

FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY IN KENYA: THE CASE OF ABAGUSII AND AGIKUYU WOMEN OF KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses factors behind the overrepresentation of women among the poor in Kenya. Focusing on the Abagusii and Agikuyu women, the paper argues that poverty has acquired a feminine face meaning that it is more of women issue than men's. The paper notes that the social distance between men and women is narrowing but a lot still needs to be done to reduce the poverty gap. There are several factors behind the social distance. These include socialization, power asymmetries in the institution of marriage, Female Genital Mutilation, Gender Based Violence, patriarchy, education opportunities, the growth of female-headed households and politics. The writers argue that poverty reduction programmes need to focus on understanding the underlying causes of poverty among women in Kenya. Then programmes can be initiated to address the structural factors behind it. The paper therefore suggests appropriate interventions to address the feminization of poverty. They include the need for increased civic awareness and women empowerment in order to spur socio-economic development.

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