

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Challenges and Prospects of Achieving Two Third Gender Rule in Elective Seats of Members in Kiambu County Assembly, Kenya

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was: to investigate factors affecting the Two Third Gender Rule in Kiambu County Kenya; the effects of not achieving the Two Third Gender Rule and to suggest possible initiatives of addressing the Two Gender Rule in county elections. The target population was elected women and nominated Members of County Assembly (MCAs) and voters. Kiambu County has 60 MCAs and only four women were elected as MCAs and thus led to nomination of 27 women to achieve the Two Third Gender Rule in the first assembly. In the second assembly, only one woman was elected as MCA leading to nomination of 29 women as MCAs. The study found out that female aspirants had inadequate finances to meet their campaign needs and the rooted patriarchal culture which did not favor female candidates. The study recommends that women should be more assertive and that women voters need to support female aspirants. Female aspirants need to come out in large numbers to seek elective seats and prove that politics should not be male dominated. The study is useful to Government ministries and researchers.

Keywords: *Two third gender rule, elective seats, patriarchal society, voter stereotype, county government, and affirmative action*

1. Introduction

Kenya promulgated its Constitution in 2010 and Chapter Eleven entails the objects and principles of Devolved Government. There are 47 counties in Kenya of which Kiambu County is one of them. Members of County Assembly (MCAs) are elected for a term of five years by the registered voters in each ward which constitutes a single member constituency. The Constitution of Kenya (175) has elaborated one the Principles of devolved governments. On 27th February 2019, the Two Third Gender Bill lacked the quorum and surprising thing is that women were not even half (20 out of 75 women) in the Kenya Parliament, raising the question on the commitment of women to pass the Gender Bill. It was the fourth time it failed and issues raised on practicality of implementing the Kenya Constitution on the Two Third Gender Rule (Mwere, 2019).

Several Amendment Bills in relation to Two Third Gender Rule have been presented at the floor of the National Assembly as in the case of 2016 (Amendment Bill (No. 4) of 2015)) and 2019 (Amendment Bill 2018) but none have been successful. Constitution embraces equality of men and women in all domains. Article 81 (b) ensures that gender rule is observed in elective public bodies. Article 27 requires government to initiate and enact policies encompassing affirmative action in order to address gender rule where not more than two third are of the same gender. Article 177 make sure Article 81 (b) and 27 (8) of Kenyan constitution are observed via nomination.

In 2013 Kenyan general election, out of 8 candidates that vied for presidential position only one candidate was a woman (Martha Karua) and garnered below 3% of the total votes casted. For gubernatorial and senatorial positions, only 19 women vied out of 237 candidates however neither a woman was elected as a governor nor senator. For 290 constituencies, only 16 women were voted as Members of Parliament. In all 47 counties, 9287 males vied to be MCAs but only 1365 were elected. In variance, 623 women were MCA candidates that vied but only 85 were successfully elected. Out of 85 women elected, four were from Kiambu County. Kenya has 1450 elective wards of which Kiambu County has 60 wards (Wairimu, 2017). It is a clear indication that Two Third Gender Rule was never achieved. Htun and Jones (2002) attest that for women to be felt in elective positions, adequate civic educated is essential. Women representation in Africa is increasing with elective periodization such as in case of Rwanda where there is increase of women representation with 56%, South Africa 42%, Tanzania 36% and Kenya 15%. Although Kenya has not achieved the Two Third Gender Rule there is progressive change from the preceding of the 10th Parliament which had 9.8 percent representation and 11th Parliament with 15% due to election of a woman representative in each county (47) respectively. In 12th Parliament there was increase of women elected in constituencies from 16 (10th parliament) to 23 women (Boyani, 2017).

The inadequate representation of women in Kenya's politics is accredited to political masculinity and electoral

system. Kenyan politics largely accommodate more men than women regardless of economic, cultural and ethnic basis. Despite women rising to politics in Kenya, the preference and taste of politics still favors men.

The Kitui County Governor, the season woman politician in Kenya, Charity Ngilu urges women that they must now realize that political power is not given rather battle for it and compete favorably with men to rise to political ladders (Daily Nation, 2019). According to Wako (2019), the election of Ann Mwangi Muvrya as the first female President of Student Organization of Nairobi University (SONU) after 50 years of its existence is a sign that women can rise to elective positions.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

According to Witt, Karen, and Glenna (1995), women have encountered challenges trying to battle for elective seats. Witt et. al. (1995), argues that women have been stereotyped by voters while seeking for elective positions. They are perceived as affectionate compared to their male counterparts who are combative. As a result, in general voters have tended to view male competitors as fit for elective positions especially in executive arm of government in connection to security and economics.

According to Kagi (2017), in 2013 election, out of 60 elected MCAs in Kiambu County only four women were elected leading to nomination of 27 women as MCAs. In the second Kiambu County Assembly, only one woman was elected in 2017 leading to a decline of women in Kiambu County assembly from three to one. It led to nomination of 29 women to achieved the two third gender rule. Hence this study focused on the political landscape of the Two Third Gender Rule in elective position of MCAs in Kiambu County, Kenya.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- To investigate factors affecting the Two Third Gender Rule in Kiambu County;
- To find out the effects of not achieving the Two Third Gender Rule in Kiambu County; and
- To suggest possible solutions to ensure the Two Third Gender Rule is achieved.

2. Literature review

The literature review focuses on global, African and Kenyan perspectives.

2.1. Global Perspectives on Elective Seats

Costantini (1990), report that women in United States encounter difficulties in entry to politics due to absence of women precursor in elective positions who acts as mentors to the upcoming women politicians. The insignificant representation of women in politics is a result of male domination in economics and machination (Aslam, 2002). Basu (2005) argues that interaction operations and organizations equally underpin male superiority and masculinity in the presence of women.

Electorates have stereotyped women with sympathetic factors such as health care, education, children, family, and environmental issues. Men are associated with economic, security and agriculture (Alexander & Andersen 1993; Huddy & Nayda 1993a; Kahn 1992).

2.2. African Perspective on Elective Seats

This section contains an analysis of challenges and success of Two-Thirds gender rule in Uganda, Rwanda and South Africa. In their (Tripp, 2000; Tamale, 2001 & Hassim, 2003), survey of the effect of quotas in Uganda, South Africa and Rwanda, have deduced that women MPs appear to encounter challenges to marshal support inside their political parties and advocate for gender equality and challenge their parties to achieve gender equity in political representation. Women do not seem too much advocate for gender equity.

According to Tamale (2001) and Tripp (2000) argues that National Resistance Movement (NRM) party in Uganda has at various times hindered the potential of women Members of Parliament to assist in legislation brought forward by women in case they pose a challenge the stand of political party in government.

The case of Rwanda political representation of women has raised significantly and even in public domain. Women in national assembly in Rwanda are 56.3% due to socio-economic and political situation of the genocide. After genocide, the population of the country comprised of 70% of women thus installing a great number of women in leadership to advance their gender agenda. The Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) which is the country ruling party that has supported women in politics through policies of gender parity such as constitutional quota of 30% women in the parliament and government institution. President Paul Kagame has supported women in political arena and women have continuously increased women in his administration (Powley, 2012).

2.3. Kenyan Perspective on Elective Seats

It is important to interrogate political arena on the Kenyan women in elective positions. Mwinyihaji (2012) argues that though women are rising up in elective politics but they are still taking minimal role as a result of means and methods men have opted to use in political arena.

In their analysis, The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA Kenya) (2018), argue that there was a rise of women elected MCAs from 84 (5.8%) in 2013 election to 97 (6.6%) women in 2017 election. Out of 1450 wards in Kenya, there is still low representation of women as MCAs which has led to nomination of 559 women as MCAs which is a cost implication to counties as they strive to achieve Two Third Gender Rule. According to

Lang'at (2017), Nairobi and Kiambu County recorded the highest in nominating women. The NDI and FIDA (2018), Bungoma County in 2017 recorded the highest in terms of electing women as MCAs (10) which is 22% and Kiambu County among the bottom with lowest number of elected woman MCA (1) which translated to 0.01%.

In 2017 election, it gave a new phase in three counties that elected women as their governors and three Senators in Senate. It is an indication that women are gaining momentum in elective politics but uncertain with dynamic politics in every elective year with voters' choice in elective positions.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The study adopted descriptive survey design. Descriptive design was used to analyze the data. It was used to describe the characteristics of women who are currently engaged in ward representative politics and those who have failed in political unrest. Survey design used were questionnaires and interview schedules.

3.2. Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in Kiambu County. It is located in the Central highlands of Kenya in the former Central Province, close to Kenya's capital, Nairobi. Its capital is Kiambu and its largest town is Thika Municipality. Kiambu County has twelve constituencies and 60 wards represented by Members of Parliament and Members of County Assembly respectively. The county is inhabited by Agikuyu community much engaged in farming. Today the Agikuyu are farmers and business oriented. In their traditional political systems the Agikuyu had a decentralized form of government where men were leaders in the council of elders "Kiama" and had a say in all matters relating to society and women were not represented in the Agikuyu political culture (Kenyatta, 1938). The social political landscape in Kiambu County is continually changing with the Multi-party politics, and the current gender parity in provision of formal education.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher collected data using the research instruments which included the questionnaire and interview schedules. Questionnaires were administered to the respondents directly and drop and pick method was employed and the respondents were given time to respond to the questions and the questionnaires were picked later. The interview schedule was conducted through face to face method. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used for data analysis. Quantitative data from the questionnaire were coded and entered into the computer for computation of descriptive statistics. The qualitative data generated from open ended questions was categorized in themes in accordance with research objectives and reported in narrative form along with quantitative presentation. The qualitative data was used to reinforce the quantitative data.

4. Results and Discussions

The first objective of the study was to investigate factors affecting Two Third Gender Rules in Kiambu County. The study found out that factors affecting the Two Third Gender Rule in Kiambu County were: female aspirants were faced by inadequate finances to facilitate and conduct an effective campaign where most women shun away from politics. The study further established that majority of the respondents indicated a deep-rooted culture within the community which propagated a false notion that women cannot bring any development in a society and is male dominated. According to the study political grapevine spread by their male counterparts were hectic to counter attack besides insecurity when conducting evening campaigns. This led to women being demoralized and negate in politics for elective seat leading to few women vying and only two women were elected as MCA and Member of Parliament (MP) in Kiambu County.

The second objective of the study was to find out the effects of not achieving Two Third Gender Rules in Kiambu County. According to the study, the problem was addressed by nominations of 27 and 29 members to the first and second assembly respectively. If these women were elected, Kiambu County would have only 60 MCAs and not 87 and 89 respectively, meaning the money used on salaries and allowances for the extra 27 and 29 could have been channeled to development activities. Failure to achieve Two Third Gender Rule has led to cost implication in the county.

The third objective of the study was to suggest possible solutions to ensure the Two Third Gender Rules is achieved. The study found out that female politicians need to work extra hard to be felt on the political ground. They need to acquire that some level of assertiveness. According to the study, respondents indicated that women need to support female aspirants fully to ensure they achieve Two Third Gender Rule in elective seats. According to the structured interviews female aspirants need to come out in large numbers to seek elective seats and prove that politics is not male dominated.

5. Conclusion

Despite the notion about the Two Third Gender Rule, women are coming out to prove they have stand out in politics much dominated by men such as Charity Ngilu, Ann Waiguru and Dr Joyce Laboso who are governors of Kitui, Kirinyaga and Bomet respectively. They have now been toughened in politics despite their gender status and proven that women can thrive in politics. They are now addressing issues of societal needs. From the study findings, the two women elected in Kiambu County have worked hard to demystify the notion that women cannot develop the society and politics is male dominated. It is apparent that the nominated women MCAs in Kiambu County are using the platform to build them politically as in the case of 2017 elections where one was elected as MCA for Bibilioni Ward and the other one as MP for Gatundu North Constituency.

In conclusion, from the interviews conducted, nominated and elected MCAs are facing challenges from notion of culture of men dominating in politics and hence need women to marshal support and votes for all female aspirants to overcome male dominated politics and to ensure affirmative action of Two Third Gender Rule. The research findings have come up with empowerment strategies on how to elect more women and transform voters' mentality towards meritocracy in the electoral process which will bridge the gap of merely nominating women MCAs with a view to comply with Two Third Gender Rule.

6. Recommendations

The study having found many perennial, current and upcoming problems affecting Kiambu County which has failed to achieve the Two Third Gender Rule, the study recommends:

- There is need for women to come out in large numbers and style up their political game to become much relevant in their aspirations in MCAs elective positions
- To overcome societal notion and perception that politics is male dominated, there is need to change the voters' mind set first by ensuring that women candidates who seek elective seats are elected in large numbers. It is equally important that female candidates who rationalize on "family responsibility notion" need to take into account that family responsibility is for both men and women unless it is a single parenthood due to circumstances.
- Women to overcome their personal factors such as being associated as kind, gentle and passive. They need to strategize on their personal attributes and competencies so that the voter perception becomes favourable for their candidacy in elective positions. Women should familiarize with the political environment in order to succeed since they are the one to change and define their environment.
- Political parties to elect women in party positions in proportion to their male counterparts to encourage more women to get into political positions. Men to avoid frustrating women in political parties and provide political environment that is conducive and friendly to all.
- 5. Elected women to act as role models to the emerging female politician. In addition, the experienced female politicians to guide and direct the newly elected MCAs to that they are not frustrated immediately and deemed irrelevant in politics. As Harold Hass assert that "Politics is who get what, when and how". Women should come out and prove that they can also change the perception of voters about politics and politics should not be male dominated.

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