

**FACTORS THAT ACCOUNT FOR THE MARGINAL
PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL
PROCESSE: THE CASE OF MAASAI WOMEN**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
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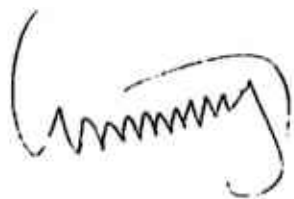
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This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.



Yiapan Juliana Nashipae

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my knowledge as university supervisor.



Dr. Peter Wanyande
University Supervisor

**TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER FOR THEIR DEVOTION TO
MY EDUCATION.**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to identify factors that account for the marginal participation of Maasai women in political processes. The objective of the study is to establish why women do not actively participate in the political process and find ways of enhancing their participation. An attempt has been made to study these factors utilizing the socialist Feminist and the patriarchy theories as theoretical frameworks. An attempt has also been made to analyze these factors using descriptive statistics and correlation analyses.

Data for the study was collected using a combination of two methods. First the use of secondary data which involved published books, journals, Kenya National Archives materials, unpublished articles and news papers. Primary data was obtained through fieldwork research covering sampled Women Groups, administrators, leaders and Maasai women in general. The research was carried out using questionnaires and interviews.

We found out from the study that several factors are responsible for the marginal participation of Maasai women in the political process, including the traditional political organization of the Maasai, socio-cultural factors such as lack of formal education, beliefs held by both men and women and low incomes among maasai women; structural factors like the Government institutions, political parties and the socialization process.

Various policy suggestions are made regarding the possible ways of enhancing Maasai women's participation in the political processes. These will require the active involvement of the Government in addressing these factors.

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter One is the introductory and contains the purpose of the study, literature review, theoretical framework and the methodology. Chapter two deals with the historical background of the Maasai Community. Chapter three and four deal with the analysis of data and chapter five concludes by trying to point out recommendations, policy implications and areas of further research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DDC	District Development Committee
DC	District Commissioner
DFRD	District Focus For Rural Development
DO	District Officer
DSDO	District Social Development Officer
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KNA	Kenya National Archives

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Studies on the participation of women in politics are a recent development in the Third World in general and in Africa in particular. Nevertheless, this area of study is already attracting considerable global and local interest and attention from scholars especially with the on going political and economic reforms in Africa. The global concern about women's status and position in public sphere can be traced the declaration by the United Nations that 1975- 1985 would be devoted by the World community to issues relating to women's welfare. In response to this declaration, various African Governments created national machineries for integrating women in political and economic development. Egypt created a Ministry and a Bureau for women affairs in 1972, Mali created a bureau in 1975 and Ghana created a commission and a bureau also in 1975 just to mention a few (Were G.S (Ed) 1985:'90). Kenya followed suit in 1976 by establishing the Women's bureau in the Ministry of Culture and Social Services. The bureau is now under the Ministry of Home Affairs , Heritage and Sports.

Despite the world-wide recognition and acknowledgment of women's contribution to socio-economic development, women's participation in the political processes has been minimal. This is especially with regard to leadership positions. This raises serious concerns for several reasons. Firstly, the position of women and their role in political development are important

not only because women constitute over half of the human resources in developing countries but also because they bear the burden of the daily struggle for survival in developing countries (ICPED, 1986:1 1). In Kenya for example, women constitute about 67% of the rural population (Achola P. O, 1983; 75) and their estimated contribution is at 80% in self-help women groups through such projects as health, water and small scale industries such as brick making, weaving and beadwork (Riegleman M. 1975;95).

Secondly, despite the Decade set aside for women, which ended in 1985, the position and role of women in politics in Kenya as well as other African countries has not changed much. Women have continued to shy away from active participation in politics especially as candidates for political office. They are also not appointed in significant political and policy-making positions in the public sector. In Kenya, for example, since independence, only 16 women have been elected to parliament and 7 nominated to parliament. The highest number of elected women Members of Parliament was recorded in the 1992 multiparty General Elections when 6 women were elected to parliament. However, out of the 12 nominated members of parliament in that year, none was a woman. It was not until 1995 when a woman was nominated to parliament. It was also the same year that a woman was for the first time appointed to a cabinet post. Two factors may explain these developments. Firstly, out of the six women members of parliament, five were elected on opposition political parties' tickets. The opposition political parties criticized the ruling party for what they saw as its failure to accommodate women in the party's positions of leadership. The nomination and appointment

also coincided with the year of the 4th World Women Conference held in Beijing, China. This may point to the government's response that it was willing to support the themes of the various mini-conferences held in preparation for the World Conference. The themes centered on empowerment and autonomy of women in politics. The high number of elected women members of parliament in the 1992 multiparty General Elections on the other hand, could be explained by the fact that during these elections the highest number of women presented themselves as candidates for both civic and parliamentary elections. Over three hundred (300) women presented their candidature for the 1992 General elections in 91 constituencies around the country. Of this total, 130 women were nominated by political parties as candidates for the civic elections while 19 were nominated as candidates for parliamentary elections (Nzomo M. 1996:596). During the 1997 Civic and Parliamentary General Elections out of a total of 882 parliamentary candidates 50 or 5.7% were women while 832 or 94.3% were men. In the civic elections, out of a total of 3,692 civic candidates, 300 or 8.1% were women while 3,392 or 91.9% were men. Four women were elected to parliament and five others were nominated to parliament making a total of nine women members of parliament out of 222 members (Electoral Commission of Kenya; January 1998).

THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As we have already indicated women have been and continue to participate actively in economic development. They however, do not participate in any significant way in the political process. This is despite the fact that they stand to gain by actively engaging in politics including taking part in leadership positions. Secondly in Kenya, there are no legal barriers to women's participation in the political process generally and electoral politics in particular. Indeed the laws of the land do not discriminate on account of gender as far as participation as candidates for electoral office is concerned. In view of what we have given above, how can we explain the tendency by women to play a marginal role in the political process? This is the problem we intend to investigate in this study. We shall focus on a pastoral community, the Maasai of Kenya. The study investigates the factors responsible for the low level participation of women in politics by examining issues related to:

- (i) What role has traditions played in the contemporary political behavior of Maasai women ?
- (ii) The impact of the political structure on Maasai women's participation in electoral politics.
- (iii) The impact of economic structure on Maasai women's participation in political process.
- (iv) The impact of women's participation in self-help groups on their level of participation in politics.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to establish reasons why women do not participate in the political process and to find ways of enhancing women's participation in the political process.

Arising from the broad objective were more specific objectives. These include:-

- (i) To investigate ways through which Maasai women seek incorporation in the political process.
- (ii) To examine the factors that explain the discrepancy between women participation in self help women groups and their involvement in national politics.
- (iii) To examine the capability of the women's participation in politics.
- (iv) To establish the effect of the political structure on Maasai women participation in politics.
- (v) To make policy recommendations aimed at designing policies and institutional frameworks That will make it possible for women generally and maasai women in particular to actively participate in the political process.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The critical role of women in development widely recognized and adequately addressed by various scholars yet their role in politics is largely ignored and inadequately addressed by scholars. In Africa most of the research on women's participation in the public realm is more than a decade old with a bias on women's participation in development. This bias came about as a result of the widely held assumption by development/modernization theorist that

economic development was the only solution to overcome mass poverty and general underdevelopment in the Third World. To some modernization theorists, development was the prerequisite for political change and development towards democracy (Almond; 1966). This led to the integration of women in development mainly as producers of national wealth. In fact it has been realized that women are producers of up to 85% of the national wealth in the Third World (Khasiani, 1991; 21) The belated realization that economic development has to be accompanied by political development in order to overcome poverty and under development has resulted in studies on involvement of women in politics in the Third World. However, in Africa such studies are very recent and there is inadequate data of women in politics in post independent Africa. There is therefore need for more research on women and their role in politics. The study will contribute to the scanty literature on participation of women in politics in Africa and Kenya in particular.

Studies in Kenya focusing on women in politics are urban oriented and where they touch on women in general, it is in their involvement in development activities. Studies by Nzomo (1991-93), Kabira (1983), Achola Pala (1978), Gideon Were (1985), Nasimiyu (1983) all focus on issues of women in Development. This study is critical of these studies because of their focus on the urban women while it is evident from available data that the rural women comprise the bulk of Kenya's population. The rural women should therefore, not be ignored in any analysis of women in Kenya. This study will fill this gap that has been left by these studies.

The study focuses on Maasai women since this is an area that has not been ventured into. The Maasai in general are pastoral and nomadic which would make them as an ethnic group marginalised in political process which require sustained settlement. However looking at the Maasai men there is a definite indication that they have not been marginalised in the political processes. Maasai men for example have been involved and are well represented in the country's political apex since independence. Twice, Maasai men have held the post of vice president, the country's second highest political office. They have also held ministerial positions since independence with three in cabinet positions in the present government and another three as assistant ministers. Other top decision making positions held by Maasai men include the speaker of the National Assembly, the Government chief whip, Provincial Commissioner, Permanent Secretary and Ambassadors. On the other hand Maasai women have not held any public position since independence. The Maasai women, apart from constituting part of the rural population, are differentiated from other rural Kenyan women by their nomadic way of life. As the Maasai change their socioeconomic way of life from pure pastoralism to pastoral - agriculture, it should be interesting to scholars to observe the effects of these changes on their political behavior. The study will contribute to knowledge in two ways:- Firstly, it will provide information on women's participation in politics, an area that has been thinly ventured into. The existing data on women's participation in politics is more than a decade old. There have been many political changes over the years in many African Countries thus there is need to update the data. Secondly, it will provide information about one of the nomadic communities on which little research has been done. The study should

also be of interest to policy makers as they design new policies that may affect the Maasai community as well as other nomadic communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The marginal participation of women in politics has been acknowledged by scholars as a recurrent phenomenon the world over. The emergence of a Women's Movement in the late 19th Century in the developed Countries has been associated with the dissatisfaction by women with their marginal roles in politics and other public spheres (Olive Banks). The campaigns by the women's movement which gave rise to the Feminist Movement led to various gains for women such as the recognition of women's suffrage (Evans;1977,30). Women in the Third World may have benefited from the struggles of the feminist movement that led to the recognition of women's suffrage. This is because most of the Third World countries adopted political rights in their constitutions at independence. Whether this was a result of the Feminist movement is debatable. Maurice Duvenger alludes to this when he rightly observes that the equality of men and women in the matter of political rights is established by a large number of constitutions, code and laws (Duvenger 1955; 7). However, despite women having political rights, they continue to be marginalised when it comes to exercising their recognized political prerogatives. Duvenger, (1955:10), Nzomo, (1992:1), United Nations Commission on the Status of Women report (1977); all present the view, that women's political rights are there on paper but in reality their participation is marginal. This raises the question of why women have not been able to translate these rights into practice.

Studies from the World over all present women as having a marginal part when it comes to political affairs and decision making. In the Scandinavian countries where we have the highest percentage of women in politics, such as, in decision making positions in the legislature and executive bodies, the participation of women in top echelons of political and economic institutions is far from being equal to that of men. Women in Scandinavian countries hold between 17% and 23% of parliamentary seats (E.Vallance in *Women and Politics* vol. 4 No. 4, 1986:38). The situation is no better in other European countries. For example a study by Willis V. (1991) notes that in the highly industrialized countries such as Britain, women make only 7% of the senior managers in industry, 5% of under-secretaries in the civil service, 3% of the university professors and 2% of vice chancellors in British universities. In Australia, women occupied 5 out of 35 positions in the Australian Council of Trade Unions in 1989, while only one of the 80 members of the Business Council of Australia was a woman. In the United States of America, there are some 17% women in the legislature, 0.5% on the boards of Corporations that control much of the country's economy and only 9% on the executive committees of the American Federation of Labor. In 1989, only 3% of top American and 8% of British Managers were female. For Europe as a whole, there are only 11% women in the top echelon in politics and top decision making positions (Willis V., 1991:5-6). Referring to the findings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union as at 1990, the *Patriot* magazine reports that only 10% of the world's legislators, are women. World-wide only 21 countries have each more than 20% of women legislators elected by direct vote. These are Norway, Finland, Saint Lucia, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Barbados, the Seychelles, South Africa, Iceland, Cuba,

Trinidad, Tobago, Belize, Austria, New Zealand, China, Germany, Malaysia, North Korea and Luxembourg. The countries of Northern Europe have the highest percentage of women legislators. Norway heads the list with 178 seats in the national parliament with 39.4% of elected representatives being women. The Netherlands by 1990 had 22.7% women Members of Parliament in the Lower House and 28% in the Upper House. Switzerland had 17.5% men in the Legislature. The Patriot reports that by 1994 there were eight countries still had no women in their parliaments. These were Bhutan, Djibouti, Kiribati, Kuwait, Mauritania, Micronesia, Papua, New Guinea and United Arab Emirates. At the ministerial level, women held less than 4% of the Cabinet positions world wide in 1989 (The Patriot Vol.005 February, 1995: 24-25). According to Sellami-Meslem (1991) in 1990, women held more than 20% ministerial posts in only four countries (Bhutan, Colombia, Norway, Sweden). There were no ministers at all in over 90 countries (Sellami Meslem, 1991: 2). The observed trend however, is that most of the women ministers occupied the portfolio in areas traditionally considered women's concerns such as health, welfare, culture, education and women's affairs. Few women have held the position of president or prime minister of their countries. In 1991 there were eight elected women Head of Governments, the largest number in a year to have ever existed in history. In world history, there has been a total of 22 elected women heads of state or Government (Patriot Vol.5, 1995; 24-25). Among them are Indira Gandhi of India, Bandaranaike and Kamaratunga of Sri Lanka, Corazon Aquino of Philippines, Violeta Chamora of Nicaragua, Margaret Thatcher of Britain, Golda Meir of Israel, Benazir Bhutto

of Pakistan, Mrs. Gro Brandtland of Norway, Edith Cresson of France, Mrs Peron of Argentina, Hannah Ashrawi of Palestine, and Agatha Uwingiliamana of Rwanda.

Most of the Nordic countries have also had women's political parties which have succeeded in getting women elected to public offices. An example is Democratic Socialist Party which is led by Norway's Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland. A study by Elizabeth Vallance which sought to explain the electoral success of women in these countries found that the system of proportional representation and the use of party list system were central factors (E. Vallance in *Women and Politics* vol. 6 No. 4 1986:38). Although such systems do not exist in Africa , no similar studies have been held with regard to African countries and Kenya in particular.

In the Third World despite the scarcity of data on the involvement of women in politics, the level of women's marginalization is presented as being lower than that of the Developed Countries . Studies conducted by such scholars as Jane Parpart, Naomi Chazan, Susan Jacobs, confirm that indeed the African leadership is male dominated. "Everywhere in Africa, the political elite is largely male..... for all the variation in states - weak or strong, more or less autonomous - one constant is that women are never central in state power. Accounts render women invisible in state formation an women occupy official state positions in no more than symbolic numbers" (Parpart & Staudt K (eds) 1989:5). In Africa for example, there has never been a woman head of state. There has been only one woman prime minister in Africa -

Angela Uwingiliamana of Rwanda (Nation April, 1994) and one Vice-President - Dr. Wandira Kazibwe of Uganda (Sunday Nation, February, 1995). Within Africa, data indicate that to date South Africa and Kenya are the only countries that have had a woman led political party. The South African party named Women's Right Place Party (WRPP) was one of the 19 political parties that contested the 1994 all race elections in South Africa. It however performed poorly, as it was not able to get a women elected to parliament (Daily Nation May 12, 1996). In Kenya the Social Democratic Party and the Liberal Party were women led parties that participated in the 1997 General Elections. Both had their leaders vying for the country's presidency. The Social Democratic Party emerged the fourth strongest political party with its leader being elected to parliament while the Liberal Party was too weak, its leader did not get elected to parliament (Electoral Commission of Kenya Jan 1998). In the far Eastern countries the political emancipation of women has been encountering very strong opposition in circles attached to traditions. (Omvedt G., 1986: 3).

In Kenya as in other Third World countries, women are peripherised in political life. They have always participated enmass as voters in electoral politics but their participation is marginal in other political activities. For example of the total elected members of parliament between 1969 - 1974, women formed 0.56%. They only constituted 8% of the Nominated Members of Parliament during this period.

In 1983, elected women members of parliament constituted 0.63% and nominated members 18.18% (Republic of Kenya, Women of Kenya July 1985; 42). In 1992

the 6 elected women Members of Parliament constitute 3.19% of the total 188 members. (Weekly Review January 8, 1993: 11-12 and February 5, 1993: 33). In 1997 four women were elected to parliament which constitute 1.8%. Kenya has five nominated women Members of Parliament. (Electoral commission of Kenya; January 1998).

Table I - MEMBERSHIP OF THE KENYA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BY YEAR OF ELECTION AND GENDER

Year of Election	Elected Members				Nominated Members			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1969	154	99.3	1	0.6	11	92	1	8.3
1974	152	96.8	5	3.1	10	83	2	16
1979	155	98.1	3	1.9	11	92	1	8.3
1983	157	99.3	1	0.6	9	82	2	18
1992	182	96.8	6	3.1	12	100	0	0
1995	182	96.8	6	3.2	11	92	1	8.3

Source Republic of Kenya, Women of Kenya (Nairobi July, 1985:42)

1992 Source (Weekly Review February 5, 1993: 33). (Daily Nation, October 1995)

Whereas these studies have indeed demonstrated that women's participation in politics and decision making processes is extremely low they have not endeavored to find out the

factors responsible for this marginalization of women or near exclusion of women in political affairs of African states.

On the other hand there is abundant literature indicating that women have been well integrated in economic development. Achola P.O. (1979), in explaining why this has happened in Kenya argues that there is a decline in participation of men in rural economic activities because of the rural-urban migration of men which came with colonialism. In Kenya, men migrated to the urban areas in search of paid employment and this left the women in charge of development activities in the rural areas. This migration also explains why the rural population is largely composed of women. Through farming and self help groups, women have found a way of participating in development activities (Achola P.O 1979:3).The Government has also supported the involvement of women in economic activities. Through "Harambee", women groups have participated in many projects such as water projects, small scale industries. Methe (1978:6), Mbithi & Rasmuseen (1977), Ng'ethe (1978:28) have shown the extent of women participation in Harambee projects. In one district, for instance, over 50% of all projects registered with the department of Social Services were women's projects (Ng'ethe, 1978: 28). Through the establishment of the Special Rural Development Programme in the first half of the 1970's the Kenya Government continued to assist women groups to carry out development projects.

International agencies have also facilitated the integration of women in development. All over the Third World, women's groups continue to receive help in the form of funding, for example,

UNICEF contributed \$153,000 for a one year joint project with the Tanzanian government to train village women in shop management, handicraft, textile production, home economics, storage techniques and leadership. (UNICEF, 1975; 10). In Upper Volta, US AID funded a \$ 1 million three year project to help rural women organize, manage and invest in over 90 micro-projects related to rural activities (US AID, 1976; 103). Tinker (1984) shows how women's efforts to gain beneficial national policies led to positive changes for rural women in economic development. For instance in Nigeria, women formed co-operative societies and demanded credit from the government to buy more efficient oil pressers to use in processing palm-oil nuts. In Kenya, the government reviewed the co-operative Act to allow membership to women and then formed a special task force to show women how to utilize the new opportunities of engaging in development activities (Tinker, 1984; 26). This study observes that similar efforts, aimed at integrating Women in economic development activities, have not been directed towards enhancing women's participation in political field. The discrepancies between Governments' efforts directed at integrating women in economic development and political development are obvious yet reasons behind such discrepancies have not been fully addressed.

This study also observes that although women in Kenya are highly mobilized into groups, their effectiveness at the national level is minimal. They remain marginalized and unable to penetrate high levels of power and central decision making positions. The failure by women groups and organizations to make an impact on the national political decision making arena

is best exemplified by their passivity on issues and policies that directly affect their status and welfare. For example between 1978 and 1988, the Government allocated to women's programmes the equivalent of 0.1% of the total government expenditure. The Government grant to women's groups has continued to drop significantly from 3.3 million Kenya shillings in 1986 to 2.6 million Kenya shillings in 1987 and 1.7 million Kenya shillings in 1989 (Economic Survey 1990; 181). Parpart and Staudt (1989;1) attribute this to the political environment in which women groups and organizations operate as a major constraint to their effectiveness. Also the constitutions upon which these groups and organizations are based do not permit them to get involved in matters deemed to be political.

Some scholars have attributed the lack of women's participation in the public spheres to the structures that came about with the emergence of capitalist mode of production. Colin (1960: 150), in his analysis of the family, State and Capitalism identified patriarchy, consequence of capitalism, as having insubordinated women and making men dominate over women. Engels identified the key to women's inequality with men as laying in the exclusion of women from socially productive work. The Capitalist State is seen as acting predominantly in the interest of preserving the dominant class relations and assisting the accumulation of capital. According to Albert.J (1989: 6), the state mediates and regulates capitalist needs through reinforcing masculine dominance and privilege persistence of sexual divisions. Anna Yeatman (1994: 9) also argues that the state works to consolidate women's oppression and does so in such a way as to aid distinctive subordination of women. The state constitutes the

social order in the interest of men ensuring male control over women and framing policies according to male experiences. Afshar H. et al (1987) argue that the state plays a role in establishing and sustaining women's low representation in the political sphere. Examining the Islamic countries of the Middle East, they observe that the states uphold ideologies which confine women to the private sphere. For example the Iranian State justifies the virtual imprisonment of women within the household under the guise of protecting their honor and dignity. In addition fundamentalist views of women as sources of evil have been used by Governments to formulate policies that have similar results of marginalizing women in the public spheres. In the Third World countries, there is a commonality shared by the states in terms of their ideological definition of gender and the part ascribed to women. There is a general identification of women with the sphere of domesticity even though the roles and obligations of women within this sphere and the definition of domesticity itself are culturally and economically specific. Third World states in general do not have coherent policies about women nor do they usually have structural facilities for co-coordinating their decisions.

There are scholars who have attributed the low levels of women's participation in politics and decision making to the socialization process. Sylvia Tamale observes that girls and women are socialized to accept traditional stereotype roles whereby their place is in the domestic sphere (Tamale S,1996;319). Similarly, Wolkowitz argues that the progressive decline in women's influence as the higher levels of political leadership are reached is maintained by the socialization process justifies politics as by nature a field essentially suited to men, to which

women should be admitted only in exceptional circumstances and then only within strictly defined limits. (Wolkowitz C., 1987; 137). In her study of Kenya, Maria Nzomo observes that in Kenya there is an established male dominated political system which is a major factor in understanding the low levels of women's participation in parliamentary, civic and party arenas (Nzomo M, 1998).

O'Barr, (1984), Okonjo K. (1976) and Lebeuf (1977) have identified colonialism in Africa as a factor that has contributed to the marginal participation of women in politics. O'Barr observes that women's political roles in pre-colonial Africa provide examples of how social systems had been organized to include the positions of power for women. Colonialism, he argues, abruptly disrupted the social, economic and political organization in African Societies. This led to the loss of political power held by women. Colonialism discriminated against women because the institutions that it imposed on Africa excluded women from participating in the running of these institutions (O'Barr, 1984; 152- 154). Okonjo observes that although most African societies are patriarchal, women are not excluded in the institutions governing the society. Western Scholars prejudged the manner in which political activities were shared among men and women in Africa. They concluded that it is men who had all the political power. Okonjo points out that they wrongly judged the position of women as subordinate because of the outwardly patriarchal framework of African Societies. African women had many institutions in which they exercised authority and political power. (Okonjo K. 1976; 45). Lebeuf's argument is that African societies offer a large variety of types of political

organizations from monarchy to democracy. In the agricultural societies, women derived their political status from the key role they played in production. Whether the society was matrilineal or patrilineal, women usually:

- (i) had political control over some area of activity, be it farming, marketing, trading or household and family affairs;
- (ii) had political institutions to decide how to rule their own affairs or to influence the affairs of men;
- (iii) were not subject to general control by men as much as they were autonomous in their own areas of responsibility.

For example, traditionally the Kikuyu women enjoyed a lot of political power. They had a women's council which regulated the hierarchy among women, their activities and which enabled them to participate in decision making in conjunction with its counterpart the men's council. The women's council was one of the political institutions of the Kikuyu (Mass1986:60).

Several other African polities had a dual-sex system in which a woman was responsible for women's affairs and a man for men's's affairs and the general community, for example, amongst the Igbo of Nigeria (Okonjo 1976:144). Some women in high political office were not restricted solely to women's affairs as shown by the role of the Queen Mother among the Asante of Ghana (O'Barr in Hay et al, 1984:148). The hunting and gathering societies of central and southern Africa were characterized by relative political equity between men and

women (Collier et al 1981:120). However, the functioning of these institutions was disturbed by the imposing of the colonial system. Women suffered from this even more than men because they were systematically excluded from any participation. Even the material and psychological basis upon which their authority rested crumbled too (Lebeuf in Paulme D (Ed), 1977; 159). Most African societies are patrilineal structure not all exemplified the high status of women as discussed above. For example Maasai women have not enjoyed any form of political power nor decision making roles in both the traditional pre-colonial period and the post-colonial period. This can be attributed to the age-set system upon which the Maasai community is organized. This system excludes women from playing any role in decision making as well as in the allocation of political offices and political status.

Jaquette observes that women's political behavior is somewhat more frequently apathetic, parochial, conservative and sensitive to the personality. These attributes make women shy away from active participation in politics (Jaquette J.S. (Ed) 1974:108). Tamale attributes Ugandan women's lack of interest in politics to their high level of illiteracy and their ignorance of current events and issues of economic or political importance (Tamale 1993:179). Our study will find out to what extent these observations are applicable in the case of Maasai women.

Some studies have argued that the majority of women who hold high political offices of state have initially derived at least part of their political legitimacy from their association with men

as wives, sisters or mothers. Examples are Mrs. Peron of Argentina, Mrs. Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Corazon Aquino of the Phillipines, Mrs. Indira Gandhi of India and Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, who were propelled to power through such associations. However, this generalization may not hold much because there are women such as Margaret Thatcher of Britain, Hanah Ashrawi of Palestine, Mrs. Gro Harden Brundtland of Norway who have risen to positions of political prominence in the absence of such political affiliation with men. (Haavio-Mann et al (eds) 1985; 48, Freeman 1985; 402, Tracey Howard 1986; 45). Our study will endeavor to find out how association with male politicians can enhance women's participation in politics in the case of Maasai women.

In explaining how we can account for women's virtual absence from the councils of decision makers in almost every country in the world, Elsa argues that women in most societies do not fit any of the current models through which political scientist attempt to analyze the phenomenon of politics. They are not an elite; they do not as a group seek power; nor do they form coalitions to bargain with other power contenders. Women are so unorganized and ill defined as a group and command so few political resources that to regard them as forming an interest group in the same sense as industrial laborers, the military would be misleading (Elsa, 1988; 274-275). Our study disagrees with this view to the extent that women in Kenya are highly mobilized into women groups and organizations, however they have not been able to improve their marginalized positions in leadership.

It is thus clear that the apparent low level participation of women in the political processes has not been accorded the attention they deserve. Especially in terms of research aimed at identifying the factors responsible for the low levels of women's participation in politics and, who at the same time, because of their high percentage in the population, influence outcomes in the political arena. Ways of enhancing the participation of women in politics and their political roles have not been extensively researched. One can hardly derive useful conclusions if one were to try and devise ways and means of meaningful interventionist policies for both qualitative and quantitative participation of women in electoral political process. These gaps in the literature suggest there is need for a study of the kind that we have undertaken.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are few theoretical approaches in existence that can be utilized in the study on women in politics and particularly on their participation in politics. This is partly because studies on women in the Third World are a recent development and partly because there is no gender theory that has been advanced to help study women in the Third World as a category of its own. "Most theoretical advances in the study of women and gender relations have been formulated on the basis of historical and contemporary studies of women in the First World. As such, few of the precepts apply in their entirety to Third World countries" (Brydon, 1989: 7).

The state - family theory (Colin Creighton; 1960; 150-160) may be used in a study of women especially in relation to their marginalization. This theory originated from Traditional Marxism and is based on Engel's discourse on the family, private property and the state. This theory argues that in the hunter gatherer societies, women enjoyed the same status as men. Descent was traced through the female line, marriage could easily be dissolved and women had supremacy in the household. With the development of agricultural production and settlement, women lost their status as a result of changes in social organization of wealth and development of classes. Domestic animals and land under settled farming conditions generated surplus wealth. Surplus wealth became the basis of private property by men. The desire to pass this wealth to their own children led men to replace female by male descent. The urge to ensure that heirs were legitimate led to the monogamous family based on the supremacy of the man. These changes marked the beginning of private property which led to inequality between men and women. Since men owned and controlled the wealth, they came to dominate economic, social and political relations in those societies. These changes institutionalized the subordination of women. According to Engels, the male domination fitted well with the capitalist mode of production which is based on exploitation. The exploitation of women serves the needs of capitalism, which is the dominant mode of production to date. While this theory can explain the origin of the subordination of women in today's capitalist society and their resultant disempowerment and lack of an economic base, it assumes that the laws of capitalist mode of production operate in a pure form. It is difficult to find a pure capitalist mode of production without other modes of production coexisting even if in an

inferior relation. Labor and capital relation i.e. economic relations are assumed to be the dominant element underpinning the development and structure of capitalist society. This analysis overlooks the super structure i.e. political relations that also determine the development of a capitalist society. Political relations concern allocation of values which is important and essential to the reproduction of capital. The theory is difficult to apply in a situation of heterogeneity as in the case of women. Women do not constitute a class of their own and can not be characterized in the Marxist dichotomy of either workers or owners of the means of production. The theory also fails to explain how women can come out of their subordinate status and therefore it would not help this study which seeks to identify and suggest ways in which women can enhance their participation in politics.

Two theoretical approaches, the socialist feminist theory and the patriarchy theory have been used in our study. The Patriarchy theory is used to help our study analyze the domination of men over women. Men's dominant position in society is taken for granted as the normal and desirable state of affairs. This is what has institutionalized and legitimized male domination over women. Patriarchy has been defined as the institutionalization of male power rather than as an innate property of being male. Spender.D 1985:36; Delphy(1984:17-18) sees patriarchy as the system of subordination of women by men in contemporary society. This system has an economic base rooted in the domestic mode of production. Patriarchy as a system of oppression is itself more or less independent of the economic order however, capitalism has influence on the modes of oppression of women. For example, male oppression of women as

labor and as reproductive capacity. The main feature of male oppression of women are the social arrangements indirectly securing men's interests, giving men market advantages before and above women and hegemony in personal relations. Male dominance is commonly invisible as a social process but the results in terms of powerlessness of women are in some respects more visible for example, in everyday life, in statistical terms or in political decision making. This theory was useful to our study in as far as it enabled us analyze the institutional and social male dominance over women, however by maintaining that male dominance is the normal and desired state of affairs, the theory becomes limited because it cannot help women out of this oppression.

The socialist feminist theory is one of the theories that stemmed from the feminist movement of the beginning of the 20th century in Europe. Feminism as a basis of a social movement has a long history dating back to the 16th century. Despite, the involvement and leadership of American women in the women's suffrage movement and other social movements in the United States in the 1800's and 1900's. However, it was not until the mid 1960's that the current feminist movement began to make major gains in emancipation of women. The movement came up in resistance to the oppression of women in places of work and in the denial of their rights to suffrage. The movement demanded equal rights for women and the removal of all legal constraints on their ability to act as free individuals in a society based on economic and social competition as the final step in the creation of a perfect Laissez-Faire society. In the many years of its existence, feminism has given rise to many theories such

as liberal feminism, radical feminism, traditional Marxism and socialist feminism. Liberal feminism is based on the social contract theories whose central themes are justice and equality. Radical feminism emerged in the 1960's and the central theme was that women were viewed as greatly oppressed by men in all spheres. Under radical feminism, women are seen as a group of oppressed class. Its literature and language is based on the Marxist theory. This theory has been largely criticized for:

- Creating negative reaction for calling for the separation women from men
- Its dwelling on ethnocentrism
- Its orientation to westernism
- Its biological division of issues

In general feminist movement aimed at confronting the problems which dominate women's lives. The socialist feminist theory is based on the premise that the oppression of women is a situation that can be reversed (Eisenstein, 1979; 57). Socialist feminism defines itself as a political instance not merely a sexual politics but a politics of experience in every day life, which later enters the public sphere of oppression and creative practice, displacing aesthetic hierarchies and generic categories and which thus establishes the semiotic ground for a different production and meaning. Emphasis is placed on subjectivity and the centrality of gender to any account of social process (De Lairetis, 1988;10). Inherent to it is the practice of small group consciousness raising with its stress on examination and understanding individual experience and connecting the experiences to the structures which define women's lives. The theory begins with the women's experiences and proceeds to address political

generalities about the oppression of women. Socialist feminism enables women to connect their everyday lives with an analysis of the social institutions which shape them (Eisentein, 1979:57). The focus on everyday life and experience makes action a necessity not a moral choice or an option. By appropriating the women's collective experience socialist feminist theory helps women recognize that they can not be in a society based on hierarchy, domination and marginalization (Linda Gordon 1979; 64). This is acquiring consciousness which is important in analyzing the patriarchal relations governing women's existence and hence the need to change these relations for both sexes to participate equally in society. This theory was appropriate to guide our study because it enabled us describe the problems that women face which makes their participation marginal in the political arena. It enabled the study analyze the forces which maintain this marginalization. By emphasizing consciousness then action, it enabled us study and suggest strategies which women will develop to overcome their marginal participation in politics. The theory has been criticized as being idealistic because of lack of consensus on the issue of class. Women can not be a class in the Marxist sense. This is because they can not be dichotomised as purely workers nor owners of the means of production. In the same sense, it cannot be concluded that men appropriate the labor of women as this is how classes relate in the capitalist mode of production. In spite of this criticism, the approach was deemed to be in line with our study. It was helpful not only in analyzing the nature and level of women's participation in political processes, but also provided how women could enhance their participation. Its emphasis on effective participation through the empowerment of women, which is attained by the women becoming

aware that they face the task of a collective will to enhance their participation, enabled the study identify the ways in which women can increase their level of participation in politics.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were tested.

- 1 The level of participation of Maasai women in political process is influenced by the level of women's mobilization in politics.
- 2 The level of participation of Maasai women in political process is influenced by the domination of maasai men in the political structure.
- 3 The level of participation of Maasai women in political process is influenced by the levels of education among Maasai women.
- 4 The level of participation of Maasai women in political process is influenced by economic power in the hands of Maasai women.
- 5 The level of participation of women in political process is influenced by the existing political structure.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The target group of the research were the women groups in the rural setting of Narok District. The selected women groups are involved in economic political and other activities. The other target groups were the government administrators interact with the women groups and women who are not members of the groups. The study mainly focused on the apparent marginal participation of maasai women in political processes. The choice of Narok district was based on the observation that it is one of the largest Maasai districts. Therefore, it was considered to be adequately representative of the Maasai. Besides it is one of the Maasai districts in which a woman has presented herself to contest for an elective political office at the civic level. Other factors that determined the choice of setting were resources and time constraints that made it difficult to cover the other Maasai Districts of Kajiado, Laikipia and Trans -Mara. Further, the concern for depth in the study necessitated the selection of a smaller area of study.

STUDY METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

The main source of data for this study was primary data. The study depended on the information collected through interviews. Given the fact that there is little existing documented data concerning the Maasai in general and Maasai Women's participation in politics in particular, there could be no better source than the primary one. Primary data ensured availability and reliability of the needed data. To supplement primary data, the study

used secondary data. These included books, policy papers, local news papers, Reviews, Journals and other publications that focus on the issue of women in politics. The study collected data by conducting interviews and using questionnaires. The groups that fell in the sample frame were the source of our information. Questionnaires were both structured and unstructured depending on the calibre of the interviewees and the kind of information required. The study also collected data by use of participant observation method. This method enabled the study get more information as the researcher participated in the activities of the women groups, attended a District Development Committee Meetings and the Narok KANU sub-branch party nomination exercise.

In sampling, the sample frame was drawn from 30% of the women's groups in Narok District. There were 200 registered women groups in the four divisions. Our sample frame of 30% was 60 women groups. The study employed two sampling techniques i.e. stratified sampling and purposive sampling. In stratified simple random sampling, we took a smaller representation of a larger whole, while ensuring equal probability to every unit as recommended by Goode (1952:144). In purposive or judgmental sampling, we used our own judgement, research skills and prior knowledge to choose settings and respondents, Banley (1978). Our study was interested in Maasai women who were sampled as our unit of analysis.

The individuals interviewed were as follows:

- Women who were members of women groups
- Women who were not members women groups
- Women leaders (in the women's groups and other institutions)
- Village elders from areas which were sampled
- Government officials (members of District Development Committee and chiefs from areas which were sampled).

In sampling a 30% sample of the population usually considered a representative sample (Prewitt 1974). For our study this 30% sample comprised women's groups chosen through the stratified random sampling technique. The interviewees were purposively sampled i.e. the researcher hand picked cases in relation to the needs of the study. Thus interviewees from the women groups comprised of leaders and rank and file members. The other calibre of interviewees that were purposively sampled were government officials, such that the sample comprised members of the District Development Committee and Chiefs. Their views enabled the study to obtain information on the political structure, participation of women in decision making and electoral politics. Also interviewed were male village elders of where the selected women groups had been sampled. Views of women not in the women groups were sought thus a random sample was drawn in areas where the women groups had been sampled. Every division of the district was used as a defined stratum from which a specific number of women groups were chosen. This eliminated the possibility of unrepresentative sample that could result if the district was treated as a homogeneous whole.

In the processing of data, the study employed frequency distribution tables and cross tabulation tables. Cross tabulation tables indicated the relationship between variables in the study. Frequency distribution indicated the distribution of women's participation in respect to electoral political process. Proportions and percentages were used in order to analyze the levels of women's participation in political process.

A measure of association was also employed. A measure of association indicates how strongly two variables are related to each other (Prewitt, 1975; 100). This was done by use of Spearman's rank correlation coefficient and Kendale Coefficient of Concordance.

The variables that have been related in this study include; levels of male domination, levels of education versus women's participation in political processes.

VARIABLE SPECIFICATION AND OPERATIONALIZATION

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

This was the dependent variable of the study. It has been viewed in terms of the various ways by which women get involved in the political processes.

- (i) Participation was operationalised as aspects of women's participation in institutions (parliament, civic bodies), electoral politics, party politics. At institutional level participation was measured by the percentage of women in these institutions. In electoral politics participation was measured by the percentage of women candidates versus male candidates. At party politics level

participation was measured by the percentage of women membership versus men party members.

- (ii) Decision making at all levels of political process was measured by the percentage of women in decision making positions in civic bodies, parliament, political parties and the nature of the positions those women hold.

WOMEN'S ABILITY

Ability was defined as the capacity to get involved in political activity. It was measured by:-

- (i) Education: Number of years in formal schooling
- (ii) Experience: Duration in which an individual has held leadership positions in the Community.
- (iii) Financial: Economic endowment in form of wealth.

FIELD WORK

During the period of data collection, our study encountered numerous problems in reaching the research sites mainly due to poor communication facilities especially bad roads. The respondents' negative attitude towards our topic on women participation in politics, made them unwilling to respond to the questions asked. However these problems were overcome by extending the interviewing period and persuading the respondents not to shy from giving their views on politics.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE MAASAI TRADITIONAL POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter looks at the setting of the area of study and the historical background and way of life of the Maasai society. The indigenous political organization of the Maasai as well as their production system will be addressed in an effort to understand the present political behavior of the Maasai and in particular the political behavior of Maasai woman.

Setting

The Anglo-Maasai treaties of 1904 and 1911 defined Maasailand which was later divided into Narok and Kajiado Districts. Following Kenya's independence in 1963, these two districts along with eleven others formed the present Rift Valley Province. (Map 2; see appendix 11). Today the Maasai land consists of Kajiado, Trans -Mara and Narok districts which occupy an area of approximately 36,000 sq. kms with a population of about 656,931 people. Narok District has four divisions; Mau, Osupuko, Ololulung'a and Olokurto with a population of 398,272 in a total area of about 15,000sq.km. (Kenya population census 1989:1 - 14,4 District Development Plan 1994 - 1996:2). The terrain of Narok District is of great diversity varying from about 1000m above sea level, in the Rift Valley floor near Lake Natron to 3,098m on the Mau escarpment. Most of the district lies between 1,500m and 2, 100m above sea level. The

land can be divided into two main physical features; highlands which is over 2,300m and the plateau which is 1,000 to 2,300m (District Development Plan 1994-1996:1).

Politically the district is divided into two constituencies, Narok North and South. At the local level, the district has 20 civic wards constituting of the Narok County Council and the Narok Town Council. Unlike most Districts in the country where political units conform to the administrative units, Narok District does not follow suit. Whereas the district has a total of 26 locations, the wards are only 20 indicating that a ward may consist of more than one location. This is the same for the constituencies which occupy more than one division. (Map 3). (Appendix 111).

The pastoral Maasai of Kenya are composed of more than thirteen territorial sections or *lloshon*. These include *Keekonyokie*, *Purko*, *Damat*, *Loitai* in Narok, *Siria*, *Uasinkishu*, *Moitanik* in Trans -Mara and *Kisongo*, *Dalalekutuk*, *Matapato*, *Kaputiei*, *Loodokilani*, *Keekonyokie* in Kajiado Districts. The *Olosho* (singular of *lloshon*) is the society's largest and most important political unit. In Narok where the study was conducted seven of these *lloshon* are found dispersed in the four administrative divisions of Mau, Osupuko, Ololulung'a and Olokurto.

History of the Maasai

With no written history of their own, the Maasai depended for their history on oral traditions passed on from one generation to the next. Nobody knows precisely the original home of the Maasai speaking people but their legendary folklore indicates that they originated from the North-East of Africa. According to this legend, the Maasai descended down the Kerio Escarpment from the Northern part of Kenya probably the present day lake Turkana region. Historians have traced the ancestors of the Maasai to the Eastern Nilotes or Nilo-Hermits (Sutton J.E.G in BA Ogot & J.A. Kieran (eds) 1968:80-81). Cultural and linguistic evidence also points to relations between the Maasai and the Nilo-Hermits. Many features of their culture such as the tradition of circumcision and clitoridectomy are Hermetic (Saibul & Carr 1988:8).

Exactly when the Maasai started their southward migration from the Kerio Valley is not known but there is historical evidence which suggests that it must have been around 1600 AD (Hamilton C. 1965:2). The Maasai migrated south below the equator to the region of the great lakes (Victoria, Tanganyika and Nyansa) pushing the Bantus from the rich savannah pasture and grazing highlands, and confining them to forests and mountains which were less favorable pastoral areas. As they trekked South-East they also pushed out the indigenous hunters in order to have additional savannah country for the increasing number of cattle they had acquired. They believed that all cattle were rightfully theirs. This explains their raids on the tribes they were pushing out of their lands. Because of this belief, raiding became a tradition

of the Maasai (S. Ole Saibul et al. 1988:8; Jacobs 1980).

By the 17th century, the Maasai had reached the Kenya highlands and spread out to Kinangop, Nakuru, Naivasha and other surrounding areas. The Maasai were a powerful fighting people and their cattle raids made their neighbouring Bantu tribes live in fear. Even the 18th century European explorers and Arab slave traders avoided crossing the Maasai territory for fear of encountering the fierce Maasai warriors. Thus by the 19th century, the Maasai had extended from lake Turkana in Kenya to the Maasai steppe in Tanzania. When the European settlers arrived in East Africa, this southward expansion was still in progress though at a slower rate as a result of the reduction of the Maasai military by civil wars and diseases (Leys N. 1873:106-109; Kantai Ole in Sankan S.S. 1970 XVII-XIX; Krapf J.L in East Africa 1968:359; Jackson F. 1969:130, Soverenson M.P.K 1968:129-135).

According to historians, these inter-cine wars amongst the Maasai sections over livestock and pastures greatly depopulated the Maasai. Certain sections of the Maasai such as the Ilwasinkishu, the Illosekelai, the Illogolala and the Laikipia were forced to disperse. They sought refuge either with other East African peoples or with the sections of their Maasai victors. In 1883, pleura-pneumonia struck the cattle population. This was followed by an epidemic of rinderpest in 1890-91 which killed more than 80% of Maasai livestock. Famine followed thus further weakening the human population. Those who survived the famine were attacked by smallpox in 1892. (Ole Sena 1986:28 - 29, Lijembe Z.A 1972:3)

Colonial Era to Independence

During this difficult period the great Maasai diviner and ritual expert (oloiboni) Mbatiany died. He died without handing over his office to a heir and a feud ensued between his two sons, Olonana and Senteu. In the succession war Olonana sought help from the British to fight his brother which was granted but at the expense of his co-operation with the British. Large numbers of Europeans began to enter the interior of East Africa during the war of Morijo (Jacobs 1965:104). This was the last of the many wars that was fought amongst sections of the Maasai. It was also a time the Maasai military might had been greatly devastated by the civil wars, disease and drought.

The coming of Europeans at a time when there were civil wars amongst the Maasai, had great influence in European attitudes towards them and in particular the colonial administrative policy towards the Maasai. Firstly it led the colonial administrators to conclude that the pastoral Maasai were responsible for all the past violence in the region. It also gave rise to important misconceptions about the nature of the Maasai social system. Two of the most important misconceptions were that:-

- (i) The alleged aggressiveness of the pastoral Maasai was a reflection of their extreme and highly uneconomical mode of subsistence which required constant raiding of other tribes to survive.

(ii) Their age-set system was thus based on the military demands arising from this need and their alleged domination of other tribes.

However, the fact is that the Maasai being a pastoralist society needed vast pasture lands for their livestock. On the other hand the Agriculturists neighboring these vast savannah lands were greatly expanding their agricultural activities thus posing a threat to the pastures of Maasai herds. This inevitably led them to defend their pasture lands (Jacobs 1965:105).

Sir, Charles Eliot who was the first commissioner to the new founded East African protectorate in 1901, summed up this belief in his first report to the foreign office in Britain as follows:-

"I regard the Maasai as the most important and dangerous tribe with whom we have to deal in East Africa, and I think it will be long necessary to maintain an adequate military force in the districts which they inhabit" (Kenya National Archives (K.N.A.)DC 1901:4).

Later this misconception was used to justify to the foreign office the wholesale removal of pastoral Maasai to Laikipia plateau, because of their alleged fear of their reaction to European settlers who were being given land in the Rift Valley.

The Europeans took advantage of the weakened state of the Maasai and through manipulations, deceptions and intimidation, took away the best dry season pasture lands for

European settlers. The Europeans took away land by adopting a cautious policy strategy towards the Maasai. One such policy was advocated by Sir Charles Eliot and involved the suggestion that the colonial authorities should maintain a military force in Maasailand in order to check their aggressiveness. Another strategy adopted was one of manipulation put forth by Francis Hall in 1989 in which he had warned that ;

"any attempt to coerce the Maasai would involve the colonial Government in costly protracted military operations of doubtful outcome. Antagonizing the Maasai might lead to a collapse of British control but a little manipulation might turn the greatest menace in East Africa into an important British asset." (Walter 1979:536).

Conversely, political and economic considerations demanded a flexible and innovative response from Maasai to the advent of British rule. Maasai leaders were aware of the British limitations and strengths. It was felt by some, notably, Olanana, the great diviner, that a little manipulation helped to reduce the potential menace of the "white locust", his father's description of the European community. Olanana and prominent age-set leaders, therefore, lent their authority to the colonial administration, perhaps in order to enhance their own authority and position. The British made Olanana a "paramount chief" in 1901. (Ole Sena 1988:31-32).

However, this move by the Maasai leaders was to prove detrimental to the entire Maasai community because, their interaction with the colonial administration gave the British another chance of manipulating the Maasai. It made it easier for the British to deceive the Maasai leaders into an alliance. Thus in 1904 a treaty between the British and the Maasai was signed (Ross 1968:135, Leys 1973:117). The treaty set up two reserves, one in the South and another in the North, on the Laikipia plateau. The Maasai were to be relocated and confined in these two reserves. After the Maasai moved to the reserves they became suspicious of the British and their relationship started to deteriorate.

The colonial authorities and European settlers cast envious eyes on Maasailand on the Laikipia plateau where many Maasai families had been settled in 1904 (Leys 1973:119). The authorities therefore coerced the Maasai to sign another treaty in 1911 which removed them from the Laikipia plateau to the extended southern reserve. The Maasai challenged this plan in a court of law but lost the case, thus they were relocated. Some elders who had signed the treaty never received the land which they had been promised by the British. The Maasai were left very bitter after the second relocation and thereafter resisted anything to do with colonial administration. Their feelings towards the experience were echoed by an elder during an interview conducted by Ole Sena as follows:-

“..... the Europeans could get away with some things such as moving us to Laikipia and again to our present residence through cheating and bribery. From the time of the

first move, the Maasai felt cheated and vowed to resist any other Government proposal". (Interview, Naimodu 1982 in Ole Sena 1988:33)..... I remember our leaders were fond of telling us that we should hide our true colours.So we often said yes when we actually meant no" (Ole Sena 1988:41).

The deceptions perpetrated against the Maasai at their encounter with the Europeans, together with later failure of the colonial Government to honor its promises to give back their land have had a lasting influence on the pastoral Maasai attitudes towards outsiders. This explains why they are always suspicious to innovations from outsiders hence their tendency to be conservative and preserve their identity. They are cautious in the way they receive change agents and are potentially receptive to development so long as ideas are beneficial to their well being (Socio-cultural profile of Narok District 1996).

During the independence struggles Maasai involvement was not as pronounced or violent as those of the other tribes such as the Kikuyus. This may partly be explained by the fact that since the advent of colonialism, the Maasai had an autonomous status and lived in reserves that isolated them from other tribes. However, they joined the struggle at a later stage. Their major aim was to get back their land which had been taken by the colonial Government. A small group of mission-educated Maasai formed the Olmaa Political Association in 1930. This association did not make an impact since the educated were not respected in the Maasai community, However, by 1956 the sons' of *Itareto*, the *llinyankusi* had come of age and were

now the political spokesmen for the Maasai, although they were not paramount in the age-set system. The *Illnyankusi* formed the *Illkalikal* and *Illkamaniki* association at a time when ethnic political groupings were gaining importance in the country. One of the association's aims was to press for the establishment of a separate Maasai nation for the Maasai. The Maasai realized that without a strong political union, they might not be able to get a fair deal from colonial authorities. The Maasai in the Narok local council were particularly interested in settling the land issue before the withdrawal of the British fearing the loss of their land to agriculturists and to the new national government. In 1960, the Maasai United Front was formed to represent Maasai interests. The front, led by Ole Tipis, Ole Keen, Oloiptip, and Ole Kapeen was given political status by the colonial government and a memorandum was prepared outlining the political objectives of the Maasai organization.

“We realized that in terms of educational development in general we were at the bottom. Our land tenure system was not protected legally. now that the men who robbed us of our land and denied us adequate education were leaving, we wanted all the land taken in 104 and 1911 returned to the Maasai.....” (Ole Sena in an interview with Ole Lemein who was a member of Maasai United Front. (Ole Sena 1988:71)

The members of the Maasai United Front were affiliated nationally with the Kenya, African, Democratic Union (K.A.D.U.), rather than to the Luo-Kikuyu dominated Kenya African

National Union (K.A.N.U.). Because K.A.D.U. had advocated regional autonomy, it was with them that the Maasai found a national platform to advance their separatist aims. They argued for their own state or for a semi-autonomous Rift Valley. Their dream was shattered, however, when K.A.N.U. won the election in 1963 and K.A.D.U. agreed to merge with it in 1964. K.A.N.U. rejected a federal structure of government preferring and encouraging the integration of all regions into the Kenyan politics and economy.

The Maasai had to reconcile themselves to a political future in Kenya which they had unsuccessfully resisted and for which they were educationally unprepared. The former Maasai reserve became part of the Rift Valley Province, instead of a separate Maasai or Maasai-Kalenjin nation.

The political security of the Maasai within the emerging Kenyan nation was perceived as a key issue after the merger of K.A.D.U. with K.A.N.U. Local leaders advocated formal education and other development innovations which were seen as a means of protecting the Maasai against agricultural and administrative encroachment and to better defend the Maasai prerogatives within the national sociopolitical and economic system. To achieve this end the Maasai became active members in the coalition.

The Economic Production system

The traditional production system of the Maasai revolves around the pastoral economy. Pastoralism among the Maasai is the central theme of their existence. Cattle are at the centre of Maasai social and economic life. Cattle are the means for gaining respect, prestige and social standing in the society. Cattle represent security and the future of every Maasai is based on them. Indeed Saitoti rightly observes that:

"Cattle are very special in Maasailand, themselves as part of culture. No ceremony can be performed without including a cow (livestock) in one way or another. Cattle related values affect a whole range of the society's structure, the role of history, folklore, pride and personal values. Most Maasai songs and poetry are based on cattle (Saitoti 1977:52)".

The Maasai had established ecological balance between their animals and the natural resources by practicing trans-humane mode of subsistence whereby grazing areas are seasonally kept fallow to allow grass generation and to reduce grazing pressure. This was the basic precondition upon which their fairly complex social structure was based. This implied strong co-operation and high dependency between households, clans, age-sets and sub-tribes. Reciprocity was a powerful bond of solidarity between the groups.

It regulated a man's conduct in relation to his fellow men and was the basis of political and military super structures. The Maasai social and political systems bear out the pastoral adaptations. Social organization is flexible allowing for periodic contraction, expansion and re-organization of herding units and social groups in response to changes in environmental conditions. Various members of different clans settling together all enjoy access to grazing land, wells, salt licks and other natural resources.

These were administered collectively. Each herdsman possess no more than access to rights equivalent to those enjoyed by his fellow herdsmen. The areas belonging to the various clans were, however, specified by custom but could neither be disposed off nor sold. Grazing rights are also extended to other clans, which explains the crucial need for the co-operation.

Wealth and status were expressed in mobile property such as animals, wives and children. Livestock is individually owned by men. Women have no rights of ownership over livestock, they need to be attached to the household of male herd-owner to access the livestock. When a woman marries a number of her husband's animals are allocated to her. She has limited rights over these animals; milking rights and right to sell or use hides of slaughtered or dead animals. Cattle allocated to a woman form the core of the future herds of her sons. She is responsible for allocating animals to her sons, but she has no rights of transferring to another owner. These pass directly from father to son. Women are also excluded from all important decision-making concerning the herds. Indeed women's direct economic interest concern the

bearing of sons who will become herd owners and have obligatory rights towards their mothers (Galaty, 1981:3-7).

In Maasailand, decisions regarding where to establish a village or settlement is determined as much by socioeconomic and political as by ecological factors. Settlements are based on kinship, co-evality and friendship. When need arises, group members may move apart to join new settlements. Each family within a single village meets its obligation for herding and carrying out ritual activities. (Jacobs 1965). Any family which fails to meet its responsibilities at the village and neighborhood level cannot expect to share in the community's resources. Amongst the Maasai there is nothing of any class or state structure beyond immediate kinship and localized clans although these are cross-cut by an age-set system. Though the social obligation does signify basically unequal and dependent relationship between men and women, there are no profits attached to these relationships. Prestige and influence are manifested through leadership in the community activities and in the settlement of disputes between families. Influence grows with seniority, increased wisdom and knowledge. As a man grows older, wealth as an indicator of herding skills comes to play an increasingly important role. Elders control the younger age groups and community wide authority rests with them. Any stratification within the Maasai communities was also determined by differences in wealth and influence which arose from raiding, looting, conquest and unequal effects of drought and diseases, inheritance and seniority (Cliffe Lionel 1977:195). These

factors facilitated the process of individual accumulation and differentiation. Any stratification does not however result to class consciousness due to social bonds and social institutions.

The Indigenous Political System of the Maasai

Before the coming of the Europeans, the Maasai had a decentralized political system. Amongst the Maasai there are three interconnected structures of internal organization. These are clans, age-sets and territories. The Maasai never organized themselves as a single tribe under a unified political system. They evolved an elaborate system whereby they were traditionally divided into a number of sections (*lloshon*: singular- *Olosho*). Each of these *lloshon* had its own territory and autonomous political structure based on an organized age-set system. The age-set system played a very important role politically on a sectional scale. It was within these individual *lloshon* that all aspects of life-social political and economic were regulated. Thus the *Olosho* was the largest political unit since it was the only level of territorial organization. (Narok District Cultural Profile, 1986:131 - 135).

The age-set system is the principle of the social organization of the Maasai's patrilineally organized society. This system represents the framework for the sociopolitical and economic structures and provides the mechanism for integrating the Maasai people. It also permits a great variety of political expression. Thus it constitutes the unit of analysis for the traditional political system of the Maasai. Although the age-set system is a common feature of some African societies, its typical form is associated with the Maasai. This is mainly because,

despite attempts at its abolition by both the colonial and post-colonial states, it has tended to persist. Sena rightly observes this by noting that:

"..During the colonial period in Maasailand there existed two forms of government, the indigenous and modern which were governing together.....(Sena 1986:147)"

The Maasai institutions of governing were well established as realized by the colonialist after their attempts to introduce their governing institutions became futile. It took two decades for the British to realize that the authority structure they imposed was foreign to the Maasai. The colonial officers began to better understand the political system of the Maasai and therefore made an effort to implement their policy of indirect rule through elders councils, tribunals and village headmen. Soon afterwards, they realized that this structure was alien to the age-set based society as well. In fact, the colonialists had to adjust their system of governing to fit the one already existing. They selected those who already occupied prominent positions in the age-set system, for example, Ole Masikonte who was an age-set spokesman (*olaiguenani*) became chief and president of the purko Maasai. The Maasai system of governance persisted well into the post-independence Kenya.

“for the moment, whether or not the national government recognizes it, two forms of government continue to operate in Maasailand, setting this community apart from many others....” (Sena 1986:147).

For instance in 1983-84 the District Commissioners of Narok and Kajiado districts directed their chiefs not to allow the inauguration of the new age-set sponsored by the Iseuri. However, these directives went unheeded because the chiefs who belonged to Iseuri age-set were central in the ceremony and they agreed together with the age-sets' spokesmen that they persuade the government for the ceremony to be allowed. Permission was granted, but the authorities advised that the meetings and ceremony should not be long (Galaty 1984:38). The chiefs just like their counterparts in the colonial period play dual roles as leaders in the modern government as well as in the traditional government.

The age-set system with some variations is a feature that has been variously described by different scholars. Prins (1953), Bernadi (1985) have described this feature as single-sex system, Baxter and Imago (1978) look at it as an age-set system while Llwely - Davies(1981) describes it as an age-gender system. On the basis of tasks performed by different categories, the system has been labeled as a political or governmental system (Jacobs 1965, Dyson - Hudson 1966). These descriptions reflect the perceptions held about the functions this system is purported to perform. This is because the age-set system performs different functions in different communities.

In his study Evans Pritchard suggested that among the Nuer, sets have no administrative, juridical or other specific political functions. It is also not a military organization. (Pritchard 1940:253) Dyson - Hudson discussing the Karamojong similarly states that the age-set system

is not a source of authority (Dyson-Hudson 1966:155), so does Prins conclude that the system is neither entirely political, juridical, educational, military or religious, but a multi-purposeful institution (Prins 1953:19,23). These comments suggest that the age-set systems perform a multiplicity of functions in the societies within which they are found. Whereas our study found that this statement is true with regards to the Maasai, more importantly, the age-sets constitute the main units of analysis of the political organization. There is a great deal of interdependence between the political system and the age-set system in that all political offices in the traditional political system of the Maasai are based on age-set system. Thus the age-set system has political functions as well as constituting the political system.

The Maasai Age-set System in Perspective

Among the Maasai, the age-set system is an institution that groups adult men into age-cohorts. Each cohort progresses through age grades, comprising young men through to the community. This is also the chief political office. The *olaiguenani* convenes meetings and adjudicates over disputes both in the age-set and the community. The second political office/position is that of *Olopolosi - Olkiteng* (the "one whose ox is split open"). *Olotuno* (the "one who plants") is the third level of authority in the hierarchy. He is chosen at the end of junior moranhood to lead his age-mates out of that stage of life into married life and elderhood. *Oloru-enkeene* (the "one who carves the strap") shares much the same degree of authority as *olotuno* as far as adjudication of certain disputes are concerned but the latter commands more respect in the age group. The fourth leadership position is that of the

Oloiboni - this is the chief seer and ritual leader who administers ritual medicine. Unlike others he is not selected but grows up as a seer. The respect accorded to him depends on his ability to foresee events. Together, these five age-set leaders control the social, economic and political life of the society. The power and influence of age-set leaders increases as members grow older. They make decisions on behalf of the whole community. Other age-set members approve and carry out the implementation of those decisions. Although younger age-sets are encouraged to make decisions, the decisions have to be ratified by the senior leaders. Leaders are selected for these positions because of their character, their family or clan background, reputation for their wisdom and their unblemished physical condition. Leaders are expected to be gracious, strong, coolheaded and articulate. They are expected to perform well in matters of interest to the age-set and to the entire community.

Maasai Women and the Age-set System

In most age-set system societies including the Maasai, it is only men who are associated formally with the age-based institution. Women do not progress through the age-set system in the same manner as men do. This is an indication of the subordinate status of women in these age-set system societies as far as political leadership is concerned. Some scholars such as (Llewelyn Davies 1978; 1981 Spencer 1988, Ndagala 1974:92, Stewart 1977:257) contributions' on women's participation in the age-set systems have drawn the conclusions that women's roles are insignificant or that they are parallel to those of men's but less elaborate. Naomi Kipury (1988) argues that although Maasai women do not progress through

age-grades in a formalized manner as men do, they identify themselves and are generally associated with the age-set members as mothers, wives and daughters. All women therefore get to belong to an age-set system through marriage and relate to their sets as well as to others accordingly. Women hold their own parallel rituals that are as formal as men's and scheduled to correspond with the elders promotional rituals. Participation of women here is comprehensible at two levels: from the roles they play in men's promotional rituals and other occasion and from their involvement in their own parallel rituals. (Kipury N.1988:133).

However, our study observed that in the traditional political system of the Maasai , all political offices are based on the age-set system. Maasai women are not organized into age-sets, they are regarded as non-political persons. To have political status in this community one must be a member of an age-set. Women are not regarded as possessing any political status nor are there any political offices recognized by women amongst themselves. Furthermore, even after associating with members of the age-sets up to the time the members retire, women never become elders despite the parallel accumulation of social knowledge as men. Maasai women are marginalized in the indigenous political system because play an insignificant role in the age-set system. Also, it has been argued that in age-based pastoral societies, women have extensive rights to livestock management. However, among the Maasai, women's control over livestock is restricted to unifractory rights and as such, this is another reason why they lack political status, since politics involves the authoritative allocation of resources in the society. In the case of the Maasai it involves making decisions regarding where and when to settle,

where to graze who to graze the animals, and how to make use of pasture land and watering points. Maasai women do not have any role in these decision making activities carried out by age-set office bearers.

Conclusion

In the traditional political and social organization of the Maasai, women come out as passive participants in the society. Their participation in the political system is relegated to association with members of the age-set as mothers, wives or sisters. In the social economic system the status of Maasai women is also peripherised by the fact that they do not own or control the means of production. They only have limited rights and are considered part of the property owned by men. They have very low status in the society which has been progressively maintained by patriarchal nature of the age-set system.

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CHAPTER THREE

SOCIAL-CULTURAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT MAASAI WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESSES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the relationship between socio-cultural factors and women's participation in political processes. The political processes addressed are electoral politics, decision making at policy making levels of political institutions namely the Government, Parliament and political parties. The question addressed throughout the chapter is what socio-cultural factors affect women's level of participation in the political processes both at national level and local levels? In answering this question, we rely mainly on the data obtained from the field research in which we interviewed a total of 154 respondents with different economic backgrounds. The 154 respondents include; 117 female Maasai respondents, 25 male Maasai respondents and 12 Government officials.

As indicated in Chapter One, the dependent variable (women's participation) is operationalised at three levels, involvement in politics of institutions such as parliament, civic bodies and political parties , involvement in electoral processes and involvement in decision making at

policy making levels, involvement is measured in terms of membership in the above mentioned institutions , numbers at policy making levels and percentages in elections.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the effect of social factors on women's participation in political processes. Section two deals with the cultural factors that have had impact on the participation of women in political processes.

The Effect of Social Factors on Women's Participation in Political Processes

The first set of factors examined to establish their effects on women's participation in political processes are social factors closely associated with the individual. These factors include age, education, marital status, relations to male politicians. Each of the above independent variables was placed against each of the indicators of the dependent variable. The indicators of the dependent variable are interest in politics, attendance of political rallies, roles in political party and voting.

Age and Women's Participation

Age was defined as the period of time, in complete years, a respondent has lived from birth to the time of the interview. The youngest interviewee was 21 years old while the oldest was about 65 years old. The range between the two was 44 years. The most recurrent age was 30 years.

Table 3.1 (a) Distribution of Female Respondents by Age

Age categories(years)	No. Of Respondents	Percentage %
0-20	0	
21-25	16	13.7
26-29	17	14.5
30-34	27	23.0
35-39	25	21.3
40-44	16	13.7
45-49	8	7.0
50-54	6	5.1
55+	2	1.7
TOTAL	117	100

Source; field work

In our study interest in politics was gauged on the following parameters whether one had taken the initiatives, time and efforts in attending Political rallies, engaged in campaigns, enrolling in political party or contesting electoral posts. Out of the 117 interviewees, 25% indicated that they had high interest in politics. Out of this 29% were aged 35 years, 23% were aged between 26 and 29, 17% were aged between 30 and 34 years, another 17% were aged between 40 and 44 years while 5% aged 54 years. The other was aged 22 years. It was noted that even for those who indicated high interest in politics none had sought or contested an electoral post at the civic or parliamentary level.

A look at the relationship between these two variables (age Vs women's participation) indicated a weak relationship as shown by the Kendale Co-efficient of concordance of 0.3. When the chi square (X^2) was computed to find out whether the correlation was significant, a X^2 value of 23.022 with 21 degrees of freedom was obtained. The X^2 critical was 32.7. The calculated X^2 was smaller than the X^2 critical. Hence the association, though present was not significant at 95% level of confidence. The null hypothesis (H_0) that there was no significant relationship between age and women's participation, when women's participation is taken to mean interest in politics, was adopted.

This finding shows that participation of Maasai women in politics when viewed in terms of their interest in politics is not determined by one's age. Factors that emerged as influencing our respondents' interest in politics varied from the family backgrounds of the respondents, to individual encounters and experiences with alternative values. For example, interest in politics appeared to have been influenced by one being born in a family where there was a politician. An indicator to this is one respondent who had this to say:-

"I attribute my activeness in political affairs to the fact that my father was a councilor and as such there were many people coming to our home. During campaigns the crowds were even greater and my father used to address them. Because of interacting with many people I learnt not to be shy and even addressing a gathering" (Parreiyo Interview 1994).

Interest in politics was also influenced by the values that one was exposed to outside the home such as education, places of work and living in the urban area where there were different people with diverse cultures. In our study, 58% of the respondents who had interest in politics attributed their interest in politics to influence from outside their culture.

This later observation concurs with earlier findings of a study by Sylvia Tamale (1996) on a group of Ugandan women. She found that exposure to alternative values other than the stereotypical attitudes inculcated during childhood socialization, which confine women to the domestic sphere, changes the political attitudes of women from being passive to being active in politics.

Age and Rally Attendance

In our study from the 117 female interviewees there were 48% who indicated that they attend political rallies, and were aged between 26 and 39 years of age. When the correlation between these two variables was computed a Kendale Co-efficient of concordance value of 0.3 was obtained. When the Chi-square (X^2) was calculated to find out whether the correlation was significant at 95% of confidence, A X^2 value of 37.60 with 21 degrees of freedom was obtained. The X^2 critical was 32.7. Therefore, the H_0 that there is no significant relationship between age and participation when participation is taken to mean attending political rallies was rejected. The strong association indicates that there is

a significant relationship between age and attendance of political rallies. This agrees with our findings.

The significant relationship between age and attendance of political rallies is explained by several factors. From our study, we found that domestic chores and caring for the children left the younger women with little time to spare for other activities such as attending political rallies. However, women who had grown-up children, indicated that they had more chances of attending political rallies. Women in the 21 - 30 years age bracket rarely or never attended political rallies because according to respondents, they had young children that needed their presence at home. On the other hand, out of 48% respondents who attended political rallies, 73% were aged 30 years and above. The observation made on this category was that they did not have young children were from polygamous families. To some extent, those women whose husbands had other wives appeared to be more active in women group activities because they had more time to spare for such activities. As a result of being members of women's groups, they got engaged in political activities that the women groups get involved in, such as engaging in political party activities and attending political rallies.

Age and Roles in Political Parties

Out of the 117 women respondents only 33% indicated that they play roles in their political parties. Only two indicated that they have leadership roles. They were aged 34 and 39 years. 11% of respondents aged between 26 and 39 years indicated that they played

recruitment roles for their political parties. 55% respondents indicated that they did not have any active role apart from being members of their political parties. Out of the 55%, 73% of them were aged between 30 and 39 years. The high number of passive membership in this age bracket, like in the case of attending political rallies, is explained by the respondents' indication that domestic and child rearing activities left less time for the women to engage in party matters. Also 50% of the respondents observed that it was more useful to stay at home and look after the children than waste time in political socialization matters which are basically handled by men.

When the correlation between age and roles in political parties was calculated, a Kendall Coefficient of concordance value of 0.62 was obtained. When the χ^2 value was calculated to ascertain whether the association was significant at 95% level of confidence, a chi square (χ^2) of 11.98 with 21 degrees of freedom was obtained. The χ^2 critical was 32.7. Thus the H_0 that there is no significant relationship between age and participation in political processes, when women's participation was taken to mean roles in the political party, was therefore adopted in this case.

Age and Voting Behavior

Out of the 117 women interviewed, 91% of the respondents indicated that they had voted in national elections, party elections and groups elections. Out of these respondents, 10% were aged between 21 and 25 years, 14% were aged between 26 and 29 years, 26% were aged

between 30 and 34 years, 28% were aged between 35 and 39 years, 11% were aged between 40 and 45 years while 10% were over 45 years of age.

The two variables were correlated in order to test the strength of their association. The statistical measure of association used was Kendall Co-efficient of concordance. The obtained value of the association was 0.5. The association was tested for significance at 95% level of confidence using Chi-square. The calculated X^2 was 6.89 with 7 degrees of freedom, while the value of X^2 critical was 14.1. This meant that the association was significant thus the H_0 that there is no significant relationship between age and the voting behavior was rejected.

The observed significant relationship between age and voting behavior shows that women participate in voting politics in spite of their age. 90% percent of the respondents indicated that their participation in voting exercises is encouraged by their husbands and the leaders. Both married and unmarried women were in agreement that the community recognized women's sole political role was to cast their votes. On the other hand women who attempted other forms of participation in politics such as presenting themselves as candidates for civic seats and campaigns, met a lot of violent resistance from the male folk.

For example, one respondent who attempted to present herself for a civic seat post was not only subjected to physical violence but also embarrassment and heckling when she attempted to make speeches. In their meetings, her male opponents abused her of being a woman of loose morals.

Another respondent described her experience during campaigns thus;

"When my husband learnt that I was involved in campaigns, he subjected me to a thorough beating and chased me away. This is despite of the fact that I had sustained a broken arm from the opponents of the candidate I was campaigning for" (Interview 1994).

In a study by M. Nzomo (1994), conducted to analyze the 1992 General Elections in Kenya, violence against women voters as well as women candidates were widespread throughout the country. Such violence ranged from physical assault, psychological intimidation where women were subjected to defamatory language by their male opponents, rape, threats with assassination and other forms of harassment (Nzomo M. 1994:597). Although violence in electoral politics affects both men and women, our study observed that the impact it had on women was more severe because the respondents identified violence in politics as the greatest obstacle to women who have or wish to present themselves as candidates for elections.

Asked why the husbands encouraged voting, the most common response was that voting determined which candidate would win the elections. The 82% married respondents who voted, indicated that they voted according to the wishes of their husbands. What was observed from our study was that women rarely voted for the candidates of their choice because of being dictated by their husbands. Although both parliamentary and civic elections are

secret ballots, the respondents maintained that they could not go against what their husband's wanted for fear of being punished. Secondly, most voters are assisted in the filling of ballot papers because they are illiterate. This also made women go by their husbands' choices.

Education Vs Interest in Politics

Education was taken as the length of time in complete years that a respondent took in formal schooling. It was assumed that increased number of years in school facilitated more awareness of the need to participate in political processes. It was hypothesized that the higher the level of education the higher the level of women's participation in political process. The maximum level of education was complete secondary, i.e., 12 years of schooling. Majority of the respondents had no education as shown in the table below.

Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education Attained.
Table 3.2 (a) Female Respondents

Level of Education	No. Of Respondents	Percentage %
None	47	40
Incomplete Primary	26	22.2
Complete Primary	24	20.5
Incomplete Secondary	15	12.8
Complete Secondary	5	4.5
College	0	0
Total	117	100

Table 3.2 (b) Male Respondents

Level of Education	No. Of Respondents	Percentage %
None	9	36.0
Incomplete Primary	7	28.0
Complete Primary	6	24.0
Incomplete Secondary	2	8.0
Complete Secondary	1	4.0
College	0	0
Total	25	100

Source: Study Sample

From the above tables, it is evident that the level of illiteracy amongst Maasai men is as high as that of Maasai women, yet the participation of men in electoral politics is greater than women for example at the civic elections there were 7 illiterate councillors and non was a woman. Thus there are other factors affecting the participation of women in electoral politics other than formal education. As observed in chapter two leadership is a male domain thus formal education not withstanding, traditional perceptions on leadership is a factor that is affecting the participation of Maasai Women in electoral politics. Of the 26 women respondents with incomplete primary education, 93% had interest in politics. Of the 24 respondents with complete primary education, 64% had interest in politics. Out of the 15 respondents who had incomplete secondary education 22% had interest in politics. Of the 47 respondents who had not attended school, 65% had interest in politics. Looking into the

relationship above, what emerges is lack of a definite relationship between formal education and interest in politics. Although 66% of the respondents with the highest level of education also have the highest interest in politics, their ratio to the uneducated was 1:22. Thus generalization made on the basis of this premise could be misleading because both the educated and the uneducated participated in electoral politics. Participation in politics is in spite of education. This is affirmed by the weakness in the Kendale coefficient of concordance of 0.086. In testing whether the correlation was statistically significant, the Chi-square was used. The null hypothesis (Ho) that there is no significant relationship between education and participation, when participation was taken to mean interest in politics, was rejected.

Education Vs Rally Attendance

Out of the 117 women interviewed, 77% attended political rallies. 21 % had incomplete primary education, 17% had complete primary education, 13% had incomplete secondary education, 4% had complete secondary education while 44% had not gone to school. The illiterate respondents dominated the attendance of political rallies as indicated by Kendale coefficient of 0.9. The relationship is explained by the answers given by the respondents. Those who had formal education indicated that they would not gain much in those political rallies thus they did not bother to attend them. The other reason advanced by those who had formal education was that they were in formal employment as teachers, clerks or business people therefore they could not have the time to attend political rallies. Those who attended political rallies indicated that they went there seeking to be informed on political issues.

There were respondents who indicated that they attended these political rallies because when it came to campaign times the candidates judged their supporters by their attendance to the meetings they called. Candidates rewarded their supporters by giving them money, sugar, flour and other foods. What emerges is that not all those who attended political rallies were out to be informed about politics. Some did so with the hope of having some material gains thereafter. A Chi-square test at 95% level of significance was instituted to the association of these two variables. The calculated X^2 obtained was 13.08 with 12 degrees of freedom. The X^2 critical was 21.0. This meant that the relationship between education and attendance of political rallies though present was not significant at the tested level of 95%.

Education Vs Roles in Political Parties

Of the 117 women respondents interviewed, 97% indicated that they were members of a political party. Out of these, only 2 played leadership roles, one had incomplete secondary education, and the other had complete secondary education. The rest participated in the women groups that were part of the KANU's women's League.

In obtaining the relationship that exists between these two variables, the Kendale coefficient of concordance was employed and a value of 0.36 was obtained. To test whether the association was significant at 95% level of confidence, Chi-square was computed and a value of 25.36 with 12 degrees of freedom was obtained. The X^2 critical was 21.0. This

meant that the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected because the correlation was significant at the tested 95% level of confidence.

Whether one had formal education did influence the roles played in the political party. According to a party official, one needs some formal education to be able to play a role in the leadership of the political party. This is because these roles involve making decision concerning the operations of the political party. The presence of only two women in the party leadership is a testimony of the marginal role that Maasai women play in party affairs. Formal education, appears to be a handicap because most of the women cited lack of education as a hindrance to their involvement in political parties affairs. Also observed was that recruitment of members into the political party was done by both those who had attained formal education and those who had no formal education. We found out that this was possible because party officials assigned all members the task of recruiting others to be members of the party.

Education Vs Voting

Of the 117 respondents interviewed, 106 or 91% had participated in voting at the national elections, party elections and women group elections. Of the 106 respondents, 23% had not completed primary education, 22% had completed primary education, 14% had not completed secondary education, 3% had completed secondary education while 35% had not gone to school. What emerges here is that voting is not determined by the level of

education but by other factors. We found that the perceptions of the Maasai community towards voting influenced this activity. Voting especially in parliamentary and civic elections was perceived as an important activity in which both men and women should participate.

The relationship between the two variables was correlated using Kendale coefficient of concordance and a value of 0.7 was obtained. To test whether this correlation was significant at 95% level of confidence, a calculated X^2 value of 5.86 with 4 degrees of freedom, and X^2 critical value of 9.5 were obtained. Thus the null hypothesis (H_0) that there is no significant relationship between the level of education and participation when participation is taken to mean voting was adopted. Voting was not dependent on the level of education since the exercise was recognized and accepted as vital in politics to both men and women who have attained the age to vote. Voting is an activity encouraged by the candidates during election campaigns, the government and local leaders. The details of the voting procedures were well known to both those who had formal education and those who had not attained formal education.

Marital Status and Women's Participation

Marital status was defined as a condition pertaining to marriage, i.e., whether one was married, single, widowed or divorced. The respondents were grouped into three categories namely married, single and widowed. Of the 142 female and male interviewed, 123 or 87%

were married, 12 or 8.7% were single and 6 or 4.3% were widowed as indicated in Table below.

Table 3.3 - Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Category	No. Of Respondents		Percentage %
	Female	Male	
Married	100	25	87
Single	13	0	8.7
Widowed	4	0	4.3
TOTAL	117	25	100

For the female respondents, when marital status was correlated with participation, it was found that it was a significant determinant of women's participation in electoral political processes when participation was taken to as interest in politics. The calculated chi square (χ^2) was 6.66 with 9 degrees of freedom while the chi square (χ^2) critical was 16.9. The correlation was significant at 95% level of confidence. Marriage appeared to be a factor influencing the participation of women in politics. Women respondents indicated that their husbands introduced them to politics especially the electoral

politics by asking them to vote in civic and parliamentary elections. For others those whose husbands were politicians, they got involved in politics because their husbands held meetings at home. As a result of the many people who visit politicians' homes, their wives got to know much about politics and this ignited their interests. For politicians , during campaign times they asked their wives to visit other women and solicit votes for their husbands.

Although the women who have been brought up in politicians home were few, such background had a lot of influence on one's interest in politics. This observation was strengthened by two of the women respondents who particularly displayed a lot of disparity from the rest of the sample. They both had been very aggressive and active on the political front, they had even made attempts to present themselves as civic candidates but by the time of our research only one of them had succeeded to hold a civic seat, though through nomination. Both respondents indicated that they came from backgrounds where they experienced a lot of political activities in their homes since childhood. Their fathers have been prominent long serving politicians at the civic and parliamentary levels.

Marital Status and Roles in Political Parties

From the sample population of 117 women, 100 or 85% of the women respondents were married. However, only one played leadership role in their political party KANU, 10% played members recruitment roles, while 65 or 65% played the role of members to the women groups which are part of the Party's women's League. A statistical correlation between marital status and roles in political party using Kendale coefficient of concordance obtained a value of 0.12. This was a weak association. Using the chi square the significance of this association was tested at 95% level of confidence. The calculated X² value was 9.76 with 9 degrees of freedom, X² critical was 16.9. This meant that the association was significant at the tested level. The null hypothesis (H₀) was rejected and H₁, reaffirmed that there exists a statistically significant correlation between marital status and roles in the political parties.

From the 100 married women, we found that 78% were members in KANU political party. This number shows that women membership is quite high compared to the few decision making roles taken by women. Our study tried to compare the party membership of men and women to the political party by examining KANU party membership registers

of three locations selected through random sampling. The results were as follows:-

Narok District KANU Branch membership register

Location	Male	Female
Olokurto	474	326
Mau	279	207
Osupuko	340	297
Total	1093	830

This comparison indicated that membership to the political party for women was as high as that of the men. However, the number of women who are active in party matters is extremely low. The study gathered that high membership of women in the political party was influenced by a strongly held misconception that one could lose their right to cast votes if one was not a member to a political party. As a result women were encouraged by their husbands and leaders to register as party members just as they were encouraged to vote. However, the women were not equally encouraged to play active roles in the affairs of the political party. Apart from lack of encouragement to participate in party affairs, women who indicated interest in taking part in activities of political parties cited domestic chores and child rearing as

hindrance since these left them with little time to participate in the affairs of the political parties. Further weight to this argument was asserted by the single women who appeared to dominate the list of the few women active in party affairs. For example, out of the 23 women who took part in recruiting exercises, 13 were single. Recruitment exercises involved a lot of movement from one place to another thus required a lot of time which was not available to married women. Among the married women there are those who indicated that although they could spare time to engage in party recruitment roles, their husbands could not allow them to engage in the exercise. This is because their husbands equated the movement with loitering which was unacceptable.

Marital Status and Attendance of political Rallies

From the 100 respondents who were married, 78% indicated that they attend political rallies. Of the respondents who were single, 75% indicated attendance of political rallies. Of the 4 respondents who were widowed, 3 indicated attendance to political rallies. These two variables were correlated using the Kendale coefficient of concordance and a value of 0.24 was obtained. The correlation was tested for significance at 95% level of confidence using Chi-square. The

calculated X² value of 6.04 with 9 degrees of freedom was obtained. The X² critical was 16.9. This meant that the correlation was significant at the tested level.

Marital Status and Voting Behavior

Of the 106 respondents who indicated that they have voted at the various levels, i.e. general elections, party elections and group elections, 85% were married, 11.4 % were single, while 3% were widowed. The statistical measure of correlation was computed using Kendale coefficient of concordance and a value of 0.9 was obtained. This was an indication of a strong association between these two variables.

The high number of married women who participated in voting can be explained by the influence of their husbands. These women voted according to their husbands' instructions, i.e., in voting as well as in the choice of candidates. Most of the married women indicated that because the husband was traditionally the head of the household, his direction and choices had to be abided with. They could only do what their husbands approve even in other spheres apart from voting.

A study by Jaquette on women's participation in voting observed that levels of voting participation are universally attributed to patterns of female dependence on male. There is data showing that husbands and wives vote alike. However, these studies have not indicated the reasons why husbands and wives vote alike. Our study found that the reason why Maasai men and women vote alike is that husbands require their wives to vote like them. The strong association was tested for significance at 95% level of confidence using the Chi-square. The calculated X^2 was 0.52 with 3 degrees of freedom. The X^2 critical was 7.8. This meant that the strong association was significant at 95% level confidence. Thus there is a significant relationship between marital status and participation in electoral political processes, when participation is taken to mean voting behavior.

Cultural Factors that Affect Women's Participation in the Political Processes

Culture was defined as the traditions, set of norms that have been accepted and which influence the day to day life of a community. The Maasai have often been seen as a people with a tendency to be conservative. This is because they maintain a very strong culture which is reflected in many spheres of their lives. For instance, King had this to say in connection with the Loita and Keekonyokie clans:

“..... two sections viewed as the most conservative over the last 70 years, the Keekonyokie and the Loita, may perhaps take longer to capitulate to the market economy” (King 1970:30).

Due to this tendency of being conservative the Maasai do not readily accept new ideas being introduced to them and more so they resist those that conflicted with their culture. For instance, during the colonial period there was continuous resistance to schooling in defense of pastoral values and the age set system. School was particularly viewed as distortive to the life style of the Maasai as elaborated in chapter two.

In our study, out of 117 women respondents, 74.6% indicated that the cultural values were the main barrier that hindered Maasai women's participation in politics. All the 25 male respondents indicated that by tradition women had no role in politics. They indicated that because of the fact that women had no political role, they could not make choices when it comes to voting or being members of political parties. They had to go by the choices and decisions of their husbands. The claim that women voted according to the wishes of their husbands was confirmed by the responses of the women respondents in that out of the 106 women who have voted, 74 % indicated that they vote to the candidates of the husband's choice. Some also felt that women should not take up political offices or roles because it was against the traditions of the Maasai. In their view politics is for men and women are not capable of running political affairs.

One of those Maasai traditions that emerged as a great hindrance to women when it comes to taking part in politics was the age-set system. This is a cultural as well as a social institution that systematically peripheries women from politics in general and leadership in particular. According to the system, Maasai women have no political role. Maasai women unlike their male counterparts do not go through the stages prescribed in the age-set system which are allocated various political offices in the cultural setup. The Maasai men go through four possible stages in the age-set system. All these stages have offices with political authority that is held by chosen members of each age-set. For the women the only stage of graduation is from childhood to womanhood and this stage has no political authority accorded to it.

Circumcision is another tradition that hinders Maasai women from participation in politics. Like in many African societies, amongst the Maasai, circumcision is seen as a rite of passage. Unfortunately, for the Maasai women circumcision does not lead to glorious stages. Instead it marks the beginning of subordination for Maasai women. It often symbolizes that a girl has become of age to be married off to an old wealthy man in exchange of great wealth if she is not lucky to be betrothed to a Moran. It also more often than not means end of schooling for the girls in school. The woman is dependent on the husband for the provision of the basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing in return of which she has to be obedient. On the other hand, circumcision to the Maasai men is the rite of passage and is very respectable. After circumcision the Maasai men enter into moranhood then graduate to junior elders and

ultimately to senior elders. All these stages are endowed with political privileges and powers as enumerated in Chapter two. It is in these offices that important political as well as economic decisions that affect the Maasai society are made. These decisions include the governing of the various Maasai subsections, grazing lands, wars etc.

The Socialization process is another aspect of the Maasai traditions that emerged as preventing women from participating in political processes. This process does not prepare a woman to aspire for any public responsibilities. The role of Maasai women is mainly set in the private domestic sphere while that of men is to take care of public and political spheres. These sex roles have been preserved from generation to generation and are thus deeply ingrained in the minds of the society at large. For example the favorite chores for girls revolved around baby nursing, milking cows and home making while those for boys include grazing cattle in the wilderness where there are tough challenges like encountering wild animals, learning the art of war and the art of leadership.

Sylvia Tamale observes the same scenario among Uganda women when she says that in Uganda the division of labor is based on sex. Women's tasks basically revolve around the home. On average work revolving around the home, not including other related responsibilities like child rearing, takes approximately 20% of her labor time (Tamale 1993:319). The socialization process together with the heavy workload women have to bear significantly contribute to women's political attitudes. The heavy workload leave women

with no spare time to think of political responsibilities while gender stereotyping roles impairs any involvement in political matters. In the words of Randal, the women's domestic chores makes them have less occasion to learn and discuss political affairs and less time and freedom to undertake political work. Society regards women as minors and inferior (Randall V.1987:86).

The traditional attitudes towards formal education emerged as being responsible for the high illiteracy levels amongst Maasai women. This lack of formal education in turn emerged as a major factor responsible for the low level of participation of women in electoral political process. Attitudes which the Maasai have had towards formal education emerged since the introduction of formal education by the colonial state. The Maasai regarded formal education as an instrument of the colonialists aimed at de-culturing them. This has had a negative impact on the levels of literacy in maasailand. Besides the general reluctance towards formal education, girls' participation lagged far behind that of boys. For instance, in 1952 the Kajiado African District Council had 5 primary schools with 400 pupils of whom only 19 were girls (KNA DC/KAJ 2/1/4:20). The education of girls was especially resisted because of its contradiction with the tribal rites for girls. The colonial authorities and the missionaries campaigned against marriage and circumcision of girls as demonstrated in the following letter from a colonial district commissioner:

“From a European standpoint, this custom (circumcision) is undesirable morally and physically”. (A letter from Kajiado District Commissioner to Provincial Commissioner, Maasai Province Ngong, No. ADM15127, KNA DCIKAS121112 12th May 1931).

However, to the Maasai, these two institutions were very important in preserving established cultural values and attitudes. Education therefore, remained unpopular then and even after independence these attitudes have not changed much since the Maasai are unwilling to abandon circumcision of girls and early marriages. In the post-independence period the trend of girls dropping out of school for marriage was and is still on. A study carried out on the rate of pupils dropping out of school indicates that:

“Approximately 35% of all primary school pupils failed to finish school between 1974 and 1979. The dropout rate in Narok was about 30% higher than in many pastoral districts such as Isiolo and Samburu, for example. In Narok the dropout was especially high among girls (over 35%). Domestic responsibilities and early marriages greatly reduce female participation in education” (Ole Sena 1986:89).

While explaining the illiteracy levels among Ugandan women, Joan Kakwenzire observes that:

“Where there is a problem of inadequate resources, parents reserve resources for educating boys in preference to girls. This is because it was and it is still believed that more economic returns and security were or are realized through educating boys and that girls' education is less beneficial...The dropout rate in primary school for girls between 1977 -1988 was 59.1 %(1996;234).

In our study 74% of women respondents indicated that lack of formal education was a hindrance to women's participation in politics, they blamed traditions for denying them access to formal education.

Decision Making Roles as a Factor Influencing Women's Participation in Political processes.

Decision making role was taken to be a means of making choices that influence authoritative allocation of resources in the community. In our study we found that all the 117 women respondents indicated that they do not have decision making roles in women groups or political parties. Even the 21% respondents who are chairladies/leaders in their groups admitted that when it comes to decision making men take over either directly or indirectly. The claim that women do not have decision making roles in their groups was strengthened by the responses of all the 25 male respondents who indicated that they have leadership roles or help in leading the women groups. However, the male respondents were not consistent as to their roles in women groups, and also on positions and work of women as elders and

leaders. This is evident from the style of responding. For example the 25 male respondents indicated that they were elders, 17 of them indicated that there were women elders also but on being questioned about the work of the women elders, their response was that women had no work apart from household work. Although the male respondents indicated that women are leaders of women groups on the other hand, 15 of them indicated that women held no leadership positions in these groups. The contradictions in these responses may explain the problems experienced by the coordinators of the women groups in the Ministry of Culture and Social Services when it comes to women's group management. Women are not allowed men to lead their groups because culturally they do not have leadership roles to play. Thus although women respondents indicated that they hold the positions of chairlady, secretary, treasurer in the groups, when it comes to making choices regarding the management of women groups and influencing authoritative decisions they admitted that they are overshadowed by men. When asked why men were predominant in decision making, 12% respondents replied that decision making was a male domain. A second reason advanced was that women are limited by their duties and responsibilities that left little time for them to attend meetings where decisions are made. Unwillingness on the part of women to venture into decision making positions could also explain why men dominate in decision making roles. For example, 57% of the women respondents indicated unwillingness to take up a political office given a chance. The explanation commonly noted was that a political office was too challenging to be taken by a woman. Also that, traditionally its men who are entitled to hold political offices. Other than male dominance, beliefs held by both men and women

also determined women's participation in politics. Any women who was venturing into power politics is treated as a deviant in a social structure that is dominated by men. Maasai women for instance by tradition are not allowed to stand and address a public gathering. This implies that as leaders politically, women cannot express their ideas in campaigns or other meetings because there is no forum to do so.

Women Involvement in Women Groups and its Effect on their General Participation in Politics

Group Management was defined as deciding upon and carrying out (with others) such group activities as implementation of projects, planning controlling and organizing activities. It had been hypothesized that the more women are mobilized into groups the higher their level of participation in electoral politics. Our study interviewed 117 Maasai women respondents and 25 Maasai male respondents. Of the 142 male and female Maasai respondents interviewed, 32% participated in the management of women groups. All the 25 Maasai male respondents participated in the management of the women groups but were categorical that they are not members in those groups. Only 19 women indicated that they managed their women groups without involving men. Thus male dominance in the management of group affairs is evident.

Table 3.4 - Distribution of Decision Making by Sex

Sex	Number of Respondents	Percentage in decision making	Percentage not in decision making
Male	25	100%	0
Female	117	6%	94%

Source - Own Survey

From Table 3.4, it is evident that a majority of women did not participate in decision making roles in the management of women's groups activities. In spite of male dominance in decision making positions, the participation of women in group activities is positive. Male dominance does not seem to deter women from carrying out the activities set out by their groups. However, the majority of the women respondents expressed their desire to have men leave them alone to manage their groups. The reason advanced were that by men managing these groups the women were disadvantaged because they did not get the benefits that accrue from the projects undertaken. For example, the chairperson of Osotua Women's groups which is running a posho mill project said that the dominance of men in the management of the group did not give the women a chance of managing the business to their expectations. This is because the men run the group's account. The group members are rarely informed about the state of their account, they are expected to assume that all is well because the men are in control. In her opinion, the effect of this situation is that it is difficult for the women to uplift themselves economically. They are not able to benefit

from the interest being earned by their account since the money is not readily at their disposal.

Conclusion

This Chapter analyzed the effect of socio-cultural factors on women's participation in the political processes. The participation of women in political process is greatly hampered by societal attitudes which subordinate women in the public sphere. Cultural factors such as circumcision, age-set system, negative attitudes towards formal education have perpetuated the marginal participation of Maasai women in political process. The dominance of men in decision making also emerged as a factor that perpetuate the marginal participation of Maasai women in the political arena. Maasai women lack the capacity to effectively operate, influence decisions, join in their implementation and control of the activities that affect them as a result of male dominance.

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CHAPTER FOUR

STRUCTURAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT MAASAI WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESSES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter identifies and analyses the structural factors that make it difficult for Maasai women to participate in the political processes. The sources of data for this chapter are both primary and secondary. It is the contention of the chapter that the existing structures have not favored Maasai women in their efforts to participate in politics. This study identified structures in existence that have proved to be a stumbling block towards the full participation of Maasai women in the political processes. These are political system, the economy, formal education and the electoral system.

Women's Bureau and Its Effect on Women's Participation in Decision Making as a political process

Looking at the composition of the Government of Kenya in general, there is an apparent under representation of women in positions of power in the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. The Government's response to the glaring under representation of women in its top echelons was by initiating strategies aimed at integrating women in the mainstream of National Development. The women's bureau was created to perform this role. One of the

major tasks that the bureau undertook was to accelerate the formation of women's groups and administer those that already existed all over the country, mainly for income generating, health improvement and other activities that aimed at drawing women closer to policy making bodies. There are about 23,614 women groups countrywide with a membership of about a million women. (Kahiga M 1995:5). To date the impact of the women's Bureau has been felt as far as integrating women into the mainstream economic activities is concerned. Indeed in our study, we found that women groups had received a lot of technical, material and financial support towards income generating projects from the Bureau. Some of the projects included posho mills, beadery and development of plots. However, our study observed that the women's bureau has not improved the participation of women in the mainstream political activities. This is because the underlying structures in the government do not allow the bureau to deal with matters deemed political. Being in the executive arm of the government, the bureau cannot support political activities such as sponsoring women to contest for elective posts in parliament or civic bodies. In addition the bureau has no powers to ensure that women are appointed to decision making positions at policy making levels in the government. However we observed that although the bureau was keen to support women groups start income generating projects, it did not equally support their participation in decision making at this very basic level.

Out of the 117 women respondents, 70% indicated that the bureau had an insignificant effect in enhancing the women's decision-making roles in the women's groups as well as at the local

and national level. The bureau had not intervened in the situation whereby men dominated the decision making of the women groups and by so doing has contributed to the marginalization of Maasai women in leadership. The District Social Development officer was interviewed to find out the role of the women's Bureau in enhancing the participation of women in the management of women groups. In his response, he was quick to point out that the women's Bureau was facing a lot of problems in this area because, men could not let women manage the projects. This is because culturally women are perceived as not capable of managing development projects, including operating bank accounts unaided. Thus the men felt that they had to "assist" women when it comes to making important decisions. This confirms our findings from the women respondents that the bureau had an insignificant effect in enhancing women's participation in decision-making roles in their community.

District Focus For Rural Development Strategy and its impact on the Participation of women in Decision Making as a political process

Another policy strategy adopted by the Government in redressing the absence of women in decision making position was the District Focus for Rural Development Strategy. The strategy involves decentralization whereby the responsibility of decision making, planning and implementation of projects is shifted from the ministry Headquarters to the various District Headquarters in the country. The strategy aimed at broadening the base for rural development by moving decisions on planning and management closer to implementation and the people who will be affected by these decisions. It encourages local participation in

order to improve problem identification, resource mobilization and utilization, project design and implementation. The strategy operates committees from the grassroots level to the district level. The composition of the committees provide for members of the local community i.e. both men and women to participate in these decision making organs, these committees also identify and prioritize projects.

Our study found that, despite the provision for women representatives in the committees, there was a conspicuous absence of Maasai women in the composition of Development Committees at all levels. The DDC is required to ensure that women's organizations are sufficiently represented in the DDC meetings but in the entire District, all the chairpersons to the Development Committees at all levels were administrative officers who happened to be men. The chairmen constituted such persons as sub-chiefs, chiefs, D0s and DCs. This essentially means that at no level does a woman chair a development committee. Other positions in the development committees are held by chairmen of local authorities, party cadre, Departmental heads and representatives of development related parastatals. These persons also happen to be largely men. Up to the time of our research, only two women have been members in the District Development Committee. It was further noted that these two women were representing Ministerial departments in the committee. The DFRD's structure does not explicitly provide for the number of local women who should be members of the DDC rather the requirement is that the committee ensures that women are sufficiently represented in the DDC meetings. This was not adhered to as our study found out. When

asked why Maasai women were not represented the chairman pointed that the proposals presented from the grassroots level were assumed to have included the views of women as well. The chairman was not keen to ensure women's presence in the DDC meetings and he had not received any complaints. We enquired from our respondents to find out their views towards the DDC meetings. Some respondents indicated awareness on their intended roles in the DDC but were not included in the meetings while others indicate that they not aware they had any roles to play at the DDC. From the foregoing, it is evident that Maasai women are not participating in decision making and their interests are not represented in the Development Committees. It is also evident that the strategy has not succeeded in bringing Maasai women in the mainstream of development and decision making in particular. This failure can be explained by the absence of the necessary structural arrangements to ensure the participation of women. Despite the strategy being gender sensitive the constitution of the implementers of this strategy is largely male who may not have adequately represented the needs and priorities of Maasai women as indicated by the Maasai women's desire to be included in those meetings.

Formal Education System and its Effect on Maasai Women's participation in Political Processes

Formal education is another structure that has been a stumbling block to Maasai women participation in political processes. This is because from the onset the colonial administration encouraged boys rather than girls to go to school. This may have been as a

result of the colonial needs at the time when education was introduced to Africans. At the time the colonial administration required clerks and administrators, thus education was shaped to meet these demands. Later on when girls were taken to school, they were taught skills that only prepared them for Christian marriage and motherhood. (Rothberg 1983:134)

When the colonial authorities introduced this type of education to the Maasai it was unacceptable to them because several reasons:-

To start with the preference for boys to be sent to school conflicted with the Maasai division of labor which allocates major herding duties to adolescent boys. If the boys were sent to school, cattle would be left unattended. Also, the Maasai did not want to send their girls to school as it conflicted with tribal rites of marriage and circumcision. Schooling for girls meant that these rites would be delayed or skipped, which was not acceptable to community.

Secondly in recruiting students for the colonial schools the administration introduced a system in which each area was required to send a given number of children to school. The responsibility for locating men whose children would be sent to school was placed in the hands of the then newly appointed chiefs. They were required to nominate particular men who would in turn decide who among the sons (daughters were not yet thought of) would go to school. Once the children had been sent to school, their parents would then be responsible for ensuring that they remain in school. Failure to comply with this rule would lead to imposition of fines and/or prison sentences. Confiscation of livestock when parents failed to comply with Government's demands was one such measure.

Thirdly the education curriculum was designed to instill agricultural skills and discourage pastoralism. This was greatly detested by the Maasai who regarded pastoralism to be superior. This compulsion coupled with the association of school with manual labor and deprivation generated a conscious resistance by the Maasai against the emasculation by colonial ideological institutions of church and school (Kipury 1986: 236-262). These were some of the features of the formal education system that have continued to impact on the attitudes of the Maasai towards the system.

Despite independence, the post Independence State did not represent a major break from its predecessor. For instance, attempts made to restructure the education structure inherited from the colonial era did not deviate from the structural features. As a result education continued to be a means through which men attain higher social status while girls continued to be confined in what they were taught. Although the education system has been changed to fit the present needs of Kenya, social factors continue to militate against the education of girls. The system changes did not put in place measures to deal with these social factors and as a result these system changes have not been felt as yet because literacy levels of women still remain low, especially among Maasai.

As for the Maasai, even when education was later on accepted (because it came to be viewed as providing a way of substituting pastoralism) boys were more often sent to school than girls. The reasons for this are generally related to their favored position in the patrilineal

structure including the fact that they, not their sisters, would be expected to support their parents in their old age. Girls have continued to be given less priority in education because they are usually not expected to return to their natal homes. Instead they get married and perpetuate other families. It is on this basis that parents, worried about school expenditures decide not to send girls to school, expecting them to make their futures elsewhere with specific economic guarantees accruing to the parents.

Despite changes in the enrollment of children in that more girls are being enrolled to go to school today the preference of educating boys is still evident when parents are financially constrained and put in situation of choice. Often it is the girls who are removed from school and married off so that the boys are educated with what accrues from these marriages and the parents also gain wealth in the form of cattle. The education of girls is further compounded by the problem of high dropout rates due to early pregnancies. Girls are discriminated against by being dropped from continuing with their education while the boys responsible for such pregnancies are left to continue with their education. This is also a fact that has contributed to parents favoring to educate sons than daughters. All these factors have resulted in a generation of illiterate women or semi literate women who cannot fully participate in politics, decision making and other economic endeavors in which education is a prerequisite for gainful participation. The education system has failed to put in place measures to deal with the numerous social and cultural factors that mitigate against the education of girls. This structural weakness has prevented the education system from

achieving the goals of equal education opportunities for both girls and boys and elimination of illiteracy in the entire Nation. For example there are no corrective measures in place when parents discontinue girls' education in order to educate the boys; when parents marry off their school going daughters , or when boys impregnate girls and the former are allowed to continue with their education while the girls are discontinued and not accepted again back to school.

The Economy and its Effect on Maasai Women's Participation in Political Processes

The economy was identified as a structure that proved to be a stumbling block to women's participation in political processes. The present economic situation is hard on women. In Africa women are the poorest among the poor. Women's labor is generally taken for granted and goes mostly unpaid. Women emerge as greatly economically deprived especially due to the fact that their low literacy levels makes them have few options for viable economic existence.

This situation can be traced to the onset of colonialism, which turned out to be the beginning of a transition to capitalism. With capitalism, there arose the need to redefine rights and control of resources. Capitalism as introduced by colonialism caused some of the most disruptive changes whose effects continue to be felt up to a personal level. Colonialism perpetuated and intensified capitalist relation of production, thereby disrupting and

weakening the traditional relations of production. For the Maasai for instance, as capitalist categories of private ownership become concretized, elders who held supervisory rights to livestock were able to assume stricter controls over the collectively held resources. Men were transformed into owners of formerly inalienable livestock and land for the purposes other than for the reproduction of the community. These developments came to define women as non-owners and made them vulnerable to being disinherited. Men acquired new rights over livestock and land that enabled them to sell these two commodities without reference to women or family members.

Since independence the viability of capitalism has continued to thrive and underdevelopment has progressed. Livestock, their products and land have been transformed into commodities that are transacted in the market. As the scramble to produce and market these products intensified, so did the need for definition of rights to them became significant. The effects of these developments have been that the traditional structures whereby livestock, their products and land were communally owned are no longer in place. The collapse of these structures has meant that some groups have become owners while others have been left vulnerable to exploitation and dependency thus creating underdevelopment.

One of the major programmes embarked on by the Government at independence was a campaign to promote efficient use of natural resources. This led to the promotion of commodity production which involved commoditization of livestock, promotion of

agriculture and the improvement of the tourist industry among others. The alternative land management programmes, presumably geared towards the achievement of greater productivity, undermined subsistence pastoralism and were directly responsible for the generation of under Development in Maasailand and other pastoralist regions.

This is because the commoditization of livestock involved influencing decisions to dispose off large herds of livestock and gear its production for the market. The rise in marketed animals was interpreted as a measure of development. Although this may be so nationally since Kenya boasts of an increase in livestock production from 425,000 herd in 1986 to 524,000 in 1987 (a 22% increase) and a 19% increase in the slaughter of sheep and goats (Economic Survey 1988:99). The effect on subsistence pastoralism was devastating in that the promotion of production to cater for the beef industry also involved a change of balance in the composition of herd in favor of male stock. This in turn influences the amount of milk available for subsistence and also upsets the allocation pattern and inheritance practices. These changes had a great impact on the Maasai women social and economic status. This is because in most acephalous pastoral societies, women control the production and distribution of milk. The commoditization of the pastoral sector and especially the production of beef for the market instead of milk for subsistence, inevitably has a negative impact on female autonomy in production and distribution of livestock products. For the Maasai, beef production is incompatible with milk production. Sound pastoralism reflects an imbalance in favor of female stock in every herd. To engage in beef production means a decrease in milk yields, which is a reflection of constrained pastoralism. This in turn

means a reduction or disappearance of objects for women's control and exchange and an increase in the reliance on the market for subsistence. (Dahl and Hjort 1979; Ensminger, 1980).

The commoditization of livestock has reduced the number of animals allotted to the wife and also made the formerly inalienable women's herd alienable in order to meet the numerous needs of the market. Although women were in control over subsistence milk whenever it is produced on a commercial scale men tend to control it. This is often aided by the fact that it is men who take loans to purchase special breeds of dairy cattle and are thus under pressure to ensure that the proceeds from the milk goes into repaying the loan. But even in the absence of loans, when the milk is produced on a modest scale to supply the market, it is men who receive such orders. The whole process tends to upset the balance of control at the expense of women.

Another post-independence development was land adjudication which also involved transformation of land into a commodity that could be transacted on the market and more importantly, it required the definition and qualification of access to it. In Maasailand, adjudication of group ranchers registered adult men as members leaving out women. When the state had to expropriate pastoral lands for the establishment of infrastructure, it is men who received money. By compensating the men, the state not only did away with the concept of collective use of resources and substituting it with capitalist principles of

exclusive ownership, it also impoverished women. The result of these transformations is that Maasai women have been greatly disadvantaged. This is because whatever form of access to economic and political status was allocated to men while women were consistently pushed into the private domain and declared dependent. Consequently Maasai women lack property ownership rights and are economically dependent on men as husbands, fathers, politicians to provide for the main products of the markets. They have no resources which they own and which can propel them in our capitalist economy.

The transformation of land into a commodity also adversely affected women in the agricultural societies as well. For example the Kikuyu women had rights of cultivating land and control of the produce therefrom. However, with the onset of colonialism there were changes that greatly affected these traditional land rights enjoyed by women. Firstly, there was migrant labor to the urban areas, in search of paid employment, which predominantly involved men. The result was that women became overwhelmed by increased responsibilities and duties that were meant for men such as looking after cattle, clearing and digging of land before planting. In addition women had to work harder to provide for the household's economic security. The husbands' meager salaries, which were heavily taxed, could not be relied upon.

The concept of land registration introduced by colonial administration necessitated new definitions with regard to land ownership, issuance of documents such as title deeds and land

certificates to the new owners. Unfortunately land was registered in husbands' names leaving out their wives' names. Men became the owners of the land and important land rights traditionally enjoyed by women were extinguished for they were not shown on the register. The title holder was the most important person representing the family. The title holder received the payments for the cash crops and any benefits such as agricultural training was directed to men. Further the introduction of cash-crops engendered loss of subsistence land by the women. The women's plight was further aggravated when the benefit accruing to the title deed were realized. Such rights as land disposal could be effected without women being lawfully able to interfere with transactions affecting their traditional interests.

Rodney observed the effects of colonialism thus:

“Colonialism distorted the position of women in society by reinforcing exploitative tendencies of preexisting social forms while at the same time setting up bureaucracies in which women's entry was effectively barred by lack of training and anti-feminist attitudes that the colonialists had acquired in capitalist society. Agricultural work traditionally done by women became inferior in social evaluation and unproductive because it did not generate cash” (Rodney 1984:2).

The situation in which women were left by the colonial policies whereby they lost control and ownership of land and property has continued to contribute to the detriment of their economic progress. African women have continued to be the poorest among the poor.

Women continued with their disadvantaged position in the post-independence state. Little has been done to improve their position in the capitalist economy. Women continue to lack the essential tools to propel them in our capitalist societies. One of the greatest economic handicaps is that women's lack of control and ownership of land and property limits their access to capital. For example land registration certificates or title deeds are very important possessions, which enable proprietorship and access to credit. Unfortunately in Kenya, only 5% of the title deeds issued are held by women (Kahiga 1985:5). This translates into a handicap because women lack land which is normally used as a collateral to enable one obtain credit. In addition due to high incidences of illiteracy among women, they lack access to information and technology which are relevant to capital formation. All these factors translate into a state of enhanced poverty which systematically locks women out of the sphere of politics. Without economic support, women find it extremely difficult to meaningfully participate in political processes. This is because engaging in these processes requires economic resources. The means available to obtain, especially financial, resources include credit from financial institutions. As mentioned earlier, collateral is a requirement to access credit. The economic structure favors men when it comes to collateral thus giving them a head start in politics since credit is used to propel them in politics. Although it may be argued that credit is not extended to finance political activities such as campaigns, it is a fact that such credit has often been directed to finance political activities to the disadvantage of women who have limited access to credit. This disadvantaged position of women is a result of the economic structure we have in place.

Political Party's Structure and its Effect on Maasai Women's Participation in Political Processes

The political party's structure was taken to be the entire party organization and leadership hierarchy. The discussion of the party's structure has been deliberately focused to Kenya African National Union (KANU) because firstly, it is the party which all the respondents indicated to belong to and secondly, it is the party that had long established itself even before the beginning of the current multiparty era.

KANU as a political party has an organizational structure that indicates operations and the working relations of the party from the national level to the grassroots (location) level. The significant observation to the study is the fact that KANU's organizational hierarchy is dominated by men. All the national level officials are men. The KANU women's group together with the youth's group are subsidiary organization that at the bottom of the hierarchy. They are found at the grassroots level of the political party. Women's representation at the decision-making levels of the party is absent. The National Governing Council, the highest decision making organ of the party, lacks women representation in its membership. When asked why men dominated decision making 80 of the 142 respondents replied that decision making was a male domain . A second reason advanced was that women had time limitations given their duties and responsibilities. Hence, women were not as free as their male counterparts. A third reason given for male dominance was the unwillingness on the part of women to venture into power position due to the lack of favorable conditions. Another reason given was that men did not want women to hold such

powerful positions. This view as held by 22 respondents twelve of whom were women. Whereas these responses do not have a direct link to the party's structure, our study observed that the party's structure denies women favorable conditions in which they can participate in the party affairs. For example respondents indicated that the placing of the women's league at the bottom of the hierarchy makes it difficult for women to reach the national decision making positions. This also indicates that women are not of significant importance to the political party as they are placed next to the youth.

Although the women respondents indicated that they were registered members of this party, it was observed that none of them had participated in the Annual Delegates Conference at any time they were held. In fact, 75% of the female respondents indicated that they were not aware of when such conferences are held. However, they indicated that they have participated in the election of delegates at some time. During the period the research was being conducted an election of delegates took place. The study observed that despite the good turnout of women in the elections at both District Party Branch and sub-branch levels, they did not elect one of their own neither had any of them presented herself to be elected. When asked why they were not electing one of their own, 42% respondents indicated that they felt well represented by men. 50% indicated that even if they were to elect a woman it would be futile because she is not accorded the same status as a man and her voice would not be heard. Therefore they had better elect a man who would be listened to. Among the male respondents 80% indicated that they would never elect a woman to represent them as it was

culturally unacceptable. However, some five male and nine women respondents indicated that the queuing system (whereby the electorate queue behind the candidate of their choice) used in the election of delegates was intimidating in that one could not express their support for a woman candidate openly without being ridiculed.

At the District party branch level, none of the respondents indicated that she was a representative in the branch. It is a requirement in the party's constitution that the District Branch shall in its membership include two representatives of the women's group. When asked why there was no women represented at the District branch level, forty respondents indicated that they were not aware of a position for women's representative. Out of these respondents ten indicated their willingness to take up such representation while the rest indicated that they were content with men representing them.

KANU Women's Group is a subsidiary organization which was created in order to enable women participate in the party's activities. According to the party's constitution, the women's group should have district leaders who work closely with Community Development officers so as to assist in organizing women's self-help and voluntary groups. The women's groups are also supposed to organize seminars, group discussions, women's rallies and other activities intended to create national consciousness among the women of Kenya. Although the women groups studied were started in response to this provision of the party's constitution, they have not achieved the intention of creating consciousness among the

women. These women groups have only gone as far as initiating self-help projects. According to the responses of the women themselves and administrators interviewed, little has been realized as far as achieving the other goals is concerned. According to one Government Administrator, it is difficult for the women groups to organize themselves independently and set objectives because they are creations of politicians and look upon the politicians for finances and direction. The politicians initiate these groups with the motives of making them stepping stones to achieve their political aims.

From the foregoing, we can be able to explain why none of the women groups studied has engaged in consciousness creating activities like organizing rallies and seminars aimed at educating other women on party and National political affairs. They have been left to concentrate on narrow activities aimed at providing for the immediate needs of the household. Thus Maasai women despite being dominantly KANU members, through enrolment have not participated in the central activities of decision making in the party. An important observation was the apparent absence of other political parties in the area of study. From our study we found that all the respondents who were members of a political party indicated that they belonged to KANU. When asked whether they were aware that other political parties existed the respondents were affirmative. What was however observed is that many respondents did not seem to understand the role of these other political parties. Respondents indicated that their leaders had informed them that other political parties could not come there because this was a Kanu zone. Lack of political consciousness can explain

the justification of areas that were referred to as KANU zones during the onset of multi-party politics in Kenya and the ensuing multiparty General Elections which were held in Kenya in 1992 for the first time. People from certain areas within the Rift Valley Province were falsely made to believe that the opposition politics were not to include or be introduced in the so called KANU zones.

Elsewhere, studies in areas where there are opposition political parties, do not indicate any better conditions for women when it comes to the participation of women in party politics, There are similar characteristics of men being in party echelons, where decisions are made, while women are relegated to the bottom of the party hierarchies. However, from the results of the 1992 General Elections, it appears that the opposition parties included more women as candidates than KANU. For instance out of the six women Members of Parliament only two are KANU MPs. Twenty six women were successful in being elected to Local Government seats. Two of them were elected as mayors and they are members of opposition parties. This rather high presence of women candidates can be associated with the fact that the change of from a one party state to a multi party state brought with it a lot of political excitement. Despite this political excitement discrimination against women aspirants was evident during party nomination of candidates exercises. The nomination practices of political parties favor male candidates over their women counterparts. For example, during the 1992 General

Elections when political parties nominated women candidates the parties preferred to direct their resources first and foremost to the male candidates who were thought to have high chances of success than their women counterparts (Nzomo 1995: 598). An example is that of a women candidate whose party refused to nominate her arguing that she will not get support because she comes from a different place and does not belong to the clan or tribe of the area in which she presented candidature. This is despite the fact that she was married for more than 15 years to a man from the same place and tribe.

The situation of discriminating against women by political parties is not unique to Kenya only. A study carried out on women contestants in different parties during the multiparty general elections in Tanzania reveals a similar scene. In the few constituencies which data was collected women constituted a very small percentage of those who aspired for parliamentary seats and fewer won the primary nominations. For example in Bahi constituency in Dodoma region, out of 10 aspirants from 8 political parties, there was only one woman aspirant who was screened out in the nomination exercise (Ruth Meena Gender issues in Election Process Tanzania Experience in Ruhongele 1996:41). The above suggest that the structure of the political parties are such that although the political parties' constitutions provide for the participation of women, they are manipulated by the men to the detriment of women's participation in politics. Neither the traditional one party states nor the emerging multi-parties are willing and ready to accommodate women's points of view in the decision making levels.

The Electoral System and its Effect on Maasai Women's Participation in Political processes

The structure of electoral politics is also another factor that hinders the participation of women in politics. Throughout the country, women's participation in politics is insignificant when we consider representation by women at civic and parliamentary levels. This is because there are more obstacles for women in exercising their full participation in seeking elective office politically. In Kenya women candidates do not enjoy a level playing ground as their male counterparts. For instance Women who have attempted to present themselves as candidate find it difficult to raise sufficient campaign funds. The financial institutions on which male candidates rely for finances are reluctant to assist women through loans or overdraft without the husbands sanctions. The extension of loan facilities requires collateral in the form of land title deeds. As observed elsewhere, women do not own land nor property thus they are unable to benefit from financial institutions. The political and economic system in Kenya is such that it gives men greater opportunities of access to financial resources than it does to women. Consequently, male candidates have a head-start over their female counterparts.

During electoral campaigns the atmosphere is characterized by political thuggery uncivil language and violence all of which discourages women from taking part in politics. A study on the Gender Dimension of 1992 General Elections clearly show the great extent

of electoral malpractice targeted against women candidates and voters. Women voters along with women candidates were exposed to physical violence e.g. in one incident during the 1992 multiparty General Elections, a woman candidate and her supporters were not only pelted with stones, two of their vehicles damaged and the candidate's car burnt to ashes. But in addition some of her women supporters were raped. Women candidates were also subjected to defamatory language by their male opponents who accused them of being prostitutes and social rejects who had no business seeking political leadership. Some women candidates were forced to take their husbands to all campaign meetings in order to defend their character (Nzomo 1996:596). Although, male politicians are also subjected to incidences of violence, it is observed that the reactions and effects of violence are different. Whereas political violence did not necessarily discourage men from electoral politics, it was singled out as the greatest deterrent to women who would have wished to participate in electoral politics. The socialization process was cited to be responsible for the difference on the impact of violence on men and women. This process psychologically prepares men for violence. In the Maasai community men are brought up to believe that violence is part of manhood. Boys are taught warfare while girls are taught to be humble, caring and gentle. Thus women are psychologically ill prepared to tackle violence. Men being aware of this tend to persist because they anticipate that women cannot withstand violence for long without breaking down. In our study a woman civic candidate interviewed reported the extent of violence and intimidation she endured. She attributed this to the fact that she had to view herself as a politician and not as a woman in order to survive the race. The candidate had to

even hire bodyguards so as to be protected from her angry opponents who attempted to beat her up. Lack of security especially for night campaigns was very scarring. The supporters of her opponent waylaid her in darkness and attacked. Luckily, she was saved by the bodyguards she had hired although she sustained minor injuries (Pareiyo in an interview 1995). Also in Tanzania the honorable Anna Makinda the then Minister of Community Development, Women and Children Affairs complained bitterly over foul language of her opponents.

Women are moreover disadvantaged by the nature of the electoral campaigns. They are unable to effectively campaign because their male counterparts have more time and are socially accepted to engage in unofficial campaigns in public pubs, night clubs etc., where men meet and strategize. During official campaigns organized by political parties women candidates are availed less time because of the perception that the male candidates stand better chances of winning elections. As a result women candidates are left to the mercies of their campaign managers who are also men. Worst still if they are not financially able to offer a handsome package to their campaign managers their chances of winning elections become very slim. (Meena in Ruhongele 1996: 45).

Competitive politics demands resources and particularly money and human resource. As a result corrupt political practices have been employed by contestants to win elections. Bribing voters and buying votes is a common practice that have greatly commercialized the electoral

process. This greatly disadvantages women both as voters and candidates. Women voters are more vulnerable and more likely to succumb to the temptation to sell their votes and voting rights than men due to their higher levels of poverty as well as their responsibilities for family maintenance. (Nzomo 1996:598). A respondent described the campaign thus:

"The contestant who often gave us sugar, 'lesos', flour and cash in his visits got more followers and eventually won the seat". (interview 1995)

Women candidates become greatly disadvantaged because they are not wealthy and cannot afford to dish out money and material goods to voters as well as give campaign managers handsome packages. Women lack independent financial sources on which to fall back on. For example during the 1995 General Elections in Tanzania most of the contestants spent very exorbitant sums of money either from their own sources, friends and supporters. The CCM candidate for Tanga for instance admitted to have spent up to 15 million Tanzanian shillings out of his own sources. Many of the female candidates could not have afforded this type of money and if there were a few who could have afforded, they could not have dared to gamble such huge sums of resources due to their social responsibilities in caring for their families. (Ruth Meena:42).

Conclusion

From this chapter it has emerged that there are numerous structural weaknesses that have given way for social and cultural influences and have thus impacted on the participation of women in the political processes by way of marginalising that participation. Although the individual structures have accommodated women's participation, in practice this has not happened because women continue to play insignificant roles in the decision making and electoral political processes. For example the D.F.R.D as analyzed earlier is a structure that is gender sensitive, however women are not participating in the strategy as expected. They do not occupy their positions as stipulated in the strategy yet the strategy has no redress to this situation. This condition whereby a structure operates while leaving out some of the components that compose that structure is a weakness we found in the structures analyzed in our study. We found these structural weaknesses responsible in a great way to the marginalisation of women in decision making and electoral political processes. These structures lacked mechanisms to deal with the external and internal influences of social and cultural factors that mitigate against women's participation in decision making.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The major objective of this study was to identify factors that account for the apparent marginal participation of Maasai women in the political processes. Interest in this study emanated from an existing gap in the literature on women and politics. The existing literature repeatedly points at how women have not participated in politics. Whereas no one can negate the importance of demonstrating that women are marginalised in politics, this study gives factors that account for women's marginal participation in the electoral political process prominence. The electoral political process determines the number of women in leadership positions and decision making at policy making levels. The study therefore identifies factors that are responsible for marginalizing women's participation in the political processes.

ASSESSMENT OF FINDINGS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

In Chapter three of this thesis, we set out to establish the Socio-cultural factors that affect Maasai women's participation in political processes. We set out with the assumption that Socio-cultural factors have an impact on the level of participation in politics amongst Maasai women. This study has revealed that various variables had varied impacts on the participation of Maasai women in politics. For example, age and marital status were

identified as having no influence on women's participation in politics when participation is taken to mean one's interest in politics or voting behavior of the respondents.

However, age did influence the participation of women in politics when this was taken to mean attendance of political rallies, roles in political parties and decision making.

This study also revealed a high association between marital status and voting behavior. 82% of the married women participated in voting. The reason for this is that men dominate over women in parliamentary and civic elections. Husbands encouraged their wives to vote and to do so according to their husbands directions.

The study also found that although women's participation in political processes could be enhanced by the level of mobilization into organized women groups because these groups were mainly concerned with economic activities and had proved to be good training grounds for women to participate in leadership and other political activities, this had not been realized for several reasons, such as male interference and domination in decision making positions, traditions and domestic responsibilities. The implication of this finding is that there is need to eliminate the domination of men over women in the groups since it is a major factor inhibiting the participation of women in group activities.

The study identified lack of formal education as a factor that deterred women's participation in political processes despite of their strong interest in politics. 74% of the female respondents blamed their in access to formal education to cultural practices and attitudes. They attributed

their marginal participation in electoral politics to lack of formal education. Cultural attitudes towards formal education were very negative in that children and more so girls were not to be taken to school because school was viewed as a threat to Maasai traditions and ways to life. Lack of formal education made the women ill equipped to participate in political activities such as roles in political parties, electoral politics, decision making and more so awareness on national issues on political matters. We observed that most women lacked the awareness that would have facilitated their participation. For instance, most women did not know their rights as far as political matters were concerned. Some did not know that they could contest a seat as they thought that only men were entitled to such a right. We also observed that beliefs held by both men and women inhibited women's full participation in politics. Men and women held certain beliefs about themselves and about each other, which result in the unwillingness of men and women to accept women to hold leadership positions in the Maasai community. In our study most women respondents indicated unwillingness to take-up decision making roles because they held the belief that such roles were masculine. Male respondents were quick to point out that women had no role to play in decision making be it in their groups or in the political arena because women were prohibited by traditions to hold leadership positions. Some women expressed dismay at the idea of having a woman get involved in electoral campaigning or becoming a member of parliament. The implication of this finding is that there is need to expose Maasai women to alternative experiences from other women who are more enlightened on political awareness. Perhaps this can be done slowly by beginning to appoint female officers at administrative levels in the rural areas. This way the

Maasai can begin to see and appreciate that women can successfully participate in leadership positions and hence be encouraged either to present themselves as candidates for elections or elect women who represent themselves as candidates. There is also need to encourage women to take up community leadership roles and then give them a chance to perform on those roles.

The study also found that women have very low incomes and have no ownership rights to livestock, which is the economic backbone of the Maasai. Although women have organized themselves into women groups that engage in small-scale economic activities to uplift the economy of the household, this has not been sufficient to enable them engage in electoral politics. The two women who attempted to vie for civic seats cited financial constraint as a major setback in their attempts to hold a political office. Engaging in political activities in Kenya as in other parts of the world demand sound economic bases, which is lacking amongst Maasai women.

In Chapter Four of this thesis, we set out to establish the structural factors that affect the participation of Maasai women in political processes. We set out with the assumption that certain structures that are in place are a hindrance to women's participation in electoral politics. The study revealed that the traditional political organization of the Maasai community, which is patriachal, has had great impact on the spheres of life of Maasai women and subsequently their contemporary political behavior. Through the age set system, the traditional political

organization was responsible for the allocation of political offices, power and authority. Unfortunately for women, they were not allocated any political office under this structural arrangement which essentially placed them as non-political persons. Women were exclusively placed in the domestic domain. The implication of this finding is that as the Maasai traditional political transforms into modern political arena, there is need to put in place special efforts to integrate Maasai women in modern politics.

The socialization process is another factor, which our study observed as having contributed to the marginalization of women Maasai in politics. Under this structural feature, women are prepared for the domestic domain while men are prepared for the public sphere. Members of the community are socialized along the set sexual division of labor. The effects of the sexual division of labor adhered to by the Maasai community was quite evident in the responses and beliefs held by the respondents. In our study we found that men took over the decision making roles in the women's groups as it was a culturally held notion that men are the leaders and decision-makers. Most women accepted this and even gave up the leadership roles in their groups to the men.

The formal education system is a structure that was faulted for failing to place measures that would ensure that girls are not discriminated against in accessing formal education. The Women's Bureau is a structure in Government that lacks the necessary mandates to enable women participate in electoral politics and decision making yet its role is enhancing the main

streaming of women in national development. The D.F.R.D is another structure in Government that has failed to actualize the participation of women in decision making due to structural weaknesses.

The economy and electoral systems are structures that were observed by our study as stumbling blocks to women's efforts to participate in politics. Low incomes amongst women can be attributed to the regulations at play in the economy which disadvantage them when it comes to accessing capital. For instance women's accessibility to credit facilities in financial institutions is hampered the requirement of land or property as collateral. Women's lack of ownership and control of land and property limits their access to capital. The electoral system fails to put in place an equal playing field for men and women candidates because when political parties discriminate against women candidates in their nominations, the system has no structure in place to rectify such anomalies. The situation is the same as far as the use of credit facilities to finance political campaigns by men while women do not have access to such credit. The electoral system cannot intervene yet these unfair practices give men advantage over their women counterparts in electoral politics.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO POLICY MAKERS

The following recommendations are made in way of increasing Maasai women's participation in political processes.

- If women are to compete favorably with men for positions of decision making, girls must have equal access with boys to education, objective knowledge and behavioral skills that are needed for effective participation in decision making. The Government should ensure equal access to these for both boys and girls.
- The Government should provide legislative redress to the laws that promote discrimination against women , for example laws related to succession and ownership of property which discriminate against women and make it difficult of them to access capital.
- The Government should take affirmative action in addressing the marginalization of women in decision-making positions. An affirmative action is the process whereby organizations make deliberate efforts to help uplift people of a specific group. These people may have been seriously disadvantaged because they were discriminated against. Women certainly qualify or affirmative action because of the way societal attitudes, prejudices, biases and stereotypes have brought major discrimination against women and led to their being seriously disadvantaged and out numbered in decision-making positions and political offices. The affirmative taken by the government could take the following forms: -

- Ensuring women have basic and higher education through providing financial assistance to educate the girls and promotion of adult literacy classes for women,
- Setting aside a certain number of seats in parliament and civic bodies for women,

- Establish specific time frames for increasing the proportion of women in decision making positions,
- Establish monitoring mechanisms to ensure equal gender distribution within Government offices, political parties and other institutions with a view of developing a campaign strategy to make women visible and guarantee equal distribution of men and women in positions of leadership and decision making.
- Provide and promote training on gender in order to raise awareness and sensitize both men and women as a process of changing beliefs and attitudes of society towards women in leadership and decision-making positions.
- The Government and civil society should promote civic education in order to raise the political consciousness of both men and women.
- The Government should aim at raising the incomes of women in Kenya through funding of income generating schemes, women group activities. This would strengthen the economic position of women , which in turn would enhance their ability to participate in political processes.
- The government should streamline or remove political structures that do not provide an enabling environment for women's participation in politics. For example violence and political thuggery which greatly deters women from participating in politics characterize electoral politics. The Government should put in place a code of conduct to govern the behavior of candidates and political parties participating in elections so as to curb political violence and thuggery.

- Government policies, structures and programs should be formulated in such a way that they have a gender sensitive approach and encourage rather than downplay women's participation in decision making. For instance the structures of political facilitate women's access to political offices, the DFRD strategy should have mechanisms which actualize women's involvement in development projects while the Women's Bureau should Andover to empower women economically and politically through lobbying, sensitization and funding of women candidates to political and decision- making positions.
- Finally we recommend that Researchers should devote more attention to the study of women's participation in politics. This is an important area that requires a lot of scholarly attention.

AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

This study attempted to investigate the factors responsible for the marginal participation of Maasai women in political processes. Women play a significant role in the social, political and economic development of this country. However as observed among the Maasai , women do have innumerable problems, which can only be exposed through research. A lot of research still remains to be carried out on the various ways of enhancing women's participation in politics. Researchers also need to consider the consequences of women's participation in politics. Indeed this question needs to be considered: -

Does women's participation in politics have special consequences for women because their role options have traditionally been more circumscribed?

Researchers also need look into the area of violence in politics particularly due to the differentiated impact it has on women as opposed to men in their participation in politics. This study was limited in scope to only one district. It is recommended that a similar study be conducted at the national level. This would ensure a large sample and a wider scope. Such a study would also shed further light on the problems experienced by women in their attempts to participate in the political processes.

The position of women in Kenya with regards to politics and development will continue to be a subject of interest to researchers. Women constitute over 50% percentage of the country's population and any developments in social, economic and political spheres must consider this fact. Obviously women's full participation in economic and political spheres is far from being achieved. Formidable obstacles which are at one physical, financial, structural social, attitudinal and political remain. Constructive ideas and policies are receiving attention and may direct the way to an ultimate solution. Already there is growing realization that democratization cannot be smooth sailing if the participation of women in all political processes is not enhanced.

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QUESTIONNAIRE I

Good day. My name is Nashipae, a Post Graduate student from the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a study on factors influencing Maasai women's marginal participation in politics and I believe you can assist me by giving me the following information. All the information given by you will be treated in strict confidence.

RESPONDENT'S PERSONAL DATA

1. Date of Interview

2. Name of women's group

3. Age

21 - 25

26 -29

30 -34

34 -39

40 -44

45 -49

50 - 54

55 - 60

Over 60

4. Marital status

Married

Divorced

Single

Widowed

5. If married, at what age were you married?

6. What education have you had?

1. Incomplete primary

2. Complete primary

3. Incomplete secondary

4. Complete secondary
 5. College
 6. Other
7. What is your occupation?
 8. What is your spouse's occupation

PERSONAL POLITICAL BACKGROUND

9. Do you have an interest in politics
 1. very much
 2. some
 3. very little
 4. none
10. When did you start having an interest in politics?
 1. before marriage
 2. after marriage
 3. after joining group
 4. other
11. Who influenced your interest in politics?
12. Have you ever voted?
13. If yes, how many times and in what elections?
14. Do you have a relative who is a politician?
 1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Do not know
15. Are you a leader?

16. In what organisation?
17. What is your basis of support in leadership?
18. What challenges do you face as a woman leader?

INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS

19. Are you a member of any political party?
20. What is your role in the political party?
21. What do you think is the political role of women in Kenya today?
22. How often do you attend political rallies?
 1. Very often
 2. Often
 3. Rarely
 4. Do not attend
23. Do you think women should participate in politics?

1.No	2.Yes	3.Do Not know
------	-------	---------------
24. If No, why?
25. If Yes, why?
26. Do you think women are participating in large enough numbers in politics?

1. No	2. Yes	3. Do not know
-------	--------	----------------
27. Do you think that there are barriers preventing women from participating in politics?

1. No	2. Yes	3. Do not know
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28. What are the three most important barriers to women's participation in politics?

[mark in rank order].

1. Women's own lack of interest
2. Male politicians
3. Men in general
4. Traditional values.
5. Domestic work
6. Lack of education
7. Other [please specify].

29. What do you think is your group's most important function?

1. Fund raising
2. Social events
3. Self help projects
4. Political elections
5. Others (please specify)

30. Do you think male politicians encourage their women counterparts?

1. No 2. Yes 3. Do Not Know

31. If No, why do you think so?

32. If Yes, in what ways?

33. If you were elected to hold a political office, would you take it?

1. No
2. Yes
3. Do not know

34. If no, why?

35. Did you vote in 1992 elections?

36. If no, why?

37. Do you vote to the same candidate as your husband?
1. No
 2. Yes
 3. Not always
38. Are there positions in Government and Political parties that should be held by women?
1. No
 2. Yes
 3. Do not know
39. If yes, what positions?
40. Are there women leaders in your area?
41. If yes, what positions do they hold?
42. How did they get their positions?
1. Election
 2. Nomination
 3. Do not know
 4. Other (please specify)

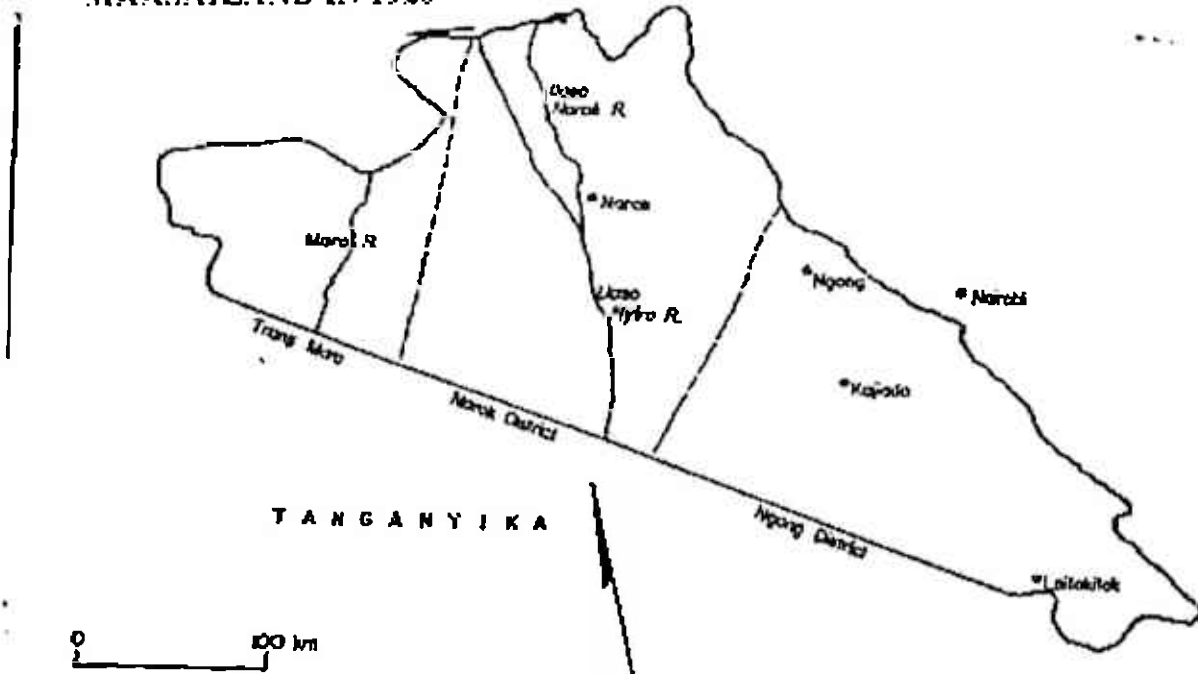
QUESTIONS TO VILLAGE ELDERS AND CHIEFS

1. What is your work as a village elder/chief?
2. Do you have women elders in your village or location?
3. If yes, what is their work?
4. Are there women leaders in your village or location?
Which organisations do they lead?
5. If yes, (i) Which organisations do they lead?
(ii) What positions do they hold?

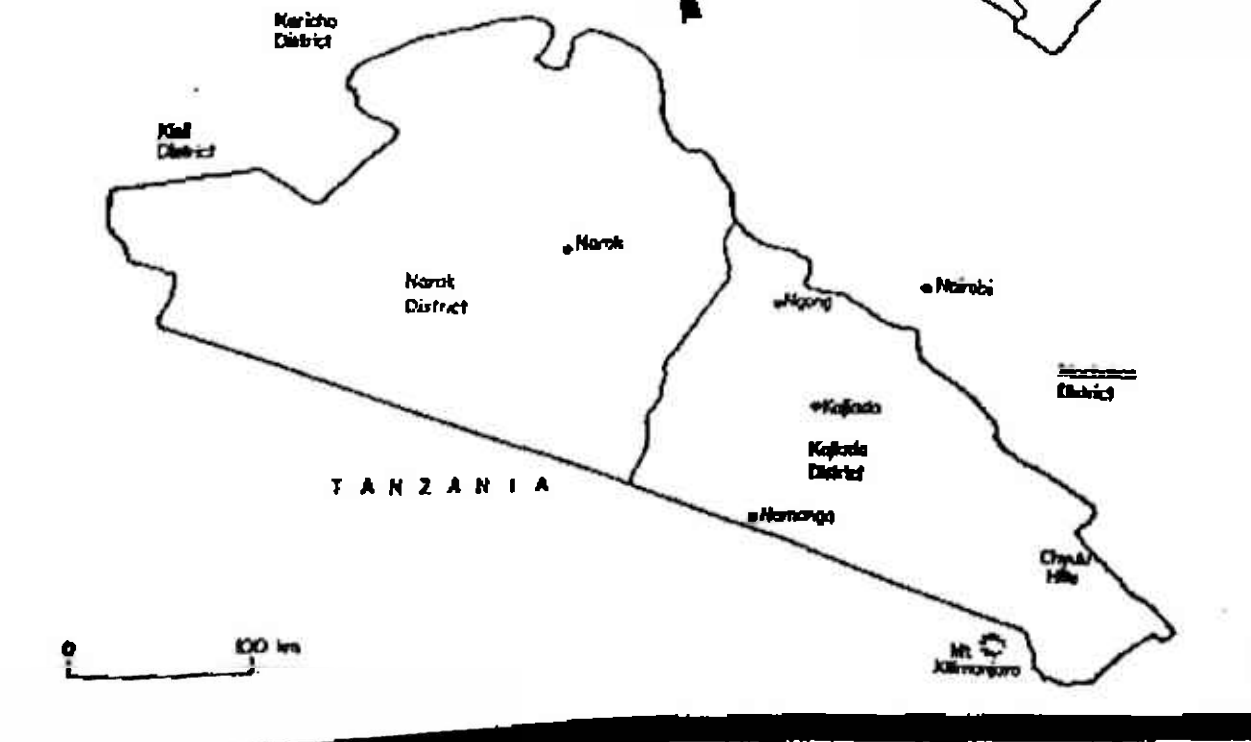
6. Are there women groups in your village or location?
7. Who leads these groups?
8. What role or roles are they involved in?
9. (a) Do you play any role in the groups?
(b) If yes, what role?
10. What do you think is the role of Maasai women in politics locally and nationally?
11. Do male politicians encourage Maasai women to participate in politics?
12. If yes, in what ways do they encourage them?
13. If no, why don't they encourage them?
14. What do you think prevents Maasai women from actively participating in politics?

1958

MAASAILAND IN 1920



b) MAASAILAND IN 1963



APPENDIX III

NAROK DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES

