

**A STUDY OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING
GENDER IMBALANCE IN ELECTIVE POLITICS AT
PARLIAMENTARY LEVEL IN KENYA: THE CASE OF
KILGORIS SUB-COUNTY**

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ABSTRACT

Gender imbalance in elective politics is an issue of concern not only in Kenya but the world over. With affirmative action in place, Kenya has increased the number of women in parliament slightly especially through nomination. There is still a major challenge on increasing the number of women in governance positions through elections to strike a balance between the two genders. The main problem to be addressed is to recommend ways of increasing women representation in elective politics in Kenya. There are still political and socio-economic challenges to be addressed in seeking ways of bringing women on board to participate in elective politics in Kenya to serve to attain the critical 33.3% of women in parliament. The study intended to investigate the socio-economic factors that influence the voter to vote for either gender in parliamentary elections in Kenya with a case study of Kilgoris sub-county (constituency). It particularly sought to assess the effect of culture, religion, education and occupation on gender imbalance in elective politics with a case study of Kilgoris sub-county was suitable because of its multi-ethnic and conservative nature due to the native Maasai community. The findings of the study were expected to be as representative of the face of Kenya as possible. The study is significant as it does not only increase the already existing body of knowledge in this area of study, but can also help policy makers and the government of in general to restructure civic education curriculum to address the gender issue effectively among voters. Even school curriculum can be reviewed further to address the gender bias issue adequately in order for the Kenyan society to tap the abilities of both genders for prosperity. It is necessary to give both genders equal opportunity to access elective political positions. Gender imbalance is usually skewed against women yet they are known for some good leadership qualities like pacifying, coalition building, initiating development projects, increased participation through delegation, etc. The research design employed was descriptive statistics. The target population was the 48,096 registered voters of Kilgoris sub-county. The sample size was 200 respondents arrived at by purposive and random sampling since population is vast. The methodology employed in this study questionnaire interview. Reliability and validity of research instruments were tested before actual research. Questionnaires were administered to all respondents in the study; an interview schedule was also used to solicit more responses. Theoretical models suitable for this research are the rational Citizen-candidate model and the sociological model which provided a framework for analyzing the factors for the voter's preference in the context of a general election in Kenya(parliamentary).Data collection was done, discussed and conclusion that indeed the four factors(education, culture, religion, occupation) do influence gender imbalance in elective politics. Recommendations were made on what should be done to reduce or completely do away with the influence of culture, education level, religion and occupation on gender imbalance in elective politics in Kenya. They included enhancing gender education in learning institutions, demystifying or discarding gender biased cultural practices, undertaking further research to verify the findings of this one and encouraging women participation in elective politics by sensitizing on their value in politics. Areas for further research were also suggested.