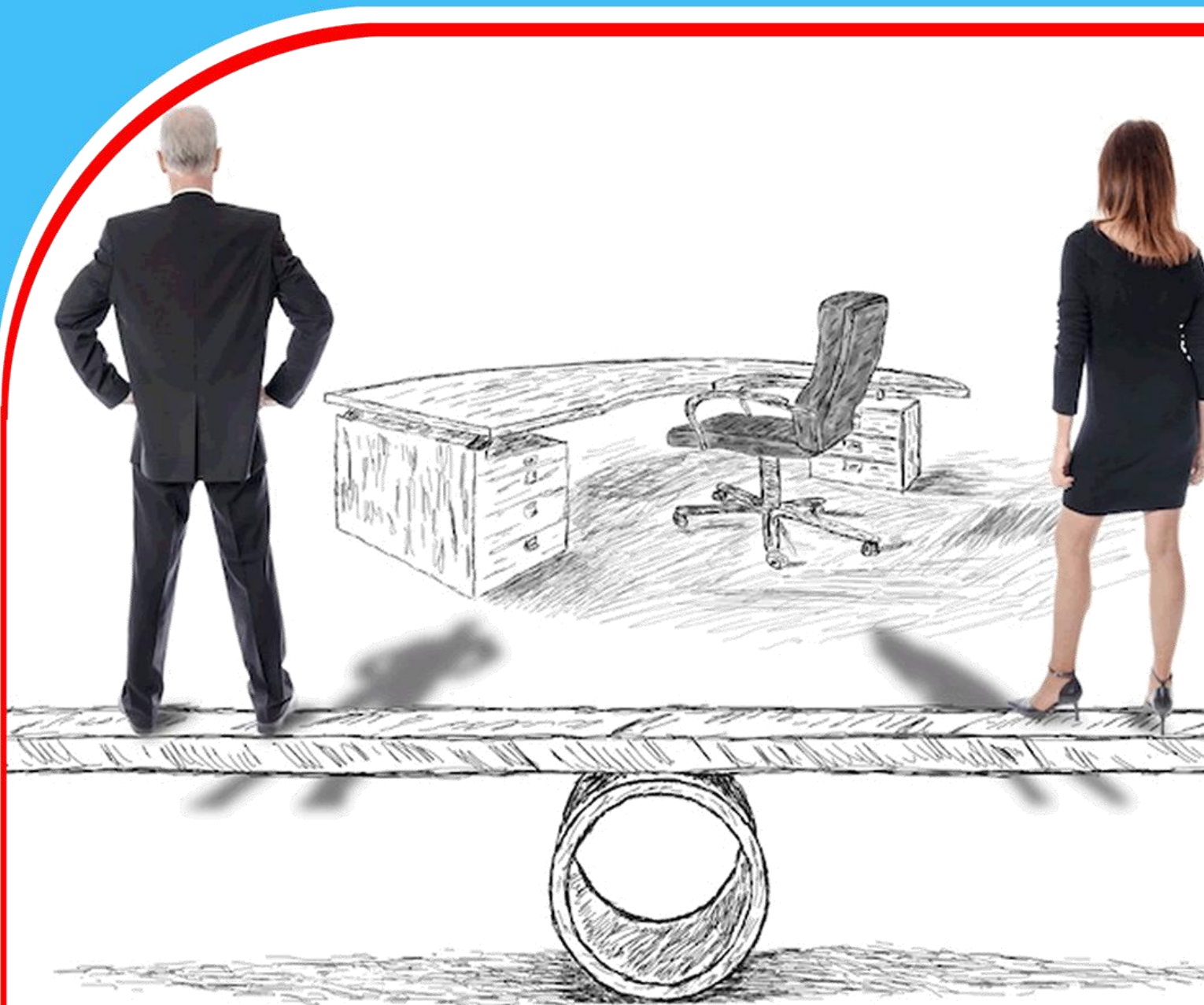# European Journal of
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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Women's participation in development is considered essential because it helps to achieve social justice and tackle poverty globally. However, women's level of participation is still facing challenges and difficulties, especially in Africa. For instance, in Turkana County in Kenya, the status of women's success remains limited despite laudable efforts to promote their status in society. This is attributable to cultural factors, which often make women sidelined in productive and economic activities. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the effects of social-cultural practices on the level of women's participation in development.

Methodology: Liberal feminist theory that believes gender inequality is produced by reduced access for women and girls to civil rights and the allocation of social resources such as education and employment was used to guide the study. A descriptive survey research design was employed in the study to blend the quantitative and qualitative research approaches and for holistic investigation of the study problem. The study was a survey of the 31 women self-help groups in Turkana Central Sub-County and the elected women political leaders. The leaders of the women self-help organizations were randomly selected and women political leaders were purposively selected, where 98 study participants constituted a study sample. Questionnaires were used for data collection. Data analysis was done using both descriptive (frequencies, means, percentages, and standard deviations) and inferential statistical methods (regression analysis and Analysis of Variance- ANOVA).

Findings: The study established that 62.9% of the respondents agreed that gender disparity affected women's participation in development. This implied that socio-cultural practices such as early marriages, polygamy, womens' restrictions on owning land, marital status, and gender roles hindered women from participating in development.

Recommendations: The study recommends that government and privately-owned organizations collaborate with the Turkana Community leadership and development groups to create sensitization and awareness of the importance of women's participation in development activities. The study further recommended that the Turkana community needs to abandon some beliefs that hinder women from participating in development and embrace new paradigm shifts and good practices for their social mobilization and participation in issues of socioeconomic wellbeing.

Key words: *Social Cultural Practices, Women Participation, Community Development*

1. INTRODUCTION

The progression of women in community development is a major source of concern all around the world. In today's environment, however, there is still an imbalance between men and women in development ventures. It is apparent that progress toward women's participation in development has been hampered at the institutional levels despite their roles defined equally by societies. Women have been dehumanized, debilitated, tarnished, marginalized, secluded, and silenced in the past. Worst of all is poor involvement of women in planning and decision-making. According to Hart (2013), the gender disparity is attributable to patriarchal structures that pervade people's lives. In Africa, women lack independence and ability in decision-making as well as control over their situation in life (Green & Haines, 2015).

Women's role in development refers to their active involvement in project preparation, decision-making, and implementation. Wildlife restoration programs, health projects, water projects, women's centers, dispute resolution, and training are examples of projects that women have engaged in. Women work in self-help organizations supported by governments, non-governmental organizations, donors, and corporate institutions. According to the study report by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD, 2016), other critical factors affecting women's participation in development include social cultural dictates of communities, lower education levels, family roles and responsibilities, limited capital resources and entrepreneurial capacities. It is also stated in study by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2020) that whilst women make up half of the world's population, they do a third of the productive jobs, earn a tenth of the world's profits, and very few of them have access to the wealth resources they create.

In India, women are extensively involved in development projects such as Joint Forest Management (JFM) in all Indian Mountain Areas Women's Committees, and cottage industry (Mudini, 2012). The village forests are being managed by forest conservation committees. Every month, six women go on a forest tour in groups of six to determine the extent of the outbreak and the harm it has caused. They take appropriate action, such as reporting major cases of deforestation to real estate authorities.

In African content, women's participation in development projects still faces many challenges, especially in slowly developing economies (Smith, 2013). In Southern Africa, countries continue to improve economic growth, and there are not enough jobs created to absorb more women and youth into the labor market (Kalita, 2012). As a result, women make up a larger proportion of the unemployed. It is shown in Kalita (2012) that women remain inferior to men in the labor market, where women win less stable employment.

In Zambia, economic factors, privileged gender and social and cultural roles, and limited women's access to production factors are contributing immensely to high levels of poverty among women. Arguments in Ngoma-Moono (2018) depict the inability to address gender problems through formulation and implementation of requisite gender development and inclusion policies as predisposing women to poverty. In Tanzania, as per findings in Grabes (2015), Maasai women are among the least fortunate, poor, and striving to develop themselves through indigenous women associations that lack requisite financial and material resources. Despite the fact that Maasai women contribute about 58% of Tanzania's public items, their circumstances are deteriorating because of the absence of satisfactory policy and resource support to improve their participation and performance in their livelihood and business enterprises.

In Kenya, one of the 2030 visions for gender, youth and vulnerable groups expects to build the cooperation of women in all monetary, social, and political dynamic cycles regardless of higher representation legislative and legal organs; social development, and eradication of detrimental cultural practices such as female genital mutilation and child labour (UNICEF, 2020). As indicated by Bette (2014), women's cooperation in projects is affected by social quality, level of training, governmental and societal equity challenges, and negative media influence women's capabilities.

Socio-cultural practices that hold back women's participation in community projects include early marriage, denial of the right to own land, and polygamy. Socio-cultural factors such as individual factors do hinder women's participation in community projects, mostly negative attitudes by the women themselves, fear of criticism, lack of self-esteem, and lack of confidence (Grabe, 2015; Ngoma-Moono, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Women's participation in development is fundamental in accomplishing social equity as well as curbing poverty levels. Research across the world indicates that when women are given a prominent role in development, it leads to improved economic growth, higher chances of child survival, overall improvement in family health, and a reduction in fertility rates, thus slowing down population growth rates. Several studies have been conducted globally on women's participation in community development and social economic development in various parts of the world.

Among the critical studies with a strong emphasis on social and economic factors that influence women's participation in income-generating activities are UNRISD (2016), Cagna & Rao (2016), Grabe (2015), and UNICEF (2020). However, little has been done in Turkana County to alleviate the impact of socio-cultural practices on the socioeconomic development of women. Therefore, this study is aimed at assessing the effects of social-cultural practices on the level of women's participation in development. The findings will hopefully help in addressing issues affecting women's participation in development in Turkana County and will help community developers and different partners on the methods of managing challenges impeding Kenya's women's participation in development.

Research Question

How does socio-cultural practices affect women's participation in community development in Turkana Central Sub-County?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The study was guided by liberal feminist theory that believes gender inequality is produced by reduced access for women and girls to civil rights and the allocation of social resources such as education and employment. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's (1860-1935) work helped formalize feminist theory during the 1960s. Growing up, she defied society's expectations of her by focusing on reading and learning concepts that were foreign to women who were taught to be house wives. This theory is of the view that all individuals (male and female) are brought into the world at an equivalent level along these lines, with circumstances that ought to be given to them, and that women's underestimation and subordination rise in perspective of non-affirmations and execution of this theory (Sha, 2007).

The liberal women's feminist warns that no one should profit from the current sexual orientation divide because both men and women are critical to the advancement of the general public and society. So they should be dealt with equally. Likewise, consider that no society can thrive if half of its assets are disregarded (women). This is an attempt to bridge the growing gender gap by emphasizing that women should be given equal opportunities to participate in everyday activities as their male partners in order for underdeveloped countries to continue to develop equally.

The theory attempts to eradicate sexism and stereotypical views of women and men from children's books and the mass media, in all human undertakings. This will be the way to bridge the gap between men and women in participating in development in Turkana County, in particular, and Kenya in general.

Empirical Review

In South Africa, Majali (2012) tried to explore socio-cultural factors that added to the intangibility of women in farming exercises at Khwezana town, Alice District. The examination was supported by a people-focused formative methodology matched with the women's activist point of view based on ethnographic research techniques, member perception, and essential individual meetings. The examination uncovered that socio-cultural factors, for example, restricted access to land, access to credit (because of convention and culture conditions) and culture change all in all are the main considerations that essentially affected the low agricultural women in the study area.

A review by Iddy and Kisimbii (2017) on social elements impacting the investment of women in the implementation of community projects in Kilifi County discovered that social conventions are deciphered to debilitate women's interest in community projects. The investigation suggested that one-sided societies and customs ought to be forgotten and the constitution maintained by seriously including women in community projects. Mindfulness battles on gender ought to be done to abate the stereotyping, sex isolation, and down-rating of women in the general public.

As indicated by Mbogori (2014) in the investigation into factors that influence the level of participation of women in community development projects, it was uncovered that the socio-cultural component plays one of the significant roles in explaining the low interest of women in network improvement ventures. The examination prescribed that the government should join forces with different associations to organize more workshops to sharpen the network on the importance of enabling women to partake in improvement projects. Another investigation led by Ngamo-Moono (2016) found out that socio-cultural elements affecting Maasai women's involvement in pay-creating exercises in the examination territory included age, conjugal status, instruction foundation, family unit size, and absence of basic leadership on pay use. The investigation reasoned that Maasai women's association in salary creating exercises contributed little to the prosperity of most families in the examination zone. The examination prescribed the need to make empowering conditions that should enhance loan strategy and business abilities.

Socio-cultural elements influencing women's investment in watershed resources management in the Chahi catchment, in South-Western Uganda, was an investigation done by Omuchemi (2016). The examination discoveries uncovered that there was no huge connection between sex assessments on the effects of the socio-cultural components and women's participation in water and soil resource management. The socio-cultural considerations that influenced

women's participation in water and soil resource management were relocation of men, property proprietorship, and the conceptive role of women.

Further outcomes uncovered that women are truly dependable to the extent that land and soil fertility management is concerned, regardless of the confinements of land ownership. Women take part in settling on choices for mulching, water collecting, and natural fertilizer application, and they take part in mutual basic leadership amid catchment management advisory group gatherings. The investigation acknowledged women's participation in water and soil management in Chahi among different ends, in spite of the essence of socio-cultural components like property possession, property inheritance, and the migration of men. The investigation prescribed that gender responsive residency frameworks be advanced in the catchment as it was observed to immobilize the full support of women in watershed resource management.

In Tanzania, Mwalumbe (2015) contemplated the effects of socio-cultural factors on the execution of women's small and medium enterprises in Tanzania. The investigation was led in Dodoma urban and Chamwino areas in Dodoma district utilizing cross-sectional and contextual analysis examine plans in which eighty women SMEs were reviewed utilizing questionnaires. Discoveries demonstrate that women's immobility, poor help from societal individuals, and ethnicity influence adversely the performance of women's SMEs. Alternately, the family role, dimension of instruction, and good examples were essential factors in sustaining the performance of women's SMEs. The investigation by and large inferred that SCFs have a negative impact on the performance of women's SMEs. The investigation suggested that the government ought to define arrangements that energize women's participation in entrepreneurial activities.

An investigation directed by Manuh (2012) uncovered that, in parts of Northern Ghana, land that women have cautiously offered has been removed, abandoning them with not so much fertile but rather more inaccessible plots. Manuh (2012) likewise expresses that in Africa, new land titles are more often than not enrolled for the sake of a male family head, paying little heed to women's financial commitment to the family unit, their standard rights, or the expanding number of female-headed family units.

Lelelit, Macharia, and Kirema (2017) studied the influence of social-cultural factors on women's participation in wildlife conservation projects, a case study of the northern rangeland trust in Samburu County. The particular targets were; to build up the impact of social practices on women's interest in natural life protection projects; to evaluate the impact of the degree of training on women's cooperation in untamed life preservation projects; to decide the impact of sexual orientation jobs on women's support in natural life protection projects; and to inspect the impacts of strict convictions on women's investment in natural life protection projects in the Northern Rangeland Trust in Samburu County. Illustrative review research configuration was utilized in this investigation. The objective populace was 213 individuals from staff in the administration positions of the Northern Rangeland Trust in Samburu County, where an example of 64 respondents was chosen. They were conservancy board members, management staff, and conservancy Scouts/officers level task administrators who counseled or associated with the Lelelit.

Nkumbuku (2018) examined social-cultural factors affecting women in decision-making and conflict resolution activities in Garissa County. The objective populace comprised of 100 respondents. Information was assembled by the utilization of a survey and was investigated utilizing subjective and quantitative information. The discoveries uncovered that socio-social variables impact women's interest in dynamic and compromise. Women typically counseled
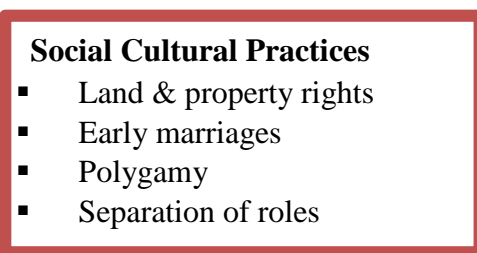
their male family members since they felt that the position of authority was a hold for men in the general public. The study also discovered that the general public expected men to take on active roles and compromise with women, rather than simply standing by and watching. This is on the grounds that the local area's way of life had a task to carry out in distributing sexual orientation job. A customarily attributed job, that is, as far as gender, decides women's vocations and progress. Improvement projects were attempted somewhere in the range of 2015 and 2016. The discoveries showed that social practices, level of training, gender roles, and religious beliefs impacted women's support in untamed life protection projects.

A study done by Ogidan, Adeoye and Ologele (2016) focused on social cultural factors influencing women's participation in sports as perceived by female students of the University of Ilorin. Two hundred female college understudies dwelling in school lobbies at home were engaged in the examination. These were chosen utilizing straightforward irregular testing. A 22-question poll dependent on socio-social variables impacting female investment in sports was administered to the respondents. The discoveries were that culture, family foundation, religion, peer gathering and sexual orientation impact females' investment in sports. Considering this, it was suggested that the administration ought to empower support in sports by giving grants and other impetuses to female competitors who dominate in any game contest.

While these studies have focused on social-cultural practices and women's participation in development, they have been largely conducted in other countries such as Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Ghana, and Tanzania. There are also other studies done in Kenya in areas such as Kilifi, Mandera, and Maasai land. However, their socio cultural practices are different from those of the Turkana, and thus the study has not linked the socio-cultural practices of the Turkana people and women's involvement in development. Therefore, the present study undertakes to examine this aspect in detail.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Social Cultural Practices
■ Land & property rights
■ Early marriages
■ Polygamy
■ Separation of roles

Women's Participation in Community Development
• Reduced retrogressive social cultural practices
• Enhanced political participation amongst women
• Increases Educational opportunities for women
• Enhanced awareness of women on participation in

Intervening Variables

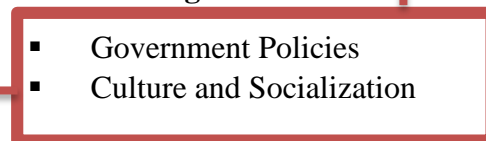| ■ Government Policies |
| --- |
| ■ Culture and Socialization |

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Lotwel, 2021

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 indicates the relationships that exist between the independent variables and the dependent variables. Women's level of participation in development is the dependent variable while the independent variables are socio-cultural practices (land & property rights, early marriages, polygamy, and separation of roles). Women's level of participation is measured by reduced retrogressive social cultural practices on participation in development. The independent variables are expected to greatly influence the dependent variable with the support of intervening variables.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This examination depended on a descriptive survey design. A descriptive survey design was used in basic and exploratory studies to collect data, summarize, introduce, and decipher research findings. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2004) note that descriptive study research is proposed to deliver factual data about parts of training that interest strategy producers and organizers. The decision of the descriptive survey design was made dependent on the way that in this investigation the analyst was keen on the situation previously existing in the field and no factor was controlled.

Target Population

The target population of this study was all the 31 registered women self-help groups in Turkana Central Sub-County and the elected political women leaders in the Sub-County. An enquiry from the District gender and social development office showed that 31 women's self-help groups had been registered from January 2016 to December 2019. The respondents of this study were officials of a women's self-help group who consisted of a chairperson, secretary, and treasurer.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The researchers used a census sampling technique to select the officials of the women's self-help groups. A census is a study of every unit, everyone or everything, in a population. It is known as a complete enumeration, which means a complete count. Therefore, all the chairpersons, secretaries, and treasurers of the 31 women's self-help groups in Turkana Central Sub-County were sampled. Purposive sampling was used to select elected female political leaders in the sub-county, the majority of whom were members of the Turkana County Assembly. The sample distribution is as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample Size Distribution

Respondent Category	Computation	Sample size
Women self-help group officials	3 * 31	93
Elected women leaders		5
Total		**98**

Source: Lotwel, 2020

Data Collection Instrument

The study used primary data, which basically involved creating "new" data (Orodho, 2009). The data was founded on the observations and frame of mind of the respondents towards the subject important to the present study. Given the nature of the data gathered, the scope of the study, time available and the nature of variables under investigation in the study,

questionnaires were the most appropriate data collection instrument. The study used a structured type questionnaire containing closed-end items.

Data Collection Procedure

First, the research began after the researcher obtained a research licence (app.iv) from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) through the Director of Post Graduate of Turkana University College (A constituent College of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology). The respondents were identified through their local leaders. In actual data collection, the researcher self-administered the questionnaires to all the study respondents. The questionnaire was administered using a drop and pick later method.

Data Analysis Techniques and procedures

The data obtained was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Analysis was aided by the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 24.0 software. Descriptive statistics included percentages, mean and standard deviation. To establish the relationship between the variables, a regression model was used. The results presentation was in tables.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics Results

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the data used in the analysis.

Table 2: Social Cultural Practices affecting the Level of Women's Participation in Community Development

Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Std
1.Cultural traditions such as early marriages has influenced negatively women participation in development	23.6	15.7	4.5	25.8	30.3	3.24	1.596
2. Social orientation of the community has affected women participation in development.	7.9	36	7.9	33.7	14.6	3.11	1.265
3.The environment favors women participation in development	15.7	28.1	4.5	44.9	6.7	2.99	1.284
4.Gender disparity is affecting women participation in development	2.2	25.8	9	49.4	13.5	3.46	1.088
5.Culture allows men to have more than one wife thus hindering women from active engagement in development	3.4	7.9	1.1	55.1	32.6	4.06	0.981
6.Women are denied to own land hence it affects their participation in development	3.4	4.5	5.6	65.2	21.3	3.97	0.872

Source: Lotwel, 2021

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The study revealed that 56.1 percent (30.3% + 25.8%) of respondents agreed that cultural traditions such as early marriages have influenced negatively women participation in development. Similarly, 48.3 percent (33.7% + 14.6%) of respondents agreed that social orientation of the community has affected women participation in development. It was important to note that slightly more than a half 51.6 percent (44.9% + 6.7%) of respondents agreed on the statement that the environment favors women participation in development. The findings further established that majority 62.9 percent (49.4% + 13.5%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that gender disparity is affecting women participation in development. On the same breadth, it was important to note that majority 87.7 percent (55.1% + 32.6%) of respondents agreed that culture allows men to have more than one wife thus hindering women from active engagement in development. Further findings established that majority 86.5 percent (65.2% + 21.3%) were of similar opinion that women are denied to own land hence it affects their participation in development.

The mean scores of all the statement were above 3 which indicate that many of the respondents agreed with the statements on social cultural practices. Most of the variations were low and therefore did not affect the mean values substantially. The results revealed that social cultural practices affected the level of women participation in development. The findings imply that social cultural practices such as early marriages, polygamy, and denial of women to own land affect women participation in development.

The findings corroborate with those of Majali (2012) who tried to explore socio-cultural factors that added to the intangibility of women in farming exercises at Khwezana town, Alice District in South Africa and found out that socio-cultural factors, for example, restricted access to land, access to credit (because of convention and culture conditions) and culture change all in all are the main considerations that essentially affected the low agricultural women in the study area. The findings also agree with those of Aminchi (2015) who uncovered that neediness, socio-social conviction, sex stereotyped and absence of mindfulness were the main considerations that added to the low dimension of women support in proficiency program. The finding however disagreed with those of Omuchemi (2016) whose examination discoveries uncovered there was no huge connection between sex assessments on effect of the socio-cultural components and women participation in water and soil resource management.

Regression Analysis Results

Regression analysis and ANOVA analysis were conducted and the following findings were obtained.

Table 3: Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.310[a]	0.096	0.086	4.210

a.   Predictor: (Constant), Social Cultural Practices
 Source: Lotwel, 2021

The results, in table 3 present the coefficient of correlation and coefficient of determinant. The model coefficient of determination was 0.086. This indicates that social cultural practices explain the changes of women's participation in community development up to 8.6 per cent. The rest of change (91.4 per cent) is determined by other factors not included in this study model.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The study conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA), in order to test the effect of social cultural practices on women's participation in community development in Turkana Central Sub-County, Kenya. The findings were as shown in table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA on Social Cultural Practices

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	164.012	1	164.012	9.254	.003[b]
	Residual	154.943	87	17.723		
	Total	1705.955	88			

a. Dependent Variable: Level of Women's Participation in Community Development
b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Cultural Practices

Source: Lotwel,2021

The results of the findings in table 4 revealed that at the level of significance 0.05 social cultural practices was significant in predicting the level of women's participation in community development (F=9.254, P<0.05). The study concurs with Nkumbuku (2018) study which examined social-cultural factors affecting women in decision making and conflict resolutions activities in Garissa County. The ANOVA results presented indicated that regression equation was significant in explaining independent and dependent variable relationships.

Coefficient of Regression Model

Table 5: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	16.139	2.615		6.171	.000
	Social Cultural Practices	.376	.124	.310	3.042	.003

a Dependent Variable: Level of women's participation in development

Source: Lotwel, 2021

The results of regression analysis shown in Table 5 were used to interpret the regression model as illustrated hereunder.

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$

$Y = 16.139 + 0.376 X_1 + 2.615$ (error term)

It was revealed that in order for level of women participation in development.to increase by one unit, there must be an effect 0.376 unit change in social cultural practices while holding other factors which were not part of this study constant ($\beta_0 = 16.139$). According to the results, it is evident that social cultural practices had an effect on level of women participation in development. It is thus imperative for women to overcome these social cultural practices to influence their participation in development.

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the study

The study revealed that cultural traditions such as early marriages negatively influence women's participation in development. It was established that the social orientation of the community has affected women's participation in development. The study also revealed that the environment favors women's participation in development. The findings further established that gender disparity is affecting women's participation in development. Also established is that culture allows men to have more than one wife, thus hindering women's active engagement in development. Further findings established that women are denied the right to own land, which affects their participation in development.

Conclusion of the study

The findings of the study conclude that social and cultural practices do not favour women's participation in development. It is deduced that socio-cultural practices that affect women's participation in development are cultural traditions such as early marriages, polygamy, women's restrictions on owning land, marital status, gender disparity, and roles perceived to be carried by women in the community. The majority of women in the study area were pastoralists, whose involvement in development was hindered by social and cultural practices.

Recommendations of the study

The study recommends that government and private organizations partner with the Turkana Community so as to create sensitization and awareness of the importance of women's participation in development activities.

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