



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



**WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE,
KENYA: A GENDER AUDIT FOR THE COUNTY GOVERNMENTS (2014-
2020)**

List of Researchers

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

Representation of both men and women in decision making processes is critical to effective implementation of policies for national development. This includes participation in Government organs, civic positions and senior Government positions, among others.

Kenya has made significant progress over the years in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment as a natural outcome of its current constitution, vision 2030 blueprint, national gender policies and programs and compliance with international and regional obligations which promote gender equality, women's empowerment and eliminate discrimination against women.

However, despite progressive gender responsive legal and regulatory frameworks, effective implementation and enforcement of the law is lagging. An AFDB Gender note 2017 observes that there exists in Kenya a data challenge in terms of collection, analysis and utilization of sex disaggregated data at the National level to guide policy decision making in the different sectors of the economy.

Gender inequality is not only a pressing moral and social issue but also a critical economic challenge (McKinsey 2015). The existence of inequality in Kenya is confirmed by the 2018 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics which indicated that the modern or formal sector employment had 880,000 women compared to 1.68 million men in 2016. Thus, women trail men by 65.6 percentage in formal employment.

This report is the first ever gender audit of Kenya's County Government and it tracks gender equality in the county public service from 2013 to 2020. Participation in formal employment is important because of its direct impact on incomes and livelihoods. Ngigi (2019) suggests that the process of devolution through the creation of County Governments as enshrined in the 2010 constitution, would, among other benefits: ensure a more equitable distribution of national resources: provide a platform for economic and social development: shift communities from a state of exclusion to inclusion: involve communities in decision making through public participation and promote transparency, accountability and democracy.

The devolution trajectory was one of the pathways to ensure gender equality and a deeper engagement of the vulnerable such as women. These constitutional expectations that gender equality would be achieved is further articulated in the Sessional Paper No. 02 of 2019 on National Policy on Gender and Development, October 2019. The 2019 Sessional paper builds on the National Policy for Gender and Development of

2000, and Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2006 on Gender Equality and Development which were meant to promote women empowerment and mainstreaming the needs of women, men, girls and boys in all sectors of development in Kenya so that they can participate and benefit equally from development initiatives.

The goal, principle and objectives, of the National Gender Policy are aimed at ensuring gender equality and women empowerment in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres as envisaged in the Constitution. The framework also seeks to establish and strengthen Affirmative Action efforts aimed at reducing gender inequalities and geographical disparities in the distribution of natural resources and access to productive resources such as land, labour, finances, information and technology. The overall goal of this policy is to achieve gender equality by creating a just society where women, men, boys and girls have equal access to opportunities in the political, economic, cultural and social spheres of life.”

The extent to which gender equality in formal employment is achieved by the public service in the county government was the key interest of this gender audit. The study uses the indicator of Gender equality in work Women and men are equal players in the labor markets with a particular interest on Female-to-male ratio of labor-force participation rate, and leadership positions Female-to-male ratio of representation in leadership positions in the public service. This indicator has also been discussed by McKinsey (2019) on the study and the The KNBS study uses the same indicator *Women in continuous paid employment* to construct the Kenyan WEI National and county Indicators for gender equality. Researchers have debated whether gender equality should be measured as equality of opportunity or equality of outcomes (World Bank 2012: McKinsey 2019). This audit takes in to consideration both opportunity and outcome.

1.2 The Structure of the County Governments

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'.

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-P (entry level management positions to Upper management, job group Q-T).

2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The gender audit trail of the County Governments provides the status quo of the public service in the seven years since the formation of county governments in 2013 under the Constitution of Kenya 2010, Article 27; and the County Government Act 2012 sections 58 and 35 (1 and b) and 2 (a) on the two thirds of either gender principle in all elective and appointive positions. The counties are further guided by the Sessional Paper No 2 of 2019.

The study employed a trend analysis where variables were measured against a time-frame to establish and understand gender trends and composition of women and men in the public service. Quantitative data was obtained from the Ministry of State for Public Service, (Integrated Pay Roll and Personnel data base-IPPD) from 2013 to 2020. The audit uses the indicator of Gender equality in work. Women and men are equal players in the labor markets with a particular interest on female-to-male ratio of labor-force participation rate, and leadership positions. Female-to-male ratio of representation in positions directly speaks to the desired policy directions in the public service. Some of the key variables used for analyses in this report include demographic characteristics (age, gender, marital status and education); proportions of women and men in the entry, middle and upper cadres over a ten-year period.

3.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1 Distribution of employees by Gender

The study sought to establish the distribution of Employees by Gender in all the 47 county governments at three management levels. These included the entry, which is job group J to L, Middle management M to P, and upper level, Q to T.

3.1.1 Proportions of at Entry Management Level (Job groups J-L) (2014-2020)

The study established that the job groups for the public servants at the county government start at J to L for management entry job groups, this is followed by middle management M to P and upper management which is Q to T. The study sought to establish the representation of both men and women at the entry management job groups Table 3.1

Table 3.1: Percent Distribution of Employees by Gender in all Counties - Job Group J-L

Year	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
Job Group	Percent													
Sex	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
J	42	58	41	59	39	61	38	62	38	62	36	64	39	61
K	32	68	33	67	34	66	38	62	39	61	37	63	38	62
L	44	56	44	56	40	60	36	64	35	65	35	65	35	65
Total	38	62	38	62	38	62	37	63	37	63	36	64	36	64

(Source: IPPD, 2020)

According to Table 3.1, women dominated job group J-L between 2014 and 2020 with the highest numbers being registered in 2016 at 4156 (62.4%) compared to the highest number of men recorded at 2588 (38.0%) within the same period (2014-2020). It is not surprising given that about (13.1 million) live in rural areas. Both KNBS and ILO observe that they comprise about 75 per cent of the agricultural labour force as compared to 51 per cent for men (KNBS 2019), ILO 2019. It is these women then who would be seeking the county jobs.

3.1.2 Proportions of Women in Middle Management Level (Job groups M-P) (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 1070 (51%) to 1059 (50.1%) The highest proportions of women (53.9%) are recorded in 2020. Men's representation, on the other hand, slightly declined between 2014 and 2016. However, the proportions increased from 49.1% (1020) in 2017 to (49.2%) in 2018 while women remained at 51%. Women

continued to dominate these job groups at 54% in 2020. In essence the proportions of representation by gender in job group M-P are almost at 50;50 ratio with slightly more women surpassing the two thirds of either gender threshold Table 3.2.

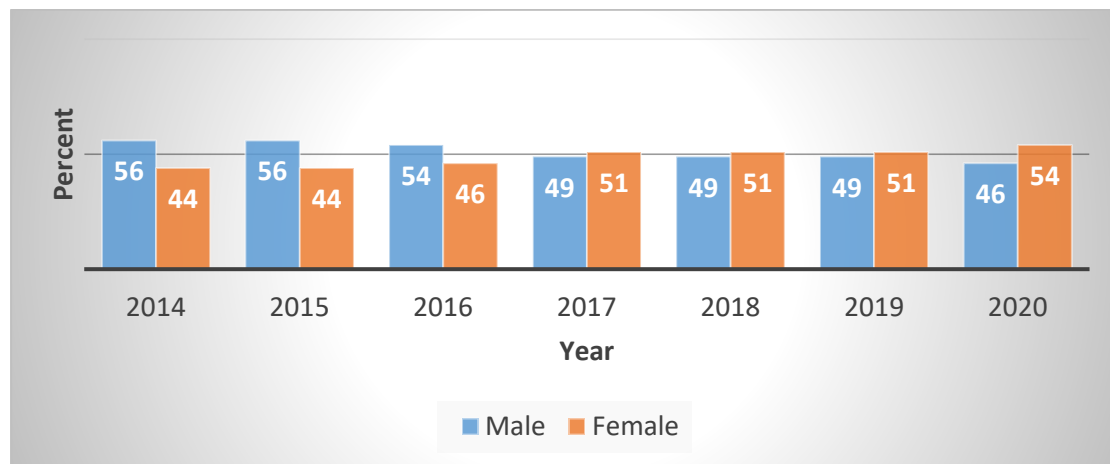
Table 3.2: Percent Distribution of employees by gender and Job group M-P

YEAR	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
Percent														
JOB GROUP	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
M	53	47	52	48	49	51	45	55	46	54	46	54	43	57
N	57	43	60	40	60	40	55	45	55	45	54	46	51	49
P	64	36	59	41	54	46	53	47	51	49	51	49	47	53
Total	56	44	56	44	54	46	49	51	49	51	49	51	46	54

(Source: IPPD, 2020)

A summative analysis of these ratios on a yearly basis shows that the differentials among both gender in the counties is really almost at par, ranging at 44% for women and 56% for men in 2014 and this statistical range does not vary much across the years. It is also notable that the female proportions increase across rising to 54 % in 2020 Fig 3.1.

Fig 3.1 Percent distribution of employees by gender at Job group M-P



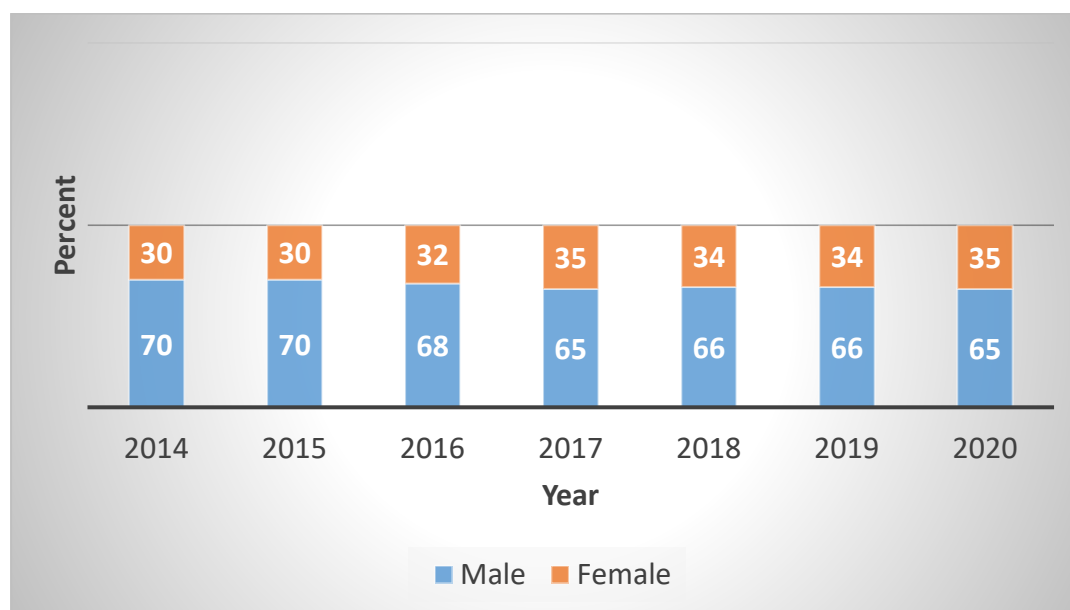
(Source: IPPD, 2020)

All the positions discussed are competitively acquired through interviews. This data shows that women do excel when competitiveness is the threshold which measures the positions they occupy in the formal employment.

3.1.3 Representation by gender in Upper Management level (Q-T)

The audit also analyzed gender data in the upper management level Q –T. The findings showed a drastic reduction in the proportions of women in upper management groups Q-T. Notably, men dominated decision making positions the entire period under investigation (2014-2020). In 2014 and 2015, women comprised 30% and men take a huge chunk of 70%. However, in the following years 2016 to 2020 there is a slow but steady increase of women to 32% (93) in 2016 rising to 35% (132) in 2020. The positions are generally political appointments and thus it is not surprising they are more male dominated.

Fig 3.2 Distribution of employees by gender – Job Group Q-T



(Source: IPPD, 2020)

Ironically, the overall number of women in upper management grew steadily from 2014 at 46% (66) 132) to 52% (132%) in 2020, with a higher concentration in job groups Q-S while the least numbers are observed in Job Group T where there was only one woman occupying the senior most position in 2014 and 2015. It is worth noting, however, that although these numbers grew, they still ranked lower than those of their male counterparts within the same period. These findings are similar to those of the Public Service Commission (PSC) baseline survey 2013–14 which showed that the ratio of men to women in the public service was 70:30 with the ratio of women reducing to 23 per cent at policy making levels (GoK 2016).

This brings to the fore a recognition that county governments have not yet achieved full inclusion as was envisaged by the Kenya Constitution Art. 27, and the Sessional Paper No 2 of 2019 on National Gender Policy. Many counties are still unable to provide women with equal opportunities. Gender inclusion is still theoretical, based on patriarchal traits, and as a result, women, including special interest groups are still

largely invisible in decision making positions. These statistics are collaborated by an OECD Report which states that in 2020, the labour force participation rate for women was 20 percentage points than for men across African countries, OECD 2021. The report further observes that women's employment also tends to occupy lower job status.

Key issues arise from the above findings. First, it is important to further examine why women even with a first degree continue to occupy lower jobs status by examining extraneous factors such as patriarchal discriminative processes at the family level which may not support women's formal work. Such could include unpaid care work, women's physical integrity such as violence and discriminatory social institutions within the family set up, the institution of employment or the societal perceptions on women's formal work. An OECD report indicated that African women spent four times more time on unpaid care and domestic work than their male counterparts compared to three times as much time on unpaid care and domestic work at the global level (OECD, 2019) and this scenario limits women's ability to participate in productive activities including formal employment. It is important to also begin to interrogate how women's physical integrity (comprising of violence against women, and female genital mutilation (FGM) and in particular intimate partner violence may contribute to these scenarios. There is also need to examine Discriminatory social institutions which establish the parameters for acceptable and unacceptable decisions, choices or behaviours for women in society, and consequently define their role and impact their outcomes because women in the public service are not averse to these very discriminatory social institutions which could hamper their upward mobility. Nevertheless, there has been a deliberate effort toward increasing women representation in parliament and the civil service through introduction of constitutional quotas, executive appointments in 1997, issuance of executive decree in October 2006 that 30 percent of all appointments to public positions be reserved for women CEDAW 2009

3.2 Age and Gender

The study sought to establish the average of the public servants in Job Group J to T in all the County Government. The average age of the public servants ranged between 37 and 49 years. Age was an interesting variable in this study. It was interesting that the average age at entry for both men and women was quite high at 45 for men and 43 for women. The average age for both men and women at Job Group J-L was higher than that of their seniors at M to P which ranged between 40 years for men at M and 37 years for women at M. At Job Group P the age range was 46 for men and 40 for the women. At job group Q to S both men and women were older ranging between 47 and 48 years for men, and 45 to 48 for women. The average age for job group T was 43 and female only.

The above findings show that the employees at the County government were largely middle aged. The lack of young employees such as young graduates in the mid-20s and thirties was a concern. However, the study notes that the Public Service Internship

Programme (PSIP), conceptualized and rolled out in the year 2019 could help bridge this gap. Under the programme, young graduates drawn from all the administrative wards in the country are recruited centrally by the Commission, and deployed as interns to Ministries, Departments and Agencies. The main objective of the programme is to enable the interns to acquire relevant skills, gainful work experience and enhance their competitive edge in search for jobs. The gap at the county government however may not be bridged if the PSIP does not stretch to the County governments.

The above findings also mirror sentiments of FKE which posits that Although the overall unemployment in Kenya is at 12.7 percent, Youth (15 – 34 year olds), who form 35 percent of the Kenyan population, have the highest unemployment rate of 67 percent (FKE 2023). Further a study by Statistica (2023 shows that in the age group between 20 and 24 years, the rate of unemployment was 15 percent in 2023 but they do not segregate by gender..

Figure 3.3 Average Age and Gender of County Public Servants in all the 47 Counties



(Source: IPPD, 2020)

3.3 Education and Gender

The county data (IPPD, 2020) revealed that a parity in educational attainment exists where more men held higher levels of education than women between 2014 to 2020 (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Percent Distribution of Employees by Gender and Education

YEAR	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
Percent														
Sex	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Bachelors	47	53	46	54	47	53	48	52	47	53	48	52	48	52
Masters	43	57	43	57	44	56	43	57	41	59	42	58	44	56
Doctorate	31	69	33	67	40	60	43	57	9	91	0	100	23	77
Postgrad Dip	48	52	47	53	52	48	50	50	50	50	50	50	53	47
Total	46	54	46	54	47	53	47	53	47	53	48	52	48	52

(Source: IPPD, 2020)

Table 3.4 shows that there were more men with a first degree, Masters and Doctorate throughout the period under consideration. More specifically, there were 5904 (47.2%) women and 6589 (52.7%) men with a bachelor's degree in 2014.

In the master's category, there were 601 (57.3%) men and 448 (42.7%) women. Male employees holding doctorate degrees were twice the number of women holding doctorates in 2014 with 9 males and 4 females respectively. In 2018, there was only one woman with a doctorate versus 10 men. It was also confirmed from the Public Service Commission that a master's degree and above were added advantages for their employees and not a basic requirement because experience, and skills mattered more.

There is direct relationship between education and employment. Mckisey 2015 further argues that higher education, has a direct relationship to income parity, and better jobs while better working conditions drive women to assume leadership roles on a par with men. Other studies opine that there exists a link between education and skills training and women's labor-force participation, working in mutually reinforcing loops. The public service is one of the largest employers in Kenya which provides better working conditions and thus has great potential for enabling educated women move toward realizing their full economic potential. Higher education is also co-related to Better job quality and higher pay, incentive to engage in paid work rather than unpaid work or leisure Mckisey 2015.

Addressing the gender inequality in the workforce has the potential to unlock needed resources and support economic development (IMF 2022). It is also a step towards reduction of poverty where education and income relate through women's participation in formal labour force.

3.3 Marital Status

Marital status and type of marriage are identified in the KNBS WEI indicators as key in women's empowerment. The number of married women and men remained steady over the 7 years, the number of single women was steadily increasing over the same period of time compared to that of their male counterparts.

Table 3.5: Marital status

Year	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
Sex	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
J	415	464	476	468	499	465	508	449	501	432	559	424	626	486
K	1212	716	1171	719	996	644	696	553	652	539	613	490	576	464
L	596	582	593	590	710	605	790	547	773	512	746	485	651	423
M	85	151	97	168	104	157	269	259	277	274	273	262	339	287
N	84	126	95	182	88	185	106	200	99	192	95	188	132	214
P	22	68	14	53	21	46	20	57	20	48	21	45	31	42
Q	22	43	27	55	24	47	27	46	30	52	29	61	30	65
R	5	41	8	54	10	58	13	67	16	66	18	65	19	61
S	5	12	9	24	10	26	9	24	2	18	3	22	2	21
T	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	1
Total	2447	2203	2491	2313	2463	2233	2438	2202	2370	2135	2357	2044	2406	2064

(Source: IPPD, 2020)

While. In 2014, the number of single women was 6056 gradually increasing to 6270 in 2015, then 6545 in 2016, to 6653 in 2017, 7235 in 2018, 7448 in 2019 then slightly declining to 7109 in 2020.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

Women are proportionately place or take half the jobs both at entry and middle management. Women, take the largest share of job groups at the entry and middle management.

At the entry management level women dominated job group J-L between 2014 and 2020 with the highest proportions being registered in 2016 (62.4%) compared to the highest proportion of men recorded of (38.0%) within the same period (2014-2020).

A summative analysis of these ratios on a yearly basis shows that the differentials among both gender in the counties is really almost at par, ranging at 44% for women and 56% for men in 2014 and this statistical range does not vary much across the years. It is also notable that the female proportions increase across rising to 54 % in 2020.

The findings showed a drastic reduction in the proportions of women in upper management groups Q-T. Notably, men dominated decision making positions the entire period under investigation (2014-2020).

The average age of the public servants ranged between 37 and 49 years. Employees at the County government were largely middle aged. There were absolutely no young employees such as young graduates in the mid-twenties and thirties.

All the employees had a minimum of first degree but, the proportions of women with higher education reduced as you ascend through the job groups.

Notably, there were more single women in top management while a larger number of those who are married occupying the lower cadres of employment. Understanding and improving the representativeness, quality, and equity in the public sector is critical for better service provision, given the intersectionality of gender, occupation, and economic empowerment.

The County Governments are providing strategic leadership in changing norms and behaviors and promoting greater gender equality in the labor market as a whole. However, political will for inclusivity of women in the highest key decision making levels of job group T is lacking.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The County Public Boards must make concerted efforts to ensure full implementation of the two-thirds of either gender principle in order to achieve success in closing the gender gap especially at the policy making job groups of Q to T. These positions are political so political will is needed.

Need for a framework which on boards the Public Service Internship Programme (PSIP) programme at the County Government. Such a framework will help to bridge the age gap fresh graduates aged 25 and above up to 35 years. The programme does not currently cover the County Government.

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