



**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY  
WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT  
HUB**



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**WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP  
IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE, KENYA  
KISUMU COUNTY GOVERNMENT REPORT**

**List of Researchers**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Gender equality and inclusion are key to realizing women's economic empowerment (Oxfam Canada, 2019). Promoting gender equality has been a key focus area locally and globally starting with the first UN conference on women held in Mexico in 1975 and the UN Decade for Women (1976 – 1985) that kick-started a worldwide conversation on gender equality.

Globally, there is a gender wage gap differential estimated at 23 percent (United Nations 2020; ILO, 2017). To show commitment in addressing gender inequalities in Kenya, the government has ratified a number of international instruments that promote gender equality and further enacted local policies to domesticate these instruments. In addition, there is a legislative framework for gender equality entrenched in the Constitution of Kenya 2010. These aim to address gender inequality issues in Kenya.

Despite these efforts, women continue to be significantly under-represented in management and leadership in the formal labour markets and in the public service (both National and County

Government). KNBS (2019) states that “*while in the paid employment, women’s participation has continued to grow, women remain underrepresented*”. However, the role of women in Kenya’s economy is widely acknowledged. According to the 2019 Census in Kenya, women comprise 51.2% of the total population and constitute half of Kenya's labour force (KNBS 2019, 2020). It is noted that women comprise 51.2% of the total population and constitute half of Kenya's labour force (KNBS 2019, 2020). The Kenyatta University Women’s Economic Empowerment Hub, through the Participation of Women in Management and Leadership team under the aegis of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Initiative, conducted a gender audit covering the years 2010 to 2020 (National Government) and 2014 to 2020 (County Government). The purpose of the gender audit exercise was to establish whether the public service had adhered to the legislative and policy documents that include the constitutional requirement of two thirds of either gender principle and the Sessional Paper No. 02 of 2019 which focuses on gender equality and development in employment and promotion of women in the public service.

According to a County gender audit trail covering the period **2014-2020**, women are seen to dominate job group J-L between 2014 and 2020 with the highest numbers being registered in 2016 at 62.4% compared to the highest number of men recorded at 37.6% within the same period (2014-2020). In 2014, 2015, and 2016, there were fewer women in middle management than men. The opposite was observed in 2017, 2018, and 2020, when women outnumbered men, with a slight decrease in 2019 from 51% to 50.1%. The highest number of women is recorded in 2020 at 53.9%.

The audit data showed a drastic reduction in the numbers of women in upper management level (Q-T). Notably, in upper management level, men seem to dominate decision making positions the entire period under investigation (2014-2020). It is worth noting that even though these numbers grew, they still ranked lower than those of their male counter parts within the same period.

It is against this backdrop that a research was conducted in the national government and in selected counties including Tharaka Nithi, Kisumu and Nairobi County to determine the status of women’s participation in leadership and management in the public service. This report presents findings from Kisumu County from a research that was conducted between January 2023 and February 2023.

Data from Kisumu County presents an interesting scenario where overall numbers indicate more women employees at 52% compared to 48% men. However, the same data shows the following distribution by gender; that there was a concentration of women in entry level job groups (J-L). In Job Group J, 52% were women while 48% were men, Job group K there were 61% women, and 13% men, Job group L, there were 59% women while there were 41% men. We see a gradual increase in the representation of men in the middle level job groups (M-P). In Job group M there were 57% women compared 43% men. Then a sudden decline in the numbers of women is seen where Job group N has 41% women and 59% men while Job group P has 42% women and 57% men. There is a sharp decline in the representation of women in top senior management positions in (Job groups Q-S) at 21% women against 79% men.

The study's findings suggest that a majority of the respondents in the survey, (53% male & 40% female) had been in their current positions for three years or less. This pattern can be attributed to the fact that with each general election, there are new appointments made to various county positions, particularly in senior management roles. As a result, turnover and changes in leadership are relatively common in such positions.

For those who had remained in their positions for more than three years, there is a noticeable gender difference in perception. Specifically, 42.5% of women surveyed felt that they had overstayed their current positions, while a slightly lower percentage, 35%, of men felt the same way. Barriers related to work-family life balance were cited as the highest contributor of delayed promotion closely followed by organizational barriers.

This brings to the fore a recognition that the County Governments have not yet achieved full inclusion as was envisaged by the Kenya Constitution 2010 and other legislative and policy frameworks. Meaning, gender inclusion is still theoretical, and as a result, women, are still largely invisible in decision making positions.

## **THE STRUCTURE OF THE COUNTY GOVERNMENTS**

County Governments are a creation of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya, which restructured the former 175 local authorities to 47 County governments to devolve services from the central government and make them more accessible to the communities. The county government has two arms: legislative and executive. The County Executive consists of the Governor and the Deputy Governor elected every five years by the citizens of the county. The Governor appoints County Executive Committee (CEC) Members. The CEC is responsible for the preparation of county policies, plans and budgets for approval from the County Assembly; and the submission to external regulatory offices of the National Treasury and Office of the Controller of Budget, implementation of all laws passed by the County Assembly and National Assembly; it prepare laws for consideration by the County Assembly, providing regular non-financial and financial reports to the County Assembly; and to external regulatory and oversight offices of the Controller of Budget and the Office of the Auditor General. The County Executive comprises county departments with delegated responsibility for the county functions headed by CEC Members. Each department has a Chief Officer reporting to the CEC also appointed by the Governor, and county public service staff recruited through the County Public Service Board. The legislature on the other hand consists of the county assembly that has both elected members of county assembly (MCAs) and nominated members referred to as the 'special seat members'. (CGT, 2020).

Considering the above, the study sought to establish the representation of women in the laid out decision making positions within the County governments for the period between 2014 to 2020. The study looked at the representation of women within job groups J-T (Entry level management positions to senior level management positions).

## **METHODOLOGY**

A sample size of 5% comprising 43(52%) men and 40(48%) women was drawn from a population of 1772 employees from Kisumu county government comprising 913(52%) women and 859(48%) men. The study focused on employees in the entry level (Job groups J-L), Middle level (Job groups M-P) and Senior Management levels (Job groups Q-S). Multistage sampling was used to select men and women respondents from job group J-P. These were mainly selected from various departments/Sections, County Assembly both at the County and Sub-County levels. Respondents from job group Q-S were purposively sampled and they formed the KII. These comprised of CEC's, HR Managers, Directors, Chief Officers and section heads. Different cadres reported separately. The study sought to document the experiences of both men and women and how these impacted their participation in leadership and management in the public service of Kisumu County.

The study aims to inform interventions to achieve a sustainable outcome of increasing the participation of women in management and leadership in the public sector by 30% by the year 2025.

## **2.0 FINDINGS**

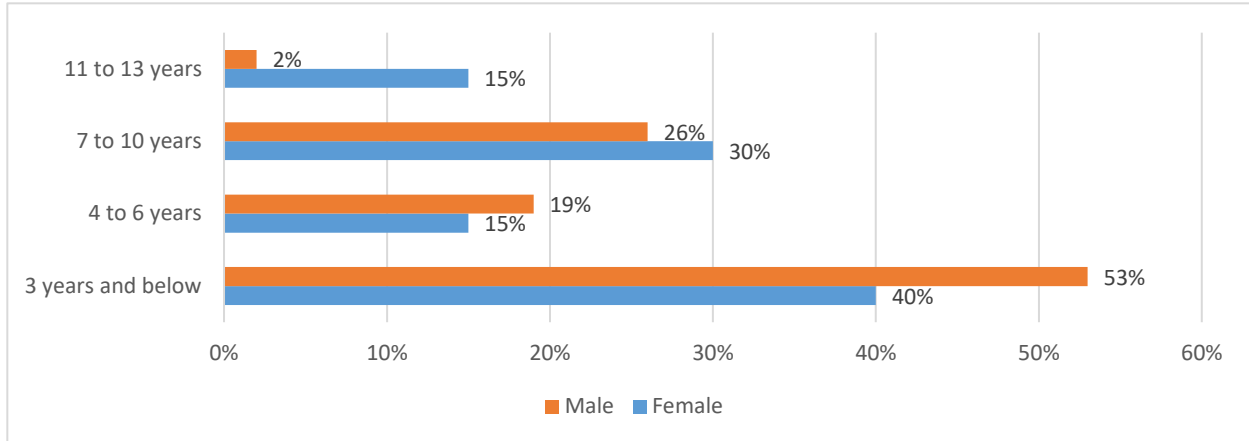
### **2.1 BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**

The first objective sought to establish the barriers to women's representation in management and leadership positions in the county government of Kisumu. To achieve this, , the study sought to find out how long the respondents had served in their current positions, whether they felt they had overstayed in those positions, reasons for delayed promotions, barriers to promotions in the workplace, and the suggested measures to remove the barriers as analysed in the following sections.

#### **2.1.1 Period Served in Current Position**

The study sought to establish the length of time each of the respondents had served in their current positions. The responses are captured in figure 1.1 below.

#### **Figure 1. 1 Period Served in Current Position**

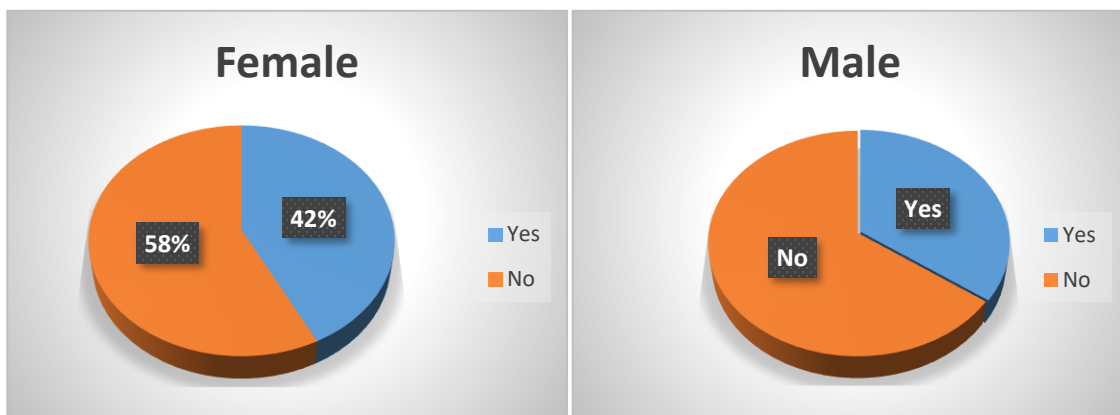


As noted from the responses, majority of the respondents had worked in their current positions for 3 years and below. It is worth noting that a greater number of these are men accounting for 53% (23) and 40% (16) were female. Most of those who had worked in the same position for 4 years and over were women who made up 60% of this category, compared to men who accounted for 47%. One notable observation was that there were more women who had served in the same position for 11 to 13 years, that is, 15% women compared to only 2% men. These figures are a clear indication that women take a longer time to get promoted than men.

### 2.1.2 Overstayed in the Current Position

The study sought to establish whether the respondents felt they had overstayed in the current position. As noted in the previous section, more women than men had served in the same position for 4 years and over. It is therefore not surprising that out of the 40 female respondents, 17 (43%) of them felt that they had overstayed in their current position. On the contrary, more men 28(65%) than women 23(57%) did not think they had overstayed in their current position as illustrated in Figure 1.2 which gives a comparative representation of both the female and male respondents.

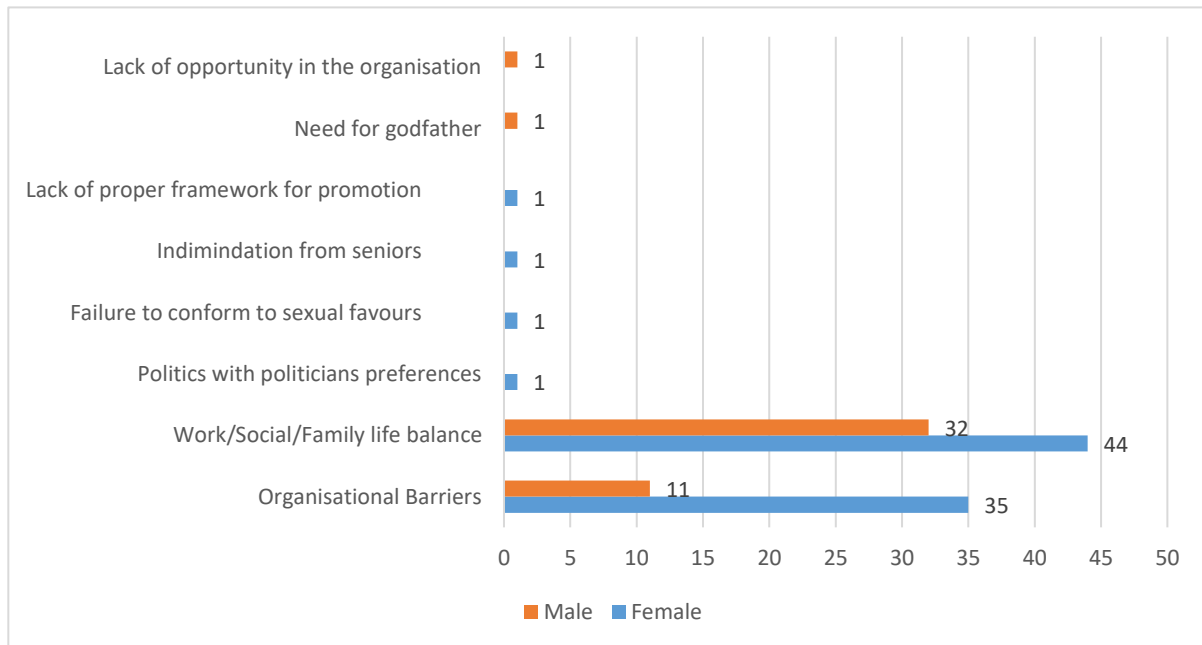
**Figure 1.2. Overstayed in the Same Position**



### 2.1.3 Reasons for Overstaying in the Same Position

The respondents cited various reasons including organizational barriers, work/social/family life, gender related barriers and sexual harassment, among others as shown in Figure 1.3 and discussed in the following sections.

**Figure 1.3 Factors Contributing to Delayed Promotions**



**(i) Organizational Barriers**

As shown in Figure 1.3, the number of female respondents who felt that organizational barriers hindered their progression to management and leadership positions is over three times that of men, with 35 responses from female respondents against 11 responses from the male respondents. On a similar note, a female and male responds in an interview said the following;

*“there are no proper frameworks for promotion” (female KII -A)*

*“the process that women undergo for promotion is rigorous and women “are taxed more during the job vetting process”.(Female KII -B)*

*“there are few opportunities for progression in the organization” (male KII-A)*

*‘the boys’ networks are often biased towards some preferred candidates for certain positions often working to suppress women to step down for other women, despite the fact that the candidate may be qualified’. (male KII-B)*

At the workplace women encountered an unsupportive work environment, which may include attitudes towards women and stereotyping, negative views on their professional abilities and capabilities and an inflexible working environment. Additionally, *Women faced biases at the workplace. Their initiative was often suppressed because their professional competencies were often questioned by their male counterparts. They were often reined back, and their contribution stifled.* As noted by the female KII C,

*“even in policy decisions, the male bosses have to confirm with other men to accept what a woman has said”. (female KII C,)*

The counter effect of this is that women must “work harder to prove their credibility” leading to the ‘invisible woman syndrome’ (Kirai and Mukulu, 2012) **This is a clear indication that organizational barriers had a greater impact on women’s career advancement.** These views are in tandem with the study by Kirai and Mukulu (2013) who present a Gendered Organizational Structure (GOS) Model of gender diversity to explain “the status and experiences of women in organizations across organizational structure”. These experiences impact the entry to and progression at work for women, and include informal networking, and preferred leadership. Kirai and Mukulu further reiterate that there were inherent discriminatory practices in organizations in various processes such as recruitment, selection, placement and promotions, a lack of sound human resource policies, mentors, and networking practices (Kirai and Mukulu, 2012).

#### **(ii) Work/Social and Cultural/Family Life Related Barriers**

This was the most cited barrier with, 44 (58%) being female respondents and 32(42%) being male respondents as indicated on figure 1.3. The study observed that women faced diverse work, social, cultural, and family related challenges that impacted their entry and advancement in their careers. The study showed that the reasons for which female employees faced trouble in maintaining a work-life balance were mostly because of long working hours, job rigidity, work overload, responsibilities related to child care, and scarce family support. Sirgy, M. J., & Lee, D. J. (2018) observe that women are often socialized to believe that there are specific roles for women and others for men and that any attempts by women to challenge that norm leads to their being ostracized by the community. In most societies the roles preserved for women are often peripheral with male dominance being the norm.

Acknowledging this fact, key informants noted that culture discriminates against women. They note that there are negative perceptions towards women’s progression from their male counterparts. Some view women as competitors while others associate successful women with immorality. These views are echoed by female respondents while sharing their life experiences, had the following to say:

*“The wider family thought I had support from some man/men because I had transcended family expectations - rising from Chief officer to a CEC” (female `KII-C)*

*‘...my own husband supported my opponent. I managed to rise through the ranks through the support I got from my maiden family’. (female KII -D)*

The study also noted that women limit themselves due to cultural hang ups. According to Kirai and Kobia (2012), culture views women as the weaker sex and men as the bread winners. Culture thus relegates men to superiority, and this is carried to the workplace where management positions are seen more as a men’s preserve. All these cultural beliefs are internalized by women thus curtailing their progress. This view was voiced by several senior management respondents in this study who noted that:

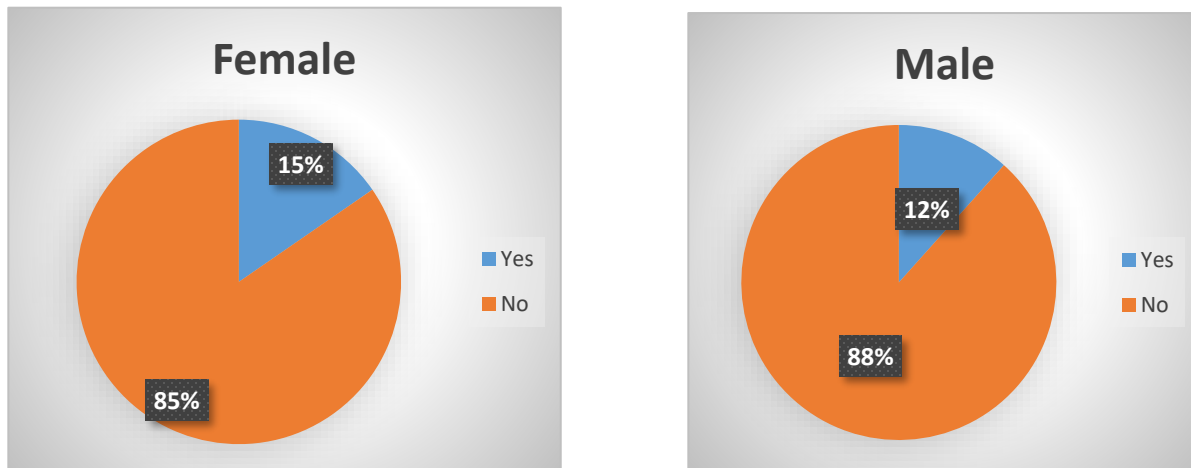
*“Women go for the traditional roles in job selection due to cultural affiliation...women need to be more aggressive” (Female KII -E)*

*“Sometimes few women believe they can make it. So, they don’t even try...no women applied for Chief officer position because no women qualified” (Female KII -F)*

**(iii) Gender related barriers**

The respondents were asked whether gender related barriers impede their career progression. As seen in figure 1.4 below, gender related barriers did not have much impact on career progression for job group J-P.

**Figure 1.4 Impact of Gender Related Barriers on Career Progression among Both Female and Male Respondents**

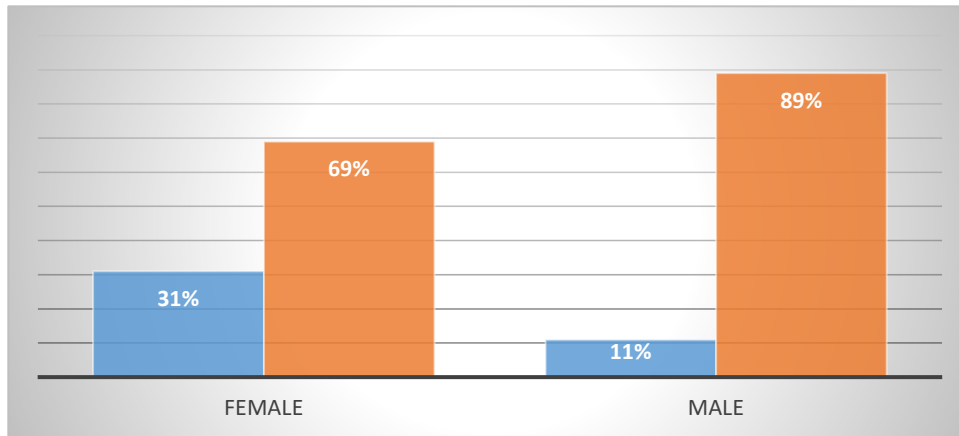


Most of the respondents, that is 85% (33) and 88% (38) of the female and male respondents respectively, felt that gender related barriers did not affect their promotion. However, it was more female respondents (15%) against 12% of male respondents who agreed that gender barriers affected their promotion.

**(iv) Impact of Care Work on Promotion**

The study sought to establish whether care work was a barrier to the promotion of the respondents. The responses to this indicate the glaring disparities between the views from the male and female respondents as seen on Figure 1.4.

**Figure 1.4. Impact of care work on promotion**



Even though majority of the respondents, 25(69%) female and 34(89%) male respondents, were of the opinion that care work did not impact their promotion, it is largely the women who are most affected by it. The number of female respondents who answered to the affirmative was 11(31%) as compared to 4 (11%) male respondents. Care work therefore appears to be the burden of women.

Further, the study sought to establish how care work affected the respondents. Male respondents felt that care work did not affect them directly and so they talked about how it affected women. On the other hand, women respondents were explicit on how care work affected them. The male respondents opined that women had a difficult time trying to “meet very tight deadlines at work” because their added responsibility of looking after their families while in formal employment. These sentiments were echoed by the women respondents who noted that;

*“..childcare is challenging especially when one is in formal employment and it is even more difficult when one has to meet tight deadlines” and more so harder when one has to take care of a sick child” or is a caregiver to a special child. (female KII - G)*

In addition, female respondents contended that the 3 months maternity leave is very short for them to give adequate attention to their new-born baby, especially since breastfeeding mothers are encouraged to breastfed exclusively for 6 months (UNICEF 2018). They also observed that they often had to work late often taking up family time. They further noted that care work impacted their personal development as is voice by one female respondent;

*“...care work delays our progress in education because we have to put education on hold to redirect the finances to educate siblings or to meet the needs of our extended family.”*

Family commitments and care work were also cited by the senior managers as impacting the progression of women in their career. A female KII respondent succinctly describes the dichotomy of the woman’s position and the choices she must make between family and work stating:

*“The triple role of women is a challenge especially when it comes to balancing work family life. Many women will always choose family over work and that affects their promotion.”*  
*“(female KII-G)*

The triple role of women framework proposed by Moser (1993), is based on the premise that women have diverse roles and responsibilities that loosely fall under three categories, reproductive, productive and community roles. These define her family and care giving roles, her economic occupation, and her responsibilities within the community (Energypedia, 2022). Other barriers identified in figure 1.3 are political interference and a lack of a godfather to push their agenda, each mentioned by one female and male respondent respectively.

**(v) Sexual Harassment at the work place**

The study sought to establish whether there was sexual harassment at the workplace. More male respondents, 13 ( 31% ), than female respondents, 11 ( 28%), felt that there is sexual harassment in the workplace while 72% and 69% female and male respondents respectively, were of the view that there is no sexual harassment at the workplace as seen on Figure 1.5 .

**Figure 1.5 Existence of Sexual Harassment at Workplace**

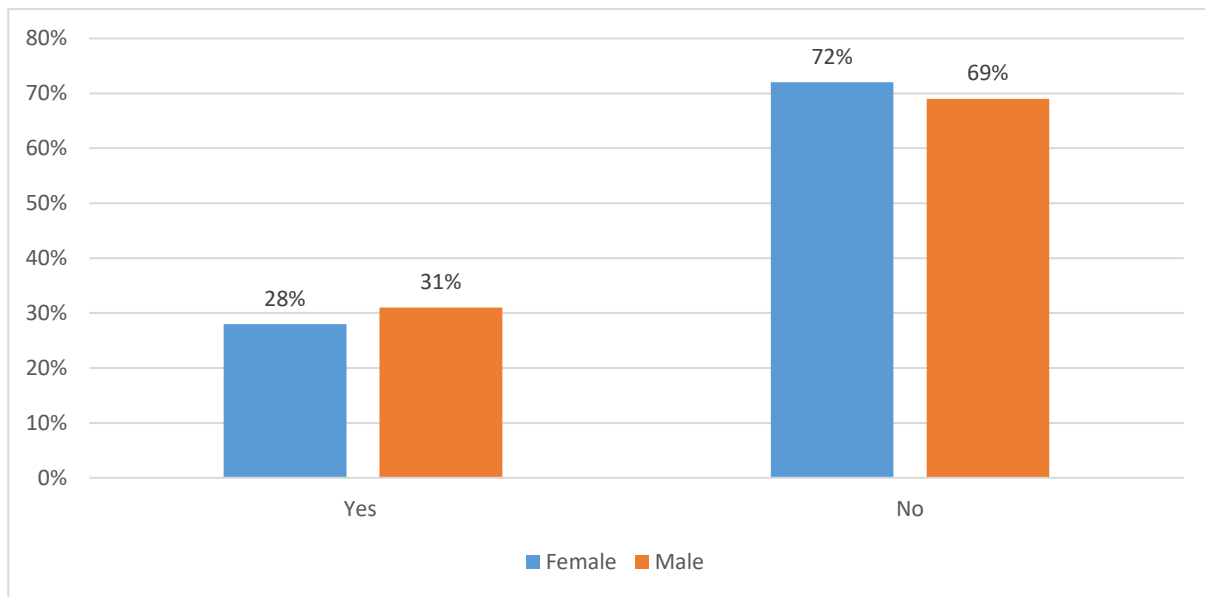


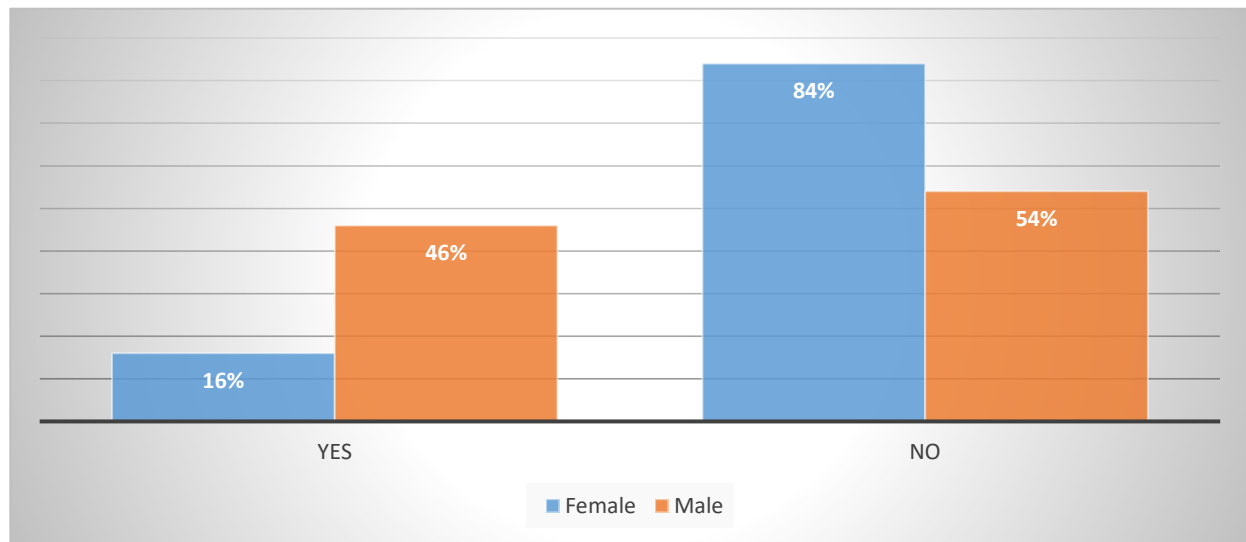
Figure 1.5 indicates that majority of the respondents did not think that there was sexual harassment at the workplace. This concurs with the findings presented in Figure 1.3 which presents sexual harassment and intimidation as barriers to career progression. 31% of the female respondents noted that they faced “intimidation from seniors” and missed promotions due to their “failure to conform to sexual favours”. A female respondent in senior management shared her experience stating that she was ostracized and isolated in her quest to take up a leadership role as captured below;

***‘Perhaps the reason why there is so much violence against women is because, men see women as competitors yet that is not the case.’ (female KII - D).***

**(vi) Sexual harassment policies at the work place**

The study further sought to find out if there was a policy that dealt with sexual harassment at the workplace. The analysis of the responses are indicated in figure 1.6.

**Figure 1.6 Existence of a Sexual Harassment Policy at the Workplace**



Majority of the respondents 31(84%) female and 21(54%) male held the view that there was no policy on sexual harassment in the workplace compared to (18(46%) female and 6(16%) male who said that there was a policy on sexual harassment.

The respondents who were of the view that there existed a sexual harassment policy at the workplace reiterated that it impacted positively on the advancement of women to management and leadership positions. According to their responses, the policy provided a safe space for women to work because they felt protected. Both male and female respondents felt that protection for women at the workplace meant security for their jobs, a conducive environment filled with respect, equality, fairness, encouragement and respect for their rights as it builds confidence to aspire. These responses accentuate the favourable conditions for women's progression at the workplace.

#### **(vii) Mechanisms of Reporting Sexual Harassment at the Workplace**

The study established that the mechanisms for reporting sexual harassment at the workplace were not well institutionalized with most male and female respondents, stating that there were no clear mechanisms in place. A small number of male and female respondents were of the idea that there was a well established mechanism for reporting sexual harassment where some mentioned that one could report to the Human Resource Department, immediate boss and use of suggestion boxes usually situated in designated areas.

#### **(viii) Measures to Mitigate Barriers to Women's Career Progression**

The study sought to establish the measures that had been put in place to mitigate barriers that hinder women's ascension to management and leadership positions. The responses indicated a glaring difference in perception between female and male respondents.

From the views given, both male and female respondents indicated that promotion was on merit, where both men and women were given equal opportunity through training, and capacity building. However, some male respondents noted that job adverts encouraged women to apply, and urged women to take up the available opportunities. A few male respondents acknowledged that there was need to improve the working environment to enable women balance work and family obligations. On the contrary some men were of the opinion that there were no barriers to women's career advancement because they "were already favoured, supported, and always given priority and therefore, did not need any other special treatment". These diverse views from men are in tandem with findings by Carlsson and Sinclair (2021) on the reactions of men and women to affirmative action procedures in hiring, where they noted that men displayed a more negative attitude towards affirmative action than women.

## **2.2 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL POLICY ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT OF 2019**

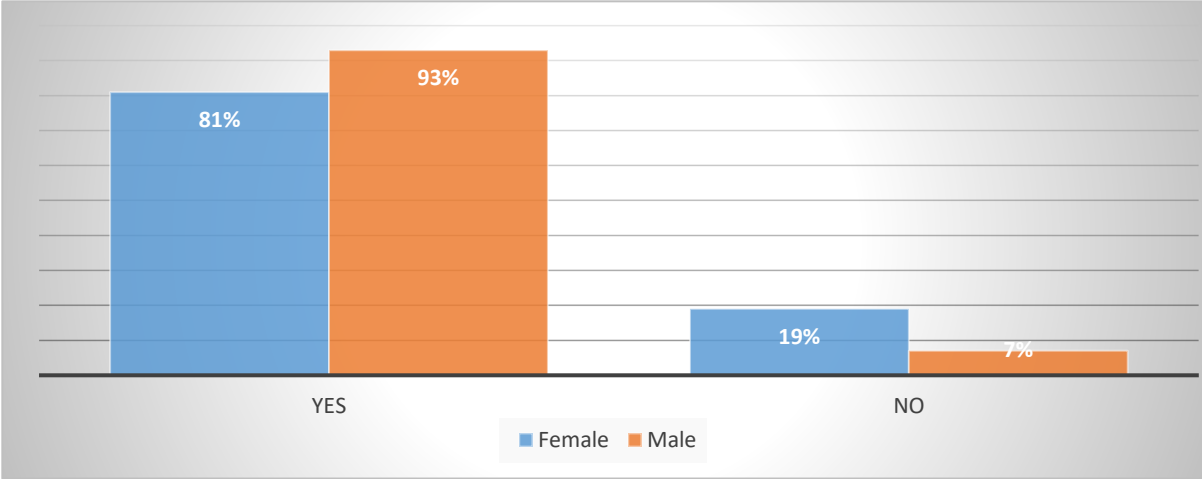
This study's second objective sought to examine the extent to which the National policy on Gender and Development (NPGAD) 2019 have been implemented in the public service. The NPGD was espoused in 2000 to provide a framework and policy approach to address gender inequalities. This policy was subsequently reviewed in 2011 and 2019, to align it to the 2010 Kenyan constitution. This Policy outlines the national agenda for gender equality and gives a roadmap on how the country intends to realise these ideals. Its objective is to create "a just, fair and transformed society free from gender-based discrimination in all spheres of life practices" (RoK, 2019).

To achieve this objective, the study sought to establish the level of awareness of the respondents on this policy, its implementation, its major breakthroughs and the obstacles to its implementation. It also sought suggestions on how to effectively ensure equal opportunity for the promotion of women to management level in the public service. The responses are discussed in the sections below.

### **2.2.2 Implementation of the National Policy on Gender and Development 2019 in the workplace**

On the implementation of the NPGD, the following responses were captured from the respondents who said that they were aware of the existence of the NPGD as indicated in figure 1.8

#### **Figure 1. 8. Implementation of the NPGD 2019 in the workplace**

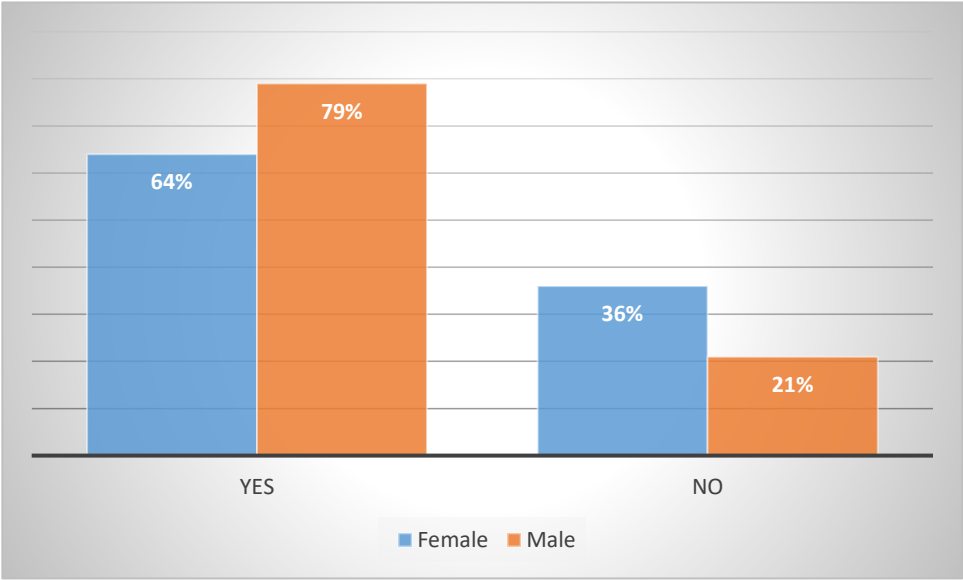


Most of the respondents, however, that is, 21(81%) female and 32(93%) of the male respondents felt that this policy had been implemented at the workplace while 5(19%) females compared to 2(7%) male felt that it was not implemented. The aim of the NPGD was to enhance gender mainstreaming at all levels and across all sectors for efficient and equitable development outcomes. Failure to comprehensively implement it mean this may not be achieved calling for an urgent implementation strategy.

**2.2.1 Level of Awareness of the National Policy on Gender and Development 2019**

The respondents were asked if they were aware of the existence of the National Policy on Gender and Development 2019 and the responses captured in figure 1.7.

**Figure 1.7 Awareness of NPGD 2019**



The findings show that more male respondents were aware of the policy at 34(79%) than the female respondents at 26(64%). On the other hand 14(36%) and 9(21%) male and female respondents

respectively indicated they were not aware of the existence of the policy. It can however, be concluded that a good percentage of the respondents were aware of the National Policy on Gender and Development. For maximum productivity by both men and women, various implementing agencies should consider developing a robust curriculum to help sensitize the contents of this policy among the various stakeholders and further initiate well-coordinated strategies that will guide gender inclusion in all sections of the county government

### **2.2.3 Areas of Implementation of the National Policy on Gender and Development**

The study further sought to establish the various areas in which the NPGD had been implemented. In general, both men and women identified the two thirds gender rule as widely implemented. The 2/3 gender rule, advocates for not more than two-thirds representation of the either gender in public positions, both elective and appointive. It is spelt out in the Kenyan constitution of 2010 in Articles 27(8), 81 (b) and 100. Obira (2023) states that the constitution provides a blueprint of how issues ought to be implemented both in the private and public service.

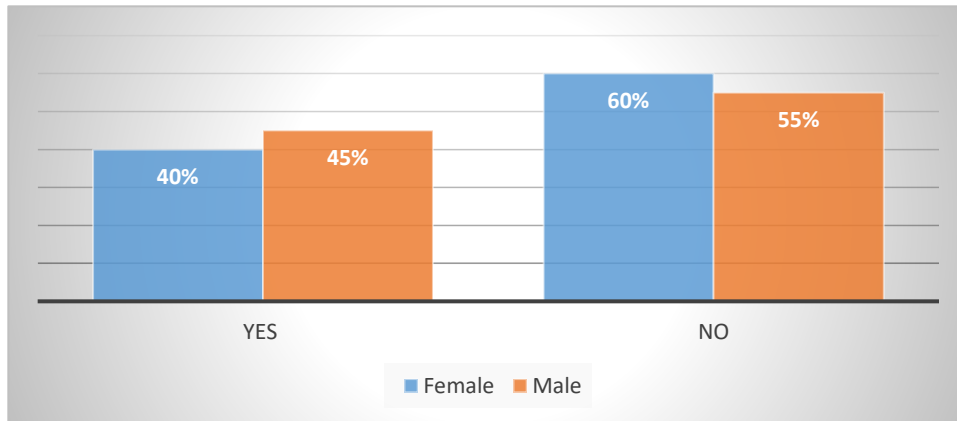
Respondent's opined that both men and women were equally represented at middle level management positions. However, some of the male respondents noted that, although there was a good representation of women in the county government, they were largely over-represented at the in the lower cadre commonly referred to as a "bottom heavy low cadre". Nonetheless, the increased representation of women also saw more women appointed to committees and different teams, than before, and a greater gender balance in recruitment and promotion.

The respondents were asked to share the major achievements and/or breakthroughs in the implementation of this policy. All respondents were of the view that it is responsible for a greater representation of women in the workforce at all levels, including positions of leadership. The policy empowered women and opened opportunities for promotion to management and leadership and therefore economically empowering them. Respondents were of the view that the policy had helped to bring out the "strength" in women. There were also more women included in the county service boards. The policy is therefore credited for more inclusion and participation of women in the various positions in the county.

### **2.2.4 Challenges Faced in the Implementation of the National Policy on Gender and Development 2019**

The study further sought to establish from the respondents if there were challenges in the implementation of the NPGD 2019. The findings are analysed on figure 1.9.

#### **Figure 1.9. Existence of Challenges in the Implementation of NPGD**



Most of the respondents that is 60% female and 55% of the male respondents noted that there were no challenges. Those who felt that there were challenges in the implementation of the policy were 40% female and 45% male respondents.

The study further sought to find out the obstacles encountered in achieving this policy. A major challenge identified by women respondents was in the knowledge, awareness and the uncoordinated nature of implementation of the policy. They observed that not many were aware of the policy, and that it was wrongly interpreted and therefore not well implemented. Others mentioned that the policy could not be well implemented because fewer women than men had the necessary qualifications and lacked mentorship to make them competitive for the appointive positions. Attitudes were also identified as an obstacle, noting that the mind-set of the society is yet to change to be more inclusive and to accept women in various positions of responsibility, and leadership.

Male respondents cited attitudes and perceptions within the society, as impediments to policy implementation. They however, felt that women ‘curtailed their own development’ and often failed “to apply for positions themselves” and hence failing to transcend to positions of leadership. They further noted that there were politics at play that affected women’s progression. In addition, the male respondents articulated that reproductive roles of women often discriminated due to their maternity responsibilities and care work which slows down their progression for various reasons.

Women in senior management alluded to the soundness of these policies, but their effective implementation is challenged by insufficient knowledge about them, and poor their poor interpretation. They observed the following:

*“The policy is good, but people just never get to read it. They are, therefore, not aware of what is contained in it” (male respondent KII-A)*

*“The policy is good, but implementation has always been a problem” (female respondent KII-B)*

The two thirds gender rule which has been misconstrued and interpreted to mean that a third of the employees should be women and 2/3 should be men. One respondent quipped; though

*these policies maybe good, their “interpretation is not being done well and 2/3 is wrongly interpreted and no one asks a question”. (female respondent - C)*

These sentiments are an indication that the implementation of the 2/3 gender rule was adequately not supported. Article 27(8) of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 provides that the State shall take steps to ensure that not more than two-thirds of members of all elective and appointive positions are of the same gender. Majority of the stakeholders have taken it to mean 1/3 representation which is consistently applied and somehow disadvantageous to women.

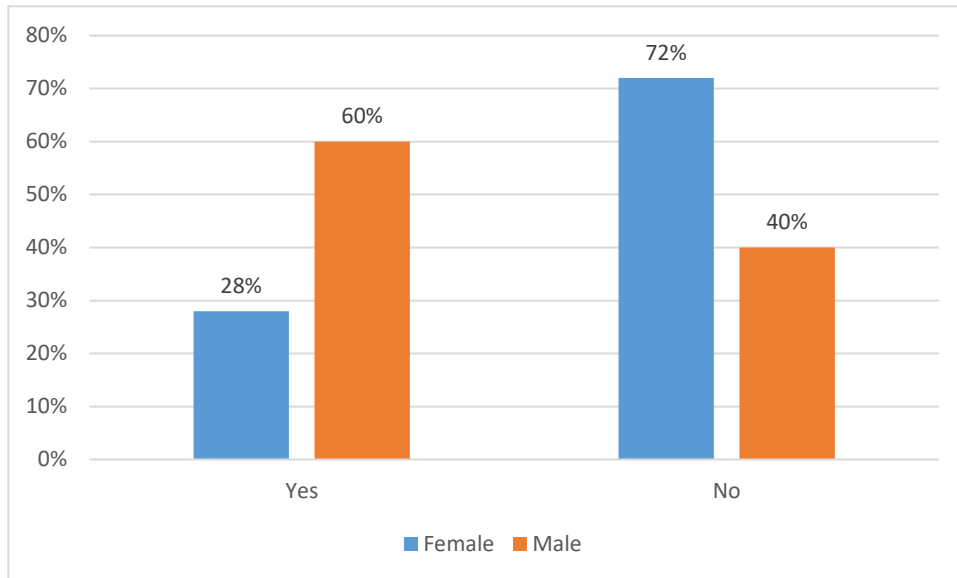
The fact that, as this respondent noted, no one questions the skewed application of the policy is probably because there is no political good will in its application. Other obstacles mentioned include poor attitudes, care work, discrimination due to maternity leave and family responsibilities.

### **3.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP**

Gender equality and inclusion is key in realizing women economic empowerment. Understanding the gender dimensions of activities, outputs and outcomes is important in tracking progress in gender mainstreaming. The study sought to establish how monitoring and evaluation of women’s participation in management and leadership in the public service is carried out.

#### **3.1 POLICY MEASURES THAT GUARANTEE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR PROMOTION OF WOMEN TO MANAGEMENT POSITION**

The study sought to establish whether the County Government of Kisumu had put in place sufficient policy measures that guarantee equal opportunity for promotion of women to management position. The study conducted in-depth face-to-face structured interviews with county employees in job group J-L which comprises the lower level. In addition, middle level management job group M-P and senior level Management job groups Q-V formed the key informants’ interview. The results are shown in figure 3.1



**Figure 3.1: Policy measures that guarantee equal opportunity for promotion of women**

**Source: Study data, 2023**

The figure above represents the views given by respondents drawn from job group J-L. From the findings, gender differences played out as majority of the female respondents felt that little had been done in policy formulation to support women to grow. Only 28% (8) of the women were positive that there has been change in policy compared to 72% (21) who felt that there was nothing noticeable in improving their representation. In contrast, majority of the men 60% (15) held the view that the county government of Kisumu had done a commendable work towards improving women progression and representation. However 40% (10) of men were in consensus with the women’s view that little had been done to promote more women in the county government.

The study further sought the views of key informants selected from senior management to provide relevant information on policy measures that guarantee equal opportunity for promotion of women to management and leadership positions. They shared the following views:

*“The 1/3 gender rule has not really helped much with promotion of women to positions of management and leadership roles, for example, no woman applied for the position of Chief Officer” (KII-Senior managers)*

Their views seemed to converge with those of male respondents from lower and middle management cadres who opined that indeed the County government had put enough measures to guarantee equal opportunities for women. Key among the measures was the implementation of the third gender rule which has played a major role in women inclusivity in management positions. However, the senior managers also noted that this rule has faced challenges especially in circumstances where women have failed to come out and take up the leadership and management positions. They illustratively noted that in the current government in Kisumu County, no woman applied for Chief Officer’s position. The discussion also noted that women lack belief and hence they don’t even try applying when vacancies are advertised. For this reason, the gender gap has continued to widen especially in senior management levels.

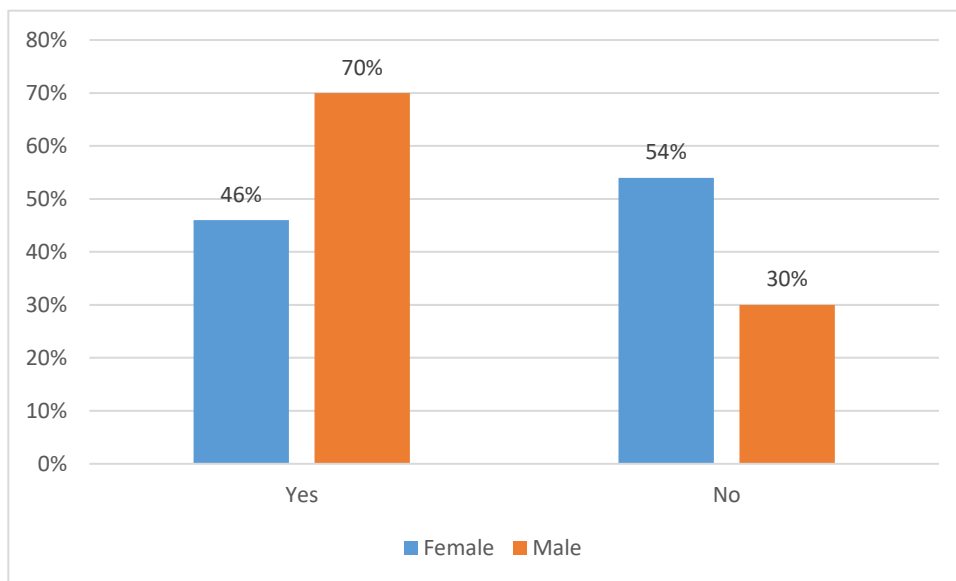
According to United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, 2010), although some progress has been made in addressing gender disparities in Kenya, through affirmative action and gender mainstreaming policy, a lot of effort still needs to be done given that women play a critical role in social–economic development of any nation; there is an urgent need to remove all the obstacles that hinder their contribution to national development.

### **3.2 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

One of the fundamental values and principles of civil service laid down in the constitution is gender equity in appointment, training and advancement at all levels. Article 27(3) of the bill of right (chapter four) also upholds women’s rights and fundamental freedoms. Women have the

right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in politics, economy and Society at large (GoK, 2010).

The study sought to find out if the county government of Kisumu had gender-responsive policies and practices aimed at boosting promotion and enable participation of women in management and leadership positions. The results are as given in figure 3.2.



**Figure 3.2: Aaffirmative action applied in hiring and promoting**

From the structured interviews, 46% (11 out of 24) women interviewees reported that affirmative action was applied in hiring and promoting women to management and leadership positions while 54% (13 out of 24) women interviewees reported that affirmative action had not been applied. Interestingly more men, 70% (14 out of 20) were of the opinion that affirmative action had been applied in their ministry/county whereas 30% (6 out of 20) men reported that affirmative action had not been applied.

When further probed about how affirmative action had been applied, the structured interview job group J-L respondents had diverse views. They noted that the gender that is underrepresented is always encouraged to apply as a part of the affirmative action.

This was further sought from key informant interviews from senior managers of the county of Kisumu, and one of them shared the following views:

*“Yes the affirmative action is working, but the interpretation is not correct because it tends to favour men as it is often assumed that the 2/3 should be men and only 1/3 is reserved for women.” (KII-Senior managers)*

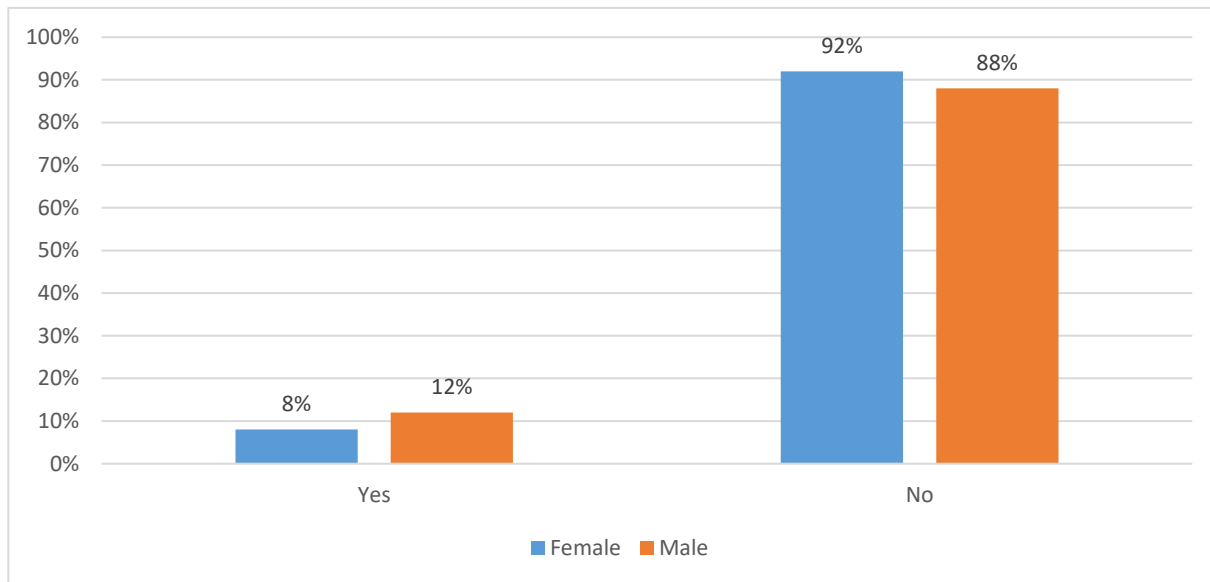
The key informant respondents added that affirmative action was applied to ensure both gender equality and ethnicity balance. But what stands out of the three job groups responses is the confusion of a third gender rule to mean one third of women while women are the two thirds.

Article 27(6) entrenches affirmative action. Although its harshest critics dismiss it as a measure that ends up perpetuating the same self-injustices that made it necessary in the first, the affirmative action principle is largely a corrective measure to the dismal presence of women and other historically disadvantaged group in the public sector in Kenya today (Nyairo,2011).

### **3.3 GENDER MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF WOMEN’S PROGRESSION IN PUBLIC SERVICE**

The study sought to establish how placement of women and women monitoring was carried out in the county. In the results, 92% (22out of 24) women respondents were not aware of any gender monitoring and evaluation mechanisms applied by the county government. Only 8% (2 out of 24) women interviewees reported that they were aware of gender monitoring and evaluation. Similarly, the same trend was observed for men with 88% (15 out of 17) having no information about gender

monitoring and evaluation whereas only 12% (2 out of 17) men had knowledge of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The results are demonstrated in figure3.3



**Figure 3.3: Gender monitoring and evaluation mechanisms**

When further probed about how gender monitoring and evaluation matters were dealt with, majority of the respondents job group J-L noted that gender related issues was not part of the performance appraisal rules and aspects in the county. It was noted that there is a no monitoring of men and women because of lack of legal requirements. When the same issue of monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming in Kisumu County was brought before the key informants in an interview, the senior managers were no different from their junior colleagues. The following as a view shared by one of the respondents with respect to monitoring and evaluation mechanism for gender compliance with gender mainstreaming:

*‘So far, there is no specific instrument to monitor and evaluate gender mainstreaming, but gender representation is captured during performance contract returns’ (KII-Senior managers)*

The key informants boldly noted that the constitution fully supports gender equity and equality but in practice women are still struggling to rise to leadership positions as promised by the constitution. Together they agreed that there have to be deliberate efforts that support the laws that promote women advancement to management and leadership positions as promised in the constitution. It suffices to say (Nyairo,2011), that the significant gains for women underlined in the constitution which promise their enhanced economic, political and social conditions will not be secured on a silver platter but through genuine commitment, first by women themselves and the rest of Kenyans

It was noted that the policy stipulates that the county ought to have a committee in place but the committee was never formulated. However, considerations are underway to formulate one. The main challenge being there isn't any existing gender monitoring and evaluation framework. Further, the CEC Gender reiterated the demand by the government on using tangible evidence in key gender mainstreaming decisions. So far, performance contracting is what is used and it only provides nominal information about gender. Gender audits are not done. Scanty data is available but it's never used in making decisions

In Kenya, little is known about the extent to which women's economic and social rights are being addressed. There is also scarce knowledge that exists on the position of female managers because of the social-cultural factors (UNIFEM, 2010).

## **5.0 SUGGESTED POLICY MEASURES TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE**

The study sought to establish some of the measures the respondents felt had brought improvement as well as proposals on what could be improved further. The respondents held differing perspectives on the measures taken to guarantee equal opportunities to women in their respective

ministries. Their views were largely influenced by their varying status, lived experiences as well as gender background. Key among the measures was the implementation of the third gender rule which has played a major role in women inclusivity in management positions. However, there was a feeling that this rule has been misinterpreted to mean a third woman and two thirds men.

Almost all respondents felt that the county has gender-blind promotion procedures. They held the view that those procedures were prone to manipulation particularly because there is lack of monitoring and evaluation frameworks. In addition, there are no known sanctions for non-adherence to the two thirds gender rule.

Negative attitudes of men towards women was also found to seriously hamper women progress. This forced women to stagger in one place, to lobby extensively for merited positions or constantly to prove themselves. There exists a misconception about the meaning of gender. Many men still believe that gender is about women and promoting the issues of women only and so they are reluctant to support. The key informants interview with the senior managers of the county revealed lack of political goodwill from the county politburo as evinced by the existence of gender offices which were nonfunctional. The situation is made worse by underfunding that affects many areas of implementation including training, capacity development, mentoring programs, development and implementation of policies require a joined-up approach, sustainable funding and a willingness to move beyond tokenistic gestures.

*“Policies on gender are good but we don’t read them. There is need for comprehensive sensitization programme” (KII-Senior managers)*

*‘There is need to effectively implement policies so that when they are reviewed, what worked and what didn’t work are put into consideration’ (KII-Senior managers)*

- ‘Curriculum reengineering to sharpen the skills of women to prepare them for leadership positions.’ **(KII-Senior managers)**

## **6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Overall, the findings of this study provide important insights into the nexus between policy and practice and highlight the points of failure raising the need for further research into the area of how Kisumu County government must develop mechanisms of effective policy implementation.

### **6.1 Conclusion**

1. These figures are a clear indication that women take a longer time to get promoted than men.
2. The study observed that women faced diverse work, social, cultural, and family related challenges that impacted their entry and advancement in their careers. The study showed that the reasons for which female employees faced trouble in maintaining a work-life balance were mostly because of long working hours, job rigidity, work overload, responsibilities related to child care, and scarce family support.
3. The study established that there were no clear mechanisms for reporting sexual harassment at the work place in that it was not well institutionalized with most male and female respondents, stating that there were no clear mechanisms in place.
4. Data suggests that the existing gender mainstreaming policies in the country lack the full force of law.
5. Research findings point that the NPGD is not well understood among the various stakeholders hence the need for the State department for Gender to develop a robust curriculum to help sensitize the contents of this policy among the various stakeholders.

6. The research found out that policy implementation managers in Kisumu county government have misunderstood the constitutional provision of 2/3 gender rule. They implement it in a manner to show that it means women are entitled to only one 1/3 maximum.

7. Under this circumstances Gender mainstreaming monitoring and evaluation tools and devices are lacking or not effected because it is not a legal requirement.

8. This results might mean that the County has no M & E instrument or mechanism

9. Violence and harassment against women appear to be more pronounced at the senior management levels than at the entry and middle level. This is perhaps, because, unlike at the entry level where promotion to the next job group in the public service is done after serving in the current job group for a certain period, at the senior management level promotions may include ascension to certain positions, which are few and therefore the increased competition.

### **5.1 Suggestions to Provide Equal Opportunities for Promotion of Women to Management and Leadership Positions**

The study sought for measures that should be put in place to provide equal opportunity for women to ascend to management and leadership positions. Various suggestions were given from across the respondents as indicated in Table 1.

#### **Box 1: Suggested measures for promoting gender equality in the county government**

- The implementation and adherence to the 2/3 gender rule
  - Full implementation of the affirmative action
  - Institutionalization of policies that target women, for instance creation of quotas.
  - Sensitize and encourage the girl child to aim higher right from primary school
  - Qualifications to enable them to compete effectively.
  - Encourage and motivate women to be “go getters” and to “compete aggressively through seminars and trainings targeting women to motivate them.
  - Give women positions of power and responsibility, even in acting capacity to learn on the job and to motivate others.
  - Have flexible working hours for women especially for nursing women and care givers.
  - Eliminate cultural barriers that impede the progression of women in carer development.
  - Sensitize women and girls of their rights.
  - Promotion based on merit.
  - Give women opportunity to prove themselves.
  - Have considerate transfers and placement of women.
  - Remove the “victim mentality” from women.
- Encourage men to support women in their career progression.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

1. It is therefore suggested that the State department for gender should revamp them, lobby with the national assembly to try and develop sanctions for those who fail to implement them.
2. Therefore, it is recommended that the State department for Gender should target these managers for training.
3. The State department of Gender to make it a legal requirement with concomitant legal sanctions against those who fail to adhere.

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