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Effect of recruitment and selection on gender equity in the ministry of agriculture, livestock and fisheries in Kirinyaga County, Kenya

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Abstract: Equality between men and women is a fundamental right and a common policy of many governments in the world today. Gender mainstreaming is the process whereby gender concerns are raised routinely within everyday operations of an institution or organization and resolved in a gender manner in normal operations. The well-being and the equality between men and women are addressed by gender mainstreaming. The purpose of this study was to establish the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming initiatives employed in enhancing gender equity in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries in Kirinyaga County, Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to establish how recruitment and selection, employee awareness, a gender office and implementation of gender mainstreaming policy affect gender equity in Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries in Kirinyaga County. The study employed a descriptive survey research design and targeted all fifty (50) Ministry employees. Descriptive data analysis was done which generated mean and standard deviation with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequencies and percentages were also generated. The study established that there was a close relationship in terms of proportions of the respondents between a yes (54%) and no (46%) responses on training.The study established that the Ministry ensured fair recruitment and selection based on Gender Equity to a great extent (36%).It is therefore recommended that the Ministry through their Cabinet Secretary provides statistics of the incoming employees based on gender. The researcher also recommends that the Ministry clearly outlines what constitutes gender mainstreaming training. The study also found out that the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries had neither done much (40%) on sponsoring gender balance awareness training nor done much(34%) on implementing gender balance awareness training. The researcher therefore recommends that awareness training should be enhanced.
Keywords: Gender Mainstreaming, Gender, Gender Equity, Gender Mainstreaming Initiatives and Gender Balance.

INTRODUCTION

History and development of Gender Mainstreaming at international level started long time ago but the most notable and documented is this one which started in the year 1985 at EU level 1985. Within the framework of 3rd United Nations World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985, criticism of the existing form of development policy and the resulting demand for stronger integration of women into the mainstream was gone into. This is also reflected in the Final Report from Nairobi: "Women should be an integral part of the process of defining aims and shaping development. Organizational and other means which enable women to contribute their interests and preferences into the evaluation and selection of alternative development goals should be identified. This would include specific measures which are conceived in such a way that the autonomy of women is enhanced so that they bring women into the mainstream of the development process on the same basis as men."(UN 1986). Even though this paper mentions neither Gender nor Mainstreaming, the 3[rd]World Conference on Women can nonetheless be regarded as an important building block in the development of the strategy of Gender Mainstreaming.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and Selection refer to the process of attracting and choosing candidates for employment. The personnel department of a larger business will often have detailed recruitment and selection policies that need to be followed by those responsible for hiring new employees [1]. Effective recruitment requires an objective, systematic and planned approach if unlawful discrimination is to be avoided. Both short-listing and selection should be on the basis of candidates' relevant experience, skills, qualifications, knowledge and talent, and should be based on factual evidence. It is unlawful to use factors such as gender, marital status, race, religion and sexual orientation to make decisions in the recruitment process (Daniels & Macdonald 2005).

Today, the world and its culture have changed significantly. Overt sexism is no longer tolerated in the

work setting, during job interviews or promotion application. There are legal safeguards that protect women from gender discrimination in the workplace. However, in spite of this improved environment, there are still remarkably few women who achieve promotion to the highest ranks of leadership, whether in universities, research institutes (including CSIRO and DSTO), or industry. In 2009 there were still fewer than 10% women in the most senior (professorial) categories in science and engineering, in CSIRO, as Federation Fellows, or as Fellows of the Australian Academy of Science or the Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering [1].

Sex discrimination may be encountered by workers when seeking employment [2] Stereotyping by a significant number of employers on what constitutes a man or woman still applies on a number of jobs. For instance presuming that a bus must be driven by a man or likewise a nurse or a nursery teacher should be a woman.

Sometimes there is an assumption that women with family responsibilities are unreliable, or that men won't want to work part-time. The objective of any recruitment process should be to find the most suitable person for the job in terms of experience, skills, aptitude and qualifications.

Sex discrimination in recruitment and selection can take several forms: direct sex discrimination, for example refusing to consider women for a lorry drivers job because of her sex. Indirect sex discrimination, for example where an employer applies a provision that all job applicants must have been previously employed by the Armed Forces; as women have not traditionally worked in the Armed Forces in the same numbers as men, fewer women than men would be eligible to apply and so women would be put at a disadvantage [2].

Sheppard and Bonneau [3] summarized the influence on levels of haemoglobin, muscular strength, body composition and differences in sizes commonly faced on capacity of working.

Employee Awareness

Making gender equality part of training and development planning is a critical success factor in enabling both women and men in the workplace to contribute to the best of their potential. According to Newton [4] employees is not a homogenous group but reflect the growing diversity of the larger population. By recognizing and valuing women and men's differences (such as age, religion, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, disability, sexual orientation, etc.) and considering their needs in shaping training and development opportunities, the business stands to benefit from the diversity of their contributions.

To guarantee agreeability with job strategies, all representatives ought to at least have clear direction in regards to proper work environment conduct and the outcomes of neglecting to consent to against segregation arrangements that incorporate sex character. According to Bagshhaw(2004), Gender identity training and education on transgender issues can be incorporated into a full-fledged training and can be directed by external facilitators and trainers. Boyle [5] posits that gender identity and training on diversity and communication should be equivalent to announcement of other training initiatives policy in the workplace. Gender identity should also be integrated in online training on harassment that includes sex and race if it is provided by the management. Regular diversity training which includes instances of gender based discrimination on gender identity should be included during induction of new employees. According to Chang. G [17] more than 70 per cent of the people entering the work force each year in US are women, immigrants and people of color.

Studies show that by 2001 women and minorities accounted for more than half of the country's work force. This indicates that diversity in the workforce is real. To bring harmony in workplace, there is need for diversity training. Diversity training according to Westfield &Stahlhut (2003) as cited by Saida, S.M &Wario G. [6] is the process by which a work force is educated about cultural, socio-economic, racial and religious differences among employees and taught how to embrace those differences so as to create and maintain an effective work environment. There are usually legal issues involved with training at workplace to deal with diversity. Nonetheless, diversity training is essential to ensure teamwork for enhanced organizational performance [6].

Before conducting diversity training, Williams and O'Reilly [7] advices that a company should acknowledge and celebrate the diversity, construct formal policies and procedures for promoting a diverse work force, research internal and external customer data and formulate a workplace diversity strategic plan. After an organization has done the practices above, it could have a chance to implement diversity training effectively.

One of the major roles of managers is to create harmony among the employees from diverse background. Therefore, these employees should be trained on how to handle other employees who are from different background. One of the ways to do this is through group information sharing. Group information elaboration was introduced by Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, and Homan [8] as a newer team process that might elucidate the positive effects of diversity in decision-making processes and performance. It refers to the extent to which team members exchange, share, process, and integrate task unique information within

the team. Specifically, group information elaboration consists of distinct activities that are responsible for a more accurate processing of information, such as individual processing of team information, feeding back the results into the group, discussing and integrating the different perspectives brought to the team by each member [8].

Available literature suggests that training is important in ensuring workforce diversity. However literature on how training can accommodate gender mainstreaming is scarce. This creates a knowledge gap which this study sought to fill by determining how employee training affects gender balance in Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries in Kirinyaga County, Kenya.

Theoretical Review
The two theories relevant to gender mainstreaming are livral feminism theory and queer theory which are discussed here under.

Liberal Feminism Theory
This study was guided by the Liberal Feminism Theory. There are different forms of Feminism ideology. According to Lorber [9] to explain their oppression women started developing a theory. There was organized resistance and Patriarchy was challenged. However, disagreement arose on particulars issues linked to feminism in 1980. Many theories branched from the one theory to many theories that focused on diverse feminist issues. Presently there are several feminism definitions which include one's own beliefs, history and culture. In 1950s to 1960s liberal feminism was popularized when movements of civil rights were taking place. God creates all people equally and all deserve equal rights were the main views of liberal feminists as postulated by [10]. According to feminists, the support of patriarchy which keeps men in power position is because of the way men and women are socialized. Women and men have the same mental capacity according to liberal feminists and therefore the same opportunities in social spheres, economic and political should be accorded equally. Essentially women should be able to choose their own life rather than having their life chosen for them just like their male colleagues.

Equal access to jobs, rights for women and equal pay are the equal opportunities demanded by these Acts of Legislation. By removing these barriers, liberal feminists believe that women are liberated and the ideologies of patriarchy are directly challenged (Rée &Urmson2005). Reforms in education, health and welfare that have increased the status of women have been attributed to many important Acts of Legislation by Liberal Feminists. Liberal feminism has regrettably only concentrated on aspect of legislation Acts of patriarchy fighting. Criticism has been for not breaking deeper ideologies and patriarchy and overlooking race and class matters.

In summary, liberal feminism claims that gender differences are not based in biology, and therefore, women and men are not all that different - their common humanity supersedes their procreative differentiation [10]. If women and men are not different, then they should not be treated differently under the law. Women should have the same rights as men and the same educational and work opportunities. This theory is therefore relevant to this study which sought to identify the gender mainstreaming initiatives employed in enhancing gender equity in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries in Kirinyaga County, Kenya.

Queer theory
Constructions of sexuality throughout literal texts and traditional forms are candidly examined and questioned openly by Queer theory. Throughout human history, queer theorists understand sexuality to be unstable social,   political structure and culture and highly fraught which have produced countless textual, political, social, philosophical and other cultural formations [11]. Any form or practice of sexuality is generally not assumed to be normal, proper or authentic by queer theorists generally. Sexuality is instead deemed to be entirely a social construction, though a rather unstable and changeable social construction at that.

According to Green [12] Queer Theory attempts to start the fight against gender stereotyping through its refusal of labels and its demonstration of the social action of gender identity and to break through binary thinking. It is the presumption of queer theory that gender is merely an activity that can be undertaken by either sex. Green [13] posits that activism and queer theory breaks down the binary supposition that is one's gender by demonstrating the fluidity of gender is something performed and is not biological. The meaning of gendered man or gendered woman is an ideological space that is opened by queer theory through this variability. An overlap is created between what was thought to be incompatible by Queer Theory destabilizing gender and new political gender identities are created in the new space [14]. Behind the expression of gender, there is no gender identity as theorized by [13]. Gender is expressed through one's action containing a more fluid and transient quality and not inherent in biology with men being masculine and women being feminine. The rise of postmodern culture which has thrown into doubt beliefs previously thought as stable has made this possible.

The queer theory is therefore relevant in this study which sought to establish the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming initiatives employed in

enhancing gender equity in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries in Kirinyaga County, Kenya.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Kirinyaga County which is one of 47 counties in Central Kenya. Specifically it was carried out in Kirinyaga East Sub-County one of the 4 Sub Counties of Kirinyaga County. The population of the Sub County according to the 2009 census was 124,674. The number of males was 61,129 while for the females was 63, 5543.It covers an area of 229.3square km.The researcher employed a descriptive survey design for this study. Descriptive survey design enables the researcher to study a number of variables to determine the current status of the population [15]. The target population comprised all the 50 employees of the Ministry and therefore Census technique was used. The study used questionnaires and interview to collect data. Computation was done using SPSS Computer software. Frequencies, percentages, and mean were used to analyze data. Orodho [16] posits that descriptive statistics allows for data presentation in an organized and meaningful fashion and therefore data can be simplified so that general trend can be seen.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION
Influence of recruitment and selection on gender equity

The study established that the Ministry ensured fair recruitment and selection based on Gender Equity to a great extent (36%). However the results had multiple modes indicating that a significant proportion of the respondents' were not sure on the extent to which the Ministry ensured fair recruitment and selection based on Gender, this implies that the Ministry need to increase sensitization on the issue. On other human resource practices, the study established that the Ministry observed the gender balance on staff recruitment (36%), recruitment and selection (36%), staff discipline measures (30%), and on staff remuneration (22%). Specifically on gender related training, the study established that Ministry of Agriculture conducted training on Gender Mainstreaming (54.3%). The respondents also indicated that the Ministry of Agriculture to a Great extent (34%) conducted training on Gender Equity. The study also established that the Ministry to a Great extent (28%) took action on affirmative action training requests.

Implementation of gender awareness training initiatives

The study also found out that the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries had not done much (40%) on sponsoring gender balance awareness training. Despite the fact that the majority of the respondents (40%) were not sure on the extent to which Ministry of Agriculture conducts in house Gender balance awareness training; those who were aware indicated that the Ministry of Agriculture had not done much in terms of conducting in-house Gender balance awareness training. On the issue of engaging external consultants, It was also established that majority of the respondents were not sure (42%) on the extent in which the ministry engaged external consultant on gender balance training, the trend is similar as (42%) of those who were aware indicated that the Ministry had not done much in terms of engaging external consultants on Gender balance training. The study established that the Ministry of Agriculture has not done much (34 %,) on implementing gender balance awareness training. It is clear therefore that the Ministry of Agriculture is not doing well in this area.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the Ministry ensures fair recruitment and selection based on Gender Equity to a great extent. On other human resource practices, the study concludes that that the Ministry fairly observes the gender balance on staff recruitment and selection, staff discipline, and on staff remuneration.The study also concludes that the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries had not done much on sponsoring gender balance awareness training neither are they doing enough in terms of awareness campaigns neither engaging external consultants on gender balance training, nor implementing gender balance awareness training. It is clear therefore that the Ministry of Agriculture is not doing well in this area.

Recommendation

The study makes the following recommendation:
- ➢ A good proportion of the respondents (36%) were not sure on the extent to which the Ministry ensured fair recruitment and selection based on Gender equity, it is therefore recommended that the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries through their Cabinet Secretary provides statistics of the incoming employees based on gender.
- ➢ The study established that there was a close relationship in terms of proportions of the respondents between a yes (54%) and no (46%) responses on training, the study recommends that the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries clearly outlines what constitutes gender mainstreaming training.
- ➢ It is recommended that future researcher could undertake the study with a wider sample and scope in the private sector to facilitate comparative studies with this study's findings.

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