

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

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WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN FARM LEVEL DECISION-MAKING: A CASE STUDY OF KILIBWONI DIVISION, NANDI DISTRICT

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24

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ABSTRACT**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

In patrilineal, patrilocal and therefore, patriarchal societies, changes in the status of women have been quite slow implying that their participation in decision-making is still very low.

The study was conducted to establish the status of women in the Nandi society, which in many ways has retained its traditional character. The aim of the study was to evaluate the factors that influence women participation in farm level decision-making thus influencing their status. The factors included among other things; culturally constituted beliefs and practises that pertain to gender relations and modernizing influences of education, formal employment and off-farm activities. The study examined the factors that facilitate or hamper women in the decision making process and in turn either raise or hold back their status in the family. This was achieved by examining an array of activities over which they could make independent farm level decisions if given a chance.

The study collected both primary and secondary data. A sample of 100 households was selected randomly out of which 100 men and 92 women (husband and wife) were interviewed. The methods of data collection that were used apart from the use of standard questionnaire were key informants interviews and personal observation. Secondary data was referred to clarify compliment and reinforce field data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to analyse the data collected using the standard questionnaire.

Three complementary theoretical frameworks guided this study; network theory, Ruth Pearson framework of thinking on gender relations and modernisation theory. Network theory and the Ruth Pearson's thinking on gender relations are relevant in understanding the plight of women in Nandi. Because they operate in a web of social relations, where society determines the gender roles in the household activities and this is not considered when it comes to policy formulation and implementation. Modernisation theory explains the effects of modernisation factors and the change of values and attitudes on the status of women.

Findings showed that there has not been much change in terms of gender relations among the Nandi. Many women have formal education but they have not been able to articulate their views concerning farm level decisions in the presence of men, because men are reluctant to change their traditional character to accommodate the changes that are taking place in the modern society.

The study recommends that in order to involve women fully in decision-making, the traditional practises and customs have to change. Women should be represented at the local level on the village committees so that they can get the information that is required for development and the educated among them can play a full and active role in development projects. Development policies should be addressed to meet the needs of both women and men, if sustainable development in Nandi District is to be achieved.