DETERMINANTS OF GENDER DISPARITIES IN THE RECRUITMENT OF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS: A CASE IN KISII COUNTY GOVERNMENT, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study intends to study the factors causing gender disparity in executive positions in KCG. To achieve this, the study will be guided by two objectives which include; establishing how political factors affect gender disparity at KCG and investigating ways in which regional balance affect recruitment of various genders of executive officers at KCG. The theory was hinged on the Social Gender Theory and Structural Functional theory. The case study research design was adopted. The study targeted staff who entailed the 119-top echelon of staff in the County. The sample size to be studied is census of 119 respondents who make up 100% of the target population for efficient questionnaire administration. Primary data was collected using one structured questionnaire. Primary data collected from the field was captured from the filled questionnaires, cleaned, coded with unique numbers, entered into the Microsoft excel worksheets and transferred to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program. After data cleaning which entails checking for errors in entry, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean score and standard deviation was estimated for all the quantitative variables. The qualitative data from the open-ended questions was analyzed using conceptual content analysis to analyze the secondary data collected from Kisii County annual reports, the Kisii County Integrated Development Plan 2013-2017, the Kisii County Website, books, journals, magazines and media reports and presented in prose. Inferential data analysis was done using Pearson moment correlation and multiple regression analysis. The information was presented in tables. The study found that there is discrimination in terms of gender recruitment since it depends on whom you know politically. The study further found that the gender disparity of work is given by chance and men have to give a convincing demonstration of incompetency to be actually judged incompetent. The study recommended that political factors should be embraced with appointment policies of executive officers in recruitment of county government. The study also recommended that there is need to embrace on the communal beliefs and social constructs that women cannot lead in leadership positions more likely to be hired when they have applied through computerized application process.

Key Words: *gender disparity, political factors and regional balance*

INTRODUCTION

Recruitment is the process of generating a pool of capable people to apply for employment to an organization (Gamage, 2014). Selection is the process by which managers and others use specific instruments to choose from a pool of applicants a person or persons more likely to succeed in the job(s), given management goals and legal requirements. It has been argued by Bratton and Gold that ensuring that the right people are in the right place at the right time is a critical factor in gaining and maintaining competitive advantage (Berman, Bowman, West & Van Wart, 2019).

Recruitment has always been a crucial process for organizations. They are integrated activities.

According to ILO 2016 report on women at work, between 1995 and 2015, the global female labour force participation rate decreased from 52.4 to 49.6 per cent. The corresponding figures for men are 79.9 and 76.1 per cent, respectively. According to the data published by the Catalyst organization, women CEOs of Fortune 500 companies make up only 5.2 per cent of the total CEOs in 2015. The percentage share of women CEOs remains almost the same when CEOs of Fortune 1000 companies are considered (Parker et al., 2015). In Southern Asia and Eastern Asia, the gap has grown even wider. Women's lower participation rates translate into fewer employment opportunities, with little variation over time, which negatively affects women's earning capacity and economic security. In 2015, the gender gap in the employment rate amounted to 25.5 percentage points in women's disfavor, only 0.6 percentage points less than in 1995. It is only in Northern, Southern and Western Europe that employment gaps have closed marginally as women continue to enter the labour market in higher numbers in that region – but also as a result of the reduction of men's employment rates due to the economic downturn (Deka, 2017).

The report further indicates that for Africa as a whole, the male employment-to-population ratio was estimated at about 69.2 per cent compared to the female employment-to-population ratio of only 39.2 per cent. While estimates for Sub-Saharan Africa stood at 70.4% to 58.8%, the data was much worse for North Africa. Women in North Africa faced an employment rate of only 19.6% (compared to the global average of 47.9%), the second lowest of all regions and sub-regions in the world – and against a figure of 68% for the men in the sub-region during the same year. The social exclusion of women in employment in Africa (especially in North Africa) is acute, given that unemployment issue was a key catalyst that triggered the Arab Spring ("revolution") in North Africa from January 2011, which had led to the fall of the governments in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. It had also triggered a spate of socio-economic cum political reforms in the other countries in the sub region (Anyanwu & Augustine, 2013).

In addition, it creates an unnaturally high employment dependency ratio. Our analysis of the Swaziland Labor Force Surveys reveals that while women predominate among entrepreneurs and self-employed, they run mostly small informal firms. They also face challenges obtaining credit in the formal sector and growing their businesses beyond the 'nascent' stage. In light of very high youth unemployment (53 % of the labor force), we pay special attention to young women (ages 15 – 29). Specifically, a fixed-effects probit model is used to identify the links between youth as well as gender and access to finance, distinguishing periods 'before' and 'after' the-crisis. The main findings support the limited access to formal finance as a constraint to entrepreneurship for young women in Swaziland, with the global financial crisis exacerbating it. Fewer women are employed in high growth areas such as science, technology and engineering. Fewer women than men work in the information and communications technologies (ICT) sector, and in some countries the gaps are especially wide ─ in Jordan women make up less than one-

third, and in South Africa, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom women comprise only around one-fifth of the ICT workforce (Ajwang, 2017).

This study examines the determent of gender disparities in recruitment of executive officers of the Kisii County Government. According to the National Gender and Equality Commission of Kenya (KNGC) (2013), the term gender is used when referring to social construction of sex, that is, that which our society and culture consider to be female or male. It also concerns ideas about what men and women are capable of doing and what they are culturally allowed to do, and all the characteristics and tasks that society considers being female or male (Osongo, 2010). Gender has further been defined as the social differences between females and males throughout the life cycle that are learned, and though deeply rooted in every culture, are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures. The NGEC states that gender determines the roles, power and resources for females and males in any culture. In different societies, women and men have different resources and opportunities which affect the way they act and reason (Ajwang, 2017).

Gender aspects are often overlooked and invisible when programs are planned and when leadership roles are being apportioned. It is worth noting that gender roles change across age and overtime and that power dynamics also change. These changes and what they portend must therefore, be considered in planning and in portioning leadership positions. Gender sensitivity entails paying attention to gender issues or putting on a gender lens. This means that the different needs, capacities and contributions of women, girls, men and boys are recognized. However, being gender blind or ignoring these different needs can have serious implications for the survival of a people and can retard development. Men's dominance in positions of organizational power, coupled with their professional and social network patterns, provide them with greater access to information and support. Women often have difficulty breaking into this professional support system.

Wide gender gaps in the workplaces were previously witnessed in the overhauled centralized political regime prior to adoption of the new system of Government in Kenya in the year 2010. (KCIDP, 2013) acknowledges that there are gender disparities in the Kisii County Government. The history was mainly occasioned by recruitment processes by the defunct Kisii Municipal Local Government that did not factor gender concerns for both men and women in the past. Additionally, in the 1980's and 1990's, little regard and emphasis was given to gender issues at the workplace in many regions of Kenya. Most girls did not complete school in the early 1980's and that was the case even in instances where girls were performing better in school than the boys.

During the fifty years (1963-2013) that Kenya had enjoyed self-rule from the British colonialists, its local governance system has been predominantly patriarchal in nature (Marara, 2014). The 1963 Kenyan Constitution favoured male applicants of civil service jobs and was overhauled

through a national Constitutional referendum held on the 4th of August, 2010. The new constitutional dispensation has a lot of legislative benefits to offer (to women and men, girls and boys) in nearly equal and justifiable terms.

Kisii County government constitutes an office of the Governor, the Senator, the County Women Representative to Parliament, the County Constituencies Parliamentary representatives, the County Assembly representatives, the Executive County Committees, the County Public Service Board (CPSB) and the County Assembly Service Board (CASB). Below, is a figurative representation of the new two-tier system of the government of Kenya: - National and County.

Figure 1: The System of Kenya's Devolved Government
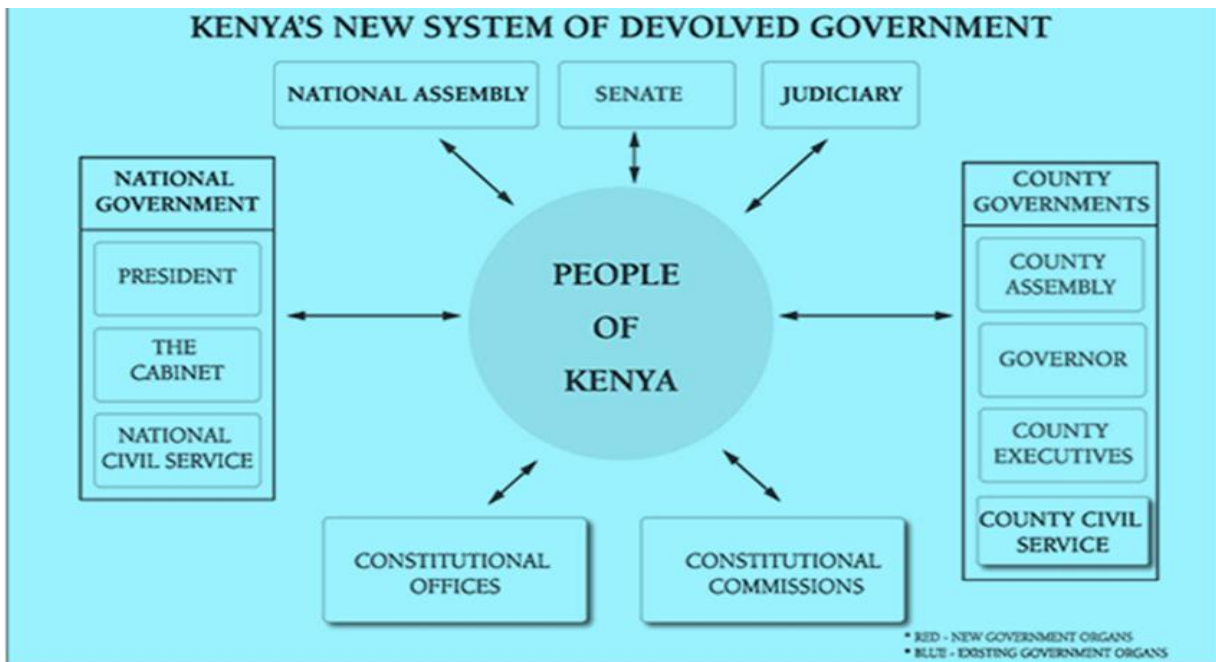
Source: (Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission of Kenya, 2012)

The current structure of government allows power to be held on two levels: the national level and the county level. This allows the Counties of Kenya a form of autonomy. Before the 2013 elections, Kenya was under a central government with 8 provinces but after the elections, there were 47 county governments. The country is a representative democracy legislatively, and a direct democracy in the election of its president, who is leader of the Executive branch of government. Kenya's constitution states that it is a multi-party democratic state founded on the national values and principles of governance referred to in Article 10 of the Kenyan Constitution. In the County Government, we have the Governor as the head of the county, County Assembly and County Executives. This is actually a replica of the National Government.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Gender disparities in employment have lived at the center of the policy discussions about ensuring gender equity in recruitment. These disparities which are most often biased towards one gender have had adverse effects on growth of the economy since they not only directly affect economic growth but also indirectly through their impact on investment, savings, labor force growth, fertility rates and population growth among others. Most cross country literature has shown that gender disparities indeed have a negative impact on economic growth of a country. In the words of Jacobsen (2011), gender inequalities pervade the world. In the background of this study inequalities in education enrolment and completion rates at various levels and employment in labor force participation is eminent in Kenya (Bandiera & Natraj, 2013). Despite sustained efforts and some notable gains in achieving gender equality in Kenya, women representation in wage employment is still proportionately very low forming less than 30 per cent of wage employment in Kenya. Further, despite the constitutional requirement that no more than two thirds of the same gender shall occupy a constitutional office, gender disparities continue to exist even in principal occupations. The same inequality is evident at operational, management and trade union levels of the service and manufacturing sector organizations which are the backbone of the economy and which hire the largest proportion of wage earners in Kenya (COTU, 2009). The labour force participation rate for women in Kenya has increased from 30% in the early eighties to 56% in 1995. Despite their growing participation in the workforce, there are still very few women in the top echelons of public decision and policy making positions in Kenya. Over time, gender representation in the Kenyan civil service has shown gross under-representation of women in top management and policy-making positions. Despite the fact that the Kenyan Constitution, 2010 has clearly outlined that in all organizations, gender balance during the recruitment exercise must be followed. Many organizations have failed to achieve this mainly because of different reasons or some prevailing circumstances. In Kisii County, despite the county government making significant progress in advancing gender equality in all its departments during recruitment, the underrepresentation of the female gender in the job market is very high. Women trail men by 65.6 percentage points in formal employment. Trade unions are expected to play a critical role in advocating for workers' rights including gender equality, yet disparities are highest within their structures. The KCPSB and the KCASB have not embraced the 30% threshold which is the required by the law. They have only been able to attain 25.65. This has left the County to have gender imbalance of having one sex having more representation than the other(Bandiera & Natraj, 2013). Few researchers in recent years have documented women's participation in management in the public and private sector in Kenya. Muchangi (2014) did a study on determinants of gender disparities in industrial occupations in Kenya, Indangasi (2015) also studied economic growth and gender inequalities in labor force participation and education in Kenya and Suda (2012) also studied Gender disparities in the Kenyan labour market: Implications for poverty reduction. However, none of these studies focused on determinants of gender disparity during recruitment of the County executive officers. Therefore this study seeks to bridge this gap by establishing the determinants of gender

disparities in the recruitment of executive officers in Kisii County government, Kenya.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The general objective was to establish the determinants of gender disparity during recruitment of the County executive officers in Kisii County.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To establish how political factors affect gender disparities in the recruitment of executive officers in Kisii County government, Kenya
2. To investigate ways in which regional balance affect gender disparities in the recruitment of executive officers in Kisii County government, Kenya

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Gender Theory

The theory was developed by Bandura (1973). It is a general psychological model constructed to explain human behavior. This theory has been revised several times according to emerging research on gender and the media. The basic premise of social learning theory is that it approaches the explanation of human behavior in terms of a continuous, reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental determinants. That is, observed stimuli, personal experiences, and individual cognitive processes all work together to determine a person's values and behaviours. Social learning theory draws upon the notion of reinforcement, whereby individuals come to adopt those values and behaviors that are perceived as rewarding and discard those that are not. Bandura (1973) suggests that as a general rule, seeing behavior succeed for others increases the tendency to behave in similar ways, while seeing behaviour punished decreases the tendency. Bandura strongly rejects the view that his interpretation of reinforcement is mechanistic, making the point that "both people and their environments are reciprocal determinants of each other".

Drawing on diverse bodies of research (Carter, 2014) documents masterfully the social construction and perpetuation of stereotypic gender differentiation. Gender stereotypes shape the perception, evaluation and treatment of males and females in selectively gendered ways that beget the very patterns of behavior that confirm the initial stereotypes. Many gender differences in social behavior are viewed as products of division of labor between the sexes that get replicated through socio-structural practices governed by disparate gender status and power (Carter, 2014). This theory forms a basis on the investigation of the effect of regional balance on gender disparities in the recruitment of executive officers in Kisii County government, Kenya.

Structural-Functional Theory

This theory was developed by Mill (1869). It is is a macro-sociological perspective that is based on the premise that society is made up of interdependent parts, each of which contributes to the functioning of the whole society. Functionalists seek to identify the basic elements or parts of society and determine the functions these parts play in meeting basic social needs in predictable ways. The structural-functional theory examines the contributions that the various parts, structures and systems of a society make towards the social needs of that society and how these structures and systems shape the behaviour of the individuals and groups within them. Structural Marxists argue that the decisions and actions of individual and groups are fundamentally constrained by the structures in which they are located and which exert influence over social, political and economic processes. The theory emphasizes that every pattern of activity makes a positive or negative contribution to that society (Alexander & Colomy, 2010). A structural-functional theorist will ask if gender division of labour will impact positively or negatively on the society.

The key words of this theory are the structure and function. Structures are constituted by rules and resources governing, and available to individuals. They refer to the enduring patterns of behaviour and relationships within social systems. They also refer to social institutions and norms which are embedded into social systems in such a way that they shape the behaviour of individuals within those social systems. According to the structural Marxists, power is located not in groups of individuals but in systems of domination. The actions of the individuals are the outside manifestations of the underlying structural relationships and the structural constraints within the system (Alexander & Colomy, 2010). Social structures can be conceived to be both constraining and enabling. They become enabling when the changes in the occupational structures enable the entry of women into the labour force. This has been due to changes such as growth of the white collar jobs, social service and welfare occupations such as nursing and teaching, and the development of technology where manual operations have been replaced by automated production systems.

Despite these developments disparities still exist in the selection of careers. This study explored the concept of duality of structures and agency as presented by the structuralism theory (Carter, 2014).. In so doing, an attempt was made to identify the extent to which the organizational structures and systems (e.g. employment policies) on one hand and the individuals (both women and men) on the other have influenced the current disparities. It also attempted to identify the extent to which the agency's (individuals) efforts can influence the structure and likewise the extent to which the structural changes can and have influenced individual behaviour. This theory will explain further how political factors affect gender disparities in the recruitment of executive officers in Kisii County government, Kenya

RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The case study research design was adopted where detailed investigation was done on the factors that influence the recruitment process of Kisii County Executives. The researcher sought to investigate how regional balance, political factors, social cultural factors, knowledge & perception influence the recruitment of persons of various genders into the Kisii County executive. The study targeted staff that were involved in the decision making, implementation of the policies as well as oversee execution of the policies. They entail the top echelon of staff in the County. In Kisii County, this population is 119 as at March 2018 and distributed in work stations. Stratified random sampling technique was employed on the target population so that respondents are well represented as per the working stations that are in the most appropriate position to supply the information required to achieve the objectives of the study. The sample size to be studied is census of 119 respondents who make up 100% of the target population for efficient questionnaire administration. Primary data was collected using one structured questionnaire developed by the researcher on the basis of the research objectives and questions for the respondents. The questionnaire will constitute three parts. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to each respondent in their respective offices and the responses were written down for the purposes of analysis. Secondary data was also be collected from Kisii County annual reports, the Kisii County Integrated Development Plan 2013-2017, the Kisii County Website, books, journals, magazines and media reports. Primary data collected from the field was captured from the filled questionnaires, cleaned, coded with unique numbers, entered into the Microsoft excel worksheets and transferred to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The qualitative data from the open-ended questions was analyzed using conceptual content analysis to analyze the secondary data collected from Kisii County annual reports, the Kisii County Integrated Development Plan 2013-2017, the Kisii County Website, books, journals, magazines and media reports and presented in prose. Inferential data analysis was done using Pearson moment correlation and multiple regression analysis. Correlation analysis was used to establish the strength of association between the variables. Multiple regression analysis was used to establish the relations between the independent and dependent variables. Since there are four independent variables in this study the multiple regression model generally assumes the following equation;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Where: Y= Gender disparities; β_0=constant; β_1, β_2 = Regression coefficients; X_1= Political factors; X_2= Regional balance

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The researcher conducted both the Pearson correlation analysis and the multiple regression analysis. The regression analysis was used to establish the relations between the independent and dependent variables while correlation was conducted to assess the degrees of association between the variables.

Pearson moment correlation was conducted to assess the degrees of association between the variables. A Pearson moment correlation is a number between -1 and +1 that measures the degree of association between two variables. A positive value for the correlation implies a positive association while a negative value for the correlation implies a negative or inverse association. Table 1 shows the results for the Pearson moment correlation.

Table 1: Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficients

		Gender Disparity	Political factors	Regional balance
Gender Disparity	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (1-tailed)			
Political factors	Pearson Correlation	.881[**]	1	
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000		
Regional balance	Pearson Correlation	.869[**]	.877[**]	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

The analysis of correlation results between the gender disparity and political factors shows a positive coefficient 0.881, with p-value of 0.000. It indicates that the result is significant at α =5% and that if the political factors increases it will have a positive impact on the gender disparity. The correlation results between regional balance and gender disparity also indicates the same type of result where the correlation coefficient is 0.869 and a p-value of 0.000 which significant at α = 5%. Nevertheless, the positive relationship indicates that when the practice of the afore-mentioned factors is in place, the levels of gender disparity increases.

Regression analysis was carried out to determine the effect of political factors, regional balance, social-cultural factors and education on gender disparities in the recruitment of executive officers in Kisii County government. The findings were presented in Table 2, 3 and 4.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.914[a]	.836	.828	.41186

The findings of Table 2 found that adjusted R-Square value (coefficient of determination) is 0.828, which indicates that the independent variables (political factors, regional balance, social-cultural factors, education) explain 82.8% of the variation in the dependent variable (gender disparities in the recruitment of executive officers in Kisii County government). This implies that there are other factors that affect the gender disparities in the recruitment of executive officers in Kisii County government attributed to 17.2% unexplained.

Table 3: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	70.711	2	35.356	213.521	.000[b]
Residual	13.909	84	0.166		
Total	84.621	86			

The results shown in Table 3 revealed that p-value was 0.000 and F calculated was 213.521. Since the p-value was less than 0.05 and F-calculated was greater than F-critical (3.105), then the overall model was statistically significant.

Model coefficients provide unstandardized and standardized coefficients to explain the direction of the regression model and to establish the level of significance of the study variables. The results are captured in Table 4.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
(Constant)	.711	.228		3.125	.002
Political factors	.367	.145	.337	2.533	.013
Regional balance	.414	.138	.318	3.000	.004

As per the SPSS generated table above, the equation ($Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \varepsilon$) becomes:

$$Y = 0.711 + 0.367X_1 + 0.414X_2$$

The findings showed that if all factors (political factors and regional balance) were held constant at zero, gender disparities in the recruitment of executive officers in Kisii County government will be 0.711. The findings presented also show that taking all other independent variables at zero, a unit increase in the political factors would lead to a 0.367 increase in gender disparities in the recruitment of executive officers in Kisii County government. This variable was significant since the p-value 0.013 was less than 0.05. These findings are in line with Kenya Economic Survey (2015) research that in education is rife with cases of school principals 'evicted' from

certain schools because they do not have the local MP's blessings. This remains a real barrier to women ascend to top management. The failure by both the Kisii County electorate to elect women and the County Assembly to approve the appointment of women job applicants contributes towards the women's marginalization.

The findings also show that a unit increase in regional balance would lead to a 0.414 increase of gender disparities in the recruitment of executive officers in Kisii County government. This variable was significant since $0.004 < 0.05$. Overall, it was established that regional balance had the greatest effect on the gender disparities in the recruitment of executive officers in Kisii County government followed by political factors. This is in line with Ravi (2010) who argued that gender aspect of education inequality most times accentuated as negating economic growth. There is however a strong discontent between the theoretical and micro-empirical studies on the other hand. The author thus argued that the narrow economic evidence can be interpreted to mean gender inequalities are not much, and as such do not essentially deter economic growth and that tackling gender disparities of power should be viewed as not of more priority than conservative economic interventions.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that political factors influenced the gender disparities in the recruitment of executive officers in Kisii County government significantly. The study deduces that politics plays a huge role in the recruitment of executive officers since if leaders respect the genders of various candidates, recruitment is fair always. Moreover, the study concluded that regional balance has a positive and significant influence on the gender disparities in the recruitment of executive officers in Kisii County government. The study concluded that it is important for the government to be accountable for removing regional disparities and developing all regions and states in a balanced way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that political factors influence recruitment of executive officers in county government. Thus, it is recommended that political factors should be embraced with appointment policies of executive officers in recruitment of county government. Public service board should consider gender balance for executive positions when recruitment. The county government should ensure that the two-thirds gender representation rule is implemented at all the levels of organizational hierarchy.

There is need to device strategies to redress their discrimination and inequality. These may include; the government to take corrective measures and affirmative action to redress the gaps and obstacles that hinder women's equal and full participation in leadership and decision-making focusing attention to the need to overcome social norms, prejudices and practices that negatively portray women in leadership.

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