

Women's Political Participation Opportunities in the Nakuru and Narok Counties of Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This paper focused on the political opportunity to empower women in Nakuru and Narok counties of Kenya by conducting comparative evaluative research. Feminist Theory informed this study, which focuses on gender disparities and how political, economic, and social factors dictate women's roles and engagements. This research aimed to assess the KB clown sketches and their impact on women's political chances. A purposive sampling procedure was adopted in which 335 participants with critical informants, ordinary citizens, and young women interested in leadership positions were sampled. Quantitative and qualitative research was used, and questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions were used to collect data among women to understand the current political situation. Data analysis was done in two ways, which include descriptive and thematic analysis. The quantitative data from the administered questionnaires were analyzed descriptively to produce frequencies and percentages for the findings on women's political participation opportunities. The information collected from interviews and focus group discussions was analyzed through thematic analysis to develop trends and findings on socio-cultural perspective, policy understanding, and institutional support for women in politics. Research outcomes revealed that despite the improvement in electoral democracy and female representation in the political process, barriers including but not limited to inadequate resource mobilization, conflict of cultures and practices, and unequal/irregular championing of gender mainstreaming policies and frameworks still inhibit inclusion. These policies were deemed critical because they informed women as to how they could extend effective democracy in political systems while also ensuring that people in a community understood the gains that could be derived from having women's leadership. Research concluded that this can be achieved through efforts to strengthen mentorship programs, increase public appreciation for the importance of women's participation in leadership and governance, and improve the application of supportive policies and laws. Some recommendations focus on political capacity-building and gender sensitization training to empower women for political positions and call on the political parties to encourage gender parity on their list of candidates. Using media and technology in leadership and management to promote role-modeling to women leaders is also essential in establishing relationships and collaboration with other regional and global organizations on lobbying for women's political rights. Research into these matters should be conducted with backup data for a substantive approach to the progress of Nakuru, Narok, and other counties. Individually, these measures present a trajectory toward improving the environment of women's political participation in Kenya.

Keywords: Effective, Implementation, Inclusivity, Participation, Supportive

I. INTRODUCTION

Every political activity of women has always been considered one of the main precursors that define the development of the democratic state. Many developed countries worldwide have progressed dramatically in increasing women's roles within political processes, and many are even close to achieving actual gender equality in governmental posts (Yadav, 2020). According to Zaenal (2022) Nordic countries, particularly the Scandinavian nations, have provided progressive gender politics, quotas in institutions, and reforms that promote the inclusion of women in the political decision-making process. In these societies, women have enhanced balance, especially in governance, and spearhead social and economic policies that foster equity and diversity. However, there is still inequality in all aspects as regional disparities remain apparent today. Despite global improvements in the quality of gender mainstreaming, women today continue to experience prejudice, limited access to managerial and executive positions, and increased political difficulties (Anyango et al., 2018).

Although African countries are parties to various regional human rights bodies regarding women's rights, the level of women's political representation is still relatively low, on average (Kaimenyi & Muriungi, 2022). African and continental policies, such as the African Union's agenda on ending the underrepresentation of women, also show high policy commitment to women's rights. Similarly, the Maputo Protocol of 2003 encourages African states to eliminate discrimination against women and increase women's participation in politics. However, Jankowski and Marcinkiewicz

(2019) noted that such commitments still come across some practical difficulties. African women in politics are often faced with culture and traditions that infringe on their democratic rights while striving for political positions. Politically and structurally, African women still need to be more politically electable. Despite the rapidly improving image in some countries like Rwanda and South Africa, many African states fail to eliminate women's core barriers to effective and active political engagement (Hailu et al., 2023).

As part of the continental context, Kenya has progressively moved to implement policies to increase gender inclusivity in its political framework. According to Kenya's State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action (2019) the promulgation of the Kenyan Constitution in 2010 stipulates that no single gender should occupy more than two-thirds of elective and appointive positions, a huge step in achieving gender equality in governance. However, Lichuma (2017) asserts that the result of this policy has been significant progress in the representation of women in Parliament and local government, although the country still needs to catch up in effectively implementing these guidelines. The legal and institutional environment has become better. Still, women have yet to advance significantly from access barriers like low access to campaign financing, entrenched cultural stereotypes, and systemic inequality in political parties. These factors help create an environment where, even in the face of formal equality, women face significant obstacles when ascending to prominent political roles (Kabira, 2013).

Nakuru and Narok counties in Kenya offer unique case studies to explore the complexities of women's involvement in politics within the country. These counties help show the use of policy, cultural values, and socioeconomic conditions in determining opportunities for women in local governance. Politically, Nakuru County, both rural and urban, is quite diverse. Thus, it needs to be clarified whether urban women have relatively greater access to resources and networking opportunities than their rural counterparts. Moreover, even in urbanized areas, prevailing cultural norms, and economic disparities, continue to circumvent women's political influence. Maasai cultural practices in Narok County are predominantly rural and historically demand different roles for men and women in public decision-making, thus limiting the role of women in decision-making processes (Kaimenyi & Muriungi, 2022). Participation of women in Narok entails negotiating these cultural norms and utilizing available support systems committed to gender inclusion.

Also, the socioeconomic realities that influence the women's engagement in politics shape the political landscape of Nakuru and Narok. Education, economic independence, and broad societal support are essential for women to participate fully in politics. However, the lack of these resources puts women at a disadvantage, especially in rural areas where campaign financing and other inequalities further compound the problem. In recent years, programs that address these issues, led by civil society organizations, have emerged to give women the skills and tools to participate in political processes (UN Women, 2022). These are crucial initiatives to bridge the gap between what is intended by policy and what is achieved and to offer training, mentorship, and financial support to emerging female leaders.

Therefore, this study analyzes the opportunities and constraints facing women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties. Through positioning these counties in their broader national and continental gender dynamics, the study seeks to elucidate what facilitates or inhibits women's political participation in local governance. It is critical for policies to inform them and for the women as political actors in Nakuru, Narok, and other contexts in Kenya and beyond Africa. This analysis can be an addition to the ongoing debate over gender inclusivity in politics, urging advancements to guarantee that women's voices are heard and their perspective is incorporated in the decision-making processes at all levels of governance.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Given this progress in advancing women participation in politics, significant gaps remain in areas where such socio-cultural and institutional barriers continue. Promoting gender equality in politics leads to more inclusive policies and better governance outputs in developed countries, as studies worldwide have shown. In Africa, the research that focuses on women's political participation points out noteworthy challenges persisting, namely, a shortage of resources, a lack of adherence to sociocultural norms, and uneven policy implementation (Turnbull, 2022).

A study of the enforcement of the constitutional 'two-thirds gender rule' in Kenya showed that, though the legislation exists, women remain significantly underrepresented in national and local governance. In particular, this study primarily emphasized systemic factors such as campaign financing and political party biases as significant barriers, with a relative lack of systemic focus regarding differences in these barriers between semi-urban and rural settings (Kamaru, 2018). A second study examined the effects of mentorship and training programs on increasing women's political empowerment in Kenya by illustrating how the creation of skill-building and support networks has allowed women to consider running for office (Kandusi & Waiganjo, 2015). However, the extent to which countries with different socio-cultural dynamics use such programmes, as found in Nakuru and Narok, still needs to be fully explored.

Another study looked at sociocultural constraints on women's political involvement in rural counties, focusing on patriarchal norms and traditional leadership structures (Ranta, 2024). Although this research was valuable, it failed to address the nuanced differences among rural settings and compared them to the more semi-urban context in which socioeconomic factors may offer different opportunities or limitations. These studies indicate the need for comparative and localized analyses sensitive to differences in the alignment of structural and cultural resources across Kenya's varied regions. This study sought to fill this gap by looking at Nakuru and Narok Counties through examining the varied political participation opportunities and challenges women face in each county and suggested ways to promote a more inclusive political sphere.

1.2 Research Objective

To evaluate the opportunities and challenges influencing women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties, Kenya.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Feminist Theory

Feminist Theory is an idea in the 19th and early 20th centuries studied by people like Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, and other pioneering feminists to focus on highlighting and category inequalities entrenched in actual social, political, and financial structures (Krook & Sanin, 2016). Feminist Theory is a theoretical framework that posits that historical and cultural biases have rendered women disproportionately marginalized, aiming to provide similar access to power and representation (particularly in political realms). Serving as roots for early feminist thought, such feminist thought sought to expose and correct these imbalances and to advocate for legal, social, and institutional reform to elevate the status of women in all spheres of influence.

Over the past few decades, Feminist Theory has become increasingly expansive, encompassing viewpoints such as intersectionality and the fact that other variables, like socioeconomic background, race, and cultural value systems, also play a part in how women are impacted and how they can advance. The intersectional approach is crucial and especially applicable to understanding political participation, given that distinct environments and cultural contexts shape women's niches in public life. Feminist Theory frames how sociocultural norms present in countries such as Nakuru and Narok influence women's access to political roles and the specific barriers to women's vehicles to political roles.

The application of Feminist Theory to this study offers a clear framework for discussing the contexts of opportunity and constraint as relating to women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties. The theory highlights how structural and cultural inequalities exist; its application as a central piece of the political empowerment of women helps analyze how deeply rooted biases impact women's political empowerment and points to creating a more equitable political landscape. Thus, Feminist Theory helps contextualize the current state of women's political engagement in these countries and provides a foundation for advocating for targeted strategies to increase gender inclusivity in local governance.

2.2 Empirical Review

Malongza et al (2017) examined how women impacted Ghana's land and constitutional reform initiatives, how foreign players supported these reforms, and the extent to which these reforms reinforced gender equality outcomes and frameworks. The study concluded that because women have been organizing in Ghana for a long time, there are potent movements with distinct missions that are well-positioned to take advantage of possibilities that occur. Worldwide support for women's mobilization has been crucial in enabling women to have an impact on various reform processes, especially in the case of constitutional revisions. However, this support should have been more coordinated and strategically smart.

Research generally indicates that female legislators are more likely to offer and pass important measures about issues affecting women (Pair et al., 2021). Issues that directly and unduly affect women are called women's issues (Alzuabi, 2016). Other concerns, such as family aid and child support laws, are primarily affecting women because of traditional gender roles (Barnes & Cassese, 2017). Cross-national research indicates a significant correlation between the promotion of several women-friendly policies linked to maternity and childcare leave and the representation of women (Bouka et al., 2019). Green (2017) demonstrates the positive correlation between policies supporting maternal work and an increase in the proportion of women lawmakers following gender quotas in various European nations. There are localized relationships that are comparable. According to Lichuma (2017), daycare coverage and the proportion of women in local councils in are related.

Scholars postulate that disparities in rent-extracting behavior between genders may cause gender disparities in policy choices and outcomes. Analysis of corruption and bribery through surveys supports this notion in part: Using survey data from sizable samples of rich and developing nations, Du Plessis & Mistry (2019) discover a negative correlation between female representation and various indicators of corruption. Women are less inclined to support corruption and take bribes. However, environments with higher percentages of women in political posts may be less corrupt due to their welcoming nature, which may also help to mitigate the official and informal hurdles to female representation, glass ceilings, and unequal chances. For example, a recent cross-country study by Duriesmith & Meger (2020) shows how cultural variations may lead to misleading associations between corruption and female representation. There is currently limited causal data about the relationship between gender and political corruption in developing nations.

Research indicates that having more female politicians in the political field raises the caliber of the group (Kassa, 2015). Furthermore, several empirical studies have examined whether the qualifications of male and female politicians in charge of political institutions differ. The results indicate that female politicians possess the same qualifications as male politicians (Owuor, 2016) and that women elected through quotas are equally qualified as their counterparts elected by popular vote (Ringera, 2017). Consequently, it is unclear if, in a situation where female politicians are not as positively selected as they currently seem to be, the estimates for the impact of female politicians on policy outcomes and the caliber of institutions might be validated.

Observational and survey-based research consistently shows gender differences in policy priorities and policy preferences. Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004) use data on policy-specific complaints by male and female village council members in India to find gender disparities in policy preferences. Based on a US study, Carroll & Sanbonmatsu (2013) demonstrate that women are generally more in favor of redistributive policies than men. Hailu et al. (2023) use poll data collected soon after Swiss federal referendums to demonstrate notable differences between gender preferences in several sectors, including welfare policy, defense spending, health, and the environment. Finally, Jankowski and Marcinkiewicz (2019) provide survey evidence showing within-party disparities in policy preferences for welfare, culture, and crime; Belgian women legislators exhibit more left-wing views in these policy areas than their male counterparts.

III. METHODOLOGY

The comparative evaluational study design was employed in this study to examine the complex context of women's political Participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties. Because of its comparative evaluative nature, it allows an 'in depth' analysis of the different socio political contexts in each county, noting what might influence women's opportunities differently (Bukve, 2019). The goal of the study was to identify barriers and enablers specific to each county, which would offer insights into the localized nature of women's political engagement.

A stratified random sampling method was used to get a representative sample of 335 participants from the two sub-counties in each Nakuru and Narok. The combination of approaches provided representation from each province yet stayed diverse, accounting for differing socioeconomic backgrounds and political experiences among members of each county. Questionnaires, interviews, and FGDs were used to collect data using qualitative and quantitative audits. Five key informants, including local political leaders and gender advocates, were interviewed in-depth; four FGDs were conducted with community members and aspiring female politicians to explore everyday experiences and views on political engagement.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative questionnaire data, outlining participants' demographic and attitudinal distribution. Interviews and FGDs qualitative data were thematically analyzed to identify recurrent themes about sociocultural norms, policy awareness, and institutional support. To make the instruments reliable, they were pre-tested in a pilot study in a neighboring county with similar socio-cultural characteristics, and necessary changes were made to make the instruments more precise and more accurate. Using triangulation by comparing the findings in various data collection methods and sources helped strengthen the study's validity.

Throughout the study, ethical considerations were carefully observed. All participants gave informed consent and received information on confidentiality and anonymity and the right to withdraw at any stage of their Participation. Information was kept sensitive to protect respondents' identities, particularly those who spoke about socio-cultural and political challenges in their communities. These ethical standards were adhered to by the study, which built trust with participants and maintained integrity in the research process.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

The study had 335, 212 males (63.3%) and 123 females (36.7%). Of these, 98(49%) were male in Nakuru County compared to 68(51%) in Narok County. Nakuru had 103(51.1%) while Narok had 66(48.9%) females. Most of

the respondents in Nakuru 88(88.3%) were diploma holders. Of these, 48 (47.5%) were male, with 40 (40.8%) females. This is contrary to the respondents from Narok; 24 (35.3%) and 18(26.5%) reported they had university and secondary levels, respectively. More female respondents from Narok had 19(28.8%) secondary education, followed by 17(25.8%) with 17(25.8%) and 14(21.2%) with secondary and university level of education, respectively. The findings show that more male respondents were educated and well-informed than women. The study's results are consistent with the previously published Narok County profile of 2023, which showed that women's literacy is 31% lower than men's at 69%. According to UN Women (2022), women comprise about two-thirds of the 796 million illiterate adults worldwide.

The study established that 181(90%) and 119(89%) respondents in Nakuru and Narok indicated the existence of women's political participation opportunities in both counties. In Nakuru, 20(10%) of the respondents and 15(11%) in Narok failed to see any opportunities for women to participate. The high visibility of prospects in both Narok and Nakuru points to the high availability of opportunities. This affirms Zaenal (2022) study, which found that despite the under-representation of women in politics, there was still hope for opportunities to be engaged in politics.

One of the reasons the study respondents gave was that there is a cultural shift in the respective countries to enable women's accommodation in politics, with 258(77%) agreeing and 77(23%) disagreeing. This is supported by Ranta (2024), who note that cultural norms that encourage civic engagement and active citizenship can motivate women to participate in politics and public affairs. The researchers note that when communities prioritize democratic values, inclusivity, and social justice, it creates a conducive environment for women's political Participation through activism and leadership. Cultural shifts that promote supportive social networks and solidarity among women facilitate their entry and advancement in politics.

During FGDs, one of the emerging themes in the discussion of women's political participation was the involvement of women in volunteer organizations, which acted as springboards for participation in politics. For example, a participant said,

I have never regretted being a peer educator. "The group has helped me develop my individuality and sense of self. Though I was naturally shy, I could now blend in with the group despite my inability. I walk about chatting with individuals as a peer educator; whether young adults, seniors, or kids. I now know how to speak in public like an orator. You can't beat me when it comes to public speaking now. In all honesty, even though I was a new member, I was granted the organizer position for my constituency in my party because of my speaking ability. I participate in debates and express my opinions during meetings. People started asking questions like "Who is this girl?" but I didn't mind because I am often asked that in my group. "FGD 011(FGD discussion on 13th June 2024 Kilgoris Catholic Church).

Another participant said,

"I believe that I was appointed to the assembly because of my performance in my group. My writing, diligence, and communication skills all contributed to my appointment. I learned how to write the minutes of meetings when I was the secretary of my association during a session I went to on behalf of the organization. I write the reports and make sure to read them before the start of our next meeting. Most people, even at the assembly level, know how to accomplish this. In our assembly sessions, I have ensured that this is completed.

As you can see, I have no credentials, but I did learn how to write minutes. Secondly, I've benefited from learning to be time-conscious in my association. I'm usually the first to take a seat at assembly committee meetings. As the secretary, I had to make sure that I was present when the meeting began, and I also instilled in myself the value of respecting time in other spheres of my life. My ability to be organized is something significant I've learned from my association. I was once again nominated to the assembly to serve on the women and children subcommittee, and we are working hard. I am very good at organizing and planning things, especially gathering women for a program. "FGD 012 (FGD discussion on 13th June 2024 Kilgoris Catholic Church).

Another participant said,

"Since I've already held a leadership role, I don't see any issues with pursuing a more senior political post. By the grace of God, I can speak, I can encourage people to vote for me, and my experience in the PTA has shown me that I can compete for party chair or PTA positions as effectively. It all comes down to having confidence in your skills. I have, therefore, gained confidence in my abilities and myself through my involvement in the PTA and the Women's Fellowship. That even encouraged me to approach the female organizer of the party. " FGD 006(FGD discussion on 13th June 2024 Kilgoris Catholic Church).

The results affirm the positive impact of peer education and community involvement on personal development and leadership skills. The influence of peer leadership in enhancing communication and leadership skills was reported by Waiswa et al. (2017). This was from a study carried out among students on the roles of communication and leadership skills among students. This aligns with the experiences shared by the participants, where involvement in



peer education and community groups led to improved public speaking and organizational abilities. Additionally, a study by Yadav (2020) emphasizes the role of peer influence in developing social skills through cooperative learning environments. This supports the narrative of participants who gained confidence and leadership skills through their roles in community groups and educational settings. The structured peer interactions and responsibilities helped them develop essential skills such as public speaking, time management, and organizational abilities, which were crucial for their personal and professional growth.

Another discussion theme was education as a facilitator for women's opportunities for political Participation. Every respondent emphasized that education was necessary to improve their involvement in local government. According to the respondents, women's education equated to having the "power" to direct, sway, and be heard—particularly in patriarchal countries where males hold most of the decision-making authority. Respondents also demanded a form of "political education" that would provide women the civic knowledge and mindset needed to enter politics, particularly when running for office, to be more prominent in political activities. Organizing specialized training sessions for women who express interest in seeking political office was another suggestion that aligned with this idea:

“Though formal education doesn't matter at the local level, education is still critical. To equip them to run for office and hold positions in the assembly, women who are willing and demonstrate an interest in local politics should receive specific political Theory education or mentoring.” KI 004 (KI on 13th April 2024 Njoro Sub County offices).

During the focus group talks, the following viewpoint was expressed:

“A less formal curriculum should be designed to prepare women who aspire to become politicians and prepare them for political engagements. This way, upon graduation, they will be equipped to assume any political role within society. As you can see, there are a lot of requirements to become a politician, and our low educational background shouldn't be a barrier. This kind of stuff needs to be done.” FGD 0020. (FGD discussion on 13th June 2024 Kilgoris Catholic Church).

This finding agrees with Pair et al. (2021), who found a wealth of data demonstrating how personal education impacts political Participation. The results of the analysis show that the educational gap is less pronounced in environments with higher levels of education and is eliminated in the counties with the highest percentage of educated citizens. This strengthens the case for the relative educational model, which holds that the impact of individual-level schooling decreases with increasing environmental educational attainment. Based on our research, residents with little means are not helped by their surroundings; conversely, educated residents typically take advantage of advantageous circumstances.

The study established that several policies promoted opportunities for women's political participation. Among these, the most quoted were the national gender policy, public participation policy, education for all, the Basic Education Act, Kenya's education training gender policy, and free primary education. This led to finding out if their enforcement would bring any changes. With respect to the statement “enforcement of policies affecting women representation will result in increased women representation in politics,” the findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1:
The Policies in Place Support Women's Political Participation

Response	Nakuru		Narok		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	88	43.8	25	18.7	113	33.7
Agree	86	42.8	44	32.8	130	38.8
Neither Disagree nor Agree	14	7.0	18	13.4	32	9.6
Disagree	8	4.0	36	26.9	44	13.1
Strongly Disagree	5	2.5	11	8.2	16	4.8
Total	201	100	134	100.0	335	100

Table 1 shows that 25 (18.7%) respondents in Narok strongly agree to the statement compared to 88 (43.8%) in Nakuru. There were 113 (33.7%) respondents in total who strongly agreed to the statement. Of the study respondents, 86 (42.8%) in Nakuru and 44 (32.8%) in Narok agreed that enforcing policies affecting women's representation will increase women's representation in politics. Of the total respondents, 130 (38.8%) concurred. The Table further shows that in Nakuru, 14 respondents (7.0%) and 18 respondents (13.4%) indicated neither agreement nor disagreement in Narok. This was 32(9.6%) of the respondents in the total combined.

Eight respondents (4.0%) in Nakuru and 36 respondents (26.9%) in Narok expressed disagreement; in total, 44 (13.1%) respondents disagreed overall. Table 1 also shows that 5(2.5%) of the study respondents in Nakuru and 11 (8.2%) in Narok expressed strong disagreement with the statement that enforcement of policies affecting women's

representation will result in increased women's representation in politics. Even though the study results show a majority indicating policies in place to support women's political participation, this is not enough, as reported by Krook and Sanin (2016) and Kamaru (2018) that there must be a support to implement them for their effectiveness of policies aimed at increasing women's political Participation to be realised.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

While there might be disparities in Nakuru and Narok in women's political participation, there are various opportunities, as evidenced by the number of women elected as leaders in the counties. There are multiple opportunities, as evidenced by the number of women who have successfully vied for political positions at the local and national levels. Some opportunities favour women's political participation in Nakuru and Narok Counties, such as positive cultural shifts in favor of women participating in politics, a perception that women have a great potential for political roles, policies in place supporting women's political participation, and international, national and regional organizations have had interventions to support women's participation in politics. The percentage of women in politics in the region is higher compared to the other areas in Kenya. Further, women have emerged victorious in previous elections and political appointments.

5.2. Recommendations

In Nakuru and Narok Counties, progress and growth in opportunities for women's participation in politics have been encouraging. Strengthening mentorship programs that allow seasoned female politicians to advise and assist emerging female leaders is crucial to building on this momentum. This encouraging trend can be further strengthened by stepping up awareness programs to inform communities about the value of women's political Participation and dispelling preconceived notions. Furthermore, a solid basis to further advancement will be established by guaranteeing that laws promoting women's political engagement are efficiently carried out and closely observed.

Programs for training and capacity-building are essential for giving women the abilities and information they need to run for office and carry out their duties successfully after winning. A more inclusive atmosphere will result from supporting gender-sensitive legislation and fighting for laws that uphold women's rights and advance gender equality in the political sphere. Political parties are also important and must be urged to embrace laws and procedures favouring female candidates. More women can get involved in politics if media and technology are used to showcase accomplished female politicians and provide forums for them to discuss their struggles and experiences.

In addition, developing regional and global collaborations can give access to resources, exchange best practices, and offer extra assistance for advancing women's political participation. It is crucial to work with local communities to create a welcoming atmosphere for women in politics, which includes removing cultural obstacles and encouraging constructive cultural changes. Data-driven and successful initiatives will be ensured by conducting research to collect data on women's political participation and using this data to guide policies and programs. By implementing these suggestions, Nakuru and Narok counties can build on their achievements and foster an even more welcoming and encouraging atmosphere for women in politics.

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