



WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE, KENYA THARAKA NITHI COUNTY GOVERNMENT REPORT

List of Researchers

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 counterparts 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 Tharaka Nithi County from a research that was conducted between March 2023 and April 2023.

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' County Government of Tharaka Nithi (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). The table below shows the distribution by gender and job group in Tharaka Nithi County Government.

Table 1.1 Distribution of employees by Gender in Tharaka Nithi County Government

Job	Group	Gender		Total
		F	M	
	J	325(61%)	208(39%)	533
	K	136(53%)	122(47%)	258
	L	69(45%)	84(55%)	153
	M	27(36%)	49(64%)	76
	N	18(36%)	32(64%)	50
	P	15(33%)	30(67%)	45
	Q	4(25%)	14(75%)	18
	R	2(18%)	11(82%)	13
	S	3(20%)	12(80%)	15
	Total	599(52%)	562(48%)	1161

Source IPPD, 2020

Results from Tharaka Nithi County presents a trend similar to the county audit report (2014-2020). Which 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 both in the national and county governments. The 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, 61% were women while 39% were men, Job group K there were 53% women, and 47% men, Job group L, there were 45% women while there were 55% 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 36% women compared 64% men. Then a sudden decline in the numbers of women is seen where Job group N has 36% women and 64% men while Job group P has 33% women and 67% 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 results show a non-conformity to the Constitution of Kenya 2010, which has a clause on the two thirds of either gender principle in all elective and appointive positions.

1.1 METHODOLOGY

1.1.1 Research design

The study used a mixture of designs including descriptive and exploratory methods to integrate three sources of data: a structured questionnaire which was answered by job group J-L the entry level and job group M-P the middle level managers. Key informant interviews with senior managers job group Q-T were conducted to obtain information about gender policy formulation, implementation and monitoring of women in leadership and management in the public service. An observation checklist was filled by the researchers. Thematic analysis was used to analyze all data. (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman & Pedersen, 2013)

1.1.2 Sampling

The study attracted a total of 45 respondents which composed of 19 men and 26 women in job group (J-L) the entry level, middle level management job group(M-P) had 7 respondents and senior level Management job groups (Q-S) had 7 respondents who were purposively selected. 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 Tharaka Nithi County.

Table 1.2: Sample Size Distribution

Job Group	Population	%	Sample Size	Response rate
Entry level (J-L)	944	5%	48	45
Middle Management Level (M-P)	171	10%	17	7
Senior Management Level (Q-T)	46	20%	10	7
Total	1161		75	59

Source IPPD, 2020

1.1.3 Data collection

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 Tharaka Nithi County. The study conducted in-depth face-to-face interviews using a structured interview guide for job group J-P and key informant interviews with senior managers job group Q-T. The interviews took place in the respondent's office or a private place of their preference. With the help of KNBS, the study utilized databases and electronic fillable forms which provide features that allow one to control how data is entered and also automatic verification for data completeness.

1.1.4 Data analysis

Data were analyzed through descriptive statistical tools and thematic content analysis Walt and Gilson's 1994 policy triangle framework, focusing on four fields: content, context, process and actors who have a critical role including middle level and senior managers in the public service. Interview and questionnaires conducted were entered into NVivo 10 software which aids in managing data ideas, data queries, data visualization and data reporting (Bazeley & Jackson , 2013) with the help of KNBS.

2.0 FINDINGS

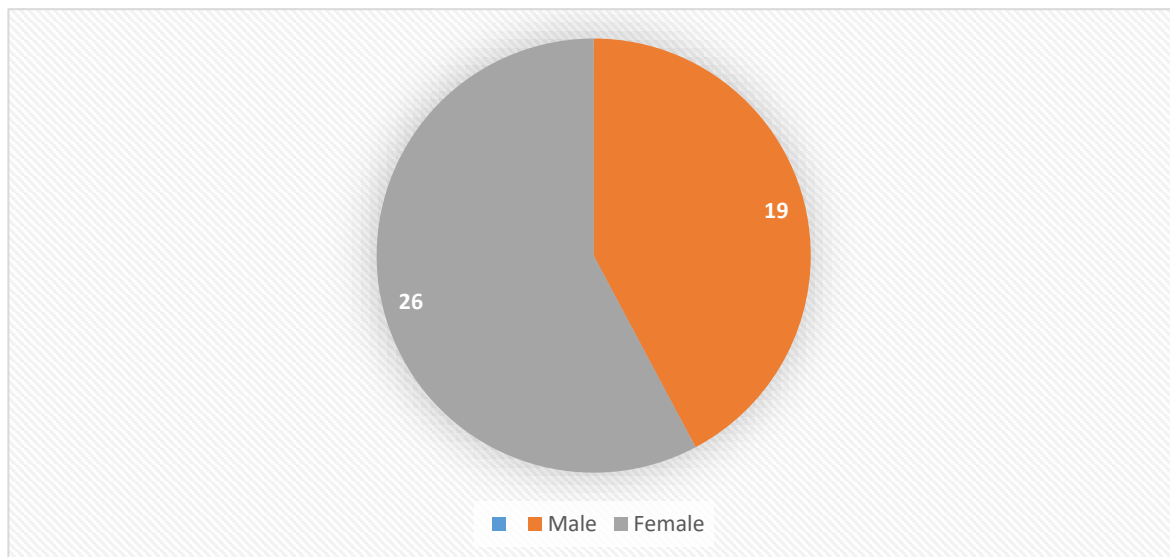
2.1 Demographic characteristics

The study interviewed 45 members of staff in the County Government of Tharaka Nithi, both male and female, in various capacities in job group J-P. The demographic information of the respondents was collected to give a better understanding of the background and characteristics of the respondents, to appreciate their needs and wants.

2.1.1 Sex of the respondents

The study sought responses from both women and men to get the different perspectives, views and ideas that both women and men have on the participation and progression of women to positions of management and leadership in the public service in Kenya, the barriers they face hindering their full participation, and possible suggestions to enable them to participate effectively. Out of the 45 respondents who presented themselves for interview, 58% were female and 42% as shown in figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1. Sex of the Respondents



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

2.1.2 Age of the respondents

The age of the respondents was an important aspect to analyse as the needs of younger workers would be different from those of older staff members. Most of the respondents were young with 78% (35) of them being 45 years and below. The results point out that Tharaka Nithi County has young workforce. This justifies the reason why most of the senior positions are held in acting capacities. Table 2.1 below gives an analysis of the age of the respondents.

Table 2.1 Distribution of respondents by age and sex in Tharaka Nithi County Government

Age	Men	Women	Total
25-34 years	9	11	20
35-45 years	7	8	15
46-55 years	1	6	7
55 years & above	2	1	3
Total	19	26	45

Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

Age also impacts work practice and views, for instance older workers may have their own views and work patterns that they have set developed over time and therefore, are not easy to adopt change. In addition, the performance by both younger and older workers may be different. According to Truxillo et.al. (2012), whereas the older workers are viewed to have a well “crystalized intelligence” and are more organized and conscious about their work, the younger workers were seen to have a “fluid intelligence” and more proactive. Crystalized intelligence is knowledge gained from learning and experience while fluid intelligence is the capacity to process new information and the application of abstract reasoning. These differences impact the way they perceive things, the way they act and their performance.

In addition to all this, the younger workers and especially women, are more likely to be impacted by the reproductive roles than their older counterparts. According to Lunani et.al (2019), the childbearing age in Kenya is between 15 and 49 years. There were 20 female respondents in falling within this age bracket compared to 16 male respondents. This implies that some of the needs of this group include those that meet the demands of their reproductive roles.

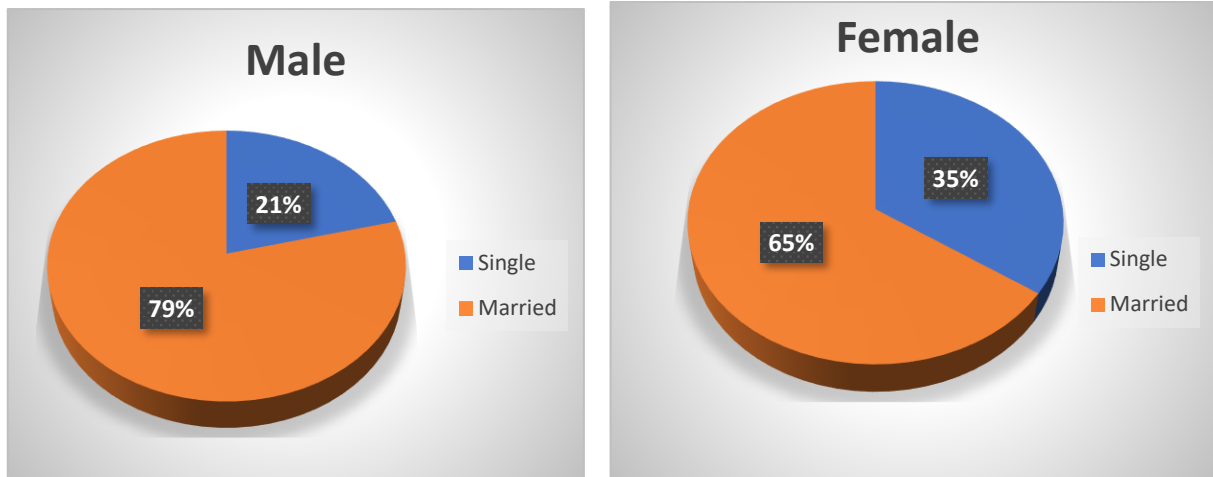
2.1.3 The Marital Status of the Respondents

The study further sought to establish the marital status of the respondents. Marital status was deemed an important variable in the study, because it impacts the participation and progression of women to positions of management and leadership. According to Akuamoah ,2020 family demands always take the priority among women and many women are not able to balance work, family and personal needs and responsibilities, and especially because the workplace does not support them with policies and programmes to make this possible. Hence the demands of their jobs and those of their family have often been a challenge to most women.

The current study noted that majority of the respondents were married as out of the 45 respondents, 32 of them were married, 17 of them being female and 15 of them male. In the overall picture there was a higher percentage of married men than women. Out of a total of 19 male respondents, 79% of whom were married and only 21% were single whereas out of the

26 female respondents, 65% were married while 35% were single as analysed on figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2 Marital status of Respondents by Sex

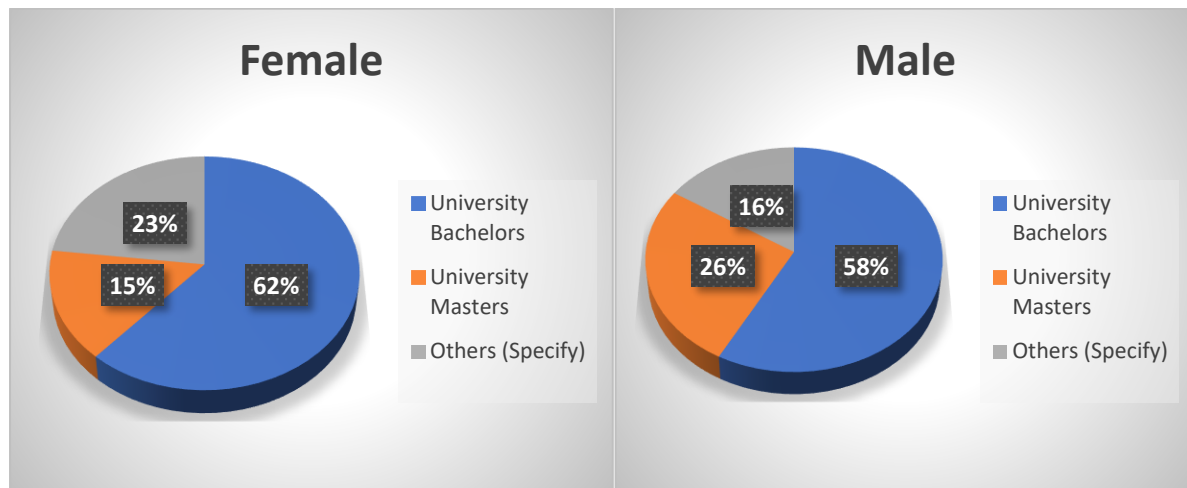


Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

2.1.4 Level of Education of Respondents

The study sought to establish the level of education of the respondents. It is often believed that higher levels of education positively correlate with higher participation in the labour force and higher earnings (Elborgh, et.al 2013). All the respondents to this study were well educated. Among the female respondents, only 23% of them did not have university degrees but had various diploma certificates. A good number of them or 15% had a master's degree, and the majority, making 62% percent had a university bachelor's degree. The same trend is noticed among the male respondents who recorded 16%, 58% and 26% for other qualifications which were largely diplomas, university bachelor's degree and university master's degree respectively as noted in figure 2.4 below. It is noteworthy that the percentage of men with a master's degree is significantly higher than that of women. This may perhaps be because men often do not have the triple roles that compete against education, for their time, finance and other commitments.

Figure 2.4 Respondents Highest Level of Education by Sex



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

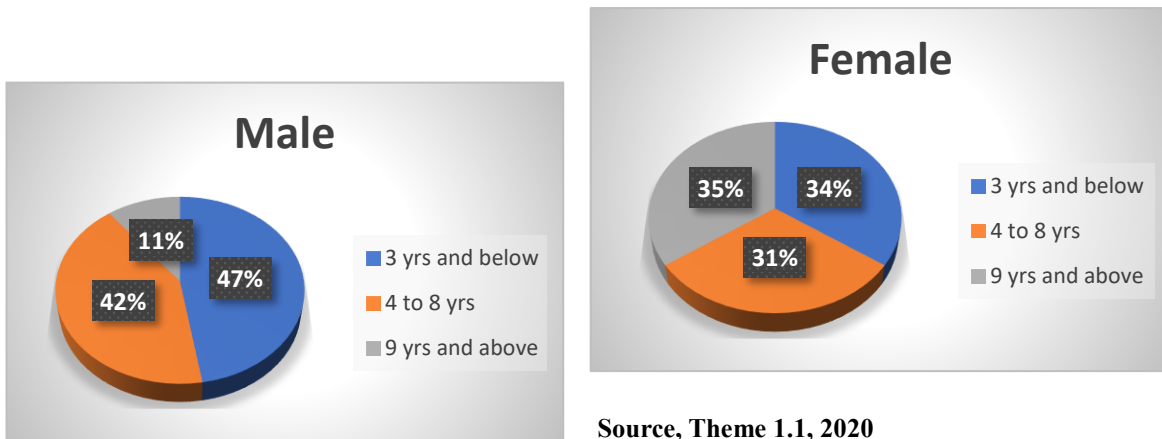
2.2 BARRIERS TO WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

The first objective sought to establish the barriers to women’s representation in management and leadership positions in the county government of Tharaka Nithi. 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.

2.2.1 Career progression

In the public service one is due for promotion to the next level after serving for three years. Being a manager in public service means that one is involved in improving the efficiency and quality of service delivered by the government. Public management also entails interpreting and implementing public policy to achieve government agenda. Understanding the number of years that respondents have worked in their positions was important as it provides a background of their role, influence, and benefits earned from different positions. It also provides a better understanding of women’s participation in management and leadership positions in the county government. The findings are provided in the figure below. The study sought to establish how long the respondents had served in their current position. This is because overstaying in one position can demoralize one and therefore impact on productivity. The responses are captured in figure 2.5 below.

Fig 2.5 Years stayed in the current position.



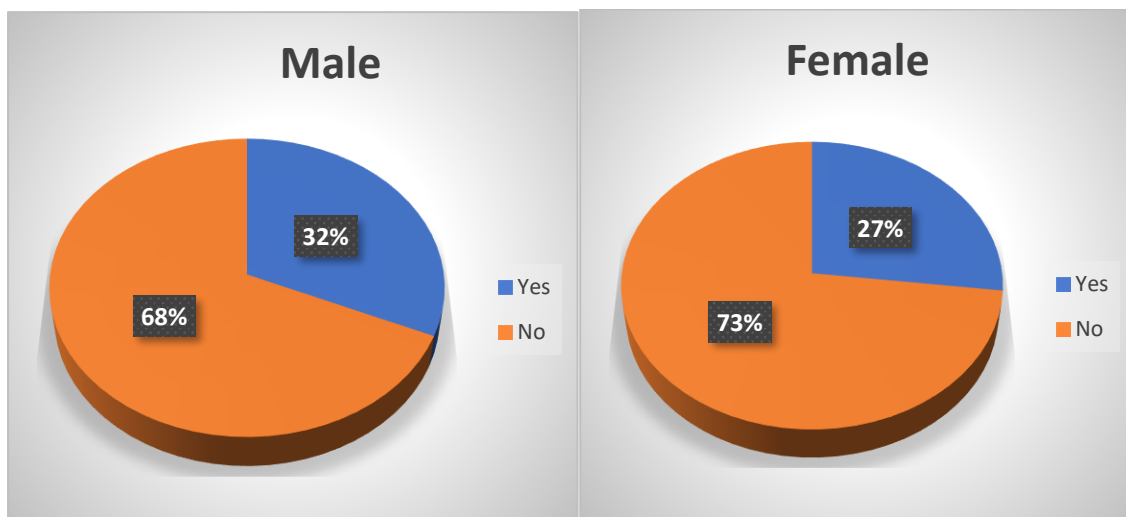
Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

The study established that more female respondents 35% (9) as opposed to 11% (2) male respondents had served in the same position for 9 years and above. 34% (9) and 31% (8) female and 47% (9) and 24% (8) male respondents had served in the same position for 3 years and below and 4 to 8 years respectively. One notable observation was that there were more women who had served in the same position compared to men. These figures are a clear indication that women take a longer time to get promoted than men hence leading to career stagnation.

2.2.2 Overstayed in the Current Position

The study sought to establish whether the respondents felt they had overstayed in the current position. The results are shown in figure 2.6 below.

Figure 2.6 overstayed in current position.



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

Majority of them, that is 68% (13) men and 73% (19) women, felt that they had not overstayed. This could be because being a County Government and with staff being appointed by the Governor, who is elected every five years, and the executive authority, appointed by the

Governor, the change in staff and the positions they hold is also expected to change after every election. There was, however, staff who felt that they had overstayed in their current position. These make up 32% (6) men and 27% (7) women.

2.2.3 Factors contributing to career stagnation

Literature asserts that in Kenya, women face a myriad of barriers including but not limited to historical, economic, structural, systemic and social-cultural in their quest to participate in management and leadership positions (Nigam, 2014 ,Ellis, 2007,) The study sought to establish some of the factors associated with delayed promotion from the respondents

(i) Work/Social and Cultural/Family Life Related Barriers

Family responsibilities coupled with social and work life balance were perceived by many women as key impediments to delayed promotion. The women attested to having children remaining a serious barrier. Career progression and child bearing seemed to be negatively correlated as it is only women who must take time out of their careers to have children. Hence this gave the men an upper hand to progress faster than women. The extra domestic responsibilities carried by women were found to adversely affect their progression hence leading to delayed promotion and overstay in one job group. A study by Powel and Grave, 2003 observed that, women in the west have to make difficult choices like remaining single or childless in order to avoid career stagnation.

What was noted in the study is that women preferred to work where they were more comfortable in terms of posting and flexibility. To confirm this, an interview with a Key Informant Interview (KII) from upper management level noted:

Women prefer to work in stations and with the bosses that they are used to and comfortable with. Many times, women refuse to take promotions that come with transfers or take up higher offices with more responsibilities but without any increment of resources. They do not want to be destabilized (KII, A)

Indeed, KII, A further noted that:

The cultural Do's and Don'ts about women impede their upward progression. Women do not want to take up certain responsibilities that take them away from their homes. Many men also do not want to have a woman boss or work at per with them. The "Huyo Mama" (that woman -to belittle women) syndrome is common in the work place.

These findings are in line with the findings of a study conducted by Osituyo (2018) who established that there is a positive correlation between gender role perception and stereotype and the career progress of women in public service.

(ii) Organizational Barriers

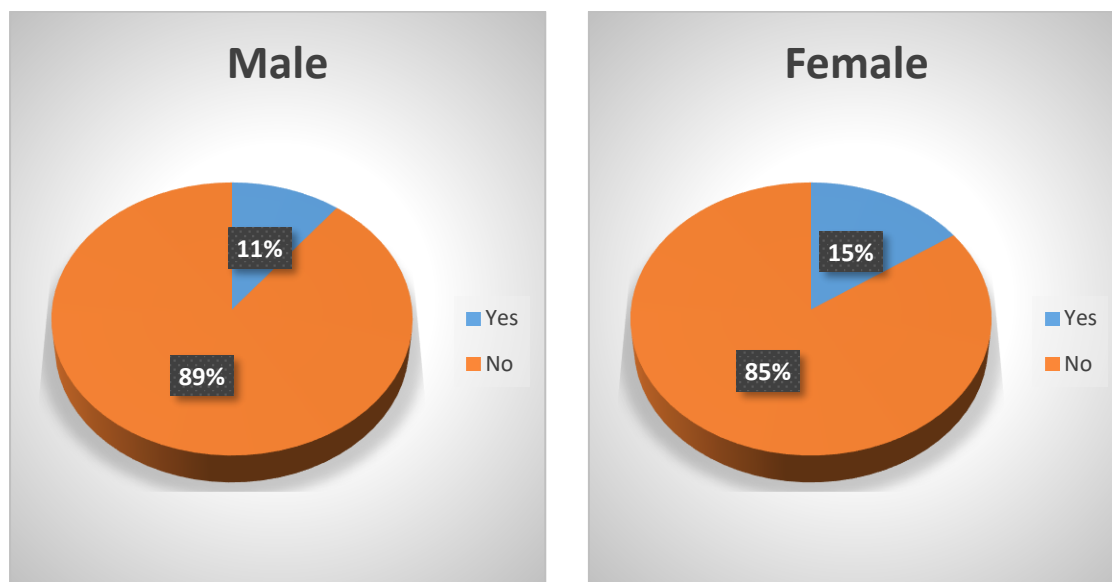
It was clear that women in middle and senior level management in a variety of professions in the public service continue to face a number of structural barriers to career progression. The women felt that organizations posed some gender specific discrimination and anti female nature of organization in the public service.

Institutional discriminations such as limited access to networking processes, lack of mentoring, limited training and development coupled with a challenging work environment which prohibits both men and women from upward mobility.

(iii) Gender related barriers

The study sought to establish whether gender related barriers had an impact on the promotion of the respondents. 11% (2) male and 15% (4) women agree that gender barriers are a hindrance to promotion while 89% (17) and 85% (22) of men and women respectively feel that gender related barriers do not impact promotion as analyzed in figure 2.7 below.

Figure 2.7 Impact of Gender Related Barriers on Career Progression among Both Female and Male Respondents



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

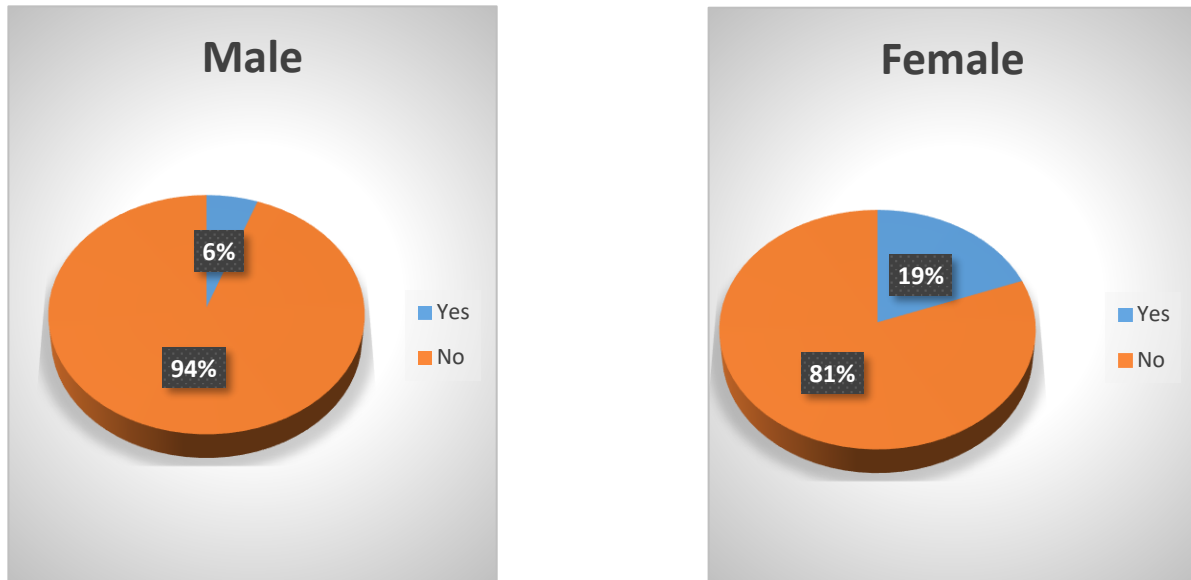
From the findings, 11% (2) male and 15% (4) women agree that gender barriers are a hindrance to promotion while 89% (17) and 85% (22) of men and women respectively feel that gender related barriers do not impact promotion. This small positive response could be attributed to the fact that there is a Scheme of Service which is followed during promotions to the next salary scale or Job Group. It comes after serving in their current position for a certain number of years which should be three years.

iv) Sexual Harassment at the work place

The study sought to establish whether there was sexual harassment at the workplace. Only a small number of the respondents, that is 6% (1) man and 19% (5) women answered to the

affirmative. A large number of the respondents that is 94% (7) men and 81% (21) women stated that there was none. These responses are analyzed in figure 2.8 below.

Figure 2.8 Existence of Sexual Harassment at Workplace

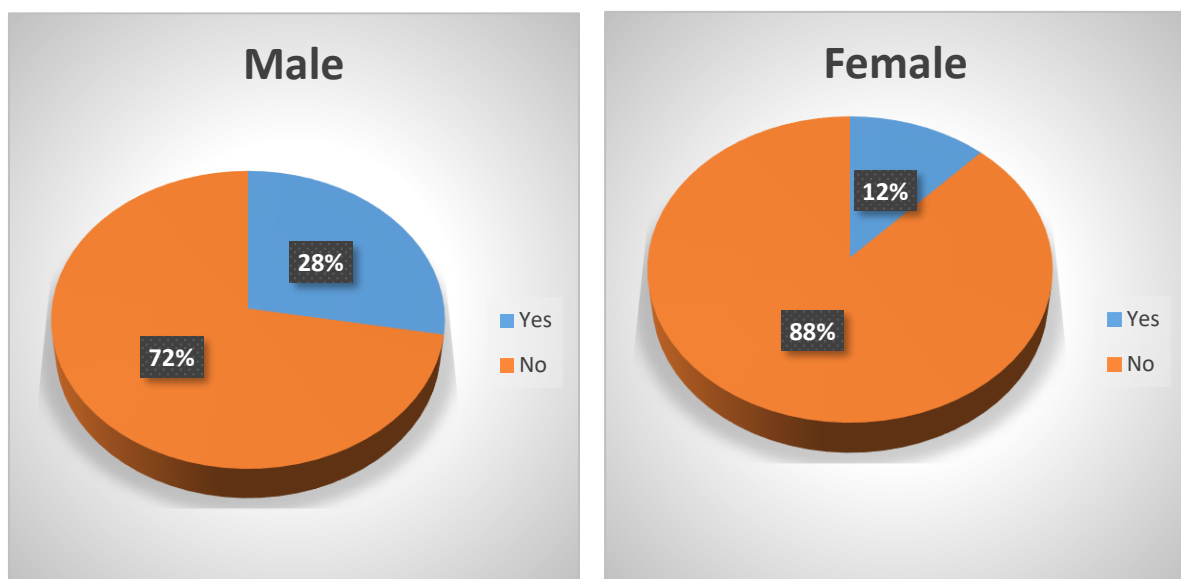


Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

(iv) Sexual harassment policies at the work place

As a follow up to the question on sexual harassment at the workplace, the study sought to find out if there was a sexual harassment policy in place in this County Government. 28% (5) male and 12% (3) female respondents responded to the affirmative while 72% (13) male and 88% (22) female noted that the policy did not exist as analyzed in figure 2.9 below.

Figure 2.9 Existence of a Sexual Harassment Policy at the Workplace



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

It is imperative to note that the presence of a sexual harassment policy would provide a sense of security to the women hence with such a large percentage feeling that there is none, leaves them feeling vulnerable. On the other hand, the men have no deterrent to bar them from harassing women as a large percentage of them are aware that there is no policy to protect women or to reprimand them for sexually harassing women.

Indeed, KII A observed that the presence of a sexual harassment policy would:

“Provide a safety net for women where they feel safe and protected and hence create a favourable and conducive atmosphere for all and especially for women to work comfortably; promote equity, provide security for women’s jobs where their job and promotions have no strings attached to them, and it will also encourage women’s rights.”

It is therefore obvious that in the absence of this policy, many women felt vulnerable as there are no policies to protect them from sexual harassment from their male counterparts, no guidelines on what sexual harassment constitutes of and no guidelines to report sexual harassment or to reprimand the perpetrators. Indeed, one male respondent wondered “where do you draw the line between courting, complimenting and sexual harassment?” This is the dilemma many men had because in most societies, it is often men who pursue women for courtship.

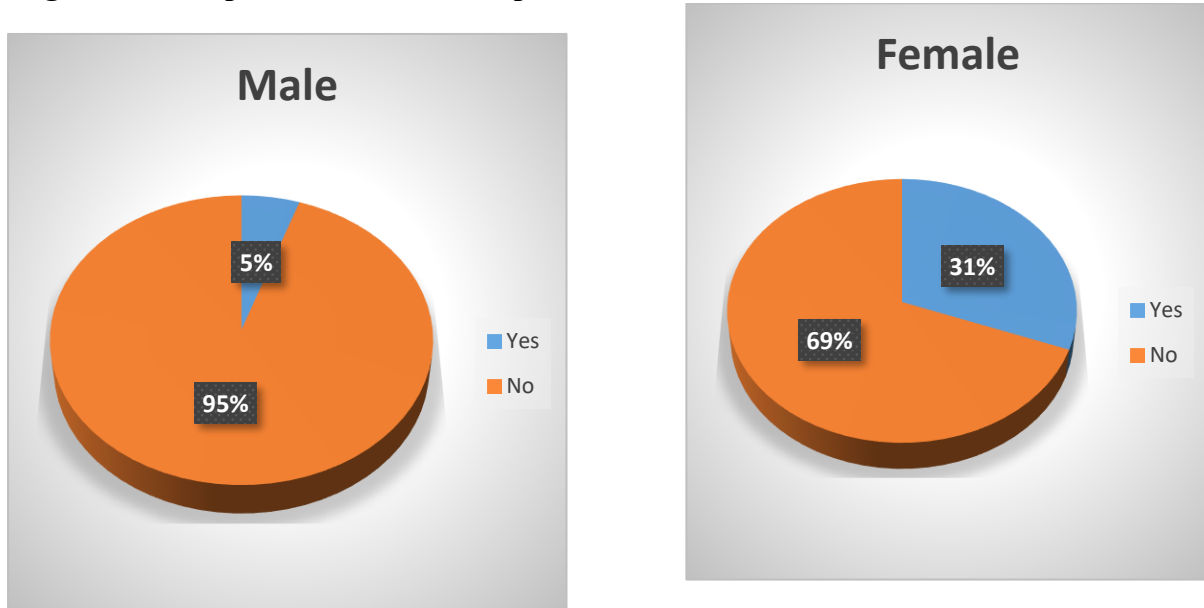
(v) Mechanisms of Reporting Sexual Harassment at the Workplace

The study established that the mechanisms for reporting sexual harassment at the work place was 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.

(vi) Impact of Care Work on Promotion

The study sought to establish if care work had an impact on promotion. A larger percentage 31% of the female respondents, as opposed to only 5% of the male respondents, responded to the affirmative. A large percentage, 95% of male respondents as compared to 69% of female respondents felt that care work did not affect their promotion. It is clear that care work affects women more than it does men as analyzed in figure 2.10 below.

Figure 2.10. Impact of care work on promotion



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

A follow up question sought to establish ways through which care work affects promotion. Among the responses given some respondents noted that childcare was very challenging for working mothers, and it was even more challenging caring for a special child with an unempathetic and insensitive boss. Other challenges highlighted by the respondents include working late or past working hours which was seen to interfere with motherly and wifely duties and often causing a strain in relationships at home; looking after sick parents and relatives as per the demands of the extended family, lack of resources to develop academically or undertake professional development courses due to extended family responsibilities and the three months maternity leave being too short hence mothers have to leave their babies before weaning them, thus making it difficult to fully concentrate at work. Since in the African culture the woman is synonymous with the home sometimes they have to miss work to attend to various issues at home or in the extended family. All these challenges have an impact on their work performance as they miss work, take time off frequently, or have divided attention and hence their career development assessment and evaluation rating may not be high enough to enable them progress to positions of management and leadership in the public sector.

(vii) Measures to Mitigate Barriers to Women's Career Progression

The study further sought the opinions of the respondents on how the barriers that hinder the progression of women to positions of management and leadership can be curbed. Various views were given. Most of the respondents felt that capacity building and training was necessary to equip women with the ability to take up these positions. These capacity building efforts should be given to all even to those who miss the sessions while on maternity leave. There should also be periodic talks focusing on women to inspire them to leadership and self-actualization.

Other views that were given include giving women managerial responsibilities, even in acting capacity, to enable them learn on the job and build their confidence; introduce affirmative action and a deliberate quota system where some openings maybe set aside for women to enhance more participation from them; practice equal treatment of both genders, promote and assign duties on merit; enforce the constitution; encourage women to take up positions of management and leadership and not be shy or self-censor themselves; implement the two thirds gender rule and enforce the Tharaka Nithi Gender Bill that was recently passed.

The study noted that there were a few male respondents with divergent views and harbouring hard stands on women empowerment. These noted that they did not think that there were any barriers to women's progression to management and leadership positions in the county. Indeed one male respondent in the middle management cadre (job group M-O) was very emphatic on this noting that:

Women were more than 1/3 of the total number of staff in the county government and therefore were well represented.

"I do not like to hear about women empowerment. From childhood, I have heard of women's empowerment. When will they become empowered and when will men begin being empowered?" This respondent felt that women have been "favoured" over men and received "special treatment" while men are ignored.

These varied views indicate the divergent views that men and women have on issues of gender mainstreaming and the participation and progression of women into positions of management and leadership in the public sector. Therefore there is urgent, need for sensitization and perception change initiatives at the workplace. Of necessity, strategies for improving perceptual skills to embrace diversity must be instituted.

3.0 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL POLICY ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT OF 2019

Kenya has ratified a number of international instruments that support gender equality in order to alleviate gender inequalities. The Kenyan government has also implemented regional regulations to domesticate these tools. For instance, gender mainstreaming initiatives in Kenya are guided by the National Policy on Gender and Development. Additionally, the 2010 Kenyan Constitution includes affirmative action as a part of its efforts to advance gender equality. These initiatives aim to enhance gender mainstreaming at all levels, and across all sectors, for efficient and equitable development outcomes.

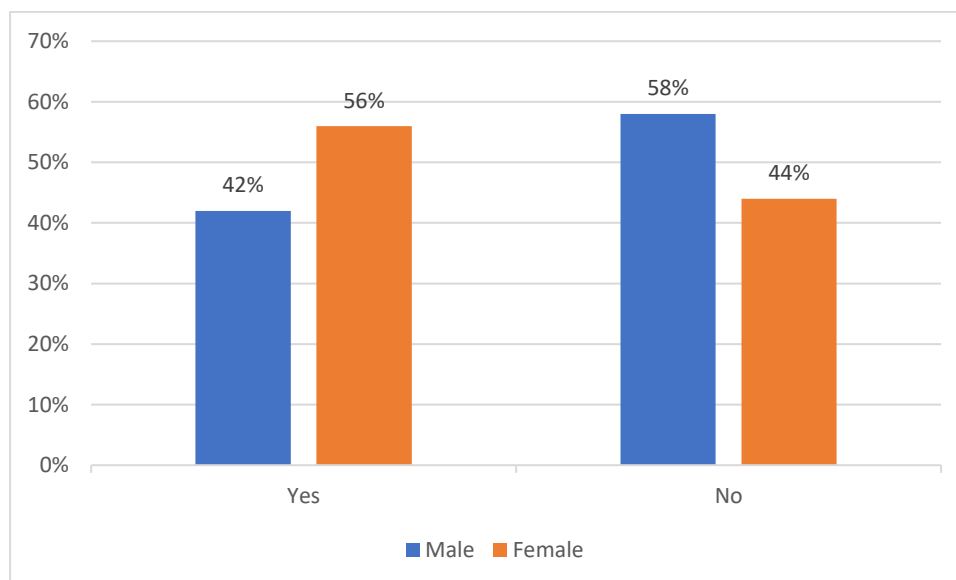
The national policy on gender and development was set up as a realization of the need for a well-coordinated and comprehensive policy to guide gender inclusion for the full utilization of available resources for maximum productivity. This policy was subsequently reviewed in 2011 and 2019, to align it 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).

This study’s second objective therefore 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. 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.

3.1: Awareness of the National policy on Gender and Development 2000

The study sought to find out if the respondents were aware of the National Policy on Gender and Development (2000) and its subsequent amendments 2011 and 2019. As indicated in figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1. Awareness of the National policy on gender and development 2000



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

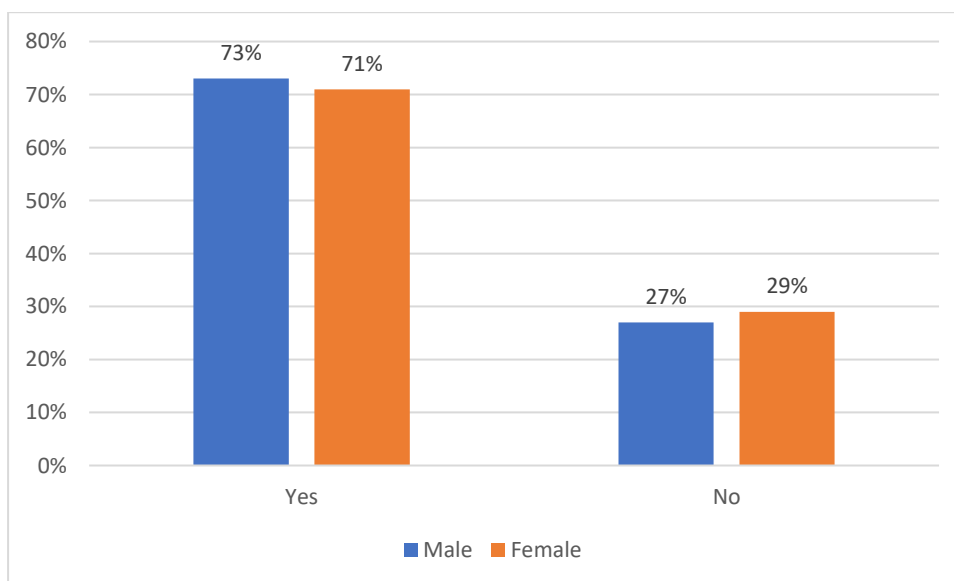
The results in the figure above sheds lights on the level of awareness by the respondents on national policy on gender and development. It indicates that 57.9% of male and 56.0% of female respondents are aware of the policy. These findings are a reflection of fairly balanced

gender awareness between men and women. However, the findings demonstrate disparity in awareness with 44.0% of females and 42.1% of males being unaware about the policy. This discrepancy may highlight a fundamental issue where there is a need for targeted efforts to create awareness. These efforts should consider empowering both men and women with knowledge, making sure that women are equally informed. It should be noted that women traditionally experience the brunt of gender inequalities. Nonetheless, overall awareness rate was 56.9% which necessitates inclusive awareness campaigns that address nuanced gender dynamics. It is important to recognize factors behind this policy unawareness which may include educational disparities and social norms in tailoring effective approaches.

3.2: Implementation of the National Policy on Gender and Development (2000) in Tharaka Nithi

The respondents who were aware of the policy were further probed on whether the National Policy on Gender and Development (2000) and its subsequent amendments 2011 and 2019 been implemented in their departments within the county. The results are presented in figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2 Implementation of the NPGD 2019 in the workplace



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

The findings contained in figure 3.2 above reveal that the implementation of the national policy and gender development is reported by 72% of both male and female respondents. They also affirm their awareness of the implementation of subsequent amendments (2011 and 2019). The respondents demonstrate a relatively positive perception about the implementation of gender and development policies in their ministry/county. Further, 71% of female and 73% of male respondents reported that the policies have been implemented in their ministry/county. Even though the difference between male and female respondents is minimal, it shows a general consistency between men and women on the implementation of gender and development policies. On the contrary, 29% of female and 23% of male respondents held a view that the policies on gender and development have not been implemented in their ministry/county.

These findings suggest a need to understand the factors behind reported perception of both male and female respondents. While there is a relatively positive overall perception of implementation of gender and development policies between men and women, contrary perceptions underscore the need for continuously evaluating and monitoring and improving the implementation process to make sure that these policies are realized at the grassroots level.

3.3 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 unison, both the responses from the structured interviews and key informants were of the opinion that the National Policy on Gender and Development had been implemented in the county. Jointly both men and women respondents pointed out to full implementation of the 2/3 gender rule which 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.

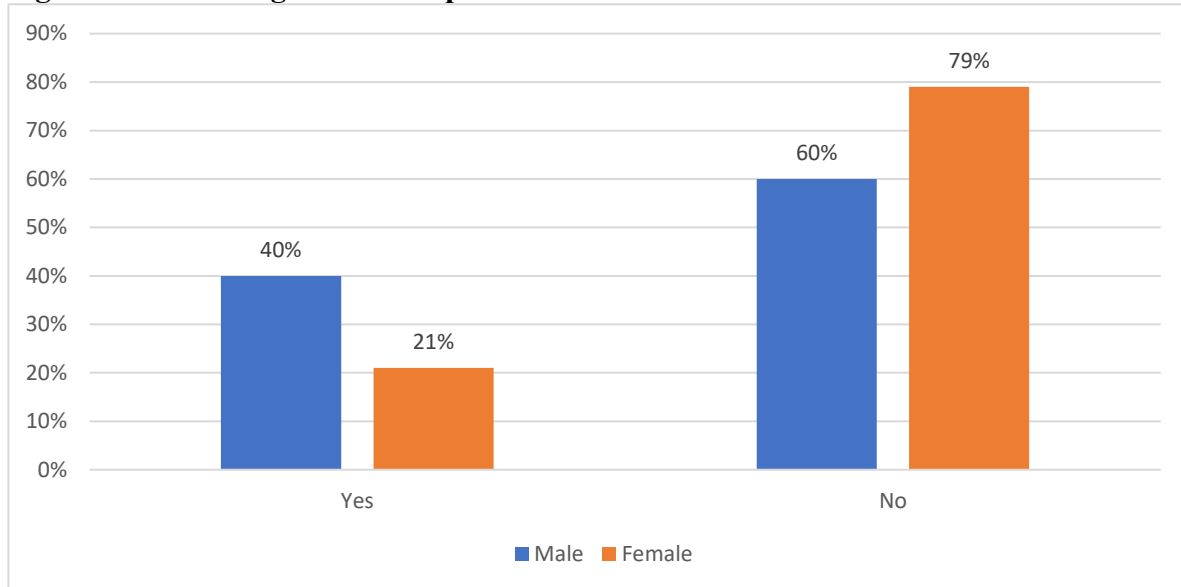
Respondents agreed that the implementation of the two third gender rule has played a major role in women inclusivity in the public service. However, from the statistics, it is noted that, although there was a good representation of women in the county government, they were largely over-represented at the in the lower cadre commonly referred to as a “bottom heavy low cadre”. The number of women diminishes in the upper cadre leading to underrepresentation.

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.

3.4 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 3.3.

Figure 2.1: Challenges in the Implementation of NPGD 2000



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

The findings contained in Figure 3.3 indicates that 40% of male and 21% of female respondents reported that there are challenges in the implementation of the National Policy on Gender and Development (2000) and its subsequent amendments 2011 and 2019 in the county. This is a notable gender discrepancy in the perception of the challenges in the implementation of the policy. However, 79% of female and 60% male respondents asserted that there are no challenges.

The study further sought to find out the obstacles encountered in achieving this policy. It was important to understand the challenges facing the implementation of the national policy on gender and development. It was clear these challenges contribute to gender disparities within public service.

A major challenge identified by both men and women was lack of proper mechanisms for implementation of the policy. It is important to note that even though there may be well-defined policies in place, the desired result may be elusive if the framework for implementation is weak or inadequate. According to Fasih, Haimoun, and Kassem (2020), identifying gaps, reviewing existing processes of implementation, and developing effective execution strategies may result to gender-inclusive policies.

Hostile political environment was agreed also as a serious bottleneck as new political regimes introduce new priorities and policies after every election. This may result to an inconsistency disrupting sustainability of gender-focused programs. Coupled with wrong interpretation of the

policy where the two thirds gender rule has been misconceived to mean one third for women and two thirds for men. Hence creating a permanent gender gap.

It was noted by women respondents that there is lack of knowledge, awareness, accurate or clear understanding of the policy, its guidelines, and objectives among all stakeholders namely decision-makers, supervisors, and staff. It was reported that there are limited training programs on the policy and unclear channels of communication that restrict proper implementation of the policy

Men respondents cited deep-seated cultural barrier, 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. In addition, the male respondents articulated that women disproportionately face biases in their places of work on the basis of assumptions on their reproductive roles and care work which slows down their progression for various reasons.

The views above were supported by women in senior positions. 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)

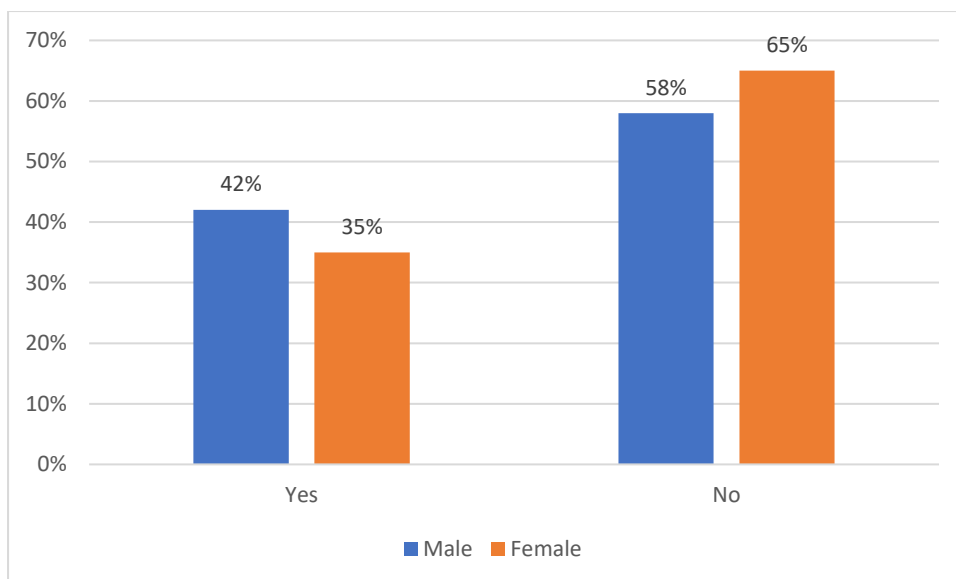
4.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

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.

4.1 POLICY MEASURES THAT GUARANTEE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR PROMOTION OF WOMEN TO MANAGEMENT POSITION

The study sought to establish whether the County Government of Tharaka Nithi had put in place sufficient policy measures that guarantee equal opportunity for promotion of women to management position. The results are shown in figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1: Policy measures that guarantee equal opportunity for promotion of women



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

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 35% (8) of the women were positive that there has been change in policy compared to 65% (21) felt that there was nothing noticeable in improving their representation. In contrast, more men than women 42% (15) held the view that the county government of Tharaka nithi had done a commendable work towards improving women progression and representation. However 58% (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 opinions of the respondents on which measures had been implemented by the county government. Various views were given.

*Most of the respondents felt that the 1/3 gender rule has been implemented in recruitment and to ensure gender balance. This was glorified as one of the key deliberate efforts in addressing the gender gap within the county government and public service in general. (Supported by **KII-Senior managers**)*

However, there was a feeling that this rule has been misinterpreted to mean a third woman and two thirds men. As a result women have continued to be under represented compared to men. And hence, this has created a permanent gender gap as demonstrated by the diminishing number of women in upward mobility.

The HR- Manager noted that *Tharaka Nithi County had prioritized Capacity building and training for women to equip them with the ability to take up higher positions.*

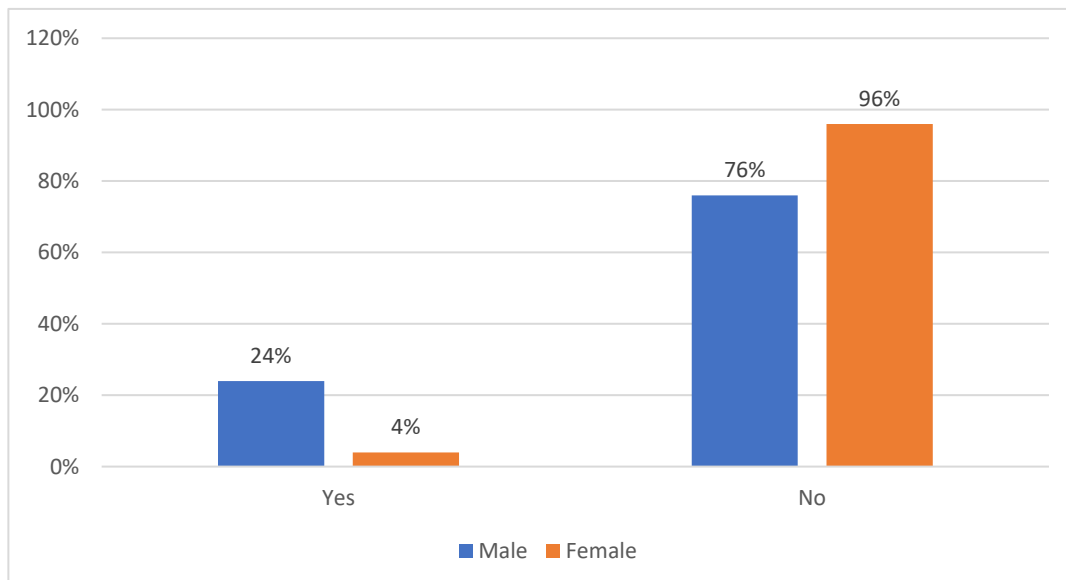
In contrast majority of the respondents felt nothing had been implemented. They cited various reasons including Lack of political goodwill from the administration in gender related matters, women lack of interest in taking up senior positions due to family commitments, Lack of budgetary allocation to gender matters as well as lack of office space for gender staff leading to non-recognition of their duties, political interferences to recruitment and promotions coupled with gender biasness and nepotism as well as negative Cultural beliefs about women being non performers

4.2 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Gender responsive policies and hiring practices have been found to boost promotion and enable participation of women’s in management and leadership positions(Kirai, 2014)/ 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, cultures and socially (GoK, 2010).

The study sought to find out if the county government of Tharaka nithi had gender-responsive policies and practices aimed at boosting employment, promotion and enable participation of women in management and leadership positions. The results are as given in figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: Affirmative action applied in hiring and promoting



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

From the structured interviews, 4% (1 out of 26) women interviewees reported that affirmative action was applied in hiring and promoting women to management and leadership positions

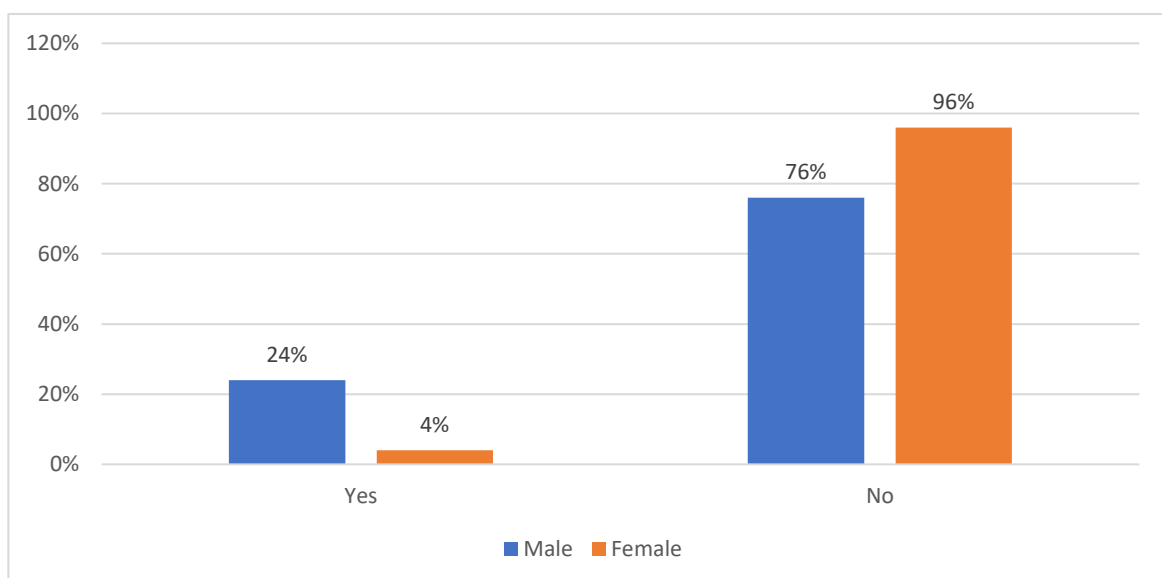
while 96% (25 out of 26) women interviewees reported that affirmative action had not been applied. Interestingly more men, 24% (5 out of 19) were of the opinion that affirmative action had been applied in their ministry/county whereas 76% (14 out of 19) men reported that affirmative action had not been applied as shown in the figure above.

The study further sought the opinions of the respondents on which measures had been implemented by the county government to encourage affirmative action. Various views were given. Most of the respondents felt that the 1/3 gender rule has provided key positions reserved for women, lowering qualification points for women and having women in every committee as key mile stones in gender equality. 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

4.3 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. The results are demonstrated in figure4.3

Figure 4.3: Gender monitoring and evaluation mechanism



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

In the results, 96% (25 out of 26) women respondents were not aware of any gender monitoring and evaluation mechanisms applied by the county government. Only 4% (1 out of 26) women interviewees reported that they were aware of gender monitoring and evaluation. Similarly, the same trend was observed for men with 76% (13 out of 17) having no information about gender monitoring and evaluation whereas only 24% (4 out of 17) men had knowledge of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

When further probed about how gender monitoring and evaluation matters were dealt with, majority of the respondent's job group J-M 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 Tharaka Nithi county was brought before the key informants in an interview, the senior managers were no different from their junior colleagues. The following is 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. 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 MEASURES TO BROADEN 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. A number of measures were advanced as possible measures that are working to mitigate the dearth of women in higher echelons or potential game changer policies of leadership should be put in place to ensure that women have equal opportunity for promotion to management level in this county government. During field work respondents had various suggestions on this difficult task depending on their ministries or department, position, gender and biographical differences. However, there was a stark misconception with the two third gender rule (Constitution of Kenya, 2010, Article 27 (8)) as meaning that women should be limited to a third of the proportion while men take two thirds (Kaimenyi et.al, 2013).

This confusion kept on recurring albeit the appreciation of the concept of affirmative action among the respondents across the job groups as an act of reforming past and present injustices to a group of people in a society in this case women (WiLDAF, 2010). They believed that there was affirmative action in hiring especially in senior positions as captured by one senior manager,

‘I got this job as a result of affirmative action’ (KII-HR manager)

Another suggestion was sensitization of women in the County public service to compete for positions with men. Respondents felt that this encouragement matters because women shy to apply or to face the recruitment and promotion process (Brenner, & Knake, 2012). Respondents claimed that many a time positions advertised fail to attract female applicants in Tharaka Nithi and to cure these female applicants should be encouraged. A study done in Zimbabwe found out that encouragement do help in bridging gender gap (Unkovic , et.al., 2016; Parente & Martinho, 2018). This is in consonant with Sandra Day O’Conor’s dictum that *‘The first step in getting power is to become visible to others’*

The respondents also posited that apart from encouragement the County government of Tharaka Nithi should ‘mind the gap’ by marshalling efforts and county resources towards meeting the gender equality requirements as provided by the National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGAD) 2000 (Maddrell, et.al., 2015). Officers interviewed across the job groups opined that the County government can reduce the gap in leadership of the public service by encouraging and facilitating women to attend seminars, workshops and educational training as pathways to power at the expense of the county government.

One officer suggested the creation of a special education fund for women employees already in the system. (KII-Senior managers)

Young career women at the entry level of management must be mentored. Respondents decried the dearth of mentorship as a contributing factor to lack of women in the higher echelons of leadership in Tharaka Nithi public service (Sophie, et. Al., 2017).

Several woman responded claimed that women at the top are ambivalent to the woes of women at lower job groups (Job group M-middle level management)

Mentorship has the capacity to emancipate young career women from the proverbial **caged bird** syndrome as those who have managed to succeed through the system will unpack both the explicit and subtle structures working against the women empowerment and ascent to leadership positions as aptly captured by Brenner, & Knake, (2012): *When one takes a step back and examines the cage (or oppressive structure) holistically, however, it is perfectly obvious that the bird is surrounded by a network of systematically related barriers, no one of which would be the least hindrance to its flight, but which, by their relations to each other, are as confining as the solid walls of a dungeon.* Coupled with the above structural impediments is the fact that senior women should make sure that succession schemes involve women at all points of the employment pipeline.

Respondents also agreed that they were not aware of the National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGAD) 2000 and those who were aware of it have not read it. This is a serious gap in the realization of that policy instrument. Therefore it will be prudent for the County government of Tharaka Nithi to invest in gender training. This training should target exposing all the employees to all the laws, policies and regulatory instruments around gender equality. The training should also aim at resocialization where anti-bias training will unpack all the sociocultural biases and the glass ceiling inherent in our cultures (O'Carroll, & Millne, 2010; Abalkhail, 2017).

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

Some of the respondents argued that as a county it faces unique gender challenges and as such the county government should endeavour to develop and adopt **fit for purpose** policy initiatives to address her special gender challenges. However, policies alone are not enough, indirect approaches such as workplace culture, ethos and ambience play a crucial and influential role in structuring behaviour change towards a culture of equality and in confronting ordinary sexism.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Conclusion

This study had four specific objectives of study. The first objective confirmed that women face barriers that hinder them from progressing to positions of management and leadership. Some of these barriers include organizational barriers, cultural, a lack of policy, experience, and adequate training, mentorship and preparation, low self-esteem and other personal attribute as well as a poor interpretation of policy.

The study established that there is lack of awareness coupled with wrong interpretation of the NPGD. The 2/3 gender rule was often referred to as the 1/3 gender rule, implying that women take up 1/3 of the available positions. Others felt that women representation meant generally at all levels and therefore as long as there were women in the workplace there was good representation. Further, it was noted that skewed gender distribution among cadres affects policy implementation. For instance, it was observed that there is gender imbalance across all cadres and also that over 70% of higher cadres are occupied by men. This aspect results in gender inequality which is persistence in the hierarchy of the public service.

The County government lacked an existing M & E framework. And therefore gender mainstreaming data was scanty. There were no clear mechanisms for reporting sexual harassment at the work place

6.2 Recommendations

Several approaches were recommended to be adopted to enhance the implementation of the policy. The first step is to create awareness on gender and development policies in ministry/department if there is to be any meaningful impact. Community engagement initiatives, educational programs, and public awareness can be effective in generating needed support for gender equality initiatives, educating the public, and disseminating information. These aspects can lead to a culture inclusivity and understanding. Public awareness campaigns can also play a basis for not only acceptance but also uptake of policies focused on gender.

Capacity building is another aspect that can lead to successful implementation of the national policy on gender and development. Building the capacity of institutions and individuals empowers them to understand and develop skills necessary for the effective implementation of gender-specific policies. Training programs for community leaders, educators, and government officials gives them an opportunity to understand gender-specific issues and equip them with skills and tools to integrate these issues in their daily work. This process of capacity building makes sure that responsible actors in policy implementation are committed and well-prepared to advance gender inclusivity at the workplaces.

It was also noted that monitoring is essential in evaluating and assessing policy implementation progress. Regular data collection and evaluation can help in identifying aspects requiring improvement and success areas. It is important to establish mechanisms of monitoring such as impact assessment and performance indicators. These aspects will provide valuable insights when it comes to effectiveness of these policies. In return, policy makers will be able to make informed decisions and make needed adjustments.

Enforcing existing policies is critical to ensure accountability and full compliance. Penalties for non-compliance, institutional mechanisms, and legal frameworks are fundamental aspects that guarantee successful implementation of the policies. Penalties deter non-compliant actors. Similarly, it is important to provide incentives to those actors and institutions that adhere to gender and development policies. When the government enforces implementation of these

policies, it sends a signal of commitment to the achievement of tangible outcomes of the policies. Further, it demonstrates that gender inclusivity and equality is a concrete societal priority and not just a merely rhetorical goal.

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