

**INFLUENCE OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION ON
GOVERNANCE IN BONDO CONSTITUENCY, SIAYA COUNTY, KENYA**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Participation of women in politics can be traced back to the 17th century in the United Kingdom when women demanded for property ownership and the vote. Through conventions, such as the Beijing platform for Action, many positive changes have taken place in national legislations in many countries leading to increased participation of women in politics and decision making organs. In Africa, Burundi, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda have achieved the critical 33% representation of women in political decision making organs such as political parties, parliamentary committees and local decision making forums. However, in other parts of Africa and indeed Kenya, participation of women in politics and thus key decision making forums is still low at 17.3%. This makes it difficult for women to influence decision made regarding matters affecting them as the majority of poor people in Kenya. Low participation of women in governance is a hindrance to this realization, thus negatively affecting service delivery in accordance to their felt needs. This study sought to determine the influence of women's political participation on governance in Bondo Constituency. The study sought to answer the following questions: How does women's participation in civic education as a component of political participation influence governance in Bondo Constituency? To what extent does women's participation in the political party leadership as a component of political participation influence governance in Bondo Constituency? To what extent does women's participation in resource mobilization as a component of political participation influence governance in Bondo constituency? How does women's participation in political office as a component of political participation influence governance in Bondo Constituency? Ex Post Facto Research design was used in the study. 100 house-holds were samples and data collected from a total of 173 male and female respondents from 6 county wards in Bondo constituency. The study found human rights rated at 33.7%, the electoral process (17%), devolved governance (13%), and the constitution (15%) as civic education activities implemented by women through churches, village meetings "barazas", women groups and funerals as forums for civic education thus influencing governance. More findings revealed that women participate in political party leadership mostly as party members (52.9%), women leaders (29.7%), treasurers (5.2%), secretaries (2.9%) and chairpersons (1.2%). Through these roles they influenced party policies especially with regard to gender equity and the number of women nominated to contest in electoral politics and conducted resource mobilizers in order to increase the number of political party supporters during political party campaigns. The study revealed that women mostly use Village savings and loan associations to secure loans (32,2%), contributions from other women(10.5%) and loans from other financial loaning services. These resources are used for political campaign activities. 33.3% of the participants thought that having adequate resources gave women self-confidence to participate in politics; 27.4% felt that women gained respect from community members; 18.5% felt that women's participation in resource mobilization would aid in financing of community projects. Women participate in political office mostly as county ward representatives (42.2%) and women's representatives (45.1%). As contribution to governance, they foster gender balance in all political offices (23.1%), resource mobilization and community development (20.2%), development through solidarity groups (19.7%), making the needs of women known (6.4%) and participation in gender budgeting. The study also found that so far, women have influenced governance advocating for good governance, rooting for good leadership and mobilizing more women to join the political arena.