

**AWARENESS OF LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON GENDER AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON
WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT**

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ABSTRACT

The government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education and gender has been working hand in hand to address gender issues. Policies have been formulated to ensure equity, equality and to empower women. The objective of the study was to assess the level of awareness of existing laws and policies, and the effect on enforcement of gender policies in education and women empowerment in Narok County, Kenya. The study was guided by cultural lag theory by William Ogburn. The study adopted ex-post facto and descriptive survey design. The study established that illiteracy among women, lack of funds, male chauvinism and the patriarchal nature of the Maasai community impacted negatively on women empowerment. Societal roles, male dominance and male chauvinism made many women to be dependent on men. Another major finding of the study was that despite government efforts to create awareness a large number of the community and some government officers were not aware of or had limited knowledge of what the laws and the policies entailed thus affecting enforcement of the laws and policies. The study recommends the need to challenge beliefs that girls and women are of less social, economic and political value than men. There is also need to shift focus on enforcing laws and instead use persuasion, community leaders, boys and community socialization to bring change.

Keywords

Awareness, Empowerment, Female Genital Mutilation, Gender Based Violence, Gender Policies, Rites of Passage

Background to the Study

FGM is the main form of Gender Based Violence and remains the main rite of passage in many countries such as Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt and Middle East. Rites of passage for girls differ from those of boys around the world, but in most cases, they reflect gendered norms and beliefs about appropriate roles for adult life (Koita, 2012). FGM is associated with puberty, reproduction, marriage and control of women sexuality. It is widespread in both Islamic and Christian communities. It is also practised by people from all social classes including the educated elite. World Health Organization (2011) estimates that 100 to 140 million girls and women undergo the practice and estimates that 3 million girls and women are at risk in Africa. FGM is practiced in half of the rural Sub-Counties in Kenya (Mundia, 2011).

Many young girls are forced into marriage after undergoing FGM. Marriage of children and adolescent girls before the age of 18 years is common in many parts of the world (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2004). It is difficult to access the statistic as most marriages are not registered. According to World Health Organization (WHO) over 30 per cent of girls in the developing countries are married before the age of 18 years. Around 14 per cent are married before the age of 15 years. According to African Union (2016) about 14 million underage girls are married on the continent each year- almost all of them are forced by their parents.

Cultural practices are a more complex issue affecting girls and women. These practices therefore persist, preventing girls from enjoying their rights and freedoms associated with childhood. Many of them are linked to construction of sexuality of young girls and in most cases results in restriction being placed particularly on the freedom of girls (Koita, 2012). Some cultural practices discriminate women and are a violation to their rights. Cultural values beliefs and customs put women in disempowering positions where decisions have to be made for them. Most of the customary laws uphold and legitimise women subordination (Mulwa, 2007).

Women in Asia, Latin America, Africa and Europe have experienced Gender Based Violence. They are marginalised and are made to be dependent in the political, legal, economic and social spheres (Mulwa, 2007). Differences are seen in education, social, economic and political arena. Although the degree of women subordination may differ from country to country there exist certain commonalities which include women rights in the family to make decisions, control of family resources, inheriting property and employment which are dominated by men (Mulwa, 2007).

Women in Africa remain more vulnerable to Gender Based Violence due to traditional cultural practices (Limangura 2000). The deplorable situation of African women has become a major focus of attention at gender analysis, given that she has limited access to education and productive resources; lacks independence and autonomy in decision making, toils for long hours and has no control of her condition of life (Nawagaba, 2001). African women have borne the blunt of cultural traditions, many of which limit their advancement.

Kenya was one of the signatories to the Declaration and was committed to achieve the MDGs. The Kenya National Policy on Gender and Development (2000) provides a basis for the government to underscore the commitment to advance the status of women. Among the guiding principles, number two states that women rights are human rights and number six is on promoting economic empowerment for women. This commitment has resulted in commendable progress in achieving a number of these goals though some were faced with challenges. The promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women was the Millennium Development Goal number three. Kenya in terms of Gender Inequality has an overall GII of 0.651(Draft 7th Human Development Report). This is however, not equal everywhere as there are regional disparities with counties located in ASALs having high Gender Inequality Indices(Ministry of Devolution and Planning, 2013).

Kenya is a signatory to major international convention. Education in Kenya is in aligned to the constitution, Chapter four of the constitution, Bill of Rights affirms the right of all Kenyans to education, and every child has a right to free and compulsory education. Vision 2030 policy on education and training aims at providing a globally competitive quality education, training and research. The overall goal of the policy was to reduce illiteracy by increasing transition from primary to secondary. Although the government of Kenya recognises education as the basic tool to develop required human resource, accessibility and equity in education sector continues to restrict the country from making gains (Society for International Development, 2010).

The study is meant to transform the traditional idea about women, to improve women literacy and empower women socially, economically and politically. The study will also challenge beliefs that women are fundamentally of less social, economic and political standing than men.

Statement of the Problem

Gender targeted policies are increasingly becoming part of everyday programme before and during the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) period unto 2030. There are numerous policies geared towards eliminating all forms of violence and discriminations against women and girls, increase girls access to education and empower them as entrenched in various national constitutions like the constitution of Kenya 2010 and other international protocols such as, Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1995), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), UN convention (1999), the UN Millennium Summit (2000), the African Charter on Human Rights and the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo protocol, 2003), the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004), the African Union Gender Policy and UN Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015).

The thrust of this study rests on the fact that there has been remarkable persistence of GBV despite existing laws, growing awareness of the dangers, particularly in the education of the girl child, which is a key factor in the empowerment of women. The factors reinforcing GBV against females and the effects of GBV on Gender Policies in Education and Women Empowerment are not known. No efforts has been made to identify the effect of GBV on enforcement of Gender policies in Education, effect of GBV on Gender Policies on Women Empowerment and the level of awareness of the laws and policies that protect girls and women and the effect on enforcement of the laws and policies thus creating an information gap that needs to be filled.

It is against this backdrop that the study sought to establish issues of culture that hinder the enforcement of laws and policies that are meant to protect girls and women, increase girls' access to education, empower women, reinforce equality and dignity of women in Narok County. The study aimed at establishing why it is difficult, to enforce laws that protect girls and women and past policies such as the Affirmative Action, Kenya National Gender Policy, the Political Party Acts and Gender policies in Vision 2030.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the level of awareness of existence of laws and policies that protect girls and women and its effect on enforcement of Gender Policies in Education and Women Empowerment.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to assess the level of awareness of existing laws and policies, and the effect on enforcement of Gender Policies in Education and Women Empowerment.

Theoretical Framework

The study was based on William Ogburn's (1964) "Cultural Lag Theory". According to Ogburn, cultural lag occurs when one or two parts of culture which are correlated change before or in a greater degree than the other parts does

thereby causing less adjustment between two parts that existed previously” (Ogburn 1964). This theory of cultural lag suggests that a period of maladjustment occurs when non-material culture is struggling to adapt to new material conditions. William Ogburn (1964) the proponent of the theory argues that within a society as a whole, a change takes place in the material and the adaptive non-material culture (belief systems and institutional practices). Change is extremely slow in spite of changes elsewhere. The term cultural lag refers to the notion that culture takes time to catch up with technological innovations. Different rates of change in material and non-material parts of culture account for this lag and social problems and conflicts are caused by this lag. In this sense Ogburn (1957) conceptualized cultural lag as the failure of ideas, attitudes and aspects of the institutional practices to keep pace with changes in adoptive culture. These changes in the adaptive culture do not synchronize exactly with the change in material culture; this delay is the cultural lag. This resonates with ideas of technological determinism, in that it presupposes that technology has independent effects on society at large.

Therefore, there exists a conflict as follows, on one hand the culture of her people which if she doesn't follow will result into rejection and make her an outcast therefore a social misfit as she has the desire to belong. On the other hand, the Maasai girl child is also at a crucial age where she is supposed to be attending the formal education like all other children of her age to prepare her to fit in with modern society and face future challenges. The researcher hopes to prove that this extension to existing theory of cultural lag will make a theoretical contribution to the study.

Literature Review

Legislations enacted to protect girls and women against Gender Based Violence

A number of international and regional human right treaties and consensus documents provide protection against harmful cultural practices including FGM and child marriage. Key among these treaties are the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which call for eradication of harmful traditional practices including FGM and child marriage. Article 2 of CEDAW directs all state parties to take appropriate measures to eliminate all customs and practices that constitute discrimination against women. In CRC all state parties are directed in article 24(3) to take all effective measures with view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children.

In 2012 the UN General Assembly adopted a milestone Resolution calling on the international community to intensify efforts to end all harmful practices and more recently, the 2015 SDGs aiming at eliminating all harmful practices, such as early forced marriage and FGM by 2030. In 2015 UN National Assembly adapted Girl Child Resolution (Resolution / 70/ 138) that recognised FGM as discrimination against the girl child and violation of the rights of girls.

In Africa international treaties and convention providing protection against harmful cultural practices are African Charter on Human Rights and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter), African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children (ACRWC); and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). African Charter on Human Rights and Peoples Rights (Banjul Charter) provides for the Right to physical integrity and calls for governments to recognise and protect the human rights of women and girls.

The 2010 constitution prohibits marriage of persons under the age of 18 years. Article 27 section 2 of the constitution states that women are entitled to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social sphere. The underlying legal frame work in the form of the constitution of Kenya 2010 is solid. It recognises gender equality as a fundamental principle. Article 27 seeks to address the historical exclusion of women and other groups from the governance structures through various affirmative action measures. The 2010 constitution demands that not more than two thirds of the members of parliament should be from the same gender.

Section 14 of the Children's Act 2001 in Kenya protects children against harmful cultural practices. It prohibits anyone to subject a child to FGM, early marriage or other cultural rites likely to negatively affect child's life, health, social welfare, dignity or physical or psychological development. Section 29 of the sexual offences Act (2006) protects women and girls against cultural and religious sexual offences. Section 4 of the Marriage Act 2014 sets the mandatory age for marriage at 18 years irrespective of customary traditions. Domestic Violence Act provides protection not only to women, but to men and children who are at risk. The act covers violence and threat of violence, and imminent danger within domestic relationship in terms of child/forced marriage, FGM, forced wife inheritance, interference from in laws, emotional abuse and economic abuse.

Kenya outlawed FGM in 2011 but thousands of girls and women still undergo the practice every year. It is unfortunate that even after FGM was banned in October 2011 some communities still cling to it (Daily Nation Saturday December 28 2013). It has been years since campaigns against FGM were launched, but the practice continues unabated in some areas.

Gender Policies in Education

Many conferences and conventions have been held all over the world to ensure education for all with more emphasis on the girl child education. During this conference the participants came up with policies and goals which are made to

achieve gender parity in education. The world conference on Education for All (EFA) held in Jomtien Thailand in March 1990. It aimed at eliminating all obstacles to enable girls and women to get quality education. The 1993 Ouagadougou declaration and framework for action emphasized on education of girls. It called upon all governments, international and bilateral agencies, NGOs and politicians to establish the education of girl child as a priority. The conference on population in Cairo (1994) emphasized on the importance of female education.

In the African Platform for Action Dakar (1994) recognized gender gap in access to education, training, science and technology as one of the key critical areas to the development of the continent. Among the policies outlined in the Dakar framework for action were early childhood education, lifelong skills, adult literacy, gender equality in education and quality education.

The 1996 OAU conference held in Kampala Uganda, main theme was empowerment of women through education as education is empowerment and if girls are not educated it will be difficult to empower them and also to fight for their rights. The conference also discussed expanding the opportunities for women and girls and achieving parity with men in all areas of development by reducing gender gap in education.

The Millennium Development Goals were agreed on at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000 in New York where world leaders made and adopted a declaration to free all men, women and children from the dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty. Among the eight MDGs, MDG number 2 was education. Education for All which is a global movement led by UNESCO aimed at meeting learning needs for all children youth and adults by 2015.

The Kenya National Gender Policy on education was developed in 2007 through the Ministry of Education. The policy states that access to quality and relevant education is one of the highest priorities in development. The policy highlights key gender concern in education such as disparities in enrolment, retention, transition rates, negative social cultural practices and attitudes, which inhibits especially girls access to school and drop out of school due to pregnancy and early marriage. Its intention was to have a framework for designing and implementation of various gender responsive education sector programmes such as measures to raise the level of gender parity at all level of education.

Vision 2030 on education and training aims at provide a globally competitive quality education, training and research to her citizen for development and emphasizes on individual well-being. The 2030 goal on equity aims to expand access across different social and political dimension including increasing school's enrolment for girls and children from nomadic counties and poor rural and slum communities.

UNESCO (2010) observed that gender gap at elementary level is wider in sub-Saharan Africa. A significant number of girls do not succeed in studies at primary, secondary and higher education. Others complete education without acquiring the skills or knowledge required to lead an autonomous and productive life (FAWE 2009).

Girls, women and village elders' knowledge of existing laws that protect girls and women

The researcher sought to assess the knowledge of girls, women and village elder of the existing laws such as Children Act (2001), Sexual offences Act (2006), Anti-FGM Act (2011), Marriage Act (2014) and the 2010 constitution. The researcher was interested in finding out if the respondent had knowledge on what the laws entail and the penalties attached to these laws. Data indicated that 53.75% of the girls were aware of the Children's Act (2001) while 46.25% were not aware of the act. 28.32% of the women were aware of Children Act while 71.68% were not aware. 29.1% of the village elders were aware of the Children Act while 70.9% were not aware.

In addition the results from the study indicated that 32.04% of the girls were aware of the Sexual Offences Act (2006) while 67.96% were not aware of the Act. 18.80% of the women were aware of the Sexual Offences Act while 81.20% were not aware. 18.2% of the village elders were aware of the Sexual Offences Act while 81.8% were not aware.

Further findings indicated that 66.15% of the girls were aware of Anti- FGM Act (2011) While 33.85% were not aware of the Act. Results from women group discussion showed that 61.90% were aware of Anti- FGM Act while 38.10% were not aware of the Act. 61.8% of the village elders were aware of Anti-FGM Act while 38.2% were not aware of the Act. The study found out that 42.38% of the girls were aware of the Marriage Act (2014) while 57.62% were not aware. On Marriage Act 19.05% of the women were aware of the Act while 80.95% were not aware of the Act and 20% of the village elders were aware of the Marriage Act while 80% were not aware of the Act.

The findings obtained indicated that most of the girls 51.94% were aware that the 2010 Constitution protects them from GBV while 48.06% were not aware. 27.32% of the women were aware that the 2010 constitution protects girls and women from GBV while 72.68% were not aware. Group discussion with village elders indicated that 16.4% were aware that the 2010 constitution protects girls and women from GBV while 83.6% were not aware.

On the alternative rite of passage the findings indicated that 60.21% of the girls were aware of the alternative rite of passage while 39.79% of the girls were not aware. Group discussion with the women showed that majority of the women (57.89%) were aware of the alternative rite of passage although they could not explain what it was all about while 42.11% were not aware of the alternative rite of passage. They further added that although some girls had undergone the

alternative rite of passage, majority undergo FGM again. Focus group discussion with the elders revealed that most of the elders 67.35% were not aware of the alternative rite of passage while 32.7% were aware of the alternative rite of passage. They further stated that there was no any other rite of passage that can replace FGM. Ignorance of the alternative rite of passage was evident in Narok County. Based on the study findings girls underwent FGM after the alternative rite of passage and the village elders also stated that there is no any other rite of passage that can replace FGM.

Based on the study findings a large number of girls had knowledge on the laws that are made to protect girls and women and the alternative rite of passage. This is in line with the findings obtained by asking the teacher to state measures they have taken to protect girls from GBV, were the teachers mentioned educating girls on their rights and laws that are made to protect them. It was difficult to assess whether the girls knew what the laws entails and the penults attached to the laws as the questionnaire had only closed ended questions. Group discussion with the women and village elder revealed that only minimal number was aware of the laws that protect girls and women from GBV and this small number had knowledge of what the law entails and also choose to ignore the laws in favour of their traditions.

Results generated from the group discussion also indicated that the community was aware of the alternative rite of passage but choose to ignore it by letting girls undergo FGM after the rite. This is also in line with the result obtained by asking the teachers to state factors reinforcing GBV and stated lack of awareness in rural areas and ignorance of the law as factor reinforcing GBV against females. It is important that sensitization is enforced with details of the law, what they entail and the penalties attached to the laws.

Teachers and government officers' knowledge of existing laws made to protect girls and women

The researcher sought to assess the knowledge of teachers and government officers of existing laws made to protect girls and women. The results of the study indicated that 91.58% of the teachers had knowledge of the Children Act (2001) while 8.42% had no knowledge on the Act. For the government officers; County Director of Education, the County Commissioner, all the DEOs, CSOs, the DCCs, ACCs, heads children department and Directors of Public Prosecution all had knowledge on the Children Act. Only 30% of the chiefs had knowledge on the children act while 70% had no knowledge of what the Act entails. 21.05% of the assistant chiefs had knowledge on the Children Act while 75% had no knowledge of the Act.

On the Sexual Offences Act (2006) 55.79% of the teachers had knowledge on what the Act entails while 44.21% had no knowledge on what the Act entails. The government officers; County Director of Education, the County Commissioner, the DEOs, CSOs, DCCs, ACCs, heads of children department and Directors of Public Prosecution had all knowledge on the Sexual Offences Act and what it entails. Only 20% of the chiefs had knowledge on the Sexual Offences Act while 80% had no clear knowledge on what the law entails. 15.79% of the assistant chiefs had knowledge on the Sexual Offences Act while 85% had no knowledge on the Act and what it entails.

On Ant- FGM Act (2011) 88.47% of the teachers had knowledge on what the Act entails while 11.58% had no knowledge on what the Act entails. The County Director of Education, the County Commission, the DEOs, CSOs, DCCs, ACCs, heads of children department and Director of Public Prosecution all had knowledge on the Anti- FGM Act and what it entails. 80% of the chiefs had knowledge on the Anti- FGM Act while 20% had no knowledge on what the act entails. 63.16% of the assistant chiefs had knowledge on Anti- FGM Act while 36.84% had no knowledge on what the Act entails.

On Marriage Act (2014) 62.11% of the teachers had knowledge on the Act while 37.89% had no knowledge on what the Act entails. The county Director of Education, the County Commissioner, the DEOs, CSOs, DCCs, ACCs heads of the children department and Director of Public Prosecution all had knowledge on the Marriage Act. Only 40% of the chiefs had knowledge on the Marriage Act while 60% had no knowledge on what the Act entails and 15.79% of the assistant chief had knowledge on the marriage Act while 84.21% had no knowledge on what the Acts is all about.

On the 2010 constitution 80% of the teachers had knowledge on the sections of the constitution that protect and empower girls and women while 20% had no knowledge of the section of the constitution that protect and empower girls and women. The county Director of Education, the County Commissioner DEOs, CSOs, DCCs, ACCs, head of children department and Director of Public Prosecution all had knowledge on the sections of the Constitution that protect and empower women. Most of the chiefs 60% did not have clear knowledge of the section of constitution that protects girls and women while 40% had knowledge on the sections of constitution that protect girls and women. A large number of the Assistant chiefs (84.21%) had no clear knowledge of the sections of the constitution that protects girls and women.

In conclusion majority in the top leadership of the county had knowledge on the laws that are made to protect girls and women. On the other hand, those in low leadership positions had none or had limited knowledge on what the laws entails and the penalties attached to it. Based on the study findings there was a very big difference in the level of awareness of the laws that protect girls and women among government officers especially the chiefs and assistant chiefs. Awareness

increased with the level of education because from the demographic information majority of the top government officers and teachers had bachelors and masters degrees.

Perception of teachers and government officers on community awareness

On the laws that protect girls and women.

The study sought find out the perception of teachers and Government Officers on the community awareness on the laws that are made to protect girls and women. Majority of the teachers stated that only a small percentage had knowledge on laws that are made to protect girls and women. From the opinion of government officers, the community was aware of the laws that protect girls and women but only a small number had knowledge on what the laws entail and the penalties. This is due to high illiteracy level especially among women. These women are girls who had never been to school or dropped out of school are absorbed in the society with no knowledge of their rights thus brainwashed by traditionalists in the pretext of culture. The women fall victims of cultural practices as they are made to believe that they are normal and necessary. Of great concern by government officers was the large number of girls who are not in school and again form the illiterate thus further exploitation together with their children.

Level of awareness of the laws that protect girls and women and its effect on the enforcement of the laws

The study sought the opinion of the respondents on whether the level of awareness of existing laws affected the enforcement of the laws. Results from group discussion with women revealed that they did not know how these laws protected them. They said that the community laws are more powerful than the said laws. This was because in case you go to court and your case does not push through you still have to go back to the community and one will be treated with a lot of hostility and will be rejected by the community.

Group discussion with the elders revealed the community lacks knowledge of the laws and those who are aware chooses to ignore the law. The custom and traditions of the community are paramount and are respected more than the laws. Further to these they believed that if they abandon their culture they will lose their identity and moral values. The findings of the study are in line with those of Nkinyangi (1997) who revealed that the Maasai girl, when were given choice to get proper education they opted to support what is culturally and ideological.

From the opinion of teachers the level of awareness is low and lack of knowledge of the laws prevents enforcement of the laws.

Interview with government officers was also in agreement with the teachers that the low level of awareness affected the enforcement of the laws. They also added that it is difficult to enforce laws that people have very little knowledge of. Some of the community leaders believe in the supremacy of their customs and beliefs and protect them under all means. Further to this any government officers who tries to go against the custom and beliefs is transferred out of the county with the help of community leaders. The chiefs and the assistant chiefs who mostly from the community always opposes the laws silently. A majority are compromised by the community leaders who are very powerful. They also have minimal knowledge of the laws they are supposed to enforce.

Knowledge of Gender Policies in Education

The study sought to assess respondent knowledge on Gender Policies in Education. The findings of the study established that 71.06% of the girls strongly agreed that they were aware of their right to free and compulsory education, 11.63% strongly disagreed with the statement. 83.46% strongly agreed that every child has a right to access education while 8.79% strongly disagreed. The findings on free primary education showed that 32.82% of the girls were aware that primary education is free while 59.43% were not aware and 60.98% of the girls strongly disagreed that there is free day secondary education while 24.29% strongly agreed with the statement.

All the teachers interviewed were aware of gender policies in education that is access, retention, completion, transition, free primary education and free day secondary education. The village elders, women and government officers interviewed were asked whether they were aware every child has a right to free and compulsory education. 95% of the women were not aware of this policy and 83.6% of the elders were not aware of this policy. Most of the government officers especially on the top leadership were aware of the policy. Quite a number of the chiefs and assistant chiefs were not aware of this policy. This is wanting because the chiefs are supposed to assist teachers in enforcing the policy.

The study also found out that 92% of the women and 81.1% of the village elders did not know it is an offence to deny a child education. Most of the government officers were aware that it is an offence to deny a child education. On the policy of free primary education 61% of the women were not aware of the policy while 50.9% of the village elders were also not aware of the policy. All the government officers were aware of the policy of free primary education. For the policy of free day secondary education 81% of the women were not aware of the policy and 70.1% of the village elders were also not aware of the policy. Both the village elders and women complained of the many levies being charged in public secondary schools. Top government officers were aware of the policy of free day secondary education but 38% of

the chiefs were not aware of the policy of free day secondary education while 42% of assistant chiefs were also not aware of the policy.

Level of awareness of Gender Policies in Education and its effect on enforcement of policies

Based on the study findings the community had limited knowledge of Gender Policies in Education. Group discussion with village elders and women revealed that they were not aware that it is an offence to deny a child education. They also revealed that children are withdrawn from school due to economic or social factors.

The teachers stated that the low level of knowledge among parents on gender policies in education affected the implementation of the policies because parents do not take their children to school or withdraw them from school before they complete the cycle. Young girls do not know their right to education so they are defenseless when their parents withdraw them from school or fail to take them to school.

The chiefs and assistant chiefs who are supposed to enforce the policies through door to door campaign are not sure of what to enforce due to limited knowledge. Based on the findings level of awareness of gender policies in education increases with the level of education as most of the teachers and top government officers had bachelors and masters degree. Most of the women, village elders, chiefs and assistant chiefs had low level of education thus affecting the level of knowledge of gender policies in education. Therefore it is difficult to enforce what you don't know or adhere to what you don't know.

Knowledge of Gender Policies on Women Empowerment

The study sought to find out whether the respondents had knowledge on gender policies on women empowerment in Kenya. The teachers were asked to state on their knowledge of Gender Policies in the Kenya National Gender Policy, the Affirmative Action, The Political Party Act, the 2010 constitution and in Vision 2030.

The results of the study indicated that most of the women involved in the study were not aware of the gender policies on women empowerment. All the women involved in the study had no knowledge on Kenya National Gender Policy which enables women to access finances for advancement and ensures fairness and justice in the treatment of women. They further added that women are always treated inferior to men and it is very difficult to access financial resources as men carry their identity cards. Focus group discussion with the village elders showed that majority of the elders were not aware of the police. During the discussion it was clear that they did not agree with the police because loans given to women may result to their property being confiscated by financial institutions. They also added that women are provided for by their husbands and there are financial resources it should be given to men.

On the affirmative action that allows women to access top leadership position and get 40%-50% of public service position, the women involved in the study were not aware of such laws as leadership belongs only to the male gender and they are in a better position to get jobs in government offices. Focus group discussion with the village elders revealed that the elders had no knowledge of the policies. During the group discussion it was clear that the elders do not approve of leadership by women and clearly stated that if to government positions are given to women the community would underrepresented in the government.

A few of the women in the study were aware of the new constitution but they did not have the slight knowledge that it was made to improve the traditional exclusion of women, allows equal participation of men and women in the government and also came with the one third gender rule which states that not more two thirds of the members of parliament should be from the same gender.

The study also sought the opinion of teachers and government officers on Gender Policies on women empowerment. On the Kenya National Gender Policy only 45.26% of the teachers had knowledge on what it entails. 53.63% of the teachers had knowledge on the Affirmative Action. 76.84% of the teachers had knowledge on Political Party Act 2007 and what it entails. 77.89% of the teachers had knowledge on gender policies in the 2010 constitution. 53.68% of the teachers had knowledge on Gender policies in Vision 2030. Their view on community awareness the teachers disagreed that the community has been sensitized on the policies.

Amajority of government officers had knowledge on Kenya National Gender Policy and what the policies entail in terms of women empowerment apart from the chiefs and the assistant chiefs who were aware of the policy but had very little knowledge on what it entails. The opinion of government officers on community awareness was that a large number of the community was not aware of the existed of such a policy and had no knowledge on what the policy entails. Most of the government officers had knowledge on the Affirmative Action apart from the chiefs and the assistant chiefs were majority had very little knowledge on the policy. Their opinion was that a large number of the community had no knowledge on the policy.

Effects of level of awareness on enforcement Gender policies on Women Empowerment

The study sought to find out whether the level of awareness of Gender Policies on women empowerment affected the enforcement of the policies. Group discussions with women showed that majority of the women were not aware of

gender policies made to empower women. They did not know that they have a right just like men to access financial resources and use the resources for advancement. The only fund they were familiar with was the Women Enterprise Fund but they were not sure whether to go for the funds because of fear that their property would be confiscated if they didn't pay.

Focus Group Discussion with the elders showed that they had low knowledge of the Gender Policies on women empowerment. The elders were not committed to gender issues especially if it involved money. They were not sure that the available funds were made to empower women and improve the life of their families. Just like women they did not support the idea of women access to funds as loans because their property would be confiscated in case the funds were not paid in time.

Results from the teachers clearly indicated that due to low level of education the community was not aware of the Gender Policies on Women Empowerment. Restriction put on women affected acquisition of knowledge on the policies. The women lacked skills on how to use the funds in case they are availed to them. Interview with government officers revealed that lack of knowledge of the policies and stereotyping of the policies affected the enforcement of the policies. The women and the community were afraid of accessing financial resources because they were afraid that their properties will be confiscated by financial institutions.

Based on the study findings level of awareness affected the enforcement of gender policies on women empowerment. Though the policies have been in place for quite some time but majority of the women especially in rural areas are not aware that the policies are made to empower the and enjoy the opportunities they deserve and empower themselves. There is need for more sensitization on the policies and available funds made to empower women. Workshops and seminars should be availed to enable women acquire knowledge of the policies and funds made to empower women and acquire skills needed to make use of the funds and empower themselves. It is only after this that empowerment of women will be realized.

Policy implication

Though the laws and the policies have been put in place, women in Narok County are not fully enjoying the human dignity they deserve due to Gender Based Violence. Despite existing laws and awareness campaigns by all stakeholders, GBV against women still persists among the Maasai because of social cultural, economic and social pressure. Based on the study findings GBV against females is an issue that is a cause and consequence of gender inequalities. Social and cultural norms continue to undermine government efforts to end violence against females. The patriarchal nature of the Maasai community is the underlying reason for violence against females. The community customs and beliefs are used to oppress demean and put women in disempowering position especially in rural areas. The community believes in supremacy of their customs and beliefs and is ready to protect the under all means. Their cultural norms are paramount and are respected more than the government laws.

From the study findings the policies and the laws had very little impact on protecting and empowering girls and women. The laws require a lot of intervention to ensure the policies and the laws are put into effect. Policy implementations involve elements like human resource, financial resource, time and skills. During the implementation everybody should be assigned what to do when and how.

For a policy to be successfully implemented it requires mobilizing political support, including the people to be affected by the policy in the planning, implementation and evaluation process so that they can accept the policy. All those who are affected should be aware of this policy and not forced on them by any outside agent. All stake holders must be sensitized to the new initiative. When policies are embraced by the intended group the people will be ready to provide required information and accept the change. During implementation the norms and the values of the community should be preserved like respecting the elders.

The study recommends the use of family socialization process to bring change. It is the primary responsibility of the family to teach their children values. If gender based violence has to end it has to start with the family to teach boys and men the importance of respecting women rights. Campaigns should not be threatening but should aim at educating the community. The law enforcers should work with key actors like laibons, elders and political leaders who are respected to help bring change.

There should be concerted effort by government and civil society through an audit of the existing gender policies in education and women empowerment and adopt best practices including resource allocation and organization of education. Although the government has made commendable efforts to end harmful cultural practices and in empowering girls and women there is urgent need for establishment of a clear policy involving all stakeholders to deliberate on issues raised in the study. Training of personnel to keep the momentum of policy running will also be necessary.

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