

GENDER MAINSTREAMING: PERSPECTIVES AND INSIGHTS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Gender mainstreaming was prioritized as a mechanism to achieve gender equality by the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. Since this Beijing meeting many institutions, the world over, have attempted to put into practice the ideas of gender mainstreaming, but the concept has not clearly been understood. While there has been some research regarding the opportunities and challenges of its implementation, very little has focused on understanding the concept, background, details and concerns of the entire topic. Through an exploratory research design and by use of documented evidence, this study sought to provide insights towards understanding the meaning and background of gender mainstreaming in Kenya. The study further explored the extent of research in the area in order to identify the gaps in the field. Literature on international, regional and national policies as well as declarations, coupled with the government and other stakeholders reports and academic research on the subject was key in the study. It is, therefore, hoped that this study provides a basis for establishing future research priorities in the area.

Key words: Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Inclusiveness, Policies

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Gender mainstreaming is an organizational strategy to bring gender perspective or consideration in all aspects of an institution's policies and activities, through building gender capacity and accountability. Gender mainstreaming became necessary, because of the inequalities that were visible in work places and societies in general. It, therefore, emanated from institutionalized patterns of distributing resources, social value and power in public and private spheres worldwide (Mbilinyi, 2000). The Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) of 1995 prioritized gender mainstreaming as the mechanism to achieve gender equality. Since then, member states including Kenya have been involved in the intergovernmental discussions on the topic and have, in consensus, adopted mainstreaming as an integral global strategy for promoting gender equality. However, nearly two decades later, there is vigorous debate as to whether this has achieved its objectives.

Although most countries have put in place gender mainstreaming policies, implementation of these policies poses significant challenges (Valks, 2000). This is attributed to the fact that the concept has remained vague and difficult to translate into action. For many, gender is synonymous with women, thus a one-sided and biased concept. Gender mainstreaming has also been adopted as a matter of compliance, without a complete transformation of the institutions. This leaves organizations addressing gender, but in the real sense not thinking gender (Wendoh, 2005). A change of attitude is thus necessary to achieve the intended purpose of gender mainstreaming. For this

change to happen there must be factual information to create understanding. This study, therefore, explored the concept of gender mainstreaming to provide more insights into appreciating and grasping the concept, establishing strategies that have been developed to this end, and suggesting possible avenues for future research on gender mainstreaming.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study were to:

- Understand the genesis and evolution of gender mainstreaming;
- Explore the laws, policies, guidelines and practices of gender mainstreaming in Kenya; and
- Identify the gaps and suggest possible avenues for future research on gender mainstreaming.

GENDER AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Understanding Gender

According to Engender Health (2005), gender refers to a set of qualities and behavioural patterns expected from a male or female by the society, the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female, the relationship between men and women, attributes, opportunities and relationships, socially construed and learned through socialization process. The National Commission on Gender and Development (2009) defines gender as the state of being woman or man in a particular society or culture; the social characteristics ascribed to men, women, boys and girls. Society teaches expected attitudes, behaviour, roles, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities and privileges of women, men, girls and boys in any context, which is often

called learned behaviour, or gender identity. Gender is thus a social, rather than a biological construct, and varies with the roles, norms and values of a given society or era. Being able to bear a child is, fundamentally, a function of biology, while expectations about the nature of parenting, or status associated with being a mother or father are more closely linked to gender roles and expectations.

Gender is learned through the process of socialization. It is not static or innate, but evolves to respond to changes in the economic, social, technological, political and cultural environment. People are born female or male (sex), learn how to be girls or boys and then become women or men (gender). Gender roles, unlike sex roles, are created by society and thus are socially determined and they vary among cultures.

The set up in many societies, especially in Africa where patriarchal structures were strong ensured that men accrued more advantages from the societal activities. Women were more often than not relegated to the level of second class citizens. Many societies in Africa have been patriarchal since time immemorial, whereby the male acts as the leading authority figure in a social organization. In a patriarchal society, men hold authority over women, children and property. Patriarchy, therefore, implies male rule and privilege, and entails female subordination. Schipper (1987) argues that in any given cultural context in Africa “male and female behaviour patterns are fixed by norms and anyone who tries to break the rules can meet serious problems in a community in which the ruling group produces images and conceptions of the others to legitimize the status quo” (p. 35). Patriarchy ensures that it is the male who is in control and, therefore, in such societies, women are expected to venture only in territories that men endorse. Men have, therefore, tended to take leadership positions, for example, by belonging to councils of elders where women cannot belong. Since gender role expectations has culturally relegated women to the house-hold level, they have limited access to communal resources, are under-represented in public decision-making bodies, have limited bargaining power in labour markets and often lack opportunities to improve their social economic position (Bryan and Varat, 2008). Deliberate efforts to bring them to the limelight are essential, which is the main gist of gender mainstreaming.

Gender Disparities

Gender disparities in terms of opportunities, security, and participation have become important issues for developing economies, and in particular for Africa

(World Bank, 2010). This is why gender equality is now among the aims of most poverty reduction strategies and also the United Nations Millennium Development Goal three (MDG 3). In the context of gender inequality, disparities in labour markets are especially important. Literature shows that in a number of African countries women are less likely to be in paid jobs, are disproportionately concentrated in informal and precarious employment and are usually paid less (ILO, 2002; Nordman, 2009).

Various factors have been identified to explain the causes of gender gaps in the labour market. In the World Bank (2010) report, differences among individuals, especially in human capital in terms of education and training, play a major role. Women find themselves disadvantaged in many ways. This is mainly contributed to the fact that women have less available time to work in the job market because of their domestic chores. Besides, women lack access to credit, which is probably strongly influenced by their relative inability to control collateral since men own or otherwise control a larger share of capital than women. This contributes to the lesser incomes of women which lead to inequalities not only in the labor market but also within a household in terms of decision making power.

In Kenya, women experienced social, economic and political inequalities in relation to men throughout the colonial period where education and paid labour used by settlers was given to men (Mueller and Mulinge, 2001). According to White (1988), those men who migrated and got jobs in the colonial city of Nairobi in Kenya were provided with very small rooms for accommodation by their employers. Provision of such small rooms was an attempt to restrict numbers in a household or precaution so that women or the wives of those men could not move to the city and live with them. This arrangement ensured that women and children stayed in the rural areas and it resulted in under-representation of women in paid labour. Even after independence, the role of women did not seem to get into the public life. Women representation in parliament remained negligible between 1963 and 2007, as shown in Table 1.

Information in Table 1 shows that women were for a long time sidelined in matters of politics. While it is women’s own initiative to campaign and get into parliament, most electorates, including women, are not keen to elect women Members of Parliament (MPs) because of the ingrained patriarchal tendencies. The nomination statistics also show this bias because as late as the 6th Parliament (1988-1992), there is evidence of zero nomination of

women to parliament as compared to 10 men, who were nominated during that period. Although the number of women increased in the 7th to the 10th Parliaments, disparity was still visible, which called for the rule of gender inclusiveness that requires two thirds of MPs to belong to either gender. Were it not

been for such statistics then, the situation could not have changed even in the 11th Parliament. What remains at stake is whether such opportunities are given to women willingly or it is just a matter of compliance with the rule.

Table 1: Gender representation and participation in Kenya's Parliament

Parliament	Time/ duration	Total no. of constituencies	Total no. of women MPs	No. of elected women MPs	Nominated MPs	
					Women	Men
1 st Parliament	1963-1969	158	0	0	0	2
2 nd Parliament	1969-1974	158	2	1	1	10
3 rd Parliament	1974-1979	158	6	4	2	14
4 th Parliament	1979-1983	158	5	4	1	11
5 th Parliament	1983-1988	158	3	2	1	9
6 th Parliament	1988-1992	188	2	2	0	10
7 th Parliament	1992-1997	188	7	6	1	12
8 th Parliament	1997-2002	210	9	4	5	9
9 th Parliament	2002-2007	210	18	10	8	4
10 th Parliament	2008-2012	210	22	16	6	6
Total			74	49	25	87

Source: Adopted from Kihoro (2007)

In the private sector, evidence of non-inclusiveness in gender terms is vividly evident. For instant, by the close of 2012, 34% of the 57 listed companies did not have a woman in the board. There was only one female chairperson of the board of directors in a listed company by the end of 2012, a figure that rose to only 5 by the end of 2013. Moreover, women take about 15% of wage employment in manufacturing, building and construction, electricity and water sectors (NGEC 2013). This shows that there is still need to work on the revision of the situation by enacting and implementing the policy of inclusiveness in such companies.

Gender Mainstreaming Meaning and Strategies

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that has strong roots in the BPA (1995) that requires governments and other actors to promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes. Thus, gender concerns are seen as important to all aspects of development, for all sectors and areas of activity and a fundamental part of the planning process. According to Hazel and Sally (2000), political as well as technical skills and goodwill are essential to a mainstreaming strategy, with organizations using tools like gender training and introduction of incentive structures which reward efforts on gender dimensions.

A study by the Public Service Commission (PSC) of South Africa (2006) revealed three key components of gender mainstreaming, namely:

- (i) Bringing about institutional changes to ensure empowerment of both women and men through equal participation in decision-making on issues which affect their lives;
- (ii) Analyzing all government policies and practices to examine different impact they have on men and women;
- (iii) Providing training and capacity building to enhance gender management skills and raise the general level of gender awareness and thus enhance change of attitudes and behaviours of individuals and organizations.

The concept of gender mainstreaming (GM) differs from previous efforts to integrate women's concerns into activities in that it does not add a component of women to existing policies, plans and programmes, but brings in a gender perspective to all these stages and in every aspect of the decision making process. Unlike some perspectives like women empowerment that purely relate to women, significantly GM takes an unbiased approach as it does not hold an assumption about women's disadvantage, but rather a thorough and rigorous analysis of the development situation. Such an analysis almost invariably reveals

gender-differentiated needs and priorities, as well as gender inequalities in terms of opportunities and outcomes, which GM then seeks to redress. Analysis will determine the level of priority and the degree of intervention that should be accorded to solving these problems. Given the above, it is clear that a GM approach does not necessarily make the need for specific policies, programmes or projects on gender equality obsolete. According to the DGD (1999) report, the level of GM intervention should entirely depend on the specific needs and priorities revealed by a gender-sensitive situation assessment.

Although the government of Kenya recognizes the importance of providing equal opportunities for all its citizens, Kenya is ranked among the 10 most unequal countries in the world and the most unequal in the Eastern Africa region (Kihara, 2005). In education, disparities are not only reflected in students' admission, but also in the recruitment and promotion of academic staff and managers in universities with women forming a small percentage (Onsongo, 2011).

The Need for Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is an essential part of good governance and is critical if a country wants to ensure that institutions, their policies and programmes respond to the needs and interests of all members, and distributes benefits equitably between men and women (UN, 2001). Gender mainstreaming considers both sexes and not just women. At the same time while gender mainstreaming is a move away from women-specific initiatives, it is important to recognize that women have different needs and priorities from men and are thus affected differently by policies and development interventions.

Mainstreaming of policies does not occur in a vacuum but is devised in institutions already gendered in ways that undermine certain individuals and their interests. In addition, gender mainstreaming is taken up by individuals in authority, who by the very nature of gender imbalance in leadership, happen to be men who might have their own interests in keeping the existing gender order intact. When this happens, the strategies can end up entrenching existing power imbalances (Wendoh and Wallace 2005). Often the resistance to gender equality hides behind an acceptance that gender equality means nothing more than employing more women, or leaving the culture, rules and procedures of institutions unchanged. For true gender mainstreaming to happen, the forces that reinforce the status quo must be *challenged*.

Link between Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy for promoting gender inclusiveness. The strategy seeks to ensure that any policy formulation is informed by consideration of gender differences and inequalities and efforts are made to narrow gender gaps and support greater equality between men and women. Paragraph 79 of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) makes the distinction by advising governments to address the inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels, through active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective. Mainstreaming is not about adding a gender equality component to an existing activity, but involves putting gender equality issues at the centre of policy decisions, government budgets and institutional structures and processes.

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

Kenya applies international, regional and national legal framework to address gender mainstreaming in her jurisdiction. This section reviews laws and declarations at international, regional and national levels that address gender mainstreaming.

REGIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

These are instruments promulgated by the African States and Heads of Governments that govern the member States.

Protocol to African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

The protocol was adopted in Maputo in 2003 and ratified in 2005 by member countries of the African Union, including Kenya. It recognizes that culture, traditions and customs are major obstacles to achievement and full enjoyment of human rights of women. The protocol requires that State Parties shall take specific positive actions such as enacting laws that clearly stipulate and encourage the participation of women in the political life of their countries on equal footing with men. These affirmative actions, national legislation and other measures should ensure that women participate without any discrimination as equal partners with men at all levels of development and in the implementation of policies and programmes. State Parties should ensure increased and effective representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making.

The protocol calls for State Parties to enact laws to guarantee equal opportunities for women and men in work and career advancement and access to other economic opportunities. This can be achieved

through equal access to employment, equal pay for jobs of equal value and encouraging women working in informal sector to have social security. In addition, member countries are required to take the necessary measures to recognize the value of the work of women in the home and recognize that both parents bear the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of children. This is meant to protect women against the oppression created by patriarchy which delineate women into domestic work that cannot usually be quantified in economic terms.

Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa

This Declaration was passed by the Heads of States of the African Union in 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to reaffirm their commitment to gender equality. In Article 5 of the Declaration, the Governments committed to expand and promote the gender parity principle at the national, as well as the local levels in their respective countries. As an accountability measure, Article 12 commits the members to report annually on the progress made in terms of gender mainstreaming. The Declaration was meant to keep watch on the members, synergize each other and hold one another accountable as regards to implementation of gender mainstreaming actions.

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

International Frameworks are benchmarks for State Parties in assessing their obligation and responsibility in matters of human rights for the enjoyment of the citizenry. State Parties commit themselves to uphold and guard the rights of their citizens through the application and enforcement of these instruments within their borders. As a State Party, Kenya is bound by the rules of the international instruments or treaties ratified by her.

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

CEDAW (1979) is the United Nations instrument for human rights of women. It has been applauded as the first instrument in the United Nations history that is dedicated specifically to the human rights of women globally (National Commission on Gender and Development, 2010). The Convention defines discrimination against women as any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex, which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) guarantees equality and freedom from discrimination for both men and women. Article 27 (3) states that “Women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres”, while article 45 (3) guarantees married couples equal rights at the time of the marriage, during the marriage and at the dissolution of the marriage. In addition, article 81(b) states that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender, showing that women are expected to be given a space in the electoral process. Article 29 (1, 8) provides women and men with three months and two weeks maternity and paternity leave, respectively, which shows a recognition of the role that women play in domestic work. While these provisions are geared towards according women space to rejuvenate and giving them opportunity to develop, the provision of longer maternity leave and an acknowledgment that they should not forfeit annual leave on account of having been on maternity leave (29, 7) still shows that women should be given special attention. This then means that mainstreaming is not equality because however much women would be willing to be equal to men they would still find themselves different because nature demands that they perform certain duties like suckling infants and taking special care especially during the toddler days.

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPA)

In 1995, women representatives from 180 United Nations Member countries, Kenya included, gathered in Beijing, China, for the Fourth World Conference on Women and signed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a document containing issues and concerns of the world's women. In the Declaration was an item that there should be nondiscriminatory treatment of women and men in economic and other matters. The Declaration recognized the lack of gender perspectives in governmental decision making particularly in educational systems as a challenge to women. It asked organizations, including trade unions to push governments to commit themselves to numerous actions including researching gender issues and taking appropriate actions to address them.

Although the BPA is not binding and has no mechanism for redress, implementing it would be an effort for Kenya to enhance national development in line with Vision 2030 and other instruments. What remains is to find out the extent to which the Declaration at this conference has been implemented and the practical implications of their suggestions.

International Labour Standards

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a United Nations Agency founded in 1919 to regulate international labour standards in the world. ILO pursues its vision based on the premise that universal lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice. It aims at promoting rights at work place and encourages decent employment opportunities. ILO supports a two-pronged approach to gender mainstreaming; systematically analyzing and addressing all initiatives with the specific needs of both women and men, and targeting interventions to enable women and men to participate in and benefit equally from development efforts.

Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

The Vienna Declaration (1993) recognizes the fact that gender-based violence is incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human beings and calls on State Parties to work towards elimination of violence against women and girls in all spheres of life, including public and private lives. Paragraph 18 stresses that full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural lives, at the national, regional and international levels, and eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community. It recommends establishment of legal measures through national action and international cooperation in such fields as economic and social development, education, safe maternity and health care, and social support.

Universal Declaration of Human rights

This Declaration was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948 as a result of the experiences of the Second World War. With the end of the War and the creation the United Nations as a body in 1945, the international community vowed never again to allow bloodshed like that of the conflict to happen. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights contains 30 items, which must be respected regardless of gender or other characteristics of human beings to promote an equal and just society.

NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND GUIDELINES

Kenya has a volume of laws, policies and guidelines that address gender mainstreaming. Major among the laws are the Constitution of Kenya 2010, Employment Act 2007, the Penal Code and The Sexual Offences Act. Besides, the national policy for gender mainstreaming includes the national gender and development policy, gender equality and development, Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2006 on

national framework towards response and prevention of gender-based violence in Kenya, and the Kenya Vision 2030. The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) is the country's arm for promoting gender equality in Kenya. All these policies are meant to ensure that there is minimal gender discrimination in all matters.

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) expressively recognizes the need to get women in employment and public participation. This principle is clearly stated in Article 27 (8) that the State shall take legislative and other measures to implement the principle that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender. Article 81 further reiterates that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender. However, statistics show that by 2013, the two-thirds gender principle was yet to be achieved in key areas of government institutions as represented in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that gender mainstreaming is a project that is more actualized on paper than in practice, because majority of positions in parliament and parastatals are headed by men. More research is needed to reveal the real causes of such disparity so that they can be addressed. The Employment Act exempts women from working during certain hours and in certain places like the mines and there are other laws in Kenya that either give priority to women or clarify the course of action for both men and women. One of the broad objectives of the Ministry of Gender in Kenya is to promote gender mainstreaming in national development processes, and engender the national budget. The Ministry is also mandated to review and implement gender-responsive policies and programmes to promote women's rights and economic empowerment. The Ministry further promotes interventions for the reduction of sexual and gender-based violence.

Article 19 of the Revised Edition (2009) of the Kenyan Penal Code stipulates that a married woman takes responsibility of a criminal offence she commits whether in presence of her husband or not, unless where there is proof that the offence was committed in the presence of, and under the coercion of, the husband. Articles 20 and 21 of The Sexual Offences Act, No. 3 of 2006, stipulate that females will be punished in the same measure as the males in case they are involved in incest. This means that the female person is regarded in her own capacity when it comes to criminal offenses and is not under the protection of man as patriarchy is wont to imply.

Table 2: Gender representation in elective and appointive positions at national level in the 11th Parliament

Position	Total number	No. of men	No. of women
Governor	47	47 (100%)	0 (0%)
Deputy Governor	47	38 (81%)	9 (19%)
Elected Member of National Assembly	290	274 (95%)	16 (6%)
Nominated Member of National Assembly	12	8 (67%)	4 (33%)
Elected Senate Member	47	47 (100%)	0 (0%)
Nominated Senate Member	20	2 (10%)	18 (90%)
Cabinet Secretary	18	12 (67%)	6 (33%)
Principle Secretary	26	19 (73%)	7 (27%)
Head of Parastatals	36	34 (94%)	2 (6%)

Source: National Gender and Equality Commission (2013)

RESEARCH ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN KENYA

Many scholars have attempted to uncover the problem of gender inequality in Kenya and the extent to which this gap has been bridged, as compared to the international regional and national policies to ensure inclusiveness of women in all areas of operation. Such studies are visible in forestry (Kaudia and Obonyo, 2007). Ryan (2007) examined how Action Aid Kenya (AAK) administers the programme, advocates, implements and develops gender mainstreaming and empowerment at various levels in Kenya. Ryan (2007) concluded that there is coherence in how AAK and Sida [sic] interpret the concepts of gender mainstreaming and empowerment. AAK focuses more on capacity-building and on women and girls, and their ability to be recognized as equal members in Kenyan society. These two organizations regard women's issues as playing an important role in fighting poverty.

Ryan (2007), however, notes that the biggest problem is the lack of political will in promoting gender equality. Many relevant frameworks and tools have been inbuilt in the new governmental national machinery for promoting gender equality in Kenya, but they are not used. The presence of rampant poverty and the lack of education mean that the focus of many people is to survive the next day. They are not aware of, or have no access to, information and are unable to understand the opportunities that are available. There is hope in the new decentralized authority visible through the Constituency Development Fund, which has given people access to, and more influence in, the local decision-making process, which is an important governmental framework change that is hoped to make the achievement of gender mainstreaming and empowerment more likely in communities all over the country. This could form a foundation for future research questions.

Ponge's (2013) research on gender mainstreaming and women empowerment in political party process in Kenya revealed that increase of women presence in the key decision-making organs has not resulted into key influence within the party hierarchy and has not been seen to impact on party affairs and activities as this is still under the tight grip of men. More gender equality in terms of participation in education has not resulted in more gender equality in the areas of political economy. It is, therefore, clear that the number of women in decision-making positions has increased, but women still face a number of challenges in these critical areas of development.

In Kenyan schools, Sang *et al.*, (2012) showed that much more needs to be done to achieve gender equity in administration of Secondary Schools in Kenya and suggested an introduction of a quota system that allocates slots for female administrators. Sang *et al.*, (2012) also proposed that training programmes could be necessary to equip administrators with leadership skills and also encourage female Principals to Head Secondary Schools.

All these researches reveal that Kenya is far from achieving the requirements of gender mainstreaming policies. This means that more work and research is needed to aid in not only discovering the extent to which implementation has taken place but also what causes the failure to implement these policies.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed at understanding gender mainstreaming, the international, regional and national policies that advocate gender mainstreaming, and finding the gaps that are visible in the process of understanding the policies of gender mainstreaming and implementation so that more studies can be done to fill up such gaps. From the overview done in this study, it is clear that the concept of gender mainstreaming differs from previous efforts to integrate women's concerns into government

activities in that it does not add a component of women to the existing policies, plans and programmes, but brings a gender perspective to all the stages and in every aspect of the decision-making process. Mainstreaming, therefore, is not about adding a gender equality component to an existing activity, but involves putting gender issues at the centre of policy decision, government budgets and institutional structures and processes. Gender mainstreaming, therefore, does not imply equality. It is, however, clear that as much as women would be willing to participate in all activities, they would not make it to similar levels with men, as women still find themselves constrained by natural demands like giving birth, suckling infants and taking care of them at night. The capacity within the woman's body may not allow working in certain areas like men, which calls for exemption from such jobs, meaning that the policy of inclusiveness may not work naturally.

The laxity or failure for gender mainstreaming to take place effectively could also be attributed to the fact that opportunities are most likely given to women, not willingly, but just as a matter of compliance to the rule. It is also evident that gender mainstreaming is taken up by individuals in authority, who by the very nature of gender imbalance in leadership, happen to be men who might have their own interests in keeping the existing gender order intact. The biggest problem in Kenya, for example, is the lack of political will in promoting gender equality, despite the many frameworks and tools developed to promote it. In addition, poverty and the lack of education makes many people desperate in looking for food and means of survival, which are more relevant to them than thinking about gender issues. This means that because of lack of proper education, strategies of gender mainstreaming cannot be completely effective in Kenya as many people have no access to information and are sometimes not aware about this information so they are unable to understand the opportunities that are available.

The study suggests that implementing the declarations and recommendations on gender mainstreaming put forward at international, regional and national levels would be an effort for Kenya to enhance national development. For true gender mainstreaming to happen, the forces that reinforce the status quo must be challenged because the resistance to gender equality hides behind an acceptance that gender equality means nothing more than employing more women, while leaving the culture, rules and procedures of institutions unchanged; this does not help.

Since, as mentioned above, gender mainstreaming often fails because of failure by the female figure to access education levels comparable to those of men, which is attributed to the said natural demands on women, more research is needed in higher institutions of learning in Kenya to gauge the level of gender inclusiveness. In addition, the extent to which the national, regional and international declarations on gender mainstreaming have been implemented and the practical implications of such declarations should be examined. Moreso, the effect that the decentralized authority (the devolved government) in Kenya has on matters of gender mainstreaming and empowerment should be looked into to gauge whether the situation has changed.

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