



Level of women involvement in gender mainstreaming policy implementation on decision making in Baringo County

Rebecca Arupe Lomong, Peter Gutwa Oino and Mildred Lumayo
Kisii University, Kenya

Abstract: *The need to visibly engender women's participation in decision-making became a growing global concern through the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Despite the Kenyan 2010 constitutional provisions for gender mainstreaming, little has changed. This study sought to examine the level of women involvement in gender mainstreaming policy implementation on decision making in Baringo County. The study was guided by Equity Feministic Theory by Sommers (1994). The study used cross-sectional survey design and mixed method approach. 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) sample size determination to arrive at sample size of 329 respondents. Questionnaires, Interview guides and FGDs were used to collect data. Reliability was determined through test-retest approach. The quantitative data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, mean and Standard deviation. Pearson Correlation and linear regression analysis were employed to determine relationship that exists between the independent and dependent variables. 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, Decision making, Baringo, Kenya*

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1. Introduction

The need to visibly engender women's participation in decision-making became a growing global concern through the CEDAW—the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Bareiro-Bobadilla et al., 2010) and its Article 7 which specifically requested State parties “to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country” (Kathree, 1995). The 1997 Committee on CEDAW also put State parties under the obligation to ensure that their constitution and legislation complied with the principles of the Convention to achieve

equal representation of women in political and public life (Lucia, 2006).

In 1995, the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, focused on the persistent exclusion of women from formal politics and decision-making. The Beijing Platform of Action (BPoA) (Declaration, 1995b) questioned the achievements of any form of effective democratic transformation in Africa, which violated women's rights to vote and be elected. The BPoA indicated that democratic institutions who lacked women's representation in political decision-making, cannot achieve gender equality in terms of representation, policy agenda setting and accountability.

This implies that women's equal participation in decision-making is a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account (Declaration, 1995b). Without the perspective of women at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development, and peace cannot be achieved.

Thus, attainment of sustainable development in Africa will require the provision of equal access to and full participation of women in power structures and decision-making (Declaration, 1995b). The BPoA therefore proposed the following measures that could be adopted to accelerate women's organizations' visible engagement in decision-making for sustainable development in Africa: Establishing gender-balanced governmental bodies, committees, public administration and judiciary, through specific targets and a positive action policy; integrating women into elective positions in political parties; promoting and protecting women's political rights; and reconciling work and family responsibilities for both men and women (Declaration, 1995a); and Conducting leadership and gender awareness training; developing transparent criteria for decision-making positions; and creating a mentoring system (Declaration, 1995b).

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, Darmstadt, Kumar & Ruger, 2015). Thus, the current study examined the level of women involvement in gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women participation in decision making in devolved government of Baringo.

1.1 Research objective

To examine the level of women involvement in gender mainstreaming policy implementation on decision making in Baringo County

2. Literature Review

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 equity, equity, inclusiveness and non-discrimination. These principles provide an anchorage for gender equity. Further, Article 27 (1) provides that every person is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit; 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. The Constitution also outlaws discrimination on any basis including, pregnancy, race, sex, marital status, health, ethnicity or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, dress, language or birth in Article 27 (4). 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 governance in Baringo County.

Many gender equity and women empowerment (GEWE) missionaries, non-governmental organizations, women's groups, and individuals have worked together in various national, international and transnational contexts to bring women and women's interests into government affairs (Devlin & Elgie, 2008) through efforts geared toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Agenda 2030 (Basu, 2018). Between 1995 and 2005, there was an upsurge in the visibility of women's involvement in leadership and decision-making in Africa. Zubeyr et al. (2013) claimed that the implementation of a gender quota system, resulted in an upsurge of the number of women who participated in public decision-making in Mozambique (34.8%), South Africa (32.8%), Tanzania (30.4%), Uganda, Burundi (30.5%), Rwanda (48.8%), Namibia (26.9%), and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Rwanda, for example, has the highest percentage (48.8%) of women's parliamentary representation across the globe. Women's organizations in the Congo successfully lobbied the government to include the principle of a 50–50 parity representation, in the constitution in 2006 (Sow, 2012). In Burundi, the government included a quota for a 30 percent representation of women in the 2005 constitution and to the electoral code in 2009 (Sow, 2012). In Mali, Niger, and Cape Verde, priority funding was awarded to political parties with large female representation which ensured the nomination of at least 10% female candidates for either elective or appointive positions (Boakye Yiadom & Musa, 2010; Krook, 2015). In Sub-Saharan Africa, some female

legislators were elected through gender quotas, which are a system of reserved seats (Yoon, 2001).

Despite these efforts and achievements in some African nations, variations in the degree of women's visibility in decision-making across the continent, ranging from <5% in Egypt to over 40% in South Africa remains (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005). Similarly, Bawa and Sanyare (2013) observed a steady decline in women's involvement in public life and politics in nations such as Ghana. This decline is most likely sustained by gender insensitive ideologies which denote the private domestic sphere as the female domain and the public and political sphere as the male terrain (Geisler, 1995).

There are several approaches on female participation in decision-making in Africa. First is the women's human rights approach, which claims that since women are about half of the entire population in Africa, they have a right to be represented in decision-making (Boserup et al., 2013). Next is the critical mass theory, which claims that women would achieve solidarity of purpose for their interests and welfare if represented in decision-making (Fraser, 1990).

At the policy level, feminist theorists advancing a theory of congresswomen's impact on women's issues, suggest that women are a homogenous group who need to be represented in discussions that result in policy-making and implementation, as their experiences are unique and different from those of men (Swers, 2002). This implies that women conduct politics differently from men. Feminist's theorists also claim that women's interests differ from men's (Pateman, 2005), and therefore, should be represented in institutions to articulate their interests. From a mentor and role model perspective, feminist theorists state that female role models will enhance female involvement and engagement in politics, while equal representation of women and men in politics will result in democratization of governance at a national and international level (Campbell & Wolbrecht, 2006).

Another foundational and influential definition of gender mainstreaming originates from the Council of Europe in 1998. According to the Council of Europe, gender mainstreaming is the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equity perspective is incorporated in all policies and at all levels at all stages, by actors involved in policy making (Wylie & dos Santos, 2016). Gender mainstreaming became much more known following the 1995 Beijing Declaration and subsequently the official adoption by the UN in 1997 and the influential work of the Council of Europe in 1998. However, "both before and after these events, feminists have sought to develop the concept of gender mainstreaming; and have debated its theoretical and practical advantages and shortcomings"

(Sainsbury & Bergqvist, 2009: 217). More generally described, one could say that gender mainstreaming entails that a gender perspective is included in policymaking with the aim to achieve gender equity (Davids & Parren, 2014). An important remark regarding gender mainstreaming is that it should be applied in all levels of policymaking, from policy design to policy implementation to policy evaluation (Davids & Parren, 2014).

Gender mainstreaming involves two reference frames, namely gender equity and mainstreaming, and is therefore considered to be "inevitably and essentially a contested process" ((Wylie & dos Santos, 2016).). In many debates about gender mainstreaming, the conceptualization of this dualism between gender equity and the mainstream is central (Jennings, 2012). When evaluating the outcomes of gender mainstreaming, there has been a lot of debate regarding how "success" should be defined. When it comes to gender mainstreaming, "the definition of success is complicated by the possible change in the nature of the goal during the process of negotiation because these are ongoing socially constructions in a changing context of what is perceived as possible" (Haataja et al., 2011). In other words, because gender mainstreaming focuses on the process, the implementation of the policy can be open to varying interpretations with different implications (Jennings, 2012).

Wanaswa (2013) observed that women's low participation indices in governance have made it difficult for women to influence decisions being made regarding matters affecting them, as a population regarded economically poor in Kenya including the youth. The biggest hindrance to the realization of all-round decision-making process in governance is under-representation of women. Miranda (2015) accolades the UDHR (1948) that women understand their situations better and should be involved in decision making process be it at the local, national, regional or supranational levels. Contrary to this, women's input in the decision-making process on governance is highlighted as an obligation for all but women are not fully enjoying this right due to low awareness as well as inefficiency in policies.

Women's representation in local offices can also affect perceptions of women as leaders and key decision makers. For example, the election of women mayors in Mexico reduced gender stereotypes among men, but the effects were temporary and diminished after the woman left office (Kerevel & Atkeson, 2015). Women's presence in local councils in India also led to changes in voter attitudes. After having a woman chief councilor for two terms, voters expressed more positive views of women in leadership (Bhavnani, 2009). Evidence from Chile suggests that women's success in local elections can improve perceptions of women among political party leaders as well

and lead to more nominations of women candidates (Shair-Rosenfield & Hinojosa, 2014). However, the presence of gender quotas may interfere with women's impact on voter attitudes. In the case of Lesotho, citizens reacted negatively to the design of the gender quota, which resulted in a decrease in voters' interest in politics and perceptions of councilors' responsiveness to citizens (Clayton, 2015). Women in local political offices can also have demonstration effects that lead to the election of even more women at the local level (Crowder-Meyer & Smith, 2015).

3.1 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 behind in terms of representations (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.

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
	MCA's	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, researcher 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 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 Level of Women Involvement in Gender Mainstreaming Policy Implementation on Decision Making and governance

The hypothesis of this research stated that:

H0₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women involvement in decision making process and women governance in Baringo County.

This hypothesis was further tested using Pearson correlation Analysis and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation Coefficient between Gender Mainstreaming Policy Implementation on Women Involvement in Decision Making Process and Women Governance

		Governance
Involvement in decision Making	Pearson Correlation	.424**
	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 involvement in decision making process and women governance in Baringo County ($r = .424$; $p = .000$). At 95% confidence level the r value for women participation in decision making process was .424 showing a positive correlation with governance. This implies that an enhanced women participation in decision making process in the county enhances governance. This is shared by a study conducted by Wanaswa (2013) that observed that women’s low participation indices in governance have made it difficult for women to influence decisions being made regarding matters affecting them, as a population regarded economically poor in Kenya including the youth. The study further stressed that the biggest hindrance to the realization of all-round decision-making process in governance is under-representation of women. In the same rejoinder, Miranda (2015) accolades the UDHR (1948) that women understand their situations better and should be involved in decision making process be it at the local, national, regional or supranational levels. Contrary to this, women’s input in the decision-making process on governance is highlighted as an obligation for all but women are not fully enjoying this right due to low awareness as well as inefficiency in policies. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no statistically significant relationship between gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women involvement in decision making process and women governance in Baringo County was rejected showing that there was a significant relationship between gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women involvement in decision making process and women governance in Baringo County.

4.2 Qualitative Data on Level of Women Involvement in Gender Mainstreaming Policy Implementation on Decision Making

Interviews conducted with the clerk of the County assembly pointed out Baringo County Assembly Service Board (BCASB) had a total of six (6) members consisting of 2(33.3%) females and 4(66.7%) males. This shows that majority (66.7%) of the members of BCASB were male as compared to their female counterparts. However, the two thirds gender rule was adhered in the appointment of members to the Board. The County assembly Service

Board is mandated in Kenya to among other things, the provision of services and facilities to ensure the efficient and effective functioning of the county assembly, constituting offices in the county assembly service, and appointing and supervising office holders, preparing annual estimates of expenditure of the county assembly service and submitting them to the county assembly for approval, and exercising budgetary control over the service and undertaking, singly or jointly with other relevant organizations, programmes to promote the ideals of parliamentary democracy amongst other functions. Thus, BCASB is an important body in terms of decision making in the management of county assembly affairs. Thus, the representation of women in the Board is a significant step in the championing of women’s affairs in the county assembly.

In addition, the clerk during the interviews noted that the county assembly leadership team comprised of ten (10) members out of which 8 (80%) were male while 2 (20%) were female. This shows that the county assembly leadership falls short of the two-thirds gender rule thus negatively affecting the participation of women in key decision making in the county. The county leadership team comprises of the Speaker, Deputy speaker, Majority leader, Deputy Majority Leader, Minority Leader, Deputy Minority leader, Majority Chief Whip, Deputy Majority Chief Whip, Minority Chief Whip and the Deputy Minority Chief Whip.

In addition, the clerk further noted that Baringo County assembly had eight departmental chairpersons in eight departments: legislature and procedural services, HR and administration, Finance and Accounts, communication and ICT, Legal services, internal Audit, Supply chain management and Budget. In these departments, only two (2) are headed by females while six (6) are headed by males. Thus, in terms of percentage representation in Departmental Committee Chairpersons women constitute 25% while males constitute 75%. This implies that women MCAs are underrepresented in leadership positions in the County assembly.

Further interviews with the clerk further showed that women MCAs participated fully in policy formulation process in the County assembly. However, it emerged that

their participation is dependent on their positions or responsibilities in the county assembly. For instance, the committees of the County Assembly are provided for in the Constitution and in the County Governments Act. Apart from helping the Assembly manage its business, the committees of the County Assembly have the following functions: Conduct oversight on the Executive to ensure that the Executive is exercising fiscal prudence and good governance in the given sectors, initiate and/or scrutinize legislative and regulatory proposals on matters touching the relevant sectors, review and recommend budget allocation to the department of the county, investigate, inquire into, and report on all matters relating to the departments' management, activities, administration, and operations, study the programme and policy objectives of the departments and the effectiveness of the implementation and vetting and reporting on appointments in the departments where the Constitution or any law requires the Assembly to approve. These are important roles tasked to the Committees in the County assembly and thus participation of women in the process constitutes policy implementation process.

Additionally, interviews with the Secretary to the County Public Service Board showed that women who have been appointed as CECs and Cos participate fully in policy formulation in the county. The Secretary acknowledged that;

“Policy formulation starts at departmental levels where we have women heading departments. So they also initiate the policy formulation process”.
KI County Secretary

Furthermore, the Clerk to the County Assembly acknowledged that there have been bills that originated from the women MCAs. These Bills included Baringo County Persons Living with Disability Act, 2020 and Baringo County Sexual and gender Based Violence Bill, 2021.

This is a clear indication that women MCAs in the county actively participate in the enactment of bills in the county which is part of the policies that have been adapted by the county assembly. However, their participation in the Assembly proceedings seemed to be low as per the Clerk. The clerk acknowledged that some women MCAs are very active during debating in the chambers while majority of them seem to be inactive. The clerk noted that the MCAs particularly the nominated ones rarely participate during heated discussions leaving debating to be the affairs of the

male MCAs. Another discussant a nominated MCA shared that there is unequal power sharing between elected and nominated MCAs which undermines the increased women participation in decision making. Mathu (2016) however attributes to low gender mainstreaming in decision making to failure of awareness among women elected and nominated leaders on processes and strategies to present discussions and argue them out. This implies that that the skills in decision making on matters affecting development among women politicians is lacking thus need for more sensitization on decision making process for development amidst politics.

Discussion from the group presented a majority appreciation for the consideration of gender mainstreaming in decision making. Many of the FGD participants agreed that it was important for gender to be considered while making decisions for politicians. A participant in the FGD had this to say:

“Gender mainstreaming in decision making is very important because the different gender understands issues surrounding them more than the other gender. Women should also be increased in such forums because few women who participate in the decision-making process are self-centered more so the nominated MCA lack the convincing language to use”. Female FGD participant Baringo

In another statement an MCA noted that there was lack of political will in equal gender participation in decision making. She explained that:

“Most of the decisions made in the assembly are political and either chose to conform to a national directive or to support majority of interested party. Thus, participation in decision making is not something one would consider effective in implementation of gender mainstreaming policy.” Female MCA, Baringo County

These statements show that gender mainstreaming in decision making as a key to implementation of gender mainstreaming policy at county level. Politicizing of decisions, low women representation and interference from national government thus affect effective implementation of gender mainstreaming policy in decision making.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

In conclusion from this study that set to examine the level of women involvement in gender mainstreaming policy implementation on decision making in Baringo County, it emerged that there was a significant positive correlation between gender mainstreaming policy implementation on women involvement in decision making process and women governance in Baringo County. Thus, increased women participation in decision making process in the county enhances efficiency in governance.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it was recommended that there is need for increased women participation in decision making process in the county enhances efficiency in governance. This can be achieved through targeted training of politicians in decision making processes as well as setting up procedures for decision making that overpower political interest.

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