have assured dynamic distinctiveness and these are; they adjust from time to time; they are learned deeds and they fluctuate between cultural spheres. As a result, due to conflicting cultural ascription pertaining to gender responsibilities, gender impartiality becomes indispensable to ensure gender mainstreaming perspectives become a custom (UNESCO, 2015). Additionally, women still encounter segregation politically collectively in societal set up and in economic set up with their narrow voice improbable to manipulate any choice-making supremacy both locally and at employment positions. The government of Kenya has put up measures for ensuring that women are included in the transformation of economy. This has been achieved through a nationwide strategy structure where gender fairness is embraced.

The Kenyan Constitution of 2010 is this structure’s basis in which fairness for all is established and a share for representation of female is mandated in the government of Kenya. According to Frosina and Mwaura (2016), the Government in 2011 approved gender strategy principal policy declaration that stipulates her effort in gender justice. Gender equality debate is an exercise and notion acknowledged by all Government Organizations and worldwide. According to UN Women (2014), the worth of gender parity is a fulfilling aim required across many spheres in worldwide advancement practice.

In Murang’a County the debates of women in leadership is escalating though at a low rate. The slow-moving advancement to the gender parity in leadership that allow women take up leadership position in Murang’a county is a huge subject matter that require lawful debate and interest of scholarly research equality strategies in leadership in the patriarchy society that we live in.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that most of the Kenyan counties discriminate against women when it comes to politics as well as in top management position of leadership. Women make up 52% of the Kenyan populace and 60% of the country’s registered electorate; political representation is deeply skewed favoring men. Since 2007, 2013 and 2017, the total number of women parliamentarians is still low, at 9.8%. Some improvement has been made in the present parliament, with women members of parliament now encompassing 19.5%. Thus an equality strategy in women leadership has not been implemented fully. The gender fairness in leadership is intended to stabilize the structure of elective offices in Kenya in order to ensure there is justice in the government by not allowing one gender to embrace more than two-thirds of elective position as per the 2010 Kenyan Constitution.

The National Gender and Equity Commission was established but the country still does not include women fully in most of decision making positions. In addition, women in management are highly included at the middle and bottom level with the principle of gender equality not being seen at the top management where choice making on how to run the County Government takes place. This study therefore, aims at examining the equality strategies in women leadership in Murang’a County.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Social –Cultural Conflict Analysis by Karl Marx

Marxist emphasized more on conflict, class division, power and ideology. According to Marie Eversson (2009), Power in most cases involves direct use of force and at times it is accompanied by the advance of ideas (ideologies) which are used to validate the events of the authoritative. Ideology, power and difference are for all time directly related since disagreement or conflicts are about power due to the benefits in terms of rewards it brings. The people in possession of authority in most cases depend on influence of philosophies in order to keep hold their supremacy and use their power if necessary.

According to Mommsen (2006), Gender and Development, the societal conflict model considers society as being imbalanced and the difference inequalities result to conflict and transformation. The conflict theorists consequently consider gender not only in terms of inequality in performance and responsibilities but also significantly on grounds of inequality in power.

Conflict theorist in addition dispute the believe of functionalist that differentiation results to peace and solidity and they emphasize that gender associations are featured by a struggle for power in where women look for in order to reform the imbalanced power liaison and men try to defend their constitutional rights. By use of Marxist perspectives, Friedrich Engles elaborated how technology advances the materialization of personal goods and free enterprise resulting in men acquiring extra power than women Marie Eversson, (2009).

Friedrich Engles argued that in traditional hunting and gathering bands the behavior of women was considered as being significance to those of men although they were diverse. On the other hand, when men became owners of personal material goods the condition of women is distorted resulting to a power chain of command where men were at the apex. Men became the governing group in society while women engaged in the position of underprivileged class Marie Eversson, (2009). County Governments of Kenya as well as National Government still holds this view as important. This is because men belief they are the ‘heads’ in all sectors including the top leadership position. That is why there are few women who hold the top position in leadership like the governor seat and there is no woman who has been the president in Kenya.

According to (UNDP, 2015), Customs from the traditions persist to underline women’s main responsibility as housewives and mothers thus restricting them to the responsibilities. A traditional value structure which is strong and patriarchal favours sexually discriminated responsibilities and “traditional cultural principles” militate against the development, growth and females taking part in political progression. Communities particularly in Africa are controlled by a philosophy of “a woman’s place.” Based on this philosophy, females only partake the task of “working mother”, generally underpaid and apolitical. In other nations, women are even notified on voting and people to vote for.

Cultural viewpoints about women have influence on representation all through the political progression, from a specific female’s choice to get involved in politics to party candidate choice, to voters’ decisions during elections time. Consequently, females are discriminated as leaders since individuals are predisposed to make an assumption that headship is a man’s thing. Female leaders encounter predicaments. Autocratic traits performed by women are assessed more unenthusiastically by people than the same actions by men their counterpart. Consequently,

women still face cultural hindrances in partaking politics even in countries in which they made job career gains or education set up (AMISON, 2016).

In the perspective of Africa, there is a historical conviction that, women are responsible to take care of kids and do kitchen tasks than involving themselves in outside home activities. For this reason, there is sharing out of tasks between men and women, which mean household deeds are attached to women and beyond home activities attached to men. Women are over tasked with diverse domestic roles which include but not limited to cooking, take care of kids, washing among other endless roles. All these actions make women fully engaged in the family unit tasks and hamper their participation in the politics of the nation. A study finding by Gidudu *et al* .(2017) shows that women have to do home chores, agriculture, and laundry whereas men go out on duty as well as further their education outside the family and women stay back to take family obligations.

According to Baxter (2013), cultural perspective in many societies, women are believed to be led but not be the leaders. Stereotyped point of view regarding women comprises key hindrances which include social insight in relation to leadership aptitude of women and women's lack of assertiveness in participation in political sphere. In this regard, long-established opinions regarding gender fairness manipulate women's progression in political involvement. Theories of socialization as discussed in this section have pointed out the continuity of sex tasks division in the society particularly in the classless or traditional behaviour continuation towards females in public and private settings. Socialization theories highlight that those behaviours are learnt in life's early stages throughout formative agencies, as well as traditional sex functions continuation acquired at home, family, local community, in learning institutions and the place of work. Cultural issues with long-established standards pertaining to the tasks of women in the home and family unit, most of women may hesitant to vie for a seat and if they get the chance, they may receive adequate electoral and party support so as to win. Significantly in Africa, females are considered subsidiary to men and second category members particularly in rural areas.

Eagle and Czerny (2009) Stereotype about women, men and leadership: p.34-35, Women encounter two types of structural issues, some are societal based and others originate in corporate context. According to Eagly and Sczesny (2009), causal factors to the women's restricted professional progression for include societal expectations of female contribution in service industries like community and social service health services, social and education; restricted human capital; some aspects of social programs and strategy. Social strategy intended for female perpetuates disparity in domestic responsibility. "When maternity leaves are preferential over paternity leaves or when women are expectant to do works on part-time basis after the delivery of a child whereas men are not given equal chance to do so. The social view perspective denotes that it is more suitable for women to accomplish the obligations of family unit tasks than for men to do so."

Even though women have augmented their contribution in the place of work over the decades their household tasks have reduced slightly. Findings by Fuwa and Cohen denotes that "the average American woman works 13.2 hours on weekly basis on household in comparison to her husband who works approximately 6.6 hours" (Grezela & Bouchard, 2010, p.768). The inequality creates a detrimental set-up for females obligated to decide between a detrimental work-life balances to chase their career goal (Eagly & Sczesny, 2009, p.39).

In addition, Guerrero (2011)) posit that females are supposed to work in sections with smaller amount of progressive advancement or in areas not transforming to executive progression. Women in administration and management tend to be from non-business settings limiting their chances of succeeding since their leadership skill in business are zero or very minimal (Broughton & Miller, 2009).

3.0 Research Methodology

A descriptive research design was deployed, which allows the researcher to describe the state of activities as it happens at the present with minimal bias and make the most of the reliability of the evidence gathered. This study therefore has taken a wide view of the outcomes of Murang'a County Government. The population of this study was 159 employees of Murang'a County Government. The County employees included Chief Officers, County Executive Officers, and Directors in various offices in the executive and elected as well as appointed representatives. The major reason why the respondents were targeted is that they are conversant on the subject matter of the field of study. The units observed is 100% of the sample size that form 159 respondents of the target population sampled from all the departments within the Murang'a County. The reason for using 100% sample size is that the target population is small and accessible to the researcher.

With regard to equality strategies in women leadership in Murang'a County Government, the investigator utilized both primary and secondary data for analyzing data to be collected using the questionnaire. The researcher adopted the questionnaires given that large percentage of respondents were reached with ease as well as it's economical. The questionnaire contained close-ended questions. Close-ended questions according to Kombo and Tromp (2006), offer more structured responses to aid concrete recommendations.

The questionnaire was well planned and tried with some individuals from the population for extra enhancements. This ensured the boosting of its rationality and exactness of data gathered. The secondary data was obtained from gender policies, passes and pending legislations on women empowerment, strategic plans, and government policy documents, annual and periodic reports in Murang'a County Government. The study also adopted the use of interviews. Briefly, unstructured interviews were conducted to ensure the researcher gets additional information on the respondent's attitudes and perceptions giving further insights to the research problem. The questionnaires were administered separately to the study respondents using a drop and pick later technique by use of research assistant. A record of leaving and arriving questionnaires administered to the respondents was kept to ensure that all questionnaires were collected back.

The data was collected after the approval by Kenyatta University graduate School and NACOSTI. The data was collected within 4 weeks commencing March 2021 to April 2021 including weekends when the politicians were on Building Bridges Initiatives (B.B.I) campaigns. The researcher adopted descriptive statistics in data analysis as they are best suited for studies dealing with social phenomena Mugenda (2006). The study findings were analyzed by use of SPSS version 26 using frequencies and percentage tables for ease of data interpretation and consumption by the readers.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

The researcher targeted 159 respondents since the study adopted a census approach from which all the questionnaires were returned yielding a 100%. Response. Demographic data revealed that 53 percentage of respondents had worked for 10-15 years and 47 percentage below 5 years.

None of the respondents have worked above 20 years since County governments were formed after 2010 constitution was made. There is a high proportion of male respondents 121 (76%) as compared to females 38 (24%). The results further showed that majority were 31 to 50 years old with 40 percent of respondents falling in this category. This rate shows that most of employees are young as compared to employees over 50 years who represent 6% of the respondents. Majority of respondents in Murang'a county government were educated with 145, 91% attaining University/College education while those with Secondary education are 7 percent and Primary education are 2 percent.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis of Statement

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Social- Cultural Values

| | |
|--------------------|--------|
| Mean | 3.169 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.2533 |

The respondents were of moderate extent that social-cultural values support women leadership with aggregate mean score of 3.169 and standard deviation of 1.2533. The respondents supported that in Murang'a County government the institution has come up with measures to address structural effect, cultural biases as well as strategies to minimize professional biases. According to Mommsen (2006), Gender and Development, the societal conflict model considers society as being imbalanced and the dissimilarity inequalities result to conflict and transformation. The conflict theorists consider gender not only in terms of inequality in performance and tasks but also significantly on grounds of inequality in power. Due to such conflicts, the Kenyan Government and Africa at large have come up with measures to ensure that women are incorporated in leadership roles and responsibilities. County Governments of Kenya as well as National Government still holds this view as important. This is because men's conviction is that they are the 'heads' in all sectors including the top leadership position. The Kenyan 2010 constitution has played a great role in supporting women leadership.

4.2 Regression Analysis

Table 2 shows model summary results for the analysis.

Table 2: Model summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .730a | 0.533 | 0.530 | 0.71586 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Socio-cultural Values

As presented in Table 2, the coefficient of determination R Square is 0.533 and R is 0.730 at 0.000 significance level. The model indicates that socio-economic factors explains 53.3% of the variation in women leadership in Murang'a County Government. This means 53.3% of women leadership in Murang'a County Government is influenced by socio-economic factors. Table 3 shows analysis of variance results.

Table 3: ANOVA

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 91.962 | 1 | 91.962 | 179.455 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 80.455 | 157 | 0.512 | | |
| | Total | 172.418 | 158 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Women Leadership

b. Predictors: (Constant), Socio-cultural values

The ANOVA results presented in Table 3 show that the model was statistically significant in explaining the influence of socio-economic factors/values on women leadership in Murang'a County Government as indicated by a p-value of 0.000. Presented in Table 4 are regression coefficient results.

Table 4: Regression Coefficient

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 0.974 | 0.174 | | 5.611 | 0.000 |
| | Social- cultural Values | 0.745 | 0.056 | 0.730 | 13.396 | 0.000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Women Leadership

The study found that the B coefficient in social–cultural factors is 0.745, implying that there existed a positive relationship between social–cultural factors and women leadership. In this case, the significant level is 0.000 which means the relationship between social –cultural factors and women leadership is statistically significant at 0.005 significant level.

5.0 Conclusion

Cultural viewpoints about women have influence on representation all through the political progression from a specific female's choice to get involved in politics to party candidate choice, to voters' decisions during elections time. Consequently, females are discriminated as leaders since individuals are predisposed to make an assumption that headship is a man's thing. Female leaders encounter predicaments. Autocratic traits performed by women are assessed more unenthusiastically by people than the same actions by men their counterpart. Consequently, women still face cultural hindrances in partaking politics even in countries in which they made job career gains or education set up.

According to cultural perspective in many societies, women are believed to be led but not to be the leaders. In reality stereotyped point of view regarding women comprises key hindrances which include societal insight in relation to leadership aptitude of women's lack of assertiveness in participation in political sphere and leadership positions. In this regard, long-established opinions regarding gender fairness manipulate women's progression in political involvement. These discriminatory behaviours are learnt in early stages of life throughout formative stages, as well as the continuation of traditional sex functions acquired at home, family, local community, in learning institutions and the place of work. Cultural issues with long-established standards

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pertaining to the tasks of women in the home and family unit where most of women hesitant to vie for a seat and if they get the chance, they may fail to draw adequate electoral and party support so as to win. Significantly in Africa, females are considered subsidiary to men and second category members particularly in rural areas.

6.0 Recommendations

Women's social and economic status plays a key responsibility in influencing their representation and involvement in decision making in political organs. Women societal and economic position directly manipulates on their contribution in elected bodies and political organizations. Women should be provided with adequate economic resources which is a major challenge that hinders women from involving themselves in politics in larger numbers. Females' contribution in political sphere relies primarily on their entrance to job opportunities which equip them with not only material power, but also positive certified abilities and experiences.

In addition, women accessibility to funds has a direct connection and control on the contribution of women in political spheres. If women are empowered and equipped with the economic wealth they will be motivated to advancing and having confidence in top leadership positions and over ruling the notion that men are the 'heads' in all sectors including the top leadership position and opposing women advancement in top leadership especially presidency women governorship positions. Women should be exposed to work in sections with higher amount of progressive advancement or in areas that transform to executive progression since they are not inferior provided they have the same qualifications with the male counter parts.

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