

**WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIVE POLITICS  
IN KIRINYAGA COUNTY, KENYA (1992-2013)**

**BY**

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## Abstract

The electoral process and representation in Kenya has developed for a long period of time. From the period of colonization to independent Kenya, several changes have taken place in the electoral process. The independence constitution provided for federal system and multiparty democracy. This however changed after independence during the KANU era. Several constitution changes led to Kenya becoming a single party state by law in 1982. Electoral process during this period was abused by the ruling party. Kenyans begun demanding for a return to multiparty democracy. This demand was implemented in 1991 when section 2A of the constitution was repealed. Further, the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 changed the electoral process in Kenya. Throughout this period, participation of women in elective politics has not been at the same level with men. Levels of women participation has been lower at both the national parliament and local councils/county. The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influenced women participation in elective politics from 1992-2013. Specifically the study focused on the contribution of economic factors and education to women participation in politics. It has also focused on the influence of cultural factors and political party policies on women participation in elective politics. To achieve this, the study adopted descriptive research design. It utilized both secondary and primary data to get the information. Interview schedules were organized with key respondent interviewed and questionnaires were issued to other respondents to fill. The study was guided by the feminist theory and structural functionalism to analyze the data descriptively based on objectives. The study observed that women perform dismally in elective politics. Women have low economic power since the society believes that men should own property. This make most women unable to finance their political campaigns. It also emerged that formal education empower women participation in politics. However, inadequate civic education has negatively influenced women participation in politics. The study also established that, cultural factors continue to deny women participation in politics because of traditional gender assigned roles. Women are placed in the private domain while men are well placed in the public domain where there is politics. Finally, political parties continue to come up with policies which prevent women from effectively participating in elective politics. The study recommends that; the government should implement constitutional requirement toward women participation in politics. Political parties should change their internal policies to accommodate quota requirement for gender representation. Finally, civic education needs to be intensified to enable the society change its stand point on gender roles. All these will improve women participation in elective politics.