



Influence of Gender Mainstreaming Policy Implementation on Women Political Representation in Baringo County Assembly

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Abstract: Global advances have been made towards the recognition of the principle of women's political, socio-economic and equity in governance. However, some counties, including Baringo have not fully implemented the gender rule as provided for in the Kenyan 2010 constitution, hence little has changed. This study sought to analyze the influence of gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women political representation in Baringo County Assembly. The study was guided by Equity Feministic Theory by Sommers (1994). The study used cross-sectional survey design and mixed method approach where both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis approaches were utilized. The target population was 2446 respondents comprising of employees, members of the County Assembly and Members of the Public Service Board. The sample size was based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) where a sample size of 329 respondents was attained. Questionnaires, Interview guides and FGDs were used to collect data. The quantitative data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, mean and Standard deviation. Qualitative data were thematically classified and arranged before they were reported in narrations and quotations as per the research objectives. The study found out that there was a significant positive correlation between gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women political representation and women governance ($r = .581$; $p = .000$). The study recommends that there is need for streamlining of women appointment to senior positions in the county to allow for efficiency and inclusivity in governance.

Keywords: Gender mainstreaming, Policy, Women, Politics, Baringo, Kenya

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1. Introduction

Global advances have been made towards the recognition of the principle of women's political, economic and social equity in governance. International agreements and conventions have persistently stressed on the importance of women's equal representation in political leadership (Siaroff, 2008). According to Moore and Shackman (2010), women bringing a different perspective in leadership are not in dispute, as clearly indicated by studies done in other parts of the world, which have shown that gender inequality in leadership contributes to women's issues not receiving enough attention even from men who may be sensitive to women's issues. Women are under-

represented in political processes throughout the world. It is important to look at and understand gender differences in power within formal decision-making structures (such as governments, community councils, and policymaking institutions) (Sivakumar, 2016). Given the under-representation of women and the low visibility of women's perspectives, the fact that women often have different priorities, needs and interests than men is often not apparent. In most instances, from national, regional and local levels, the specific needs and priorities of a community are often defined without meaningful input from women (Endalcachew, 2015).

Gender mainstreaming is the public policies concept of assessing the different implications for women and men of any planned policy action, including legislations and programme, in all areas and levels (Sivakumar, 2016). Mainstreaming, essentially, offers a pluralistic approach that values the diversity among both women and men. Gender mainstreaming calls for positive action at different levels and requires commitment, capacities and resources. With its objective of reaching gender equity, the strategy of gender mainstreaming works towards benefitting both men and women equally with programmes and activities taking conscious account of the significance of gender, rather than being gender neutral (Haataja et al., 2011).

However, some studies have shown that the gender-mainstreaming efforts to help societies work toward gender equity do not consider how such social change and its implementation impact men at a socio-psychological level, particularly in male-dominated societies (Jennings, 2012). The governance is in terms of political representation, appointment of women, involvement of women in decision making and development. This is with an aim of ensuring accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation of women. In efforts to promote the advancement of women in governance over the past few decades the approaches and strategies adopted have changed significantly (Alvarez, 2013). Initial efforts were focused on separate targeted activities for women. While many of these efforts produced positive results, particularly for the limited numbers of women who could benefit directly, this approach did not tackle the structural constraints to gender equity. Gender mainstreaming is deemed as a proper strategy to address subtle forms of disadvantage or discrimination which nowadays are much more common than outright discrimination, something that, of course, has to be banned right away (Feldman et al., 2015).

1.1 Research objective

To analyze the influence of gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women political representation in Baringo County Assembly.

2. Literature Review

In Africa, women have traditionally been excluded from the structures of state that determine political and legislative priorities. Nonetheless, in recent years, Africa has witnessed rapid escalation in female political representation as compared to the low rates that existed in the 1960s. According to The African Development Forum (2008), confirmatory developments in African governance, which have been eased by the ever-increasing

consolidation of democracy in the continent, have led to the increase in women's representation in politics. Numerous achievements have been recorded in the advancement of gender equity and women's empowerment and various policies, programmes and projects are in place to advance gender equity and women's empowerment (Ballington, 2009).

In the region, Kenya trails Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda in women representation placing it among democracies that are slow in placing women in key decision-making positions (Kathungu, 2013). This same inequality is replicated in all other arms of the government. Devolution, which was intended, in a big way to cure the inequality, did very little to address the problem. Non-compliance has been noted in implementation of the two third gender rule in some public sectors. For example, in elective positions where the rule was supposed to apply, it failed to work as was evidenced in the general elections held on 4th March 2013. Analysis from Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission indicated that only 16 women were elected for the post of Member of The National Assembly compared to 274 men elected for the same positions. This put as a percentage, there was only 6% women elected as members of The National Assembly and 94% men elected to this position. The percentage is much below the two-thirds or 33% provision in the constitution. It is important to note that there was no woman elected for both the senatorial and the gubernatorial seats, (Esipisu, 2013). In the matter of the principle of Gender representation in the National Assembly and the Senate raised by the Attorney General (on behalf of the government of Kenya), to the Supreme Court for advisory, the court observed that the two-thirds gender principle could not be immediately realized neither could it be force-able in the two houses until August 2015 (Kenya Law Reports, 2012). In 2017, paltry 3 women governors were elected, which was a major step in relation to 2013 general election where there was no single elected woman governor though still the 3 only represent 6.4% of the elected governors.

The Constitution of Kenya creates a platform for gender equity and nondiscrimination. It also provides a fresh impetus for a national policy to chart a roadmap for the attainment of the constitutional provisions (Gok, 2019). Article 10 of the Constitution is on the National Values and Principles of governance. It highlights such principles as equality, equity, inclusiveness and non-discrimination. These principles provide an anchorage for gender equity. Article 27 (3) provides that women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, social, economic and cultural spheres. To realize these ideals, the Constitution in Article 27 (6) requires the government to take legislative and other measures, including affirmative action to redress

disadvantages suffered by individuals and groups because of past discrimination. Article 27 (8) requires that not more than two thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies are of the same gender. Therefore, the current study investigated the gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women political representation in Baringo County.

Women's full and effective political participation is a matter of human rights, inclusive growth and sustainable development (OECD, 2018). The active participation of women, on equal terms with men, at all levels of decision-making and political involvement is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy and the inclusion of their perspectives and experiences into the decision-making processes. Despite this, in the twenty-first century, women are facing obstacles in their political participation worldwide (Kumar, 2018). Women around the world at every socio-political level are under-represented in parliament and far removed from decision-making levels. As noted in the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2019), women's equal participation with men in power and decision-making is part of their fundamental right to participate in political life, and at the core of gender equity and women's empowerment. Strategies to increase women's participation in politics have been advanced through conventions, protocols and international agreements for gender mainstreaming, but they are yet to prove effective in achieving gender parity in the highest government rankings (Morobane, 2014). Half of the world's population is women, but today women only hold 23% of all seats in parliaments and senates globally (Chalaby, 2017). 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; Omwami, 2015).

Democracy is strengthened and works effectively when opportunities exist for involvement or representatives 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; Morojole, 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). The leadership of women has been described as transparent, democratic and sensitive to pertinent issues than men (Conway, 2011). For instance, women see government as a tool to serve the underrepresented or minority groups (Kabeer, 2015). More specifically, female

parliamentarians tend to prioritize 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). 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 political participation has been intricately linked to the economic development; the more developed a country, the likely women would take part in politics (Milligan, 2014). 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 (Omwami, 2011).

Given the fact that many states have ratified international conventions and protocols on gender equity and women political participation, the low level of women's representation in government and political positions may be considered a violation of women's fundamental democratic rights. The African government's public commitments have not materialized into better protection for women and support for victims and this has made women to play outside the political ground. According to Rop (2013) many African state sign and commit themselves to promoting gender parity in political participation but end up shelving the agreement. Abuse of office and desire to acquire power through self-centred means has resulted in the state ignoring women concerns. Thus, women continue to be underrepresented in governments across the nation and face barriers that often make it difficult for them to exercise political power and assume leadership positions in the public sphere. The UN (2011) concurs and states that, "women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women". However, despite the presence of the policy on two-thirds gender rule, women continue to be marginalized in governance thus this study intends to fill this gap.

Literature has shown that the factors that hamper or facilitate women's political participation vary with level of socio-economic development, geography, culture, and the type of political system (Alzuabi, 2016). In Africa, for instance, women are striving to assert an influential role in determining the course of their states but, they have been faced with many challenges that have actually strengthened their resolve. Moreover, the political environment and conditions are often unfriendly or even hostile to women (Radu, 2018). Often the after effects of the consequences of abuses that women and girls face during conflicts are

ignored and under-reported, especially when it comes to political participation and women involvement in politics and governance. Lack of political will comes from the political parties in Africa who only think of how they can expand power and win elections. Anything that does not give these is seen as impractical. This has jarred the confidence of women in their ability to participate in political processes which reflects the reality around the globe. And the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is no different in this global trend. Figures for most of the countries still fall short of the target set by SADC to have 50% women in decision-making positions (SADC, 2019).

2.1 Equity Feministic Theory

This theory was propounded by Sommers (1994). This is a form of classical-liberal feminism that holds that feminism's *political* role is simply to ensure that everyone's, including women's, right against coercive interference is respected. Feminism reflects "a world view that values women and that confronts systematic injustices based on gender" (Chinn & Wheeler, 1985). The participation of women and men in formal and informal decision-making structures varies greatly between countries but is generally in favor of men. Institutional as well as cultural, economic and societal factors limit women's opportunities and abilities to participate in decision-making. Women's low political representation is therefore often used as an indicator of gender inequality. Increasing women's presence as elected officials and public administrators leads to the adoption of more women friendly policies and public services for women (Meier & Funk, 2017). However, despite the presence of various legislations and adoption of gender mainstreaming policies, Kenya still lags in terms of representations in the elective positions).

Therefore, gender mainstreaming brings a feminist lens to policies and policymaking (Hay, 2012). This requires awareness that policies can reproduce asymmetrical gender power relations that mostly benefit men and disadvantage women. It also requires recognizing that some voices have been systematically silenced and that those with less power have been excluded from political decision making. It is concerned with who has been silenced, how and why this silence is maintained, and how it can be challenged.

Even when women are represented in political office, representation does not automatically translate into

influence (Franceschet et al., 2012). For example, although the fraction of women appointed to Cabinet positions has been increasing steadily since 1980 throughout Africa, they are disproportionately assigned policy areas that are considered more "feminine" and less strategic such as social welfare, culture, women's and family affairs, as opposed to finance, defense, or foreign affairs, which are male dominated (Krook & sO'Brien, 2012). As such, the feministic theory allows for gender mainstreaming policies to be undertaken, thus allowing women to participate equally with men in political representation and governance which this study seeks to investigate.

3. Methodology

The study was conducted in Baringo County. The County is one of the 47 counties in Kenya. It is situated in the Rift Valley region. It borders Turkana and Samburu counties to the north, Laikipia to the east, Nakuru and Kericho to the south, Uasin Gishu to the southwest, and Elgeyo-Marakwet and West Pokot to the west. It is located between longitudes 35 30' and 36 30' East and between latitudes 0 10' South and 1 40'. Baringo covers an area of 11,015.3 sq km of which 165 sq km is covered by surface water- Lake Baringo, Lake Bogoria and Lake Kamnarok.

The county is made up of six sub-counties namely: Mogotio, Koibatek, Marigat, Baringo Central, Baringo North and Tiaty. The sub-counties are further divided into 30 wards (divisions) and 116 locations. The county can be divided into two major zones: the highlands and the lowlands.

Despite the nomination of women into leadership positions in Baringo County, there is no much development issues which correlates well with their nomination and of particular interest on the participation of the women in developing policies at the county assembly and also their governance in the county, hence, the need to study how gender mainstreaming policy influence women participation in governance issues.

The study targeted a total of 2446 respondents comprising of employees of Baringo County Government, members of the County Assembly and Members of the Public Service Board within the county assembly. The Target population is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Target Population

Category		Total
County Assembly	Clerk	1
	MCAs	45
	County Assembly Workers	115
County Executive	County Executive members	10
	Chief officers	16
	County Secretary	1
	Directors	24
	Employees	2227
Baringo County Public Service Board	Board Members	7
Total		2446

Source: Researcher, 2021

Questionnaires were administered to both county government and county assembly employees with the help of the research assistants. Additionally, researchers analysed employment records from both the County public service board and the County Assembly service board. This was followed by interviews which were administered to the County Secretary, the County assembly clerk, 2 MCAs, 2 CECs, 2 chief officers, 3 Directors of Departments and the chairperson of the County Public service Board (CPSB). Further, one focus group discussion was held in each of the six sub-counties of Baringo County. The quantitative data from the questionnaire and document analysis were first subjected to preliminary processing through validation, coding and tabulation in readiness for analysis with the help of the statistical package for social science (SPSS) computer package (Version 23.1). Frequencies, percentages, mean and Standard deviation was used to analyze quantitative data so as to determine the gender mainstreaming policy influencing women participation in devolved government of Baringo, Kenya. Qualitative data from key informant interviews and FGDs were thematically classified and arranged before they were reported in narrations and quotations as per the research objectives. The analyzed data were presented in tables and graphs. In addition, the quantitative analysis was supplemented by qualitative descriptions to explore and expand on the quantitative finding in order to provide in-depth explanations of the findings and validation.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Influence of Gender Mainstreaming Policy Implementation on Women Political Representation

This study was guided by the following hypothesis:

H0₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women political representation and women governance in Baringo County.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient (simply, r) was employed to determine the potential relationship between gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women political representation and women governance. In this case when $r = (+) 1$, it shows a positive correlation and when r is $(-) 1$, it indicates that there is a negative correlation. This shows that variations in independent variable (x) explains 100% of the variations in the dependent variable (y) which shows that for a unit change in independent variable there happens to be a constant change in the dependent variables towards the same direction. In this case, the correlation is deemed to be a perfect positive correlation. However, if such change occurs in the opposite direction, the correlation is deemed to be a perfect negative correlation. The value of ' r ' nearer +1 or -1 shows a high degree of correlation between the two variables. Table 2 presents the correlation coefficient between gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women political representation and women governance.

Table 2: Correlation Coefficient between gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women political representation and women governance

		Governance
Political Participation	Pearson Correlation	.581**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	309

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows that there was a significant positive correlation between gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women political representation and women governance in Baringo County ($r = .581$; $p = .000$). At 95% confidence level the r value for women participation in political representation was .581 showing a positive correlation with governance. This implies that an improved participation of women in politics leads to increased participation in governance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no statistically significant relationship between gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women political representation and women governance in Baringo County was rejected showing that there was a significant relationship between gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women political representation and women governance in Baringo County.

Interviews were conducted with the leadership of the county assembly and the findings showed that there were only two women who were elected in 2017 general elections as members of the county assembly. This is out of a total of 30 members of the county assembly. Thus, women political representation in the County represents only about 6.7% falling way below the required number of women in the county assembly. For the county assembly of Baringo to satisfy the gender rule, there is need for a minimum of 10 women out of the 30 seats available to be elected into the county assembly. An interview with an elected MCA on strategies used to win election revealed that it was difficult for women to be elected as leaders to represent the constituency. As explained by one:

“Me winning the election was not easy. I had to use a lot of money paying electorate as well as powerful leaders so that they could endorse me. Culture has really affected electorate view of women leaders. You will find that despite being an elected MCA my power in representing my people must be seconded by the other leaders. I have to get the buy in of the MP, governor and in other cases senator to front my people’s needs.” Elected Woman MCA, Baringo KI04

These statements show that gender mainstreaming policy implementation through election of women in political seats was an uphill task countered by culture, male dominance in politics and limited spaces for power sharing. This clearly indicates that gender mainstreaming policy implementation through women political representation is still low in Baringo County. This concedes with finding by Polo (2019) that there was big gender parity in women political representation that undermines wholistic gender mainstreaming in governance.

Moreso, Baringo County was found to be non-satisfying in meeting the two third gender representations in women political representation. This trend seems to be replicated all over Kenya where in 2017 about 6.6% of women were elected as MCAs, 7.9% as Members of National assembly (MNAs), 6.4% as Senators and 6.4% as Governors as indicated by Opoku et al. (2018). The fulfillment of the two thirds gender rule could be attributed to the fact that the 2017 general elections took place without a law to facilitate the implementation of rule. As a result, the composition of the county assemblies, parliament and Senate after the 2017 general elections was noncompliant with the constitution as per International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA, 2021).

However, in terms of participation for election as MCAs there were 21 women aspirants out of a total of 196 aspirants in all the 30 wards of Baringo County. This was according to the Clerk of the County assembly of Baringo. This shows that women represented only 10.7% of the aspirants in the general election of 2017. This is still considered to be a low number of women aspirants owing to various factors which hinder their participation in politics. From a total of 21 women aspirants only two (2) were elected representing 9.5% of the total number of women aspirants. As such there is need to encourage more women to participate in political elections despite the challenges associated with women participation in politics. This study finding is in line with those of other researchers including Foulds, (2014) and Omwami, (2015) who acknowledged in their studies that despite the increase in awareness and initiatives to empower women to take an active part in politics, they are less likely to be voted in the seats they aspire for. This gap is explained by the dominance of patriarchy and reverence of the elderly

against women and limited women power in the economic status (Owuor, 2016; Sivi-Njonjo, 2016).

As a way of fulfilling the two thirds gender rule, 13 more women were nominated into the county assembly of Baringo. However, nomination does not translate directly to political representation since the nominated MCAs do not have any wards to represent. Instead, they are answerable to the appointing authorities (parties) and champion what the party or the sponsors would want them to do. This is consistent with the findings of Berry et al. (2020) who argued that there is a difference between nominated and elected legislators at the county level which may contribute to a broader sense that women are not capable political actors. The researchers noted that nominated women do not represent any specific ward; unlike their elected counterparts, they represent the entire county not a clear geographic constituency. One of the nominated MCAs had this to say:

“Our elected MCAs are against us the nominated MCAs. They don’t want us to have any kind of budget in our dockets. They usually say that we don’t represent any ward which warrants any recognition. These elected MCAs believe that we are girlfriends of the appointing part bosses and thus we lack respect in the county assembly.” (Female nominated MCA Baringo County KI003)

From the above sentiments it can be shown that nomination into the county assembly does not translate directly to political representation as the nominated MCAs whether women or men lack budgetary allocations for projects within the wards.

Interviews with another nominated MCAs further pointed out that during debating in the house they have lower vigor in their presentation since they have no wards to represent. The nominated MCA had this to say:

“I am a nominated MCA but it’s not easy for me owing to the fact that I don’t have a ward to represent. In the county assembly, you sometimes find yourself out of place when the elected members start debating and saying my ward lacks this and this... what happens to me who has no ward? Besides these, most of the people in Baringo just say that we were nominated to just enrich ourselves. This discourages most of us the nominated members from participating actively in matters concerning development in the

county.” (Female nominated MCA Baringo County, KI001)

Interviews conducted with the Leader of majority revealed that women constitute a bigger part of the voters in the study area. However, they do not make use of their voting powers to vote for their fellow women. The interviewee had this to say:

“Women have contested for political offices in this county, but they were not successful. If women in this county can team up and vote for their fellow women, we could be having more women MCAs compared to men. I have seen instances where women discourage their female counterparts from participating in politics. So how do we fulfil the two thirds gender rule? It’s impossible unless we just nominate them.” Male political leader, KI06

Based on the above argument, the participation of women in politics in Baringo County can be deemed to be low. Moreover, despite a few participating in politics, they have limited chances of being elected. This is consistent with the findings of Anyango et al. (2018) who found in their studies that women fail to support each other in Kenyan politics despite their numerical advantage giving men a leeway in elections.

From the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) it emerged that nomination of women to county assembly as a way of fulfilling the two thirds gender rule is not a highly appreciated idea. In one of the FGDs, one participant lamented that nominated women MCAs do not in any way represent the rural populace, but they are nominated to just enrich themselves and their families. The participant said this:

“Surely you expect these people to represent us? Did any of you vote for them during the elections? Let them enrich their pockets. We need to appeal against this kind of nomination and maybe we need to start nominating them from the villages so that they can be accountable.” Male Participant, FGD.

In a different FGD a participant retorted that:

“Nomination is another politics to add expenses to mwananchi (citizens) since the nominees have no work and keep earning salaries for no good course”. It does not help because they get busy

fighting with the elected MCAs in preparation for the next election. There is no representation of mwananchi.”
Woman Participant, FGD.

From these sentiments it can be acknowledged that women nominated MCAs are not accountable to the electorates since they were not directly nominated by the electorates but through party mechanisms. These statements further show non-acknowledgement by citizens of nomination of women MCAs as an important aspect of gender mainstreaming. Many, according to their statement find it as a political move that does not increase equality between women and men but rather creating more of patronage in the communities. This is a clear manifestation that nomination does not translate to representation and thus, the nomination process needs to be clearly looked into so as to incorporate the electorates.

Further Information gathered from FGD indicated that women political representation through election should be given more focus than nomination. Some of the FGD participants felt that women were in position to be elected while others argued that women cannot be elected by citizens on the basis of their gender. As one FGD participant explained:

“Gender mainstreaming is a policy which seeks to increase women in leadership. This is an aspect that we are starting to adopt with having seen some women being successful political leaders while others have failed terribly. My opinion would be let women campaign like men and convince people to elect them rather than appointing them.” Male FGD participant Baringo County

This statement shows a mixed reaction in which locals believe that women can attain political representation through election other than appointment. These assertions support findings by USAID, 2018 that women political representation was increasing compared to other years. Lorna et al. (2017) however argues that the representation is still low and not at par with the two third gender preposition. This thus calls for more empowerment of women as individuals and at party level to take up electoral positions within their counties at all electoral levels.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, it has emerged that the participation of women in politics in Baringo County can be deemed to be low. Moreover, despite a few participating in politics, they have limited chances of being elected. Nomination of women to county assembly as a way of fulfilling the two thirds gender rule is not a highly appreciated idea. This is a clear manifestation that nomination does not translate to representation and thus the nomination process needs to be clearly looked into so as to incorporate the electorates.

It was concluded that there was a significant positive correlation between gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women political representation and women governance in Baringo County. Thus, improved participation of women in politics leads to increased participation in governance.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, there is need for more women to be encouraged to participate in seeking for elective positions in the county as this will enhance effective governance in the County. This can be done through setting of or funding pools for women electorates, as well as sensitizing citizenry on the important of women in leadership to counter cultural barriers.

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