

To Examine the Life and Times of Alice Muthoni Wahome in the form of a Biography

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Alice Muthoni Wahome, one of the few women elected Members of Parliament, 2013-2016. She won the seat in a male dominated race after three attempts. She was born in Muruka in Kandara, Murang'a County. She schooled in Karumu primary school, 1966-1973, Siakago Girls High School, 1973-1976, Ngandu Girls High School, 1977-1978 and The University of Nairobi 1980-1984. The study covers the post-colonial period from the late 1950s to 2016. Alice Muthoni is currently representing the people of Kandara as the member of parliament. The objectives of this study were to examine the life and times of Alice Muthoni Wahome, assess her formative years from her childhood through primary school, secondary school and university education, examine her life as a state counsel and her life in politics in the eras of Mwai Kibaki and Uhuru Kenyatta. The study was informed by Subaltern theory, the Liberal feminism theory and the Trait theory. Literature Review involved examination of biographies and autobiographies of Kenyan and world leaders. A few gender related works have also been reviewed. Data collection involved a thorough examination of primary and secondary information. The oral evidence was gathered through conducting interviews, observation and focus groups discussions with respondents drawn from Kandara constituency, the m.p herself and her colleagues in parliament. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling and snowballing. The secondary data was collected from Mount Kenya University Library and the Postmodern Library of Kenyatta University. These were supplemented with archival research at Kenya National Archives. The internet was also used to get more information. Descriptive survey design was used.

Keywords: Alice Muthoni Wahome, Members of Parliament, politics, seat.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Biography is and has been a popular feature of history because it encompasses something most people wish to believe, the deep-seated hope that individuals matter. However, one of the tendencies of modern historiography is to debunk past heroes by dwelling extensively on their limitations and personal difficulties. This is notwithstanding the fact that there is no one who is perfect in this world. Blackening heroes has created a situation whereby people have a false idea that there are no real heroes in the world. It also leads to a situation whereby all of us are indirectly absolved forever attempting to be heroes to our nation (Hein, 1993).

There is a difference between being well known and being heroic. The currently well-known are

soon forgotten as they are replaced by another generation of well-known celebrities and sport figures. True heroes weather the ravages of time and are exemplary and inspiring for generations after their actual departure from this world. Epstein (1999) says that heroes teach us that human gifts are powerful in determining human achievements. In other words, it can be said that biography is history teaching by example and that no history can be complete without the life record of many men and women who constitute its citizenry.

Most of the women politicians in Kenya have autobiographies. This presents a gap in the historiographies of Kenya. These autobiographies include that of Wambui Otieno and Wangari Maathai. This project is aimed at filling this gap by presenting the political portrait of Alice Muthoni Wahome to show

that women also have had a contribution to make in the historiography of Kenya. Scott (1980) asserts that 'her story' when studied together with 'history' has had excellent results and contributions to the overall study of history. This refutes the claims of those who insist that women had no history of significance in the stories of the past. The coverage of both sexes will enable the people to truly understand humanity not necessarily history but a story of gender.

This work is devoted to the biography of one woman who has been identified with politics, social, business and professional life of Kandara constituency. This constituency has a very rich and eventful history ever since the gaining of Kenya's independence. It is in this constituency where one of the Kapenguria six, Bildad Kaggia, was the first M.P after Kenya gained independence in 1963.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In the light of the gap that exists in the writing of biographies on women in Kenya. This is a historical investigation into the political life of Alice Muthoni Wahome. What inspired her to join politics and persist in fighting for the Kandara seat despite failing to capture it twice (during the elections of 2002 and those of 2007)? The existing literature about Alice Muthoni Wahome is biased. Should historians agree with press reports that she has neglected her family? An analysis of such allegations and judgements about Alice Muthoni Wahome should come to light through an independent study of Alice Muthoni Wahome, the politician. The study aims to build a political portrait of Alice Muthoni Wahome by investigating the negative perceptions, rumors and press reports about her. The study adds to Kenya's historiography on politics and gender in Kenya during the multiparty era, 2002-2016.

1.3 Purpose of the study

A biography of Alice Muthoni Wahome, a female politician, the Member of Parliament for Kandara constituency of Murang'a County, 1959 to 2016.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The study reviewed related literature on global trends on biography of world leaders, biographies from Africa and those from Kenya. A few gender related works on women political participation has also been reviewed. This research sketches Alice Muthoni Wahome's political portrait against the social economic developments in Kandara during the period 2002- 2016.

This work is of relevance in my study as it brings into focus the situation as it was in Kenya when Alice Muthoni Wahome was going through her education benefitting from the social developments in the country in as far as education policies were concerned.

Bildad Kaggia (1975) talks of having been the first MP for Kandara at independence in 1963. Kaggia was a Kenyan nationalist, freedom fighter and politician. In the 1963 general elections, he won the Kandara parliamentary seat on a KANU ticket. He was thus one of the members of independent Kenya's first parliament. Kaggia also served as an independent minister in the Kenyatta's cabinet as an assistant minister for education. Kaggia's work illustrates devotion for the freedom struggle and active participation in post-independence politics as one of Kenya's heroes. This work contributes to the understanding of the politics that existed immediately after Kenya gained independence.

Bildad Kaggia's work put Kandara constituency into the picture of Kenya's first parliament after independence. Due to Bildad Kaggia's socialistic inclination as opposed to capitalism which Kenyatta the president supported, Kandara had to bear the brunt of criticism from Kenyatta's government. This brings out a background information on the constituency that Alice Muthoni Wahome has to struggle to develop.

Muriuki (1978) observes that the Gikuyu society has always been patriarchal. This narrative has been used to castigate Alice Muthoni Wahome for daring to compete with men. He says that there is a legend which claims that at one time, the Agikuyu society was matriarchal and that menfolk staged a coup where they impregnated the women and made them vulnerable which ended the women's rule. To this day, many Gikuyu men fight to preserve their hegemony over women. This explains why the hired goons willingly attacked Alice Muthoni Wahome because deep down they could also see her as a threat to men. Traditionally, women are expected to belong to the home to fulfil their domestic roles of nurturing the children.

Kiraitu Murungi in his biography talks about the problems of Kenyan politics. He recognizes the differences within political societies and the nature of their struggles for power. Murungi has pointed out the social, political and economic challenges facing nation during the Moi enabling KANU for all the challenges that the country went through. This is depicted when KANU supported Maendeleo Ya Wanawake when few women fought other women who stood for leadership roles. This work is relevant in my study as it brings out the situation as it was in Kenya in the 1990s. Alice Muthoni Wahome was deeply involved in political activism that was aimed at removing president Moi from power. Alice Muthoni Wahome was among the lawyers who had joined forces with the opposition parties to campaign for the 'change constitution debate'. This brings out the contribution of Muthoni to the political developments in the 1990s.

According to Scott, if people are to truly understand history, then both men and women must be studied. This then presents a gap in that, most of the biographies in Kenya focus on men. Alice Muthoni Wahome's biography will try to fill this gap. Ochieng (2005) says that the writing of biographies has remained enigmatic. Heroes have come and gone as Kenyans pay expensive last respects after these leaders die. It is important to write about these leaders and recognize their contribution before they die. This is what inspired me to research about Alice Muthoni Wahome's life before it is too late.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Kandara constituency of Murang'a County. Kandara subcounty is divided into nine wards. The subcounty borders Kigumo subcounty to the north, Murang'a south to the east, Gatanga to the south as well as to the western side.

The study employed the descriptive survey design. This involved collecting information by interviewing a sample of individuals. The post facto design was also used. This deals with the past and also tries to reconstruct history from that past. It looks at naturally occurring events and tries to figure out the facts that may have caused something to happen. This approach eliminates the possibility of the participant to be influenced by awareness that they are being tested.

The target population was the MP i.e. Alice Muthoni Wahome, family members of the MP, voters from Kandara, her colleagues in parliament and her opponents to the Kandara seat. The respondents had to be 18 years old and above. A sample size of 80 respondents was targeted.

Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to study the problem under examination as it identified the specific respondents to be interviewed. These had to be 18 years and above and must have had knowledge of the MP. A research guide was used to identify these respondents. Snowballing was then used to identify the researcher to other respondents. The researcher recorded all the information provided by the respondents. This was achieved by interviewing them using open-ended and close-ended questions.

Different methodologies were employed to obtain data for this study. The research was based on available literature, archival materials and oral interviews. This was aimed at getting as much information as possible as the respondents were not restricted during the discussion. Throughout the discussion, the researcher guided the respondents to stick to the topic of discussion.

The data was subjected to qualitative analysis. The tape-recorded data was classified into several

categories in relation to the statement of the problem and the objectives of the study. The data was interpreted in light of the objectives and the theoretical framework of the study. Data from the various sources was subjected to historical criticism and corroborated to verify its validity and ensure its reliability. This enabled the researcher to make conclusions as to whether this data had answered the questions that led to the research.

4.0 ALICE MUTHONI WAHOME FORMATIVE YEARS, 1959- 1978

In this section it assesses the formative years of Alice Muthoni Wahome from her childhood through primary school to her secondary education. The chapter explains how her early life experiences influenced her to join politics.

Alice Muthoni Wahome was born in Muruka village in Kandara division of Murang'a County in the year 1959. Karumu Primary School where Alice Muthoni Wahome acquired her primary school education is said to be built on land that once had a detention camp. The camp was used to detain those who opposed the colonial government policies and later this camp served as a detention camp for Mau Mau suspects. Alice Muthoni Wahome was baptised at the age of five years after having gone through catechism at the Anglican Church of Kenya. Muruka, the birth place of Muthoni had witnessed the presence of European missionary activities.

At the Lancaster house conference, a compromise constitutional change was arrived at. The change gave Africans a measure of control over the legislative council. They were assured of a majority on the unofficial members. It was at this stage of Kenya's political development that Alice Muthoni Wahome was born, when Kenyans were in expectation of finally getting off the yoke of colonialism. Her parents, Babu Manore and Hannah Nyawira belonged to the Agaciku clan. These are descendants of one of the daughters of Gikuyu and Mumbi, Wanjiku, according to the Agikuyu myths of origin (Muriuki, 1975). The parents lived in Location Four of the reserves set up by the colonial government to settle the Agikuyu whose land had been alienated by the colonial government (Thiong's Ngugi, O. I, April 6th 2015).

4.1 Historical background to Kandara

Kandara is inhabited by the Agikuyu whose ancestors are believed to have migrated from Tigania/Igembe area in Meru between the 15th and 16th century. They first settled at Ithanga where they met with the Gumba. The Gumba lived in caves hunting and gathering for their survival. Their interaction with the Agikuyu led to cultural borrowing where the Agikuyu borrowed the art of iron working, clitoridectomy and some features of the age set systems from the Gumba. With time, the Gumba were assimilated by the ancestors of the Agikuyu. It is from Ithanga that the

Agikuyu migrated to what is regarded as their ancestral and spiritual home Murang'a (Mukurwe wa Nyagathanga), from where they populated Kiambu and Nyeri regions (Muriuki, 1975).

Political organization of the Agikuyu in the pre-colonial period

The pre-colonial Agikuyu society was patriarchal. The basic administrative unit was the family under a male head who presided over family affairs. Several families formed a sub clan (mbari). The affairs of the clan were conducted by a council of elders. The council was under the chairmanship of a Muramati (guardian). Those initiated together formed an age set (riika). This formed the basis of political organization among the Agikuyu. There was always a ruling generation in power which was charged with political, judicial and religious functions. A ruling generation's term of office began and ended with the handing over ceremony known as 'Ituiika' which was enacted every thirty to forty years (Muriuki, 1975).

Colonial administration among the Agikuyu

The British appointed chiefs among the Agikuyu to assist them in administration. The British largely overlooked and ignored the traditional political set up and appointed people who did not belong to the ruling generation to become chiefs (KNA- PC/1/4/2). The duties of the colonial chiefs included collecting taxes, recruiting labour for European farms and maintaining law and order. This made the colonial chiefs unpopular in their communities. With time the colonial government appointed mission-educated young men who had acquired western education and culture. Those educated chiefs could read and write and this made the work of administration much easier. They were expected to set a good example to follow towards change and modernity (KNA- DC/KBU/3/25).

Kenya attains independence – A new political experience for Alice Muthoni Wahome and Kenyans in general

Independence elections were held in May 1963. KANU won 73 seats, KADU 31 and APP. On 1st June 1963, Kenya attained internal self-government (Madaraka) with Kenyatta as the first prime minister of independent Kenya. This meant that while the internal affairs of the country were under Kenyatta, the foreign affairs as well as the defence docket were under the control of the British government. On the 12th of December 1963, Kenya attained full independence. This meant that Kenya could not only run her internal affairs but also foreign affairs as well as the defence docket. On this day, the Union Jack was lowered for the last time and the air of excitement was experienced throughout the nation. Finally, the dream that Africans had cherished all through had come true. It was a new dawn and a new beginning (Kiereni, 2010). The parents of Alice Muthoni Wahome experienced the excitement brought by independence, Alice Muthoni Wahome was

then too young to witness the excitement brought about by independence but her older siblings had vivid recollection of the events and were quite helpful for this study in as far as filling the knowledge gaps that Alice Muthoni Wahome could not remember.

Alice Muthoni Wahome and the history of missionary education in Kenya

Pre-colonial education in Kenya was informal. When the missionaries came, they introduced formal education as we have it today. The African informal education was transmitted through storytelling, proverbs, riddles and apprenticeship among other methods. It was the responsibility of the adults to pass knowledge to the young generation. Alice Muthoni Wahome had a taste of this informal education as well as the western education. When the missionaries came to Africa, they introduced western education. They started schools in their mission stations and encouraged Africans to enroll.

Alice Muthoni Wahome and the developments in formal education in post independent Kenya

Independence elections were held in May 1963. KANU won 73 seats, KADU 31 and APP. On 1st June 1963, Kenya attained internal self-government with Kenyatta as the prime minister. This meant that while the internal affairs of the colony under the control of Kenyatta, foreign affairs and the defence docket were under the control of the British government. On 12th December 1963, Kenya attained full independence. This meant that Kenya could not only run the internal affairs but the foreign affairs as well as have control over the defence docket (Ibid).

At independence, ignorance was identified as one of the major hindrances to national development. Education was seen as the only way the government would resort to if it was to have skilled manpower to replace expatriates in the civil service, commerce and industry (Kivuitu, 2005). The education system inherited at independence was geared towards producing clerks, servants and low-level workers in colonial power and economic structure. Due to the need to tailor education to post independence developments, several commissions and committees were set up to advise the government on the most suitable and appropriate system of education. Among the outstanding commissions were Ominde (1964) and Gachathi (1976). Each of these commissions made elaborate recommendations towards education reforms. The emphasis was placed on making education meaningful and relevant to the social, economic and political aspirations of the people of Kenya. The Ominde commission recommended extensive changes in the education curriculum to make it relevant to Kenyans. The Gachathi commission focused on education objectives and policies (Kivuitu, 2005).

Alice Muthoni Wahome joined Karumu Primary School in the year 1966. She was a beneficiary of the recommendations of the Ominde Commission of 1964 where education was geared towards making it relevant to Kenyans (Mwangi Patrick, O.I, July 21st 2015). Karumu primary was established by the Anglican Church in 1958 but was later taken over by the government. The ACK remains as the sponsor to the school offering spiritual guidance to the students. She had joined the school as a standard one student and went through the system. Her teacher, Mr. Waweru informed this study that Alice Muthoni Wahome was an above average student.

Alice Muthoni Wahome and the Kenyatta succession debate

In 1976, there was a move to amend the constitution to block the then vice president, Daniel T. Moi from taking over the government. The question of Kenyatta's succession and the method to be used to replace him had been raised on several occasions due to Kenyatta's advanced age. The constitution of Kenya Chapter eleven section 6(1) and (2) stated that the vice president would take up the functions of the president for 90 days if the office of the president fell vacant or if the president became incapacitated. Leaders such as Dr. Njoroge Mungai, Kihika Kimani, James Gichuru, Paul Ngei, Jackson Angaine and Njenga Karume were of the opinion that the existing constitution needed to be amended to bar the automatic ascension of the vice president to the position of the president in the event of the death of President Kenyatta. This was a move aimed at blocking Daniel Moi from ascending to the office of the president upon Jomo Kenyatta's death. Daniel Moi was the then vice president to Jomo Kenyatta. The issue was however settled in October 1976 when Charles Njonjo, the then Attorney General, reminded Kenyans that it was criminal for 'any person to compass, imagine, devise or intend the death of the President (Kivuitu, 2005).

5.0 ALICE MUTHONI WAHOME AND THE MOI REGIME

The transition from Kenyatta's presidency to Daniel Moi's presidency was relatively peaceful. Political friends and foes rallied to support Daniel Moi (Karume, 2009). The cabinet issued a statement read by Mwai Kibaki declaring full support for Daniel Moi to succeed Kenyatta as the president of Kenya. All KANU branches in all provinces including Central Province, the home of the Agikuyu did not want to appear to oppose the president designate. Daniel Moi was elected to succeed Kenyatta on 10th October 1978. On 14th October, he was sworn in as the second president of Kenya. The transition was smooth and eventually the country moved from Harambee to Nyayo (Morton, 1998). Harambee refers to a slogan mostly used by President Kenyatta when encouraging people to work together. Pull together.

Alice Muthoni Wahome completed her secondary education at Ngandu girls under a new president. She sat for her KACE. This was the highest level of education that qualified one to join the university. She passed well and was admitted to the University of Nairobi for a Bachelor's degree in law. She joined many other girls from Ngandu Girls who were pursuing their law degree at the University of Nairobi. Ngandu Girls has produced quite a number of lawyers including Mumbi Ngugi who is a current judge of the High Court. It can thus be rightly said that Alice Muthoni Wahome's education prepared her for a career in law and politics, thanks to the good leadership skills instilled in her by Sister Nazarena Zouta, the then principal of Ngandu girls (Alice Muthoni Wahome, O.I, 17th September 2015).

Before joining the University of Nairobi, Alice Muthoni Wahome attended the National Youth Service. This was a compulsory requirement for those joining the university. After completing the training, she came out a hardened person ready to face the challenges at the university. She joined the University of Nairobi in the year 1980. As she informed this study, she joined the university with very high expectations of how finally she was to enjoy the university life with all its freedoms.

On the political scene as already observed, Moi had succeeded Kenyatta. He had promised to follow the footsteps (Nyayo) of Kenyatta. The kikuyu had interpreted this to mean that he would maintain the status quo. He preached continuity through the Nyayo slogan with its pillars of peace, love and unity.

This made him win the support of the kikuyus as well as other Kenyan communities (Kanyinga, 1994). Moi used popular Kikuyu leaders to consolidate power and legitimize his regime among the Kikuyu. Thus, Mwai Kibaki was appointed the vice president, Charles Njonjo remained the Attorney General and G.G Kariuki was appointed minister in the office of the president. Charles Njonjo served as the Attorney General from 1963-1980. He was a trusted political adviser to President Daniel Moi in the 1980s. In the initial stages of his presidency, president Moi would not go anywhere without the company of one of these leaders. This close relationship with the Kikuyu leadership made the community build confidence in Moi (Karume, 2009). Thus, Alice and other Kenyans were at peace as they watched the unfolding of things. Moi to them was after all a dependable leader. Alice Muthoni Wahome and her family were able to have a sigh of relief as all seemed to be well at the political scene.

Alice Muthoni Wahome's life at the University of Nairobi under Moi's presidency

Upon ascending to the presidency in 1978, Daniel Moi released all the political prisoners. This elicited demonstrations by the students of the

University of Nairobi in support of the decision. However, hopes of a cordial relationship between the university community and the government were quickly dashed as Moi expected uncritical support and loyalty from the university. He soon banned the Student's organization SONU (Nairobi University Student Organization). This organization had emerged as a strong supporter of the autonomy of academic freedom, criticism of the government was met with hostility by Moi and his supporters. Public speeches at the university had to be cleared by the special branch (intelligence police), who also attended any lectures held at the university grounds (Daily Nation, 31st July 1983).

Alice Muthoni Wahome joined the University of Nairobi in the year 1980 as already noted. In the 1980s, there was harassment of students to unprecedented levels. Police informers became regulars on the campus and in the classrooms. Student leaders were regularly expelled and the academic staff union was banned in 1980. This, according to Alice had caused a lot of insecurity and suspicion among the students. Government officials called for the screening of lecturers such that only those who were perceived to be loyal to the government were allowed to teach. Student organizations were mandated to obtain permits from the office of the president before holding meetings in the campus (Ibid).

In May 1981, after student disturbance prompted by inadequate library conditions and the barring of outside speakers, the university was closed down indefinitely. The inadequate library conditions were only a trigger. There were many grievances e.g. lecturers regarded as critical to the government were deprived of their passports, students were not happy with what was happening such lecturers including; Ooko Ombako, Mukaru Ng'ang'a, Okoth Ogendo, Atieno Odhiambo, Peter Anyang' Nyong'o and Shadrack Cutto. Most of these lecturers had been associated with the academic staff union. This was the situation at the University of Nairobi when Alice Muthoni Wahome was a student. As she put it, the freedom she had looked forward to turned to be just a dream (Alice Muthoni Wahome, O.I, July 29th 2015).

Alice Muthoni Wahome's experience as Kenya became a 'de jure' state one party state.

In June 1982, section 2A of the constitution of Kenya was hastily introduced making Kenya a 'de jure' (by law) one party state. This followed rumours that Oginga Odinga who had been expelled from KANU together with other radicals were in the process of forming a socialism oriented political party in Kenya (Windner, 1993). This act insinuated d K.A.N.U to be the only lawful political party in Kenya. Prior to the amendment, Kenya was a 'defacto' one party state between 1969 and 1982. This implied that there were no legal technicalities preventing Kenyans from forming

other political parties. When this amendment was introduced, Alice Muthoni Wahome was already a third-year student. It became a topic on the law students' lips though they still had to discuss it discreetly because of the many police informers who were out to get an information that could be said to be criticizing the government. The situation in the country as well as in the universities was tense as the people experienced a wind of intimidation that culminated into a coup in 1982. A coup that has remained in the minds of those who witnessed the anarchy that followed, a dark past in Kenya's history (Windner, 1993)

6.0 ALICE MUTHONI WAHOMÉ'S LIFE AS A STATE COUNSEL, (1986-2000).AND AS A POLITICIAN (2000-2016)

Alice Muthoni Wahome was admitted as a state counsel in 1986 after graduating from the Kenya School of Law with a diploma in law. One is a public servant as a law officer of the Attorney General's department. While serving as a state counsel, she served in the Chief Justice committee that was instrumental in the establishment of the family court in Kenya. The family court is a department of the High Court of Kenya. It covers matters of adoption, custody of children, matrimonial property, succession to property, separation and maintenance among other cases (Alice Muthoni Wahome, O. I, September 3rd 2015). Alice Muthoni Wahome as a state counsel was able to represent the state in many proceedings. A case in point was that of the case involving Ms Peter Ngechu and Zipporah Kimani in 1990. The two had been married for ten years and had three children. The marriage had issues of unfaithfulness. The wife sued for divorce but the husband was very uncooperative. Alice Muthoni Wahome thus represented the wife as a state counsel. The divorce case proceeded very well. The wife was accorded custody of the children as well as child support from the husband. Alice Muthoni Wahome informed the study that the case favoured the wife because the children were below the age of 18 years. The husband could not be trusted to be with the children due to his careless living (Zipporah Kimani, O.I, April 28th 2015).

Another case that Alice Muthoni Wahome was involved in was that of Samuel Kariuki. Kariuki, who was an orphan whose property had been grabbed by his uncles. The mother, a single parent and a teacher, died leaving Samuel then 10 years old under the care of the uncles. After sitting and passing his Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination in 1994, the boy was not taken to the secondary school where he had been admitted. His teachers from his primary school followed the case and that is how Alice Muthoni Wahome was given the assignment to take up the case. The boy was assisted to go to his dream school and from then on, his mother's dues were put under his name.

In the year 1998, Alice Muthoni Wahome handled a case brought to her by Alice Wangechi Thuo. She was to represent this lady in a case that involved the sale of land registered as L.R. NO.4933/1022. The buyer had paid the money through a lawyer but this money had not been given to the owner of the land. Alice was able to file a case at Milimani High Court. The case went on well and as it came out, the buyer had not had the land transferred to him as required by law. However, the seller of the land was commanded by the court to transfer the land to the buyer so that he could be given the proceeds of the land. This was a success on the part of Alice Muthoni Wahome as Alice as the lawyer. The judge who presided over the case was able to interpret the law to Alice Wangechi Thuo. He told her that for her to be given all her dues, she must complete the sale agreement by transferring the land to the new owner of the land. (Wangechi Thuo, 0.1, June 21st, 2015).

Alice Muthoni Wahome in private practice

Alice Muthoni Wahome has been a leading advocate in Nairobi and a senior partner in Wahome and Gichohi Advocates. This is a successful legal firm with a capacity of ten staff members all qualified in their field. In her 18 years' experience, she has handled precedent settling criminal and civil cases. Some of these have attracted major public interest both nationally and internationally. However due to her zeal for her work, some of her cases she has handled have had a backlash from her opponents. A good example is a case involving a former minister's widow Eddah Wanjiru Mbiyu. The widow sees Alice Muthoni Wahome as a fraudulent lawyer who was against High Court decisions. She accused Alice Muthoni Wahome of having forged documents which allowed for the illegal transfer of over 284 million shillings meant to settle off debts on the estate of the former minister in the Jomo Kenyatta regime. (Daily Nation 19th 2015) When this study contacted her for a comment she clarified by saying that this was one of the propagandas aimed at tarnishing her name. A FIDA case challenging the appointment of the Director of Public Prosecution in 2011 is another example of cases where she is involved. It was her wish that this post should go to a woman to fulfil the 2/3 gender rule. However, she lost the case because of other considerations that the judges looked at. She has undertaken legal litigation cases in family law up to the Kenya court of Appeal as illustrated earlier on.

How her professional career shaped her political life

As already explained, Alice Muthoni Wahome graduated from the University in 1984. She commenced her career as a lawyer at the Attorney General Chambers as a state counsel in the civil litigation department in 1986 after having gone through Kenya School of Law for her Diploma in Law. This occupation has played a great role in shaping her political career.

She was able to get exposed to legal issues, network with fellow lawyers and also empower herself economically. Alice informed the study that when she was in FIDA (Kenya), she felt that her energy was not being fully utilized. She felt like she needed to go for more challenging tasks. In one of the interviews that she held with the study, she informed this study that she has the desire to go for the highest office in this land when the right time comes.

The experience that she gained during her professional career as a lawyer has helped her political campaigns. Her experience enabled her to see some of the challenges and issues that people in her constituency (Kandara) encountered. During her campaigns, she was able to give promises to the electorate from an informed perspective. She was able to fund her campaigns from her salary and investments. Economic empowerment is very important for any woman who wants to join politics as such a woman will not be depending on other people to fund her campaign (Alice Muthoni Wahome, O.I, July 8th 2015). This also confirms the UNIFEM Biennial report (2004) that education is essential for enabling women exercise greater voice in decision making in the arena of politics. Education empowers women financially.

As a lawyer, she attended the 1995 Beijing conference which encouraged women organization to hold their government accountable to improving women status. This meeting thus opened her eyes to the fact that the world was for women inclusion in politics and decision-making organs. The meeting came up with the recommendations that institutions had to be restructured to cater for women inclusion. This, according to Muthoni, is a lesson that women politicians need to learn the world trends such that as the campaign they will be speaking from an informed perspective. She also informed this study that women wishing to join politics must be economically empowered to survive. This is because depending on husbands or even parents at times may limit one's advances in politics. (Choti, 2013)

6.1 Alice Muthoni Wahome's life as a politician during Uhuruto era (2013- 2016)

Although from the study we have established that Alice Muthoni Wahome joined politics in the elections of 2002, her life as a politician commenced officially on 4th March 2013. This was after she won the Kandara Parliamentary seat. Her victory was taken with a mixture of excitement and confusion for being the first female politician to represent Kandara constituency. She has tried to perform her political duties with a lot of devotion. She has set two days in a week to visit her constituency (Mondays and Fridays). During these visits, she is able to get first – hand information on their needs. The meetings are scheduled for Mondays and Fridays. At times, she visits the constituency on Saturdays and Sundays. She is aligned

to the Jubilee coalition which is the ruling coalition presently. (2013-2017)

The 2013 General Elections

The 2013 general elections were significant in Kandara. This study found out through research that they were the very first elections to be won by a woman. They were also conducted under a new constitutional dispensation. These elections were won by Alice Muthoni Wahome (TNA). The election results were received with a mixture of excitement and confusion. Never before had elections been won by a woman in Kandara constituency. She became the first woman MP for Kandara and the entire Murang'a County since independence in 1963. She was overwhelmingly voted for by the entire constituency garnering 80% of the total votes cast. Her manifesto which focused on offering creative solutions to recurrent challenges faced by the Kandara residents attracted the massive support she received (Jacqueline Kamau, O.I, May 3rd 2015).

Alice Muthoni Wahome on roads in Kandara constituency

Alice Muthoni Wahome's vision for Kandara is to transform Kandara into a vibrant community that exploits its abundant resources to meet its basic daily needs. These include enough food, good shelter, quality education and access to affordable health care. Alice Muthoni Wahome has been an active participant in the development projects in Kandara even before she was elected as the MP. Most of the constituents refer to her as 'Muthoni wa Ciiko' translated to mean 'Muthoni of actions'. This is in reference to her active participation in their development projects (Mburu Kimani, O.I, April 29th 2015).

In the year 1999, Alice Muthoni Wahome attended a Harambee aimed at recarpeting the feeder roads in Kandara which was held at the Kandara chief's camp. It was presided over by the then MP Joshua Ngugi Toro. When she was given a chance to address the people present, she told them that she felt indebted to give back to Kandara people as she had benefitted from the area as a student. From that time onwards, she has continued to support development projects in the area. The researcher attended this function this ranges from construction of bridges to make the area accessible to even recarpeting of feeder roads. Since she won the Kandara seat in the 2013 elections, she has been in the fore front of improving transport in the area. On 9th January 2014, she officially opened Kagumoini Bridge. This bridge was constructed through CDF funding and according to the residents, it has really improved transport in this area which earlier on used to be impassable during the rainy season. This bridge is thus of great help to these people. They are thus assured of good transport as the bridge has made farmers in the area to intensify their efforts in farming as they are

assured of reliable transport for their farm produce (Muturi Ngugi, O.I, March 3rd 2015).

Muthoni on Piped Water

Kandara constituency has had water shortages for a long time. Ever since the era of George Ndung'u Mwicigi, the area has experienced water shortages after the Mwicigi water project was mismanaged by those who took over leadership from Mwicigi. Mwicigi, as earlier mentioned in this study, had managed to provide water to Kandara people. Alice Muthoni Wahome has been on the fore front of initiating water projects through the CDF. However, the water objects were taken over by the Murang'a County government. In May 2014, she was commissioning the Kariua Water project that had been funded by CDF which was the patron. She tried to enlighten the residents of how the water project will benefit them. Earlier on, the mothers had been spending long hours looking for water. With the water project functioning, they would be able to devote the hours too other duties such as kitchen gardening.

Alice Muthoni Wahome on health facilities

As had been highlighted earlier on, Alice Muthoni Wahome has been very involved in funding projects that are going to benefit Kandara residents. This she has done through CDF funds. On 15th January 2014, she was at Muruka commissioning the Nguthuru dispensary laboratory. This is one of the CDF funded projects under Alice Muthoni Wahome's patronage. During this occasion, she encouraged the area residents to make use of the facility to eradicate diseases and general poor health. She reminded them that a healthy population will be able to engage in economic activities better than sickly people (Macharia Mugo, O.I, April 20th 2015).

Alice Muthoni Wahome has also equipped many health facilities in the consistency. On 20th April 2014, she was able to officially open a dispensary at Gitura Ward which was also funded through CDF funding. Through the same funding, she has established health centers in practically all the wards in Kandara constituency.

Alice Muthoni Wahome and the anti- jigger's campaign

Alice Muthoni Wahome has been deeply involved in the anti- jigger campaigns in Kandara and the other parts of the country. In this area, most of the poor households have been affected by jiggers. At an anti- jigger campaign activity held at Kariguini primary school, Alice was involved in the activity. She also took this chance to sensitize the area residents on how they can avoid being attacked by the jiggers that is by maintaining hygienic conditions in their homes. Alice Muthoni Wahome has been working closely with Ahadi Trust director Mr. Kamau. This is an organization that is involved in fighting the jigger menace in Kenya. On

many occasions, this study witnessed the activities of this organization. She was observed by this researcher washing the feet of those affected by the jiggers at Kariguini primary school. As she went on about this, she encouraged them to observe hygienic conditions for healthier feet.

7.0 ALICE MUTHONI WAHOME'S CONTRIBUTION IN THE JUBILEE GOVERNMENT, 2013- 2016

7.1 Alice Muthoni Wahome's contributions in Parliament

In parliament, she is very active in debates. She is able to articulate her points very well. She has been an ardent supporter of President Uhuru Kenyatta. She was among those who used to accompany the president to The Hague for his crimes against humanity cases. This was a result of the post elections violence that happened in Kenya after the 2007 general elections. Alice Muthoni Wahome on many times would comment on The Hague cases always insisting that Kenya was not a failed state hence according to her, the 'Hague Six' could still have been tried or at the AU court of justice but not in foreign court.

7.2 Challenges to Alice Muthoni Wahome's life as a politician

Alice Muthoni Wahome has faced various challenges and criticism in her life as a politician. However, these challenges have not discouraged her but have actually strengthened her the more. As she went on her campaign, her opponents tried all sorts of methods to discourage her to quit politics. Her main opponent, the former MP for Kandara, described her as an alien to Kandara constituency. This is not something new in Kenyan politics where women are concerned. Dr. Choti (2012), when writing about marriage in Gusii community says it constitutes the transferring of the bride from her home of birth to the home of the bridegroom.

Alice Muthoni Wahome has not been very much involved in the joint political activities in Murang'a County. She has not been supported by the county government as shown earlier. However, during her many visits to her constituency, she has tried to attack the county government in various ways. On 11th October 2016 as she addressed her constituents at Karugia in Gaichanjiru ward, she attacked the governor of Murang'a; Mwangi wa iria accusing him of misusing public funds on uncalled for advertisement that were of personal and of no benefit to the people of Murang'a. She felt that the governor should not use public funds to put up billboards that were expensive.

Alice Muthoni Wahome also uses her tours in the constituency to give her views on political issues. When the CORD coalition brought up the allegation that jubilee was trying to rig elections, she came out strongly to oppose them. The CORD brigade had alleged that the issuance of national IDs and voters'

cards had been schemed in favour of Jubilee strongholds. She termed the assertion to be in bad taste. She felt that this allegation was geared towards plunging the country into chaos. This was in response to Junet Mohammed of CORD. Junet had alleged that the action by Nyeri registrar of persons to take IDs to different centres is rigging the elections. Alice Muthoni Wahome felt that CORD should not be making alarmist statements to Kenyans (daily nation, April 21st 2016).

Alice Muthoni Wahome's life outside politics

Alice Muthoni Wahome has been in politics directly and indirectly for a long time (1999-2016) as has been shown in this study. During her time as a state counsel, she had been elected as a council member of LSK (1999- 2000). She was the vice chairperson for FIDA (Kenya). At a personal level, Alice Muthoni Wahome is a family person. While at the University of Nairobi, she met the love of her life, Godfrey Wahome Ngahu. Wahome was pursuing a degree in medicine. After graduating, they got married. They have been blessed with four children, three daughters and one son. The daughters are Nyawira, Wambui and Wangui. Their only son is called Ngahu Wahome. Alice Muthoni Wahome has always had time for her family. As the children testified, she has always been there for them. They remember all the days which their parents had to set aside to be with them despite their busy schedules. The children informed this study that their parents never used to miss out on important occasions like birthdays or visiting days during their secondary school days. Their parents would be there to listen to them and motivate them (Nyawira Wahome, O.I, 27th October 2015).

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

Alice Muthoni Wahome's life was impacted by what was happening in post-colonial Kenya. When the government of Kenya decided to tailor education to the post- independence development needs, she benefitted from these changes. When the government introduced the Higher Education and Loans Board (HELB), she benefitted from this change. HELB is a body that provides loans to university students. The loans are paid by the recipients. Alice Muthoni Wahome informed this study that she had no financial constraints during her university days. She was able to pay secondary school fees for her younger sister. The money was thus enough for her personal use and even help her siblings financially. Those were the days when going to the university was like working. The students were fed well and given 'boom'. Alice Muthoni Wahome informed the study that the boom that she got was so much to her that she was actually able to give part of it to her parents and at the same time live a comfortable life at the university of Nairobi. As she tried to compare her university days to current university days, she felt that there is a great difference. For now, not all the students who apply get the HELB loan. This

is the reason why some students look for sponsors as they want to get money to sustain them in college (Alice Muthoni Wahome, O.I, October 30th 2015).

This study was able to establish that Muthoni's education was able to prepare her to join politics. The UNIFEM Biennial report (2004) notes that education is essential for improving women standards and enabling them to exercise greater voice in the decision making in the family, the community, place of paid work and the public arena of politics. Basic literacy and other basic skills are absolutely vital to women's empowerment. Without the skills acquired in secondary school education, women can't obtain better paid employment. Education thus becomes a stepping stone to move out of cultural intrigues and liberates women from the male dominated society. This has been true to Alice Muthoni Wahome.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Although this study tried to build a political portrait of Alice Muthoni Wahome, the researcher feels that it was not exhausted. Her contributions towards development in Kandara need to be studied from 2016 to 2017 and beyond to see whether she will be able to fulfil all her election pledges.

The study established that Kenyan politicians use unorthodox means to win votes including mudslinging their opponents. There is therefore the need to enforce laws that prevent violence against women. Alice Muthoni Wahome has been assaulted while campaigning highlighting the danger that they have to face during campaigns. Once right laws are enforced, more women will be encouraged to join politics. Many women have lost their lives during campaigns. Martha Karua, the leader of NARC- Kenya, informed this study that during campaigns, she behaves like she is in a war zone to be shelled anytime. This would not be the case if laws are enforced to protect women candidates as they are the main victims of attack. Women politicians also need to strategize early enough and empower themselves financially in order to survive politics.

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