The Nature of Gender Mainstreaming Policies in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies at various levels of public administration in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya. It explores the integration of global conceptions, national policymaking, local self-governance, and feminist ideology in achieving gender equality. The research addresses the debate on the capacity of local versus national governments to implement gender equality initiatives. Feminist Theory guided this research. Using a comparative evaluative study design, the study investigates why these policies have not effectively increased women's political participation. The target population comprised of elected leaders, civil society and the general public of Nakuru and Narok Counties. Stratified random sampling was employed to derive a sample of 335 respondents comprising of 92 elected leaders, 22 civil society members and 221 members of the general public. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions, involving key informants and community members. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics while qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions was analyzed through content analysis. Findings revealed that there was no good familiarity with gender mainstreaming by 135(40.3%). Most of those unfamiliar with gender mainstreaming were from Narok, 68 (50.7%) followed by Nakuru 67(33.3%). Similarly, research showed that 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 recognize the importance of these concepts. The study concludes that the government has significantly shaped these policies, which have advanced gender equality in various ways. However, challenges remain, requiring a comprehensive approach that includes legal reforms, cultural shifts, and targeted support programs. The research recommended that promoting gender-friendly political cultures, challenging patriarchal norms, and providing support and training are essential for empowering women to take on leadership roles and contribute to the political process. This holistic approach is crucial for achieving gender parity in politics and ensuring women's voices are heard in decision-making.

Keywords: *Culture, Gender Mainstreaming, Policies, Parity, Targeted Support*

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I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the concept of gender mainstreaming has been widely accepted by national governments, international institutions, and development agencies in most parts of the world as an international approach not only for attaining gender equality but also as a pre-condition for the sustainable socio-economic development of society (Orisadare, 2019). That is why gender mainstreaming has been promoted by the United Nations, the World Bank, and many bilateral aid agencies, national governments, human rights, and development organizations as a common means of achieving diverse goals like reducing maternal mortality, increasing literacy, and slowing the spread of HIV/AIDS (Njeri & Kuria, 2019).

As part of global movements, the Kenya government has declared its unequivocal commitment to the development of women and to addressing the issues of gender inequalities that deter long-lasting changes with the announcement of the national policy on women in 1993 and, consequently, support structures for policy implementation have been put in place (Mutahi, 2019). The promulgation of the Kenya constitution in 2010 further guarantees all citizens equality before the law and equality of access (Government of Kenya [GoK], 2010). Besides, Kenya has ratified relevant continental and international instruments about gender. At the continental level, Kenya has signed the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on Women's Rights in Africa (Kabura & Orara, 2019).

Globally, the Kenyan Government is a signatory to most international instruments, conventions and declarations on gender equality, including The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and is a party to commitments such as the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Beijing Platform of Action, which demonstrate the

existence of the political will and an enabling environment for pursuing the objectives of gender equality in the country (Kaimenyi & Muriungi, 2022).

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy nations, organisations, and enterprises use to promote gender equality and/or gender awareness (Moser & Branscombe, 2023). In addition, the Council of Europe states that it is the (re)organization, enhancement, development, and evaluation of policy processes to ensure that the actors generally involved in policymaking incorporate a gender equality perspective into all policies, at all levels, and throughout all phases. The plan asks for continuous, coordinated efforts to change institutional structures to guarantee women's and men's equal participation in significant institutional and political decision-making processes and their equal empowerment (Mastracci, 2017).

According to Kaimenyi and Muriungi (2022) gender mainstreaming has been implemented and modified to fit the various levels of public administration; local, regional, and national sub-level governments are not autonomous institutions. Local governments attempt to operate and achieve gender equality by implementing gender mainstreaming within the framework of a merging of global conceptions, national policymaking, local self-governance, and feminist ideology demanding change. Divergent opinions exist in the research about local governments' capacity to implement gender equality initiatives. There is a debate among authors regarding the ease of implementation of policies at the local level against the simplicity of doing so at the national level (Lowndes, 2020).

In Kenya, great strides have been made 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 (Kinyanjui & Mute, 2019). Nevertheless, women in Narok and Nakuru Counties still face challenges in gaining equal electoral representation. Women in these counties are increasingly participating in local politics, contesting for various positions, but men hold most of the political positions, which hinders women's political development (Kenya's State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action, 2019). This has been blamed on cultural and societal norms that hamper their engagement, resistance and discrimination. This is in line with UN Women (2022), which asserts that women's political participation in political development is hampered by these cultural and traditional norms that predispose women to gender-based violence and limit access to campaign finances.

Further, Ojwala et al. (2022) have argued that gender mainstreaming initiatives have not been implemented as quickly as anticipated in Kenya, resulting in unequal access to opportunities, resources, and sustainable development for men and women. In a similar vein, Kaimenyi and Muriungi (2022) corroborate this viewpoint by pointing out that while both sexes are frequently acknowledged as participants in the political and developmental processes, women's contributions have occasionally gone unnoticed by Kenyan policymakers and planners.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies at both national and local levels in Kenya, women's participation in politics remains significantly low. The 2010 Kenyan Constitution, which incorporates various international human rights declarations, 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 (Ojwala et al., 2022).

However, women in Kenya continue to confront substantial obstacles to participating in politics, even in the face of these constitutional provisions meant to advance gender equality. These obstacles include threats to their lives, sexual harassment, and acts of physical and psychological abuse. The experiences of well-known individuals, including Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai, highlight the serious dangers that women face in the political arena.

Regional disparities further exacerbate these issues. For instance, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS](2019) notes that the Rift Valley has lower rates of female political participation than other regions. This suggests that men and women in the political sphere have different access to opportunities and resources, undermining the objective of gender parity in political involvement.

This study seeks to answer the following questions: What is the nature of gender mainstreaming policies in Nakuru and Narok counties, Kenya, and why have these policies not effectively increased women's political participation? By examining these policies and the specific challenges women face in these regions, the study aims to provide insights into the persistent gender disparities in political participation and offer recommendations for more effective policy implementation.

1.2 Research Objective

To evaluate the nature of gender mainstreaming policies in Nakuru and Narok counties

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework
2.1.1 Feminist Theory

This theory emerged prominently during early 20th century. This was through the seminal works of early feminist crusadors such as Mary Wollstonecraft. However, this theory later expanded with inputs from scholar Simone de Beauvoir and others (Kantola & Lombardo, 2017). This concept evaluates societal models to address and transform inequalities encountered by women and other vulnerable groups. The origins of feminist theory lies in assessing power relations, questioning traditional gender roles, and advancing for equal opportunities. This makes it highly applicable and suitable for assessing gender mainstreaming policies (Krook & Mackay, 2015).

In both Nakuru and Narok Counties, social and cultural practices largely impact gender relations. In this regard, feminist theory offers valuable insights into the unique hindrances of enforcing gender mainstreaming policies. It allows a pragmatic evaluation of how these policies are applicable in addressing historical inequalities as well as taking into account diverse identities within the population. By adopting feminist theory as an anchoring framework, this approach underpins strengths and limitations of prevailing policies and promoting modifications that encourage inclusivity and empowerment across genders in these counties.

2.2 Empirical Review

A study by O'Brien and Rickne (2016) in Europe found that one of the main factors influencing women's engagement in the labour force is their level of education. According outcomes of the research, women are likelier to hold political office in states and areas where the legislative branch is less desirable and politicians are less professional. Tabak et al. (2022) 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.

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 (Moshood et al., 2019). Researchers in India, Pandey (2019), found that women's performance in political institutions is significantly impacted by literacy. According to Plagerson et al. (2019), women in South Africa 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.

Maseda et al. (2022) found that many Kenyan career women prioritise their families over their careers. This is not because they don't care about their careers; rather, they have been taught that a good woman puts her family first. Berry et al. (2022) discovered that many women would prefer to put off making significant career decisions, including pursuing a doctorate, until their children had reached adulthood. 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]. 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.

In a study conducted by Riley et al. (2022), a sample of 1019 local councillors from three Nepal districts (of which 843 were women) revealed that 51.9 per cent of the women and 18.7 per cent of the men were illiterate and that 18.6 per cent of the women claimed to be literate but lacking even a primary qualification, compared to 13.1 per cent of the men. In national politics, quotas and reservations are typically enjoyed by women who have been involved in the field for a long time, have a strong network, come from elite families, and are similar to elite male politicians in terms of their level of education and financial stability. Women's relative lack of political experience from party involvement or civic engagement in traditional rural societies, combined with their significantly lower educational endowment relative to men, has understandably led to scepticism about their ability to govern effectively in these roles, let alone act in the interests of women.

A study was done by Kauria et al. (2018) 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, and a questionnaire return rate of 93.9% was achieved. 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.

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, have not been the subject of prior research.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed comparative evaluative study designs. It was chosen for this study because it is necessary to comprehend the complex dynamics of gender mainstreaming in the counties of Nakuru and Narok (Bukve, 2019). Comparative evaluative research enables a thorough examination of the distinct socio-political environments of Narok and Nakuru. Stratified random sampling was employed to select two sub-counties from each county. The target population comprised elected leaders, civil society, and the general public of Nakuru and Narok Counties. Stratified random sampling was employed to derive a sample of 335 respondents, comprising 92 elected leaders, 22 civil society members, and 221 members of the general public. Questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions were used to collect data.

In-depth interviews with five key informants and four focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted. Quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics. The qualitative data acquired through focus group discussions (FGDs) and the interviews were processed using thematic methodologies to generate a narrative report. The researcher enlisted the aid of specialists in the field who are knowledgeable in several facets of validity, including construct, criterion, and content validity. To achieve reliability, a test-retest protocol was employed. This entailed repeating the same test twice over time in order to show consistent results. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used by the researcher to evaluate dependability, and a Cronbach alpha of 0.7 or higher was regarded as dependable.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Response Rate

The study established that of the elected leaders, 56 males (16.7%) and 36 females (10.7%), for civil society, we had 10 males (3.0%) and 12 females (3.6%); and for the general public, we had 146 males (43.6%) and 75 females (22.4%). The managed to get 212 males (63.3%) and 123 females (36.7%), a total of 335 individuals. The elected leaders include individuals who hold elected positions in government or other positions of influence. They are crucial for understanding the impact of policies on political development from a governance perspective. The Civil Society group comprises members of non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups. They provide insights into public participation and policy influence from a grassroots-level perspective. The public represents the broader population, offering a comprehensive view of how policies affect everyday citizens. The study had 98(49%) male 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 male in Narok is higher than females due to the patriarchal nature of the where men are more involved than the women. The findings align with the demographic survey of Narok County (2023) which showed a ratio of 50% for men and 50% for women respectively. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2019) in their Nakuru county demographic survey also indicate 50.4% for female and 49.6% for male.

Respondent education is another determinant in gender policy success and women's political participation at various levels. Analyzing 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 1.

Table 1
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%

According to Table 1, 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. The 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 (2019), which showed that women's literacy is 31% lower than men's at 69%. According to UNESCO (2017), women make up about two-thirds of the 796 million illiterate adults worldwide.

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. 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. According to Turnbull (2022), 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. Analyzing 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 prioritize 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.

The respondents' familiarity with gender mainstreaming was assessed. 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. The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Respondent's 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**

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 2 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". This was evident from the FGDs that were held with the members of the community. Indeed, during FGD, some of the participants said,

"Hebu tueleze hii gender mainstreaming ni nini" translated, *"Tell us what this gender mainstreaming you are talking about?"*(FGD participant in Narok North, 12th June 2024)

Another added,

"Ni ile maneno ya wanawake?" translated *"Is it those things about women?"* she posed. (FGD participant in Narok North, 12th June 2024)

From the above, it is demonstrated that there was no good familiarity with gender mainstreaming by 135(40.3%). Most of those unfamiliar with gender mainstreaming were from Narok, 68 (50.7%) followed by Nakuru 67(33.3%). Gender mainstreaming familiarity was 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,

"Here in Nakuru seems everyone is talking about gender mainstreaming. You see, the other day the county launched its strategic plan for mainstreaming. And you see before the launch many people were taken through on what the strategic plan would be used for". KI 002 (Nakuru west Subcounty office, 10th April 2024)

From the various FGDs, one participant said,

"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". (FGD 008 Nakuru west social hall, 10th April 2024)

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 university or colleges. A KI had this to say,

"Here the locals have been taught to believe that the good positions are a reserve of the men,……...you see even this starts from their homes…women are not supposed to do certain things or eat certain parts of a cow or a goat. So when it gets to more important issues like being involved in politics, they say wacha tuachie (let's leave it to) men". KI 002 (Kilgoris, June 12th, 2024)

Among those who participated in FGDs, one had this to say,

"This is not the gone days when men were treated as gods. Those days when whatever men said was like law. We have gone to school and understood that some of the taboos in the society was selfishly made by men to protect themselves from challenges from women. Nowadays, even women are eating and participating and demanding their share of positions in the society. This has been made possible by the new constitution. In addition, we have gone to school to master's degree and we are now wiser than before. Tena (also) the advent of technology has made many people aware of their rights from reading or watching the news". FGD 012 (Kisirir, Narok North 12th June 2024)

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 (Onyango & Natarajan, 2022).

Since gender mainstreaming was not a very new concept to respondents and respondents were respectively familiar with the concepts, the researcher sought to identify the specific gender mainstreaming policies that respondents were familiar with.

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 3.

Table 3
Awareness of Two-Thirds 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**

Table 3 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 in the FGDs in both the counties as responses in the meetings reviewed. Most of the FGDs this is in excerpts like,

> *"Who doesn't know what the two-thirds gender rule is? Yaani (are you assuming) you think we are that dumb? Do you know that even the Kenyan parliament is unconstitutional? Do you know the rule has not been observed in parliament?"* FGD 0018 (AIC church grounds, Njoro 11th April 2024)

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 organizations 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.

Despite all these, Teixeira et al. (2021) states that women have unique needs and contributions of women in be included in approaches to peacebuilding. 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 Lu (2020) 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 operationalise 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.

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 recognizes it as a fundamental principle of governance and requires public involvement in matters affecting them. Table 4 below presents the extent to which respondents in Nakuru and Narok counties were familiar with the Public Participation Policy.

Table 4
Awareness of Public Participation Policy

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very High Extent	190	48
High Extent	154	39
Moderate Extent	30	7
Low Extent	20	5
Very Low Extent	3	1
Total	**335**	**100**

Table 4 shows that nearly half of the respondents (48%) indicated a very high level of awareness about the Public Participation Policy. Table 4 also shows that 39% of respondents reported high awareness. Combined with

those with a very high extent of awareness, 87 per cent of the respondents are either highly or very highly aware of the policy. Another smaller segment, 7 per cent, indicated a moderate level of awareness. About 5% of respondents reported low awareness, with 1 per cent 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 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. Kenyan counties have also enacted legislation to operationalize public participation at the local level. County governments must develop mechanisms and structures for engaging citizens in budgeting, planning, and service delivery. Results align with Krook and Sanin (2020) who observed that 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. Further, Civil society organisations and NGOs are crucial in promoting public participation in Kenya. They often serve as intermediaries between citizens and government institutions, mobilizing communities, providing civic education, and advocating for inclusive decision-making processes (Kwon & Otieno, 2022).

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 5, 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 5
Awareness 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**

Table 5 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 recognize 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.

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 (Bassett, 2020). Conversely, equity refers to fairness and justice in distributing resources, opportunities, and outcomes. While equality focuses on treating everyone equally, equity recognizes 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 (Bassett, 2020). 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.

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 6.

Table 6:
Rating of the Awareness of Right to Own Property

Response	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
	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**

Table 6 reveals that a significant majority of respondents in both Nakuru and Narok strongly agree with the awareness of the right to own property, each accounting for 58.2% of their respective populations. This strong consensus suggests a robust recognition of property rights in both counties, indicating that awareness campaigns and educational efforts have been equally effective. Additionally, 21.9% of respondents in Nakuru and 16.4% in Narok agreed with the awareness of property rights, highlighting a slightly higher level of general agreement in Nakuru, possibly due to better access to information and more proactive local governance. 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% and Narok at 10.4%. This neutrality might reflect insufficient information or understanding about property rights, or ambivalence about their practical implications. This underscores the need for more targeted educational programs to bridge the knowledge gap and foster a deeper understanding of property rights.

Furthermore, 3.0% of respondents in Nakuru and 9.0% in Narok disagree with property rights awareness, suggesting more significant barriers in Narok, such as entrenched cultural norms and ineffective communication. A small percentage of respondents strongly disagree with property rights awareness, with 4.0% in Nakuru and 6.0% in Narok. Although these numbers are relatively low, they indicate the presence of strong opposition to these rights,

particularly in Narok. This opposition could stem from deeply rooted patriarchal beliefs, fear of losing traditional power structures, and misinformation about property rights initiatives. Overcoming this opposition requires persistent efforts to challenge and change these beliefs through education, dialogue, and inclusive policymaking.

The researcher's various discussions demonstrated the high percentage of respondents being aware of the right to own property. This was affirmed by the FGDs, where the discussants had this to say,

"Everyone is allowed to own property in any place in this country. However, how safe is it when some people come up with cultural issues and take what you have?" You see, I have seen women like me suffering when their husbands pass away. Yes, the policy is there, but in places like here in Narok, they say culture precedes the policy" FGD 008 (FGD discussion at Kilgoris Catholic church hall 13th June 2024).

Others had different opinions. For example, one FGD discussant who said that,

"Due to the policy in place on the right to own property, I can now own property which is not my husband's. I now have rental houses to my name". FGD010 (FGD discussion at Kilgoris Catholic church hall 13th June 2024).

This finding is similar to 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 marginalized communities. Efforts to address these challenges include land reforms, digitization 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.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The study concludes that understanding and familiarity with gender mainstreaming policies is important to gauge the extent to which respondents can contribute ideas towards the subject matter. The government has significantly shaped gender mainstreaming policies in Kenya, and respondents have identified several key policies. These policies have contributed to advancing gender equality in various ways. Addressing the challenges to gender mainstreaming requires a comprehensive approach that includes legal reforms, cultural shifts, and targeted support programs. 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.

5.2. Recommendation

This research recommended that measures should strive to strengthen and enforce laws that promote gender equality and protect women's rights. This includes revising existing legislation to remove discriminatory provisions and ensuring that new laws are gender sensitive. At the same time, programs that challenge and change patriarchal norms and stereotypes should be implemented. This can be achieved through public awareness campaigns, community dialogues, and educational initiatives that promote gender equality and respect for women's rights.

County governments should develop and expand support programs that provide women with the resources and training they need to take on leadership roles. This includes mentorship programs, leadership training, and financial support for women political candidates.

Inclusive policymaking should be enforced by ensuring women are actively involved in policymaking. This includes consulting women and women's organisations when developing policies and ensuring women's voices are heard and considered in decision-making forums.

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