RESEARCH ARTICLE

Perceived Organisational Barriers to Women Career Progression in Kenya's Civil Service

Kirai MN*, Elegwa Mukulu

Department of Human Resource Management School of Human Resource Development, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Kenya.

Corresponding Author: E-mail: **Margretkirai@yahoo.com*

Abstract

Purpose: The study seeks to investigate the perceived organizational barriers on women career progression in Kenya's civil service. Methodology: data was obtained through a descriptive survey involving 324 women in middle and senior management in selected government ministries. A structured questionnaire with likert scale questions was used to collect data from the respondents. An interview was also conducted with the human resource managers. The study used Gendered Organizational Structure (GOS) model of gender diversity to explains the status and experience of women) in organizations across organizational structure Findings: the study revealed that the organization's discriminatory practices in recruitment, selection and promotions are the most significant impediment of women career advancement. Other impediment includes absence of sound human resource policies and lack of mentors as well as networking practices. Limitations: the study was conducted in a few ministries in the civil service and therefore cannot be generalised in other institutions in the public and private sectors. Practical implications: provide evidence on the perceived organizational barriers to women career progression and offer recommendations on what the organizations as well as individuals can do to improve on the current practices. Originality: this is the first study of this nature conducted in Kenya focussing on the effects of organizational structures on women career progress.

Keywords: *Career progression, Civil service, Kenya, Women.*

Introduction

Globally the presence and status of female managers have improved dramatically over the last half a century, however, research indicate that women in management positions in a variety of professions continue to face a number of barriers within the organization that affect career progression [1]. A number of studies have identified structural and cultural barriers working within organizations that have led to under representation of women at the senior level [2].The anti-female nature of organization and the institutional discrimination such as limited access to networking processes lack of mentoring and limited training and development opportunities have contributed to women low career progression [3]. Concerns about organizational barriers in management development remain challenging and deserving of additional research.

In Kenya government statistics indicate that majority of women occupy low job groups in the civil service. A status report on women indicates that 84 per cent of men take the lion's share of senior positions compared to 16 per cent of women. Similar situation is replicated in parastatals where majority of male employees stand at 61 per cent compared to women 39 per cent. While women constitute majority of the population, they still constitute a big workforce whose employment is regarded as complementary rather than essential.

The limited advancement of women into the top management levels of the civil service in Kenya previously would be explained as a pipeline problem. It was said that women with the appropriate educational background are not available. With the pipeline now full of women the only marginality is the glass ceiling which serves as a reminder that most organizations were created by and for men[4]. Thus institutional norms rarely accommodate the fact that women typically bear the responsibility for home and family and therefore have more demands on their time. Institutions therefore end up judging women as less committed and less competent than their male counterparts.

Models that Support the Study

The study is supported by the gendered organization model which integrates three underlying models that add definitions and important aspects of enquiry.

Gendered Organizational Structure (GOS) Model

The GOS model of gender diversity explains the status and experience of women in organizations across organizational structure [5]. Specifically, includes informal networking, diversity performance evaluation, stereotyping and preferred leadership. According to Fagenson [6] and cooper [5] organizational structures impedes women entry to and advancement in the workplace. That structure can include job recruitment, job assignment, mentoring, retention, and training, how work and family are balanced by employees, and promotions and reward systems. Moreover, Bajdo and Dickson [7], found that the greatest predictor of the number of women in management position resulted from organizations that focus on the aspect organizational culture relating to gender equity practices.

Promotional Opportunity Model

Promotional policies and practices are designed to foster opportunities traditionally deemed essential for women to rise to executive level positions. Oakley [8], summarizes the significance of line experiences, performance based feedback, training and career development on the ability of women to rise to CEO and other senior level positions.

Inclusionary Diversity Model

Corporate climate, including informal networks has been cited as a cultural barrier to breaking the glass ceiling Cooper [5]. Such barriers can influence women's performance evaluations and potentially contribute to inhospitable and exclusionary environmentally [9].

Work/ Family Partnership Model

The work/family model presents opportunities for women to balance work and family responsibilities. The implementation of policies that help employees manage non work responsibilities such as dependent-care services and flexible –scheduling program like various types of family leave practices yields a positive effect on the number of women in upper level management.

Literature Review

Empirical Review

The organizational climate which refers to the prevailing corporate perceptions of women's professional capabilities and commitment affect their careers. It also includes attitude towards women that could result in unsupportive and discouraging work environment. Negative attitude permeate the workplace, questioning women's professional capabilities, inviting them in turn to work harder to prove their credibility and commitment as part of the 'invisible woman syndrome [9].

Research has shown that in male work environment, female managers often do not get the diversity of experience compared to male managers, women are blocked from promotions while moving up the ladder and also gender inequality and culture and dissatisfaction with promotions negatively influence women's overall job satisfaction. Satisfaction with one's job is very crucial because it has been found to be positively related to career growth [9].

A research carried out by Thomas [10], revealed that majority of organizations favour the use of informal recruitment and selection processes, such as small social networks and employee referrals. Many organizations rely on informal, rather than merit based processes in order to select the best candidates and to screen out large numbers of unsuitable applicants. Informal recruitment processes can lead to bias because recruiter tends to determine job requirements according to the current job- holder's gender [2]. If the current job-holder is male and displays certain characteristics and abilities, then these characteristics and abilities are determined as being necessary to the job. Applicants are then assessed according to these requirements, and where these are perceived as being held more by men then a man is preferred. This process tends to limit the number of women applicants for men's job. It reinforces occupational segregation and contributes to building stereotypical views of men and women and women's roles and abilities [2].

Few organizations make a systematic effort in assisting women by keeping them informed about all training and career development programs available and giving them access to these programs. A study carried out by Jamali, Safieddine and Daouk [11] in Lebanon revealed that women have fewer opportunities for professional development in organizations compared to men. The research suggests that

managerial advancement is positively related to human capital credentials. More specifically, women's advancement to top management is directly related to their increased knowledge and skills and professional development opportunities made available to them throughout their careers [12].

In spite of the consistent association of on-job-development and promotion, research indicates that women are offered fewer developmental experiences than men [13]. However a study carried out by Flanders [14] revealed that the responsibility for ensuring adequate training can not be left solely on the employer. To be successful, women themselves may often need to take the initiative to request the training they need in order to continue advancing in their careers.

Research done by Cross [15], revealed that in most organizations promotion policies are not clear. Cross further observed that women are not committed to their work due to their biological make up. Child bearing remains a barrier to women career progress. The scholar recommended a further research on the effects of parental care leave on women promotion and career progress which are being addressed by this study.

Research indicates that men tend to be promoted faster than women, even in organizations in which women dominate numerically and in which men are relative newcomers [16]. Rusaw [17] also found that the U.S. federal government promoted women more slowly and less often than male counterparts. Reasons for these differences are varied. Thomas, [10] explains men's greater success in achieving promotion is part to their greater use of informal networks as opposed to women's greater reliance on formal promotion processes alone. The operation of promotion policies in many organizations is an area which often has an unclear set of criteria attached. This allows for subjectivity rather than objectivity to enter the process with senior management allowed considerable scope for discretion [18].Often, promotion criteria are focused on a preconceived notion of who should perform the role rather than the qualifications required. A study conducted in Irish by Cross and Linehan [19], revealed that promotional policies have a significant negative impact on the advancement of women to the senior management positions.

According to Flanders [14] employers often believe that women are less committed to work

and less able to undertake a full time career than men, due to their biological make up, rather than ability. When promotion opportunities arise and an employer is given the choice between a man and a woman with equal qualifications, the woman he posits, is frequently viewed as the greater risk. Working in male dominated hierarchies is seen to reduce women's advancement levels as male managerial hierarchies are more likely to promote men for managerial positions, as men feel more comfortable with other men than they do with women [13].

Mentoring and networking relationships are also potentially valuable for women's advancement in view of boosting emotional support and confidence and careers satisfaction [9]. A study carried out by Cross [15] revealed a clear realisation among the female managers that their male counterparts were overtly engaging in networking activities which gave them increased levels of visibility among the senior management team. However, women in male dominated organizations often have limited networking and mentoring opportunities. Studies have shown that a significantly high proportion of women who have proved themselves successfully in career terms have received encouragement from their mentors [20].

Although mentoring relationship is crucial to women in management in organizations, women are significantly less likely than men to develop these relationships [21]. While researchers have demonstrated the importance of the mentor to the women managers they are often faced with organizational barriers which restrict the development of mentor relationships. Female managers may also have fewer formal and informal opportunities to obtain mentors than their male counterparts. The other issue is how people will interpret the relationship between the female manager and her male mentor. The study seeks to assess these issues and how they affect career advancement in Kenya.

Organizational culture or the way we do things around here influences what employees can do and how they conceptualize, define, analyze and address issues. The concept of organizational culture is important to understand barriers faced by career women. Organizational culture is often cited as either the key facilitator or barrier to work-life policies, as cultural norms override formal policy intentions [11].

Organizational culture can also present constraints to advancement of women to high level leadership and managerial positions where job advertisement for managerial positions require many years of continuous experience [1]. According to wood, organisational culture does not reflect the values that embrace and celebrate diversity in workplace. He asserts that there is need to actively challenge covert and overt practices that sustain gender bias hence hindering the progress of women in management.

Negative attitudes towards and sex-typed stereotype of women in the workplace continue to be reflected in the discriminatory organization practices through discriminatory managerial recruitment and selection processes, training and development opportunities performance evaluation procedures and promotions

From the literature the operation of promotion policies in many organizations is an area which often has unclear set of criteria attached. This allows for subjectivity rather than objectivity to enter the process with senior management allowed considerable scope of discretion. Often, promotion criteria are focused on a preconceived notion of who should perform the role rather than the qualification required. Employers often believe that women are less able to undertake a full-time career than men, due to their biological make up, rather than ability. When promotion appointment arises and an employer is given the choice between a man and a woman with equal qualification, the woman is viewed as the greater risk. Working in male dominated her/his is seen to reduce women advancement levels as male managerial hierarchies are more likely to promote more managerial positions as men feel more comfortable with other men than they do with women.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

A descriptive survey was carried out in an attempt to investigate the barriers that women face in their organisations when trying to advance their careers. The population for this study concentrated on women in middle and senior management. They were staff that would be promoted to executive level. A total of 324 women in middle and senior management participated in the study. Human resource managers from selected ministries were also interviewed.

A questionnaire was adapted from the studies of Wise and Bond [22] to identify barriers to promotion and career progression that women faced in their organizations. Based on responses, comments and suggestions were also sought from human resource managers to ensure that the questionnaires did not encroach into potential conflicts with organization's values. Cronbach alpha coefficients was used to determine the reliability of the instrument.

From 324 female managers, 250 respondents (77 percent) returned their questionnaires. To analyze the data, SPSS a statistical software package was used. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, means and standard deviation were determined. Mean comparisons were done using independent t-test and one way ANOVA.

Findings and Discussions

Table 1: Item Statistics on the opinion women hold on organizational structures as barriers to women career progression

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Women receive fewer opportunities for professional development at work	2.91	1.235	220
Organizations lack policies to support women career progression	3.00	1.242	220
Promotions to the next grade is not based on performance	2.85	1.258	220
Male hierarchies are more likely to promote men for managerial positions than women	3.23	1.247	220
Men are promoted faster than women	2.97	1.264	220

Inhospitable organizational culture act as a barrier to women career progression	3.13 1.184	220
Lack of women in general line management hinder women career progress	3.09 1.202	220
Lack of understanding among employers of the value of gender diversity at senior levels impede women career progress	3.32 1.143	220
Women who have progressed in their career have relevant work experience	3.86 .960	220
Most women in senior positions have advanced their career levels and have appropriate training	4.10 .903	220
Most women in senior positions change their institutions	3.34 1.054	220
Women who progress demonstrate competency on the job producing high quality work	4.13 .823	220
Women who progress are given opportunity and support from the company	3.52 1.022	220
Average	**3.34 1.12**	

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	16	6.30%
Disagree	66	25.80%
Neutral	31	12.00%
Agree	101	39.60%
Strongly agree	42	16.30%
Total	**256**	**100%**

Respondent's perception on organisational structures.

Organisational practices include managerial selection and recruitment, promotion procedures, performance evaluation, and training and development. While several studies have reported the efforts of leading organizations in supporting women's progression [23-24] many continue to reveal that nothing has really changed. Negative attitudes toward and sex-typed stereotypes of women in the workplace continue to be reflected in discriminatory organizational practices through discriminatory managerial recruitment and selection processes, training and development opportunities, performance evaluation procedures, and promotions [25-26]. A similar study carried out by Hutchings [27] and Weir [28] highlighted the selection process in the Arab world as being highly subjective and based on personal contacts, nepotism, and family name. In another study Weir [28] found evidence of limited access by Arab female managers to on- job training and development and lack of systematic performance appraisal. A similar study carried out by Al-lamki's [29] revealed that male bosses held traditional attitudes towards working women resulting in discriminatory selection and promotion. This study revealed similar results.

The findings highlighted discriminatory practices in Kenya's civil service in recruitment, selection and promotions. The respondents highlighted that recruitment and promotions to senior positions depend on who knows who or how one is politically connected. The study also revealed that performance evaluation is very subjective allowing the senior management considerable scope for discretion. Often promotion criteria are focused on a preconceived notion of who should perform the role rather than the qualifications required.

On on-job training, similar findings were replicated by this study where the respondents felt that the bosses are biased against women when approving training courses. Therefore findings of this study demonstrate that organisation structures determine women career progression. Regardless of the women's management level, the majority of the respondent 56% confirmed the salience of discriminatory and gender centred barriers in the organisation.

The culture of an organization also acts as a barrier to women career progression. A large body

of research by other scholars suggest that patterns of behaviour, attitudes , values, and norms act as either facilitator or barriers to work –life policies [30-32].Organizational culture has been studied extensively in the European, American and Asian literature and studies have shown that gender inequities in the workplace are the root cause of the discriminatory treatment against women that limit their upward mobility [33].Hence having women as managers violates the social norm of men's higher status and superiority. Majority of studies describe and highlight the persistent stereotypical view of female managers as more communal with more feminine ways of managing compared to men, who are described as more competitive and business oriented. Against these prevailing views women are perceived to be inadequate as managers [34].

Such barriers still persist in today's modern world and are unchallenged despite women's higher education attainment levels. The situation is similar in Kenya. In this study Kenyan female managers attributed negative attitude, perceptions, and stereotypes to the cultures of the women's organization and found them to be unsupportive and discriminating towards women. The findings are also consistent with those of Jamali et al [11] that detailed how the work culture of organization can impede women's career progression. This type of organization culture that is discriminatory towards female managers may be attributed to the prevailing social and cultural values and practices that tend to have a significant influence on the organization's recruitment and promotions practices in the country. This explains why women remain underrepresented in the senior management in civil service.

The discriminatory organization cultures that favour men reinforce the patriarchal culture. Respondents were asked to state the challenges that they face at their work place. The most three challenges faced by the respondents in their career life were 25% discrimination due to their gender, 30% work life balance 24% indicated lack of support from their bosses. Others included lack of support from family, lack of confidence, discouragement from friends and inefficient systems in the workplace.

Organizations are discriminatory in their practices in recruitment, professional development and promotion. Women managers lack support, trust and opportunities for development. According to the study, when it comes to professional development and promotions women are measured by the male model of career development, without considering there family responsibilities. The respondents were asked how they dealt with the challenges they had experienced in their career life. The responses included working harder 15% balancing work and family responsibilities 12% and ignoring detractors 13%. During the interview a few mentioned perseverance, focusing on priorities, consulting widely and seeking support from colleagues.

Regarding what women can do to progress in their careers in Kenya, 30% of the respondents felt that they need to be assertive to compete with men for the senior positions and press for affirmative action in addition to applying for senior positions in the civil service. Others felt that they need to support one another and build more networks. Other suggestions given by the respondents included, making demands for the senior positions and those women in senior positions to support others to ascend.

According to the literature mentoring has long been described throughout the literature as helpful for career progression [35].Mentors are considered critical for career advancement as they participate in career progression though coaching, role modelling and counselling. Based on previous studies conducted in USA, employees with mentors have been found to have access to important people and enjoy more career satisfaction and promotions more frequently [36].

Mentors are considered important to the success of female managers because mentors help in the development of manager's sense of identity and professional confidence and reduce discrimination [37]. However a number of studies have highlighted the difficulties that female mangers have in getting mentors [38]. According to the literature there are few women in senior positions and the discomfort with cross-gender mentors. The same findings are revealed in this study where the respondents admitted that they lack mentors in their organisations. They also revealed that there are very few women inn senior positions who can mentor them. Just as the literature as revealed cross –gender mentoring will not be taken well in Kenya. Therefore in general lack of mentor has negatively impacted women's career progression. Much of the literature on mentoring comes from the wests which suggest that mentoring can play a crucial role in career advancement of women managers. There is no study that has investigated the

existent or impact of mentoring on the career advancement of female managers in Kenya.

A similar study carried out by Al-Lamki [29], reported that the absence of role models and mentoring programs is a major organizational concern limiting women's access to top managerial positions. Finding a mentor in Kenyan organizations is difficult given that there are not enough women in senior management positions to provide support. Given men's control in the organizations they are more likely to be mentors. This suggest that women in Kenya miss opportunities for career progression because they lack female role models .Therefore mentoring relationships can be considered potentially valuable for women's career progression in Kenya. On this basis and given the current lack of knowledge of mentoring on career progression of female managers in Kenya, more research is needed whether mentoring relationships play a crucial role in career progression of Kenyan female managers.

Researchers have confirmed that women who have mentors do better in management and in their careers, as women with mentors gain reflected power, feedback and access to resources and senior positions through their mentors. Despite the positive impact that mentoring has been claimed to have on career progression of female managers in terms of creating a favourable organisational environment, enhancing employee satisfaction, providing career development functions and self confidence and improving promotional prospects, the study revealed that mentoring as a concept appears to be non existent in Kenyan civil service.

Literature revealed that in most organizations promotion policies are not clear. Research indicates that men tend to be promoted faster than women even in organizations in which women dominate numerically and in which men are relatively newcomers. A study carried out in US revealed that women are promoted more slowly and less often than their male counterparts. Reasons given were that is that men are able to use informal networks in achieving promotion as opposed to women who rely on formal promotions alone. This was supported by this study where the respondents confirmed that women are not good in networking and are not able to lobby for promotions because of the culture. It was also noted from the literature that the operation of promotion policies in many organizations is an area which often has unclear set of criteria attached. This was

supported by this study which revealed that most women were not aware of the existent of clear policies on the criteria of promotions or were certain these policies did not exist. These findings suggest that, in the view of most women, the promotion process in the organization is still prone to all manner of abuse including gender discrimination. Where promotion policies in an organization are not clear, those in lower cadre especially women can easily believe that their gender may be the reason why they are not promoted. In most of the organisations, promotion procedures were found to be gender-blind and the unwritten laws limit the progress of women particularly from middle management levels to senior management levels.

Recruitment procedures were also found to be superficially gender-blind; however, the fact that most recruitment boards are often all or majority are male (reflecting the management structure of the organisation) makes recruitment policy prejudicial to women.

Thus institutional norms rarely accommodate the fact that women typically bear the responsibility for home and family and therefore have more demands on their time. Institutions therefore end up judging women as less committed and less competent than their male counterpartsTo support the findings hypothesis testing on the perception of organizational structures as a barrier to women career progression was done using one sample T-test

$H_0{}_{3:}$ Organizational Structures are not likely to be Perceived as Barriers to Women Career Progressions

 The findings revealed that t (248)=8.288,p<0.001 which is less than the critical value of 0.05 and the mean difference is positive significantly indicating that the respondents agree that organisational structures are perceived as barriers to women career progression. Therefore the null hypothesis that organizational structures are not likely to be perceived as barriers to women career progression is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

The results in table 4.6 provide support for the alternative hypothesis that organization structures are perceived as barriers to women career progression in Kenyan civil service. And are consistent with the previous research carried out in other parts of the world [39];[26]. The results for research revealed significant difference across the management levels and showed that

majority of the respondents 56 percent of women stated that they faced discrimination due to their gender in promotion. The respondents also stated that male hierarchies are more likely to promote men for managerial positions than women. Majority of women also believed that men receive more support and trust from the organisation than women. The respondents also highlighted the long hours culture associated with management positions and particularly middle and senior management positions as effectively acting as a means of closure to exclude women because fewer women than men are able to comply with the requirement due to family commitments. Additionally this provides a rationale for those holding the positions of power in organizations (men) to believe that men are therefore better suited to senior management positions than women. It is necessary to caution against this type of organizational culture as it acts as a barrier for women, more so than for men who are seeking to progress to the senior management team. When there are a few women in senior roles the male dominated organizational culture and attitudes are not challenged, thereby remaining a feature of organizational life. As the findings in this study establish these factors then act as barriers to women's career advancement, causing them to re-evaluate their career aspirations.

The study also revealed that majority of organizations favour the use of informal recruitment and selection processes such as small social networks. A similar study carried out by Thomas [10] revealed that majority of organizations rely on informal rather than merit based processes in order to select the best candidate. Informal recruitment processes can lead to bias because recruiter tends to determine job requirement according to the current job-holder. If the job holder is a man, then a man is preferred to a woman. This reinforces occupational segregation and contributes to building stereotypical views of men and women and women's roles and abilities.

Summary and Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that women in the civil service face many challenges. Although they have the necessary qualifications and experiences, they still have to deal with lack of support from their supervisors, peers, spouses and staff. The study established that women in senior positions in the civil service were in support of the presidential affirmative action policy to recruit 30% of women in all public service appointments.

Appointing more women in the public service through affirmative action would expose more women to leadership roles and thus provide models and mentors for the young career women. However there are challenges facing women in the entire country. Perceptions and attitude of the public towards women leadership. Overcoming stereotype and myths about women's leadership capability is paramount to society education especially that education that targets senior male public officers and the law makers.

Within the organization, there are certain factors, mainly subtle which serve to hamper women's career advancement. First of all, women have limited access to continuous education. The study revealed that 60 per cent of women were not able to attend at least one form of training or professional meeting annually; 12 per cent of women had not been to any sort of training within the last 5 years. In some ministries where participants are largely nominated by their employers, women are poorly represented. The study also established that even where women received training, the gender aspect was mostly absent. Forty-five per cent of the sample noted that they had never attended training with a gender dimension. Another 20 per cent noted that they had only attended once or twice. The figures indicate therefore that women have to make their way unaided, in a completely male-dominated organization.

It was also noted that in most organizations, the performance appraisal rules do not consider the special circumstances that cause women employees to stay at home to face some family exigencies or for the sake of taking care of the children. Other factors that affect women career progression were attitudinal rather than structural. One of the respondent commented that `` *the chances for application to training are usually equal for both men and women, however the approval is sometimes directed more to men than top women*". This indicates lack of fairness and male bias.It was also revealed that women do not compete favourably with men. Women perceive their promotion to senior management levels as their basic right that they are competent to get.

Interview carried out with the human resource managers revealed that women's recruitment and promotion is carried in most organizations according to employment laws based on; availability of vacant posts, performance appraisal reports, years of experience and competence and high qualifications. They confirmed that procedures are usually carried out

by committee through nomination or application to the post. However this is not done in all organizations. The study revealed that civil service procedures for recruitment and promotion are gender blind, they are laid down and supposed to be strictly adhered to. Consequently, if regulations are strictly adhered to it is difficult to discriminate against women. However, the reality is that women have been discriminated against in subtle and not so subtle ways. The study revealed that despite all the problems women undergo to attain and advance in top management; women are still not convinced about affirmative action for women. When women were asked whether affirmative action has ever influenced their decision to promote a subordinate: 60 per cent of women said, "no"; 25 per cent said, "sometimes"; 12 per cent said, "yes". This is an indication that affirmative action is not implemented in most organizations

Nearly all institutions have gender-blind promotion procedures. However, it was found that these procedures are manipulated particularly in male-dominated areas, and negative attitude of men seriously hampers female progress. This forces the woman to stagger in one place, to lobby extensively for merited positions or to be forced to constantly prove herself. The dual (home and office) role of women was also stated as a problem. Coping with domestic and official duties was stated as an important problem which required increased coping strategies. In jobs where out-of-station posting is a pre-requisite for promotion, family responsibility and cultural expectations was a serious hindrance to progress.

Within the organization, most promotion procedures were found to be gender-blind but unwritten laws limit the progress of women particularly from middle management level to senior management level .Within the development process, gender responsiveness means recognizing that men and women often have different needs and priorities, face different constraints, have different aspirations and contributes to development in different ways. This study reveals that women empowerment lies in the ability to work hard with determinations to achieve the required qualifications and experience that has helped in overcoming work environmental factors that have hindered their career progression. In addition recognizing the role of networking lobbying for affirmative action and inclusion of men as partners in the campaign for gender equity in public service is a critical success factor.

Recruitment procedures were also found to be superficially gender-blind. However, the fact that most recruitment boards are often all or majority male (reflecting the management structure of the organization) makes recruitment policy prejudicial to women. Sexist questions enquiring into the domestic situation of women were often addressed to women but not to men. It was found that in some ministries, the prejudice against the hiring of women was blatant. Top officials stated quite openly that they don't want to recruit women into their organizations

Recommendations

Employers should be sensitized that women make good leaders. They should be given opportunity to lead and during the recruitment they should hire more women. Equal opportunities should be given during training. The bosses should not discriminate against women when assigning responsibilities. The government should implement affirmative action and formulate a legal framework for implementing the presidential policy of hiring at least 30% of women in the public service. The government should also recognize the role women play in social and economic development. The government should also provide an enabling environment for women to excel and have policies which will place more women in senior positions.Women need organization support. Kenyan organizations should confront the challenge and responsibility of identifying and developing high potential employees and providing adequate development opportunities irrespective of gender. Organizational processes need to be inclusive of women talent in order to leverage the intellectual capital of the entire workforce. It is important for organizations to have objective HR policies in which recruitment, training and development, performance appraisals, and promotions are determined in an objective manner, one that does not discriminate based on gender.The management of institutions should understand that diversity in workforce embodies different perspectives and approaches that enhance and develop performance; accordingly they should encourage women's promotion.Career plans and related competency requirements should be made clear and more transparent for women. Promotion criteria and measures should be clearly identified, including the related procedures to make the promotion process more structured and transparent for women.To facilitate change in organization culture and to create healthy work environment

where women do not feel that their employers prefer men, organizations need to look into creating a more gender–neutral work environment and reduce gender stereotype and discrimination based on gender. Top Management vacant positions should be openly advertised for in order to give all qualified candidates equal opportunities to apply for them.

Human resources development programs should provide equal opportunities for all employees on gender-neutral bases. Women should be trained to be effective in their performance and to prove their capabilities in decision making and problem solving through challenging and high-profile assignments Performance appraisal procedures should use gender-neutral and measurable criteria to avoid any bias. Women's appraisal should be based on an organizational rather than personal approach where merit and professional achievements can clearly be identified.

Any circumstances related to woman's reproductive or family role should not prejudice her chance of promotion. If her performance and qualifications are satisfactory this can make her eligible for promotion. Affordable, good-quality and consistent childcare houses should be established in work places to assist women with their children Many of the interviewees also stressed the need to provide corporate mechanisms for example provision of nursery services and day care centre, flex- time, extended

maternity and family support services, which can be tremendously helpful in terms of allowing women to effectively reconcile their multiple roles responsibilities. Women should be aware of and fully understand their rights and learn how to attain them. This can be attained through socialization at home, education institutions and work places. Women should understand that their promotion to top managerial levels is crucial in enabling them to participate in decision making and in influencing policies at the macro-level to be more gender sensitive, and hence to promote gender mainstreaming in designing, executing, implementing, and monitoring those policies. Women should be more career –focused rather than job focused. They should learn how to have systematic, critical thinking and to make use of the role models in the work environment. They must be keen to have more training chances and to be initiative in undertaking challenging assignments to qualify them to be promoted to top managerial levels They should take work issues seriously enough and not absent themselves for any social or familial events of less importance to them. Seriousness is an important indicator to responsibility and reliability, both of which are supportive to promotion. They should adopt proper division of addressing the constraints facing women at work is action by women themselves. Several interviewees indicated that despite the role played by cultural forces and organizations, the change has to be catalyzed by women themselves.

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