

**THE EFFECT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION ON WOMENS'
EMPOWERMENT: A CASE OF GATUE DIVISION, THARAKA NORTH
DISTRICT, KENYA.**

BY

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN PROJECT PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.**

2012

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree course in any other university.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family: My loving husband Robert Njagi and my dear children Patience Mukiri, Ian Karani and Wesley Muthomi for their prayers, support and encouragement during my study period at the University of Nairobi. I cannot forget my dear parents Jonathan and Esther Mpara for their efforts in making me what I am today.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICPD-PoA	International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women

ABSTRACT

Socio- economic discrimination of women has been an issue of concern globally and Kenya in particular. Although the Kenyan constitution has put emphasis on gender equality and women empowerment and that many worlds' governments ratified CEDAW and accepted it as a Bill of Rights for women in their laws, these have however not received meaningful support from men as well as the government structures. It is on this ground that the researcher sought to find out the effects of socio-economic discrimination on women's empowerment in Gatue division- Tharaka North District. The research was carried out using descriptive and correlational research designs and the data was collected through 6 key informant interviews and 8 focused group discussions. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and themes since the study was based on both quantitative and qualitative paradigms. The analyzed data was presented using percentages, frequency distribution tables and themes.

The study revealed that socio-economic discrimination of women in form of lack of participation in decision making and leadership roles, lack of property ownership and engagement in economic activities, inadequate access to education, are an hindrance to women's empowerment because they reduce the women to the domestic sphere with limited opportunities to get empowered. The study also recommends that similar studies be done in other parts of the country so as to establish similarities or differences in research findings and to enrich future studies.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This Chapter deals with the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, justification of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, basic assumptions of the study and definition of significant terms.

1.1 Background to the Study

According to Peggy (2004), the global call to alleviate gender discrimination and enhance women's empowerment has brought focus, strong recognition and collaborative action in addressing gender concerns. The first global women's conference held in Mexico City in 1975 launched the Women's decade (1976-1985), bringing unprecedented attention to issues of concern for women around the world. The significance of the decade designation was that in the same year the General Assembly set out three goals (Equality, Development and Peace) which would guide the work for advancement of women and inform intergovernmental discussions from 1975 up to the Beijing conference in 1985. The goals called for actions "to promote equality between women and men, to ensure full integration of women in the total development effort and to increase women's contributions to the world development" (UN Report, 1986).

It was during this period that the most significant legal instrument known as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979 was established and accepted by the world's governments as the Bill of Rights for women which came into effect in 1981 (Muteshi, 2006). The states that ratified CEDAW, Kenya being one of them were required to implement corrective

measures to eliminate gender inequality and to report on their progress. However, this to some extent has become practically challenging to implement especially in Kenya where men own and control the largest amount of property, leadership and decision making positions as compared to women.

Equality of men and women is an integral part of the universal human rights; hence it is vital to the realization of human rights for all in the society. The overall objective of gender equality is to establish a society where women and men enjoy the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. Equality exists when both men and women are able to share equally in distribution of power and influence, have equal opportunities for financial independence through work or through setting up businesses, enjoy equal access to education and the opportunity to develop personal ambitions, interests and talents; share responsibility for the home and children and are completely free from coercion, intimidation and gender-based violence both at work and at home (UNESCO, 2000).

1.1.1 Global Perspective of Socio- Economic Discrimination of Women

Article 1 of CEDAW defines gender discrimination as ‘any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the bases 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 bases of equality of men and women of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social cultural, civil or any other’ (Muteshi, 2006).

Eradication of gender discrimination and promotion of women’s empowerment is integral to accelerating progress on internationally-agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A research done by the Economic Commission of Africa in 2005 underscores that reducing the social,

economic and political barriers faced by women and girls keeps children in school longer, decreases child mortality and fosters greater economic activity, putting more resources in households and communities. Yet, despite some promising overall progress, gender inequality remains a great challenge, perpetuating poverty and exclusion worldwide (United Nations Private Sector Forum, 2010).

All over the world, education for girls and women is recognized as a strategy for alleviating gender discrimination and empowering women. It is widely accepted that an educated woman is more likely to marry later, to space her pregnancies, to have fewer children, to seek medical care for herself and her children and to adopt good hygiene in her household (source). The Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) identified gross inequalities and inadequacies in education and training for women. Two Millennium development goals (MDGs -Goals 2 and 3) call for the elimination of gender inequality in primary and secondary education by 2005 and at all levels and achievement of gender equality and women empowerment by 2015. This is far from being achieved irrespective of the fact that fulfilment of women's potential through education and skills training is a key factor to women empowerment (Economic Commission of Africa, 2005). Throughout the world, women are a powerful force for growth and development, making important contributions to the economy as workers and entrepreneurs, and to the welfare of their families (Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General, 2005).

1.1.2 Social Economic discrimination of women in Africa

An assessment done by the Economic Commission of Africa in 2005, on the situation of gender discrimination in Africa shows that most of the strategies developed for instance, Gender and Development Policy of Kenya 2009 have not been fully implemented and have not made notable differences in the lives of women at the grass

root. , Africa is still characterised by deteriorating poverty levels, women have limited access to productive resources, they suffer gross violations of their social, cultural and economic rights, they have inadequate access to social services and are generally marginalized in the economy (Economic Commission of Africa, 2005).

According to Vivienne, (1999), comparisons with other regions of the world indicate that Africa still lags behind in many areas. Globalization has reinforced the marginalization of women in Africa, particularly in the areas of sustainable livelihoods, trade, property rights and participation in the global economy.

In many African countries, however, unequal access to property, discrimination in the labour market, and business-related obstacles hinder women from contributing even more to their countries' growth and well-being. Removing such obstacles can help not only to empower women, but also to unlock the full economic potential of their nations (Economic Commission of Africa, 2005).

Although there has been an increase in the numbers of women legislative bodies, generally women continue to be under-represented in all structures of power and decision-making. They are subjected to cultural attitudes that do not recognize the right of women to lead. While policies that promote gender equality in appointments to decision-making positions are in place in some countries, implementation lags far behind. Even where women are appointed into positions of power, they are often appointed to head ministries that are considered traditionally 'female' such as health, education, social services, gender and human resources, and away from traditionally 'male' areas such as science and technology, justice, defence, finance and foreign trade (UN Report, 2005).

The African Union Gender Policy reaffirms that whilst significant progress has been made in strengthening women's legal and human rights at continental, regional and

national levels, a lot still needs to be done. Dual legal systems create contradictions on the rights of women by according women some rights through general law and withholding others on the basis of traditional, customary and some religious beliefs and practices, denying women their fundamental rights (sentence not clear). Weak legal frameworks, institutional infrastructure and noncompliance to adopt rights-based legislation continue to hinder progress and empowerment of women in some countries in the continent, resulting in failure to attain required gender justice and human development targets (African Union Gender Policy, 2009).

1.1.3 Social Economic discrimination of Women in Kenya

According to Muteshi, (2006), the Kenyan women's political caucus was formed in 1998 with the aim of mobilizing women in order to articulate their concerns and carry out advocacy in support of the equality bill in parliament. In addition, since 2004, under the then NARC government's national machinery, the National Commission on Gender and Development and governmental bodies such as department of gender under the ministry of Gender, children and social services were created to help formulate policies and carry out measures to eliminate gender discrimination. However, these policies lack meaningful support from the same government and men in implementation.

It is however civil society organizations, especially women led organizations that have carried the burden of alleviating gender discrimination over the years. They include Non Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, women groups and professional organizations, for instance Maendeleo Ya Wanawake, National Council of Women of Kenya, World Vision International, Save the Children, Plan International.

Generally, Kenyan communities have inculcated in their people the assumption that leadership rightfully belongs to men. In patriarchal societies, men, traditionally, are the elders and leaders. They make wide-ranging decisions that affect family and the community. In modern Kenya, when male Members of Parliament are given Cabinet positions, their communities often elevate them to the status of elders and accord them the right to use symbols of leadership and eldership such as walking sticks, knobkerries, beaded or feathered headdresses and traditional attire. This illustrates the continuation of traditional patriarchal practices in a modern society. This elevation to eldership and leadership status in their communities rarely happens to women (Mazrui, 2004).

Although statistics show that girls' enrolment in school is higher than that of boys in Kenya, girls' retention and transition rate above primary and secondary level is lower than that of boys especially in the Arid and Semi-arid areas like Tharaka (Ministry of Education Strategic Plan, 2008). This is because girls are forced into early marriages in search of dowry in many communities and others are converted into labour to earn a living for the family or to take care of their younger siblings. The chances of girls' getting into influential decision making organs therefore become limited, leaving them as mere casual labourers and with junior positions in their places of work.

Women constitute over 52% of Kenya's population, but the majority of them are among the most illiterate and poor in the country. Gender disparities in terms of employment ratios of men and women, educational attainment, dominance of men in certain professional disciplines and unbalanced gender representation at decision making positions, can be traced back to traditional and cultural biases against the female gender (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics Report, 2010).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although emphasis has been put on the importance of gender equality globally and in Kenya through legal instruments like the Kenyan Constitution (2010), Kenya Gender Equality and Development Policy 2006, CEDAW 1975 and other international agreements, gender discrimination is still very visible in the social and, economic arena in Kenya and Tharaka in particular. In Gatue division of Tharaka, 99.5 % of property is owned and controlled by men, leaving women with a mere 0.5% and 1% respectively (Tharaka District Statistics office and Tharaka District Lands office). The current study investigates the nature of social economic discrimination and its effects on women empowerment. Moreover, there is no documented research that has been done on social economic discrimination of women in Tharaka, thus the need to conduct this study.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to find out the nature of social economic discrimination and how it affects women's empowerment in Gatue Division, Tharaka.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- i) To explore the nature of social/economic discrimination
- ii) To establish how social discrimination affects women's empowerment.
- iii) To investigate how economic discrimination affects women's empowerment

1.5 Research Questions

This study was based on the following research questions:

- i) What are the various forms of socio- economic discrimination experienced by women?

ii) In what ways does social discrimination affect women empowerment?

iii) How does economic discrimination affect women empowerment?

1.6 Justification of the Study

The findings of this study are significant to the Ministry of Gender and Children's Services in that they may be used in drawing programs that are geared towards achieving gender equality and women empowerment.

In addition, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) can utilize the research findings in developing programs\projects that target women empowerment and that address socio- economic discrimination of women. The NGOs can also be guided by the research in addressing the root causes of social economic discrimination and the challenges faced by women in their struggle towards achieving gender equality.

The study is also useful in micro finance companies or banks, since they could come up with money lending policies that protect women from over dependency on men as loan guarantors, hence giving women the freedom of accessing loans without restrictions. Moreover, the study may help students who are undertaking gender studies at the post secondary level in understanding how gender discrimination impacts on women empowerment and the role of women in development.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The study was confined to Gatue division only due to inadequate funds. The study also concentrated on the nature and effects of socio- economic discrimination on women's empowerment.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This study was based on descriptive research design. According to Gay, (1987), descriptive research often involves collecting information through data review, surveys and interviews. Descriptive study describes and interprets what is. It is

concerned with conditions or relationships that exists, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing. It is limited in that it does not address the causes of developing trends .The researcher used interviews and focused group discussions to collect data and not the questionnaires. This is because according to Kumar (2005), interviews and focused group discussions are very flexible and can be used to collect large amounts of information. Trained interviewers/ researcher can hold the respondent's attention and is available to clarify difficult questions. The researcher can also guide interviews, explore issues, and probe as the situation requires.

1.9 Assumptions of the study

The following assumptions were made:

The respondents gave accurate responses during interviews and focused group discussions.

The respondents were willing to give information freely.

Every aspect of socio- economic discrimination is an indication of hindrance to women empowerment.

1.10 Definition of significant terms.

Culture is the beliefs, values, behaviour and materials which are created and shared by a particular group of people. It consists of a set traditions and principles transmitted from generation to generation and its flexible and subject to change because it is created by people.

Economic discrimination is where women have unequal access to economic resources such as capital, credit, labour, land and limited opportunities for employment and career advancement which restricts their ability to improve their economic situation. Women have unequal access to education and training

opportunities which leads to low literacy levels and employment in unskilled, low status jobs.

Gender refers to the social differences and relations between men and women which are learned; they vary widely among societies and cultures and change over time.

Gender discrimination is the systematic unfavorable treatment of individuals on the basis of their gender which denies them rights, opportunities or resources.

Gender equality refers to the equal valuing of the roles of men and women where by men and women are given equal opportunities, overcoming barriers of stereotype and prejudices so that both sexes are able to equally contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political development within the society.

Gender inequality refers to unequal provision of opportunities and conditions for both men and women to realize their full potential in economic, social, cultural and political development, where one sex is given preferred treatment or favour on the basis of the biological make up.

Social discrimination refers to insufficient support to mechanisms that promote the advancement of women such as unequal access to education and health for women due to cultural prejudice, inadequate involvement or participation of women in decision making and leadership, women's roles having less value than that of men and high levels of violence against women where it is accepted as 'normal' and makes women not participate in development processes.

Women empowerment is whereby women have more power over their own situation and can make improvements to their lives. This means that women achieve increasing control of the various aspects of their lives and participate in development activities, decision making, economic activities and control resources and benefits just like the men.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, review of related literature is presented. The review discusses aspects of different forms of gender discrimination. Causes of gender discrimination and, how it affects women's empowerment, interventions that have been used to address gender discrimination is also presented. The theoretical framework based on Marxist, Liberal, and Social Feminist Theory are discussed. Finally conceptual framework is presented.

2.2 Forms of gender discrimination

According to UNESCO (2000), there are various forms of gender discriminations which are experienced by women.

2.2.1 Social discrimination

Social discrimination is characterised by women and men having different roles and responsibilities in the society. For example men tend to do heavier work that is usually located outside the home. Men's work tends to have higher status than that of women whose main responsibility is that of caring for children, the elderly and providing food for the family. Women have unequal access to education and health services (Sally and Rachel, 2005). Social customs that encourage or force girls into teenage marriages and early child bearing have dangerous consequences for their health. There is a high level of violence against women where it is accepted as 'normal' and makes women not to participate in development processes. In addition, there is insufficient support by government and men to mechanisms that promote the advancement of women (Mazrui, 2004).

Gender discrimination begins early. Modern diagnostic tools for pregnancy have made it possible to determine a child's sex in the earliest phase. Where there is a clear economic or cultural preference for sons, the misuse of these techniques can facilitate women foeticide. Although there is no conclusive evidence to confirm such illegal misuse, birth histories and census data reveal an unusually high proportion of male births and male children under five in Asia, notably in China and India, suggesting sex selective foeticide and infanticide in the world's two most populous countries—despite initiatives to eradicate these practices in both countries (Miller,2008).

2.2.2 Economic discrimination

Employment is important for socio-economic well-being. It is widely acknowledged in Kenya that there are wide disparities in employment by men and women. The participation of men in the labour force is also higher than that of women. Women mostly occupy low-grade positions, especially in the public sector and are concentrated in the non-professional positions. It is significant, for example, that women only constituted 13% of the total professionals in public service in 2002 (Society for International Development, 2004).

About 70% of the world's poor are women and the number living in poverty has increased. Women have unequal access to economic resources such as capital, credit, labour, land and limited opportunities for employment and career advancement which restricts their ability to improve their economic situation. Women have unequal access to education and training opportunities which leads to low literacy levels and employment in unskilled, low status jobs (UNESCO, 2000).

Table 2.1: Gender disparities in employment opportunities

Employment	Units	Female	Male
Mean monthly earnings from paid employment rates (1999)	Ksh.	5,752	8,440
Labour force participation rates (1999)	Percent	72.6	74.7
Informal sector employment	"	45.0	55.0
Formal sector employment	"	28.0	71.9
Unemployment rates (15-64 years)	"	19.3	9.8
Wage employment by grades (public-2002)	Percent		
Bottom 5 A	"	70	30
B	"	65	35
C	"	67	33
E	"	77	33
F	"	89	23
Top 5 Q	"	19	81
R	"	15	85
S	"	10	90
T	"	6	94
U	"	30	70
Occupation of employed person (15-64)	Percent		
Legislators, senior officials and managers	"	12.6	87.4
Professionals	"	13.3	86.7
Technical and associate professionals	"	37.1	62.9
Clerks	"	39.7	60.3
Service workers, shop/market sale workers	"	50.3	49.7
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	"	58.0	42.0
Craft & related activities	"	20.4	79.6
Plant and machinery operators & assemblers	"	4.0	96.0
Elementary occupation	"	52.0	48.0
Others	"	59.1	40.9

Source: 1998/99 Integrated Labour Force Survey data, the 1999 Population and Housing Census and Records of Directorate of Personnel management.

Table 2.1 summarizes some of the important dimensions of economic discrimination of women. The data shows that men not only have higher incomes, but are also better placed in the labour market in terms of the kind of jobs they do. As mentioned above, holders of public offices in Kenya may, on given situations, offer services based on one's socio-economic characteristics. The status of women in Kenya, and the degree to which they enjoy their freedoms and rights, depends a great deal on how well they are represented in senior positions.

Table 2.2: Administrative and Diplomatic ranks by gender

Gender	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female
Occupation	1998	2000	Mar-02	1998	2000	Mar-02
Provincial Commissioners	8	7	7	0	1	1
Permanent Secretaries	26	15	14	4	3	4
District Commissioners	68	67	65	1	3	5
Deputy Secretaries	69	71	72	13	14	14
District Officers	644	647	644	68	82	85
Ambassadors/ Commissioners High	31	28	28	2	5	6

Source: *Analytical Report on Gender Dimensions, Population Census, 1999*

Table 2.2 shows the composition, by gender, of senior positions in government and in the diplomatic service. It is evident that women have been poorly represented as Permanent Secretaries, District Commissioners and District Officers. Until 2000, there was no woman provincial commissioner and the ratio of women to men district commissioners was 1:13 as of March 2002 (Society for International Development, 2004).

Women are poorly represented at all levels of formal decision making in society particularly regional and national levels. The legal system in most countries discriminates against women in the areas of family law, inheritance, property and land ownership, citizenship and criminal law. The prosecution of cases involving violence against women and the girl child is particularly difficult and in most cases is dismissed on the basis of lack of evidence. All the above inequalities are great hindrances to women empowerment (UNESCO, 2000).

Table 2.3: Composition of judicial service and legal sector by gender

Gender	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female
Occupation	1996	1998	2002	1996	1998	2002
Chief Justice	1	1	1	-	-	-
Judge Court Judge	10	9	10	-	-	1
Commissioner of Assize	26	24	29	4	5	6
Chief magistrate	-	6	5	-	4	3
Senior principal magistrate	5	6	6	4	4	4
Senior resident magistrate	5	7	8	3	3	4
Magistrate	27	25	27	13	14	16
District magistrate	72	58	61	24	28	31
Chief Kadhis	14	17	17	-	-	-
Total	237	225	236	87	99	107
Lawyers	3249	3255	3193	1295	1409	1531

Source: *Analytical report On Gender Dimensions, Population Census, 1999*

An important dimension of gender discrimination is the number of women in Kenya's judicial service and the number of women lawyers being admitted to the bar. This information is presented in Table 2.3. It shows, for instance, that Kenya has never had a woman Chief Justice and only in July 2011 got a woman Deputy Chief Justice, and supreme court judge (Njoki Ndugu) with the promulgation of new constitution; a woman Judge in the Appeal Court in 2002, against 10 of them who are men. As of March 2002, there were twice as many men lawyers as there were women ones (Society for International Development, 2004).

2.3 Causes of social economic discrimination

Women's discrimination limits the scope of their rights in most countries. . The causes of women's subordination and unequal gender relations are deeply rooted in history, religions, culture, legal systems, political institutions and social attitudes. The perceptions of stereotypical images and words that portray women negatively hinder the fight against gender discrimination. In many Kenyan communities, cultural taboos imposed on women contribute to the perception that when women struggle for equality, this means that they want to usurp the rights and roles of men. Since cultural perceptions and attitudes underpin many gender issues, it is critical that these be

addressed if the gender debate in Kenya, and elsewhere in Africa, is to move forward positively (Mazrui, 2004).

Women are the victims of violence and discrimination in virtually all cultures in Africa. The basic cause of the problem is the degrading cultural attitude that perceives males as superior to females. A woman who only gives birth to females is treated like an outcast not only by other people but also by her husband who, in biological terms determines the sexes of his children. Thus, the boy child is raised with a mentality of male superiority. This negative traditional attitude manifest in violence against women everywhere. Women are victims of domestic violence. A number of women are going through a lot of trauma in their matrimonial homes. Many men, at the least provocation, turn their wives into punching bags. It is common to see women with black eyes, swollen lips, battered heads and weals all over their bodies and if you did not know that they were mauled by their husbands, you would think they were victims of road traffic accidents (Miller, 2008).

Early marriage is a form of violence against women. When a girl is given in marriage at fourteen or thereabouts, as is the case in some African societies, she is stunted in growth emotionally and psychologically. Such children are not allowed to pass through adolescence before they are given into marriage. Soon, they become child-mothers. They become adults before their time. Usually, they experience physical problems like obstructed or painful labour, often resulting in stillbirth (Mulenkei, 2002).

There are other forms of violence against women. Sexual abuse in all its ramifications, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) which renders a woman incomplete, and the subordination of females to their male counterparts, are all forms of violence against women. Apart from being victims of violence, women also suffer gender

discrimination in various situations. Almost every Africa culture encourages male child preference. So, early in life, a female child in a typical African home is bewildered as she notices that her male siblings are more preferred. In many places, women are either denied education or are not allowed to have the same quality of education as males because it is believed that educating females is an economic waste since she will leave the family and go to another family. The reasoning is that if a man educates his daughter, he would not reap from it in terms of material reward. The fact is that females care more for their parents than males. Later in life, the female is discriminated against in employment on ground of sex. This pervasive discrimination against females occurs in every segment of the society- the home, the school, the workplace, in politics. For instance, it's only in Liberia that a woman has ruled as a president in the whole of Africa (Miller, 2008).

In Africa, illiteracy levels are quite high, with many people, especially in the rural areas hardly understanding the negative impact of gender stereotypes and discrimination. This hinders the attainment of gender equity. Many socio-cultural constructs regarding sex are used to justify gender disparities in development, due mainly to ignorance. Even some policy makers do not know what gender mainstreaming is all about. Majority of them, like the feminist predecessors, comfortably equate gender issues to women's issues. Gender mainstreaming requires a multifaceted approach, which intervenes at the level of the home, community, the work place and within the educational system. It is not enough to deal with issues of access. What is required is Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) for effective socio-cultural and political transformation which then can bring about an environment that is both gender sensitive and gender fair (Njoka , 2007).

The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women is the first critical area of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action 1995. Alleviation of poverty is also the first goal in the MDGs and an important goal of NEPAD. Poverty is also recognized as a major challenge to the achievement of the gender equality. Women continue to languish in poverty because they do not have access to and control of resources. In the agricultural sector, women grow about half of the world's food but hardly own any land. Chances are that the food they produce is sold off by their husbands without their consent because they do not own any land (Economic Commission of Africa, 2005).

Women's discrimination in employment status and low earnings are associated with poverty in many countries around the world. Women tend to be concentrated in informal employment, where pay and conditions of work are worse than in public and formal jobs. Unless improving women's earnings is seen as central to increasing the incomes of poor households, it will be difficult to meet the MDGs of reducing poverty, reducing gender discrimination, and empowering women (Reeves and Baden, 2000).

Women's differential access to power and control of resources is central to discrimination in all institutional spheres, which is the household, community, market and state. For instance, gender discrimination simply means that: women work 67% of the world's working hours (both productive and reproductive), 2 out of 3 of the world's illiterate people are women, women earnings range from 50 to 85% of men's earnings, globally, women make up just over 10% of the representatives in national governments ((Reeves and Baden, 2000).

In the labour market, unequal pay, occupational exclusion or segregation into low skill and low paid work limit women's earnings in comparison to those of men of

similar education levels. Women's lack of representation and voice in decision-making bodies in the community and the state perpetuates discrimination in terms of access to public services such as schooling, healthcare or discriminatory laws. Laws are usually a product of a culture with oppressive gender ideologies (Jahan, 1995).

Culture is a major cause of social economic discrimination. In most traditional African communities, women were and are still treated as inferior to men. They were not incorporated in decision making as this was a no go zone for women. Women were also not allowed to own any property and land. They could only own property through marriage and their male children in the event of widowhood. This impoverished women especially if they were widowed and did not have any male children. Women were also not given an opportunity to make any sound decisions of their own nor could they participate in active economic, social and cultural development. Many African communities have still not gotten over these traditional practices that were meant to oppress women, hence where they are practiced; they act as a strong hindrance to women empowerment (Elimu Yetu Coalition, 2003).

Despite legal reforms in most of the African countries, women's social and economic status continues to be largely defined by customary rules that are deeply rooted in the specific countries. Women, especially in Africa and particularly Kenya, have relegated to an inferior position throughout the history of mankind. She is regarded as 'the weaker sex' thus not as capable as her male counterpart who is considered 'more able and wiser' and from whom she should rely on for direction, protection and existence. The ability to control resources, make decisions, inherit and participate are contained in the law but never practiced. The participation in and receipt of benefit from the formal and informal economic sector is impeded by laws and regulations. For African indigenous, rural and urban poor women, their countries' legal systems

are either irrelevant to their lives or constitute systems that reinforce constraints (Mulenkei, 2002).

The Constitution of Kenya 2010 recognizes gender equality as a fundamental human right principle and provides for affirmative action to redress imbalances including those based on gender. It recognizes the rights of all citizens (men and women, girls and boys) to reach their full potential in social, economic and political activities. These Constitutional provisions are linked to the Kenya Vision 2030 whose aims are to be realized through the implementation of specific strategies. For instance, increasing the participation of women in all economic, social and political decision-making processes such as; higher representation of women in Parliament , improving access of all disadvantaged groups to business opportunities, health and education services, housing and justice and Minimizing vulnerabilities through prohibition of retrogressive practices like female genital mutilation and child labour (Republic of Kenya, Medium term development Plan 2008-2012)).

The Kenya Vision 2030 is the national planning and development framework with gender responsive principles. The Vision 2030 recognizes that Kenyan women have been disempowered at the household, community and national levels. As a result, they are disadvantaged in accessing labour markets and productive resources. They are also under-represented in social and political leadership. The capabilities of women have also not been developed to full potential due to limited access to capital, education, training and health care. These disparities need to be remedied (Republic of Kenya, Medium term development Plan 2008-2012).

2.4 Effects of social economic discrimination on women empowerment

Women empowerment is a process of transforming gender relations through groups or individuals developing awareness of women's subordination and building their

capacity to challenge it. Alleviating gender discrimination will require changes in institutional practices and social relations through which disparities are reinforced and sustained. It also requires a strong voice for women in shaping their societies. Due to the nature of gender discrimination, it is difficult to achieve gender equality without the empowerment of women. Both equality and empowerment are necessary in order to achieve political, social, economic, cultural and environmental stability. Because of the current disparities, equal treatment of women and men is insufficient as a strategy for gender equality (Society for International Development, 2004).

Although there has been some acknowledgement that gender equality is essential for eradicating poverty in Africa, the number of women living in poverty continues to increase. Women constitute the vast majority (up to 80%) of the poor. Unequal access to and control over productive resources, unequal access to social services such as health and education, skewed distribution of remunerated and unremunerated work and inadequate support for women's productive activities and entrepreneurship are some of the major causes of the widespread increase in the number of women living in poverty (Economic Commission of Africa, 2005).

The majority of African women live in rural areas, largely confined to subsistence agriculture. They carry the responsibility for the production and preparation of food in their households, caring for children, the elderly, the sick and performing a wide variety of voluntary community services. All these contributions are not recognised or counted in national economic statistics. Poor women head many households and are more likely to take in orphaned children whose numbers have increased exponentially as a result of HIV/AIDS. Lack of recognition of women's work leads to lack of public investment in the areas where women are concentrated, such as the informal sector employment, rural subsistence production, domestic 'reproductive' work or the care

economy and voluntary community work. As a result of the inadequate poverty analysis and diagnosis, gender insensitive policy choices further marginalise women and reinforce poverty (UNIFEM, 2002).

By 2005, nearly half of the 39 million people living with HIV were women. In parts of Africa and the Caribbean, young women (aged 15–24) are up to six times more likely to be infected than young men of their age. Women are at greater risk of contracting HIV than men due to social gender discrimination that denies women sex negotiating power with men to reduce their risk of infection. High rates of illiteracy among women prevent them from knowing about the risks of HIV infection and possible protection strategies. A survey of 24 sub-Saharan African countries by UNICEF in 2008 revealed that two thirds or more of young women lack comprehensive knowledge of HIV transmission (Miller, 2008).

Elderly women may face double discrimination on the basis of both gender and age. Women tend to live longer than men, may lack control of family resources and can face discrimination from inheritance and property laws. Many older women are plunged into poverty at a time of life when they are very vulnerable. Only a few developing countries have safety nets for older people in the form of non-contributory or means tested pensions (Miller, 2008).

Another major challenge to eradication of gender discrimination is the apparent inability of governments to translate gender policies into effective, actionable programmes. Many governments have reported that they incorporated the Beijing objectives and MDGs relating to gender equality into national poverty reduction policies and development plans. However, research has revealed that even where gender-related poverty issues have been raised in country policies, gender-sensitive programmes to deal with these issues are rarely identified or implemented and most

measures taken do not address the gender issues and problems identified in the policy diagnosis (Economic Commission of Africa, 2005).

When women are sexually abused, many do not report the crime because of the stigma attached to such assaults. The woman is often seen as the one responsible for the crime. The phrases we often hear in this context are negative ones such as 'oh, she asked for it', or 'she must have been badly dressed'. These negative views imprint on our minds the idea that it is the behaviour of women which leads to sexual harassment. A consequence of this is that, 'victims of rape and incest are habitually viewed with suspicion, negatively stereotyped, treated with insensitivity, or pressurized into forgetting about these crimes and moving on with their damaged lives' (Omamo, 2002).

Proving rape is difficult and many offenders do not get charged in courts of law. Even when they are charged, the prosecution may not be effective since in Kenyan courts, 'cultural biases are discernible in decisions made by courts involving gender-based crimes' (Omamo, 2002).

Gender parity in primary school enrolment does not necessarily bring about equal empowerment. Even when young women enter school in equal numbers with young men, they still drop out in large numbers. They suffer from sexual harassment, are married off early by their parents in favour of their brothers education and they are discouraged from seeking higher education because of unequal job opportunities. Even when they enter employment in equal numbers, they bump against the glass ceiling in unequal promotions and unequal pay (UNIFEM, 2002).

An assessment of PRSPs conducted by the World Bank Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network in 2001 revealed some important findings. For instance, none of the countries had considered gender issues in the diagnosis, actions

or monitoring in agriculture, safety nets, governance, infrastructure or financial services sectors; gender issues were better integrated into health, nutrition and population issues because of the need to discuss reproductive health issues, especially women's reproductive roles. Only one quarter of the PRSPs considered gender issues in relation to HIV and AIDS. Although there was some discussion of gender issues in the diagnosis of the education sector, only 3 PRSPs included actions to address gender specific constraints identified in the diagnosis.

In addition, the International Conference on Population and Development Plan of Action also puts the fulfilment of women's potential through education and skills training at the center of population policies and programmes. Major challenges to progress in education and training for women in Africa arise from persistent gender stereotyping, widespread gender discrimination and negative social attitudes toward girls' education. In lower income households, girls are over-burdened with household work compared to their male counterparts and are more likely to drop out of school when families experience economic and/or social hardships. While 61% of illiterate people over the age of 15 in sub-Saharan Africa are female, pressure from multiple reproductive roles for women leaves little time for adult education (Economic Commission of Africa, 2005).

The main challenge to women's health arises from inequitable distribution of health care services, particularly in rural areas. In rural areas (where the majority of the people live), there are insufficient human resources and inadequate health delivery infrastructure. Gender inequality in the health sector is reflected by high malnutrition among women and girls as well as high rates of fertility, infant mortality and maternal mortality. In countries where there is armed conflict and political instability, health delivery systems have been disrupted and there is less expenditure on social services

compared to military spending. The health of women and girls, who are often the main victims of the conflict, is greatly compromised. One of the main challenges to women's health in Africa is the absence of support structures to enable women to enjoy their reproductive rights (Rachel and Sally DFID Report, 2005).

According to UNFPA (2005), adolescent childbearing are at a significant risk of dying. About 50% of women in Africa have their first pregnancy by the age of 19. This increases their lifetime risk of maternal death. For every woman who dies, approximately 30 more suffer injuries, infection and disabilities in pregnancy or childbirth. The cumulative total of those affected has been estimated at 300 million, or about one third of adult women in the developing world.

The main challenges that hinder the achievement of gender equality in Africa include putting gender equality at the heart of decent work. Despite signs of progress in gender equality over the past 15 years, there is still a significant gap between women and men in terms of job opportunities and quality of employment. Increasing women's participation and leadership in business operations at all levels, including boards of directors and the CEO-level.

In addition, UNFPA (2005) reports lack of opportunities for women to influence these policies, lack of recognition of the contribution to the macro-economy of the informal, household and rural subsistence economies where women are concentrated; eliminating gender-based violence and harassment of women in the workplace; violence against women has been documented as causing high levels of lost productivity.

Despite existing international conventions, greater awareness and practical strategies to prevent and address violence against women are needed. Moreover, facilitating access to affordable services critical to women's empowerment, such as health,

education, sanitation, water, communications and energy; Opening opportunities for women's engagement in economic activities. Although evidence shows that self-employed women — such as traders, entrepreneurs, or SME owners — have higher re-payment rates for loans than their male counterparts, they are often unable to access formal financial services due to cultural and procedural barriers (Viviene, 1999).

Great disparities exist between women and men when it comes to governance. Many of the problems that confront women political aspirants have to do with cultural perceptions about the role of women in society. From the very start of their political campaigns to the time they enter Parliament, women politicians face physical violence and verbal abuse, in addition to lack of funds and moral support. During the 2002 elections in Kenya, several women politicians were subjected to electoral violence (Mazrui, 2004). For example Ms. Dorcas Wambui, a civic ward aspirant, lost her husband and six members of her family in a fire when political rivals torched her house (Ogembo, 2002). Mrs. Grace Wamuyu Nyachae, the wife of the Ford People presidential candidate, had to flee when her husband's political rivals threatened to attack her and her campaign team (Ogembo, 2002).

2.5 Interventions that have been used to address social economic discrimination

According to Peggy, (2004), the equality of men and women has been accepted as a fundamental principle of human rights since the adoption of the United Nations Charter in 1945. More international agreements which were arrived at include; Convention on the elimination of All forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW) 1979, the World Conference on Human Rights 1993, World Conference of women (Beijing Conference) 1995, the MDGs 2000 (goal 3- Promote gender equality

and empower women by 2015) and the constitution of Kenya 2010- equal opportunities for both men and women.

Identification of women's discrimination as a problem led to a variety of efforts to correct the imbalances. For example, women were organized into groups targeting their projects, thus giving women special attention. Unfortunately this targeted women as a separate category and women were seen as a separate development who needed to be tagged. This led to giving them token assistance and in projects, which were too small for too many, for instance, 60 women owning 2 cows and women continued to be marginalised (Njiro, 2010). Enacting laws against discrimination on the basis of sex like CEDAW in 1979 by UN in which all member countries signed and ratified. The laws unfortunately are more paperwork – despite their objectives to ensure that women and men enjoy equality before the law and are not discriminated against on the basis of sex, gender and other grounds of disadvantage not much has been achieved. Most of the glaring inequalities have been removed yet discriminatory attitudes which render the laws and rights meaningless continue. The great concern is lack of implementation by governments and punitive measures particularly on the issues of customary law versus western laws ((Njiro, 2010).

There was increasing donor funds to women's projects by subsidising inputs, training and technology so as to reach out to many women. Such projects once successful are hijacked by the men. Thus the assumption that women would produce more goods, services and profit from their production to raise the family's standards was proved wrong. Researchers sought to understand how and why women continued to be subordinated and how this could change. Systematic documentation of women's constraints and contributors has changed what women and men do and how this fits in development process. This has brought a deeper theoretical understanding of the

underlying issues. Gender studies are about contributing to these efforts and bring about a lasting change (Society for International Development, 2004).

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework brings out the arguments of various scholars, which help us understand the causes of socio-economic discrimination among women and how its effects on women empowerment. It also portrays the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the current study.

2.6.1 Marxist Feminist Theory

Marxist Feminist theory's foundation is laid by Marx and Engels in their analysis of gender oppression. They stated that women's subordination is not as a result of her biological disposition but of social relations. According to Barrett, (1980), Marxist feminism states that private property, which gives rise to economic inequality, dependence, political confusion and ultimately unhealthy social relations between men and women, is the root cause of women's oppression in the current social context. Marxists feminists attributes the subordination of women to the needs of capitalism to have both a domestic labour force and a 'reserve army of labor' which will further the interests of the capitalist class.

Thus women reproduce the labour force biologically (childbearing) and socially (childrearing), they act as consumers for the products of capitalism and they serve as a source of psychological and material comfort for men workers in the capitalist enterprise. Women's subordinate social position is due to the class conflict and oppression which is generally a characteristic of capitalist economy likely to lead to economic oppression. Marxist feminists argue that because the subordination of women is maintained by the capitalist system, then that system should be the primary target of women's political activism. Women must organize with the male working

class to abolish the capitalist system and establish a new mode of production – a socialist system. Only with socialism will classes disappear and a true basis of gender equality be established (Barrett, 1980).

The Marxist Feminist Theory has a relationship with the independent variable (social economic discrimination) and the dependent variable (women empowerment) as well as the moderating variable (government policies) and the intervening variable (culture) in that; the theory presents women discrimination as formed by the society/culture in favour of men and with support / good will of the government. According to the theory, women subordination therefore leaves them with no resources/ means of production and in a state of oppression.

2.6.2 Liberal Feminist Theory

The first Western liberal feminist theorist, Mary Wollstonecraft, argued that women's capacity to reason was equal to that of men and that biological sex differences were irrelevant to the granting of political rights. She argued that the reason women appeared to be intellectually inferior was due to their inferior education. Liberal feminists focus on equal opportunities for women and men. Their concern is that women should receive equal opportunities in education, campaigns for women's voting and property rights. These feminists are also concerned that job opportunities be equally open to women so that they can achieve positions of power in government and business. Liberal- feminist activists are concerned with ensuring that laws and policies do not discriminate against women and that women have equal opportunities in all aspects of life (Mitchell, 1984).

According to Mitchell, (1984), liberal-feminist theorist has been the dominant guide for setting up special women's departments and machinery in government. These departments promote the interests of women within the existing socio-economic

system. Policies are proposed to remove discriminatory practices in institutions that support women. For example, if women have unequal access to credit, then bank policy can be changed or special programs can be set up for women's credit.

The liberal feminist theory has a relationship with the variables in the study in that it supports the fact that gender equality which means equal opportunities for both men and women socially and economically through government's goodwill in implementation of gender equality supportive policies, would culminate to women empowerment.

2.6.3 Socialist Feminist Theory

According to Mitchell (1984), socialist feminists argued that class and women's subordination were of equal importance and had to be challenged simultaneously. They argued that there were four interlocking structures to be considered in women's subordination: production, reproduction, sexuality and child bearing. They argued that if they are to understand and abolish women's subordination, it is essential that they examine the processes by which gender characteristics are defined and gender relations are constructed. Mitchell (1984) adds that social feminists promote policies to eliminate gender segregation in domestic and wage labour, eliminate sexual harassment in the workplace, achieve equal pay for work of equal value, increase women's control over their conditions of work, transform the conditions in which women can make reproductive choices and increase public responsibility for child care.

The socialist feminist theory has a relationship with the variables in the study in that it portrays social economic discrimination of women as a cultural formulation and argues that this can be eradicated by implementation of gender equality supportive

government policies that will enhance capacities of women socially, economically resulting to ultimate women empowerment.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), conceptual framework is a diagrammatical representation of the relationship between the variables in the study.

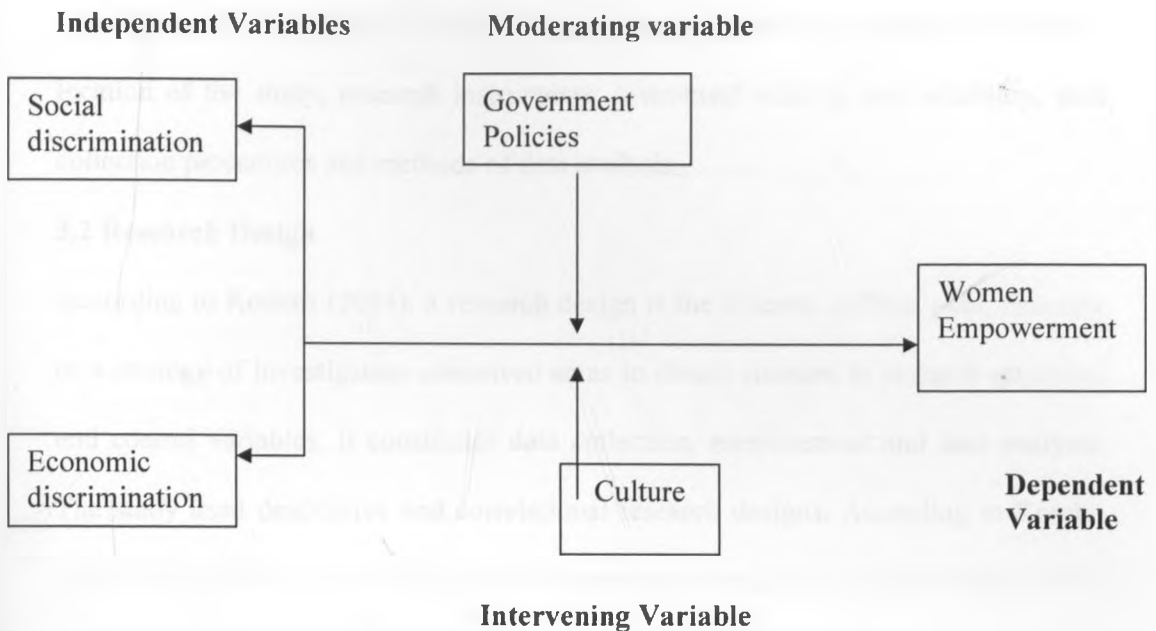


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

2.8 Summary

There is increasing evidence of the link between making progress on gender equality, and making progress on all the other development objectives. Tackling social economic discrimination of women through access to services and resources is proven to increase women’s productivity, and reduce poverty and hunger. Economically empowered women play a more active role in household decision-making, with greater bargaining power to increase spending on education and health. Educated girls and women have better opportunities for entrepreneurship and to earn higher wages, lifting themselves and their families, out of poverty.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research methodology employed in the present study. It specifically focuses on the research design, target population, sampling procedures, location of the study, research instruments, instrument validity and reliability, data collection procedures and methods of data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

According to Kothari (2004), a research design is the scheme, outline, plan, structure or a strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and control variables. It constitutes data collection, measurement and data analysis. The study used descriptive and correlational research designs. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), the major purpose of descriptive design is to describe the state of affairs as it exists. It involves methods of collecting data through key informants interviews and focused group discussions. Correlational design enabled the researcher to establish the relationship between socio- economic discrimination (independent variable), women empowerment (dependent variable), government policies (moderating variable) and culture (intervening variable).

3.3 Target Population

The study took place in Gatue division of Tharaka North district which is a semi arid area and one of the Districts in Tharaka Nithi County. The study was conducted in Gatue division because it is the remotest area of Tharaka North district and lags behind in development as compared to other parts of the larger Tharaka. It covers an area of 734.5 KM² and has four locations namely; Gatue, Kathangachini, Maragwa

and Kanjoro. It borders Mukothima division on the north, Mwingi district on the south, Tharaka South district on the east, and Tigania East district on the west. The area of study has a population of 28,713 people who are distributed in four locations as follows; Gatue 7213, Kathangachini 7541, Maragwa 7038 and Kanjoro 6921 people (District Statistics office, Tharaka).

3.4 Sampling procedures and techniques

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), sampling is the procedure of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group. Stratified sampling was used in identifying the sample for the FGDs because it is more appropriate since the study dealt with the youth, men and women from four locations. Since the population is homogeneous, stratified technique was used in order to obtain a representative sample. Purposive sampling technique was used to identify the key informants. The sample size comprised of 100 people distributed in the entire division. The number interviewed was allocated proportionately (Kothari, 2004.63). The formula used is as shown below.

If P_i represents proportion of population in stratum i , and n represents the total sample size, the number of element selected from stratum i , is $n \cdot p_i$ (Kothari 2006.63). This was calculated as follows; sample size (n) = 100 to be drawn from a population size (N) = 28,713 which is divided in four locations that form 4 strata of sizes:

$$\text{Gatue } (N_1) = (7213/28,713) \times 100 = 25 \text{ Youth (13 women and 12 men)}$$

$$\text{Khangachini } (N_2) = (7541/28,713) \times 100 = 26 \text{ (13 women and 13 men)}$$

$$\text{Maragwa } (N_3) = (7038/28,713) \times 100 = 25 \text{ (13 men and 12 women)}$$

$$\text{Kanjoro } (N_4) = (6921/28,713) \times 100 = 24 \text{ (12 men and 12 women)}$$

Key informants from the North District :1 gender officer (woman), 1 Maendeleo Ya Wanawake leader (woman), 1 NGO worker (woman), 1 education officer (man), 1 health worker (man), 1 lands officer (man) = 6

Total..... 106 people (53 women and 53 men)

3.5 Methods of Data collection

The data was collected using key informant interviews (KII) and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs). According to Kumar (2005) FGDs and KII research instruments enable the researcher to acquire more information through discussions and probing the interviewees. Those participating were able to comment on the views of other members in the group. Face to face interviews were conducted by the researcher with guided questions which were developed considering independent and dependent variables. Tape recorder was used to collect data from the FGDs because it was not possible to capture all the information from the respondents through writing. The researcher conducted eight (8) focused group discussions. These comprised of two (2) youth FGDs, 13 women to 12 men; six (6) FGDs for men and women which were done separately to give women freedom of expression without fear of intimidation by men so that the researcher could acquire detailed information; and six (6) key informants interviews.

3.6 Reliability and Validity of Research instruments

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), the validity of test is a measure of how well a test measures what it is supposed to measure. The tools of data collection were interviews through FGD and KII. To assess the validity of the tools used, the researcher conducted a pre-test of the instruments of data collection in a local shopping centre. Reliability on the other hand is a measure of how consistent the

results are from the test. The researcher used test re-test method that enabled her to ensure reliability of the interviews by examining whether the sample response was obtained. After the pretest the results helped the researcher to make the necessary changes so as to make the instruments valid and reliable in order to collect data for the main study.

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3.7 Operationalization of variables

Table 3.1: Operationalization of variables

Objectives	Type of variable	Indicators	Measure	Data collection	Level of scale	Approach of Analysis	Level of Analysis
To explore the forms/nature of social economic discrimination experienced by women	Independent variable	Identified forms of social economic discriminations	The extent to which the various forms of social economic discrimination affect women empowerment	FGDs KII (Interviews)	Nominal Ratio Ordinal	Qualitative Quantitative	Descriptive
To establish how social discrimination affects women empowerment.	Independent variable	-Women involvement and participation in decision making organs. -Women in leadership positions. -equal education opportunities for men and women. -Equal access to health and reproductive health education/services for men and women	-Number of women involved and participation in decision making. -Number of women in active leadership positions. -Number of women accessing health and reproductive health services.	FGDs KII (Interviews)	Nominal Ratio Ordinal	Qualitative Quantitative	Descriptive
To investigate how economic discrimination affects women empowerment.	Independent variable	-Property ownership and control by women -Women involvement in economic activities -Women in senior employment	-Number title deeds owned by women -Number of women in business and other economic activities -Number of women in senior formal	FGDs KII (Interviews)	Nominal Ratio Ordinal	Qualitative Quantitative	Descriptive

		positions	employment positions				
Government Policies	Moderating variable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Government policies put in place in support of women empowerment. -NGO/ private sector initiatives on women empowerment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Efficiency and effectiveness of government policies / NGOs in support of women empowerment. 	FGDs KII (Interviews)	Nominal Ratio Ordinal	Qualitative Quantitative	Descriptive
Women empowerment	Dependent variable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Women involvement in decision making position -High literacy levels for women -Women involvement and participation in economic activities -Women ownership and control of property -Women access and control of reproductive health. -Adequate women representation in political positions -Ability of women to make decisions on issues affecting them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of women in leadership/ decision making positions. -Number of literate women in senior formal employment. -Number of women who own businesses and other economic activities. -Number of women using family planning methods. -Women representation in political positions -Number of independent women 	FGDs KII (Interviews)	Nominal Ratio Ordinal	Qualitative Quantitative	Descriptive

		positions	employment positions				
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3.8 Methods of Data Analysis

The collected quantitative and qualitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and themes. Descriptive statistics was used to establish the general characteristics of the study population. The data collected was analysed using themes since the study is based on qualitative paradigms and Statistical Package of Social Sciences. The analyzed data was presented using percentages, frequency distribution tables and themes (Kumar, 2005)

3.9 Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology applied. Various research methodology items are explained as per their application. The explanation of these research methodology items follow the following sequence; research design, target population, sampling procedure, methods of data collection, Instrument reliability and validity and methods of data analysis.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents analysed data and its interpretation. The data presented is based on the objectives of the study. Thus analytical insight is centered on the forms of socio-economic discrimination against women, effects of social discrimination on women empowerment and effects of economic discrimination on women empowerment.

4.2 Demographic information

The 8 sampled focused group discussions were conducted representing a return rate of 100% and 6 key informant interviews were also done, hence 100% statistically acceptable representation of the target population.

4.3 Nature of socio- economic discrimination

The form in which women inequality manifests itself is varied as the economic, social and cultural conditions of the world community.

4.3.1 Ways in which women are socially discriminated

The respondents were requested to indicate ways in which women are discriminated against in Gatue Division through focused group discussions and key informant interviews. The results are presented in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Summarised views on ways in which women are socially discriminated

Forms of social discrimination	Frequency			Percentage
		Men	Women	
Discriminatory cultural practices against women	7	3	4	50
Unequal division of labour	5	3	2	35.7
Women are given limited interactive freedom	9	4	5	64.3
Lack of participation in social, cultural and community development activities	5	4	5	35.7
Lack of participation in leadership roles	11	4	7	78.6
Inadequate involvement in decision making	5	2	3	35.7
Physical , verbal and sexual abuse	3	1	2	21.4

Table 4.1 shows that the respondents indicated that, women in Gatue Division experience discriminatory practices (50%) such as female genital mutilation among others. The respondents also recorded, unequal division of labour (35.7%), limited interactive freedom which instills fear in the women making them withdraw from development activities that would empower them (64.3%), lack of participation in community development activities (35.7%), lack of participation in leadership roles (78.6%), inadequate involvement in decision making (35.7%) as well as physical, verbal and sexual abuse (21.4%). women are sexually abused by being forced to marry men not of their choice and early marriages so as to get dowry which in turn reduces women's chances of completing education, which in return decreases their ability of getting formal

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employment. As a result of these forms of social discrimination, women have often been regarded and treated as men's inferior and unequal in their activities outside the domestic sphere and have suffered violations of their human rights, consequently affecting their self-esteem and ability to empower themselves.

4.4 Division of labour

The participants in focused group discussions were requested to indicate whether women and men perform the same duties at home. The 8 focused group discussions (100%) respondents indicated that men and women do not perform the same duties. Women do more domestic duties than men. The distribution of tasks and responsibilities of women and men in society mainly restricts women to the domestic sphere and unduly burdens them denying access to education and leisure time.

4.4.1 Reasons for unequal division of labour

The respondents of 8 focused group discussions were requested to indicate some of the reasons as to why women are tasked with more duties at home than men. The respondents indicated that the unequal division of labor among men and women are as a result of cultural 4 (50%), social 2 (25%) and religious beliefs 2 (25%) which has been justified on the basis of the childbearing function of women, which is inherent in womanhood, mainly restricting women to the domestic sphere. As a result, women have often been regarded and treated as men's inferior, and unequal in their activities outside the domestic sphere consequently impeding their ability to empower themselves.

4.4.2 Duties undertaken by men and women in the households

The respondents were requested to indicate duties undertaken by men and women in the households. The results are shown in Table 4.2

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4.4.2 Duties undertaken by men and women in the households

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Table 4.2: Duties undertaken by men and women in the households

Men's Duties	F	%	Women's Duties	F	%
Heading families	7	87.5	Child bearing	8	100.0
Providing basic needs	7	87.5	Providing family care	7	87.5
Overall decision making	5	62.5	Performing household chores	6	75.0
Acquiring family wealth	5	62.5	Performing domestic chores	5	62.5
Providing security	3	37.5	Assisting in household decision making	1	12.5

Table 4.2 indicates that men are overall family heads (87.5%) and decision makers (62.5%) and are tasked with providing basic family needs such as food, clothing and shelter, acquiring family wealth (62.5%) such businesses, family properties and finances and providing the family with security. On the other hand the women are assistants in family matters (12.5%) and are tasked with child bearing and in cases of no children are ridiculed, abused and sometimes sent back to their maternal families, providing family care like ensuring family wellness, performing household chores such as cleaning the house, clothes, dishes fetching water and firewood and performing domestic chores such as working in the farms, cleaning the compound and mending broken fences. This further confirms that women are given more tasks which unduly burdens them and recurrently affects their health hindering them from participating in other activities that would empower them.

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4.4.3 Distribution of labour among boys and girls

The respondents were asked if boys and girls are assigned equal duties by parents at home and if not who is assigned more duties. The responses of the 8 focused group discussions revealed that boys and girls are not (100%) assigned equal duties and that girls (100%) are assigned more duties. In addition, they were asked to give reasons as to why girls are assigned more duties as compared to boys and the responses from 3 focused group discussions (37.5%) indicated that girls are trained to be homemakers whereas 5 (62.7%) reported that girls are put through preparation of their future roles as wives and hence are given more duties than boys.

Table 4.3: Effects of distribution of duties at home on girls

Effect of unequal distribution of duties	Frequency			Percentage
		Men	Women	
Inadequate study time	6	3	3	75.0
Emotional exhaustion	5	2	3	62.5
Physical exhaustion	5	2	3	62.5
Psychological disturbance	4	2	2	50.0
Lack of motivation	2	1	1	25.0

From table 4.3, the respondents indicated that girls have inadequate study time 6 (75%) which could lead to poor academic performance in school. There is also evidence to show that girls are emotionally and physically exhausted as reported by 5 (62.5%), which is likely to affect their physical and mental health and development. A number of respondents 4 (50%) noted that girls are psychologically disturbed, since they seem to be treated differently from their male siblings and as such feel inferior and unequal to them. Lack of motivation due to exhaustion was reported by 2 (25%).

4.5 Reasons why women are socially discriminated

The causes of the inequality between women and men are deeply rooted in history, religion, culture, legal systems, political institutions and social attitudes. The key informants were requested to indicate some of the reasons why women are socially discriminated. The results are summarized in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Reasons which lead to social discrimination of women

Reasons for socially discriminating women	Frequency			Percentage
		Men	Women	
Cultural beliefs	4	2	2	66.7
Customary laws	3	2	1	50.0
Religious beliefs	3	1	2	50.0
Political culture	2	1	1	33.3
Failure to implement discrimination laws	2	1	1	33.3
Gender roles ascribed to women	1	1	0	16.7
Level of education	1	1	0	16.7

The results in Table 4.4 show (according to the key informants) the reasons for social discrimination against women that include cultural beliefs (66.7%), customary laws (50%) and religious beliefs (50%) which have strict norms that limit women possibilities of social, intellectual or emotional fulfillment. The informants also indicated that political cultures (33.3%) where women take a back seat as they are regarded and treated as men's inferior and unequal opponent and as such laxity in implementing discrimination laws

(33.3%) is experienced. Gender roles ascribed to women (16.7%) that unduly burdened them and limit them from attaining the right education (16.7%) are also some of the reasons as to why women are socially discriminated against. Table 4.9 shows views from the FGDs which shows how culture contributes to social discrimination of women.

Table 4.5: Views on how culture contributes to social discrimination of women

Response	Frequency			Percentage
		Men	Women	
Stringent cultural practices	6	2	4	75.0
Women are regarded as inferior beings	5	3	2	62.5
Women are regarded as weak and incapable	2	1	1	25.0

Table 4.5 indicates that culture contributes to social sidelining of women by enforcing stringent cultural practices (75%) that affect women ability to empower themselves, by giving women only limited access to resources and participation in every sphere of life, like decision-making, which then restricts women to domestic sphere. Women are also regarded and treated as men's inferior (62.5%) and as the weaker gender (25%).

4.6 Ways in which women are economically discriminated against.

The respondents were requested to indicate ways in which women are economically discriminated against in Gatue Division. Their responses are indicated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Ways in which women are economically discriminated

Economic discrimination	Focused group discussions (8)				Key Informant interviews (6)			
	Frequency			Percentage	Frequency			Percentage
		M	W			M	W	
Limited access to resources	2	1	1	25.0	2	1	1	33.3
Lack ownership rights	5	3	2	62.5	3	2	1	50.0
Limited employment opportunities	3	2	1	37.5	1	0	1	16.7
Inadequate involvement in decision making	1	0	1	12.5	1	1	0	16.7
Limited participation in leadership roles	2	1	1	25.0	2	1	1	33.3
Unequal inheritance rights	3	2	1	37.5	3	1	2	50.0
Limited access to education	1	0	1	12.5	3	1	2	50.0

According to Table 4.6 respondents in focused group discussions indicated that the women in Gatue Division were discriminated against by being allowed limited access to resources (25%), limited employment opportunities (37.5%) and limited participation in leadership roles (25%). They also indicated that women lack ownership rights (37.5%) and unequal inheritance rights and in case of ownership it is the man who has control over any property the women owns since women rarely participate in decision making processes (12.5%), lack adequate education background (12.5%) which can allow them to own any property. My study findings concur with UNESCO's sentiments that women have unequal access to education and training opportunities which leads to low literacy levels and employment in unskilled, low status jobs. .

The table also lists the informants responses on the ways in which women are politically and economically discriminated against in Gatue Division. According to table 4.10, the informants indicated that women are allowed inadequate involvement in decision making (16.7%) and women have unequal inheritance (50%) and ownership rights (50%). The informants also indicated that the women are allowed limited access to resources (33.3%), employment opportunities (16.7%) and participation in leadership roles (33.3%) as well as limited access to education (50%). Because of their status as second-class citizens, women account for the highest statistics for illiteracy and lack of material and other resources on international charts consequently hindering them from accomplishing their full potential in their activities outside the domestic sphere that would otherwise empower them.

4.6.1 Reasons why women are economically discriminated

The respondents were requested to give reasons as to why women are economically discriminated against. The results are shown in table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Reasons which make women be discriminated economically

Reason	Frequency			Percentage
		Men	Women	
Societal norms	3	2	1	37.5
Women are not given opportunities to exploit their ability as they are perceived to be useless	3	1	2	37.5
Women are perceived as incapable to perform	5	3	2	62.5

As shown in Table 4.7, the participants in focused group discussions indicated that women are economically discriminated against because of society norms dictates (37.5%), and because women are perceived to be useless (37.5%) and incapable to

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As shown in Table 4.7, the participants in focused group discussions indicated that women are economically discriminated against because of society norms dictates (37.5%), and because women are perceived to be useless (37.5%) and incapable to

perform (62.5%). Discriminatory practices against women in the area of ownership, access and control of land and property in the society lowers their morale in self-empowerment and prevents them from accomplishing their full potential. Table 4.8 summarizes the informants' views on the reasons for economically discriminating women.

Table 4.8: Reasons why women are economically discriminated

Reason	Frequency			Percentage
		Men	Women	
Low level of education	3	2	1	50.0
Lack of skills	3	2	1	50.0
Lack of access to resources	2	1	1	33.3
Lack of power	2	1	1	33.3
Societal practices	1	1	0	16.7

From table 4.8, the key informants felt that low level of education (50%), lack of skills (50%) and access to resources (33.3%) were some of the reasons as to why women were discriminated against. Women usually account for the highest statistics of illiteracy and lack of material and other resources on international charts and as such generally bear the heaviest burden of marginalization and exploitation by society as a whole. The respondents also indicated that societal discriminatory practices against women (16.7%) and lack of power (33.3%) to use or manage resources as well as influence decision making in the society are some of the reasons as to why women are discriminated against.

4.7 How culture contributes to economic discrimination against women

The focused groups were requested to indicate how culture contributes to economic discrimination against women. The results are presented in table 4.13.

Table 4.9: How culture contributes to economic discrimination of women

Response	Frequency			Percentage
		Men	Women	
Culturally women are excluded in property or general family wealth ownership	4	2	2	50.0
Jobs are stereotyped on genders	2	1	1	25.0
Women are given none or limited opportunities to indulge in economic activities	4	2	2	50.0

The results in Table 4.9 indicate that culture contributes to economic discrimination against women by excluding women from ownership of property or family wealth (50%), offering employment opportunities stereotyped on gender (25%) and limiting women in indulging in economic activities that would empower them. These results clearly demonstrate that culture is a contributing factor in economic discrimination against women leading to limited possibilities of social, economic, intellectual or emotional fulfillment of women.

4.8 Effects of social discrimination on women empowerment

This section establishes how social discrimination affects the empowerment of women. The respondents (Key informant interviews and Focused group discussions) gave several reasons on how social discrimination affects the empowerment of women. The results are shown in table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Effects of social discrimination on women empowerment

Effects	Frequency			Percentage
		Men	Women	
Low self- esteem	12	5	7	85.7
Loss of motivation	7	2	5	50.0
Limited access to services	7	3	4	50.0
Reduced individual rights	4	1	3	28.6

Table 4.10 shows that the respondents described the effects of social discrimination on women empowerment as low self- esteem (85%) especially women who are physically abused, loss of motivation (50%) due to lack of support from their male counterparts, limited access to resources (50%) such as capital, education, training and health care and reduced individual rights (28.6%). These findings indicate that equal treatment of women and men is significant to empowering women and developing their capabilities to full potential.

4.9 Effects of economic discrimination on women empowerment

This section investigated how economic discrimination affects the empowerment of women. Table 4.11 records the respondents' (KIIs and FDGs) views on how economic discrimination affects the empowerment of women.

Table 4.11: Effects of economic discrimination on women empowerment

Effect	Frequency			Percentage
		Men	Women	
Illiteracy	11	4	7	78.6
Poor earning opportunities	12	5	7	85.7
Lower employment opportunities	7	3	4	50.0
Lack of independence	4	2	2	28.6

According to table 4.11 the respondents indicated that the effects of economic discrimination on women empowerment were illiteracy (78.6%) as women are allowed limited access to education increasing their illiteracy levels, poor earning opportunities (85.7%) as they lack the right to education and skills to engage in income generating activities, lower employment opportunities (50%) due to illiteracy and inequality in hiring and promotion practices and lack of independence (28.6%) due to patriarchic cultural beliefs that allow men control and dominance over women.

4.10 Eradicating socio- economic discrimination against women

The key informants and focused group discussions participants highlighted some ways of eradicating social economic discrimination against women. Their responses are recorded in table 4.12

Table 4.12: Eradicating socio- economic discrimination of women

Response	Frequency			Percentage
		Men	Women	
Capacity building for women	7	3	4	50.0
Gender mainstreaming	4	1	3	28.6
Increase women participation in economic activities	12	5	7	85.7
Establishing equal legal protection rights	2	0	2	14.3
Promoting family life education	7	3	4	50.0
Abandoning harmful practices against women	11	4	7	78.6
Creating gender equality awareness	12	6	6	85.7
Establishing policies that govern women rights	2	1	1	14.3

According to table 4.12, the respondents proposed capacity building through training (50%) for women and girls so as to help improve their understanding levels and confidence, gender mainstreaming (28.6%) especially for women, increasing participation of women and girls in economic activities (85.7%) so as to empower them and their families and abandoning harmful cultural practices (78.6%) that affect women's self-esteem and general health. They also suggested creation of gender equality awareness (85.7%) by organizing seminars and workshops, promoting family life education (50%) where the family is taught on how to support family development,

handle domestic problems and encourage women and girls on self empowerment, establishing policies (14.3%) and legal protection (14.3%) that govern women's rights. Residents of Gatue Division need to back the law and law enforcement agencies and most importantly, believe in the power of gender equality to help eradicate discrimination and empower their women.

4.11 Summary

This chapter presented and discussed data drawn from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with key informants. The study revealed that women experience socio-economic discrimination is influenced by culture, leaving women with power to own or use resources, to engage in economic activities, limited access to education which hinders them from acquiring senior positions in formal employment due to lack of adequate skills and competencies as compared to their male counterparts. As a result, women remain inferior and lack empowerment.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary, conclusions and recommendations drawn from the findings discussed in chapter four. The main objective of the study was to find out the nature of socio- economic discrimination and how it affects women's empowerment in Gatue Division, Tharaka. The specific objectives of the study were to: - explore the nature of socio-economic discrimination, establish how social and economic discrimination affects women empowerment.

5.2 Summary of the findings

Objective	Main findings
To explore the nature of socio-economic discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Women in Gatue Division experience discriminatory practices (50%) such as female genital mutation among others.• Unequal division of labor (35.7%), limited interactive freedom (64.3%) lack of participation in community activities (35.7%) and leadership roles (78.6%) and inadequate involvement in decision making (35.7%) as well as physical and verbal abuse (21.4%) were some forms of social inequalities experienced by women in Gatue Division.• Women in Gatue Division were discriminated against by being allowed limited access to resources (25%), employment opportunities (37.5%) and participation in leadership roles (25%).

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women lack ownership rights (62.5.5%) and unequal inheritance rights. • Women are allowed inadequate involvement in decision making (83.3%) and women have unequal inheritance (66.7%) and ownership rights (50%). • The informants also indicated that the women are allowed limited access to resources (33.3%), employment opportunities (16.7%) and participation in leadership roles (33.3%) as well as limited access to education (50%).
<p>To establish how social discrimination affects women empowerment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents described the effects of social discrimination on women empowerment as low self- esteem (85.7%) especially women who are physically abused, loss of motivation (50%) due to lack of support from their male counterparts, limited access to resources (50%) such as capital, education, training and health care and reduced individual rights (28.6%). • These findings indicate that equal treatment of women and men is significant to empowering women and developing their capabilities to full potential.
<p>To investigate how economic discrimination affects women empowerment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents indicated that the effects of economic discrimination on women empowerment were illiteracy (78.6%) as women are allowed limited access to education increasing their illiteracy levels, poor earning opportunities (85.7%) as they lack the right education and skills to engage in

	<p>income generating activities, lower employment opportunities (50%) due to illiteracy and inequality in hiring and promotion practices and lack of independence (28.6%) due to patriarchic cultural beliefs that allow men to control and dominate over women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture contributes to economic discrimination against women by excluding women from ownership of property or family wealth (50%), offering employment opportunities stereotyped on gender (25%) and limiting women in indulging in economic activities that would empower them (50%).
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5.3 Conclusions

The continued presence of long standing cultural and traditional practices that discriminate against women and girls' have constrained the progress towards achieving gender equality. Discriminatory practices and public attitudes towards the advancement of women and gender equality have not changed at the same pace as policy, legal and institutional frameworks. This study established that there were various forms of discrimination against women including female genital mutilation, unequal division of labor, unequal access to, control and ownership of resources, limited interactive freedom, lack of participation in community activities and leadership roles and inadequate involvement in decision making as well as physical and verbal abuse. It was further revealed that social discrimination resulted into low self- esteem, loss of motivation, limited access to resources and reduced individual human rights. Further, economic

discrimination was responsible for illiteracy, poor earning opportunities, and reduced employment opportunities, inequality in hiring and promotion practices and lack of independence. All the above findings on nature of socio-economic discrimination therefore hinder women empowerment in that they act as a stumbling block to achievement of gender equality hence limiting women from attaining their full potential in life.

5.4 Recommendations

The study proposes the following recommendations:

Strengthening of national gender machineries and substantial capacity building is required in the form of human and financial resources to enable implementation of roles and responsibilities assigned to these structures and also to review their mandates so as to enable them focus on the promotion of gender equality.

The study also recommends gender mainstreaming in all development initiatives and societal settings, increasing participation of women and girls in economic activities so as to empower them and their families and abandoning harmful cultural practices that affect the women's self-esteem and general health.

There is need for creation of gender equality awareness by organizing seminars and workshops, promoting family life education where the family is taught on the importance of supporting women development, handle domestic problems and encourage women and girls on self empowerment.

5.5 Areas of further research

There is need for similar studies to be done in other parts of the country since this study was only done in Tharaka Nithi County. Similar studies can also be done and different

methodologies used as well as use of different respondents such as students so as to establish the similarities or differences in research findings and to enrich future studies in the field of gender and women empowerment.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of transmittal for data collection in Gatue Division: Tharaka North District.

**THE DISTRICT OFFICER
GATUE DIVISION
P.O BOX 2
MARIMANTI**

Dear Sir,

RE: PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA IN GATUE DIVISION

I am a student at the University of Nairobi undertaking Masters Degree in Project Planning and Management at Meru Extra- Mural Centre. I am required do collect data and write a report on 'Nature and effects of social economic discrimination on women empowerment'. Since I chose Gatue division as my area of study, I wish to request for permission to collect data from the four locations of Gatue division. The information gathered will be confidential and will only be used for academic purpose.

I humbly request for your authority.

Thank you

Yours faithfully,

Faith Joy Karimi Mpara

Appendix II: Interview guide for Focused Group Discussions

Date.....

Place.....

FGD Name.....

Number of FGD participants.....

1. In what ways are women sidelined or discriminated against socially in this community?
2. How does culture contribute to social discrimination of women?
3. What are the reasons as to why women are socially sidelined?
4. Do men and women perform the same duties at home? If No? And if Yes? Why
 - a. Which duties are done by men and which ones are done by women?
 - b. Are boys and girls assigned equal duties at home?
 - c. If not who is assigned more duties and why?
 - d. How does this affect their education and development?
5. In what ways are women sidelined or discriminated against economically?
6. How does culture contribute to economic sidelining or discrimination of women?
7. What are the reasons as to why women are sidelined economically in this community?
8. How does the social and economic sidelining of women hinder their ability to get empowered?
9. What would you recommend as the best way of eradicating social economic discrimination of women in this community?

Appendix III: Interview guide for Key Informants

Occupation/ duties of key informant.....

1. What are the various forms of social discrimination encountered by women in this community?
2. What are the reasons of discriminating women socially?
3. How does social discrimination affect women empowerment?
4. In what ways are women discriminated against economically in this community?
5. What are the reasons as to why women are discriminated against economically?
6. How does economic discrimination affect women empowerment?
7. In what ways can socio economic discrimination of women be eradicated in this community?

Appendix IV: Data Collection Schedule

Date		Morning	Afternoon
14/11/2011	KIIs	Key Informants Interview (Gender officer, Education officer, Maendeleo Ya Wanawake rep.	Key Informants Interview (lands officer, NGO worker, District public health nurse.)
15/11/2011	Gatue	Youth FGD1 Women	Youth FGD 2 Men
16/11/2011	Khangachini	Women FGD	Men FGD
17/11/2011	Kanjoro	Women FGD	Men FGD
18/11/2011	Maragwa	Women FGD	Men FGD

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