UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN DEVOLVED FUNDS; A CASE STUDY
OF KANDUYI CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUND, BUNGOMA
COUNTY IN KENYA.

BY:
WAMALWA AKIRAPA CAROLYN
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ABSTRACT

Leadership has for long been characterized by male-dominance, gender biasness in distribution and control of resources as women in the modern economic conditions have had to assume more responsibility in agriculture and other domestic roles to be able to fend for their families, rather than engage in more official duties. This study seeks to investigate women's participation in the governance and ownership of projects of devolved funds, a case study of Kanduyi Constituency Development Fund. Among the pertinent factors in this study include; CDF projects and women's needs, women's participation CDF projects, constraints to women's participation in CDF projects and the legal framework guiding CDF operations as outlined in the CDF Act 2003 and how they affect women's participation. Full women's participation in development activities at the grassroots level has been a mirage owing to low literacy levels amongst womenfolk, retrogressive beliefs, the nature of various development projects which are often perceived to be laborious, the various roles assigned to women in CDF projects' activities; although we note that the lack of clearly defined legislation outlining women's participation and/or lack of information concerning the CDF Act itself by most locals, alongside a women's resigned attitude towards activities outside the confines of the conventional home making role as factors which indirectly come in the way of the realization of full women's participation in development activities funded by CDF, thus a great undoing to the strides made towards promoting gender equity, a tenet of the affirmative action, as well as the two-third constitutional gender requirement.

This indicates a disconnect between the factors mentioned therein, hence, this study set out to investigate how to bridge the gap by conducting an in-depth study of the extend women's participation in devolved funds, a case study of Kanduyi CDF. A brief introduction of the Kanduyi CDF has been done highlighting the variables under study and secondary data collected on how strides have been made to enhance women's participation in various devolved development projects the world over. Some information about devolved funds as well as women's participation in Kenya is highlighted and a conceptual framework depicting the relationship between the variables discussed. The third chapter outlines the research methodology which includes the research design, target population, sample and sampling procedure as well as data collection instruments. A cross sectional survey design characterized by a stratified random sampling design was used to select the sample from the population. The study utilized questionnaires, Focus Group interviews, in-depth and Key informant interviews and a review of secondary data. The questionnaires were pretested to
ensure their reliability. Data was meaningfully analyzed by use of descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, percentages, charts, and presented in charts tables and graphs for easy interpretation. Qualitative data was presented in prose and repetitive responses grouped in themes.

The study found out that there is more uptake of roles at all levels of development projects, and the barriers that have characterized lack or minimalist participation are slowly being tamed. Women are now participating in CDF projects at all levels right from decision making to implementation, constraints to participation such as retrogressive beliefs are slowly losing face, more women are enrolling in schools to get educationally empowered so as to compete at par with men, as well as acquainting themselves with the legal guidelines touching on their roles in development activities. There is need to liberate mindsets from unorthodox beliefs, sensitize women on their rights through thorough civic education as well as effect legislation that will enhance more women's participation. Women should also play their part in cultivating their attitude towards participation in order to claim their rightful positions in development activities. Authorities will need to check on a regular basis if stipulated laws guiding CDF especially those concerning women empowerment are observed at the constituency levels and new CDF officials should strive to ensure gender balance in CDF operations. This study will be significant to the people of Kanduyi constituency, the Ministry of National Treasury and underlying departments, policy makers, development actors and the Government of Kenya.