# Gender Perspectives On Human Security For National Development In Kenya

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## Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between gender and human security for national development in Kenya. Using Feminist Economic Theory and Functionalism as a framework, the study analyzes how gender and human security impacts on Kenya's national development. The research questions are as follows: Is there a connection between gender and human security and development in Kenya? Does considering gender lead to improved human security and in turn to Kenya's national development? Will incorporating gender perspectives into institutional policies, security sector and legislation lead to improved human security and development in Kenya? The study employs secondary data using policy documents, journal articles, and books for data collection. The findings of this study highlight why gender perspectives and human security are important for Kenya's national development and the need for their incorporation in decision-making by the United Nations Security Council and in other conflict resolution situations and security procedures. The research findings inform the efforts towards integrating gender and human security for Kenya's national development.

**Keywords:** *gender, human security, national development, gender perspectives, sex, gender relations, gender roles, gender disparities, gender mainstreaming, gender impacts of security, gender-responsive policies and programs.*

## Introduction

Human security as a concept is gaining popularity, due to security difficulties in the modern world. Old security and development challenges still exist alongside new ones that have also surfaced including: Drug and human trafficking, inequality among nations, terrorism, pollution, post-conflict stagnation, ethnic wars, and transnational crime, just to mention a few. To deal with these issues, a multidisciplinary, all- encompassing strategy is needed.

Applying the concept of human security to solve different insecurities, all the interlinked causes must be identified whether economic, social, political or cultural. Sickness, poverty, armed conflict also pose a danger to human security. Thus, in order to achieve human security, individuals must be provided with economic, physical, social, and environmental security in their residences, work places, and within the communities where they live. Unfortunately, decisions makers, politician and planners, more often than not never take the issue of human security seriously. Despite being important, issues of human security in Kenya are still not given the prominence they deserve. There are minimal efforts towards inclusion of a human security perspective in development plans and programs (Kumssa, 2010).

With the changing nature of war, there is an increased need to consider various effects war has on vulnerable individuals, especially on women and girls. The significance of involving women in peace and security is also becoming more widely recognized. Women constitute half of the world's population and hold a crucial place in the society. Without them, it would be impossible to create lasting peace and security.

There is a paradigm shift when discussing security issues and now the focus is on human security rather than state security. This broadens the debate on security to include: the risks to national security, such as gender based violence, poverty, discrimination, marginalization and lack of democracy, among others. Non-state actors, civil society and individual are more concerned with security issues than before. A security sector based on human security considers varied requirements of the different genders, ensuring that the needs of the entire community are

taken into consideration and that both men and women participate as equals. It helps to establish a society that is peaceful and secure.

Globally, more women than men live in poverty, women have minimal access to education and healthcare than men. They also often lack economic autonomy and are under-represented in leadership and decision making positions.

The Kenya Constitution 2010 promotes gender equality and women's empowerment. However, the promotion of gender *equality still remains a key concern in Kenya.* Girls and women in Kenya have the potential to contribute in different areas in the developmental agenda. But, still their contributions are minimal.

## Key Definitions

*Gender:* can be defined as those characteristics that are contracted socially; meaning they are very dynamic and over time can be changed and even muted. It concerns the socially relegated roles of men and women (FAO,2009). Differences in gender are therefore, based on a particular society's perceptions of different capabilities of men and women, including basic traits like tastes of men and women. It should be noted that over time, these gender differences, can vary and even be transformed as societies and cultures evolve.

*Gender perspectives:* is how opportunities for the different genders are impacted upon in a society (FAO,2009). Any implementation of policies, programmes, or projects is directly impacted upon by gender. This also influences economic and social process of development, making gender an important component in every aspect of our lives. It influences the different roles given to women and men by society.

*Sex*: Refers to those characteristics that both men and women have that are permanent and immutable, are common to all individuals in different cultures and communities and they cannot be changed (FAO,2009).

*Gender Relations*: These are the different ways a society perceives and views the identities of men and women in relations to one another and in relations to their roles (FAO, 2009). Rights and responsibilities are thus described as those specific

ways in which the responsibilities of each sex are determined by different cultures.

*Gender Roles,* on the other hand are those responsibilities, tasks and behaviours, that a society considers as being appropriate for men, women, girls and boys (FAO, 2009). They also determine whether or not any gender has access to material resources which include: credit and training, land and even power etc. These kind of divisions have serious implications on the daily lives of different genders in the kind of responsibilities each family member can have both within the home and outside, on the way labour is divided between and among different genders, on education and different opportunities for professional advancement and even leadership when it comes to things like policy-making. In addition, to the differing power dynamics between men and women, gender refers to the social construction of the roles, personality characteristics, and behaviours that are associated with it.

*Gender Disparities*: has to do with differences in the way men or women access resources, well-being and status, which usually favour men more than women. This is made worse by the fact that systematically such favours are often institutionalized through the law, justice, and social norms (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2015).

*Gender mainstreaming*: Entails the recognition of the different forms of insecurity that women, girls, men and boys experience (Megan, 2013). People and organizations are thus mandated to comply with national, regional and international laws to ensure that both men and women are represented in all programs within the society.

*Gendered impacts of insecurity:* Insecurity can have different impacts on men and women, girls and boys(Okyere, 2018). For example, women and girls may be more likely to experience sexual and gender-based violence in conflict, while men and boys may be more likely to be recruited into armed groups (Strachan and Halder, 2015).

*Gendered drivers of insecurity*: Causes of insecurity can be different for both women and men (Khoza, 2022). To give examples, poverty and inequality may disproportionately affect women, who may have less  opportunities to access resources than their counterparts, the men (Smith, 2022).

*Gender-responsive policies and programs*: ensure that security and development efforts consider the different perspectives and needs of both women and men (Henry, 2007). for example, incorporating gender considerations into security sector reforms, or ensuring that development programs are designed towards addressing the specific needs and priorities of girls and women (Hendricks, 2012). 6

## Features of Human Security

### *People-centred*

In the modern perspective of human security architecture, the welfare and affairs of the individual person are given prominence. As a result, human security is thus centred on key elements for human survival; security, rights, and development (incomplete 2016). According to Sabina and Alkire (2003) writing for the Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity agrees with this fundamental notion and further adds that "…respect for human security means that whatever their primary objective may be, all actors, whether institutional, corporate or individual, must ascertain that their actions do not foreseeably albeit unintentionally, threaten human security…". Muguruza (2017), states that since the end of the cold war in the early 1990s international humanitarian law and relations developed such that sovereignty preceded the protection of human rights.

In a bid to protect human lives and avert human suffering due to internal political instabilities witnessed across the globe, the United Nations re-asserted its responsibility to guarantee international peace and recognised human rights abuses as a threat to international peace as such it required states to show more responsibility in the exercise of their sovereignty as underlined in the principle of the responsibility to protect (UNGA, 2005).

### *Multi–sectoral*

The United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report (HDR) 1994 offered an inaugural moment for actors to reflect on the extent of complexity of the new dimension of human security and forge a multi-sectoral approach towards combating some of the world's most sinister challenges. In this regard, understanding of human security would attract the participation of actors from different sectors within society since the new dimension meant that a wider interpretation of what human security entailed. According to United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (2016), human security is divided into at least seven categories, which are interrelated and as such require coordinated efforts that seek to resolve the root causes other than the symptoms.

| Nature of Security | Major Threats |
|---|---|
| Economic Security | Poverty, unemployment |
| Food Security | Hunger, Famine, Drought |
| Health Security | Infectious diseases, malnutrition, unsafe food, inaccessibility to basic healthcare services |
| Environmental Security | Environmental degradation, resource depletion, natural disasters, pollution, climate change |
| Personal Security | Physical violence, crime, terrorism, domestic violence, gender-based violence, child abuse |
| Community Security | Inter-ethnic clashes/tensions, identity-based tensions e.g. religious, racial, caste, sexuality |
| Political Security | Political repression, human rights abuses |

**Fig. 1.1 Source: United Nations Trust for Human Security (2016)**

### *Comprehensive*

Weller (2014) notes that a comprehensive approach emerged to account to the fact that security, social, political and economic dimensions of conflict and crisis situations were increasingly becoming mutually reinforced and critical to sustainable transitions. As a result of this overlapping reality, there is a need for cooperation and coordination of efforts by actors involved in human security and development planning including the military, non-governmental entities,

diplomatic officers as well as local organisations. Weller (2014) further clarifies that steps that can ensure the achievement of these common goals include mechanisms for communication sharing, coordination and cooperation. When pursued appropriately these steps can yield coherence and efficacy of outcomes (Karstein & Pia, 2008).

### Context-specific

United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS, 2016) highlights that the human security approach recognises that there is no universal solution to addressing them. Threats to human security are divergent and require local and context-specific counter measures. The world's problems vary by geography, both within nations and across the boundaries of states, and across different dispersions of time and circumstances. It is also globally acknowledged that different individuals, communities, societies, nations and other entities also have varying capacities to deal with challenges differently. Therefore, there is a need to pay keen attention to the modalities of actions employed to address insecurity and align with the framework provided within the International system including the localisation of solutions within the context of the occurrences, in addition to these the mechanisms should endeavour to "…build on processes that are based on peoples' own perceptions of fear and vulnerability, Identifies the concrete insecurities and needs of populations under stress, enables the development of more appropriate solutions that are embedded in local realities, Unveils mismatches between domestic and/or international policies, and helps identify priority needs and vulnerabilities at the local level, and captures rapidly changing international, regional and domestic developments and their effects on different communities "(UNTFHS, 2016).

### Prevention Oriented

Human security features a strong value proposition for unearthing and dealing with potential risks to human life and existence. United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS, 2016) defines human security as being prevention-oriented with conflict prevention and peace building strategies aiming for sustainable solutions. Therefore, efforts should be made to uncover the root causes

of insecurity and early warning systems established to identify the potential of the reoccurrence of threats and possibly undertake preventive measures to secure the future. Matsuoka (2014) posits the need to implement a comprehensive approach towards global security issues and the importance of developing the capabilities to address potential threats. While his concerns are within the realm of structural engineering for human security, the comprehensive analysis of the threats and risks for human security is impeccable.

## Legal Frameworks on Gender and Human Security for National Development

According to the Commission on Human Security (CHS) in its report titled *Security Now*, human security entails "a response to new opportunities for propelling development and dealing with armed conflicts…" (UNTFHS, 2016). The shift from the traditional view of security from its traditional mainstay within the statecraft is thus highlighted. Human security is henceforth given a new understanding that is people-centred and development-oriented. The modern view of human security is especially concerned with the interlinkages that various actors portray in a continually globalizing world characterised by a growing involvement of non-state actors in the daily lives of individuals and communities on a scale never witnessed before.

As a result, multinational corporations, non-governmental bodies including International organisations such as the United Nations and its plethora of agencies, as well as grassroots entities are thus viewed as pertinent players in the human security discourse, particularly as regards to developmental agenda of different state. Therefore, to uncover more about the intervening nature of this new concept it is essential to establish some instrumental parameters within which human security and national development transcend.

### Global Review

Over the years, development agencies and governments have put top priority to issues concerning gender issues specifically on different policies and development planning, major examples including the 1992 UN Conference on Environment

and Development (UNCED), Agenda 21, which deals with gender issues (Alm, 1992). The World Conference on Human Rights 1993, recognized the rights of women and the girl-child as a pivotal part of human development (Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, 1993). The Gender principle was also tackled at the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 (Report on International Conference on Population and Development, 1994). The World Summit for Social Development, 1995 also restated the key role gender equity plays (World Summit for Social Development, 1995). During this Social Summit, governments reached a new consensus on the need to put people at the centre of development.

The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing (United Nations Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995) also reiterated the importance of gender and why the status of women must be strengthened. During this conference, a platform for action and a declaration was adopted with the aim of overcoming any barriers to gender equity, with the belief that this would guarantee an active participation of women in all spheres of life. The inherent dignity of men and women and their equal rights was emphasized in the report as it called for the elimination of discrimination against women in all its forms; described as the restriction or exclusion made on the basis of gender relations or roles that prevents any of the genders from enjoying full human rights (FAO, 2009).

Further, Governments, international organizations, non- governmental Organizations and civil societies were called upon to produce, promote and disseminate information regarding the different aspects of gender issues and to share gender-specific statistics for any planning including programmes, policies and evaluation. They were mandated to gather all statistics concerning individual's genders, compile, analyse and present as gender-disaggregated data. All the data collected should mirror the concerns and issues of different genders in society (UNTFHS, 2016).

Despite all these advancements, women continue to be underrepresented in government positions, at the negotiating table, and in peacekeeping operations,

in post-conflict disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), as well as in security sector reform, judicial system restoration, and the rule of law, women's demands and views are often disregarded. Numerous wars have been characterized by pervasive sexual and gender-based violence, which often persists after the battle and is frequently accompanied by the offenders' impunity. Women's integration into economic life and leadership are hampered in post-conflict cultures by persistent lack of physical protection and the presence of considerable legal restrictions.

Despite the Security Council resolution's 1325, women's level of involvement in peace and security has remained low. Only 4% of those who signed peace accords were women, according to research by UN Women on 31 significant peace initiatives between 1992 and 2011. Women made up just 9% of negotiators, 3.7% of witnesses, and 2.4% of key mediators. In the procedures up to the signing of Comprehensive Peace Agreements, no women served as the principal mediators. An important fact is that the UN has never designated a woman as lead mediator in a peace process that it has supported (Peace Women 2014). Sub-Saharan Africa has the second-highest number of refugees and internally displaced people in the world, behind Asia, although making up just 10% of the global population (UNHCR, 2006).

The normative foundation for women's degree of engagement in peace and security is provided by international obligations. Women have a right to take an equal role in civic, political, and familial life, even in nations racked by war. But in order for women to really exercise this right, gender structures that deny them power and freedom must be changed. The foundation of women's involvement in development and peace projects should be their contribution to the economic growth of families and communities. Women have the right to participate in planning and running neighbourhood development projects, official efforts for peace and reconciliation, and neighbourhood government systems.

Aid organizations have a terrible track record of recognizing gender as a political problem, which makes this normative aim very political and contentious. Feminists contend that the mainstreaming of gender issues in development has

resulted in a sanitized kind of feminism known as "development feminism," which is dominated by bureaucrats, consultants, and donor-supported NGOs rather than grassroots and international feminist organizations (Harcourt, 2010; Eyben, 2008).

## Continental Review

In addition to the global legal frameworks, there are several continental legal frameworks that guide gender perspectives on human security and national development. Some examples include:

*African Union (AU) Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa:* This protocol was adopted by the AU in 2003, and it aims to ensure the protection and promotion of the rights of women in Africa. It includes provisions on the elimination of discrimination against women, the protection of women's rights in situations of armed conflict, and the participation of women in decision-making processes.

*Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender and Development Protocol:* This protocol was adopted by the SADC in 2008, and it aims to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in the Southern African region. It includes provisions on the elimination of discrimination against women, the protection of women's rights in situations of armed conflict, and the participation of women in decision-making processes.

*Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Gender Policy:* This policy was adopted by the ECOWAS in 2007, and it aims to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in the West African region. It includes provisions on the elimination of discrimination against women, the protection of women's rights in situations of armed conflict, and the participation of women in decision-making processes.

*Arab Charter on Human Rights:* This charter was adopted by the League of Arab States in 2004, and it aims to protect and promote human rights in the Arab region. It includes provisions on the elimination of discrimination against women and the protection of women's rights in situations of armed conflict.

These continental frameworks provide guidance on how governments should ensure gender equality and women's empowerment in the areas of human security and national development in specific regions and they call on states to take necessary actions to make that happen.

### *National Review –Kenya*

Kenya's stance on gender relations is guided by various international conventions and national legislative and policy documents. The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 of 2000 remains to be one of the most acknowledged international instruments on the inclusion of women in all aspects of peace building, peace-making, peacekeeping and conflict resolution mechanisms across the world. The resolution underlines 4 pillars for enhancement of the role of women in peace and security processes; (i) Participation (ii) Protection (iii) Prevention (iv) Relief and Recovery. (UNSCR 1325, 2000).

The Kenyan law also provides that all international conventions to which Kenya is a party are by extension part of the laws of Kenya pursuant to Articles 3(5) and (6) of the Constitution. Kenya, being a member of the UN, has the international obligation to adhere to the UNSCR 1325, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol), among others

Kenya's constitution contains a comprehensive Bill of Rights clauses and it also categorises the nature of relations that is expected between both genders. In Article 27 (3), the law states that "…women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres." The State is also forbidden by law from perpetrating any form of discrimination on an individual either directly or indirectly on any basis including race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, health status, etc. (Article 27 (4)). In sub-articles 6 and 8 the state is called upon to take measures, including legislative, to ensure (i) the realisation of all rights and fundamental freedoms underscored under article 27 and (ii) to implement the affirmative action requirements as stipulated by law; which is that no more than two-thirds of a particular gender shall occupy an elective or appointive organ of the state. In addition, the state

shall also endeavour to redress any historical discriminatory conditions that were suffered by individuals or groups. Article 81 (b) of the Constitution further emphasizes that all "…electoral systems in Kenya shall ensure that no more than two-thirds of elective positions are occupied by persons of the same gender."

The National policy on gender and development (NPGD), seeks to have gendered perspectives in all aspects of national development including in policy development and planning for various sectors of the economy including labour, employment, education, health, land, housing, agriculture, environment, and natural resources, peace and security, governance, power and decision making, information and communications technologies, respect for the human rights, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence; the girl child and the boy child, intersectional discrimination, media and access to justice (NPGD, 2019).

Partnerships by various actors within the national development discourse including both levels of government; national and county, the Civil Society, International Development Agencies, the private sector, faith-based organisations, and other entities also feature prominently in the policy framework (NPGD, 2019). The policy framework characterizes key areas of focus and hence the areas for prioritisation for policy actions. In the considered opinion and in consistence with the categorizations of human security by both the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report of 1994 and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, in this paper, these areas are collapsed into the ten thematic areas of human security i.e. Family, environment, water management, health and nutrition, poverty, education, work land rights, politics, research and modern technology.

## The Intersection Between Gender and Human Security for National Development

*Globally*, gender is recognized as a key factor in understanding and addressing issues related to human security and national development. The United Nations (UN) has emphasized the importance of incorporating a gender perspective in its work on human security, including in its human security concept, which recognizes that individuals and communities are vulnerable to a wide range of

threats and that women, men, girls, and boys experience these threats differently. The UN also recognized that gender equality is a prerequisite for human security, sustainable development, and peace.

*Continentally,* African Union (AU) has been working towards gender equality and women's empowerment as a means of achieving human security and national development. The AU has adopted a number of policies and frameworks, including the African Union Policy on Gender and Development, which aims to mainstream gender in all AU policies, programs, and activities. The African Union has also adopted the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, which guarantees the rights of women and girls and calls for the elimination of discrimination against women in Africa.

*Locally,* in Kenya, the government has made efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment as a means of achieving human security and national development. The government has adopted policies and laws that aim to address gender-based violence and discrimination, and has established institutions such as the National Gender and Equality Commission to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The government has also made efforts to include women in decision-making processes, and has adopted a National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children.

In all levels, the intersection between gender, human security and national development can be understood as the recognition that gender equality and women's empowerment are essential for achieving human security and sustainable development, and that efforts to promote human security and national development must take into account the different ways in which women, men, girls and boys experience these issues.

## Theoretical Framework

There are several theories and theoretical frameworks that can be used to explain the intersection between gender, human security, and national development in Kenya. Some of the most commonly used frameworks include:

*Feminist Theory:* This theory emphasizes the importance of understanding and addressing the ways in which gender shapes experiences of violence, insecurity, and inequality, and calls for the inclusion of women's perspectives and experiences in the development of policies and programs (Katherine, Sang, 2016).

*Social Constructivism:* This theory argues that gender is a social construct and that the roles and expectations associated with being male or female are created and reinforced by society (Buttler, 1991). This framework can be used to understand how societal norms and expectations contribute to the ways in which women and men experience human security and development.

*Human Security Framework:* This framework focuses on the security of individuals and communities and recognizes that people are vulnerable to a wide range of threats, including poverty, disease, and violence (Parvin Parmar Kaur, et al.2014). This framework can be used to understand how gender shapes experiences of human security and how policies and programs can address these experiences.

*Human Development Framework:* This framework focuses on the expansion of human capabilities and opportunities, and recognizes that social, economic, and political factors contribute to human development (IEG, World Bank, 2010). This framework can be used to understand how gender shapes experiences of development and how policies and programs can address these experiences.

*Capability Approach:* This framework focuses on empowering individuals by expanding the capabilities and opportunities available to them (Amartya Sen, 1998). This framework can be used to understand how gender shapes experiences of development and how policies and programs can address these experiences.

Overall, the intersection between gender, human security and national development in Kenya can be best understood by using a combination of these frameworks, which will help to understand the complex ways in which gender shapes experiences of human security and development, and to develop policies and programs that are effective in addressing these experiences.

# Methodology

There are various research methodologies that can be applied to determine the relationship between gender considerations and human security and development in Kenya. These include:

Quantitative research (Trochim, 2006), qualitative research (Creswell, 2013) and case study research: (Yin, 2014). A mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods, can also be useful for triangulating data and gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between gender considerations and human security and development in Kenya (Creswell & Plano, 2011).

However, this study focussed on secondary data due to the research questions, the data availability and accessibility at the time of research, and other practical considerations like time constraints. This procedure was also adopted to ensure a comprehensive and rigorous review. In defining the research questions: and the objectives the desktop review guided in the selection of relevant data sources and in ensuring that the review was focused and relevant.

Additionally, it helped in identifying and selecting relevant data sources, such as reports and different studies and human security and development in Kenya and in the consideration of sources from international organizations, government agencies, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations.

In reviewing Literature, this procedure guided in developing a data extraction framework to ensure a systematic and consistent approach to the review of the data, in terms of the source of the data, the type of data, the date of the data, and any relevant findings related to the research questions.

We used this procedure to carefully analyze the data and extract relevant information on gender and human security and development in Kenya, look for patterns, trends, and relationships, and take note of any inconsistencies or gaps in the data and consequently, synthesizing the findings from the desk review and organizing the data into a clear and concise format.

In conclusion, we used the desk review to evaluate the quality of the data, including its relevance, accuracy, and validity, and to consider any limitations or biases that may have affected the findings.

Further to cross-reference the findings with other sources such as primary research data, policy documents, and expert opinions, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between gender considerations and human security and development in Kenya. By following these procedures, that we conducted a rigorous and comprehensive desk review of secondary data to determine the relationship between gender considerations and human security and development in Kenya.

## Results and Findings

## Gender and Human Security for National Development in Kenya: Exploring The Gaps

Over the years, development agencies and governments have put top priority to issues concerning gender issues specifically on different policies and development planning. Recent international conventions have prioritized gender equity, which denotes the fairness and impartiality in the treatment of men and women concerning their rights and duties, opportunities as well as benefits. They have also reflected on the relationship between sustainable development and gender equity.

Gender Disparities refer to differences in women's and men's access to resources, status, and well-being, which usually favour men and are often institutionalized through the law, justice, and social norms (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2015). They occur in all areas, in, family life, poverty, employment, education, health environment, public life and in decision-making in the following ways:

### Family life

Households in all societies differentiate various household responsibilities and activities and responsibilities by gender. For women, production and reproduction are interlinked, most women are not paid for much of the work they do.

In Kenya, the number of female headed households has increased, with "de facto" female headed households, where the woman is left to be the primary bread winner and decision-maker emerging due to factors such as widowhood, irresponsible male partners, among others (Caroline, 2017).

### Environment:

In most developing countries, described as countries with less developed industrial economies relative to other countries (O'Sullivan, 2003), it is women who manage daily use of natural resources.

In Kenya, slums are a common feature in major cities, the largest being Kibera slum. Another is Mathare slum, with an estimated population of 600,000-800,000(COHRE, 2008). It has grown on top of a dumpsite with an ever-increasing population (COHRE, 2008). They are exposed to solid waste materials and other pollutants. The constitution of Kenya (2010), in Article 42 clearly underscores the right of every person to a clean and healthy environment including the protection of the environment for the benefit of the present and posterity. Women, however, remain largely excluded from control of their natural environment; mineral sites, land, forests, etc. in their communities. Kenya works with the United Nations Environmental programme to create solutions to pollution. It is therefore, important to have a coordinated plan of having the voices of both genders in coming up with sustainable solutions to environmental challenges in their communities.

### Water Management

Climate change has worsened water security, forcing women to wonder tens of miles in search of water, fruits and, vegetables for their families especially in arid areas specifically in the northern part of Kenya. Taking care of weak animals often becomes their responsibility in pastoralist communities, which they have to move from one place to another in search of water, increasing their already heavy duties. They end up queuing in long files in water kiosks so they can fetch water for home use. In extreme cases, which are not uncommon, pregnant women lack water to use during or after childbirth, resorting to alternatives such as coarse

sand to clean themselves and their new-borns (Muna, 2021). Climate change also forces women to venture further away from home in search of food and water, making them vulnerable to sexual assault, murder and rape (Muna, 2021). Women, however, remain poorly represented in decision-making boards tackling climate-induced drought. This limits solutions tailored to their needs.

In Kenya, The National Climate Change Action Plan 2018-2022 cited gender inequality as a key source of vulnerability for climate action, demonstrating the seriousness of the issue. The Climate Change Act 2016 is guided by the principles set out in Article 10 of the Constitution, a key provision being gender equity. This has however, not yet been achieved, despite efforts, because of factors which include inequality, cultural norms and illiteracy.

### *Health and Nutrition*

Women and men have different health needs because of their different biological makeup and physical capabilities. In some societies, the male is fed better than women and women are expected to eat last when everyone has eaten. This treatment severely affects their health. This continues even through pregnancy and breastfeeding (UN Women, 2012).

Article 43 (1a) of the Kenya Constitution (2010) provides that every person has the right to the highest attainable standard of health. However, Kenya's healthcare system remains one of the most unequal, inaccessible, and unaffordable. Reproductive health is particularly under serious strain. Recent research has shown a worrying prevalence of HIV/AIDS with women taking a serious toll of prevalence at 5.2% as compared to 4.8% for men in the adult population. The prevalence of HIV has been shown to be much higher in women than in men. This could be attributable to higher illiteracy among women, since the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics also reported that more men than women were using condoms with their partners. More men than women are also limiting sexual activity with one partner. Though this number in women has increased more than men as of 2014, it still remains lower.

*Poverty*

Poverty can be defined as a lack of access to the resources needed to ensure sustainable living conditions and the combination of uncertain or non-existent income. It can also be defined as a state of condition in which a community or a person lacks essentials for a minimum standard of living and the financial resources (Chen, 2022).

In Kenya, a majority of households living in poverty are headed by women, with the most vulnerable being slum dwelling families (IEA, 2008). These households are characterized by low incomes, many living on less than a dollar a day. In Mathare slum in Nairobi Kenya, Gitathuru, Kosovo and Mathare 4B slums were surveyed and 75.3% were found to be living on 0-10,000 Kenyan shillings a month (Billy, 2017). Social constructions in Kenya generally still relegate women to positions of limited power where wealth and authority is concerned, in distribution of national and local resources, relegating them to informal professions such as prostitution. Similarly, the contribution of women in wealth creation which is predominant in the informal sectors including small-scale farming and family-based chores is rarely recognised or even included in national development.

The National Policy Framework (2019) identifies poverty, access to labour and economy, access to education, access to health, land, housing and infrastructure, information and communications technologies and the media as areas that require deep reflection and auctioning. For instance, gender inequality is a key dimension in human development indexes in Kenya (UNICEF, 2016). Article 27(6) of the Constitution affirms its commitment to affirmative action for disadvantaged groups, which include women.

*Education*

Illiteracy is very high among women in rural areas and more men are educated than women. When the higher population of a country is illiterate, the gap between men and women widens (UNDP. 1995. *Human Development Report.)* The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates that 41% of women in developing countries are illiterate, (as compared

men who are only 20%). In some countries, rural women between the ages of 15 and 24 are three times more illiterate than urban women (Nelly, 1990).

In Kenya, 26.8% of female headed population have no education, while the figure in male headed population is 23.5% (SID, 2013). School dropouts among girls are due to early pregnancies, lack of transport, lack of basic needs like sanitary towels and rigid cultural practices. Gender disparities in education go up the higher you climb the education ladder. In 2019, 50.6% of primary school pupils were boys while 49.4% were girls, while in secondary school the number was tied at 1.63 million.

In public and private universities, 60% were male while 40% were female (KNBS, 2022). The number of school dropouts in women and men also increases by age, and is higher in women as the age increases. In 2019 this figure was highest at age 17, with 0% female and 58% male dropouts (KNBS, 2022). This higher figure in women is attributable to lack of sanitary products, teenage pregnancies, early marriages, cultural norms as well as family responsibilities. In arid areas, for example in Wajir, girls opt to leave school during the dry season to lessen the burden on domestic chores at home (Muna, 2021).

Education legislation such as the Basic Education Act, 2013 have among their guiding principles protection against discrimination of any kind (Section (4) e), in line with Article 10 of the Constitution. Every child has the right to be educated free from discrimination on the basis of equal opportunity (UNCRC, 1989). Steps are being taken by the National Gender and Equality Commission and other organisations to reduce disparities such as by distribution of dignity packs to girls which contain sanitary towels, underwear and other personal effects to improve the situation.

### Work

In the workplace, there is still a gap in the composition of the workforce between men and women. Gender disparities in accessing economic resources, prevents them from improving theirs and their families' lives. This greatly their potential productivity. As stated by Jacques Diouf (2009), economic and social inequalities

between women and men hold back economic growth and advances in Agriculture, thus undermining food security.

A study done by the National Gender and Equality Commission in 2021 found that of the 59 companies surveyed, 30.5% of the companies has complied with the two third gender rule (NGEC, 2021). 20% did not have women serving on the boards. The gender pay gap reported in 2019 is also still wide at sh68 to sh100 for men and women respectively (KNBS,2022. Organisations such as the National Gender and Equality commission lobbying for equal pay between men and women in its quest to "promote gender equality and equity generally and to coordinate and facilitate gender mainstreaming in national development…" (Constitution, Art 59(2) b) This is also set out in the establishing act, The National Gender and Equality Commission Act of 2011.

### *Land rights:*

Before the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution, women had limited access to land in Kenya. The legal Land Framework consisted of oppressive laws such as the Married Women's Property Act which tied women's rights to own land to their husbands. The 2010 Constitution however established a progressive legal framework that granted women and girls equal right to own land subjecting land laws to principles of equitable access to land and elimination on discrimination. This is line with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights 1948, where Article 17 grants everyone the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. The Land Registration Act (s 28), for example lists spousal rights as an overriding interest to matrimonial property. This prevents one spouse from selling matrimonial property without the consent of the other. Section 93 also creates a presumption that a spouse that obtains land that becomes matrimonial property is presumed to hold it in trust for the other spouse unless this presumption is rebutted.

Despite this, many women lack education on their rights and therefore are uninformed as to the actions they could take against violations of their land rights under patriarchal cultures where land rights automatically vest in men. Reports show that less than 2% of title deeds went to women since 2013. Lack of data on

the subject also prevents policy action from being enforced to improve women's access to land.

### Politics

Underrepresentation is still a challenge for women policy making positions. (UNDP Report, 1994). There is still a large gap in the number of women and men in political positions in Kenya, though the number of women leaders is increasing. This is still in contrast to the 260 male members of parliament elected, still violating the two thirds gender rule. There is a lack of gender-disaggregated data which makes the situation of women dire. Gender-disaggregated data (GDD) is sub-categorized into a (typically binary) distinction of male and female. Without GDD, women and girls are effectively invisible. GDD provides visibility into how programming targets and impacts women and girls.

Kenya's constitution contains a comprehensive Bill of Rights clause and also categorises the nature of relations that is expected between both genders. In Article 27 (3), the law states that "…women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres." The State is also forbidden by law from perpetrating any form of discrimination on an individual either directly or indirectly on any basis including race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, health status, etc.

### Research and Modern Technology

Despite women being very knowledgeable in use of domestic and wild varieties, they are still overlooked as resource managers and researchers. This is especially visible in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics fields (STEM) having many more men than women (ETGP, 2015). New approaches should bring more women to conduct research in different areas of development.

## Conclusion

Through the data gathered from our sources, gender does matter in human security and development. Gender affects all aspects of life for individuals and determines whether individual rights are met. It is evident that women are at a

disadvantage in nearly all aspects of life, demonstrating a need for further action to be taken to improve their welfare. When gender is considered in policy making, better outcomes emerge for all individuals because their unique needs are met. Better Gender Aggregated Data should be collected in order to facilitate better policies to eliminate disparities between men and women.

Governments of developing countries, especially in Africa must increase women's access to local power structures in addition to focusing on their participation in politically visible initiatives and structures like negotiations, peace agreements, peacekeeping operations, the establishment of power structures during the post-conflict transition period, state institutions for constitutional and democratic governance, etc.

Kenya has taken valuable steps in reducing the discrimination and inequalities between men and women. This has included the setting up of the National Gender and Equality Commission in 2011 with a mandate to reduce gender inequality and discrimination for all. This is in furtherance of the rights guaranteed in the Bill of rights article 27 to promote equal treatment and eradicate discrimination and an implementation of Article 59(4) and (5) of the Constitution.

In conclusion, we can say that the efforts by Kenya's government to establish policy frameworks and other national reporting mechanisms for the women peace and security and other gender-related regimes is critical for the realisation of an equitable and responsive atmosphere in the achievement of gender equality, women's empowerment, equitable participation of both women, boys and girls, and vulnerable and marginalized groups in national development (National Policy on Gender and Development, 2019).

Owing to the insecurities that lead to lack of development in Kenya, The following actions should be taken urgently: increase the involvement of women in local development initiatives; enhance the development of the organizational, managerial, and literacy capacities of women's organizations in the communities; provide leadership development programs for women, particularly in rural areas; create a political environment that supports women's involvement

in local affairs, particularly through educating local actors and the wider public about the contribution that women make to peace, development, and national reconciliation.

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