

Women Elites and the Economic Challenges Affecting Their Participation in National development among the Maasai of Narok South Subcounty, Kenya

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Abstract: *This Paper Discusses The Current State Of Elite Women Participation in Political Leadership In Kenya Paying Particular Attention To The Economic Factors Influencing Women. Kenya Remains Challenged In Terms Of Ascendancy Of Women To Political Leadership In Relation To Various Factors. Elite Women Participation In Politics And Other Public Offices Is Still Underrepresented. This Paper Focuses On The Effect Of Economic Factor On Participation Of Elite Women In Politics. This Historical And Descriptive Survey Research Design Was Adopted. The Target Population Was Elite Women In Narok South Sub County Of Narok County. A Sample Of 372 Elite Women Was Selected By Simple Random Sampling Method. Questionnaires, Focused Group Discussions Guides And In Depth Interview Schedules Were Adopted As The Main Tools Of Data Collection. Quantitative Data Was Analyzed both Descriptively And Inferentially Where The Frequency And Percentages Were Computed And Using Chi Square Analysis The Results Were Tested For Association. Qualitative Data Was Analyzed Through Identification, Examination, And Interpretation Of themes In Textual Data. The Findings Of This Paper Indicated That Economic Factors Deter Elite Women Among The Maasai From Engaging In Politics. It Was Established That Most Women In The Maasai Community Do Not Have A Voice Before Men And Therefore They Are Not Supposed To Own Any Economic Resource. This Makes Women To Fully Depend On Men For Economic Hand Out And Therefore They Are Not Able To Stand By Themselves And Engage In Any Political Issues. It Was Further Noted That Men Regard Women As Children From The Social Cultural Aspects Of The Community. Women Cannot Therefore Engage In Any Economic Activity To Generate Their Own Money. Infact Even Those On A Salary Must Be Given A Way On How To Spend The Money By Their Husbands. On Strategies That Could Be Employed To Assist The Elite Women The Study Established That, Most Women Felt That It Is Until The Men Are Made Aware Through Various Forums Of The Need And The Contribution Of The Women In Politics That The Situation Can Change. Most Respondents Ruled Out The Fact That It Is Women Who Are To Be Enlightened. However They Felt That It Is Important To Women To Be Taken To School To Earn A Good Education More So Political Knowledge So That They Can Be Ready For The Political Challenge. It Is Therefore Concluded That The Participation Of Not Just The Elite Women By All Women In Politics Is Hindered Greatly By Economic Factors. It Is Recommended That Men Should Change Their Way Of Looking At Women And Empower Them Economically For Bringing A Change In The Political Arena.*

Key Words: Elite Women, Participation, Education, Economic, Political

Date of Submission: 24-02-2018

Date of acceptance: 12-03-2018

I. Introduction

Over The Decades, Issues Concerning Women Have Taken On New Dimensions And Received Varied Treatment By The United Nations And Its Specialized Agencies. Gender Equality Was First Declared A Development Agenda In The United Nations Charter Of 1945, And Was Subsequently Addressed In The Universal Declaration Of Human Rights (1948) And The Millennium Development Goals (Mdg's) Of 2000. In Spite Of The International Declarations Affirming The Rights And Equality Between Men And Women Of Which Kenya Is A Signatory, Existing Literature Shows That Women Still Constitute A Disproportionately Small Percentage Of Those Participating In Political Decision-Making And Leadership.

The Protocol To The African Charter On The Rights Of Women In Africa (2003), And The African Plan Of Action Was To Accelerate The Implementation For The Advancement Of Women In Political Participation (1999). Many Global Conferences Have Been Held Including Cairo Conference On Population And Development In 1994, Fourth World Conference On Women Of 1995, And World Summit For Social Development Of 1995 Which Affirmed That Inequalities Still Persist In Women's Political Representation Despite The Progress Made Globally In Improving Their Status, Through The Establishment Of A National

Task Force On Gender And Education In 1995, A National Policy On Gender And Education Was Not Formulated Until 2008 (Republic Of Kenya 2007). The Policy Provided A Framework For Planning And Implementation Of Gender Responsive Education, As Well As Research And Training But It Suffered Numerous Setbacks.

The Third Millennium Development Goal (Mdg), Categorically States That By 2015 All Countries, Kenya Included, Need To Eliminate Gender Disparities At All Levels Of Education And Labor Relations. On This Note, The Constitution Of Kenya Guarantees Equal Rights And Freedom For Women And Men And Upholds The Principles Of Non-Discrimination And Equality. Articles 27(8) And (81) (B) Of The Constitution Provides For Not More Than Two Thirds Representation Of One Gender In Elective And Appointive Positions As A Way Of Bridging The Gender Gap. The Participation Of Women In Decision-Making And Politics Is A Human Rights Issue Enshrined In The Constitution That Has Addressed Many Issues That Have Been At The Heart Of The Clamor For Gender Mainstreaming In Kenya From The 1980s (The Kenyan Constitution 2010).

The Exclusion Of Women From Politics And Other Decision Making Structures In Kenya Is A Result Of Multiple Structural And Functional Factors That Vary In Different Social Contexts Across The Newly Established 47 Counties. It Appears That The Society As A Whole Has Not Yet Acknowledged Women's Leadership Rights And Abilities. When The National Rainbow Coalition (Narc) Government Was Elected In 2003, It Established The Gender Commission And An Autonomous Ministry Of Gender. The National Policy On Gender And Development Of 2000 Provided A Framework With Which The Government Could Address Gender Imbalances Strategically Through Established Legal And Institutional Frameworks Towards Women Empowerment And Decision Making. In The Year 2012, The Gender Inequality Index In Kenya Was Ranked At Position 145 Out Of 186 Countries According To The Human Development Report 2013. Available Data Indicates That Gender Inequity Is Still Prevalent In The Country, Currently The National Assembly, Senate And County Governments Do Not Meet The Minimum One Third Gender Constitutional Representation Requirement (Ouma & Maina 2010).

Political Participation Is The Degree And Form Of Involvement Of Citizens In Governance And Related Institutions Of Society (Igwee 2002). It Thus Involves Participation In Political Campaigns And Debates, Attending Strategy Meetings Of Political Parties, Voting During Elections, Vying As Candidates For Elections, And Holding Of Key Government And Political Party Positions. Throughout The History Of Politics In Western And African Countries, Women Political Representation Has Been Very Low. Women Have Been Seeking To Participate Alongside Men In Governance And Decision Making In All Aspects Of Public Life But Progress Has Been Slow Due To Many Challenges In Their Way. These Challenges Take The Form Of Small Conflicts Over Access To Resources, Which Add Up To Slow Participation Of Women In Political, Economic And Social Empowerment (Aili, 2000). The Possible Explanation For This Scenario Could Be That Gender Issues In Politics Have Not Received Due Attention And Redress. Women Are Always Relegated To The Peripheries Of Political Leadership And Marginalized. In Their Public And Private Lives, Women Have To Struggle To Articulate Their Desires And To Find Their Own Voices. Since Kenya Attained Her Independence In 1963, Women Have Been Seeking To Effectively Participate Alongside Men, In Governance And Decision-Making Processes In All Aspects Of Public Life. Since Then To The Present Date Women Participation Still Remains Very Low (Nyokabi, 2010).

In Kenya, And Especially At The Grassroots Level, A Number Of Factors Hinder More Than Half Of The Population In Their Participation In Politics. It Is More Apparent Amongst The Pastoralist Communities (African Press International, 2007). Pastoralists' Women Remain Marginalized And Have Little Or No Representation In Local And National Government. In This Context, Very Few Were Nominated Or Elected In The Recent General Elections, (Kipuri, 2008) Given The Low Political Ranking Regionally And Globally In Respect To Female Representation In Parliament Currently Standing At 9.9% Of The Total Mps In 2008-2012 Tenth Parliament (Nzomo, 2012). This Compares Poorly With Kenya's Eastern Neighbors And Partners In The East African Community That Have All Attained 30% Female Presence In Their Respective Parliaments. Rwanda's (56.3%), Tanzania (36.0%), Uganda (34.9%), Burundi (32.1%); Similarly South Africa (44.5%), Mozambique (39.2%) And Angola (38.6%) Have Also Attained The Threshold. Despite The New Kenyan Constitution That Ruled That 30% Threshold Would Be Progressively Achieved, Women Still Lag Behind (Nzomo, 2012).

Kenyan Women Have Come A Long Way In Penetrating The Politically Male-Dominated World. Kenya's History Has Recorded Great Women Who Went Through Many Difficulties And Humiliating Conditions To Fight For Equality And Participation In Politics. Since Kenya's Independence From The British Rule In 1963, Female Representation In Parliament Has Been Very Low. The Late Grace Monica Ogot Became The First Woman Mayor For Kisumu Town In 1965 And Had To Receive Permission From The Late Jaramogi Oginga Odinga To Stand For A Parliamentary Seat, Winning The Kisumu Constituency In 1969 (Nyokabi, 2010).

In 1984, The Lategrace Ogot Earned A Distinctive Position In Kenya's Political History; She Became One Of The Few Women To Serve As A Member Of Parliament And The Only Female Assistant Minister In Former President Moi's Cabinet. When The Late Wangari Maathai Ventured Into The Public Sphereshe Faced Tremendous Challenges And Opposition From Men, Her Voice Was Drowned And Ridiculed In Private And In Public Spaces. She Played A Pivotal Role In Kenya's Politics And Became A Role Model And Mentor For Many Kenyan Women Aspiring For Leadership.

Statement Of The Problem

Despite Subscribing To International Commitments To Empower Women, Kenya Still Lags Behind In The East African Region In Terms Of Women Representation In Politics And Decision Making. Political Participation Is The Degree And Form Of Involvement Of Citizens In Governance And Related Institutions Of Society. It Thus Involves Participation In Political Campaigns And Debates, Attending Strategy Meetings Of Political Parties, Voting During Elections, Vying As Candidates For Elections, And Holding Of Key Government And Political Party Positions. Equal Political Participation Of Both Genders Is One Of The Critical Pillars Of Good Governance Which Entails Freedom Of Expression, Freedom Of Association Among Other Fundamental Rights. This Paper Sought To Establish The Effect Of Economic Factors On Elite Women Participation In National Development With Specific Focus On Their Participation In Politics.

Braod Objective

To Evaluate The Women Elite And The Economic Factors That Affect Their Participation In National Development Particularly In Politics In Narok South Sub County .

Economic Factors Relating To Elite Women Participation In Political Leadership

In Malaysia, Women Have Long Been The Mainstay Of Communities And Are Heavily Involved In Community Initiatives In Various Forms. Though Often They Are Heroes Of Community Action, Women's Role In Political Leadership Has Become Increasingly Important. In Some Communities, They Have Established Themselves As Leaders And Have Acquired The Requisite Skills That Have Brought Positive Gender Changes To Their Communities. However, They Still Face Cultural, Economic And Social Barriers In Leading Their Community. In Addition, They Have To Overcome Those Traditional Barriers With Resilience. This Has Become Their Intuitive Motivation. Historical Comparisons Of The Percentage Of Women In Parliaments Across Regions In The Scandinavian Nations Have Surpassed All Other Regions In Their Levels Of Women's Political Representation At All Time Points (Haavio-Mannila *Et Al.*, 2004).

On The Other Hand, The Middle East Has Persistently Had The Lowest Average Levels Of Female Representation. Although Women's Representation In Latin America, Africa, And The West Progressed Slowly Until 1995, As Other Countries Registers Low Percentages Of Women In Parliament, Narok South Sub-County Has Not Achieved At All. Culture Stresses That Beliefs And Attitudes Influence Both The Supply Of And Demand For Female Candidates (Paxton *Et Al.*, 2003). The Current Study Seeks To Find Out Whether Low Participation Has Been Caused By Attitudes Towards Women In Narok South Sub-County

There Is A Limit To Women's Opportunities For Education And Employment. The Gender Gap In Political Knowledge And Interest Is Well Established. Across Both Developed And Developing Countries, Men Are Consistently Found To Be More Interested In Politics And Have More Political Knowledge Than Women (Burns *Et Al.* 2001). The U.S. Men Scored The Equivalent Of An Additional 2, 3, 4 Years Of Schooling On Objective Tests Of Political Knowledge Compared With Women. The U.S. Gender Gap In Political Interest And Knowledge Also Varies By Race And Ethnicity. Across All Races, This Gender Gap Is Reversed Among Children And Teenagers Alozie *et Al.*, (2003) . This Study Will Seek To Find Whether Lack Of Political Knowledge Has An Influence On Low Women Representation In Narok South Sub-County.

In Other Countries Women Have Made Gains In Employment And Education, Though They Face Cultural Barriers To Participation In Politics. For Example, 25% Of The U.S. Population Still Says That Men Are Better Suited Emotionally To Politics And 15% Of Americans Agreed With The Statement "Women Should Take Care Of Running Their Homes And Leave Running The Country Up To Men" (Lawless And Theriault, 2005). Individual Differences Between Men And Women In Levels Of Education Are An Important Explanation For Differences In Political Participation. (Burns *Et Al.*, 2001). Women's Levels Of Education Could Explain Differences In Their Levels Of Parliamentary Representation. Across Countries, However, There Has Been Little Evidence To Support The Argument That The Percentage Of Women In Education Is A Predictor Of Parliamentary Representation (Kenworthy *Et Al.*, 1999). Therefore This Current Study Seeks To Find Out Whether Levels Of Education Could Explain Why There Is No Parliamentary Representation In Narok South Sub-County.

However, It Is Difficult To Establish A Single Measure Of Education That Is Appropriate Across All Countries. In The United States, Law And Other Professional Degrees Provide An Important Path, And Having

More Women In Such Pipeline Occupations Leads To More Female Participation In Political Leadership (Arceneaux *Et Al*,2001).Therefore, This Paper Sought To Find Out Whether Academic Qualification Provide An Important Path For Elite Women To Participate In Political Leadership In Narok South Sub-County

Women's Participation Is Still Lower Than That Of Their Male Counterparts, Despite Determined Efforts To Increase Women Participation. There Are Several Factors Hindering The Process Of Women's Participation In The Political Process: Educational Backwardness, Lack Of Economic Resources, Inadequate Mobility, Structural Deficiencies, Religion, Culture, And Patriarchy (Villaluz, 2000).Most Bangladeshi Women Are Still Illiterate. They Lack Information On The Political Process And Do Not Know How To Mobilize For Policies That Respond To Women's Interests, Kabir, (2003). The Maasai Women Could Also Be Faced By Educational Backwardness, Economic Factors, And Patriarchy.

Traditional Roles And The Division Of Labor Are Still Clearly Gendered, The Woman's Role Is Typically That Of A Homemaker Who Performs Reproductive Functions And Community Maintenance, While The Man Is Regarded As The Breadwinner, Is In Charge Of Family Decision-Making, And Has A Right To Public Life. This Is Further Amplified; Women's Gender Identity Is Still Predominantly Conceived Of As Being Domestic In Nature And Continues To Act As A Barrier To Women's Entry Into Formal Politics (Olaleye, 2004). The Maasai Community Has Clearly Stated Roles That Women Should Perform And That Could Influence The Maasai Elite Women From Participating In Decision Making And The Right To Public Life.

Practical Manifestation Of The Patriarchal Nature Of Many African Societies Is, For Example, The Fact That In Botswana And Mozambique, The Media Fails To Give Special Coverage To Female Candidates' Campaigns Or To Interview Them. This Further Reinforces Women's Marginalized Situation. According To Sebudubuduand (2005), Socio-Economic Factors Identified In All Sadc Countries As Contributing To The Under-Representation Of Women Include Their Lack Of Confidence In Participating In Party Politics Except To Vote, Lack Of Time Due To Women's Reproductive Roles, Lack Of Skills And Lack Of Finances Would Also Be Expressed In Narok South Sub-County.

Mauritius Is An Example Of A Country In Which Parties, On An Informal Level, Often Require Candidates To Contribute Substantial Sums Of Money Before The Party Can Consider Them For Nomination (Bunwaree, 2008). Social-Economic Factors Expressed In Other Countries Could Also Be Expressed In Narok South District As Factors That Influence Maasai Elite Women From Participating In Political Leadership.

In Uganda, Seven Years Of Education And English Language Skills Are Sufficient Educational Credentials For Women (Johnson, 2003).Women Are Further Disadvantaged By Resource Constraints Because They Received The Same Budgetary And Other Resources Received By A General Member, Even Though Women Covered A Wider Area. There Was Also Role Confusion In Terms Of Who Would Do What, How And When. More Specifically, The Local Government Second Amendment Act (1997) There Is Also Negative Attitudes Of The Lawmakers Toward Women, (Goetz, 2004). In The Maasai Community The Elite Could Still Be Disadvantaged By Resource Constraints And Thus Their Participation In Political Leadership Is Hindered.

II. Methodology

The Study Was Conducted Through A Descriptive Survey Research Design To Study Factors Influencing Elite Women Participation In Political Leadership In Narok South Sub County. This Study Targeted Elite Women Among The Maasai Community. A Total Sample Of 330 Respondents Was Selected Using Simple Random Sampling Method.A Pilot Study Was Undertaken For The Purpose Of Pre- Testing Of The Research Instruments To Be Used In The Study. This Study Was Necessary Since It Gave An Allowance For Checking Statistical And Analytical Procedures; It Gave A Chance To Reduce Problems And Mistakes In The Study (Isaac & Michael, 1995).Pre-Testing Was Done By Administering Interview Schedules 20 Randomly Sampled Respondents Whom Were Not Among The Sample In The Actual Study. This Sample Size Was Justified By Hertzog (2008) And Hill (1998) Suggested That 10 To 30 Participants Will Be Sufficient For The Pilot Study In A Survey Research. The Study Applied Primary And Secondary Data Collection Methods From Men And Women And Key Informants In Order To Analyze The Factors Influencing Elite Women Participation In Political Leadership With Respect To The Variables In The Study. The Research Therefore Utilized Mixed Method Research That Entails Both Qualitative And Quantitative Methodologies. Thestudy Included In-Depth Interview, Questionnaires And Focus Group Discussion To Gather Information From Elite Maasai Women. The Reliability Of The Instrument Was 0. 68 And The Validity Was Measured Using Kmo Measure Of Sampling And It Was Found To Be 0.583 Hence The Questionnaires Were Considered To Be Appropriate.

III.Results

Relationship Between Economic Status Of Women And Elite Women Participation In Political Leadership

This Paper Aimed At Examininghow Economic Factor Influenced Elite Women Participation In Political Leadership In Narok South Sub County, Narok County .To Achieve This Objective The Women And Men

Respondents Were Asked To Respond To Questions Which Reveals That The Girl Child In Narok South Does Not Inherit Land. A Clear Title To Land Gives The Security Of Use Rights, Under Current Private Property Regimes It Also Permits Owners To Speculate And Profit From Land As A Market Commodity. Girl Child In Narok South Sub County Due To Lack Of Having Opportunity To Inherit Land Makes Them Lack Security To Use Their Father's Land Or Husband's Land Securing Micro Finance Or Bank Loans When They Need Funds To Register, Campaign And Participate As An Aspiring Political Member In The Region.

Most Of The Respondents Acknowledged That Most Women In Narok South Sub County Actively Involve Themselves In Domestic Chores As Compared To Men Opposed To Other Occupations As Public Service. The Situation Serves As An Impediment In Their Endeavor To Marshal The Needed Resources To Participate In Political Leadership Process.

From The In-Depth Interview Conducted The Respondents Acknowledged That Most Women In Narok South Sub County Depend Mostly On The Husbands Hence Unable To participate In Political Leadership. It Was Interesting To Note Than Even Women Who Hold Positions In The County Still Indicated That They Have To Abide By The Culture And Remain Under The Mercy Of Men On Economic Issues. One Of The Respondents Categorically Noted;

'As Women I Have Nothing Of My Own, I Don't Own Any Thing So Long As I Am Married, The Man Is Every Things. He Will Dictate What I Will Buy And How I Will Spend My Salary And Other Earnings. I Can't Be Allowed To Own Any Piece Of Land, Nor Even A Goat. I Am Made To Do All House And Home Related Cores Despite The Fact That I Am Employed.'

Another Respondent Also Indicated; It Is A High Time Men Treated Women As Human Beings And Not Just Objects Or Part Of Their Assets. In The Maasai Culture A Woman After Being Married Becomes The Property Of The Husband And Therefore She Is To Follow The Instructions Given By The Husbands. She Further Noted That We Don't Have Any Right To Own Anything Including Our Own Salaries. Our Husbands Manage Everything And We Are Just Left Watching. We Cannot Therefore Go Against The Cultural Rules Despite The Full Knowledge That We Have Of This Intimidation.

These Results Therefore Show That Women Cannot Participate In Politics Because They Need Money To Do So And They Can't Be Allowed To Have Any Money Including Their Own Salaries. Hence They Cannot Afford To Raise The Finances To Participate In The Politics.

The Respondents Were Asked To Indicate Strategies That They Felt Could Assist In Ensuring That They Participate In Politics. Among The Strategies Were, The Need To Educate The Girls As A Mean Of Empowering Them, Making Them Aware Of Their Rights Enhancing Their Self Esteem. In The Focus Group And Interview Session The Most Interesting Strategy Which Was Believed To Supersede All The Others Was That It Is Men Who Need The Training And The Awareness And Not The Women. One Of The Respondents In The Focus Group Categorically Said;

'Us Women We Don't Have A Problem With Joining Politics , We Understand Our Position We Have Gone To School And Interacted With Others But Men Can't Let Us Just Do What We Feel Is Right. They Still Look Down Upon Us And Considered Us As Any Other Property. All This In The Name Of Culture Therefore In My Opinion It Is The Men Who Have Refused To Change With Time And Prefer To Intimidate Use Other Than Assist Us To Get What Is Best For Us And The Society At Large. Therefore If There Are People Who Need The Seminars And Awareness Campaigns Then It Is The Men'.

This Was Shared By Two Other Educated Women Who Felt That Men Are The Problem And They Hide Themselves In The Culture Of The Society. They Indicated That If Men Could Agree To Change Their Perception And Attitude Towards Women Then Women Will Be Able To Rise In Ranks And Participate In Politics Without Any Problem. The Overall Mean For The Study Items Was 3.79 Meaning That Over 50% Of The Respondents Agreed With The Statements And Hence It Means Economic Factors Play An Important Role In Women Participation In Politics.

The Chi Square Analysis Shows that There Is A Very Strong And Significant Association Between Elite Women Participation In Politics And Their Economic Status (Chi Square = 579.7, P- Value = 0.000). This Therefore Shows That Women's Failure To Participate In Politics Requires Economic Empowerment.

IV. Conclusions

Based On The Findings Presented It Is Concluded That Participation Of Women In Politics Is Influenced By Their Economic Status. The Results Show That Women Are Denied The Chance To Participate In Politics Because They Don't Have The Economic Power Which Is Necessary For Any Person To Make It Through The Political System In The Country.

Recommendations

Therefore This Paper Recommended That There Is Need To Provide A Level Playing Ground For Those Women Who Wish To Join Politics. The Patriarchy Society Which Tends To Make It Hard For Women To Participate Should Be Addressed Through Training And Seminars So That Men Could Be Able To Change Their Perceptionabout Women And Political Leadership.

Acknowledgements

The Road To Success In Education, And Attaining The Highest Award Has Not Been Easy. The Journey Has Been Long, Rough And Tiring. It Required Sufficient Grace Of God, Hands To Hold, Friends To Lean On And Ears To Listen. First And Foremost I Thank The Almighty God For His Immense Blessings In My Life And Enabling Me To Get To This Level At This Point In Time.

Special Thanks To My Supervisors Dr. Hadija Murenga And Dr Eric Kiprono Bor For Their Expert Guidance And Input That Greatly Helped Me Perfect This Report And From Bringing Me From The Corridors To Light By Ensuring That Each Piece In The Jigsaw Falls Into Place. I Recognize The Contribution Of Prof Ngetich And Dr Parsitau During The Formative Stages Of The Thesis.

I Am Grateful To The Ministry Of Science And Technology For Granting Me Permission To Carry Out This Study. The Fieldwork Was Successful Because Of The Help Of Mr. Indanya, Felister And Kisotu Who Walked With Me The Long Stretches Of Narok South Paths. Special Thanks To Mr. Indanya Who Endured Long Hours And Days To Key In The Data Into The Computer And Mr. Rotich Who Drove Through The Roughest Roads Of Narok South.

Secondly, I Am Greatly Indebted To My Parents The Late James Kauria And Mary Kauria Who Educated And Have Been Sources Of Great Wisdom, Love, Care, Encouragement As Well As Inspiration Throughout My Life. I Thank My Brothers Kenneth Langat And Wilson With Whom I Have Grown Up And For Their Unending Encouragement. I Wish To Pay Tribute To All My Teachers Through The Circles Of Education, Without Whose Efforts This Venture Would Have Remained Only A Dream

Thirdly, I Pay Much Gratitude To My Husband Hon (Dr) Korei Ole Lemein, Children Collins, Ian And Brian For Enduring Many Long Hours Without My Attention And For Their Efforts To Give Me Peace And Space To Work On This Document, Thank You For Supporting Me In Prayer.

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Kauria Zeddy " Women Elites and the Economic Challenges Affecting Their Participation in Nationaldevelopment among the Maasai of Narok South Subcounty, Kenya "IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS). vol. 23 no. 3, 2018, pp.01-06