WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF THE YOUNG LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

SUBMITTED BY

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ABSTRACT

The study is aims at having a gender analysis of the people trained and the participation of young women in the leadership-training course, which is a programme of the Youth Agenda. The course is targeted to the youth at their various sectors of leadership including student leaders, trade union leaders, young political leaders, community and civil society leaders, the young women leaders and the young professionals.

It takes into cognizance the nature of the Kenyan Political setup, which is patriarchal in nature and argues with the theory that is difficult for the women to penetrate the leadership echelons even when given a chance.

The methodology used to collect the data is secondary as the records of the young men and women who are trained are contained in a database at the Youth Agenda offices and the researcher used gender analysis to come up with the figures.

Some of the findings are that the women participants are not as many as the men and that they still shy away from attending the more "serious" leadership trainings like political and trade unions and tend to cluster in the community, professional and young women sectors.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The starting point for women's development is the lower socio-economic status of women. Throughout the third world, the position of women, relative to men, is lower on all the main indicators such as level of literacy, years of schooling, nutritional status, and level of income. The typical woman in the third world has a triple burden of work in child rearing, maintaining the home and in food production. Relative to men, women work much longer hours for a smaller income. Increasingly, development programmes are passing on this unacceptable gender gap and are aiming to provide gender gap and aiming to provide gender equality for all areas of social provision, especially in education, health care and opportunity for wage employment.

This picture may be factually correct but it is inadequate as conceptualization of the problem. We cannot intervene to solve a problem unless we understand its causes and complexities. The unequal position of women is not a mere technical problem that can be solved simply by building more schools and hospitals. The unequal position of women does not arise from some earlier oversight, which we can correct now that the problem has been noticed. On the contrary, the unequal position of women arises from systematic gender discrimination in patriarchal societies.

Equality is not merely a welfare issue; it is also a political one. Women cannot be "given" equality since any awareness towards a more equal position is more likely to challenge the existing patriarchal power structure. Such a challenge will be restricted. Women need to mobilize to overcome the obstacles they face and to end discriminatory practices. This process of mobilization to recognize and analyze the system of gender discrimination and taking it to the end is what the process of women's empowerment means.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The women's movement has its principle objective; advancement or improvement of the status of women within a given social context, the local context, the norms, values and practices which in turn define the position of women and the issues which the women's movement takes on. Implicit in the overall objectives of the women's movement is the element of change of norms, attitudes, values, socio-economic and .socio-political structures and methods or ways of doing things. The strength of the African movement lies in the moral righteousness of the struggle of women's suffering. This provides the motivation for many women to seek improvement in their situation.

There is also strength in numbers. Women are half the population in Africa. The potential strength for political action arising out of this fact cannot be underestimated as it has hardly been exploited. The other strength lies the diversity. Different types of groups (health, religious, education, legal rights e.t.c.) have different basis of public and political support.

The status of young women in leadership forms part of the challenges facing the women's movement as a whole. The concerns of the young and the adult woman in various spheres are inextricably linked. In relation to leadership, the women's movement has concentrated its efforts on the need to promote women to decision making positions at different levels within the mainstream structures of leadership as a strategy to assure that women's concerns are well represented. Whereas participation in decision-making is an area of critical concern, on the struggle to emancipate women, there has been a marginalization of young women's rights to leadership in the society as a whole.

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One of the major constraints to young women's participation in leadership is the generation gap. This is meant as the age difference between the young 25-40 and the older members. The qualifications of leadership on the basis of age favour the older generation because this is viewed as a measure of experience and maturity. Whereas this is true and advantageous, it is also important to have a representation of the young generation to take over leadership, and be given an opportunity to participate and represent their concern as an interest group.

Young women lack leadership skills that are required for effective mobilization of members to join and perform the work necessary to the advantage of other women. Young women need an early exposure to issues of leadership and the negotiation of power relations, which constitute the thrust of the women's movement. Training in leadership should enable the young women apply these skills to their daily experiences.

1.3 RESEACH OBJECTIVES

The major aims of the study was to analyze the participation of women aged between 18 and 35 years in an ongoing leadership programme that targets the young people in various sectors of life.

More specifically the study was,

1. To have a gender analysis of the people trained

2. To find out which areas of training the young women are interested in.

2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK **AND** LITERATURE REVIEW

Walby (1986) attempts to reveal how patriarchy operates to achieve and maintain the gender inequalities essential for the subordination of women. It shows how it can operate differently in the private and public domain but towards the same end. Patriarchy is identified as having diverse forms of and relationships between its structures in the public and private spheres, and yet it still operates in a related fashion. This explanation sees the household and household production as being a key site of women's subordination as well as supporting, reflecting and maintaining patriarchy itself.

Walby points out that the structures of patriarchy differ in their form. The household has a different structure to other institutional forms e.g. the workplace. This is an important point because if feminist theories of patriarchy are to stand, they must show that patriarchy operates to the same end in both the private and public sphere, even if it uses different strategies, otherwise it could not be the main reason for the continuing inequality of women in both the public and private sphere. It shows that within the private structures and the public structures, patriarchy does use different strategies to maintain gender inequality and these strategies both achieve the subordination of women. The household strategy is considered to be exclusionary and the public arena is based on household production. Application of this strategy in the domestic sphere depends on individual patriarchs controlling women in the private world of the home. The male patriarch in the household is both the oppressor and recipient of women's subordination. This strategy is direct as the individual patriarchs who share their lives oppress women on a personal and individual basis.

The segregationist strategy used in the public patriarchy actively excludes women from the public arena using various structures to subordinate them. Application depends on controlling access to public arenas using various structures to subordinate them. This strategy ensures that individual patriarchs are privileged at the expense of women, and it maintains gender differences.

2.1 Patriarchy And Women's Participation In Politics

Shortly before and after the Parliamentary and Presidential elections in 1992, Kenya witnessed an increased participation of women in politics both as contestants for competitive political offices and also as participants in political debates. In both endeavors, however, women faced a lot of male-based resistance that was deeply rooted in the patriarchal culture and ideologies that predominantly manifest themselves in our political style and systems. By patriarchy, we mean a social, political and economic system that ensures, preserves and perpetuates male supremacy in all sectors of life. It is a system that characterizes the operation of practically all structures in society. In this we seek to give an insight into the patriarchal culture, its possible roots in colonial systems of governance and possible implications it has for women n politics, now and in the future.

Patriarchal ideology operates on the premises that men are biologically superior to women and that as a result women are weak and have to depend on men for their survival. Within this frame of patriarchal understanding, male leadership at all levels is seen as the only legitimate leadership for the protection of women. The most fundamental

expression of this is in the patriarchal family where the man is the natural head of the household. In African households, the practice of polygyny under which one man can marry more than one wife, gives male supremacy and male leadership of the family more credence. The African family concept of male leadership of Kenya has since been strengthened by the colonial systems of governance and the Judeo-Christian and Islamic religious practices that largely shape the theory and practice of the lives of Kenyans.

We have already alluded to the fact that patriarchy characterized most traditions in Eastern Africa. While this undoubtly forms part of the roots of current patriarchal practices, we have to recognize other equally important forces of external patriarchy, which came with new religions in Eastern Africa and also with colonialism. . Both are rooted in Middle East and Arabic pastoralist traditions that are extremely patriarchal. Both religions unequivocally identify men as leaders, right from their homes to the sphere around the home and the public sector. Male leadership is further given a divine ordination by the two religions, thus making it almost mandatory for all believers to recognize male domination in everything if they have to justify their faith in the respective Holy Scriptures. It is partly the force of this religions (and partly of the Judeo-Christian influence) that gave legitimacy to and strengthened the largely patriarchal colonial system of governance.

The colonial government in Kenya amplified traditional patriarchal leadership forms and styles. In terms of leadership, nearly all the top colonial administrators were male. Their habits and lifestyles also duplicated and reinforced the traditional British

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family structure. Women existed as appendages of the male 'breadwinner' and were popularized as social butterflies whose sole responsibility was to stand behind their husbands and provide obligatory 'moral support'. It is therefore little wonder that the colonial system rigidly put in place a system, which sharply divided the domestic (home) sector from the public sector, subsequently promoting modern forms of separate private (home) spheres for women and men in public spheres that were largely male.

If we were to consider the public sector as structures of governance and governance that exist outside of the home, these would include colonial public servants, the military, police, teachers and even commercial activities in the family and industrial production. The formal wage and salary employment sector was largely male dominated, especially in higher positions. The colonial education system ensured that enough men were trained to join the formal and informal public sector, housekeepers of 'manpower', which tended to perpetuate the system and deeply entrenched colonial leadership styles. As a result a lot of exposed African male workforce was created on the backdrop of women homemakers who did not have similar opportunities.

The colonial government in Kenya also encouraged the growth of urban centres, which existed as public places that men migrated to and provided labor to industries. The population of these centres was largely male which emphasized the separation of the private family sector from the public 'work' sector. Town dwellers largely enjoyed better political opportunities even in the limited structures that the colonial government offered. What this effectively meant was that men tended to ensure the available opportunities

since they had enjoyed a better education and had gained status by virtue of their employment. Thus, colonial authorities prepared men for leadership.

The sharp division between the public and private sectors kept women in the private and men in the public. Although women inevitably participated in the nationalistic political action, they were notably not given not given a place in the mainstream. Most of their activities were glossed over as supporting the activities of the men (husbands, brothers, fathers and other relatives). In other words, their participation was not seen as arising from their own commitment and articulation of the political situation.

Kenyan women took part in the 'land freedom party' (usually referred to as Mau Mau) armed struggle against colonial authorities and many were jailed, detained and even killed alongside their male colleagues. However, this contribution has tended to be overlooked and instead, the suffering of mothers and wives of the freedom fighters in the reserves emphasized. The message is clear: Men fought in the forest while women supported them from the protected reserves.

It is against this background that the wives of colonial administrators came up with the noble idea of setting up non-political women's organization-Maendeleo ya Wanawake, to take care of women's needs, especially those that had to do with income generation. It was an exercise at cutting out a place that was distinctly apolitical for women. For many years to come this was to be the only women's organization

recognized and approved of by mainstream government structures as a 'partner in development'. Needless to say that partnership did not include politics. Many a government official could vilify men for 'spending too much time politicking instead of being development conscious like the women'. Pledges were made by the same government officials to support women in 'Small income generating activities'. Women were and still are most visible in the colorful dances they put for male politicians, whether at airports for visiting dignitaries or Kenyan politicians on other occasions. Girl's schools have also been sucked into this whirlpool of entertainment, which prepares them for a supporting role in politics, despite their educational achievement.

The political climate so created has made it almost impossible for the women's agenda to penetrate the political public sphere. Women, in predictable crude patriarchal style, are only referred to by male politicians when they either want to prove their manhood or to insult opponents whose behavior is chided as 'womanish' meaning cowardly, hysterical, erratic, short-sighted or immature (name it). Femininity is largely used as the worst that a politician could aspire to be identified with. Symbolically, a politician who is a woman has to behave like a man by giving issues affecting women for political office. It is therefore impossible for women, unlike their male colleagues, to start from the familiar grounds of their own experience.

One cannot also ignore the typically patriarchal political competition style of Kenyan politics in consigning women to the background. Kenyan politics, both before and after independence has been a field of masculine encounters between candidates who

see their opponents as enemies to be 'finished'. The most vivid expression of this is the rampant violence, mudslinging and political intrigue that has christened Kenyan politics as 'dirty' and therefore not suitable for a woman. The unsaid slogan appears to be 'keep politics dirty; keep women out'. Politics has become a field where men display their masculinity and power and test it against their opponents. The battle is phenomenally important because of the understanding that the winner takes it all. The winner once in a position of power will use that power to fight and 'finish' the opponent who is referred to as 'Political enemy'. Male egos are at play and often reason and logic take a back seat.

At its vilest, the character of the leaders of political parties demonstrates the primitive nature of Kenyan 'masculine polities'. Each leader of a political party seeks to gain absolute power over the membership and to govern by decree rather than by popular consensus. Dissent is treated as treason even in the face of clean Constitutional guidelines. The man leading the party has to be seen to 'total', otherwise he is called names by supporters and enemies alike, with newspaper or columnists joining the fray and wondering why the said leader is playing 'soft ball' when he knows that politics is 'hard ball'. The understanding appears to be that Kenyans need 'strong leaders' who are often perceived of in atavistic terms. Being a woman starts off from a position of 'natural' weakness since she becomes an object of curiosity, worse as an intruder to be taught where she belongs.

At independence women were hounded by the empty mythical title of 'mothers of the nation' - a position that did not translate into political power or recognition as was the

case with the male 'fathers of the nation' who were rewarded with powerful political offices.

Other factors, such as ethnicity and authoritarianism that have characterized Kenyan politics are seen as extreme manifestations of the expression of patriarchal power, which as we have seen valorizes hierarchy and dominance of one person or groups of people over others and allows them to exercise their authority absolutely. In our situation the very few people who control the state machinery own it and display their power in crude symbols of violence and domination.

What we need is a completely different style of governance, which would entail an overhaul of the existing political structures, and styles to make them less domineering. A two-prong approach would be most effective: top down reforms initiated by the Executive the Legislature and the Judiciary that would open up the political field, minimize the violence, reduce powers vested in the top offices, come up with a formula of power sharing and enact and enforce laws on gender equality. Affirmative action would be a good starting point (in the top down approach) but one that is timed to run concurrently with a well-orchestrated program that has an in built monitoring and evaluation mechanism aimed at achieving gender equality in politics. For the top down approaches to work it is inevitable that bottom up gender responsive civic education programs be initiated and implemented. It is also imperative that the state gives moral and financial support to these mainstreaming strategies. One of the very first campaigns would be to popularize the concept of power sharing as desirable and empowering, rather

than emphasizing the current winner takes it all formula, which tends to erroneously represent power as indivisible and absolute.

For civic education campaigns to succeed, all social structures (political and apolitical) have to be targeted. For example political parties may have to accept to play by the rules by respecting their own constitutions as a beginning point; to focus on issues rather than on personalities. Political structures may also be enabled to learn something from horizontal forms of organization that have been the norm in grassroots women organizations where emphasis on hierarchy is minimized and participation by all members and sharing of benefits is in proportion to the amount of actual contribution is emphasized.

It is also important to make visible and take advantage of women's contribution for their own benefit rather than for the much talked about community benefit. We need to re-evaluate and refocus women's proven organizational ability and presence (in terms of numbers) in order to use it for their advancement. Two things that stand out clearly as illustrations of the strength of women organizations include the accepted forms of popular decision making and conflict resolution through horizontal forms of anticipatory dialogue and consensus building in the decision making process. It is inevitable that women's movements are politicized through civic education that should clearly help women see the political impact of their activities, particularly those that have to do with economic performance as in income generation, particularly at the grassroots level and mainstream organization and delivery of social services. In the latter we are specifically

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referring to the reliance by the government on women's organizations in the delivery of development services such as in the health sector, education sector and general implementation of poverty alleviation programs. Women are now taking over a service that was initially paid for by the government, but which has proven difficult to deliver in the same manner because of implementation of structural adjustment programs. Plainly stated, the government would grind to a halt if women withdrew their services. Women should make political capital out of this; first by making politicians and government acknowledge and reward them for their role. It would also help women if both parties were made to stop taking them for granted - one way of doing this is to organize mass action, such as refusal to deliver services in case women are not recognized as equal participants in development with men.

Still the challenge is how to make patriarchy feel and recognize the political significance of women's activities and how women can turn their economic and social success stories into a powerful force that will force patriarchal structures to the negotiating table, or even sweep them aside. We recognize that it is difficult for patriarchal structures to appear to be undermining themselves by recognizing parallel and often opposing feminine structures that are increasingly delivering more with little mainstream support. For women to break into the male-dominated public sphere by getting their ideas recognized across the board as important to society a lot of homework has to be done at clearly identifying the ideas and issues, organizing for support across the board, but principally from women and as much as possible getting rid of the

divisions that men have tended to highlight and take advantage of, particularly between elite and rural women.

Finally, serious discussion has to center around the forms of structures that will promote women's interest. We have acknowledged over and over again the domination of patriarchal structures in the mainstream, which puts women at a disadvantage since they are expected to find a place in the already described and demarcated 'men's sphere' for the simple reason that it is the mainstream sphere. Entering blindly into such a sphere as has been demonstrated in the past raises serious problems for women, as the structures are in more ways than one anti-woman, litis calls for women to redefine and reorganize the mainstream of politics to accommodate their structures and change accordingly.

The gender question, especially as it relates to women's rights, is one of overriding concern today. This is particularly so due to the fact that women's rights have now gained acceptance as human rights.

The term 'gender' is used not to mean biological sex. It is used to refer to the socio-psychological political interpretation of what it means to be female or male, as viewed from varied dictates of society. Behind this interpretation are the cultural and social forces that come into play in generation values, thought patterns and attitudes, stereotypes and other kinds of human interrelationship in society.

Women do not operate in vacuum. They are part of the economic, political and cultural structures in any society. Their participation in socio-political affairs therefore makes them both part of the problem and the solution. It is for this reason that their role as agents (active or passive) of change and transformation both in society and in various churches deserves a critical assessment. And the fact that structures of domination and exploitation have over the years de-humanized women by unjustly pushing them to the bottom of economic, political and social ranks makes this assessment all the more worthwhile.

The denial of women's equal participation in decision-making processes at both domestic and public spheres has forced grassroots women to drift further and further from mainstream politics. Consequently, they have come to consider politics as a male domain. Such women even attempt to undermine others either aspiring to or who have managed to secure for themselves positions of political authority.

This explains why women hardly vote for fellow women, during elections, and why the public expects them to be followers rather than leaders, this somatization has impeded grassroots women's participation as well as the elite, however, the grassroots women are worse hit.

Kenyan political systems are largely male-centered and oriented. This renders gender relationship in politics essentially unequal as the power possession rests with men. Added to this, the colonial ideology about division of labour and unequal training

opportunities in many areas such as unemployment, education and politics also contributed to rocking the status of Kenyan women, especially at the grassroots. The colonial legacy therefore, with its division of labour, has largely been a vehicle of sheer chauvinism calculated to suppress women.

Traditionally, women in Africa stood on a sound ground of economic independence. In pre-colonial days the family was the basic unit of economic production. Today this is no longer the case. As society, becomes obsessed with profit making, grassroots women essential role as the agricultural workforce has been mostly benefiting men without due compensation to women. Little wonder phrases such as 'beasts of burden' in reference to grassroots women in both rural and urban areas found their way into literature on African Women.

Today it is estimated that grassroots women do two-thirds of agricultural work in Africa. Food processing is almost 100 per cent women's work. And 60 per cent of marketing in Africa is in their hands. Yet this daily contribution is rarely acknowledged and is never reflected in the national economic figures, as it is often treated as domestic work not worthy of financial compensation or recognition. The Fourth World Conference on women in Beijing observed:

> *Without economic empowerment, it is unlikely that women will be able to participate effectively in most of the processes of society.*

Besides the economic factor, cultural and social stereotypes are also basic hindrances to grassroots women's effective competition with men in politics. These stereotypes are responsible for the unequal opportunities accessible to women in education and employment.

The stereotypes carry with them psychological violence, which often brings at the home where silent or verbal abuse by men aimed at ridiculing women takes place. Phrases like 'Stop crying like a woman,' 'You are behaving like a woman,' instill in women and men at an early age a particular stereotype that says 'Sons are to be more appreciated than daughters (Women included) as the latter are anything but good for nothing. So why even bother to educate them?"

The 'good for nothing' image is also reflected in the educational system that has tended for long to deny equal learning opportunities to girls, encouraging them instead, just to take interest in domestic matters. The attitudes and structures that legitimize and institutionalize the supposedly inferiority of women that abounds in our families and villages, one could say, are real causes that impede grassroots women's participation in politics, since they deprive women of their self-worth. Little wonder then that many legal rules and principles also legitimize subordination of women, notwithstanding the equality guaranteed under the Constitution. Even in matters where law seems to articulate women's issues, it is often women's issues from men's perspective.

2.2 How Can Women Improve The Quality Of Leadership Thus Changing Our Male-Dominated Political System?

Men and women have unique gifts; bestowed upon them by the creator, which gifts are essential for truly human existence they both possess distinctive qualities that can enrich politics. Apparently, our political systems could be incomplete or less human since they have not been graced fully with uniquely feminine insights and qualities, which could serve as a special contribution.

Motherhood, a tremendous quality that women possess, calls for self-less commitment and devotion in nursing life. This self-less dedication is no doubt, a quality much needed in good and responsible leadership. Other qualities that are distinctively feminine that women's participation in politics would bring to our male-dominated systems are patience, kindness, intimate communication and 'other centredness.'

The fact that women tend to invest a lot of faith in people grace them with intuition and ability, more than men, to cherish and patiently bring out the good in other people. A woman's greatness in many societies is seen through the lenses of bringing forth life, nursing it and nurturing it until it comes to maturation. It is against this background that women's roles in society have been narrowly interpreted as being only domestic.

But those times are gone. Today, it is a well-known fact that women have played a variety of significant roles in history. For example in Kenya's history there are records

of women who are honored for having gallantly participated in the armed struggle for independence. Some of them whose names have been immortalized by historians are Mekatitili, Muthoni, Nyanjiru and Moraa Ngiti.

The colonial and our neo-colonial political systems, with their biased and cheap concept of women, reinforced sexist ideology that is blind to women's political contribution to an improved society. Thus women's political roles got replaced by the colonial sexist ideology, which expediently deemed politics as men's domain and kitchen as the woman's place.

It is true that if Kenyans voted more women to Parliament, voices for new vision would be forces to reckon with for the good of political leadership in our country. The active participation of women would perhaps help in dismantling the paternalistic, authoritarian, hierarchical patterns in our political system and put in their place the maternal, compassionate, sensitive relationship among people.

This would also help women's organizations like Maendeleo ya Wanawake be an independent organ tailored to advancing the welfare of women, particularly grassroots women.

2.3 A Challenge To The Church And Society

How do we redress the balance to allow grassroots women to participate in politics or in church-leadership? Though women make the majority of active church members, there lot here that is no better than in secular society.

Both the society and the church must actively venture into activities that aim at creating gender sensitivity in the church and sensitizing women on their need to be empowered for responsible freedom and destiny. These awakening activities must aim at advocating for equal treatment for men and women in all areas of life

Due to lack of modern education and exposure, grassroot women have for decades been compelled to swallow and digest bitter stereotypes. Consequently, they think of their supposedly inferiority complex as part of the way the world was meant to be. That the woman is inferior to the man and, worse still she is from creation, responsible for all chaos present in the universe.

With education opportunities equally accessible to both male and female, society should adopt measures that enhance and influence the social and cultural patterns of men and women participation in politics.

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Economic independence for grassroots women should also be encouraged through establishment of savings and credit in rural-based co-operatives. Mass media, positive portrayal of achievements of grassroots women are a desirable effort in advancing their causes in their respective rural and urban economic struggles.

2.4 The Church

When it comes to leadership in the church, women have no power within male-clergy dominated church structures. Women are poorly represented in local church councils and synods. Often times, women's activities are unsuspiciously limited to being Sunday school teachers, cleaning the churches and altar linen in addition to singing in the choir. Nthamburi critically observes that even where churches have agreed to ordain women, the numbers are negligible and make one wonder whether this is not tokenism.

If women are to be a power and voices for new vision in church, its leadership needs to foster institutions that recognize women's needs and potential for religious leadership. The church's teaching on the equality and dignity of women should be expressed not only in documents but in action, echoing justice towards women.

Jesus, both in his relationship and teachings, disapproved of all forms of structures and customs that impeded women's participation or discriminated against them. For example, Jesus dismissed the Jewish law on adultery, which penalized women

but not men. Jesus had compelling respect for women and his message about God's reign inaugurated a challenging new equality between men and women.

Grassroots women, one could argue, are an embodiment of all the oppressed peoples of the world. To them Jesus should mean a representative of a new humanity.

The developing theological understanding of the church as a family of God as opposed to hierarchy only has also led to an appreciation of the role played by women in social and church spheres. The Catholic Church, for example, has often called for a change of attitude and mentality that discriminate and abuse women. Pope John Paul II, for example, denounced violence against women when he promulgated the results of the African Synod in September 1995:

> *The Synod requests that women be given quality formation to prepare for their responsibilities... and to open for them all the social career from which traditional and modern tend to exclude them without reason.*

> *The Synod asks that women be given once again that place which corresponds to the real importance conferred upon them by the responsibilities they already exercise.*

At the grassroots level the church has shown concerted effort in providing opportunities for literacy and vocational training for women. It has also shown its solidarity with single mothers, through giving them training that aims at making them self-reliant.

Through commissions for justice and peace and other organs of the civic education, the church has initiated awareness programmes that have awakened grassroots women in appreciating more their place as agents of political change through the power of the ballot. Co-operatives and other women groups operating under the church umbrella have also accorded women some economic independence.

However, it seems that the main challenge facing the grassroots women in the church today is their ability to develop self-assurance, self-confidence and assertiveness in pursuit of their God-given dignity as a women. This is the sure path to their self-determination. and liberation. In her struggle to liberate themselves and the grassroots women could draw inspiration from the great women of the Bible, like Miriam, Deborah, Ruth, Esther, Judith, Dorcas, Prophetesses Anne, Martha and Mary and Mary the mother of Jesus. By their deeds, these women were instruments of God's voice for new vision.

Society is our larger self. Our social structure could be said to bear the marks of thought processes and images we project of ourselves. For example, if we take women as 'good for nothing', then that image will be socially projected.

Denying women participation in decision-making processes, be it in politics or church matters, as this paper has attempted to unearth, deprives them their rightful place as complete human beings in society. In so doing we project a social image of a dehumanized and an incomplete society.

Women's active participation in politics and church life, welcome as it should be, cannot be overemphasized as an indispensable contribution that our society can only ignore at its own peril.

This fact should serve to trigger a clarion call to the powers-that-be to establish policies of gender balance in government structures and discourage policies that discriminate against women's participation.

That women comprise the majority of the Kenyan population is a telling fact about the necessity of empowering them for total social transformation for equitable gender participation. Kenyan women as such are a social power, voices for a new vision that both the society and the church cannot afford to ignore.

Will our social and church structures pass the test of time? Whether they will or not, the struggle for women's rights in our society is an idea whose time has come. It cannot and should not be frustrated.

2.5 Engendering politics

This discussion starts on the premise that the 'universal' principles of democracy have to be challenged; that ambiguities such as 'he means she; man means woman; early man also means early woman' have to be challenged. This ambiguity has made it possible for institutions with diverse, ideological and political priorities and including

dictatorship and totalitarian regimes to claim commitment to democracy. One therefore needs to question the so-called 'universal' democratic principles which to date have influenced politics. However, the gender perspective recognizes that it is not just the issue of bringing men and women into the center of the political process, it is a process that recognizes men and women as victims of socio-cultural and historical processes that shut out half of the world's population from public life. It is a process that has male symbols such as cocks and lions and that promotes 'warrior-politics.' It is a process that has developed a social mythology that justifies male domination through concepts, such as 'there cannot be two cocks in one homestead;' winner takes all; 'defeat is not in my vocabulary.' This kind of culture hinders development of quality leadership, meaningful transformation of political culture and social cohesion. It promotes delusions of grandeur that keeps away the fundamental quest for liberty, justice and good governance.

The gender perspective therefore calls for selfless, concerted and co-ordinated efforts towards the ordained duty of building a humane society.

2.6 The Role Of Women In Engendering Party Politics

Women have been made to watch political activities from the side. They have been encouraged to continue voting and to understand their right to vote. Women leaders and Non Governmental Organizations have continued to work at the grassroots and to encourage other women to fight for their rights. Leaders who have cynically told women activists to, 'use your numerical power to take over all the seats in Parliament' have also

encouraged this. Women leaders have been desperately moving and working at the grassroots as if it is their fault that women are not in the decision making position and as leaders of political parties. They have not appreciated that they come from a tradition where:

- They were left out of political leadership and legal representation.

- They were left out of religious positions.

- They did not own basic resources.

The stage was set for political, cultural and economic power for their own subordination and ideological justification of their wretchedness through development of social mythologies that they themselves perpetuated. This, in a sense, legitimizes the male power and therefore translates it into authority. Women therefore do have the responsibility to challenge these institutions and in particular political parties that always promise to take the whole nation to greater heights. They have to develop strategies that help open up political parties and structures so that development of democratic cultures, democratic organizations as well democratic leadership becomes a reality so that the spirit of justice, fairness, self-reliance and tolerance is infused into our political organizations.

Adopting a gender perspective in the development party politics helps women to understand the process of social construction, which leads to their own averse attitude to politics, insecurity, powerlessness and therefore helps them to think strategically and to build alliances. This understanding will lead women to challenge male resistance to

change; to engage in political leadership and to insist that it is the responsibility for their parties and party leadership to use affirmative action to bridge the gender imbalance in political leadership, management and programming. They will reject the myth that politics is a man's duty and move away from the holier-than-thou attitude, which points an accusing finger at those women who are involved in the political process. They will refuse to leave the destiny of this nation to male dominance in the political process.

Women will therefore deal with underlying factors that contribute to male leadership in politics. They will understand male attitudes, the myths and facts about politics and also create solidarity with progressive forces in society.

Working with women party co-ordinators in 1996 and 1997 has demonstrated to us the importance of gender analysis in the political process and the great need to engender politics in Kenya and in our region. All the parties in Kenya have women's wings, women's assemblies, women's leaders, or women party coordinators. At party women's leaders 'or coordinators' workshops conducted by the Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development the following observations can be made:

- Those party co-ordinators or women leaders within the parties see themselves as organizing women outside the mainstream party politics.
- That the women who come to the workshops are not aware of their role in creating an enabling environment for women within their parties.

- That they do not see themselves as having responsibility to engage with the party policies in order to ensure that they aim at getting 50 per cent representation in the party hierarchy.

- That they needed gender responsive recruitment and management within the parties.

Gender awareness and analysis of their party structures manifestos, constitutions and other documents brings to focus the need for the women to:

- Understand the determining factors that lead to male leadership and visions in the parties.

- Building alliances among women and gender responsive men so that they are engaged with and influence the party policies and structures.

- Appreciate the necessity to lobby and encourage women to vie for posts, which have power within their parties so that they can influence the course of events.

- Link up and lobby with other women's organizations and women leaders in order to influence both the party policies and national policies.

The need to share women's visions structures and cultures with their male counterparts. They even begin to question such symbols as cocks, lions and concepts such as 'winner take all' and support more friendly concepts such as sharing of power through 'coalitions' of parties. The women too get the 'wake up call' to engage in party politics and national quest for liberty, justice and good governance. This can only happen

if we have creative dialogue between women co-ordinators and leaders on the one hand and political parties on the other. Women co-ordinators should understand that Power relations have to do with the capacity of individuals and groups to initiate action and determine outcome, which changes existing social, political and economic systems and norms to equalize gender relations.

The role of women coordinators must be seen within the broad context of affirmative action for political change, but not as a continuation of the dance from the side. The struggle to engender politics and to create more democratic gender-responsive political cultures, institutions and policies continues.

2.7 Young Women In Kenyan Politics

Over the past decade or so, Kenya has experienced a lot of changes in her political system. These changes have largely resulted from the challenges that have faced the country's political arena and the citizens are conscious of their rights. There has therefore been increasing pressure and demand for change in the political arena to correct flaws and gaps in the way that the country is governed. The myth that leadership is meant for men has also been challenged. A few women have made a break-through into the political arena. These however, are numerically negligible. At any rate they have not been fully accepted as leaders equal to their male counterparts.

Gender roles for men and women have changed a lot due to the dynamism of society. The woman's place is no longer in the kitchen, and in her endeavors to provide for the family, she is often faced with challenges that her conservative traditional society had not exposed her to. The woman's scope of operation economically, socially and politically and thus, her richness of experience can be utilized to improve the quality of leadership in this country. To begin with women understand the challenges that face men and women, as well as children better than men.

Many men who are in leadership positions basically take care of the infrastructure and once a while, participate in the building of institutions. Very rarely do they make a follow up to know how these institutions are managed. Many take care of what can be seen but rarely do they address the day to day lives of the people, something, which is central to human experience. People can live with hunger and disease or without other basic needs. Women are very much in touch with these therefore Kenya, being a patriarchal society could have better leadership if there can be this diversification of experience in her political leadership.

It is however a fact that women do not actively participate in politics. Young women especially, have up to and until now played a passive role in political mobilization in Kenya. They have not been involved in the political change that has been taking place in the country. To be able to lay strategies of promoting political activism among the young women, it is essential that we examine the reason why they do not

participate and attempt to make suggestions on how to overcome this. Three major causes of their political passiveness seem to exist.

2.8 Bias And Stereotypes

The first one is cultural bias and stereotypes. Women, from time immemorial, have lived in a society characterized by discriminatory customary traditions and cultural prejudices. In the traditional Kenyan society, women were not allowed to play administrative roles. Men ruled even where women would have made better leaders. Women who exhibit and assert their leadership qualities have traditionally threatened men.

Most young girls are brought up to know that they will end up being wives and mothers. The exposure they get and the direction, in which their thoughts are steered, from early childhood, perfect these future roles. Most of them are brought up with the mentality that leadership is for men. From very early in life, they therefore let the boys take up leadership roles. Women are also brought up to know that they are not only physically weaker than men are but also misled into believing themselves mentally and emotionally weaker. They therefore tend to recoil from responsibility, for it will call for a strong will to overcome the challenges. Thus, their potential largely goes untapped.

In the same vein, common stereotypes have put women in a disadvantaged position in the area of political activism. One often hears such cliches as 'politics is for

men'. Women generally therefore never understand the political situation prevailing at the time. Their critical evaluation of the same is therefore mediocre. This socialization has barred young women from participating actively in politics.

2.9 Ignorance

The second reason is ignorance. This is at two levels. First is the lack of formal education that would otherwise promote critical thinking. Secondly women are generally ignorant of the fact that they need to participate in the political well-being of their country. Due to the fact that a large percentage of women have not been to school or had the least formal education, they cannot understand the on-goings in the political arena. Rural women are particularly unable to understand the political jargon of Marxism, democracy, multi- party or even the objectives of the R.P.P (Release Political Prisoners) pressure group. To them, political prisoners are 'criminals' just like the village chicken thief. They see them as rebels, since they see no evil in the political leadership. There are other women who have formal education, even to very high levels, but due to their upbringing and exposure do not think they ought to participate in politics. They usually want to leave politics to those who want to 'play the dirty game'. They are likely to grumble behind doors. Some others are very conservative. They resist change since they do not want to leave the 'comfort' of the present state of things and take a risk with the aim of better things that might never come. They just want to maintain the *status quo*. Maybe this ties with fear, or maybe they are not aware of the injustices being perpetrated upon society, or maybe they simply do not know their rights.

2.10 Fear

The other reason is fear. This can be internal, or caused by the prevailing political situation.   Political activism in Kenya today is characterized by violence; both physical and verbal.   People have been physically assaulted during public rallies and political campaigns.   Others have been thrown into prison while some still have been maligned and slurred.

Politics, instead of being an art of government, administration of public affairs and statesmanship, has been made a license to insult and to dig out incidents in people's past to embarrass them. Politicians have been known to be more of troubleshooters than custodians of the affairs touching on the government of the nation.   Many people therefore, seeing the trend that politics has taken are uneasy about the consequences of being active in political mobilization.

Young women also fear victimization by parents, friends and the society in general if they should enter into politics.   Some people believe that politics is not for people who have peace, who do not like violence and people who are religious.   The problem is however not in religion but in what politics has come to connote.

2.11 Towards A Solution

Having these reasons in mind therefore, the first step in promoting young women's participation in politics should be to educate the community about the need for young women to participate in political mobilization. Time and again people have called on the young to lead responsible lives 'because the future of the country is in their hands.' This is a notion that should be corrected. The country's present is actually in the hands of the youth. The youth can determine whether there shall be order or chaos in the country. They have the numbers, strength, zeal and determination and this should be channeled into the right avenues. Why should they wait until the time when they are so old, so weighed down by responsibilities in the family and so disillusioned by feelings of hopelessness brought about experience to make contributions to the political well-being of the country? Young women should be encouraged to get involved in political decisions making; from the voting level to vying for seats. They should emulate those who have made successful attempts in this domain.

Men also need to be educated on the need for cooperation between men and women. They should learn to encourage and not discourage women and young women should be taught not to cower, in the face of opposition but to stand up against it, bearing a long shot, young women should be taught not against it, bearing in mind that behind every successful woman, is a man who does not want her to succeed, or who is actually trying to stop her. There are of course a few men who stand by their wives as they strive to make the best out of their lives. But the rest ought to get awake.

Young women must also be taught the true meaning of patriotism . Were (1986) defines patriotism as a 'genuine internal love for one's own country, which influences one's general behaviour.' It should be emphasized that political activism should arise from this love and not from the desire for material gain. Many people go into politics primarily to better their individual material status. Patriotism does not come naturally. It is the result of education and training. Young girls will not feel like responsible political mobilization agents in the country unless they are told that it is their responsibility. They should be discouraged from the mentality that someone else will do it. Those 'others' are the ones who are making wrong decisions. The nation needs every one of its citizens as much as they need the nation. They are interdependent. Young women must bear this mind.

They must also learn to break free from oppressive customs and traditions and play their part in political mobilization, whether other people like it or not. They need to be aggressive enough and with time, it will be accepted that they are involved in political parties and quasi-political groups. They should vie for leadership of political groups. They should be given moral, financial and any other support by responsible bodies.

In the same vein, there should be an educational campaign to sweep the political debris of the political activists who shoot into the arena like a bullet on the wrong course. The wrongs done on the definition of politics need to rectified. People must be taught the meaning of politics. This will not only ensure more participation by young women in

political matters but also encouragement from other people, since they will have the right perspective of politics when this information about political participation is corrected.

Political sensitization should be decentralized. People should be educated to go out and educate others. It would be a good idea if young women could be trained and then sent out to educate other young women around the country. Successful young women could act as role models and those out there will know-.that there are young women already actively involved in political mobilization and see them at work and this will encourage them to break into the world of politics. To cite an example, Muthoni, the immediate former mayor of Embu has been a great inspiration to many young women. Those going to educate others should receive training because they need to know how to handle the challenges they will meet during this sensitization process.

Leaders of different political parties must also be educated on the need to nominate women candidates' for election at both the civic and national levels. Political leadership can only be achieved if someone is operating under the umbrella of a political party. Women need to be given the chance to vie for seats during party elections. If they are not nominated, they cannot do this. Voters must also be encouraged to shun gender bias when electing their leaders. Many women fail to be elected just because they are women. If young women win voter's confidence, then more will become actively involved in politics.

Young women also need to work closely with one another. Political cohesion among them will enable them to get more into leadership positions. They must be taught that political

patriotism involves sacrifice and not personal gain; the desire to make the country a better place to live in. the point in all thus struggle for women's political empowerment is not just to get women into Parliament to compete with men but to get competent leaders who will be responsible for determining the destiny of the country. This is in the belief that they will not behave like some of their male counterparts have done. They must understand this.

> "Pure patriotism rises above materialism, desire for regard or recognition and so on. It is a state of mind that recoils from thoughts of selfish pleasure and gain which either chains the nation and its people (socially, materially economically), embraces the nation and its people... its development."

They must be willing to sacrifice their time, money and even themselves for this nation.

The importance of education cannot therefore be overemphasized. This is the only bridge that can be used to cross the women over from political passiveness to political activism. The whole should be encouraged to pursue formal education to higher levels because this gives them the kind of exposure and experience that sharpens their critical thinking and steers it in the right direction.

Young women should start making independent decisions; to observe, read, listen, analyze and draw decisions based on this and not what other people push down their throats. The wider society also needs education or political sensitization. If we want to promote women's participation in politics, if we want our political leadership to be enriched by the experience of the women, education is what will save the day.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study analyzed the ongoing Young Leadership Development Program, whose aim is to identify, harness and nurture demonstrated leadership potential of young Kenyans from the private, public and voluntary sectors and wish to commit them to provide alternative and progressive leadership. This shall be done in the form of

1. Analysis of the data on the applicants

2. Analysis of the records kept of the applicants and the young people trained

3. Review of available literature

The type of data to be collected is secondary from the applications sent to the Youth Agenda database. The methods of data collection in this case are secondary as the researcher utilized available data and literature review

The respondents are the young women and young men who applied for the training and were short-listed and invited to attend the training course.

4.0 Data Analysis

TABLE 1: TABLE SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE TRAINED BY THEIR GENDER IN THE VARIOUS SECTORS.

SECTOR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1st Community Leaders	12	5	19
1st Civil Society Leaders	24	3	27
1st Student Leaders	17	3	20
1st Young Women Leaders	0	19	19
1st Trade Union Leaders	24	0	24
1 Political Leaders	29	4	3 3
1st Young Professionals	19	5	24
2nd Community Leaders	11	5	16
2nd Civil Society Leaders	14	1	15
2nd Young Women Leaders	0	15	15
Total Number and Percentages	150 (71%)	60 (29%)	210 (100%)

4.1 STUDY FINDINGS

It is evident from the Youth Agenda Leadership Training Program that young women do not participate in leadership in the various existing sectors. In the year 2000, the seven categories used for conducting training on a national level were analyzed and the results show that women responded dismally to the various sectors, yet they were given an equal opportunity to apply and be selected by the facilitators for the training. The applicants showed unequal applications by gender with the men always outnumbering the women applicants in the program. In all cases except the young women leaders category, the men outnumbered the women by more than seventy-five percent.

In the young student leaders, young professionals, political leaders, trade union and the civil society leaders, the young women were less than five participants who turned up for the training out of an average of twenty-seven participants per session. This was despite the fact that during the selection or recruiting, the facilitators were gender sensitive and selected an equal number of men and women.

This could mean that the young women are not interested in the 'hardcore' areas of leadership but opt for the softer areas of community leaders and young women leaders. It was also observed that in the young student leaders who turned up for training, most of the men held the position of chairperson and the women were either assistants to a certain - position or the secretary to the council of student leadership. This shows that the young women are still being reluctant to take up high positions despite being given positions in

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the governing bodies and continue to hold the traditional stereotyped positions of secretary and coordinator.

In the case of young women in the trade unions there was a zero turnout for women participants and this leaves the question whether young women are adequately represented in this sector.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FOWARD.

As a result of the experiences of the lack of young women in the first phase of the Leadership Development Training Program, the Youth Agenda is planning on starting a leadership-training program specifically for young women to be drawn from all the above sectors. This has come as we talk about giving women an equal opportunity to be leaders of the country and will be a way of nurturing young women to get into the country's leadership. This will come right on time for the much anticipated general elections which are expected in the year 2002 and we expect to see a greater number of young women taking the mantle from the older women and men in leadership. Some recommendations to help strengthen this are;

1. That the young women be seen as a special entity in the political sector and thus be given a chance to participate in leadership training without necessarily being in a position of leadership, e.g in the trade union sector, the can be given the capacity to

become conscious of their leadership capabilities. This also holds true for the young students who are interested in leadership.

2. Look for a shorter duration to carry out the training as most of the women who failed to turned up said that that the four-day period was too long for them to be away from their domestic responsibilities.

3. Plan to carry out outreach clinics for young women who are not able to leave their places of residence because this will mean a countrywide reach.

4. A training manual for the young women who are unable to attend the course and are interested could be produced which will draw from the experiences of other women in leadership and used to reach out to them.

5. Another means of advertising the leadership training should be adopted other than the newspaper advertisement as rural women rarely get to read the newspaper and are thus left out of the training program

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