GENDER AND POLITICS: THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE KENYAN PARLIAMENT

BY

ELLEAN AKINYI POLO

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BY

ELLEAN AKINYI POLO

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SUMMER 2019
DECLARATION

I hereby declare, that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for examination to any other academic, institution in any form other than United States International University- Africa (USIU-A), for academic credit. All material obtained herein from other sources is duly acknowledged.

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This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as the appointed supervisor.

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Signed: ------------------------------ Date: ------------------------------

Ambassador Ruthie Rono, PhD.
Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs (DVCAA)
DEDICATION

I dedicate this Thesis to my beloved parents Dr. Julius Otie Polo and Mrs. Jenipher Ndege Polo for their unending support, inspirational, limitless and underlying love, and also for believing in me. My siblings Crisencia Polo, Felix Polo and Cynthia Polo for having my back and for their continuous encouragement. You have all made me to be a great person and I am forever indebted to you. May God Bless you.
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ABSTRACT

Kenya has signed and ratified a number of conventions and enacted a number of laws and policies to address the gender gap and at the same time promote equality and equity. These developments have been as a result of women fighting for their rights over a long period of time. Currently, the Kenyan constitution 2010 provides for a two thirds-gender rule- where no single gender should occupy two-thirds of whichever positions in the public service sphere. In this case, the parliament should not be made of more than two-thirds of the male gender.

Studies indicate progressive improvement in women representation and the promotion of fundamental human rights, minimal progress means that achieving gender parity remains a distant dream. Women have since time immemorial played a key role in politics but so far, their efforts and contributions have not been documented. This research therefore sought to examine the role and impact of the parliamentary women representatives. It assessed how this position has influenced gender equality and politics in Kenya in the period between 2013 and 2018.

The study found out that women are still under represented in elective positions in Kenya. It also established that the role of county women’s representative in promoting gender equality in Kenya was above average with mean of 3.9840. This means that the women representatives’ position is important as any other position and they should be given equal opportunities with their male counterparts to serve their electorates.

The study concluded that there is still a big gender parity in terms of the composition of women in political leadership positions, and recommends that the
disparity in gender representation in parties and national politics be improved by empowering more women to engage in active party politics.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the guidance, help and support of many great people. First, I would like to give thanks to the almighty God for giving me patience, determination and ability to complete this thesis, without Him, I could not have come this far. I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Fatuma Ahmed Ali for her guidance and support throughout this research. I greatly appreciate her countless hours of supervision and reading through drafts of my research proposal and final thesis. Without her patience and guidance, this thesis would never have been completed. My appreciation also goes to my reader Mr. Simon Njoroge who took his time to read through my work and give very constructive feedback, and all my lecturers who prepared me for this study. I cannot forget to mention my classmates Carolyn Tunnen Ingutiah and Perpetua Nyaboke Angima who walked this journey with me, for their encouragement, constructive criticism and advice during the course of my studies and writing this thesis. Special thanks goes to my parents, Dr. Julius Polo and Mrs. Jenipher Ndege, for being my greatest support and also for giving me the necessary advice. And finally to my siblings Cris, Felix and Cynthia for always having my back and for the continuous encouragement. May God bless you all!
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<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACHPR</td>
<td>African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights.</td>
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<td>AWDF</td>
<td>African Women’s Development Fund.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>The Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCU</td>
<td>Chama Cha Uzalendo Party.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOSOC</td>
<td>Economic and Social Council.</td>
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<td>FIDA</td>
<td>Federation for Women Lawyers.</td>
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<td>GBV</td>
<td>Gender Based Violence.</td>
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<td>GOK</td>
<td>Government of Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICJ</td>
<td>International Court of Justice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICESCR</td>
<td>International Covenant on Economic and Socio Cultural Rights.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEBC</td>
<td>Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labor Organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPU</td>
<td>Inter-Parliamentary Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KADU</td>
<td>Kenya African Democratic Union.</td>
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<td>LSK</td>
<td>Law Society of Kenya.</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals.</td>
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<td>MCAs</td>
<td>Members of County Assembly.</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPs</td>
<td>Members of Parliament.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MYWO</td>
<td>Maendeleo ya Wanawake.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NARC</td>
<td>National Rainbow Coalition–Kenya.</td>
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<td>NCWK</td>
<td>National Council of Women of Kenya.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODM</td>
<td>Orange, Democratic Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>People’s Democratic Party Kenya.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals.</td>
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<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community.</td>
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<td>TNA</td>
<td>The National Alliance</td>
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<td>TIP</td>
<td>The Independent Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>UDHR</td>
<td>Universal Declaration of Human Rights.</td>
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<td>UDF</td>
<td>United Democratic Forum Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>United Nations Development Fund for Women.</td>
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<tr>
<td>URP</td>
<td>United Republic Party.</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development.</td>
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<td>WEF</td>
<td>World Economic Forum.</td>
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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

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

According to Nyokabi (2010), there are two domains for the exercise of power, the public and private. Private domains comprise of business leadership, civil society, professional, faith-based and community-based organizations. Her Excellency (H.E) Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in a speech on the 10th anniversary of the African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF), explained that governance cuts across all spheres of representation and decision-making, from the community to national levels; she argued that political participation for women would be realized only when quotas and special seats are abolished and their access to participatory institutions at political and economic arenas considered a right women no longer feel compelled to wage campaigns and stage protests for. A survey of political participation and trends in Britain conducted by Parry, Moyser and Day (1992) found that gender differences in voting participation had become insignificant by the 1980s, men continued to prove more engaged in conducting public affairs, collective action and direct action.

Mclvor (1996) argues that the history of political thought had ignored women because politics was about the power of governments, war and diplomacy; areas where women
‘could not participate’ ostensibly because power was considered a masculine attribute. Discrimination against women has been noted to be widespread due to patriarchal arrangements, where the husband is the head of the household and women often have little influence in decisions affecting their lives. This has been so, despite the fact that women form a majority of the population in Kenya (51.2%) and play an active role in the development of the society.

Women continue to be marginalized and discriminated against in many aspects of their lives, a situation which for a long time was attributed to the existing laws and policies as well as the socio-cultural factors that forms the heart of democracy in Kenya. Women political participation can be traced back from pre-colonial times and the trend has changed over time. Women’s Rights Organizations formed as early as 1952 have lobbied for the rights of women and created empowerment programs that would ensure involvement of women in politics and political party nomination. However, political parties on the other hand have not involved women equally in their party nominations nor given them equal leadership opportunities as their male counterparts.

A majority of political parties in Kenya are largely dominated by men, and as vehicles to political offices, often decide who will be listed on the ballot and in what capacity. The Inter-Parliamentary Union incorporated the universal declaration on democracy which says ‘The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of the society in which they work, in equality and complementarity, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences. Therefore one major problem with women’s under representation in politics lies primarily with lack of democracy in political parties and male domination in other leadership structures. (Inter-parliamentaryUnion,2015)
The purpose of this study therefore is to investigate the role and influence of the County Women Representatives in parliament in promoting gender equality and participation of women in the national political arena. This chapter highlights the study background with a focus on empirical literature on the study thematic areas. Furthermore, the chapter outlines the study’s problem statement, objectives followed by literature review, the study methodology, findings and lastly, the conclusion and recommendations.

1.1 Background of the study

The French philosopher and feminist Simone de Beauvoir (1972) once posited that, “One is not born but becomes a woman”. Same sentiments were echoed by Mikkola, (2011), who pointed out that "females become women through a process whereby they acquire feminine traits and learn feminine behavior." The same applies to men. In other words, men and women are the intended or unintended products of social constructs (Anders, Raili, & Snjezana, 2017). These sentiments led to equality feminism commonly known as liberal feminism an ideology that believes that men and women are born equal and thus deserve equal treatment without any hindrance.

In the context of International Law, gender equality has been regarded as the central development goal by the United Nations (UN) and other international organizations such as the World Bank and International Labor Organization (ILO). However, as much as gender equality means both men and women having the same opportunities, it is important to note that equal opportunities do not necessarily lead to equality as outcomes. Gender inequalities exist because of both gender stereotypes and outright discrimination in the society (Koobak & Marling, 2014). Koobak and Marling
(2014) says that gender inequalities start right from the families spreading through institutional structures with most dominance witnessed in the labor market, educational and political spheres which eventually lead to the dis-empowerment of women. Thus, equal rights are an integral concept in the international legal practice.

As a result, achieving gender equality has been tackled as an international issue. This has led to establishment of various international biding conventions that seek to address human rights and fundamental freedoms key among them being the 1979 Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). According to CEDAW, equality is the cornerstone of every democratic society that aspires to attain social justice and human rights (Raday, 2012). In the context of women and politics, CEDAW is of the assertion that, the inclusion of women is a social, economic, and political good in itself. Article 7 of CEDAW called upon state parties to take appropriate actions to eliminate discrimination against women in political spheres by ensuring both men and women have equal opportunities to vote and to be eligible to hold public office, to take part in policy formulation and implementation, and to participate in Non-governmental Organizations (Hellum & Aasen, 2013).

Besides CEDAW, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights constitute some of the key attempts by the international community to establish universal rules on gender equality in political participation. Both of these international covenants enshrine political participation as a human right. In 1995, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) endorsed a 30

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1 Political participation: This refers to engaging in political activities or actions particularly, women participation in civic education, rallies, conferences and elective campaigns, registration drives or advocacy activities. Women’s attainment of freedom of speech, being listened and enduring through elective positions is noted as political participation.
percent target of women participation at decision-making levels (Asiedu, Branstette, Gaekwad-Babulal, & Malokele, 2017).

In the African region, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) made recommendations for gender policy and institutional framework, which was later adopted as the Declaration on Gender and Development of 1997 in Blantyre, Malawi by SADC heads of government. The declaration recognized gender equality as a fundamental human right and included a commitment to a 30% quota of women in political decision making bodies by 2005 (Asiedu et al., 2017). The increasing significance of women in political participation was further recognized by its inclusion both in the Millennium Development Goal 3 (MDGs) and in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDGs).

Despite the international community's comprehensive equality frameworks, women are still discriminated against on the basis of gender and underrepresented in decision-making. Even though women's average share of parliamentary membership almost doubled between the years 1995 and 2015, from 11.3% to 22.1% respectively (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2015) in Kenya, the threshold still remains way below the two-thirds principle. Globally, an increase in the share of women in parliament was registered with America taking the lead. In the review study by Inter-Parliamentary Union (2015), Rwanda, Andorra and Bolivia achieved greatest gender representation progress between 1995 and 2015 in their single or lower houses at 63.8%, 50% and 53.1% respectively.

Gender; The socially constructed definition of femininity and masculinity. It is the social design of biological sex, determined by the conception of tasks, functions and roles attributed to women and men in society and in public and private life.
America as a region has witnessed the highest aggregate changes in the past 20 years. Women's average share of the region's parliaments rose from 12.7% in 1995 to 26.4% in 2015 with Bolivia leading with women's share of lower houses at 53.1% \cite{Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2015}. According to the study, countries in Europe also show an increment in the share of women in the national parliaments from 13.2% to 25% within the same period. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Women’s representation made substantial progress where their average share of parliament grew from 9.8 per cent in 1995 to 22.3 per cent in 2015 \cite{Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016}. In 1995, no States in this region had elected more than 30 per cent women to their single or lower houses. Seychelles and Mozambique fell just below that mark, at 27.3 and 25.2 per cent, respectively \cite{Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016}. By 2015, the regional tally had shifted dramatically: 12 countries have elected more than 30 per cent women to their lower or single houses; five have elected more than 40 per cent; and one (Rwanda) has elected more than 60 per cent \cite{Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016}.

Kenya is a signatory to a number of sub-regional, regional and international declarations on human rights and equal representation of both men and women. The solemn declaration on gender equality in Africa, the Maputo Protocol, African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, The Beijing Protocol and Platform for Action and also the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are just but some of the declarations that Kenya is signatory to. In light of this, Kenya has the obligation to uphold human rights principles as outlined in these biding instruments. In recognition of this obligation, the Kenyan leadership has put measures in place in efforts to achieve and uphold human rights particularly on equal representation, with the
landmark of them being the promulgation of the new Constitution of 2010 (Opuko, Anyango and Alupo, 2018).

The Constitution of Kenya 2010 domesticates a number of commitments that are meant to safeguard the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms with the key among them being the two third gender rule. The two-thirds gender rule concept is entrenched in article 81 (b) of the constitution and it states "Not more than two thirds of members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender". Article 27 (8) requires the state to take legislative and other measures to implement the two-thirds gender principle and states that “not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender”. Furthermore, article 27 (b) of the constitution requires that legislative and other measures including affirmative action programs and policies be established and implemented by the senate to redress historical injustices and disadvantages suffered by either groups or individuals (GoK, 2010).

Following the implementation of the constitution, various legislation's have been established and implemented in a bid to promote the two-thirds gender rule principle, key among these being Elections Act, 2011 and the Political Parties Act, 2011. Pursuant to the constitution, the affirmative action program mandated the recognition of women as a way of creating special seats for them, a move that led to the creation of the Women’s Representative post. Notably, this led to the election of forty-seven (47) women into the national assembly, nomination of sixteen women by political parties and one woman representing youth and persons with disabilities into the senate. This led to an increase in
the representation\textsuperscript{3} of women in the current political leadership from 9.8\% in the tenth parliament to 20.7\% in the eleventh parliament (SID, 2018).

Nevertheless, the women's share in the country still falls below the required 30\% even in 2019. Much blame has been put on the legislators who are charged with translating the constitutional guarantees into law. Unable to reach an agreement on implementation, the 10th parliament referred the issue to the Supreme Court, which directed that the gender representation quota be implanted in stages, rather than all at once. In a second attempt to implement the gender principle, the 11\textsuperscript{th} parliament failed yet again to implement the two-thirds gender amendment bill in 2015 citing lack of quorum during voting process (Kihiu, 2018).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Despite the affirmative action measures, following the promulgation of the 2010 constitution, women’s participation has still been below the expectations. This was evident in the 2013 general election whereby women’s participation\textsuperscript{4} remained questionable. The numbers of women elected through the normal elective procedure were very low whereby only 16 out of the possible 290 female members of parliament were elected. Furthermore, 47 were elected on Women's only seats and another 5 nominated on special seats (SID, 2018).

\textsuperscript{3} Representation; This refers to a situation in which an individual is chosen to speak, deliberate and make informed decisions on behalf of parties, whereby the choice mandate is given by the people through either elections, nominations or direct appointment and is binding.

\textsuperscript{4} Participation; Refers to the act of taking part or engaging in a given activity either in the social, economic or political spheres of life.
In the senate, not a single woman won a seat but 18 women were nominated out of the possible 68 Senators. In the gubernatorial seat, a no single woman was elected governor. (Wambui, 2016). However, in the 2017 elections, there was progress which saw a slight increase in number of elected women both in the senate and National Assembly and importantly, the election of three women governors was historic for Kenya and a great milestone towards achieving gender equality. Despite facing all the challenges as opposed to their male counterparts, they fought tooth and nail to emerge winners and secure the elective seats with any favoritism. Nevertheless, deadlines on the implementation of the affirmative action has not been met and misguided by the narrative that the cost of implementing the two-thirds gender principle will be too expensive for the taxpayers, thus, contributing to public spending (SID, 2018).

Although the constitutional requirement for the women’s representation has not been met except for the County assemblies, it is worth noting that there is an increased number of women in the legislative bodies. On this backdrop, it would be expected that addressing women's and gender issues by the Women's representatives would increase compared to the previous years. This has however not been the case. Contrary to the expectations, women's representatives have been accused of addressing their own interests, more or less like the male counterpart politicians, at the expense of the group they were meant to represent. In addition, the women's representatives have been accused of working with parties that nominated them again at the expense of the people (Kamau, 2010).

Studies have shown that although quota system enhances women's visibility in representative politics, beneficiaries of affirmative action to influence public policy is
limited to political patronages (Wambui, 2016). This has led to the labeling of women representatives and those nominated as political flower girls. It is upon this premise that this study investigated the role and influence of Women Representatives in the parliament in promoting gender equality and political participation of women in Kenya.

1.3 Objective of the study

The general objective of this study was to investigate the role and influence of elected County women representatives in promoting gender equality and political involvement of women in Kenya (2013-2018). The study is guided by the following specific objectives;

1. To examine the gender equality outlook in the Kenyan politics from year 2010 to present.
2. To analyze the effectiveness of elected County Women Representatives in promoting gender equality in Kenya.
3. To investigate the perceptions of the general public about the County Women’s Representative position.

1.4 Research Questions

1. To what extent has gender equality been achieved in the Kenyan politics since the promulgation of the Kenyan constitution?
2. How effective is the County Women’s Representative position in promoting gender equality in Kenya?
3. How does the public perceive the County Women’s Representative position?
1.5 Significance of the Study

Empirical literature detailing the electoral participation and involvement of women in politics remains scanty, especially on the newly created affirmative posts. In addition, information about the role of women leaders in enhancing gender equality and political representation is limited. Subsequently, this study endeavors to determine the influence and the role of women representatives in promoting gender equality and the extent of women participation in politics since the promulgation of the constitution of Kenya, 2010. It is of significance that this study conducted a post-electoral analysis to determine people’s perceptions on the women representatives.

The findings of this study may contribute in understanding the available strategies to enhance women’s participation in political leadership, challenges that are constraining their ease to access political space, constructivism thoughts, beliefs, perceptions and biased ideals that face women’s participation in political leadership in Kenya. This study is critical on the premise that it will provide empirical content useful in understanding women’s needs and solutions towards utilizing the available opportunities to enhance their political ascendance to leadership, which has been marked by male dominance. This study will add to the contribution of the already existing research material and if published act as a reference material for future studies.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focused on exploring the political experiences of elected county women representatives in promoting gender equality and political involvement of women in Kenya. Using a qualitative approach, the study aimed at collecting the views and opinions of women representatives in the 11th and 12th Parliament in regard to their role
and influence in promoting gender equality and political participation of women in Kenya. The study also sought to collect the public’s opinion on the study topic. This may help in determining the public's perceptions of the women’s representative post. The study was limited to the elected County women representatives, gender and human rights experts both in the public and private sector, in organizations such Kenya National Commission of Human Rights (KNCHR), Kenya Women Judges Association (KWJA), Association of Media Women, (AMW), Law Society of Kenya (LSK), Katiba Institute, Federation for Women Lawyers (FIDA), among others and political opinion leaders. The study excluded respondents who did not have knowledge on gender and politics.
1.7 Organization of the Study

Chapter One: This is the chapter that contains the introduction, background of the Study, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, statement of the problem and the scope of the study.

Chapter Two: Presents the literature review and the theoretical framework, the review covers an analysis of the gender roles of the African woman, the extent to which gender equality has been realized in Kenya after the promulgation of the constitution in 2010, the introduction of the two thirds gender rule and affirmative action and mentions the literature gap. This chapter also discusses the various theories associated with gender equality like the feminism and liberal feminism theories, and the laws and policies that promote gender equality in Kenya.

Chapter Three: outlines the methodology used in the research, the research design, data collection methods and tools, the population sampling design, the data analysis methods and procedures and finally the ethical considerations for this research rule to present.

Chapter Four: Discusses the data analysis and findings of the research, it presents the tables on the surveys data and the analysis of the general elections, on the gradual change in the way the women have been involved in the political arena since the introduction of the two thirds gender. This chapter presents the findings on the effectiveness of the county women representatives in promoting gender equality and the perception of the public about the women representative position.

Chapter Five: This is the final chapter of this research and it outlined the summary, conclusion, recommendations for the study, and the limitations. It also highlights suggestions for future research work.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Gender refers to ‘the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures.’ These roles are socially constructed, learned, vary across cultures and have been subject to change over time (UNESCO, 2013). Gender can be observed through three main theoretical approaches: The biological differences approach, interpersonal influence approach and the cultural influence approach. The biological approach states that biological characteristics of both genders are the premise of their differences. Sex hormones affect development of the brain as well as the body (Schwartz & Cellini, 1995). Research indicates that, although men and women use both lobes of the brain, each sex tends to specialize in one.

The Interpersonal Influences approach states that interpersonal relationships within the family that affect a child's sense of identity, particularly his or her gender (Freud, 1957). Mischel (1966) argues that children tend to observe others and copy them to characterize themselves since they are persuaded by an innate need to want to be competent, which incorporates knowing how to be manly or ladylike in western culture (Kohlberg et al 1984; Mischel, 1966). The Cultural influences approach states that although both genders can nurture and be forceful, it is the way of life which energizes or demoralizes these characteristics in children of each sex. Distinctive social groups like women and men create specific aptitudes, states of mind, mind-sets and understandings of life because of their position inside the society (Collins, 1986).

Likewise, in the economic sector, the bulk of the work women do remains informal and highly precarious and is unpaid. A study by Bradshaw et al (2013) shows
that the bulk of women are perceived as ‘a reliable, productive and cheap labor force makes them the preferred work force for textiles and electronic transnational corporations.’ Although representation has been steadily growing in different parts of the world, still below the 30% benchmark required by the United Nations to achieve a “critical mass” (NDI, 2017). In the environmental sector, they play a key role in environmental protection since they interact with it often yet their knowledge is often ignored and are not counted as agents of change (SIDA, 2016).

Women make up half of the world’s population and yet represent a staggering 70 percent of the world’s poor (UN, 2015). For the millions of women living in poverty, their lives are a litany of injustices, discrimination and obstacles that get in the way of achieving their needs of good health, safe childbirth, education, and employment (UN, 2015). Overcoming these inequalities and ensuring that women benefit from development, requires that the needs and desires of women are not only taken into account, but be put front and center.

This section seeks to analyze the historical background on gender equality in Kenya; examine the role of women in the old system of governance (Pre- 2010) and the current system (Post, 2010). It examined the newly created County Women’s Representative position and its impact on gender equality.

2.1 The African Woman: An Analysis of the Gender Roles

Culture is still held in high esteem amongst many African nations today; it governs the social fabric and plays a key role in defining gender roles for both men and women. The roles and perceptions about women include being viewed as somebody’s daughter, then somebody’s wife after marriage and somebody’s mother after having
children. In the past, this meant that women did not have a chance to create an identity for themselves. In almost all cultures, a woman was expected to have as many children as she could; this was and is still treated as a symbol of respect in some cultures. Then again, in such cultures, she is much more respected if she bears more boys than girls as girls are of no value to some communities (Kerr et al, 2004).

Women are among Africa’s hidden growth reserves, providing most of the regions labor, but their productivity is hampered by widespread inequality (IBRD, 2000). Most women engage in manual labor; they work on farms to provide the much-needed agricultural labor which is done on family land hence no pay. According to (Adeleye-Fayemi in Kerr et all 2004), The African woman on average is also illiterate; in most societies, educating a woman was unheard of; only male children are educated. In fact, the highest instances and school dropout cases happen amongst the girl-child. An educated boy child, in many communities, is considered very valuable to his family and society at large (Adeleye-Fayemi in Kerr et al, 2004). Therefore, gaining access to mainstream decision-making and political power for African women remains a challenge.

Moreover, those who are literate have to contend with the difficult process of seeking the support of their husbands, family and friends, and acceptance from colleagues. They also have to mobilize the necessary campaign finances and endure the harsh realities of political campaigns. Those who are elected have to deal with existing structures which favor the male gender; it is often very difficult to work within these structures. Additionally, those who make it this far are very few; therefore, they do not effectively participate in decision making- their voices are hardly listened to (Pankaj, 2017).
This narrative is however changing gradually. The modern African woman is increasingly exerting her place in politics in Africa today; she is engaging more in those sectors of the economy that were predominantly male dominated. She is thus shaping global norms regarding women rights in virtually every sector of the economy. Currently, the government of Rwanda has 62% of women parliamentary representatives, the highest in the world. The governments of Senegal, South Africa, Namibia, and Mozambique each have 50% of female representation. Moreover, countries like Liberia, Central African Republic, Malawi, Mauritius and Ethiopia have female heads of state. In the African Union, women hold approximately 50% of positions (Tripp, 2018).

Although studies show that women’s involvement in decision making contributes to redefining political priorities, this is far from the reality in Africa because it remains highly patriarchal. Thus, without the active participation and inclusion of their perspectives at all levels of decision making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved (Pankaj, 2017; Kerr et al 2004). Women’s political participation in African governments should be on the rise. This provides a suitable platform for their views to be aired on broader scope and their voices heard. (IBRD, 2000).

2.1.1 An Overview of Women’s Political Representation

Women have both a privilege and a commitment to dynamic cooperation in political authority. Notwithstanding this human right and duty, political analysts and researchers from different regions of the world (for example Clinton-Rodham, 2003; Neuman, 1998; Maathai, 2006; Thomas and Wilcox, 2005; Wanjohi, 2003) have observed that when women get into power and organization, they bring a substitute perspective of the
political activity. These analysts and researchers argued that having more women taking part in administrative process would take care of issues connected with ceaseless destitution, particularly as it influences ladies. Women political investment and representation helps in building countries as well as parities up basic leadership forms (Epstein et al., 2005). Neuman (1998), expounding on women officials in the United States, watched that choices worried with issues of instruction, wellbeing, sexual orientation brutality, ladies’ financial strengthening, peace, rights, nobility, and vote based system are normally of incredible worry to ladies pioneers.

Global understandings and traditions have relentlessly worried on the significance of women’s equivalent political cooperation and representation. The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, for instance, underscored that 'ladies' equivalent cooperation in basic leadership is an interest for equity or majority rule government, as well as be viewed as a vital condition for women's interests to be considered. Without the perspective of women at all levels of essential initiative, the destinations of correspondence, headway and peace can't be proficient.’ The Platform defined two fundamental objectives: (i) to ensure women's identical access to and full participation in all power structures and essential administration; and (ii) to fabricate women's capacity to partake in essential authority and power. Basically, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), in Article 7, called upon state get-togethers 'to take each and every fitting measure to discard exploitation of women in the political and open presence of the country. Similarly, the UN Security Council's Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security moreover reaffirmed the hugeness of identical support and full commitment of women in all attempts for the upkeep and headway of peace and security, and the need to manufacture women's part in fundamental initiative (Nzomo, 2010).
The end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the 21st century has seen a persisting upward trend in women's political support in Africa. In a UN report 'Africa and the Millennium Development Goals–2007 Update', it is seen that the share of parliamentary seats held by women in Africa extended from 7 percent in 1990 to 17 percent in 2007, which is close to the overall ordinary. As at 2007, women held 48.8 percent of seats in the Lower House in Rwanda, the most raised rate far and wide. In January 2006, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf got the chance to be President of Liberia and Africa's first elected woman president. Prior to the end of the twentieth century, two or three African countries, for example Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and South Africa had set numbers for women in national and adjacent regulatory bodies, a sign of a restored obligation to have more women in political speculation and representation. Permitting of such shares is an additional acknowledgment of the verifiable treacheries that ladies have encountered, and which make it more troublesome for them to contend similarly with men.

By 2009, Kenya had not yet enacted for governmental policy regarding minorities in society for ladies; a bill bolstered by Martha Karua in (2007) failed to get enough support. Regardless of the progress made in a few nations, genuine and steady obstructions still impede the headway of ladies and their interest in political basic leadership forms. A portion of the primary obstructions are identified with relentless destitution; absence of equivalent access to wellbeing, instruction, preparing and work; social boundaries; political structures and establishments that segregate on ladies; and at times the effect of furnished conflict and regular catastrophes, which has likewise added to ladies' lower support because of different difficulties that go with conflict (UN report 'Africa and the Millennium Development Goals, 2007).
2.1.2 Gender Equality in Kenya

Gender equality entails that both genders- male and female- have the same opportunities to realize their human rights but also to benefit from political, social, economic, cultural development (UNESCO, 2003). It includes providing opportunities for people of both genders as indicated by their particular needs to guarantee equal rights, obligations, and opportunities. This idea was proposed in 1995 at the Beijing Platform for Action by Islamic fundamentalists and Vatican followers. It states that people are allowed to make decisions without the impediments set by stereotypes and that their different contributions and needs are valued equally (CID, 2012).

For a long time in Kenya, women have faced oppression, intimidation and have been looked down upon based on societal norms and cultural practices that tend to be biased towards the male gender more than the female. Women activists and movements have often in the past met resistance from the government due to the fear of changing the status quo. However, with the reformation of the 2010 constitution, there has been an advancement of women’s participation in the social, political, and economic spheres (Wanjala & Simbiri, 2016).

The constitution provides for ambitious Bills of rights that contain specific gains in relation to women’s rights. It has established a set of principles that aim at eradicating any discriminatory law or practices including traditional norms and customs in a bid to compensate women for the biased gender inequality practices of the past. Since the passing of the 2010 constitution, the cultural tradition of locking out women from inheriting their parent’s property has been outlawed (GoK, 2010).
Article 60 of the supreme law provides for elimination of gender discrimination in law, customs, and practices that are related to ownership of land and property. In addition, articles 27 and 60 of the new constitution champions for women, whether married or unmarried to access the right of inheritance of wealth in the family (GoK, 2010). Prior to passing of the new constitution, the courts had already invoked the law of Secession Act in order to guarantee women property rights (FIDA, 2017).

Apart from the eradication of discriminatory cultural practices, the 2010 constitution has created new opportunity structures for women’s access to decision making roles in the political spheres therefore advancing gender equality. The 2010 constitution clearly states that not more than two thirds of members of elective government bodies can be of the same gender (GoK, 2010). In addition to the two thirds rule, the constitution stipulates that 47 women representatives are to be elected in each county so as to form part of the national assembly. Women representation has also increased in the judicial arm of government and their representation has largely contributed to changing of perceptions and beliefs about women’s role in the public arena (NGEC, 2016).

With the recent wave of gender equality and women empowerment, much focus has been drawn into creating a social and economic conducive environment for nurturing young women. These has resulted into numerous opportunities being granted to young girls such as education especially in Africa (Wafula, 2006). For example, many scholarships to study abroad are often granted to girls more than boys. This has created a form of inequality as the male child feels neglected. However, Kenya is still ranked 76th out of 144 countries globally (WEF, 2017). There continues to be inequalities in
representation between male and female population in the education, health, political and economic sectors (WEF, 2017).

### 2.1.3 Laws and Policies that Promote Gender Equality

Women’s rights have also been protected and promoted through a number of conventions. The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has its main focus on women’s rights protection and ensures that all forms of discrimination against women in all aspects of humanity are done away with. Membership of states in organizations such as the International Labor Organization (ILO) and even the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has also helped states promote and uphold women’s rights (IPU and OHCHR, 2016).

Goal 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seeks to eliminate inequalities across age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic status; however, it does not refer to bridging inequality across sexuality and gender orientation. Goal 5 of the SDGs seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Evans, 2015). In their definition of gender, Feminists believe that women have something valuable to contribute to each and every sector of the economy. However, they have been oppressed to a point where they have not been able to use their skills to achieve their potential hence the need for social transformation (Ropers-Humilan, 2002).

The recently Promulgated Kenyan Constitution 2010 recognizes women’s rights as human rights. In this case, the constitution, through its principles promotes equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality, non-discrimination, protection of marginalized groups and human dignity. The Bill of Rights provides for equality between men and women before the law; in this case, both men and women have the right to be protected
by the law. Additionally, they have a right to equal opportunities in the social, political, economic and cultural arenas. The constitution also mandates the state to take affirmative action measures to uplift the party that is at a disadvantage (GoK, 2010).


All these legal instruments address the rights of women; for instance, Article 62 of CEDAW addresses imbalances in property allocation and ownership between men and women especially in agrarian reform measures where women in agricultural labour (Wamai, 2003). However, according to Article 3.6; 10.3 of Kenya’s National Land Policy, the Government of Kenya has not been able to domesticate most of these international laws into national policies and laws and therefore they have not been adhered to. (GoK, 2009).

Kenya’s Vision 2030 for gender, youth and vulnerable groups has its foundations on equity and improved livelihoods for vulnerable groups. One of its principles is to ensure that Kenya shall be a nation that treats its women and men equally without any form of discrimination. Moreover, allocation of, access to and management of land
according to Vision 2030 is central to Kenya’s aspiration to alleviate poverty. Consequently, it seeks to increase opportunities for women, youth and disadvantaged groups (Ministry of State Planning, 2008). Chapter five of the Kenyan constitution requires that land be managed in an equitable non-discriminatory, efficient proactive and sustainable manner (GoK, 2010).

In 2012, Kenya approved new land laws; this led to the establishment of Land Act (No. 6 of 2012), the Land Registration Act (No. 3 of 2012), and the National Land Commission Act (No. 5 of 2012). Moreover, the National Land Policy was approved and embedded in Kenya’s Revised 2010 constitution (Manji, 2014). However, over 75 of Kenya’s existing land statutes fail to recognize women’s land rights. They discriminate against women by invoking customary law which confers exclusive control of land to govern land rights; vests in men absolute sole ownership rights of registered land and has also adopted procedures that insulate customary laws from appeal and judicial scrutiny (FIDA, 2009).

Consequently, women farmers control the bulk of small holder agriculture which employs 70% of the country’s labor force yet majority of them have no legal rights to the same land. They argue that written law does not discriminate against women. Moreover, women have not been able to assert their rights to land since there is a lack of procedural safeguards for land disputes. The current process of land adjudication, consolidation and registration continues to put men as absolute owners and controllers of land and land related issues (FIDA, 2009).
Customary law, which is still operational today, discriminates against women; under this law, women have inferior land rights relative to men and access is indirect and insecure. Women only have the rights of use over land; moreover, they are not allowed to sell or mortgage property that had been acquired during marriage (Njuguna and Mbaya, 2016). Culture and traditions promote male over female inheritance of family land. Moreover, the conflict between constitutional provisions, international conventions on gender equality and customary law has further promoted the continued discrimination of women’s rights to own land (GoK, 2009).

Despite having a new progressive constitution and a number of sectoral policies that promote gender parity, women’s participation in economic development and decision making remains low. Additionally, there is no vibrant movement of women to advocate for gender equality not only in these two but also the socio-cultural, education and other fundamental rights that are enshrined in the Bill of Rights (UN Women Africa, 2019).

2.1.4 Women’s Political Participation in Africa and Particularly in Kenya.

Politics is the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live. Etzioni (2014) argues that politics entails bridging power gaps between the society and the state. It also includes intrastate processes such as ‘application, reallocation, and legitimization of power’. According to Easton (1971) it is the use of power to allocate values for the society. Key (1964) summarizes it in the form of power ‘relationships of super ordination, or dominance and submission, of the governors and the governed.'
The sociological approach provides an understanding of the extent of involvement of women in politics in Africa. Modernization with its accompanying industrialisation was a breakthrough encouraging the participation of women in public offices (Conway, 2001). As women assume more public roles, they become visible in influential positions which likely result in their increased participation in the political process (Barton, 2005; Foulds, 2014; Yiapan, 2002). However, this process is slow in sub-Saharan Africa where culture plays a prominent role in determining the status of women in societies, like determining the extent of women’s involvement in activities outside the home (Kabeer, 2015; Lawless & Fox, 1999; Kameri-Mbote, 2016; Mwangi, 1996; Omwami, 2011). For instance, some cultural values prohibit the active participation of women in politics as some societal values and norms proscribe their involvement in activities outside the home (Mbarika et al. 2007; Musandu, 2008). This contradicts political activities that put women at the forefront engaging with men in public places.

Men are religiously, prepared for roles outside the home while women are trained to work at home. Besides, stereotype gender roles contribute to the lack of investment in the education of women in societies (Boulanger, 2008; Mbarika et al. 2007; Morojole, 2011). The patriarchal society in Kenya has mainly assigned women to the domestic role which dissuade them from mainstream political activities. In some marginalised communities in Northern Kenya such as the Maasai, the Samburu and Turkana, girls are not taken to school because parents have the notion that they will end up in another man’s house (as wives) and thus, they focus on educating the boys (Yiapan, 2002). These girls would grow up and become powerless in their communities as they are likely not to participate in national affairs.
The restraint of women to household jobs give them little time to be nurtured for public offices. There is a conflict between parental roles and marital roles and career opportunities for women (Norris & Inglehart, 2001; White, 2012). Women’s family obligations, including especially childcare which may interfere with their ability to take on political jobs (Biegon, 2016; Kassilly & Onkware, 2010; Kameri-Mbote, 2016). In Kenya, there are limited childcare facilities and not every family could afford the cost of accessing these facilities due to limited income. Based on this, women become cautious in venturing into public roles which may affect their home or marriage. As a result, women are limited to narrow prescribed jobs such as nurses, secretary, clerks and even teachers which do not pay much in Kenya (Norris & Inglehart, 2001). More so, marriage is sacred, and women found to have divorced, or unmarried are disrespected in societies. In Denmark, most women in leadership positions were found to be divorced or unmarried (Norris & Inglehart, 2001) which is intolerated in Africa societies. Perhaps, women had no option than being submissive to the social roles and take up domestic jobs that would not give them much income for them to fund their political activities.

Women have fought for spaces in the political realm, but only a few get the chance to participate in national administration. Leadership in Africa is typified by its exemplary masculinity as decision-making is consistently monopolised (Lawless & Fox, 1999; Mwangi, 1996; Sifuna, 2006). The notion is that men take the lead role while women follow their footsteps (Norris & Inglehart, 2001). The increasing awareness of the need to change the status-quo has resulted in domestic laws and policies aimed at mainstreaming gender issues (Milligan, 2014; Odhiambo, 2011; Sahabaya & Konadu-Agyemang, 2004). The literature in Kenya is not exhaustive and yet to add the voices of
women leaders and advocates on their perspective on affirmative action and its foregrounding in contemporary Kenyan politics. Hence, this study analysed the political commitment to implement the two-thirds gender policy and factors contributing to the limited participation of women in the politics of Kenya.

Nzomo (2014) argues that women have played a critical role in shaping the politics of Kenya. Key amongst them was the first woman Chief, Wangu wa Makeri who played a critical role in Kenya’s liberation during the colonial times. Additionally, some women formed grassroots organizations during this time to take care of the Mau fighters (Anyango et al, 2018). Prior to that, women’s roles were limited to child care, maintenance of the household, farming and taking care of their husbands (Gatwiri, 2010).

Other key women include Muthoni Nyanjiru, the first woman political activist, who was shot dead when she led a group of women to demand the release of Harry Thuku; Grace Onyango who was the first female councilor, first female Mayor, the first female Member of Parliament and the first woman to hold the Speaker’s chair and also the first female Deputy Speaker (Gatwiri, 2010). Philomena Chelagat has a strong stand against political assassinations, land grabbing and corruption and fought for the rights of the poor.

Chelagat also played a key role in championing the second liberation of Kenya - in 1992, Kenya moved from being a mono-party to a multi-party state. She also fought for inclusion of women in Kenyan politics. Wangari Maathai, the first African female Nobel Peace Prize winner and a politician was an advocate for sustainable development, democracy and peace. She was also an activist for the environment, women and minority
groups. She also championed the second liberation of Kenya (Maathai, 2006). Dr. Phoebe Asiyo has played a key role in advocating for the rights of women and protection of women from oppression, forced marriages and violence (Anyango et al, 2018).

Despite the roles women have played in the development of Kenya, their stories have not been recorded- these heroines’ contributions have not been acknowledged by the state. The lack of acknowledgment has culminated in the lack of role models to other women to take up political leadership positions. This is because women have been socialized to accept male dominance in every sphere of their lives so that taking up political roles has been seen as going against their cultures (Oduol, 1992).

However, these efforts have not gone unrecognized; their efforts have contributed to the woman’s role in politics and decision making to be acknowledged in the current constitution, which has been achieved by way of affirmative action. The two third gender rule is one of the affirmative actions enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya in Article 27(8) of the Bill of right to help enhance equality. Therefore, all elective posts are supposed to abide by this rule (Gichengo, 2015). Moreover, the new checks and balances accountability mechanism established by the 2010 constitution has broadened the range of forums for engagement by gender activists therefore paving way for enhancement, monitoring and implementation of gender equality and protection from discrimination (NGEC, 2016).

The Federation for Women Lawyers (FIDA) has also contributed largely to empowerment of women by promoting women’s individual and collective power to claim their rights in all spheres of life (Chesoni, 2014). The Kenyan government has partnered
with United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), an organization that aimed at strengthening the collective voice of women through providing a link between human rights and women parliamentarians. It has also enhanced the networking of women’s rights in organizations by facilitating partnerships which have produced networks such as the women agenda, aimed at providing access for women’s rights in organizations and senior policy makers (UN Women, 2015).

In its 2017 Global Gender Parity Report, the World Economic Forum (WEF) found that the political gender gap remains wide but there has been slow improvement. The World Economic Forum further states that Kenya’s Global Gender Gap score on political empowerment was ranked number 83 out of 144 with a score of 0.147 (WEF, 2017). Additionally, women’s participation in politics in Kenya remains low. In 2017, female aspirants for political positions was only 8.7% - only 3 are governors, 3 senators, 23 Members of parliament, 47 in the women representatives’ position and 96 members of the County Assembly across the forty-seven counties. This is still below the one-third that is stated in the constitution (USAID, 2018).

This can be attributed to the lack of political will to implement the two third’s gender rule; continued political violence and financial constraints (NGEC, 2016; Anyango et al, 2018). NGEC (2016) further argues that there has been no progress to implement the two thirds gender rule since the promulgation of the constitution. The current constitution does not provide a mechanism to fulfill the gender quota in the National Assembly and the Senate as it was done for the County Assembly.
Political leaders are key determinants of how International Relations is carried out. Both state and non-State actors have significant responsibilities in the international and national-security policy and international economics policy arenas. The politics of any country or region usually involve their relationship with other political entities. Analysts of large-scale political processes bring into play alternative models that include self-motivating and self-contained social units but Charles Tilly (1995) argues that very few of them conform to such models while others do not. Additionally, others specify fields of variation for the phenomena in question, reconstruct underlying sequences and concentrate on explaining relations with those outcomes.

2.2 Structures that safeguard and promote Women’s political participation.

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

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

The journalists, being part of the larger society carry with them the same gender stereotypes which affects their reporting on what is (not) news. These gender stereotypes permeate both female and male reporters who generally view women’s political activities as not newsworthy and therefore making them invisible in the public scene. The role of the mass media in shaping public opinion on societal issues is an area that has been explored by scholars overtime. However some contest this view, arguing that the media simply reflects but doesn’t shape public opinion (Nyokabi, 2010; Wrong, 2009; Devitt & Alday, 2001 cited in Pantti, 2006). Whether through shaping or reflecting the public view, there is a general agreement that the media plays an important role in the political, cultural, social and economic aspects of the society particularly in the increasingly globalizing world.

Women political aspirants/politicians are often invited to talk about issues related to social welfare ‘(issues that Briske, 2004, calls ‘soft issues’) as opposed to men who are often asked to discuss economic and security issues (‘hard issues’). (Briske, 2004), argues that this selective engagement of male and female politicians may not reflect their true identities or intellectual capacity to comment on ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ issues but the message sent to the public is interpreted in that context.
Muteshi (2006), discusses the role of media in women’s political participation and explains that the Kenyan media has continually allowed more women to join its ranks, thereby allowing women to influence discourse on a variety of public and private issues, though she laments that the said women have failed to rise to decision making levels. According to Muteshi, (2006) this is partly responsible for the limited attention paid to women politicians by the media in Kenya.

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

2.2.1 Women’s impact on policy making to promote gender equality

Some comparative literature on women’s role in politics has posited the theory that increased women’s political representation leads to improved gender equality and development outcomes (Kamau, 2010). Literature suggests that though the political profile for women increases high-level political discussions focused on socio-economic development objectives, the impact of their inclusion on development outcomes is mixed.
at best, and inconclusive for most sub-Saharan countries (Franceschet, 2015). Additional obstacles limiting women’s political impact once they are in decision-making roles remain (Aoláin, Haynes & Cahn, 2011). These include corruption; persistent gender-based violence (GBV) and harassment; the absence of family-friendly schedules or policies; the dominance of male patronage networks; and incumbent versus newly elected status (Wangnerud, 2009; Beckwirth, 2007).

Once in political roles, many women find their voices and opinions marginalized by male political actors because of the patriarchal nature of the political systems. Political party elites often curtail women’s ability to operate independently from the party once elected in office and view women politicians as easy to control. Women may also be assigned ‘soft portfolios’, such as health, tourism, housing, education, culture, while men are assigned ‘hard portfolios’ such as finance, trade or foreign affairs (Htun & Piscopo, 2010). Such gendered assignments reinforce cultural expectations about women’s roles and capabilities. In some cases, women included through quotas report not enjoying the same level of respect and authority as elected women. A study on women brought into government through quotas in Uganda showed that they are less recognized in plenary debates than their elected counterparts and therefore may not have equal influence as their male colleagues to shape legislative outcomes (Clayton et al., 2014).

Evidence on the agendas and impact of elected women in sub-Saharan Africa is also mixed (Bauer & Britton, 2005). African women politicians do not have a unified agenda but rather—in addition to issues related to gender inequality, education, child and healthcare may also bring attention to land rights, poverty alleviation, HIV/AIDS, sexual freedom and issues on violence against women (Bauer & Britton, 2005). For example, in
Rwanda, women politicians have been influential in passing reforms of benefit to women, including revisions to laws relating to inheritance, discrimination and rape (Longman, 2006). However, in Namibia, while women MPs have played a pivotal role in crafting and passing many new laws, they have ‘not managed to make their national legislatures more women- or parent-friendly’ (Bauer & Taylor, 2005).

Women have made the Kenyan legislative process more gender sensitive, though, with less success in implementing women friendly policies. In Mozambique, women’s increased representation has not yet translated into significant ‘women-centered or feminist policy initiatives’ (Bauer, 2005). In many African states, the dominance of a single party in systems where power is heavily concentrated in the executive, encourages legislators to promote agendas that favor their constituency as a whole, regardless of gender. In this context, it is even more challenging for women to singlehandedly push for pro-women legislation (Salih and Nordlund 2007).

In some cases, such as Uganda, women MPs, like their male counterparts, are constrained by the ruling National Resistance Movement’s (NRM) dominance in parliament, as it compels women politicians to follow party priorities instead of promoting women friendly policies, in order to remain competitive within the party (Tamale, 1999; Abebe & Woldeyesus, 2013). In such contexts, it is not unusual for female politicians to have very limited interaction with women advocacy organizations outside of the government, despite having benefitted from their support when running for office. Overall, while women in formal political offices have shaped policy discussions in new ways, there is still little evidence that an increase in women’s representation directly
changes policy outcomes although there is evidence of their impact in influencing and changing legislation.

2.2.2 Consequences of women participating in politics

With a view to the role of women in politics, plenty researches have proved that “women are critical to economic development, active civil society, and good governance, especially in developing countries.” As Nobel Prize winning economist Amartya Sen claimed, the economic, political, and social participation of women is the most important force for development today. Women, who have long been treated as passive recipients of aid, are now generally seen as active agents of change who can help the whole community. And a variety of researches suggest that accordingly the benefits to women are the greatest, when aids focused on improving their education, their control over resources, and their political voice.

One of the advantages of female politics is that women are less corrupt than men. Female’s behaviour is always different from male according to practical experiments. Rivas (2012) argues that women can be more careful for the relationship and have higher standards of ethics, implying that women are more willing to sacrifice private benefits for the public. Besides, women are more risk averse than men, leading them less corrupt since corruption can be regarded as risky activity. Just as previous research said, ‘Women attach great importance to the quality of contact between people and bare less individualistic than men, (ENE, 1997). Focusing on Asia, Panday (2008) mentioned that women’s participation in parliament certainly has a positive impact on the character of Asian parliaments and make public policies create ‘a more peaceful, productive and less corrupt societies’.
Another advantage which is has been widely proven is that the presence of more women in parliament brings better governance. Achieving gender equality is seen as essential to reducing poverty and improving governance. Women’s participation in politics can facilitate democracy, not only because it improves their civil rights and helps them speak out their interests, but also because powerful women tend to make different policy choices from their male counterparts, which are beneficial to the local distribution of public resources and the development. When a woman is in charge, they invest more in infrastructure which matches the needs of women in order to cover the imbalance of women resulting from the past ignorance of women (Coleman, 2004). The 56th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference points out that the political culture can be changed by more women participation in the decision making and women represent change and creation.

On the microeconomic aspect, Khandker (2005) proved that female microeconomic borrowing are much more efficient than male’s borrowing, showing that women are better microeconomic operators. This efficiency may also have an impact when women are in the office. Moreover, microfinance endows greatest long-term interests on the social status of women. Studies show that women with microfinance can obtain more decision-making power in family, a growing number of political and legal awareness, and more participation in public affairs than other women. Microfinance can also reduce wife abuse because women start to generate income of their own and need not only depend on male to survive (Coleman, 2004).

Other interesting findings about the role of female parliamentarians are how they are able to promote female representation in parliament. Intuitively, senior women
officers in national managerial system tends to increase the amount of women representatives by putting forward a lot of female-supportive policies, for example, they can facilitate gender equality when the parties make a decision of the candidates submitted to voters (Kunovich & Paxton, 2007). Moreover, active women political activities have undoubtedly succeeded in creating a more open political environment for women. Beckwith, (2005); Reindgold, (2000) however stated that female legislators are much more likely to make laws beneficial to female’s interest.

The fact that women’s career and promotion are facilitated with each other is widely noticed too. Mansbrige (1999) argues that social groups (including women) tend to elect individuals who have similar backgrounds to them even if the candidate may have some different perspectives and interests from them. It is believed that women in the office are supposed to create and increase opportunities for the career of other women (Cornfield, 1989). A study in law organizations proved this facilitation too. The findings of Ely (1994) shows that female associates in law firm gain more help if there are female partners exist. There is evidence that women leaders often benefit considerably from the network of women and conversely makes their organization more female-friendly (Healy, Geraldine, Kirton & Gill, 2012).

2.3 Women Participation and Representation in Post-Independence

Kenya

Worldwide progresses has been made towards the affirmation of the rule of women's political, budgetary and social uniformity. Following more than two many years of sex activism, sexual orientation refinement, limit assembling, campaigning and activating Kenya ladies to take up different political cooperation and representation
positions, urban, sex and human rights mindfulness has amazingly enhanced, close by procedures for strategy and backing mediations. Arrangement producers have additionally aced the sexual orientation dialect and can logically express sex balance standards. Kenya, nonetheless, remains enormously tested with respect to ladies' authority into open political interest and representation positions (Kamau, 2010).

As indicated by a 2009 study by the Ministry of Gender, only 30.9 percent of those used in Kenya's open organization are women, 72 percent of who are in the lower units. This same irregularity exists in the legitimate and in the political venture and representation: Women held just around 10 percent of the seats in the tenth Parliament. This representation trails a long ways behind the worldwide normal of 18.8 percent ladies representation in parliaments. In the momentum house (eleventh parliament), ladies hold 19 percent of seats in the National Assembly and 27 percent of seats in the senate. Some African nations have effectively accomplished the minimum amount edge of 33 percent ladies' representation in basic leadership. Humorously, Kenyan ladies have been at the front line in championing the discussion and techniques that support women's rights and sexual introduction equality–reinforced clearly by the encouraging of the third World Conference of Women in Nairobi in 1985. Lamentably, this pioneer soul has not quite recently bombarded in achieving suitable political interest and representation positions in Kenya itself, yet ladies have likewise just served to support and watch the development and achievement of ladies' developments in neighboring Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania who now lead overall bits of knowledge on women's representation in elective administrative issues at 56.3, 31 and 30 percent, independently (Ministry of Gender Survey, 2009).
The low intrigue and representation of women without trying to hide and political foundations of the country like the Senate, National Assembly and County Assemblies invalidates the esteem that is guaranteed in the constitution. Kenya assented to the sexual introduction reasonableness organize with respect to its obligations to various United Nations (UN) resolutions, for instance, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Convention for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (CEDAW) (Nyanjom, 2011). It furthermore maintained the 1966 contracts on Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In 1985, the country was at the point of convergence of sexual introduction adjust exercises when it encouraged the arrangement of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, and was at front line of territory game plans for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, a development grasped by Parliament in 1996. In any case, regardless of Kenya acquiescing to all these worldwide revelations, sexual orientation mainstreaming has stayed slippery.

The dreary execution of Kenya with respect to ladies’ political cooperation and representation, in spite of having spearheaded and given authority to the post-1990 multi-party ladies strengthening programs in the East African district, keeps on raising concern both at the level of hypothesis and praxis. All inclusive, the fundamental requirements ladies confront as they endeavor to take an interest in legislative issues, however happening in shifting sizes in various nations, have a tendency to be extensively comparative. It has been contended that Kenya has some one of a kind perspectives that keep on keeping the quantities of ladies in governmental issues low, for example, absence
of an affirmative action law, and the sex merciless male political culture, which continues administering key social and political establishments (Nzomo, 2010).

2.4 Democracy and women participation in Politics in Present Kenya

Democracy is underscored by the ability of all persons to participate in politics equally. Democratic principles value respect for citizens’ rights to participation in elections, holding public office and being active in political party structures (Conway, 2011; Norris & Inglehart, 2011). Despite the increase in awareness and initiatives to empower women to take an active part in politics, they are less likely to be voted or appointed to public office (Foulds, 2014; Sifuna, 2006; Omwami, 2015). The promulgation of 2010 Constitution of Kenya was a major milestone in the fight towards gender equality as well as open up spaces for participation of women and their representation in decision-making processes. After years of adopting this new constitution, women continue to suffer setbacks whenever they seek not only elective but also appointment positions in Kenya.

In the two parliamentary chambers, only few women have shown interest in contesting for parliamentary seats. For example, during the 2013 general elections, out of 1,908 aspirants who contested for the 349 National Assembly seats, only 197 were women which 69 were elected. Concerning the Senate chamber, out of 67 representatives, only 16 women were elected to present their counties. At the local county level, out of 623 women who contested, only 85 were elected compared to 1,365 males who were elected out of 9,287 contestants (Association of Media Women in Kenya, 2014; Gender Forum, 2013). Authoritative resource allocations are determined by these legislative bodies which underscores the relevance of gender parity in the decision-making process.
Thus, this paper aims to document the barriers to the participation of women in the Republic of Kenya.

Democracy is strengthened and works effectively when opportunities exist for involvement or representation of all citizens in the decision-making process of a country. Accordingly, the equal political participation of both genders is a critical pillar of good governance as everyone would have an equal voice in national discourses (Kabeer, 2005; Morojoile, 2011; Sifuna, 2006). Politics plays a vital role in influencing the policymaking process, and the absence of significant numbers of women in influential positions would deny them a fair representation (Milligan, 2014; Norris & Inglehart, 2001; Sahabaya & Konadu-Agyemang, 2004). The leadership of women has been described as transparent, democratic and sensitive to pertinent issues than men (Barton, 2005; Conway, 2011; Kabeer, 2015). For instance women see government as a tool to serve the underrepresented or minority groups (Norris & Inglehart, 2001). More specifically, female parliamentarians tend to prioritise social issues such as childcare, equal pay, parental leave and pensions and gender-based violence and development matters such as poverty alleviation and service delivery (Musandu, 2008; Norris & Inglehart, 2001). Admittedly, with more than half of the Kenyan population being women, it means that inequalities in representation would further alienate them in the society.

Women groups has increasingly fought for political liberation in order to create a more inclusive society. The recent economic downturn intensified arguments on the essence of encouraging women to participate in economic activities and by extension, increase their presence in the public spheres (Malik & Courtney, 2011; Sahabaya & Konadu-Agyemang, 2004). Previously, women were limited to life at home as their major
tasks included cooking, raising children and taking care of the home (Foulds, 2014; Kabeer, 2005; Sifuna, 2006). The recent economic crisis with its increasing hardships conscientise societies on the need to support women to participate in income generation activities to complement the efforts of men who are mainly the breadwinners of their respective families. The consequences of family poverty and rural poverty which mostly affects women has reinforced the need for their empowerment to enable them engage in productive activities (Boulanger, 2008; Milligan, 2014; Odhiambo, 2011). Despite laudable efforts at achieving equal political participation of women and men, there still remains a challenge as the former are usually outnumbered.

Disparities in participation have been linked to lack of availability of resources such as education, income, public status and centrality in organisations (Biegon, 2016; Kameri-Mbote, 2016). Women political participation has been intricately linked to the economic development; the more developed a country, the likely women would take part in politics (Conway, 2001; Norris & Inglehart, 2001). Based on this analogy, the gap between men and women could be wide in Kenya where there is low development, high corruption and political violence. The social order in Kenya affects the ability of women to enjoy their economic rights (Hughes, Mwiria, 1989; Kabeer, 2005; Milligan, 2014; Owamwi, 2011). Socio-cultural beliefs and practices such as patriarchy and reverence of the elder continue to work against women empowerment and thus, giving them limited resources and influence in societies (Boulanger, 2008; Mbarika et al. 2007; Morojole, 2011; Owuor, 2016; Sivi-Njonjo, 2016).

The change of constitution in 2010 was described as a new era in the political history of Kenya as the expectations were that there would be a gender balance in the
public sphere (Biegon, 2016; Sivi-Njobjo, 2016). Therefore, it is important to investigate from the perspectives of women and gender advocates, contemporary development issues in the political environment in Kenya. The study objectives are threefold; a) to measure the effectiveness of the two-third gender rule; b) to assess the contribution of women in national politics, and c) to discuss barriers to the participation of women in national politics. This empirical study will add to the literature on discourses on gender and political participation in the global south where the existing culture serves as a barrier to equal participation.

2.5 Mechanisms that Support Women Participation and Representation

The absence of a sexual orientation bolster structure that could expand Kenyan ladies' perceivability regarding voicing their worries and incorporation in arrangement and basic leadership can be ascribed to an absence of a supported ladies' development (Kiragu, 2006). This has been the situation notwithstanding the way that there have been a few ladies' arranging developments from the pre-pioneer period.

The most established ladies' association, Maendeleo ya Wanawake (MYWO) (Development of Women' in English), was confined in 1952. MYWO was set up as a non-political NGO in the midst of the wilderness time. It had branches countrywide and it has continued getting a charge out of national representation to date. The purpose of MYWO was to upgrade women's welfare with a fundamental grouping of strengthening women's capacity to make pay and manage their families (Kiragu, 2006). Kiragu (2006:18) notes 'MYWO at its introduction did not challenge patriarchy, rather it looked to find ways and means through which women would weave around the unevenness of vitality to improve the way of their lives and that of their families'. Consistently, MYWO
changed from just a welfare affiliation and ended up being for all intents and purposes like a women's wing of the choice party KANU. This status was hardened in the midst of the 24 years of Moi's run the show.

MYWO expected a critical part as a grassroots relationship for Kenyan women. Regardless, it could have done significantly more in propelling women's political bolster in light of its national angle and generous enlistment, as it had more than three million people countrywide by the year 2000 (Maendeleo ya Wanawake, 2000). Political hindrance almost rendered the affiliation insufficient, making it a reference point on how women couldn't manage their own specific issues. MYWO did not hold races for over 10 years. When they were at last held in 2006, political impedance suggested that those picked were not so much the most surely understood pioneers. The lawmaking body misused the choices to put in political collaboration and representation women who may help it in the 2007 general race. Given the unfavorable amounts of Kenyan women who have made sense of how to get to parliament since self-rule, the affiliation did not fulfill much yet it helped an impressive measure of men get picked.

YWO's record of political venture and representation made a negative perspective towards women's power, an issue that would in like manner influence the general perceivability of women as unable pioneers. By far most of the media pictures of MYWO were of women fighting over political support and representation positions and calling each unique names. More unfortunate still, the woman who served this relationship as Chair for more than 10 years was referred to in the press requesting that women leave senior political positions, for instance, the organization to their fathers and mates as a sign of respect.
Another women's affiliation that had a national representation was the National Council for Women in Kenya (NCWK), which was developed speedily after Kenya's opportunity in 1964. Its essential goal was to fortify and join women's relationship at the area, national and all inclusive levels (Kiragu, 2006). NCWK accepted a basic part in sorting out NGOs in game plan for the Beijing Conference of 1985. Regardless, NCWK can't claim to have finished much in its years of nearness, given that women's political representation is still far underneath 30 for every penny.

2.6 Empirical literature review

According to the study by Lorna, Kennedy & Preston (2017) on the influence of political culture on women participation in politics in Nairobi and Kajiado counties, they proposed that Kenya is a patriarchal society and the women are placed in relatively low status, with gender inequality/inequity prevailing in many aspects of the society. The study compared two counties in Kenya, one from the urban area (Nairobi) and the other one from a rural setting (Kajiado). The study was guided by a feminist, social network, postmodernism and political development theories. The study used a descriptive survey design and it adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The study used questionnaires and interview guides to collect data, and the results indicated that the current political developments did not favor women to contest certain elective posts, as the society viewed the aforementioned posts to be a reserve for their male counterparts. Further, the results indicated clear patriarchal structures within parties, state, and people's lives had deleterious effect on the level of political participation by women, and that cultural stereotypes labelled against women continued to pervade the county of Kajiado to an extent that women were not viewed as equal to men.
Another study was done by Kassilly and Onkware (2010) which analyzed the struggles and success in engendering the African public sphere: A perspective of Kenyan women in politics. This article examined the place of Kenyan women in politics. It investigated the strides made by Democracy in Kenya, if Kenyan women have made the desired difference, how Kenyan men and women have embraced democracy and the women’s vital voices in the public sphere. The paper argued here that Kenyan women have not fully embraced the political life due to the patriarchal nature of the society which locks them out from the public sphere, and mainstream political parties which only reserve junior leadership positions for women.

In the writer’s view, to improve Kenyan Women’s electoral performance and especially to strengthen their political participation in all spheres, there is need to device strategies to redress their marginalization. These may include affirmative action programs removal of stereotyped culture, frequent attendance of women at social and political gatherings, where important political information is likely to be shared, development of political professionalism and power incumbency retention rate. The paper further affirmed that the women should embrace a common goal that will unite them in their diversity for the promotion of a gender agenda in the country’s governance and democratization process. It concluded that the Kenyan women themselves need to articulate, challenge, and seek to influence the social, political and economic environment for the benefit of their lot.

In order to establish factors impeding political participation and representation of women in Kenya,(2014) postulated that Women have been marginalized and underrepresented in organs of decision-making and in governance structures of the
country since independence. It argued that Even though a number of women have made
great strides in the political arena in the country, women representation is still far below
the bare minimum one third public service requirement of Article 27(3) of the
Constitution of Kenya. Data on the numbers of elected Parliamentarians (including
Senators, Governors and County Representatives) and holders of senior government
positions showed that gender equity is still a mirage. It also showed that cultural
impediments to women’s economic emancipation have also denied them political
representation in the Legislature. The study recommended that advancing the
participation of women in devolved governance structures requires serious consideration
by putting in place policy measures and interventions that would further this cause since
equal gender participation is enshrined in the Constitution.

According to Wanaswa (2013), he examined the influence of women’s political
participation on governance in Bondo constituency, Siaya county, Kenya. The study
sought to answer the following questions: How does women’s participation in civic
education as a component of political participation influence governance in Bondo
Constituency? To what extent does women’s participation in the political party leadership
as a component of political participation influence governance in Bondo Constituency?
To what extent does women’s participation in resource mobilization as a component of
political participation influence governance in Bondo constituency? How does women’s
participation in political office as a component of political participation influence
governance in Bondo Constituency?. Ex Post Facto research design was used in the
study. 100 house-holds were sampled and data collected from a total of 173 male and
female respondents from 6 county wards in Bondo constituency. The study found human
rights rated at 33.7%, the electoral process (17%), devolved governance (13%), and the constitution (15%) as civic education activities implemented by women through churches, village meetings “barazas”, women groups and funerals as forums for civic education thus influencing governance.

More findings revealed that women participate in political party leadership mostly as party members (52.9%), women leaders (29.7%), treasurers (5.2%), secretaries (2.9%) and chairpersons (1.2%). Through these roles, they influenced party policies especially with regard to gender equality and the number of women nominated to contest in electoral politics and conducted resource mobilizers in order to increase the number of political party supporters during political party campaigns. The study revealed that women mostly use contributions from the villagers savings and loan associations to secure loans (32.2%), contributions from other women(10.5%) and loans from other financial loaning services to help in their campaigns.

A study was conducted by Opoku, Anyango and Alupo (2018) on women in politics in Kenya: an analysis of participation and barriers from a sociological perspective, this paper assessed the extent of participation of women in the political development of Kenya. The qualitative study used interviews to analyse the contribution of women in politics. In all, 30 key informants, made up of 11 males and 19 females, were purposively recruited for the study. The study found that there were hindrances to women’s effective political participation which included; political environment characterized by violence, discrimination based on gender and lack of support from fellow women.
Further, Otieno (2013) did a study on challenges and prospects of women’s political participation in governance in Africa, with a reference to Kenya. The overall objective of the study was to assess women’s political participation in Africa. The study found out that women face a number of challenges when participating in political sphere. They lack the proper knowledge with which to make informed decisions, patriarchal norms which always serve to oppress the women and lack of proper means to access power. It established that over the years women and more so women in Kenya have overcome such adversaries to take part in the country’s politics.

To analyze women’s participation in political processes in Kenya with a specific reference to Nyamira County 1963-2013, Ndubi (2009) undertook to investigate reasons for the under-representation of women at all levels of political leadership and decision-making, look at strategies to enhance women participation. The study made use of the Marxist feminist and gender theories. The targeted population was men and women aged 18 years and above in Nyamira County. Respondents were selected from each constituency on stratified random sampling and targeted at least 10 respondents from each constituency of Nyamira County.

Data collection was done through question guidelines and interviews. The study found out that although women in the traditional set-up were to some extent subordinate to the men under the African Customary Law, in many respects the roles of men and women were complementary in nature. Second, the study found out that the colonial policies, practices and missionary activities greatly affected the participation of women in political processes in the area. Third, the study found out that the participation of women in political processes during Kenyatta’s reign was very minimal. Fourth, the study found
out that women’s participation in political processes prior to 1990s remained low but with the re-introduction of multi-party politics saw an increased political participation of women in Nyamira County.

Another study was undertaken by Kamau (2010) on women and political leadership in Kenya. This study acknowledged the challenges Kenya women face as they attempt to engage in political leadership. However, the study focuses less on the challenges women politicians face on the road to politics and more on the perceptions, experiences, visions, achievements and the lived experiences that have shaped their leadership perspectives and approaches. The study used the feminist approach and an empowering methodology that gives women leaders’ a voice and which allows them to tell their own stories in their own words. The findings of this study indicated that some individual women political leaders contribute more than is often acknowledged in the public eye. The study also affirmed that the lack of a critical mass of women in parliament is a major constraint for women political leaders to effect significance and positive differences towards transforming the male-dominated culture of parliament, public policy, and influencing resource allocation in a gender equitable manner.

Moreover, Mwatha, Mbugua and Murunga, (2013) did a study on young women's political involvement in Kenya; a study on the experiences and challenges of young women in political engagement; technical report. Specifically, it examined the historical and current trends of political participation of young women, and analyzed the existing structures that encouraged and safeguarded the political participation of young women. It also analyzed the way patriarchy and masculinity interfaced to marginalize young women from political inclusion. Finally, the study looked at how reproductive roles of women
constitute a challenge to their ascent into leadership. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. Structured and unstructured interview schedules, unstructured schedules for focus group discussions and document review were used to gather data. Interviews proceeded purposively among sampled respondents, who comprised of young women political aspirants, women leaders, community elders as well as politicians across five different regions in Kenya targeted for this study.

The findings of this study demonstrated that there exists a significant gender gap in the political participation among young women in Kenya. The study established that masculinity and the patriarchal nature of politics, lack of resources, and lack of support for young women who sought to assume leadership roles, the impact of societal expectations and stereotypes, insecurity and gender-based humiliation and violence often undermine young women’s political ambitions.

In an analysis of the effect of increased women's representation in parliament with reference to Rwanda, a study conducted by Devlin and Elgie (2008), posited that there is little evidence to suggest that increased women’s representation has altered policy outcomes. The study examined the case of Rwanda, which now has the highest level of women’s representation in parliament in the world at 48.75 per cent. Data was collected using face-to-face interviews with women representatives in the Rwandan parliament. The results showed that in Rwanda, women political representatives considered themselves to have a greater concern with grassroots politics, although there was also some divergence of views on the matter; there has been no change in the working hours or calendar of parliament. It also showed that in terms of the policy agenda, women’s issues are now raised more easily and more often than before, and there has been a strong
advocacy of ‘international feminism’ by many deputies. However, increased women’s representation has had little effect on policy outputs.

To bring out clearly the effects of female political participation on economic growth, Xu (2015) did an investigation in Asian Countries. The study investigated whether gender gaps in political participation affect economic growth during the period 1991-2013 using data of up to 30 countries in Asia. The study used cross-country and panel regressions and the results showed that in recent years, the impact of female political participation on economic growth may not be linear, which means that the number of women in parliament needs to reach up to a certain level so that female representation in parliaments can enable them to influence the national economy.

The challenges and opportunities of women political participation in Ethiopia was investigated by Kassa (2014). The central objective of this study was to examine the challenges and opportunities of women political participation in Ethiopia. Qualitative research methodology was employed. Data was collected from secondary sources mainly from published journal articles, books and report of government and non-government organization. The findings of the study showed that different casual factors such as; economic, religious, social and cultural factors contributed to women’s poor participation in the political arena in the country. The study further revealed that political participation allows women to address their basic problems and needs in their community and ensures the openness, real fight against rent-seeking, accountability, political commitment, political leadership, and political responsiveness of the existing national, regional, districts, and local levels.
2.7 Literature Gap

Many countries across the world have made and are still making attempts to bridge the existing gender gap between men and women in the various sectors of the economy. Kenya is yet to achieve the two-thirds gender rule constitutional as a requirement. In a bid to bridge the gender gap in her political leadership. Through Article 97 of the Kenyan Constitution, which introduced the County Women Representatives’ position. Although this position is fairly new, these women have already started to make some positive impacts especially at grassroots level. From the literature above, it is noteworthy that six years down the line from 2013 to 2018, lessons from this position have not been documented and most of the developments that these County women representatives’ have achieved have not been made known to the public. This study will endeavor to document some of the experiences of the county women representatives; attempt to link their contributions to decision making and gender equality and draw lessons for future leaders.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted two theories, the Feminism theory and Liberal feminism theory. The feminism theory was used to explain the role, contribution and participation of women in the political arena. This theory also significantly laid out the many setbacks women have faced in rising on the political sphere, and how their decisions have not been supported in political matters. These challenges are evidently laid out in the Kenya political situation, whereby despite the affirmative action measures, incorporated in the constitution, women have not gotten to the same level as the men in leadership positions. The liberal feminist theory was used to bring into perspective, the role of the county
women’s representative position in promoting gender equality in Kenya and their political representation.

2.8.1 Feminism Theory

Feminism as an ideological movement and intellectual tool has become one of the emerging issues in the world. Its objective is to protect and promote gender equality on all genders regardless of peoples’ physical attributes. Feminism aims to bring out key issues that affect women by focusing on the nature of gender inequality, gender differences, gender oppression and structural oppression (Banks, 1986). Feminism has also been defined as an awareness of women’s oppression and exploitation in society, at work and within the family and conscious action by women and men to change this situation (Sprenger & Symington, 2010).

This feminism and feminists came into existence in the nineteenth century through social movements composed of women, which was directed towards fighting for their basic civil rights, in essence the right to vote. The movement originated from New York and it included a large number of people who focused on the status of the women, especially the religious, social, economic and civil (Evans, 1995). The major aim of this movement was to ensure that the women received fair and equal treatment as much as the males in all aspects of life. According to (Cott, 1987), the Feminists felt the need for gender equality representation in the society as the male had mainly dominated.

There are four strands of Feminism Theory; they include liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism and African feminism. All these strands focus and recognize gender specific issues and all agree that women have been given second status in the
society; their main agenda is to ensure that women gain equal standing in society with men (Kerr et al., 2004).

2.8.2 Liberal Feminist Theory

Liberal Feminism is an individualistic form of feminism theory that focuses on women’s ability to show and maintain their equality through their own action and choices. Liberal feminists argue that the society holds the belief that women are, by nature, less intellectually and physically capable than men. It tends to discriminate against women in academia, the market place and in forums (Sprenger & Symington, 2010; Tong, 1989).

Feminism is a diverse, competing and often opposing collection of social theories, political movements and moral philosophies largely motivated by or concerning the experience of women especially in terms of their social, political and economic inequalities (Adawo et al., 2011). It is women’s movement and liberation that is at stake. It is women that are harmed, oppressed and prescribe strategies for women’s liberation (Tong, 2009). These theories, by paying close attention to structures of power and social context and by examining the real experiences of women living within these structures, suggest a method of theorizing that moves beyond the forms of individualism and abstraction that are prominent within liberalism (Schwartzman, 2006).

On the basis of the root causes of women’s oppression and subordination, different feminist groups have emerged in different times. Although their assumptions and interests vary, the main goal is to abstain from women’s oppression so as to achieve gender equality. Of the varieties of feminism, liberal feminism is the most dominant and subordinated; women’s consciousness changed to see oppression for what it was, and to
see, too, that it was not inescapable or natural and that it could be challenged (Thompson, 2001). Feminist theories attempt to describe women’s oppression, explain its causes and consequences, and groundwork for other feminist groups.

Giddens (2001) defines liberal feminism theory as a “feminist theory that believes gender inequality is created by lowering access for women and girls to civil rights and allocation of social resources such as education and employment”. This situation is mainly centered on the socially constructed ideology of patriarchy that perpetuates inequality between the two sexes. Liberal feminism is derived from the liberal political philosophy in the enlightenment period, and centers on the core ideas of autonomy, universal rights, equal citizenship, and democracy (Tong, 2009). It is characterized by an individualistic emphasis on equality (Khattak, 2011). It is depicted as focusing on individual rights and on the concepts of equality, justice and equal opportunities, where legal and social policy changes are seen as tools for engineering women”s equality with men (Maynard, 1995). Some aspects of feminist politics are shifting from autonomous forms of organization to increased engagement with the state. Women are just beginning to enter an era of liberal democracy (Walby, 2002).

In its central assumption, liberal feminism maintains that differences between women and men are not based on biology, which basically represents reproduction differences. Hence, women should have the same rights as men, including the same educational as well as employment opportunities. Unfortunately, liberal feminism cannot overcome the prevailing belief that women and men are intrinsically different; but to a degree, it succeeds in showing that, although women are different from men, they are not inferior (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016).
According to liberal feminists, female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that block women’s entrance to success in the public sphere. Lack of opportunities in life chances and outcomes of women inspired liberal feminists to overcome the problem through education and law (Tong, 2009). It is also true in Kenya, laws and educational policies are the prominent strategies to mitigate women’s marginalization and oppression. Kenya has enacted and adopted various national, regional and international human right instruments which clearly recognized mechanisms to do so. Ethiopia has also adopted different policies to overcome gender discrimination in different sectors. For instance, Ethiopia has adopted the education and training policy which promote gender equality and overall aim to bring social changes by using education as the main machinery.

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The ideology focused on the advocacy for women rights on the grounds of the equality of the sexes and removal of discriminatory practices in everyday life as well as from governing legal documents. According to (Anders et al., 2017) liberal feminism has been most associated with gender equality in the national and international public spheres of life. Gerson (2002) argues that human beings should be viewed independently of their social conditions. Currently, women’s needs and interests are underrepresented in the
public sphere in most nations across the world. In Kenya, despite developing the relevant policy and legal frameworks to ensure gender equality, implementation has become a huge problem; thus, Kenya has not been able to realize gender equality especially in politics. Liberal Feminists in this case call for the restructuring of social, sexual and familial roles so that women’s autonomy and self-fulfillment is realized. They also argue that women should be allowed to participate in democratic processes by means of ensuring equality and equity in the distribution of benefits and burdens of the society.

To achieve gender equality in general and avoid Women’s oppression in particular, Kenyan Government has been working with specific measures like affirmative action. Likewise, as it is stated in the work of Tong (2009), liberal feminism has two competing major ideologies. These are classical liberals and welfare liberals. The former liberals assert that the state’s role should be protecting civil rights, providing everyone equal opportunity and freedom to enter into the free market; while the latter welfare liberals assert that the state should interfere to do adjustments to make the playing field equal for everyone and should provide basic requirements including legal services, school loans, food stamps, low cost housing for its needy citizens.

Among these two major competing ideologies of liberal feminism, Kenya also adopts policies that require different treatments of women and men under different circumstances. To avert the past injustices based on sex discrimination by the society and the state, the government of Kenya is providing affirmative action for women. For example, when the state functions as an employer in different formal and paid sectors like education, public accommodations, or associations, affirmative action is applying. Currently, the special treatment to women by the government of Kenya is derived from
liberal feminist philosophy. Therefore, Kenyan Government supports the welfare liberalists who claim that affirmative action is the bridge to narrow the gender gap. To make this real, affirmative action has got legal ground and clearly stated under constitution of Kenya 2010. Such specific measure is improving females’ participation in accessing education and employment.

The other major solution proposed by liberal feminist to address gender inequality is legal reform. Legal systems are the basic machinery to govern our relationship among individuals and governments. In the world, historical evidence showed that there were discriminatory laws which favor one sex, which is men and discriminate women. Women experienced de jure discrimination, meaning legal based discrimination which was very serious in human rights violation. Such discriminatory law was observed in Kenya.

Kenyan Government has been striving to promote equality between men and women in different aspects, such as education, voting process, reproductive rights, discrimination based on sex, and equal opportunities in the work place. Hence, providing women with access to power becomes the issue of providing them with equal access to the public sphere. Promoting gender equality is the goal of Kenya because it conceives the problem of women’s confinement to the private sphere as central to their low socio-political status. Therefore, giving equal opportunities is the best possible solution to eliminate discrimination based on gender and that enhances women’s capacities in different aspects; then strategies are encouraged by Ethiopia.

In the move to promote and achieve gender equality, Kenya has implemented domestic laws, and is also a party to various international conventions which are intended
to promote, protect and fulfill human rights. The state has also ratified different international human right instruments to protect, promote and fulfill human rights. Specifically, Kenya has ratified the International Convention on and Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, which was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by the national assembly of Kenya.

In Kenya, despite developing the relevant policy and legal frameworks to ensure gender equality, implementation has become a huge problem; thus, Kenya has not been able to realize gender equality in the political arena. Liberal Feminists in this case call for the restructuring of social, sexual and familial roles so that women’s autonomy and self-fulfillment is realized. They also argue that women should be allowed to participate in the democratic processes by means of ensuring equality and equity in the distribution of benefits and burdens of the society.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology of this study. It highlights the adopted research design, study target population, sampling procedure, data collection and analysis procedures and lastly, the ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a phenomenological research design in achieving its objectives. According to Christensen, Johnson and Turner (2010), a phenomenological approach is an inductive, descriptive research approach that is developed from phenomenological philosophy and it aims at describing experience as it is actually lived by the respondent. The researcher found this approach suitable in uncovering meaning from participant stories and discovering themes through participant response commonalities. The approach allowed describing of the meaning of individual experiences and clustering of these meanings into themes which was then integrated into narrations.

3.2 Population and Sampling Design

The study targeted a third 1/3 of the elected County Women Representatives as well as opinion leaders and or experts in gender issues and politics in Kenya. The opinion leaders constituted a homogeneous respondent group with knowledge and experience on the study subject, and were sampled from law firms, governmental and non-governmental organizations in Nairobi, Kenya.
Mixed method approach was adopted whereby snowballing and purposive sampling methods were used to recruit study key informants. Snowballing, a non-probability sampling method was used in sampling key informant Women’s Representatives. This involved identifying first few accessible women representatives for recruitment to the study cohort. These cohort members were then requested to recommend other Women’s Representatives as potential respondents, who in turn suggested others. This sampling method is considered the best since the desired target population are hard to reach based on their social-political status and commitments. Therefore, snowballing sampling is considered the best sampling method that was used to easily get access to the study informants and obtain a reasonably representative sample of all the 47 women representatives in Kenya. However, unlike random sampling methods, snowball sampling does not require the construction of a sampling frame (Sedgwick, 2016).

On the other hand, purposive sampling method was used to recruit key informants from the opinion leaders and gender experts whom were drawn from political leadership, law firms, governmental and non-governmental organizations and women groups. This method is best suited in recruiting from this target population since the research focused on recruiting respondents who are competent enough to share their experiences and opinions on the subject and thus likely to make useful contribution to enrich the study.

3.3 Data Collection Methods and Tools

The study made use of both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was collected using in depth desktop literature review of published reports, scientific journal papers, and books on gender mainstreaming, politics and its implications on national,
regional and International Relations. Equally important, the Constitution of Kenya was referenced as one of the major secondary data sources of this study.

Primary data was collected using semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide constituted questions developed from the thematic areas of study from the reviewed literature. In qualitative research, interview guides allows for an in-depth gathering of participant perspectives while digging deep into their social and personal experiences on the subject of study (Opoku, Anyango, & Alupo, 2018). The questions covered key study thematic areas namely gender equality, involvement of women in political decision making and perceptions of the women representative position.

3.4 Data Analysis Methods and Procedures

This is a qualitative study whereby in-depth semi-structured interview guide was used. Data collection and analysis followed a systematic procedure. First, interviews were audio taped and the same time note taking was done to capture aspects of the interaction that the audio taping may not pick which help in setting the data collected into context. Secondly, the audio taped data was transcribed into word document. The purpose of this was to enable the researcher to know what level and type of details to choose and which to omit. The transcribed data also assisted in interpreting the data for easier representation. This was followed by data coding into themes whereby similar phrases or responses were categorized into cadres. Lastly, the categorized data was generalized and interpreted. The quantitative data from the semi-structured interviews such as age and years of experience were analyzed descriptively and presented using frequency counts, percentages, means or median statistical techniques. The data in themes were interpreted and reported in form of tables.
3.5 Ethical Considerations

In planning and conducting research, as well as in reporting findings, the researcher has to fulfill certain obligations in meeting the ethical standards. First, the researcher ensured proper planning to minimize the chances for misleading results. The researcher achieved this by ensuring adequate peer review and consultation with the supervisor. Secondly, steps were taken to protect and ensure the welfare and dignity of all participants. These included; complying with the university research procedures, that is, obtaining a research authorization letter from the school and other relevant authorities such as the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI).

In addition, prior to data collection, clarifications about the study were made. This included clear description of the purpose and nature of the study and what the interviewees should expect from the study. Further, upon study descriptions, participants were given an opportunity to seek clarifications on issues regarding the study and its findings. This was followed by a verbal or written consent from each participant to participate in the study, (communication prior and at the time of data collection). Moreover, the researcher maintained the integrity of the participants by ensuring that the information collected is only used for academic purposes and utmost anonymity and confidentiality was maintained in protecting them from unforeseen risks.

Lastly, the researcher gave appropriate credit for the work of other researchers by providing citations, respondents were assured of the right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality at all times.
3.6 Limitations of the Study

The term limitation as used in the context of this study implies limiting conditions or restrictive weaknesses encountered in the conduct of the research (Mutua, 2006). A number of limitations were identified in the conduct of this research. First, the study used purposive sampling which may have left out respondents whose views would have tremendously contributed to theory building and hypothesis testing in this study. Nevertheless, to enhance the accuracy and validity of results the data obtained was scrutinized and cleaned before analysis,

Secondly, the study limited its investigation to the role and influence of women representatives in promoting gender equality and political participation of women in Kenya. It left out the role of men in the same subject matter yet the boy child is also increasingly becoming endangered in fight for political space and inclusion in competitive position even in the corporate arena. Lastly, the thematic areas captured for analysis may have left out some perceptions of the respondents as the questionnaire were open ended allowing them to give varied opinions on the subject matter under investigation. Nonetheless this was attributed to the nature of the respondents who were more often out of office and thereby very difficult to reach. Therefore, repeat visits were arranged on appointments to counter this thereby achieving the near desired response rate.
CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter gives the response rate, data screening and cleaning, descriptive statistics and presents analyses of various responses on items of key variable constructs. More significantly it analyses results are based on the objectives of the study.

4.1 Gender Equality Outlook in the Kenyan Politics

The respondents consisted of women representatives as well as opinion leaders and experts in gender issues and politics in Kenya. According to the secondary data collected, in 2013, with the promulgation of the new constitution and its two-thirds gender equity principle, the government nominated six women to Cabinet seats (FIDA-Kenya 2013). These were approved by Parliament and became the largest number of female cabinet secretaries appointed since independence. With the reconstitution of the Cabinet in 2015, one female Cabinet Secretary was purged and in her place the President appointed a male as a replacement.

The poor performance of women during this period can be attributed to multiple factors, including a biased nomination process; lack of political will among top party and national leaders to support and promote women political leaders. Many women vying for political seats complained about lack of funds to run their campaigns. Other considerations such as political patronage and appeasement of certain individuals and groups in society took precedence. Thus, political leaders lack genuine commitment to ensuring gender equality during party nominations and appointments into leadership positions such as the cabinet. The marginalization of women therefore continued in electoral politics as per data in the table below:
The data in the table above indicates that a negligible number of women were nominated to vie for two major positions in 2013; for governor and senator. Six were cleared to run for the governor seat and seventeen for senator, however, none was elected. Likewise, only 6% were nominated to run for both MP and MCA position and only 6% of them were elected. The observation made from these data is that more women nominees would lead to a higher number of women in the legislative and executive positions. Political parties, therefore, should nominate more women to run for the positions. However, the Constitution set aside 16 special seats for nomination of women into the Senate, which are shared proportionately among political parties. The distribution is presented in table below:
Table 2: Women Senators by Party as per the 16 seats set aside by the Constitution for Women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Women Cleared</th>
<th>Elected</th>
<th>Nominated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TNA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WDM</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARC-K</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODM</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KANU</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KADU ASILI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APK</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORD-K</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Candidate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CMD-Kenya Gender Ranking Baseline, (2014)

The table shows that of the 16 seats set aside for nomination of women in the senate, the party that nominated the highest number of women in 2013 was The National Alliance party (TNA) and Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) with 4 slots each. They were then followed by United Republican party (URP), which nominated 3 women in the senate the rest of the slots were shared by other small parties including WDM, KANU, APK, and FORD-K all of which got one slot each for nomination of a woman representative into the senate.
Table 3 Analysis of Women in Political Party Leadership in 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Total NEC Members</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>% Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TNA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WDM-K</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URP</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARC-K</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODM</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDP</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARC-K</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNU</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APK</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFK</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVP</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPK</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAFINA</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORD-K</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCU</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIP</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORD-P</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KADU-ASILI</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PICK</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORD-ASILI</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KENDA</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Party</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrikisho Party</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Party of Kenya</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Party of Kenya</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CMD-Kenya Gender Ranking Baseline, (2014)
Political parties are the training ground for its members. This is the point at which leaders are identified and nurtured at all levels of party leadership. Equality and equity principles are supposed to be embraced at this level and nurtured throughout the political arena. It is worth noting that Kenya's political parties have not fared well on the principle of gender equality on this scale. Out of the thirty parties surveyed (CMD-Kenya, 2014), only 17% of the parties had women as party leaders, while at least 33% of the parties had women as deputy party leaders, another 33% had women as treasurers and national women leaders.

Although this reflects some progress since independence, this does not translate into influencing decisions about getting many women being cleared, nominated or elected through individual political parties. This is due to inadequate women empowerment, support and nurture, negative cultural attitudes, and the nature of Kenya's electoral system. Party structures and party leaders' attitudes that support patriarchy also account for this state of affairs. Thus, only 19.4% of those elected to Parliament were women while none was elected as Senator and Governor, which is below the constitutional two-thirds gender principle. This is shown in the table below:
The table above shows that out of 1,862 positions gazetted by IEBC, 172 were women which accounted for (9 percent of the total). Among the women elected were 3 governors and 3 senators, 23 members of national assembly, 47 women representatives were elected on the affirmative action basis and 96 members of County Assembly. The number of women governors elected in 2017 improved to 3 as compared to 0 in 2013. This was an improvement from 0% to 6.38%. The number of elected deputy governors were 7 in 2017 as compared to 0 in 2013. This was also an improvement in women representation by 14.89%. The success rate of women in 2017 increased compared to 2013, with about 13 percent of candidates winning office (excluding the WMNA position).
With the net increase in the number of women competing, the 13 percent success rate still translated to even more women gaining office. Compared to 2013, the number of women elected to office increased by 18.6 percent. Women’s success rate increased slightly even as that of male candidates faltered, indicating that women were able to maintain their competitiveness despite the larger numbers of candidates in all races. The implication is that voters are willing to elect women, given the opportunity, and will do so at rates equal to that of men. Yet, few women make it far enough in the electoral process to have the opportunity to gain higher office.

4.2: Effectiveness; Women Representative Position as Gender Factor in Kenya.

A total of 104 key informants were engaged in this study and asked how effective the position of women representative is in promoting gender equality in Kenya. Their responses were coded and put in a Likert scale of 1-5 where 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. The responses were analyzed and presented as shown in the table below:
### Table 5: Effectiveness of Women Representative position in Promoting gender equality in Kenya

| Statement                                                                 | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree | f | %    | f | %    | f | %    | f | %    | f | %    | F | %    | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|---|------|---|------|---|------|---|------|---|------|----|----------------|
| The position of women rep is relevant in the current political set up in Kenya | 0                 | 0.00%    | 8       | 7.70% | 18             |   | 17.30%| 54 | 51.90%| 24 | 23.10%| 3.9038 | 0.84209 |
| The position of women rep has bridged the gender gap in political participation in Kenya | 0                 | 0.00%    | 4       | 3.80% | 10             |   | 9.60% | 65 | 62.50%| 25 | 24.00%| 4.0673 | 0.70041 |
| The women rep position has influenced Kenyan women to participate in civic education on governance | 0                 | 0.00%    | 8       | 7.70% | 20             |   | 19.20%| 54 | 51.90%| 22 | 21.20%| 3.8654 | 0.83675 |
| The position of women representative has influenced women participation in political party leadership | 1                 | 1.00%    | 3       | 2.90% | 12             |   | 11.50%| 63 | 60.60%| 25 | 24.00%| 4.0385 | 0.74941 |
| Women rep position has encouraged women’s party roles and influence on political office contests | 1                 | 1.00%    | 3       | 2.90% | 7              |   | 6.70% | 54 | 51.90%| 39 | 37.50%| 4.2212 | 0.77531 |
| The women rep position has encouraged participation of women in resource mobilization in the counties | 0                 | 0.00%    | 5       | 4.80% | 28             |   | 26.90%| 53 | 51.00%| 18 | 17.30%| 3.8077 | 0.77681 |

Source: survey data (2019)
The results above showed that in a scale of 1-5, the effectiveness of the County Women Representative position in promoting gender equality in Kenya was above average with an overall mean of 3.9840. This means that the respondents were in agreement that the women representative position in Kenya is necessary and should be retained in the Kenyan constitution. However, the proposition that the women representative position has encouraged women’s party roles and influence on political office contests had the highest response rate with a mean of 4.2212 and SD= .77531. This was followed by the statement that women representatives in parliament representation has tried to bridge the gender gap in political participation in Kenya with a mean of 4.0673 and SD=0.70041. In overall, the respondents were in agreement that the women representative position is effective in promoting gender equality in Kenya as it has resulted into more women joining the political arena.

These findings echo Kenya’s Vision 2030 for gender, youth and vulnerable groups that has its foundations on equity and improved livelihoods. Similarly, it also concurs with the argument by Nzomo (2014) who posited that women have played a critical role in shaping the politics of Kenya. However, these findings contradicted the assertion by the works of Lorna, Kennedy, Preston (2017) who conducted a study on influence of political culture on women participation in politics in Nairobi and Kajiado Counties. In their study, they proposed that Kenya is a patriarchal society and the status of women is relatively low with gender inequality/inequity prevailing in many aspects of the society.

Similarly, the works of Kivoi (2014) who did a study on factors impeding political participation and representation of women in Kenya, argued that even though a number of women have made great strides in the political arena in the country, women
representation is far below the minimum one third public service requirement of Article 27(3) of the Constitution of Kenya, which advocates for the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic and cultural and social spheres. His data on the numbers of elected Parliamentarians (including Senators, Governors and County Women Representatives) and holders of senior government positions showed that gender equity is still a mirage. Opoku, Anyango and Alupo study in (2018) on the participation and barriers from a sociological perspective, found that there were hindrances to women’s effective political participation which included; a political environment characterized by violence, discrimination based on gender and lack of support from fellow women.

4.3: How the public perceive the county women’s representative position

The Key informants that were approached to give their views on how they perceive the county women’s representative position, gave their view qualitatively which was then coded and put on a Likert scale of 1-5 and they were then asked to score those responses in the scale given. Their responses were then tabulated and presented as shown in the table below:
Table 6: How the public perceive the County women’s representative position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=104, Mean= 4.057683333</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women representatives play active role in future girl child empowerment to participate in elective positions</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>5 4.8</td>
<td>6 5.8%</td>
<td>5 48.1</td>
<td>43 41.3</td>
<td>4.259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most women representatives contribute in legislative debates in parliament</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>2 1.9</td>
<td>1 11.5</td>
<td>6 60.6</td>
<td>27 26.0</td>
<td>4.105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women representatives position impact on policy and gender equality</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>2 1.9</td>
<td>1 12.5</td>
<td>6 66.3</td>
<td>20 19.2</td>
<td>4.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women rep position has improved women representation in parliament compared to other years</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>3 2.9</td>
<td>1 16.3</td>
<td>6 60.6</td>
<td>21 20.2</td>
<td>3.980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women representatives mobilize resources for better service delivery in their counties</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>2 1.9</td>
<td>1 18.3</td>
<td>5 56.7</td>
<td>24 23.1</td>
<td>4.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women representatives are actively involved in the push for gender balance in Kenya for future generation women politicians</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>2 20.2</td>
<td>6 63.5</td>
<td>17 16.3</td>
<td>3.961</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data, (2019)

The data above is a clear indication that the public perception of the county women’s representative position in Kenya is positive and favorable. This enumerated by the fact that the overall mean for the themes identified under public perception on the position of counties’ women representatives was 4.057683. The highest response rate was
attained from the fact that Women representatives play active role in future girl child empowerment to participate in elective positions with a mean of 4.2596 and standard deviation of 0.77579. However, the lowest response rate was attained in the statement that Women representatives are actively involved in the push for gender balance in Kenya for future generation women politicians with a mean of 3.9615 and standard deviation of 0.60617.

These findings show that members of the public highly regard the position of women representatives in the counties, but at the same time contradicts the feelings of the minority who may not favor the creation of this position in the political arena in Kenya. Conversely, these findings are in line with findings of the works by Kamau (2010) who did a study on women and political leadership in Kenya. This study acknowledged the challenges Kenyan women face as they attempt to engage in political leadership. Her results showed that some individual women politicians contribute more than is often acknowledged. However, it contradicted the findings of the study by Devlin and Elgie (2008), who found out that increased women’s representation has had little effect on policy outputs. It also showed that in terms of the policy agenda, women’s issues are now raised more easily and more often than before, and there has been a strong advocacy of ‘international feminism’ by many deputies.

4.4 Conclusion of the Study

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that as much as there is an improvement in women representation in the Kenyan parliament, there is still a big gender parity in terms of the composition of women in the political Arena in Kenya, unlike other countries like South Africa which has since endeavored to give women the
same chances of representation as the men. This is also the same case with political party composition of women which nominates fewer women to the national assembly, senate and county assemblies. Similarly, it can be concluded that the county women representatives’ position plays a key role in promoting gender equality as they are the main champions of under representation of women in the senate, national assembly, and in the county assemblies. It can also be concluded that majority of the members of the public especially the women, are in favor of the retaining the position of women representatives in the national assembly and they perceive the position as important as it encourages female members of the society to compete equally with their male counterparts.
CHAPTER FIVE: GENERAL CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the results of the study and reports the conclusions drawn. In addition, practical contributions of the study are discussed together with observed limitations. The chapter concludes by providing potential avenues for future research areas.

5.1 Summary of the findings

Research objective one sought to examine the gender equality outlook in the Kenyan politics from the year 2010 to present. Secondary data analyzed for the year 2013/2014 showed that there was a huge disparity in gender balance in elective positions from members of the county assembly, members of parliament and the senator and governor positions. Specifically, of the elective positions in 2013 alone, no woman was elected as a governor, no woman senator, but there were 16 elected women members of parliament out of 290 elective positions for members of national assembly. Similarly, there were only 91 elected women members of the county assembly, relative to 1359 male MCA’s. This implied that women are still under represented in elective positions in Kenya. On party politics and representation, it was also established that in the year 2013/2014, there were no women elected as senators in all the 47 counties but TNA and ODM nominated 4 women senators each while URP nominated 3 women to the senate and KANU, UDF, WDM, APK and FORD-K each nominated one-woman senator totaling to 16 women nominated to the senate in 2013.

The Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission (IEBC’s) candidates list revealed that prior to the election, the number of women lagged far behind that of their
male counterparts. Of the 14,501 candidates who participated in the 2017 election, 1,259 (8.7 percent) were women. Despite the concerted efforts of various actors to increase the pool of aspiring women candidates, a majority of the women who received this support did not participate in the party primaries because they were left out by their own parties and some due to financial constrain.

The second objective of the study was to analyze the effectiveness of elected county women representatives in promoting gender equality in Kenya. Using descriptive statistics, the study found out that the role of the county women’s representative in promoting gender equality in Kenya was above average with an overall mean of 3.9840. This means that the respondents were in agreement that the women’s representative position in Kenya is necessary and should be retained in the Kenyan constitution.

The third objective of the study was to investigate the perceptions of the general public about the position of the women representatives in Kenya. Similarly, using descriptive statistics, it was found out that the overall mean for the themes identified under public perception on the position of counties’ women representatives was 4.057683. This means that majority of respondents were in agreement that the women representative position in the country is as important as any other elective position and they should be given equal opportunities with their male counterparts to serve their electorates.

5.2 Study Recommendations

The participation of women in the political arena and in decision making processes is still undermined in Kenya despite the introduction of the two thirds gender rule as enshrined in the constitution, which was meant to promote equal treatment and
opportunities for both men and women. The male political leaders continue to dominate the leadership positions, leaving the women with very few spaces to fight for. This is an issue that needs to be taken into serious consideration in order to bridge the gender gap, promote gender equality and finally to support the sustainable development goal 5, to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. In order to ensure legislation and policy implementation, some recommendations should be put in place to ensure gender equality in political participation of women as their male counterparts:

I. Based on the conclusions of the objective one, it is recommended that the disparity in gender representation in political parties be improved, by empowering more women to engage in active party politics and elective politics through girl child education sponsorship's and mentorship. Similarly, more women should be allocated leadership positions in the government organizations and the private sector to enable them get skills in resource and people management, which can then prepare them for bigger and more challenging roles of people representation in the senate and the national assembly.

II. It is because of the patriarchal nature of the society that regards a woman’s place to be at home and not taking part in leadership roles, which women have been reluctant in participating in politics. The negative perception of some communities in Kenya that women cannot play an active role in governance and decision making should be abolished and replaced with a more proactive perception, which will encourage the girl child, who are the perceived future leaders to compete with their male counterparts on equal grounds without any discrimination and have an input into policies that affect them.
III. Most women vying for political seats complained of lack of funds to steer their campaigns, and a lack of financial support from their political parties, thus being unable to fairly compete against their male counterparts. In order to be fully prepared by the time campaigns kick off, the women should learn to make early preparations, putting all required resources in place to enable them have a smooth operation. Therefore, there is a great need to empower women economically and the political parties should be willing to support their women candidates fully in order to realize their dream of becoming leaders. This will in the end promote gender equality in the Kenyan political arena.

IV. Women political leaders, once elected into the office, should make themselves available to the constituents who elected them. Constituents complain about them being unavailable to attend to them, as a result when they try to run on second terms most of them are not re-elected.

V. The women who have made it successfully into the political arena in Kenya, should be willing to mentor the other women on how to succeed in political participation. Women should look out for each other and render all the support needed to get to the top. Combined efforts work much better than individual, as they say two is better than one. And since all women are working towards a common goal of ensuring gender equality in the leadership positions, they should strive to combine efforts so as to beat their male opponents. And also if women support women more then there would be no need for laws like affirmative action
to put women in leadership positions, rather women would vie for elective seats on equal grounds.

VI. The media needs to publicize the works and developments by women political more often than they have, especially the County women representatives. Useful partnerships should be formed between the media and women candidates, as well as civil society organizations and funding organizations supportive of gender equality and women’s political interests. This is to enhance the positive coverage of women and their candidature, as well as issues that promote the participation and representation of women in political office.

VII. More and regular training should be conducted for women and the girls generally to prepare them for the leadership positions and to ensure more exposure to the leadership roles. On the other hand, the society should be educated and enlighten on the importance of promoting gender equality, so that they can move away from the cultural belief which does not recognize the leadership capacity of women. This way, they will then embrace and vote for more women political leaders.
5.4 Suggestions for Future Research Area

From the limitations above, this study establishes the foundations for numerous future conceptual and empirical research efforts. Other future studies should focus on the role and influence of male elected members of the national assembly and senators in fostering gender equality and political participation of women in elective politics and party politics. Similarly, the future research endeavors should focus on the hindrances to female participation in elective positions despite the affirmative action enacted and installed in the Kenyan constitution of 2010.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I; INTRODUCTION LETTER

Dear Respondent,


The objective of this questionnaire is to gather detailed information about Role and Influence of the County Women Representatives’ in Promoting Gender Equality and Political Participation of Women in the Kenyan parliament. Data collection is paramount to the completion of this research. I humbly request for your cooperation as I conduct this research. Kindly note that the information you provide will be treated with utmost discretion and confidentiality and will be used purely for academic purpose.

Yours Sincerely,

Ellean Akinyi Polo
APPENDIX II: Key Informant Guideline Questionnaire

This questionnaire attempts to analyze the effectiveness of elected women representatives in promoting gender equality in Kenya; investigate the perceptions of the general public about the County Women Representative position, and to examine the gender equality outlook in the Kenyan politics for the period 2010 to present. It targets Gender Experts and Women Political Leaders, and opinion leaders in Kenya.

Section A: Background Information

Age
- 18 - 35 Years
- 36- 50 Years
- 51 -65 Years
- 65 Years and Above

Gender
- Female
- Male

Highest level of Education
- None
- Primary School
- Secondary School
- Tertiary level

Occupation

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Section B: Women Participation in Politics in Kenya

Should Kenyan women be encouraged to take part in political participation in Kenya?

Why/why not?

What are the attributes of a good female political leader?

What do you think motivates women to participate in politics?

What do you think motivates the electorate to vote for women?

Section C: The Women Representative Position

Do you know the women Representative for your county?

☐ Yes

☐ No

How relevant is the position of the County Women’s Representative?
Has the Women representatives position bridged the gender gap in political participation in Kenya? What challenges do you think they face?

In your own opinion, how can these challenges be mitigated?

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the performance of women’s representative in your County and why?

How do you see women participation and representation in political arena in Kenya in the next ten years?
APPENDIX 111: Key Informant Questionnaire 2

This questionnaire attempts to analyze the effectiveness of elected County Women Representatives in promoting gender equality in Kenya and to examine the gender equality outlook in the Kenyan politics for the period 2010 to present. It targets the elected County Women Representatives.

Section A: Background Information

Age

☐ 18-35 years
☐ 36-50 years
☐ 51-65 years
☐ 66 years and above

Highest level of Education

☐ None
☐ Primary School
☐ Secondary School
☐ Tertiary level

Section B: Women Representation in Kenya

Which county do you represent?  

Who are the majority leaders in your county, have men and women been treated equally during elections?
What changes do you think have taken place in women’s participation in Politics since 2010?

Section C: The Role of the Political Women Representative Position

When did you join politics and what was your motivation to do so? Who were your biggest supporters during elections?

What is your role as a Women’s Representative in your county?

Which political party do you belong to and how did they support you?

In the next ten years, are more women likely to take part in political participation in Kenya?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Why?
What measures are you and your party putting in place to ensure that both men and women have equal chances to take part in political participation in the future?

What Bills have Women Representatives tabled in the Parliament and have they been passed into law? If not what could be the major setback towards achieving this?

Which parliamentary committees are Women Reps involved in and what positions do they occupy?

Section D: Key Challenges and Achievements (2010-2018)
What challenges did you face while campaigning/ during elections?

What challenges do you face now as a woman’s representative for your county and how do you think they can be resolved?
Do you think that the public understands your role as a women representative? If not how can you create awareness?

What do you consider your greatest Achievements/ Failures so far?

In your opinion, has the position of the women representative helped to bridge the gender gap in the political arena in Kenya? If yes, how? If not, why?
APPENDIX IV: Questionnaire 3

a) The Effectiveness of Women Representative position in Promoting gender equality in Kenya

✓ Tick one box for each, to indicate how you would rate the following statements relating to effectiveness of women representative in Promoting gender equality in Kenya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The position of women rep is relevant in the current political set up in Kenya</td>
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<td>The position of women rep has bridged the gender gap in political participation in Kenya</td>
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<td>The women rep position has influenced Kenyan women to participate in civic education on governance</td>
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<tr>
<td>The position of women representative has influenced women participation in political party leadership</td>
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<td>Women rep position has encouraged women’s party roles and influence on political office contests</td>
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<td>The women rep position has encouraged participation of women in resource mobilization in the counties</td>
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</table>
b) **How the public perceives the County women’s representative position?**

Tick one box for each, to indicate how you would rate the following public perception of county women representative statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<td>Women representatives play active role in future girl child empowerment to participate in elective positions</td>
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<td>Most women representatives contribute in legislative debates in parliament</td>
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<td>Women representatives position impact on policy and gender equality</td>
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<td>Women rep position has improved women representation in parliament compared to other years</td>
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<td>Women representatives mobilize resources for better service delivery in their counties</td>
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<td>Women representatives are actively involved in the push for gender balance in Kenya for future generation women politicians</td>
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Thank you