

Factors determining women's participation in the management of co-operative societies - Njoro Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya

¹Xavier Okado Lugaga, ²Prof. Kennedy Ondimu, ³Dr. Ruth Aura Adhiambo

¹*Institute of Gender, Women and Development Studies Egerton University, Njoro campus*

²*Faculty of Arts and Social Science Egerton University, Njoro campus*

³*Institute of Gender, Women and Development Studies Egerton University, Njoro campus*

Abstract: *In Njoro sub county Nakuru County, Kenya, women are the majority in co-operative society but they are fewer in the management of these economic enterprises. This is despite national and international efforts to change the state anchored by the 2010 Kenya Constitution that requires two-thirds gender representation. The international effort is grounded by Convention the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and article 9 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, guarantying comprehensive rights to women to participate in decision-making process at all levels. The study was therefore designed to assess the existing status pertaining to women participation in decision making. Purpose sampling with qualitative and quantitative components was used to identify 353 co-operative officials, 37 Extension service officers who used as respondents and 21 Focus Group Discussions were conducted. Analysis was by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Application. Data was presented in form of frequencies, percentage, means, mode and range. The specific objectives were to examine education, age, sex, and marital status economic and social factors influence in women's ascendancy to leadership as well as cultural factors including patriarchy as established. The study concluded that formulation of comprehensive policy and women empowerment will ensure their ascendancy to leadership on co-operative societies.*

Keywords: *Affirmative action, Empowerment, Gender equality, Gender role, Njoro Sub County, Patriarchy, Policies.*

I. Introduction

Feminism movement arose out of desire to combat gender disparity created by colonialism. It wanted voting rights for women (Mary W. 1792) in order to achieve gender equality as part of human rights. It is also desired appreciating equality, the differences between women and men in the diverse roles they play in society including the right to be different. The second feminism movement came with radical facets in the late 1960s and early 1970s, according Historian Alice Echols (Fletcher, J. K.1994).It had the aim of fighting female oppression by men across the board(Alice W.1982,). There is also African feminism philosophy dubbed Nego-feminism. Practiced in Africa, it challenges patriarchy, insubordination and all forms of discrimination against women through negotiations and compromise (Nnaemeka, 2003). It is anchored by shared values in many African cultures of give and take (Obioma N, 2004).

In East and West Africa countries, including Kenya, colonial regimes emphasized control over women through Western Christianity (Nokoko 2011), Its' education strategy targeted educating men rather than women (Mikell, 1997). This affected gender relations, undermining women power, freedoms and positions and enhanced male domination and patriarchy (Mikell, 1997). During the Pre-Colonial Kenya era some roles of women was to till family land, maintain homestead, and tend to their husbands (M. Nzomo, 1997). Women were also affected by land redistribution becoming economically dependent on men leading to heightened domestic patriarchy (M. Nzomo, 1997). This continued in the Post-Colonial Kenya era as, colonialist continued to nourish patriarchal order (M. Nzomo, 1997). The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action seemed to have brought hope for Kenyan women leading to a rise in female consciousness and self confidence (Claris, G. 2010).

Due to socialization in Kenya's patriarchal society, most women are still dependant on men. This has continued and efforts by the Kenyan woman, to achieve economic empowerment have been a struggle (Claris, G. 2010). The future of gender equality in Kenya is linked to the successful implementation of the Constitution since it requires that no more than two-thirds of elected or appointed public bodies consist of one gender (Claris, G. 2010). The Kenyan government has ventured to empower women through formation of Gender, Children, and Social Development Ministry and introduced Women's Enterprise Fund (WEF) in 2006 to economically empower women through loans that targeted women aged 18 years and above (GoK 2006). The government

also hoped to realize Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 3 on “gender equality and empowerment of women”. The government also formed the National Gender and Equality commission as its focal point in gender affairs (GoK, 2006). Several forums including public meetings, associated with Kenya government exist to socially, economically, and politically empower women (Gok 2012). United Nation Development Program (UNDP) in collaboration with Kenya government focuses on gender equality and women’s empowerment as a human rights and pathway to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sustainable development as well as bridging the gender gap (UN report 2014). The new Constitution of Kenya desires to achieve gender equity in major decision making organs (GoK 2010). Several non-governmental organizations among them FIDA-Kenya, Caucus for Women Leadership(CWL) and Amani Communities Africa(ACA) exist to socially, economically, and politically empower women.

From casual cursory glance, women situation have improved over the past decades but not quite. In fact lot more need to be done to achieve equal rights for both women and men according Birgit Erbe (Robins, 1998). Globally, women are fewer in leadership despite their proven leadership abilities, being agents of change and their right to participate equally in democratic governance. Women face obstacles to participate in leadership (Shvedova, 2007) including structural barriers through discriminatory laws that limit their options to contest. In 2011 United Nations (UN) General Assembly Resolution noted that women leadership participation is marginalized due to discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in its State of Food and Agriculture Report 2010-11, suggested increasing women access to and use of productive resources for purpose of empowerment. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights 2014), better known as the Maputo Protocol, through article 9, guarantees comprehensive rights to women including to social and political equality with men and the right to participation in the Political and Decision-Making Process. It requires state parties to take specific positive action to promote participative governance and the equal participation of women in the political life of their countries through affirmative action, enabling national legislation and other measures to ensure that women participate without any discrimination. Therefore, the challenge for Co-operative societies is to involve women in management.

1.1 Gender equality and equity issues in Kenya

Kenya is still grappling with achieving gender parity (Mzalendo, K. 2012). Kenyan women make up 52 per cent of the country’s population (Kassily and On kware 2010). In 2010, Kenya had only about 10 per cent women representation, trailing far behind the global average of 19.5 per cent women representation in parliaments. Over the past decades other countries in the East African region has surpassed Kenya on all measures of gender equality indices (Kamau, N. 2010). Nearly 40 per cent of households are run by women (Kamau, N. 2003). Women are limited from owning property (Maria N. 1997). Socialization and negative stereotyping of women reinforce the tendency for decision-making to remain the domain of men. Often, discriminatory attitudes and practices within the family influence unequal power relations (Maria N. 1997).

1.2 Gender issues in Co-operatives sector in Kenya

The Co-operative sector is pivotal in Kenya’s social, economic growth and development. With a membership of over 10 million in more than 14,000 registered Co-operative societies, the Savings and Credit Co-operative(Sacco) sub sector, in particular, has mobilized over Kshs. 300 billion (GoK, 2007). Co-operative enterprises should therefore respond to both women's practical and strategic needs either through women only Co-operative enterprises or those made up of all genders. Co-operators do not fully ascribe to values of self-help, mutual responsibility, equality and equity as desired by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), (Kamau, N, 2010). The gender issues that need to be addressed include low level of women participation in Co-operative management and efforts being made to deal with constraints such as social and cultural (Kamau, N, 2010).

II. Material and Methods

2.1 Study location

The study was conducted in Njoro Sub-County, one of the nine sub counties in Nakuru County. It lies within the Great Rift Valley and covers an area of 702.1 Km² (Census 2009). It is located between Longitude 350 28’ and 350 36’ East and Latitude 00 13’ and 10 10’ South. It borders four sub counties namely; Rongai, Molo, Gilgil, Narok North and Nakuru West. The Sub-County is sub-divided into five administrative divisions with a total of twenty two (22) locations. As of 2011, Njoro Sub-County, had an estimated population of 195, 253, (GoK, 2013).

2.2 Gender inequality

Among the Cross-cutting issues is Gender inequality which has been exacerbated by poverty levels, insecurity and inter-ethnic strife in the sub county that has continued to reduce any gains made towards gender equality (GoK, 2013)..

2.3 Settlement Patterns, climatic conditions and economic activities

Settlement patterns in the sub county are influenced by soil fertility and rainfall. It has hilly terrain and agricultural potential, fairly distributed good road network and settlement pattern. The main topographic feature is the Mau Escarpment and it has average altitude of 2,500m above sea level. The rivers originate from the escarpment, a home to the forests which influences rainfall pattern in the sub county. (GoK 2013). Altitude and physical features particularly the escarpment and forests influence climatic conditions of the Sub County with two broad climatic zones whose temperatures varies between 24°C and 29°C. The forests, rivers and escarpments' including rich volcanic soils are the natural resources (Gok 2013).

The sub county's topography influences economic activities. In areas where volcanic soils are found, both dairy and crop farming are the economic mainstay with Agriculture, livestock rearing and wildlife being the main economic activities. Women undertake most of social activities besides reproductive role (GoK, 2013). There over 35 registered Co-operative societies, majority being Sacco's in the sub county. Others are Housing Co-operative societies and land buying. 99 per cent of the Co-operative societies are active and plays a major in the growth and development of member's economic and social being (GoK, 2013).

2.4 Target population

The study target population was all registered membership (male and female) of all Co-operative societies in Njoro Sub-County of Nakuru County. A total of 353 officials and members of sampled Co-operative societies were interviewed. 37 Extension services officers and 21 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted.

2.5 Research design

Descriptive survey suitable for collecting many variables was used and involved both quantitative and qualitative methods (Mugenda A and Mugenda O. 1999). Some of the features that made the survey a good choice of research design relevant to this study were as follows. First, it is an efficient way of collecting information from a large number of respondents which this study targeted. Secondly, surveys are flexible in the sense that a wide range of information (such as attitudes, perceptions, values, beliefs and past behaviours can be gathered (Fraenkel & Wallen (2000); Kathuru & Pals, (1993).

2.6 Sampling procedure and sample size

This is the process of selecting relevant subjects to represent a population for purposes of generalization. Samples offered more detailed information and a high degree of accuracy because they dealt with relatively small number of units. Purposive sampling a non-probability sampling technique where units selected for investigation is based on the judgment of the study (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003) was used. It allowed the use of respondents that had the required information with respect to the objective(s). Purposive sampling was used so that important elements are captured. Purposive sampling was employed in selecting Co-operative societies based on their type and the business turnover and gender (men and women) proportion. Four Urban and four Rural Co-operative societies with women and men with different education levels, skills and located away from each other were examined. A total of 353 officials and members of sampled Co-operative societies were interviewed through open and close ended questionnaires. Another 37 Extension service officers as key informants provided views through In-depth interviews and 21 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted. According to Kathuri & Pals (1993) 100 respondents are ideal for a Survey research in social sciences. The extra 20 is necessary to take care of non response and drop outs

2.7 Research Instruments

Questionnaires and interview schedules were instruments for data collection (Bell, J. 1995). The study used one set of questionnaires for women aged between 18-51 years and above. The questionnaire filled by women had two sections with 19 questions designed to fulfil the objectives and interview schedule was used to enable interviewer control over the interview situation and probe for clarity, explain unclear questions and follow up vague or incomplete responses (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). A structured interview schedule made it possible to obtain data required to meet specific objectives of the study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

2.8 Data collection procedure

A letter of research from Graduate School, ethical permit and another letter from the National Commission of Science and Technology Nairobi were acquired. A structured interview schedule was used to obtain information from respondents. Each respondent in the sample was given a structured interview schedule to fill with the help of the interviewer and the researcher lead the FGD with the aim of gathering in-depth information and their experiences by. The study carried out an in-depth interview with Extension Services officers. The respondents returned the filled questionnaires while others were picked. Data was obtained on the number of women in the Co-operative societies and those within the management ranks of the study area. The information was also sought from the Njoro Sub-County Co-operative office. By-laws and policy documents of sampled Co-operative societies were interrogated. FGD and in-depth interviews with Extension officers and selected former officials of sampled Co-operative societies helped in obtaining information about replies to issues that required more knowledgeable and informed answer

2.9 Data analysis

The raw data was pre-coded before filling it into Statistical Package Social Scientist (SPSS) for social scientists. This enabled reducing and organising data for effective analysis. The frequency distribution was needed to examine the pattern of response to each independent and depended variable under study. Three research questions posited in the study were measured, by use of tables, bars, pie charts, gender, age, marital status, education levels and source of support for women. The Unit of analysis which were individuals nestled in the sampled Co-operative societies, policies and by-laws of the Co-operative societies, and the socio and economic factors influencing women's participation in the management of Co-operative societies in Njoro Sub-county gave the basis of "what" or "who" to be studied, resulting into conceptualisation after the formulation of research objectives prior to choosing study instrument (Trochim, 2006). Individuals in the Co-operative societies were analysed in the context of their sexes, ages, societies and area to describe the general population.

2.10 Validity of the research instruments

Instruments validity was through discussion with the supervisors and faculty experts and appropriate adjustment done (Paton, 2002). The idea was to find out if the instruments asked the right questions in terms of accuracy and meaningfulness to get results as desired (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999). In designing an instrument that yielded valid data, the study ensured that they contained all possible items that could be used in measuring the concept.

2.11 Reliability of the research instruments

Reliability of instruments were pilot tested using random sampling of 20 women Co-operative society members in Njoro Sub-County, Nakuru County. The test-retest method of assessing reliability of data involved administering the same instrument twice to the same subjects (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999). During this trial run, a preliminary study or pilot testing was carried out and the information obtained was used to evaluate the following:-a) Informants reactions to the research procedures: b) Availability of eligible informant's day of the week, time of the day, and meeting place; acceptability of questions asked; and willingness of informants to participate in the study. c) Quality tools, enabled collection of adequate data, recording and filing as planned.

2.12 Ethical consideration

Ethics are norms of standards of behavior that guides moral choices about behavior and our relationship with others. Ethical approval to undertake the study was obtained from Egerton University. Informants gave their informed consents to take part in the study after receiving detailed information regarding the voluntary nature of participants and confidentiality.

III. Results and Discussions

Out of the 353 questionnaires distributed to the respondents 330 were correctly filled and returned. This was a 93 per cent return rate. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), response rate of 60 per cent is good enough; therefore the researcher concluded that the questionnaires were adequate for analysis.

3.1 Women in management positions

Women are often marginalized in leadership positions at all management of Co-operative societies. The phenomenon is not confined to the third world and the developing world but is prevalent even in developed world which shows that it is consistent across geographical entities. For instance, the European Union (EU, 2013) noted that women leaders account for only 16.6 per cent of board members in publicly listed companies within the European zone. The highest female representation in leadership within the Europe Zone is Finland at 29.1 per cent (EU, 2013). Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in its State of Food and

Agriculture Report 2010-11, suggested increasing women access to and use of productive resources. This is to deal with limitations and prejudices facing women. A small percentage of women are represented in senior and middle level policy formulation and implementation processes. This is despite the huge number of women in communities contributing to the gender sensitivity in policy process including roles and needs of women. These glaring gender disparities in major decision making institutions are attributed to various factors including, lack of resources, supportive legislations and patriarchy. The study results in Table 1 below are consistent with the EU views on the women in leadership positions. A total of 32.7 per cent of the women respondents are in leadership positions in contrast to the 67.3 per cent of the respondents who are not. In the context of gender, there are more men in leadership positions compared to female members in similar positions. Men in leadership position constitute 70.6 per cent of the total leadership positions compared to only 29.4 per cent who are female members in similar positions. In ratio form of women to men in leadership positions in Co-operative societies in Njoro Sub-County, compared to those who are not, stood at 19:80, which sharply contrasts to those of men to women, this stood at 46:58. The study was also concerned with finding out whether there was any relationship between gender and leadership position in Co-operative societies. The chi square tests of independence was undertaken to determine if gender and mode of assumption to leadership position were statistically significant.

TABLE 1: Cross tabulation of gender and management positions in Co-operative societies showing the percentage of male and women in leadership positions

Gender	% in leadership position	% not in leadership position
Male	46.2	53.8
Female	19.2	80.8

A chi square test was performed and there was statistically significant relationship between gender and leadership positions in the Co-operative societies in Njoro Sub-County since χ^2 (1, N=52) = 4.282, $p=0.039$. As $p < 0.05$ which then meant that there is a statistically significant relationship between gender and leadership positions in the Co-operative societies in the Sub-County in table 2 below.

TABLE 2: Chi square test of independence between gender and leadership positions in Co-operative societies

Variable	Value	Degree of freedom	Point Probability
Gender	4.282a	1	-

3.2 Management positions held by women in comparison to those held by men in Co-operative societies

Women are not only marginalized in top leadership positions but at every level of leadership from the junior, grass root leadership level to the highest leadership. The United Nation(UN) (2007) noted that men are still overwhelmingly the decision-makers as senior executives and board members of corporations, public sector officials, judges and law-makers, media executives, negotiators in trade unions, and leaders of civil society organizations and may not have women's issues as their primary concern (UN, 2007,). The disparity in leadership positions between men and women is evident within the Co-operative societies as the study results indicate. Comparing the number of people in different management levels, there is a cumulative percentage of 17.3 per cent in junior management level, 9.6 per cent in middle level management level and 5.8 per cent in senior management level while the difference are not in any management (Fig.1) below. These percentages are acceptable as there would be more people in junior management level in comparison to those in senior management levels.

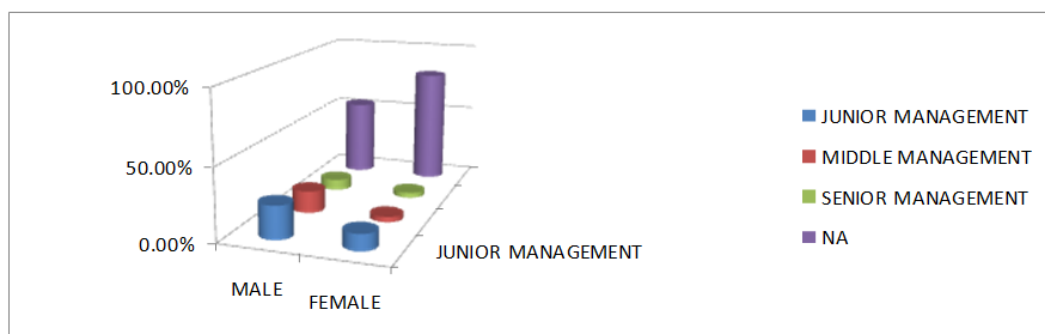


Fig. 1 Distribution of leadership positions by gender in Co-operative societies

In the context of gender, there are 11.5 per cent of women in junior management and 3.8 and 3.9 per cent in middle and senior management levels respectively. The difference of 80.8 per cent of women is not in any leadership position. This does not compare favourably with 23.1 per cent of their male counterparts in junior management levels, and 15.4 per cent and 7.7 per cent in middle and senior management levels respectively. The difference of 53.8 per cent of men is in management position. These results indicate that there more men in management at all management levels in comparison to their female counterparts.

A chi square test of independence was performed to test if there is any significant statistical relationship between gender and the leadership management level. However, the chi square test of independence conditions were not met as 6 cells (75.0 per cent) had expected count of less than 5 and as such the fisher's exact test was thus conducted.

TABLE 3: Chi square test of independence between gender and leadership position in Co-operative societies

Variable	Value	Degree of freedom	Point Probability
Gender	4.533	3	-
Fisher's exact test	4.403	3	-

The results as indicated in Table 4.3 above are: $\chi^2 (3, N=52) = 4.403, p=0.228$. The conclusion of the fisher's exact test is that since $p > 0.05$ there is no statistical significance in relationship between gender and the level of leadership position, that is, any difference in them is purely as a result of chance.

3.3 Factors determining women's ascendancy to management positions

Several factors affect women's ascendancy to leadership positions with among them, mode of vying for office, marital status, patriarchal tendencies and mode of electing leaders as established during the study.

3.4 Mode of vying for office

Mode of vying for office bears a critical importance in the women's chances of ascending to leadership positions. All the respondents indicated that the mode of vying for office was through democratic elections. This may affect a significant number of women ascending to leadership positions as some of them may not have the financial muscle to mount serious campaigns and sometimes campaigns become rowdy, brutal and sadistic (Kamau,2010). Democratic elections require finances which women do not have something that works against them to contest (Kamau, 2010). Also the threat of electoral violence contributes to lesser women in elective positions (Kamau, 2010). In this context, Lawless and Fox (2012) observes that entering the electoral arena involves the courageous step of putting oneself before the public, often only to face intense scrutiny, loss of privacy, and disruption from regular routines and pursuits. This decision, even for s politicians, seasoned requires traits such as confidence, competitiveness, and risk-taking - characteristics that men have traditionally been encouraged to embrace and women to shun.

3.5 Marital status

Marital status plays a significant role in leadership positions in African societies. Asked how critical they thought marital status was key in the role of appointment of leaders, 69.2 per cent of the respondents thought the status played a significant role compared to only 30.8 per cent who did not think the same played a role as captured in the Fig. 2 below:

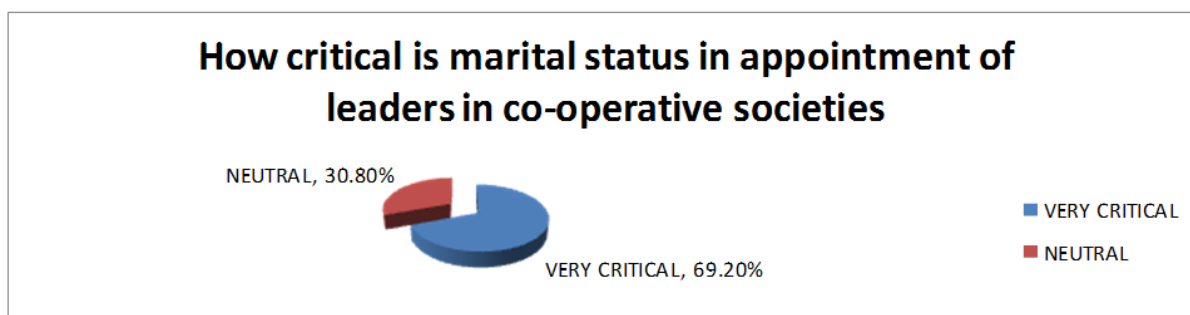


Fig. 2 How critical is marital status in appointment of leaders in Co-operative societies?

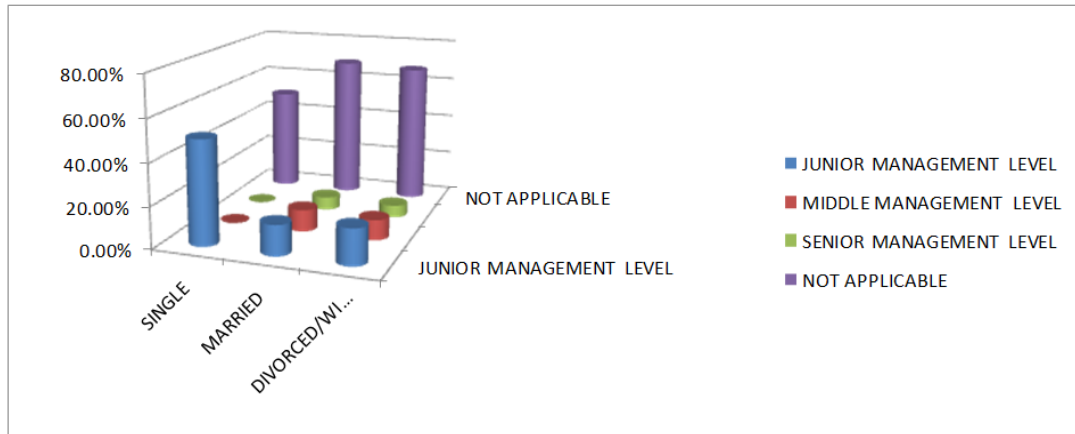


Fig. 3 Cross tabulation of marital status and management role in Co-operative societies

The issue of marital status does not disadvantage women in any sense in ascending to leadership positions as all the women in Co-operative societies are married in comparison to 7.7 per cent of men who are single or divorced.

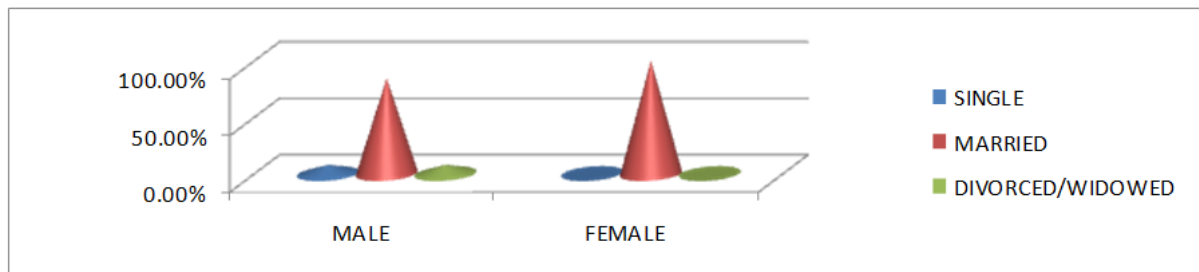


Fig. 4 Cross tabulation of gender and marital status in Co-operative societies

However, Fisher's exact test $\chi^2 (2, N=52) = 3.583, p>0.05$ done indicated that there is no statistical significant relationship between marital status and gender (Table 5) below.

TABLE 5 Chi square test of independence between gender and marital status in Co-operative societies

Variable	Value	Degree of freedom	Point Probability
Marital status	4.333	2	-
Fisher's exact test	3.583	2	-

3.6 Gender issues in Co-operative societies

The study was also interested in finding out how women are treated in the Co-operative societies. The study wanted to find out whether co-operative societies had women friendly policies and embraces affirmative action in favour of women as well as policies that take cognizance of women's unique characteristics, advocate for enhanced women practical and strategic needs that would enhance women's participation like affirmative action as well as gender mainstreaming. By-laws of the sampled societies analysed had no provision for affirmative action or gender mainstreaming.

3.7 Co-operative societies organizational policies treatment of women

Co-operative societies do not have provisions within their by-laws to cater for women's interest specifically. This is despite the fact that women have unique characteristics and have dual roles that work against their effort to compete with men effectively in certain fields in particular in seeking leadership positions. 30.8 per cent respondents said that the policies of co-operative societies did favour women and none thought that the policies were friendly to women as captured in Fig. 5 below:-

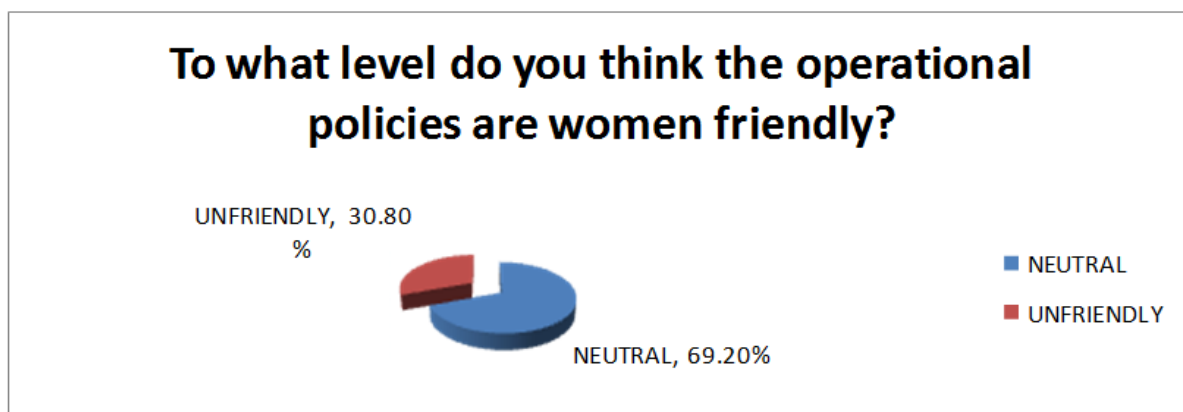


Fig. 5 The level of women friendliness of operational policies in Co-operative societies

3.8 Affirmative action policies and practices in favour of women

The study revealed that there are no affirmative policies in the Co-operative society's by-laws in Njoro Sub-County that would assist women to ascend to leadership positions. There are no specific products for women or any special sessions or deliberate moves to sensitize women on the need to ascend to leadership position. There are no special seats reserved for women as they have to compete on equal footing with men regardless of their unique characteristics.

3.9 Patriarchal influence on women's participation in Co-operative societies management

There are strong patriarchal tendencies in co-operative societies and that men are the greatest proponents of the phenomenon. All respondents indicated that the patriarchal tendencies are discriminative, oppressive and autocratic in nature that can best be dealt through legislations and formal policies. A good example of patriarchal tendencies is the assumption that men make better leaders than women (Kamau, 2010). The patriarchal tendencies have influence on women's ascendancy to leadership positions chances. A total of 74 per cent of the respondents cumulatively indicated that they thought the influence to be "Very Critical" and "Critical" in the influence of the same (Fig. 6) below.

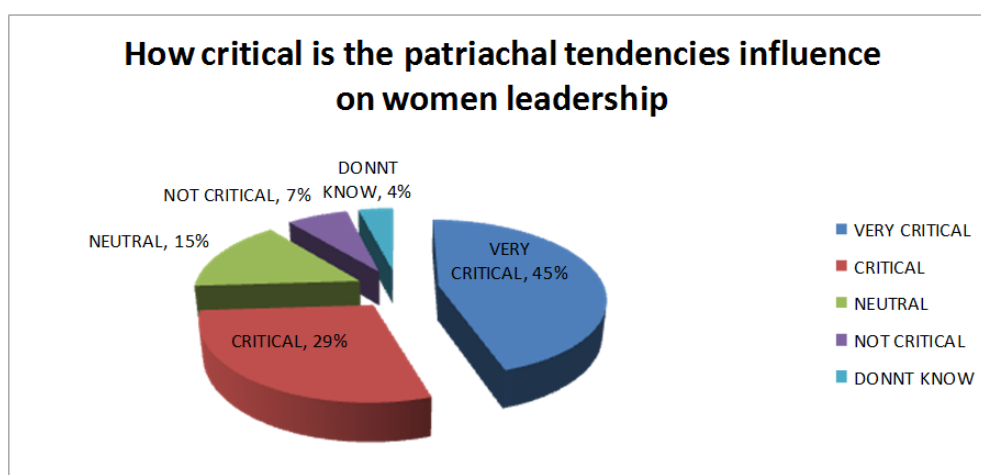


Fig. 6 Patriarchal tendencies influence on women leadership in Co-operative societies

3.10 Outcome of In-depth Interview, Focus group discussion and Key-informant discussions

The study revealed that women have been marginalised due to patriarchy buttressed by entrenched social and cultural factors. The 37 Extension officers who were key informants and 27 serving co-operative society members and officials and 16 former officials of Co-operative societies said. Though women till land they own do not own it. All family land and other property is legally owned by the men who dictates how the proceeds are shared. Even family members from the man's side or family set-up have a bigger say than the women who are legally married to the man. It is said that though local administrators talk against it in public, in privacy they support it. The women's dual role of reproduction and production militated against their attempt to seek leadership positions in Co-operative societies. The key informants from the Ministry of Industrialisation and Enterprise Development shared the same views. They suggested gender mainstreaming and enforcement of

affirmative action as a panacea. Women are treated like second class status in family set ups due to patriarchy leading inequity and hindering them take up leadership positions in Co-operative societies. Women shun violence that precedes democratic elections. Views that were echoed by eight key informants from Kenya Union of Savings and Credit Co-operative society (KUSCCO), National Co-operative Housing Union (NACHU) and Co-operative in Kenya-Co-operative alliance of Kenya (CAK). Women also suffer from extreme self conscious and avoid being scrutinised by the electorates and public at large. The current Kenya constitution should promote gender equality and equity to assist women ascendancy to leadership position in Co-operative society.

IV. Findings

Women are the majority in the Co-operative societies and contribute more in the context of shareholding but they are least represented in the management of Co-operative societies in Njoro Sub-County. Only a total of 29.4 per cent of women are in leadership positions compared to 70.6 per cent of men who are in leadership positions. The outcome indicated that a total of 37.7 per cent of women interviewed in leadership positions in contrast to 67.3 per cent of them who are not, enlightening that there are more men in leadership positions than women. The ratio of women who are in leadership positions compared to those who are not stood at 19:80 in percentage which contrasts to the men which stood at 46:58. There are more men in leadership regardless of their fewer numbers and low level of shareholding in Co-operative societies.

4.1 Marital status

It was established that marital status is a desirable trait for women seeking leadership positions in Co-operative societies. If one is married, she has a better chance to be elected to management positions.

4.2 Mode of assumption to office

The primary mode of assumption of office in Co-operative societies is through democratic elections which were found to disadvantage women due to violent nature of campaigns that are mounted prior to elections. Women also are self conscious and avoid violent campaigns. This gives men advantage over women to ascend to leadership.

4.3 Cultural factors

A small ratio of women are represented in senior and middle level policy formulation and implementation processes. These glaring gender disparities in major decision making institutions is attributed to various factors among them, negative stereotypes and socio-cultural attitudes reinforced with patriarchal family systems that work against women and inability to recognize women potential. It was also established during the study that campaign take a lot of time hence does not give women much opportunity to mount elaborate since she has to care of her family and her productive role. She has to undertake reproductive and productive roles at the same time.

4.4 Affirmative action policies

Affirmative action policies that ought to play a pivotal role in stirring women into leadership positions in Co-operative societies are absent yet they should promote gender equality and equity for women as desired by the current constitution, international legal instruments among them CEDAW, Maputo protocol and Beijing Plat form. The study established that there are strong patriarchal tendencies that play a huge role in deciding who ascends to management positions in Co-operative societies in Njoro Sub-County. Patriarchy, it was established is discriminative, oppressive and autocratic against women. Women are marginalized in leadership position in Co-operative societies given that only an average of 29.4 per cent are in leadership positions compared to 70.6 per cent men in similar positions. The Women are marginalized at all levels of management levels given that only 11.5 per cent of women leaders are in junior level management, 3.8 per cent in middle level management and a similar 3.8 per cent in senior level management. This compares negatively with 23.1 per cent, 15.4 per cent and 7.7 per cent respectively of men in similar positions.

V. Conclusion

The study revealed that the status quo is not about to go away despite national and international intervention, as it is considered part and parcel of the revered culture. This is despite the fact that it militates against gender relations curtailing growth of co-operative societies. At household/family level women are not supported to own family, counter patriarchy and violence and participate in decision making.

At Community level, violence tendency that militates against women's pursuit for leadership in co-operative societies is present. Gender mainstreaming endeavours and advocacy is absent though the government and stakeholders preaches. Women organisations are not supported adequately to demand for accountability and there is political goodwill and legalisations for challenging gender inequity in co-operative societies.

At national level, quota systems for co-operative societies are not entrenched in their by-laws to address gender imbalances. Women capabilities to challenge for positions in co-operative societies and gender inequality are lacking. Gender stereotyping that harm woman's potential of winning leadership positions in co-operative societies is an everyday occurrence.

6. Recommendations

The study recommends policy formulations and gender mainstreaming promotion to achieve gender equality at all levels. This will provide avenue for women's participation in leadership for sustained development of co-operative societies. Co-operative enterprises should create supportive structures, incentives, and accountability mechanisms for gender mainstreaming.

At Household/family levels Women's practical genders needs should be addressed as a way of empowering them. Policies should be formulated to allow women own family property, and counter patriarchy and violence for them to contest effectively for leadership in co-operative societies.

Affirmative policies and programs should be put in place at community levels to promote women assumption of leadership in Co-operative societies. There should be gender mainstreaming endeavours and advocacy in order to break the vicious circle of patriarchy. Women organisations should be supported to demand for accountability from all actors since they can mobilise political goodwill and capable of energising coalitions to challenge gender equality barriers.

At national level, Co-operative societies should legalise quota system to address inequality and equity. Essential structural facet must be addressed to deepen normative framework to achieve women's human rights through effective implementation of laws and policies. Education should and will be promoted among women to expand their capabilities for them to challenge stereotypes and gender inequality individually and collectively.

7 Appendix Capital base, and women to men ratio in sampled Co-operative societies in Njoro Sub-County

Society Name	Total membership	Total Women membership	Ratio of Women to men in management	Ratio of Women against total Savings
Egerton University Sacco	3000	2200	1: 9	Kshs 780M: 989M
Egerton Workers Housing Society	2000	855	3: 6	-
Secod Sacco	3700	3000	3:9	Kshs 575M: 891M
PCEA Njoro Sacco	290	200	2:7	Kshs 0.1M:0.8M
Njoro farmers Co-operative society	3889	2379	2:7	-
Mau Narok Rural Sacco	2390	1971	1:8	Kshs 457,000:401M
Njoro Canning Sacco	230	168	0:9	Kshs 450,000:3.1M
Expression Sacco	1000	825	2:7	800,000:1.2M

Source: Njoro Sub-County Co-operative Annual report 2011

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank officials, members of Co-operative societies in Njoro sub- county and Extension officers of Ministry of Industrialization and Enterprise Development for sharing their experiences, and men in the focus group that contributed enormously. Lastly, the Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies-Egerton University, Njoro Kenya for their support and encouragement.

Declaration of conflicting interest

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this article

Reference

- [1]. Adedamola et, al. (2010).Gender Analysis of Political Participation in Nigeria: Journal of Law and Psychology. Vol. 2 (5).
- [2]. Akin Aina, T. (1997). The state and civil society: Politics, government, and social organization in African cities. The Urban Challenge in Africa: Growth and Management of Its Large Cities (Mega-city) Tokyo: United Nations University Press.
- [3]. Al Hibri, A. (1984). Research in philosophy In: P. Durban, (eds.). Vol 7. London : JAL Press.
- [4]. Alice Walker(1982), The Color purple.
- [5]. Allen, J. V. (1972). "Sitting on a Man": Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women. Canadian Journal of African Studies, VI (ii).
- [6]. Amaza, P.S.,P.V. Kwagbe, and A.A. Amos, (1999). Analysis of women participation in Agricultural Co-operatives: Case Study of Borno State, Nigeria. Annals of Borno.
- [7]. Amin, K. (2005). Social science research: Conception methodology and analysis, Kampala: Makerere University printers.

- [8]. Bell, J.(1995). How to complete your research project successfully. New Delhi:UBSPD
- [9]. Claris G. Kariuki (2007) Centre for International Private Enterprise (CIPE)
- [10]. Cole, S.(2011). Increasing Women's Political Participation in Liberia: Challenges and Potential Lessons from India, Rwanda and South Africa. Washington: IFES.
- [11]. Daniel S. S.(1972) "The Demographic History of Colonial New England," Journal of Economic History.
- [12]. Fraenkel, J, R., & Wallen, N. (2002). How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education. 4th Edition. New-York; McGraw Hill publishing.
- [13]. Kathuri, N. & Pals, D. (1993). Introduction to Education Research. Njoro: EMC Egerton University.
- [14]. Gamba P. & Komo I Evolution, Growth and Decline of Co-operative sector: A report for Centre for Governance and Development (CGD). (accessed from Internet on 2013).
- [15]. GoK, (2010), The Draft Constitution of Kenya, Nairobi: Government Printers-Kenya.
- [16]. GoK (2013), Njoro Sub County Annual report: Government printers-Kenya.
- [17]. IPU Report (2012). Women in National Parliament .World Classification according to Country. Situation as of May 30 2012.Retrieved from <http://www.ipu.org/e/htm>
- [18]. Inglehart, R., & Norris, P. (2003).The Rising Tide: Gender Equality .Gender Equality and Cultural Change around the World .Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [19]. Iwanaga, K (2008). Women's Political Participation and Representation in Asia.Retrieved from <http://www.niapress.dk/books/series/women- and - politics-asia>.
- [20]. John Lord and Peggy Hutchison (1993) Published in Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health 12:1, Spring 1993.
- [21]. Kathuri & Pals (1993)
- [22]. Kamau, N. (2003).Do Women Bring a Different Perspective into Political Leadership?
- [23]. Kassily, B.J. N & Onkware, K. (2010). Struggles and Success in Engendering the African Public Sphere: Kenyan Women in Politics .Kenya Studies Review: 3, 3, 71-83.
- [24]. Kombo, K. and Tromp, L.A, (2006), Proposal and Thesis Writing .An introduction. Nairobi Pauline Publications.
- [25]. Lawless, J & Fox, R. (2012). Men Rule: The Continued Under-Representation of Women in U.S. Politics. Retrieved November 14, 2013
- [26]. Lerner, G. (1986). The creation of patriarchy. Oxford University Press. New York:
- [27]. Sirleaf, E. J. (2010).African Women Political Participation: Lecture by H.E Ellen Johnson Sirleaf President of the Republic of Liberia .Retrieved March 20 2012, from African Women's Development Fund Website
- [28]. Solomon, A. E., Adekayo, A. E. (2006).Women and power transformation in Household: A case Study of Osun State, Nigeria. The social sciences1(3):231-234
- [29]. Summary Report on the Progress towards Achieving of the Millennium Goals (MDGs) in Kenya (2010). Ministry of State for Planning, National Development and Vision 2030.
- [30]. Michelle J. Hindin, For Better or for Worse?. Women's Autonomy and Marital Status in Zimbabwe.
- [31]. M. Nzomo (ed.)(1997) Women Candidates in Kenyan Electoral Politics. NCSW, Type Design Ltd. Nairobi
- [32]. M. Nzomo (1997) Women in Top Management in Kenya. AAPAM, Nairobi.
- [33]. Mikell, G. (1995). African Feminism: Toward a New Politics of Representation. Agenda Empowering Women for Gender Equity.
- [34]. Mucai-Katambo, V. (1992). Co-operatives: formation, Management and settlement of Disputes. Oxford University Press, Nairobi.
- [35]. Mugenda O.M. & Abel. G. Mugenda, (2003). Research methods, quantitative and qualitative Approaches. ACTS press Nairobi Kenya.
- [36]. Mugenda A and Mugenda O (1999). Research Methods .Quantitative and Qualitative approaches, Nairobi: ACTS Press.
- [37]. Mugenda A and Mugenda O. (2003). Research Design and Methodology. Nairobi: ACTS Press,
- [38]. Mzalendo, K. (2012). Gender Rule: Where are we?
- [39]. Mzalendo. Eye on Kenyan Parliament. www.mzalendo.com. Accessed 2012
- [40]. Nnaemeka, O. (2004). Nego Feminism: Theorizing, Practicing, and Pruning Africa's Way. Signs, 29(2), 357-385.
- [41]. Nokoko, Institute of African Studies Carleton University (Ottawa, Canada) Fall 2011 (2)
- [42]. Nzomo, M. (1989). The Impact of the Women's Decade on Policies, Programs and Empowerment of Women in Kenya. Issue: A Journal of Opinion,
- [43]. Obioma Nnaemeka's, "Nego-feminism: Theorising, Practicing, and Pruning Africa's way,"(Winter,2004):
- [44]. Oyewumi, O. (2004). African Women and Feminism: Reflecting on the Politics of Sisterhood. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
- [45]. United Nations. (1948). Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Geneva: United Nations Organizations.
- [46]. United Nations.(1996). The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action–Fourth World Conference on Women. Beijing, China 4-15 Sept. 1995
- [47]. United Nations(2007). Women in leadership roles. Retrieved November 14, 2013.
- [48]. United Nation Development Programme Millennium Development Goals Report 2014.
- [49]. Wanjiku M. K. and Elishiba N. K, African Women Studies Centre, University of Nairobi and Department of Gender and Development Studies.
- [50]. Wipper, A. (1971). Equal Rights for Women in Kenya? The Journal of Modern African Studies,
- [51]. World Bank (2009). Food and Agricultural Organization, and International Fund for Agricultural Development. Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook, Washington, DC. World Bank.