

THE POLITICAL LIFE OF ALICEN CHELAITE, 1945–2007

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**A Research Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Conferment of the Degree of Master of Arts in History of
Laikipia University**

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

I hereby declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted either wholly or in part to this or to any other university for the award of any degree.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved dad, Isaac Kamurian who in his own wisdom has always wished well for me, may his soul rest in peace.

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ABSTRACT

There exist a people - outstanding people - doomed to be remembered less for themselves than their entanglement in history made by others. Alicen Chelaite was one of these, a devoted wife and exemplary mother, an assiduous and effective campaigner for women rights in Kenya. This study endeavours to examine the political life of Alicen Chelaite. It was guided by three objectives: to examine the early life of Alicen Chelaite, 1945-1977, to investigate Alicen Chelaite's life during the Moi regime, 1978-2002 and to analyse Alicen Chelaite's life and times during the Kibaki's regime, 2003-2007. Chelaite was born in 1945 and in 1951 joined Kapropita Primary School. From 1961, she served in various secretarial capacities before joining active politics in 1979 when she was appointed a councillor for Nakuru. Subsequently, she became the first woman Mayor of Nakuru in 1996 and later in 2002 as a Member of Parliament for Rongai and afterwards as an assistant minister before retiring from active politics in 2007. Alicen Chelaite is a true example of a heroine: despite her humble educational background, she represents a majority of women whose contributions are not aptly captured by historians notwithstanding her onerous role of surmounting the obsolete social norms and obstacles from the deep-seated patriarchal Kalenjin community. The main objective of this study was to examine the life of Alicen Chelaite from 1945 to 2007. To achieve this, historical research design was used to evaluate and analyse data that were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data for this study was sought from the Kenya National Archives and the Parliament archives in Nairobi. This was complemented by data gathered through oral interviews with relevant informants, including her existing lifetime friends, relatives, family members, Members of Parliament who worked with her and local administrators. The informants were identified through purposive sampling. Secondary data was sought from the internet, Laikipia University Library, Egerton University Library, the University of Nairobi Library and Kenya National Library Services. The study employed Great man, subaltern and feminism theory. The three theories were used to give a true picture of Chelaite as a female leader in the Kenyan political arena. Three analytical frames were used to analyse the collected data. They included theoretical reflection, documentary review and content analysis. This analysis of Chelaite's biography thus contributes to the body of knowledge as it added to growing historiography of biographies in Kenya.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

In the context of this study the following terms means:

Activist:	Refers to a person who promotes political or social change.
Autobiography:	Refers to an account of a person's life written by that person.
Autocracy:	Refers to a government in which one person possesses unlimited power.
Biography:	Refers to a detailed description of a person's life written by someone else.
County:	Refers to a geographical region of a country used for administration.
Councillor:	Refers to a member of a local government council.
District:	Refers to a region marked off for administrative purposes.
Historiography:	Refers to the study of the methods of historians in developing history as an academic discipline.
Location:	Refers to a human settlement i.e. a village.
Mayor:	Refers to an official elected or appointed to act as head of town
Municipality:	Refers to a primarily urban political unit having powers of self-government.
Patriarchy:	Social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property.
Subaltern:	A term that describes the lower social classes and the other social groups displaced to the margins of a society
Feminism:	This refers to the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes.
Great Man Theory:	Refers to highly influential and unique individuals who, due to their natural attributes, such as superior intellect, heroic courage, extraordinary leadership abilities.
Ecology:	Refers to the relationships between living organisms like animals and their physical environment.
Ward:	A ward is the basic administrative unit of a local government

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

AEMO	African Elected Members Organisation
AIM	Africa Inland Mission
AWF	African Workers' Federation
AWU	African Workers Union
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CEE	Common Entrance Examination
CWO	Child Welfare Organisation
DP	Democratic Party
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FORD	Forum for the Restoration of Democracy
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HCT	Human Capacity Training
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KAPE	Kenya African Preliminary Examination
KFL	Kenya Federation of Labour
KNA	Kenya National Archives
KPU	Kenya Peoples Union
KSH	Kenya Shillings
LEGCO	Legislative Council
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MFI	Micro Finance Institutions
MGCSS	Ministry of Gender Children and Social Services
MP	Member of Parliament
MYWO	<i>Mandeleo Ya Wanawake</i> Organisation
NCPB	National Cereals and Produce Board
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
PTA	Parents-Teachers Association
SACCO	Saving and Credit Cooperative

GLOSSARY OF TUGEN TERMS

<i>Bager:</i>	Kalenjin term used by circumcised girls to refer to their fathers.
<i>Bamor:</i>	Kalenjin term referring to a husband of one's sister
<i>Chepigwek:</i>	Kalenjin term referring to a mad person
<i>Chesiran:</i>	Girls' age set
<i>Chongin:</i>	The oldest age set team
<i>Chumo:</i>	The second age set.
<i>Ibinwek:</i>	Kalenjin term used to refer to people who marry or get married at the same period
<i>Ibinda:</i>	A group of Kalenjin boys circumcised together.
<i>Kapchepsuei:</i>	A marginalised Kalenjin sub tribe with a very small population in Marigat
<i>Kiplelach:</i>	The fifth age set
<i>Kipkoimet:</i>	The fourth age set
<i>Kipnyigei:</i>	The sixth age set
<i>Maina:</i>	The first age set
<i>Masinya:</i>	Girls' age set
<i>Mursik:</i>	A traditional fermented milk variant of the Kalenjin people of Kenya.
<i>Nyongi:</i>	The last age set



A portrait of Alicen Chelaite

Source: Family Album, 2011

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Kenya's political landscape has historically been dominated by patriarchy and those women who have tried to break this ceiling ignore this sign have paid dearly. Women who stand for public office often get subjected to violence and taunts because of their sexuality.¹This is exactly what happened to Chelaite when she first ventured into politics.As a normal African girl, Chelaite had to undergo ordinary childhood stages like schooling but she still rose above board to become a senior citizen and a great leader in the Kenyan socio-economic and political arena. She manoeuvred successfully to become a leader in an otherwise patriarchal Kalenjin community residing in the Rift Valley region of Kenya. Owing to this feat, she has become a great person of interest to undergo research.

Chelaite broke the political glass ceiling in the 90s when she became the first woman Mayor of Nakuru Town at a time when political leadership in Kenya was a preserve of males. Some of the benefits enjoyed by women today can be traced back to efforts of leaders such as Alicen Chelaite. In honour of Alicen's efforts to empower women, this study highlights her political life and service to communities.

The heavy emphasis in a biography on those who had made significant political or military contributions, or who had a place in the dominant literary and artistic canon, made it almost impossible for women to "qualify" as suitable subjects for biography. Even when they did, the standard biographical pattern fitted them badly. Indeed, the flow of a life through childhood, education in school and then often at the university, sometimes followed by or substituted with military training and leading into a career or a life of public activity involved constant interaction with institutions from which, until very recently, women were excluded.²

Moreover, within this pattern, marriage, family responsibilities and domestic life usually played a very minor role. However, this was rarely the case for women,

¹M.N Were, 'Marciana Youthful Spirit for all Times, A biography of Julia Auma Ojiambo,' B.A Dissertation, University of Nairobi.1991,p.76.

²Cf. B. Caine, *Biography and History*, (London, 2010), p.106.

for whom domestic life and family relationships were generally far more important than for men. Even those nineteenth and early twentieth-century women who were celebrated for their intense public involvement - Josephine Butler and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in the nineteenth century and Eleanor Roosevelt in the twentieth century, for example - were closely enmeshed in domestic and familial responsibilities, which took precedence over their public activities for a large portion of their lives. Even if a woman did not marry, she was likely to have close ties to and responsibilities for parents, siblings and relatives and possibly also to live with a close friend.³

While most biographers deal in some way with marriage, family life and extramarital relationships of male subjects, the treatment has often been reasonably cursory. The silencing of women, along with the assumption that they were of relatively little value in the telling of a man's life story, the views and judgements given most weight by biographers, therefore, were taken from those who were involved in the same literary, political or scientific circles as their primary subject and often from their male friends.⁴

Women like Mekatilili wa Menza, a Giriama woman played a role in provoking and leading the resistance against the British in the period 1912-1914, urging the Giriama not to cooperate with attempts to recruit their men into wage labour. She managed to bring together divergent strands, a woman who rejected acknowledged gender norms and advocated for the rights of children and the youth and at the same time acted as a champion of the Mijikenda cultural rights.⁵ Besides, there were female leaders like Phoebe Asiyo, Grace Ogot, Wambui Otieno and others who sought to represent the interests of their people by working with "Wanjiku". Unfortunately, women at the grassroots have had no visibility in historiography. Several obstacles have been identified that generally prevent women from advancing to the peak of their socio-political spheres. Adhiambo-Oduol⁶ identifies various socio-cultural beliefs, attitudes, biases and stereotypes as major barriers which emphasise

³Ibid, p.107.

⁴B. Caine, *Biography and History*, (London, 2010), p.108.

⁵J. Mwarandu, "Mekatilili, Giriama hero." *Kenya Past and Present* 42 (2015), pp. 20-28.

⁶J. Adhiambo, "The Women in the New Political Dispensation: A False Start, in Challenges and Opportunities", *Journal of the Institute of Certified Public Secretaries of Kenya* Nairobi vol. XIV, No. 2. 2003, p. 23.

the superiority of men and the inferiority of women. They form an integral part of the socialisation process in the form of gender education and training where both men and women are exposed to from childhood. Another formidable barrier is the institutional framework guiding gender division of labour, recruitment and vertical mobility.

Current estimates show that women are particularly disadvantaged with their labour, often under-valued and under-utilised. Women are more likely to be employed than men are, yet their average income is lower. Yet another obstacle confronting women is lack of enough participation and empowerment in decisions that affect their lives in political and social processes. Since men dominate public decision-making processes, male values are ultimately reflected in the decision-making bodies in Kenya's development record.⁷

Laws claiming to protect women's rights have seldom evoked the same amount of hostility or opposition in many other countries of the world and get to be easily endorsed by the entire political spectrum. It took women in Europe a century-long struggle to win the right to vote. Even today, in some other countries, especially in Africa, some rights such as the right to vote and other legal rights come with a fuss or fight. The right to equal employment and educational opportunities, equal remuneration has not been hitherto fully attained by women. Most countries in the world have failed to give due space and representation to women in political institutions. Even in societies where women exercise relatively more freedom in day-to-day living, they remain politically marginalised.⁸

The biggest question in this context is what motivates women to seek political leadership? Studies have shown that women develop their vision of leadership from experiences they have as young girls raised within a society with major gender inequalities. When most women get into politics, priorities are guided by their desire to see a world where all people get equal opportunities in life⁹. There is a clear indication that even though women form the majority of voters in Kenya, they are still under-represented in leadership positions. Women's participation in electoral politics,

⁷ Ibid. p. 24.

⁸ Appleton, Simon, John Hoddinott, and P. Krishnan. "The Gender Wage Gap in Three African Countries." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 47 (2), 1999, pp. 289-312.

⁹ N. Kamau, *Women and Political leadership* (Nairobi: 2010), p. 4.

since Kenya's independence in 1963, has been limited to providing support to male politicians. With the new political dispensation in Kenya, there is a greater need for equal gender participation in acquisition and exercise of political powers.¹⁰

Notably, the repeal of Section 2 (A) of the Kenya Constitution in 1991 to some extent provided this opportunity by allowing room for multi-party democracy and reactivation of civil society activities. In this endeavour, it was envisaged that a level playing ground and larger political arena would be created for women's involvement in electoral politics: yet women are still under-represented in electoral politics. A recent survey in Kenya has revealed that women constitute the majority of voters and that their level of participation in electoral politics is minimal. However, Alicen Chelaite seems to have survived and penetrated through the said challenges and obstacles.¹¹

In order to honour women like Alicen Chelaite and recognise their role in socio-political endeavours, it was necessary to recognise them. A well-detailed and documented biography is what such ladies deserve. According to Ochieng, a good biography is a painfully researched and honest exercise and unless proper research is undertaken, one ends up with a misleading one. In academic circles, emphasis has been on major events that happened in the societies within Africa but the individuals who made such events happen have been ignored. The existing education system does not create curiosity and creative writing but instead reinforces a culture of compliance and conformity.¹²

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many studies have been carried out on prominent female politicians whose endeavours have touched and influenced millions of people around the globe. However, there are many ordinary female politicians whose lives, painful struggles and work have impacted the lives of their subjects yet; there is extant literature about this crop of politicians. Closer home, there is paucity of academic writing on

¹⁰The Constitution of Kenya (Amendment) Act No 12 of 1991. Repealed Section A of the Constitution hence ending the *de jure* one-party rule in Kenya. The Turn Coat Rule (Fifth Amendment) was reintroduced.

¹¹D. Throup, General elections and political legitimacy in Kenya, *Journal of International African*, Vol. 61 (1992), pp. 300-396.

¹²W.R. Ochieng, *Place of Biography in Kenyan History 1904 – 2005* (Kisumu: 2005) p. 6.

women's biographies in Kenya and this distortion and omission has since become institutionalized. Thus, this historical investigation of the political life of Alicen Chelaite, will add to the existing literature and hopefully inspire more historians to capture the life and times of the ordinary women in Kenya doing extraordinary things. To put things into perspective, Chelaite rose to become a Member of Parliament, a cabinet minister, and even the first female Mayor in Nakuru Municipal Council. Yet, historians had not captured her valuable and indelible contributions to society. She traversed through patriarchal terrain to rise to one of the highest echelons of politics when society pushed women into the margins of obscurity. Furthermore, the study reveals the diverse nature and the substantial scale of Chelaite's involvement in social/political change in Kenya.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the life and times of Alicen Chelaite from 1945 to 2007.

The specific objectives are:

- (i) To examine the early life of Alicen Chelaite, 1945-1977.
- (ii) To investigate Alicen Chelaite's life during the Moi regime ,1978-2002
- (iii) To analyse life and times of Alicen Chelaite during the Kibaki's regime ,2003-2007

1.4 Research Premises

This study is based on the following assumptions:

- (i) Alicen Chelaite's childhood prepared her adequately for the role she played in the political history of Kenya.
- (ii) The difficulties experienced during Moi's period provided her with sufficient leadership and life skills that brought her forth the desire for abrasive political favour.
- (iii) Chelaite's women liberation and gender grassroots struggles prepared her for high-stake politics during the Kibaki's regime.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study becomes of great benefit to scholars and political activists in Kenya as well as all over the world in trying to comprehend the woman's position in society as far as the political arena is concerned. In particular, it would be of great help to the

female leaders who would wish to participate in the political process but are scared of various stereotypical cultural beliefs. Furthermore, historians can use the research findings to better appreciate the role women have played in shaping the political landscape. Besides, various governments may use the findings from this study to recognize outstanding women and honour them for their contributions in shaping social, political and economic spheres of their countries. Evidently, the crucial role she has played in making the history of Kenya and Tugen women in the political arena should be explored to present clear information and evidence to historians. It also contributes to the written works on biographies.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study was confined to the colonial and postcolonial periods of 1945-2007 signifying the year that she was born up until the year she retired from active politics however the study has highlighted upto 2022 because she is still alive. The limitation of the study lay in getting undistorted information since the interviews relied on narratives given by informants; however, this limitation was curbed by supporting the oral information with archival data and secondary sources available.

1.7 Literature Review

The study of biographies is considered crucial since they are considered as rich sources of history. This argument renders the study of biographies to be inevitable. Studies on the biographies of great people have provided very popular and revealing readings. This can be traced back to the classical periods. Scholars like Rowse argue that a great deal of history may be learnt in the most congenial way simply by reading biographies.¹³ His study is relevant to this study because it clearly points out the importance of studying biographies which began several centuries ago. It, therefore, forms a solid background to the study of the biography of Alicen Jematia Chelaite which this research espouses.

Lee in his book, *A very short introduction*, posited that biographies capture the life of a person from childhood to the time of his death which can be categorised into topics and themes. He pointed out that biographies deal with great individuals,

¹³A.I. Rowse, *The Use of History in W.R. Ochieng (Ed) Place of Biography in Kenyan History: 1904–2005* (Kisumu, 1991), p. 1.

hence, they must portray the real picture of an individual. The period of classical and medieval biographies was a way of putting on record the contributions and roles played by leaders in military, political and religious perspective. Furthermore, biographies of most Kenyans were written after independence and details of those who participated in the struggle for independence were captured. This was a way of depicting their importance and the role they played in the attainment of Kenya's independence. Lee's statement helps this study in that it supports the analysis of an individual's life from childhood to death. It also states that a biography is one way of documenting the legacies and contributions of an individual.¹⁴ Therefore, it was important for this study, since it also helped in analysing the life of Alicen Chelaite and her untold history.

In his study of the psychological approach in biography, Erikson argued that it was highlighted in the 1950s with the publication of *Young man Luther*, a study that, according to him, sought an explanation for the actions of the leaders of the Reformation in his childhood and adolescence. A factor that emanated from Luther's challenges with his father and related identity crisis.¹⁵ Such an open psychological perspective was further elaborated by Gusdorf, who tried to show that autobiographers seek to create order, coherence and direction in life's narrative where none may have existed; thus, interpreting autobiography as a form of self-stage. Bjorklund would later argue that autobiographers were, therefore, a good source for investigating ideas about the "self" to find out about people's mental constitution.¹⁶

Isaacson, carefully observes Henry Kissinger from his childhood as a persecuted Jew in Nazi Germany, through his family's migration to America, his education and his rise in public space to a security advisor and the Secretary of State during the reign of Nixon.¹⁷ He also assesses Kissinger's role as a globe-trotting business consultant. Isaacson observes that Kissinger never embraced European

¹⁴H. Lee, *A very short Introduction, Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 10

¹⁵E. H. Erikson, *Young man Luther: A study in psychoanalysis and History* (New York, 1958), pp. 8–10.

¹⁶G. Gusdorf, "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography" in J. Oluey (Ed) *Autobiography Essays theoretical and critical* (Princeton, 1980), pp. 28–48.

¹⁷W. Isaacson, *Kissinger, A biography* (New York, 1992), p. 67.

liberalism, republicanism and idealism. He shows that, instead, Kissinger was attracted to conservatism with its emphasis on national interest and balance of power. He posits that Kissinger turned to Metternich, Castlereagh and Otto Von Bismarck, the prime practitioners of power politics, to whom he dedicated his doctoral dissertation. He affirms that, in his foreign policy, Kissinger would always see any struggle in the world in the East-West context and, therefore, the need for realpolitik (Realism). According to Isaacson, the policy was reflected in Kissinger's dealing with Vietnam, Cambodia, China and the Soviet Union as well as Africa, especially in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The review of Kissinger's biography was important as it helped in shedding light on the styles used in biography writing. This was especially important as it highlights Chelaite's secretarial work in various public offices as an important variable in the study.

Yet in another biography written by Moore, he portrays Thatcher as a tough but principled lady with a firm stand in her political perception. Margaret was the first female Prime Minister in Britain from 1979 to 1999. She was nicknamed the "iron lady" because of her tough political stand. Moore argues that Thatcher made a major change in the UK, she instituted reforms and reduced the powers of powerful movements during times of trade unions. She expanded the relationship of her country to stabilize peace and harmony with her neighbours. He notes that Margaret was a bright student in academia before she joined politics. At the secondary school level, she won a scholarship to Kasteren and Arantham Girls School where she was appointed the head girl.¹⁸

She proceeded to Somerville College Oxford University. At Oxford University, she was elected student leader. Moore explains that Thatcher's leadership at all levels impressed many people because of her strong ability of advocacy and good articulation of issues. After her academics, she was elected MP for Finchley and gained popularity as she was ranked high in the Conservative Party leadership and finally appointed the Minister for Education in 1970.¹⁹ Thatcher's biography was of great importance in the writing of Chelaite's biography since this comparison guided

¹⁸C. Moore, *Margaret Thatcher; Everything she wan*, (Oxford, 2015), p. 14

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 18

in elaborating Chelaite's undertaking in the various public offices where she served, and her leadership skills as the first woman mayor of Nakuru Municipality.

George in his work discusses Zarina, an Indian who moved to Kenya in her early years. George points out that Zarina refused to be guided by her parents' conservative stance on issues of marriage; instead, she took an independent step against her parents' wish. Obviously, Zarina was a woman with a firm stand. The conservative guidance of her parents has turned her to be quite obstinate since her early childhood. Critically, she was born in a very rich family where her education was catered for. In her scholarship journey, she gained requisite knowledge which gave her critical skills to censure some aspects in her Hindu religion: those aspects influenced her against some doctrinal practices of Hindu. In his writing concerning the marriage of Zarina, George portrayed Zarina as a leader with an independent mind, who thinks of her own and a woman who denounces any kind of guidance which is against her views.²⁰ Zarina's character gives a key understanding of Chelaite's political stand when she opted to contest for a parliamentary seat with the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), when the area was largely Kenya African National Union (KANU) in 2002; however, she did not emerge victorious.

Another very important work is Sara's *The Political Worlds of Women* which analyses historians interested in female political activities in the nineteenth century. It also shows how women have been excluded from local and national politics. The majority of the women explored in Richardson were part of the developing middle class, whose political ideology was at its peak for the chronological period of the sixteenth century and seventeenth century.²¹

Keller in his study, *The story of Mandela Nelson*, explains life in totality. He describes Mandela as a son of the chief of Thembu in South Africa. Mandela's father revolted against the whites' authorities in South Africa; he was always obedient but challenged the laws used by whites to govern the South Africans. Amusingly, Mandela's father was once summoned by the resident magistrate to answer as why he

²⁰ G. George, *Story of Zarina Patel: An Indomitable Spirit*, (Nairobi, 2013), p. 14

²¹S. Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in 19th –Century* (London: 2013), p. 45.

was not guiding his subjects to abide by the regulations of whites; but he failed to turn up. This resulted to him not only losing his employment as a chief but also his cattle and land leaving him with almost nothing. Consequently, Mandela as a young boy was forced relocate to his relative's home in the Qunu area. Keller demonstrates how Mandela's rich background moulded him. Mandela was a man who was respected throughout his life. He explains that Mandela went through the normal rites of passage when he was 15 years old which moulded and shaped him for a tougher future in terms of leadership. Nelson later worked in gold mines as a security officer.

Keller vividly describes the legal career of Mandela and the way he teamed up with his fellow colleague Oliver Tambo in exercising their profession as young lawyers. When Mandela embarked on politics in 1945, he became a strong opponent of apartheid rule in South Africa. Consequently, the government issued a warrant of arrest for Mandela and ANC members. To counter this harsh treatment by the authorities, Mandela changed the strategies of using peaceful advocacy to armed guerrilla tactics. As a result of this, Mandela was arrested and imprisoned in 1953. According to Keller, Mandela emerged as a fearless lawyer, courageous freedom and mindful nationalist who at no point gave up in fighting for the country.

Moreover, Keller explored the life of Mandela when he emerged victorious in the first democratic elections held in 1990 thereby becoming the first black president of South Africa. After independence, Mandela stunned the world by allowing the whites to remain in the country, despite being a nationalist who fought against apartheid rule. Keller further asserts that Mandela handed over leadership of the country voluntarily after he served for a short period of one term. Thereafter, Thabo Mbeki took over from Mandela setting up an exemplary leadership to the world. His dedication, charismatic nature and confidence to bring independence to South Africa shows how committed he was to liberate his people from apartheid.²² Comparatively, in this study, Alicen Chelaite's background closely resembles that of Mandela. Whereas Keller's study majorly focusses on Mandela's political legacies, this study analyses Chelaite's legacies both in politics and after retirement from politics.

²² K. Bill, *The story of Nelson Mandela* (Oxford, 2009), p. 23

Maina wa Kinyathi examines the violent confrontation against the British invaders, their social and political struggle against the occupation of the British imperialist, the transformation of the constitution, *Mau Mau* armed resistance, the class struggle and revolutionary movement against Kenyatta, as well as, Moi's neo-colonial regime and their imperialist backers.²³ In his work, the author mentions such prominent contemporary leaders and civil servants of President Daniel arap Moi such as Mwangale, Charles Njonjo, J.M Kariuki, Ben Gethi, Patrick Shaw, Pius Kibathi Thuo, Peter Giceru Njau, Peter Kimani and Kihika Kimani. Other leaders mentioned include Oginga Odinga, Ochieng' Oneko, Paul Ngei, Taita Towett, Robert Matano, Okiki Amayo, Nathan Munoko, Nyamweya, Kibaki, Kiano and Nyaga. The author does not mention Reuben Chesire, even though Chesire was a close friend of Moi who even served in various ministries under the Moi's regime. This book is important as it pointed to the blatant gaps in existing literature that necessitated the study.

Khapoya in his article, *Moi and beyond*, attempts to explain Kenya's successful transition experience after the death of the founding president, Jomo Kenyatta. He explores the factors underlying the then uneasiness in the country, which led to the detention of political activists, and to charges of human rights violations even for those that went to exile. He goes on to speculate on the prospects of a peaceful transition to the presidency of Daniel arap Moi who promised to follow in the footsteps of Kenyatta. Vincent asserted that, after Moi took leadership from Kenyatta, he promised change and brought back hope. In 1979, Moi did indeed follow on the footsteps of Kenyatta by blocking the political members of KPU from contesting their parliamentary seats. In the same year, succession strife arose when Moi was supposed to ascend to power after the death of Kenyatta within a constitution period of 90 days. Ironically, Chelaite was not a very loyal KANU supporter, despite the fact that KANU sponsored her studies. This was evident when she betrayed the party when she joined NARC in 2002. Little is known about Chelaite in Moi's government. Therefore, more information is required about her whereabouts from the Moi era to the Kibaki era which this research purposed to give.

²³Maina wa Kinyatti, *History of Resistance in Kenya – 1884-2002*, (Nairobi, 2008).

Waruhiu in his book, *From Autocracy to Democracy in Kenya*, seeks to give an analysis of the government of Kenya between the granting of internal self-government in June 1963 and the multiparty general elections in December 1992, in order to reveal how the government, fell short of achieving the democratic ideals to which the people of Kenya aspired at independence.²⁴ Sadly, while the book mentions many of Chelaite's contemporaries, it fails to mention her anywhere. The book was important since it pointed out the gaps of excluding other important personalities that necessitated the writing of a biography on Alicen Chelaite.

Douglas' work, *Leadership in Africa; the Role of Youths in Leadership*, shows that the role of women in representation at the political stage was completely ignored. Notably, the number of women participations only continued to grow after African countries received their independence in the 1960s. During the struggle in Africa, the position of women participation in politics was emphasized.²⁵ African women were recognized for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace building. Around 2014, Forbes listed Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as the 70th most powerful woman in the world.

In further pursuit of biographies, Nyambura in her work, *Development and politics of Laikipia in Kenya*, expounded on development and changes which took place in Laikipia County, which she associated with leadership and politics of G.G. Kariuki. Nyambura analysed the whole life of Kariuki from his birth up to the time he was a second-term senator of Laikipia County. She explains how the early life of Kariuki shaped his spiritual background and moulded him as well as its impact in his academic journey. Kariuki embarked on politics from a tender age of 22 years in 1959. She asserts that Kariuki created interest in politics and leadership when he participated in formation of Central Rift Valley Labour Party (CRVLP). Kariuki was elected the first Member of Parliament representing Laikipia Constituency in 1963. As a Member of Parliament of Laikipia, Kariuki emerged as champion of education in his area: she posits that Kariuki built many schools in the area and provided

²⁴S.M. Waruhiu, *From Autocracy to Democracy in Kenya, Past systems of government and reforms for the future*, (Nairobi, 1994).

²⁵D. Gichuki, "Leadership in Africa and the Role of Youth in the Leadership Milieu", Conference paper presented in 2014.

scholarships to many students in secondary schools. Kariuki developed the area in many aspects of development; Nyambura mentioned Kariuki as a pioneer of many technical institutions in Laikipia and a number of health facilities in its jurisdiction. Like Chelaite, Kariuki helped many of his electorates to buy land for settlement through the formation of women groups. Nyambura established that Kariuki in 1970 helped his people to form land buying companies in Laikipia which assisted more than 10,000 landless families with land to settle in. According to Nyambura, Kariuki emerged to be one of the outspoken parliamentarians who was always making remarkable deliberations to debate in parliamentary proceedings. It was especially helpful to the people of Laikipia constituency.²⁶ Kariuki's efforts are similar to Chelaite's in which this research attempts to duly document.

Whereas Nyambura's work only shows G. G. Kariuki's own education within Laikipia County, this study attempted to show Alicen's contributions, both in her constituency and in the country at large. This indicates that African women in leadership have achieved recognition. These women including Ellen Sirleaf Johnson of Liberia, Joyce Banda of Malawi and Catherine Samba-Panza of the Central African Republic have helped to break gender barriers and help women achieve the ultimate status of being heads of states. Gichuki highlights the role of women in assisting other women to visualise themselves as leaders of their nation; but this has not recognised the role of women in helping other women from marginalised societies and humble backgrounds play in the making of political history.

Jane Parpart, an Assistant Professor of History at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada argues that while women in certain classes and ethnic groups may have had greater access to the state; generally, women have been under-represented in African state affairs. Parpart confirms that women have played an active and important role in the nationalist's struggles where the transfer of power from one man to another is common.²⁷ Whereas Alicen Chelaite is a woman who most historians have not explored her background and contribution, she made history where she plays

²⁶ R. Nyambura, J. J. Kariuki and development of Laikipia County in Kenya, 2013, p. 456-459

²⁷ J. L. Parpart & K. A. Staudt (Eds) *Women and the state in Africa*. (Colorado, 1986), p. 67

a role in mentoring other women in leadership and political participation; unfortunately, her contribution has not been fully documented and this research attempts to address this discrepancy.

Kadaga in her study, *Women's Political Leadership and Political Africa*, has observed that women in East Africa have played an active role in political activities with specific reference to Uganda. She avers that, in the eighth parliament of Uganda, 99 members of parliament were women, 79 of whom were District Women representatives, 14 directly elected women parliamentarians and 6 special interest representatives.²⁸

Nzomo in the work, *Women in political leadership in Kenya: access, agenda setting and accountability*, tries to present the role of Kenyan women in their notable presence and political participation, leadership and governance which occurred from the pre-colonial period through colonial to post-colonial.²⁹ Nzomo argues that many heroes accomplished roles that the first woman chief, Wangu wa Makeri played including participation in the country's struggle for liberation. Women have been at the forefront to contribute along with men in all aspects of public life in Kenya.³⁰ However, Nzomo does not address political participation of women from marginalised communities. Chelaite is among those women who have played a big role and participated in the struggle for independence and liberation of Kenya. Chelaite's humble background has not prevented her from ascertaining the role of women in the political history of Kenya.

Ochieng posits that each man and woman is unique and different in the society. He also looks at various biographies and autobiographies of Kenyans like Oginga Odinga, Koigi wa Wamwere, Godfrey Gitahi Kariuki and Kiraitu Murungi. He notes that it takes time to mould a nation and these leaders should be considered as important individuals in the making of Kenya. This writer provides resourceful and detailed analysis of biographies. However, there are still many more issues to be

²⁸R. A. Kadaga, *Women's Political Leadership in East Africa with Specific Reference to Uganda*. Commonwealth Secretariat, (Kampala, 2013), pp. 68-85.

²⁹N. Maria, "Women and Political Governance in Africa: A feminist Perspective." Pathways to African Feminism and Development, *Journal of African Women's Studies Centre 1*, no.1.2015

³⁰Ibid.

resolved. The writing of biographies among Kenyans is enigmatic. Heroes have come and gone and all that Kenya does is pay an expensive last respect after the leader's demise. Most of the available written biographies concentrate mainly on political history: gender politics has not been covered exhaustively. Biographical studies are important in that they are objective scholarly works compared to autobiographies, which are often written from a subjective point of view. This confirms Chatterji's Assertion that "biography is history teaching by example" and no history of any community would be complete that did not contain the life record of many of the men and women who constitute its citizenry.

A number of Kenyans have written biographies of prominent people. For instance, the biography of Wangu wa Makeri was written by Wanyoike³¹ who was born in the second half of the 19th century into a traditional Gikuyu society in 1901. She was appointed as the "headman" of Weithaga location. She was the first and the only female head of the entire colonial period in Kenya. The author outlines Makeri's character, background, and the kind of leadership that she presented to her community. The work assesses the significance of her fall from power and the conflict between the traditional society and the colonial framework within which Makeri worked; her eventual downfall is crucial for this research. Wanyoike's work provides useful knowledge on the kind of leadership that existed in the traditional Kenyan society which has a direct impact to this research.

Roelker employs a biographical method in tracing the personality of Eliud Mathu. He looks at Mathu's political career, especially the role he played in the legislative council during the colonial period, being the first African to be appointed to the LEGCO. He assesses Mathu's representation of African grievances in a parliament dominated by white settler representatives³² which are similar to Chelaite's tribulations as has been exemplified in this research.

Jeevanjee, also known as "A Rebel of the Empire", has been authored by *Zarina Patel*. This is an introductory biography of A.M. Jeevanjee, a brilliant entrepreneur in colonial Kenya who resisted the British Empire. Born in Karachi (now

³¹M. Wanjiko, "Wangu wa Makeri: *A Biography*", (Nairobi, 2002), pp. 1-42.

³²J.R Roelker, *Mathu of Kenya: A political Study*, (Nairobi, 1976), pp. 32-47.

Pakistan) in 1856 to a family of traders, he became a trader early on in his own right. He travelled to East Africa in 1890 and started trading there by provisioning ships in Mombasa. He went on to help in the construction of the Uganda Railway, and founded the newspaper the *African Standard*. As an Asian, he was also discriminated against in colonial East Africa. In 1914, he helped found the East African Indian National Congress and was involved in the fight for rights for both Indians and Africans.³³ In comparison, Chelaite's efforts are comparable to Jeevanjee as far as his rebellious nature was concerned.

Similarly, Aseka provides a detailed analysis of Ronald Ngala's life who was a prominent Kenyan politician - the leader of KADU- the opposition party at Kenya's independence. His career was marked by a realistic approach to politics and by devotion to Kenya, his country, which allowed him to place his country's stability over his own political ambition. Similarly, the biography of Alice Muthoni indicates that she has also placed her constituency's interest over her career in law. She joined politics to help solve some of the problems that have been affecting the constituency. Among these problems, include poor infrastructure and general poverty brought about by poor leadership. She felt that she could offer the best help to the constituency by representing them in parliament.³⁴

Ronald Ngala's biography, on the other hand, is a thrilling exploration. Written by Clara Momanyi, Ronald Ngala is undoubtedly one of the lesser-known figures in the Kenyan independence movement. Ngala was born in 1922 and grew up among the Giriama people on the Kenyan coast. He went to Makerere University College in Uganda where he trained as a science teacher (and where he became a friend of Julius Nyerere, later to be the first president of Tanzania), and when he returned to Kenya he rose to become a school principal. He ventured into politics at the time of the emerging nationalist struggle and founded KADU, the second of the

³³Zarina Patel, 2002. Jeevanjee; A Rebel of the Empire has been authored, Sasa Sema Publisher, Nairobi Kenya

³⁴ E.M Aseka, '*Ronald Ngala*' M.A Thesis, Kenyatta University, 1989. pp. 23-67.

Kenyan nationalist political parties and later becoming a cabinet minister in the new Kenyan government. Sadly, he died from injuries received in a car wreck in 1972.³⁵

Elizabeth Mugi-Ndua also attempted to author the biography of Mekatilili Wa Menza whom she described as a “Woman Warrior”. This is the story of an East African resistance leader in the first part of the twentieth century. A member of the Giriama people who lived on the Kenyan coast north of Mombasa, she was an extraordinary woman, who led her people in resistance against the British colonialists in the early 1900s.³⁶

Jaramogi Odinga’s biography written by Atieno Odhiambo has also been reviewed. In this work, Jaramogi Odinga is said to have found himself living in a colonial world dominated by colonial power. This made him seek political, economic and social independence; Odinga was a member of legislative council by 1957. He became the first vice president of Kenya in 1964. He later opposed K.A.N.U and founded K.P.U in 1966. It is this multiparty democracy, which increased women political participation in politics in Kenya. The NARC government, which took over from K.A.N.U in 2002 had among its pledges promised to form a government that will ensure the participation of all citizens including gender equality.

Edwin Nyutho, in his scholarly works, has attempted to author the biography of Mohamed Amin, who he describes as, “*The Eyes of Africa*”. His work is based on the story of the Kenyan photographer and photojournalist, Mohamed Amin, born in Kenya in 1943 the son of an immigrant from Punjab who worked for East African Railways. He became entranced by photography at an early age and had his first pictures published in a national newspaper when he was still at school in Tanganyika. Mohamed Amin went on to photograph and film many important stories including the Russian involvement in Zanzibar, and Idi Amin’s coup and brutal dictatorship in

³⁵ M. Clara, *Ronald Ngala*, (Nairobi, 2001)

³⁶ Elizabeth Mugi-Ndua, *Mekatalili wa Menza, The Woman Warrior*. (Nairobi, 2000), p.23

Uganda and later the famine in Ethiopia in 1984. He died in a plane crash following a hijacking in the 1990s.³⁷

Mwai Kibaki, an Economist for Kenya, by Nganga Mbuga, is a biography of the third president of Kenya, elected in 2002. He describes him as “A brilliant economist, Mwai Kibaki made his name building the economy of Kenya.” Born in 1931, he was a gifted student, attended Makerere University College in Uganda, where he became an economist. He started work with the Shell Oil Company, since government jobs were then not open to Africans; went to London to further his studies; and subsequently helped in the founding of KANU, one of the Kenyan political parties leading the fight for independence. He became the Finance Minister in the independence government. He later left the government and helped found the opposition parties which led to the defeat of the government of Daniel Arap Moi. Included therein is a copy of his inauguration speech.³⁸

William Ochieng has looked at various biographies and autobiographies of Kenyans like Oginga Odinga, Koigi wa Wamwere, Godfrey Gitahi Kariuki and Kiraitu Murungi. In his work, he posits that each man or woman is unique and different and that society moulds him/her. Ochieng notes that it takes a leader to mould a nation: hence, these leaders should be considered as important individuals in the making of Kenya. Ochieng provides resourceful and detailed analysis of biographies.

Bildad Kaggia talks of having been the first Member of Parliament for Kandara at Independence in 1963. Kaggia’s work puts the Kandara constituency into the picture of Kenya’s first parliament after independence. Due to Kaggia’s socialist inclination as opposed to capitalism which the President supported, Kandara had to withstand the worst of criticism from Kenyatta’s government.³⁹

Wangari Maathai is recognized as a great scholar, an environmentalist and a human rights crusader. Rising from a humble background, Maathai secured herself a

³⁷ See Nyutho Edwin, Mohamed Amin, who he describes as, “The Eyes of Africa”. (Nairobi, 2000), p.4

³⁸ Ng’ang’a Mbuga, *Mwai Kibaki, Economist for Kenya*. (Nairobi, 2003), p.34.

³⁹B. Kaggia, *Roots of freedom 1921-1963. The autobiography of Bildad Kaggia*, (Nairobi,1975), p. 62

place in history for promoting environmental conservation in Kenya by planting trees. During the struggle for multiparty democracy, she was in the forefront and stood firm against corruption and ethnic-based politics. In the 1980s, Maathai served as the chairperson of the National Movement, a non-governmental organization whose aim was to promote environmental conservation, Maathai led in planting as many trees as possible across the nation. Later in 2006, she supported the International Year for the Eradication of Desertification Programme. Maathai also spearheaded the United Nation's billion-tree campaign in Kenya. The other achievements of Maathai included her election as the Member of Parliament for Tetu constituency and her appointment as an assistant minister for Environment and Natural Resources, which was in line with her activism. In 2004, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to recognize her unique commitment in environmental conservation, hence many considered Maathai a heroine.⁴⁰

Wangari Mathai's life is an example of the perpetuation of gender stratification. Her efforts to save Uhuru Park from being allocated to Kenya Media Trust for a commercial development project in 1989 put Wangari into a collision course with Moi's henchmen and members of parliament. Her environmental concerns and the significance of preserving Uhuru Park for posterity were sacrificed at the altar of male chauvinism. As her public image blossomed and her political star began shining across Kenya's political horizons, the male ruling class sensed danger. Her potential to mobilize Kenyan women for political causes was clearly discerned. For this reason, she was subjected to public ridicule, abuse and condemnations by President Moi and his supporters. This abuse was clearly based on the fear that women might just be good or even better in terms of leadership. The men panicked and feared that women would threaten their hegemonic position. The story of Wangari Mathai's tribulations is an example of what women politicians have to endure in politics.⁴¹

In examining Scott's work, which focuses on the vexed relationship of the particularity of gender to the universalizing force of democratic politics, she asserts

⁴⁰W. Maathai, *Unbowed: A memoir* (Nairobi, 2006), p. 23.

⁴¹Ibid, p. 25

that 'her story' has had excellent results and contribution to the overall study of history.⁴² She writes that by piling up the evidence about women in the past refutes the claims of those who insist that women had no history with no significant place in the stories of the past. Scott's work is relevant for this research as it challenges those writing on women's political representation in Kenya to bring about efforts by women like Alice Chelaite to develop their constituencies. According to Scott, if people are to truly understand history, then both men and women had to be studied. This then presents a gap, in that, most of the biographies in Kenya focus on men.

Most of the available biographies concentrate on male personalities. Gender politics, in as far as biographies are concerned, has not been covered adequately. This study aims to fill this gap. As the society moulds the lives and destinies of the individuals within it, they are said to leave their footsteps on the sands of time. Biography is said to be teaching history by example and that no history of any community would be complete without the life record of many of the men and women who constitute its Citizens.⁴³

Notably, many writers and scholars have provided resourceful and detailed analysis of biographies of great leaders: there are still many gaps in related fields and the ones discussed here are just but a selected few. This study utilized as many sources as possible in an attempt to harness sufficient information on historical biographies.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by three major theories: the Feminism Theory, the Subaltern Theory and the Great Man Theory. According to Morgan, the term eco-feminism was conceived in 1974 by a Frenchman called Francois de Eaubonne, as a connection between ecology and women. According to Spretnak, eco-feminism is a fusion of environmental, feminism, and women's spiritual concerns. This means that

⁴²J.W Scott, *Gender and politics of History*, (New York, 1988), p. 3.

⁴³R. Chatterji, *The voyage of the hero; the self and the other in one narrative tradition of Purluria*, "Contributions of India Sociology ", (Oxford, 1986), p. 12.

eco-feminism is a combination of two terms, ecology and feminism.⁴⁴ Salleh argues that eco-feminism is a recent development in a feminist thought which argues that the current global environmental crisis was a predictable outcome of patriarchal culture.⁴⁵ Therefore, there is a connection between the exploitation of the natural world and the oppression of women as observed by Mellor. Women and nature were united through their shared history of oppression by a patriarchal western society. The eco-feminists argue that the society of which men are a part did not value women just as they did not value nature.⁴⁶

The struggles by feminism to liberate women and nature are the same struggles Alicen Chelaite undertook to liberate fellow women from the chains of male chauvinism not just in her home area but in Kenya as a whole. Therefore, eco-feminism theory is relevant to the study of the biography of Alicen Chelaite. According to Warren, eco-feminists recognize the value of nature and its use to human beings and the struggles to conserve it. Mellor, in another argument, observes that eco-feminism emerged in the 1970s alongside the second-wave feminism and the Greenbelt Movement associated with Wangari Maathai is equally similar to struggles by Alicen Chelaite. It had elements of feminism and those of the Greenbelt Movement from which it took a concern about the impact of human activities on the non-human world; for example, the destruction of the environment through deforestation and industrial pollution. It also borrowed the concept of gender bias against women from the feminist theory, in order to advocate for equality of both men and women.

Feminism theory was coined in the 1970s to speak for women and preserve the environment. As a result, women participated in the environmental movements, to preserve and conserve the environment. Women worked in efforts to protect wildlife, food, air, and water. According to Susan, women of different races and class played a

⁴⁴C. Spretnak, *The Early Years of Green Movement in the United States*, in Zeiko and Brinkmann, Eds, *Green Parties*, 1990

⁴⁵A. K. Salleh, *Living with Nature: Reciprocity or Control in Ethics of Environment and Development*, (Eds). R. and J. Engel (Tuason, 1990), pp. 23-32.

⁴⁶M. Mellor, *Introduction to Feminism and Ecology*. (New York, 1997), p. 13.

big role in starting the eco-feminism theory to advocate for their needs. She was supported by other women activists, including Susan and Carolyn who advocated against the domination of women by men and nature by culture. Alicen Chelaite even challenged men to a physical fight just to prove to them women were no longer any lesser beings.⁴⁷

Susan avers that the consumers worldwide became aware of the effects of industrialization to both human beings and the environment. The environment was exposed to pollution, waste disposal, and depletion of the ozone layer. Consumers, in this case human beings, wanted to buy the products that were environmentally safe. Eco-feminism argued that women were primary caretakers of families and were placed at the forefront of the environmental crises as can be seen in their responsibility for shopping. Eighty percent of household shopping was performed by women and so they had to choose safe products to buy for their family, and at the same time take care of nature so that it is safe. This was to be done through the eco-feminism call to join activism and advocate against environmental pollution and deforestation.⁴⁸

Feminism had several elements and mainly argued that nature had been conceived by the dominant culture as alien/foreign and separate from human beings. This separation had made human beings to dominate nature and manipulate it. They further argued that nature and women had traditionally been aligned in terms of symbols and terminology; for example, words such as ‘virgin resources’, or ‘raping the land’. Eco-feminism observed that women had begun to play a major role in environmental movements and political activism in order to change policies and save the environment. Eco-feminism observed that men exploited both nature and women. It was necessary to introduce new policies to protect both nature and women against oppression.⁴⁹

According to Warren, there is a connection between the domination of nature and women, and to understand this better, Feminist Theory must include an ecological

⁴⁷G. Susan, *Women and Nature: The Roaring inside Her*. (New York, 1978.),p.21

⁴⁸ Ibid,23

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 24

perspective and similarly ecological problems must include feminist perspective. This results into eco-feminism theory. Through the environmental movements, women began to see the violation of women and earth as part of male control. Eco-feminists claimed to be a social movement; however, Sale criticized them saying that it was just a philosophy since it lacked action. It also lacked the traditional paradigm of social movements, which engaged in protests and direct action: eco-feminism only called for consciousness with nature. The critics, through Sale, argued out that eco-feminism did not have leaders or organized groups but rather a few international conferences and books.⁵⁰ Eco-feminists were also criticized by Janet Biehl, a feminist and a social ecologist, for focusing too much on a mystical connection between women and nature. They had failed to focus on the critical conditions of women. Post-structuralism and third wave feminists dismissed eco-feminists as goddesses' worshippers and anti-intellectualists.⁵¹

Feminism, through spiritual and feminist visions noted that the earth was a sacred being known as Goddess or Gaia, which refers to human beings here. In the past, women were just as highly valued as men, and were not subordinate to men. This golden age was one of a partnership socially where there was no one superior or inferior; nonetheless, other scholars dismissed this as utopia.⁵²

The introduction of science and technology as tools of men led to exploitation of Goddess earth. Science took over the domination of the earth, raped and plundered it together with the women at will. According to Spretnak, women are presently concerned with the loss of a species and pollution of the environment. Man is faced with worldwide deforestation and the increasing pollution of the environment by poison and low-level radiation. Eco-feminism's action in all these is for women to respect the earth and not to destroy it, to call upon men and in prayer to stop the earth from destruction.⁵³

These views were supported by the feminists' vision, which saw women as the

⁵⁰K. Sale, *The Nation, Eco-feminism: A new Perspective*. 1987, p. 11.

⁵¹J. Biehl, *Rethinking, Eco-feminist politics*, (Boston, 1991), p. 10.

⁵²Ibid, p. 17.

⁵³C. Spretnak, *The Early Years of Green Movement in the United States*, in Zeiko and Brinkmann, Eds, *Green Parties*, 1990

worldwide victims of oppression, fighting for the lives of their children as in the case of Somalia. Likewise, through the feminist's vision, eco-feminism called upon all women to directly act on at all local levels to stop all pollution and destruction. Kings supported this with the example of a tree hugging movement in India, where women resisted developers' bulldozers by wrapping their bodies around trees in order to save trees from destruction. Hamilton supported Kings by recounting a successful battle by women in a "poor residential, black, and Hispanic community" against the city's decision to place an incinerator in their neighbourhood. Such women are the heroes doing battles to protect the environment on which they depend upon.⁵⁴

These women are likened to Wangari Maathai who devoted all her life to struggle towards liberating the poor and the environment through the Greenbelt Movement. Just like Wangari Maathai fought to save the environment from human destruction, so was Alicen Chelaite's action, who observed that once the environment was exhausted, there would be nothing left for the future generation.⁵⁵

Zimmerman argues that environmental visions used the Biblical creation story where God presented all of His creation under man to take care of it, and even woman was created for the consumption of man. Therefore, the best solution to eco-feminism was full participation of both men and women in order to maintain a healthy ecosystem. This led to an eco-feminist saga of the three visions to ensure equality of men and women.⁵⁶ Sale however, criticized eco-feminism theory saying that it was not a movement but a shared drama which informs other traditional movements. The eco-feminists' groups in the spiritual, feminist, and environmental visions could not unite as one; they only used feminism as a term of identity in conferences and books.⁵⁷

Feminist's theory is the most suitable thought towards the study of the biography of Alicen Chelaite because it discusses about the real challenges of women

⁵⁴Y. King, *Healing the wounds: Feminism, Ecology and the Natural Culture Dualism*. In Diamond and G.F. Orenstein (Eds). *Reweaving the World. The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990, p. 43.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 44.

⁵⁶M.E. Zimmerman, *Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism: The Emerging Dialogue*. In Diamond and G.F. Orenstein (Eds). *Reweaving the World. The Emergence of Eco-feminism*. ((San Francisco: Sierra Club Books,) 1990, p. 46.

⁵⁷ K. Sale, *The Nation, Eco-feminism: A new perspective*. 1987, p. 11.

in the society. Men devalue and discriminate against women and look at them as inferior in the African society.

This applies to the society in which Alicen Chelaite lived, the Kenyan society that discriminated against women as inferior. Feminism called for equality between men and women and a harmonious living, which was a good guide towards the works of Alien Chelaite, who literally fought for democracy in society.⁵⁸ Feminism theory is the best guiding theory in the study of the biography of Chelaite.

Subaltern theory was used to describe the lower classes and the social groups who are side-lined in society. Subaltern is a person rendered without any connection to the sitting government due to his or her social status.⁵⁹ In the context of social power relations, subaltern social groups can be defined as oppressed, racial minorities whose social presence is crucial to self-definition of the majority group; as such, subaltern social groups who hold hegemonic power.⁶⁰ This study, therefore, was also guided by the Subaltern Theory which was advanced by the Italian Marxist intellectual Antonio Gramsci. He came up with this theory while in prison and in order for it to be published he used the word 'subaltern' as a synonym for the proletariat to deceive the prison censor to allow his manuscripts out of prison.⁶¹

However, this has been resisted and other schools of thought postulate that it was a novel concept in Gramsci's political theory.⁶² Many scholars have used this theory in modern society to depict situations as they are. For example, the term subaltern cosmopolitanism can be used to describe the counter-hegemonic practice, social movement, resistance and struggle against neoliberal globalization, especially the struggle against hegemonic globalization.⁶³

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 25.

⁵⁹ R.J.C. Young, *Post colonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York, 2003), P.54

⁶⁰ L.G. Morean and P.C Peiffer, "Unsatisfied: Notes on Vernacular Cosmopolitan", *Text and Nation: Cross-Disciplinary Essays on Cultural and National Identities*. (Columbia, 1996), pp.191-207.

⁶¹ S. Morton, "The subaltern: Genealogy of a concept", in Gayatri Spivak: *Ethics Subalternity and the Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. Malden MA: Polity. pp 96-97.

⁶² Concept in Gayatri Spivak: *Ethics, Subaltern and the Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. Malden, MA: Polity. 2007. Pp.96-97.

⁶³ S.B. Sousa, *S. Toward a New Legal Common Sense*. 2002

For the purposes of this study, therefore, the term subaltern would be used to refer to those people who are side-lined in matters pertaining to the sharing of the national “cake” because of their social status. In this case, the social status may come because of their stand with the oppressed in society about political opinion. After independence, those who had hegemonic power shared the national cake amongst themselves and those who were well connected with the central government in Nairobi with little regard for the suffering masses down the grassroots. Land and government jobs were shared among the politically connected class.

Poor men and women, the landless and those who may have championed the rights of those under oppression in Kenya qualify to be called subalterns. In this case, Chelaite may be described as a subaltern because she was oppressed and side-lined from the governments of the day for standing for the people against those who had hegemonic power. Her family background had no political affiliations, but she rose up the political ranks at a time when it was difficult for a woman to ascend to political leadership positions and worse if her family name did not appear in the who-is-who list of Kenyan leaders. However, this theory is limiting because it only focuses on ordinary people in the society without mentioning their great endeavours in life.

Thomas Carlyle’s work was equally important in this study because it investigated the influence of charisma, wisdom and intelligence among others on great individuals and their impacts on history. This theory provided rules that explained the role of heroes/heroines or great individuals in the making of history. It provides a link between the actions of great individuals and the making of history.

Charisma can be defined as the powerful personal quality that some individuals have and which makes them to attract and please other people. This concept was used to explain how some great people influenced history using this principle. Thomas Carlyle asserts that, history has turned on the decision of heroes/heroines and gives a detailed analysis of the influence of the likes of Shakespeare a great poet, whose poems are read far and wide; Martin Luther, a great monk, who was against the ills and deeds of Napoleon who believed in nepotism and built the family of kings; Alexander the great, who led a great troop of warriors to victory and Martin Luther King, a great American who spearheaded the civil rights

movement in the United States of America⁶⁴ just to mention but a few. The trait was used to examine the power Alicen Chelaite used in luring and pleasing others during various elections, which resulted in her victory in various elections and the great things she undertook during her time especially in politics.

Carlyle's Theory is based on two major assumptions: leaders are born and not made, and that great leaders arise in times of need. The theory was used in classical historiography in the histories of Homer, Herodotus, and Thucydides among others. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the reigns of new energetic kings who transformed the royal court into a true centre of power stimulated the writing of biographies. The Great Man Theory received a further boost after the American revolution of 1776. Following the revolution, biographers preferred the founding fathers as teachers of the new nation, the role which was better fitted by George Washington.⁶⁵

When talking of Great Man Theory, Katz argues that great leaders are born not made. This approach emphasized that a person is born with or without the necessary traits of leadership. Ancient "Great man" explanations of leadership studied the traits of great leaders like Abraham Lincoln, Napoleon Bonaparte and Mahatma Gandhi among others who were born with these characteristics.⁶⁶

In his study, Ochieng unearths how histories of great individuals such as Jomo Kenyatta, Kungu Karumba, Achieng Oneko, Bildad Kagia among other nationalists struggled for independence in Kenya.⁶⁷ The two assumptions above were necessary in this study because they were used to examine Chelaite's perpetual growth in politics. Since her childhood, Chelaite proved that she was born a leader, because apart from being the third born in a family of nine, she managed to single-handedly take care of the family after the demise of their father. These attributes nurtured her political ambitions until she finally joined elective politics in 1978.

⁶⁴T. Carlyle, "On Heroes, Hero-worship, and Heroic History", (Boston, 1841), p.126.

⁶⁵T. Carlyle, "Great Man theory" in Ochieng, W. R., *Place of Biography in Kenyan History: 1904-2000*, (Kisumu,1991), pp. 56-67

⁶⁶Katz, *Skills of an Effective Administration in the book cases of Leadership* (California, 1974)

⁶⁷W.R. Ochieng, *Place of Biography in Kenyan History: 1904-2005* (Kisumu, 1991), p. 23.

The theory however, has some weaknesses according to Herbert Spencer. Herbert Spencer has critiqued the theory on the grounds that, “great men” according to Carlyle were merely products of social environment and so should not be used to explain the historical events associated with Great Men; nonetheless, the theory has what it takes to explain the effects of great men/women in influencing history by not looking at the influence of social environment. Spencer’s view however are different from Carlyle’s view. One significant contribution of this theory was the argument that human beings influence the course of history and that instead of viewing history as a wholly determined process, the theory takes into account accidents and other unpredictable circumstances. The perspective emphasizes the action of individuals as a driving force in human development. Chelaite was a hero because she influenced women empowerment in Kenya. Great Man Theory was very important for this study because it was useful in analysing Chelaite’s role in various public spaces including in politics. It is, therefore, important to note that Great Man Theory was important in elucidating Chelaite’s role in nation building by focusing on her role in politics and development, until the time she retired from active politics in 2007.

1.9 Research Methodology

This section discusses the methodology that was adopted in the study to investigate the life of Alicen Chelaite. It describes the research design, sampling procedures, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations.

1.9.1 Research Design

The study was based on a historical research design. This design refers to the process of critical inquiry into past events to produce an accurate description and interpretation of these events. According to Walliman, historical research is the systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events.⁶⁸ The design has four main steps: identification of the research problem, collection and evaluation of source materials (external and internal criticism), synthesis of information from source materials and analysis, as well as, interpretation and formulation of conclusion.

⁶⁸N. Walliman, *Your Research Project: Designing and Planning your Work*, 3rd Edn (London, 2011). p. 9.

Moreover, a historical study whose research design is ex-post facto, which according to Ongunyi is that, a historical research is a systematic examination of the past in order to understand the present and to look at the future wisely⁶⁹. The researcher in this type of investigation depends on available data about past events on which he cannot exercise any control. Therefore, the study adopted the ex-post facto approach as the appropriate research design. This design enabled the researcher to investigate and explain a phenomenon that has already occurred. Consequently, manipulative control of the factors under scrutiny and randomization are not possible as in the case with experimental inquiry. The conclusions were, therefore, based upon logical analysis and inferences. The sources of the data were finally judged in terms of consistency and utility or internal and external criticism.⁷⁰ This enables determination as to whether or not the document is authentic.

1.9.2 Sampling Procedure

In this study, purposive and snowball sampling were employed. Purposive sampling is the type of sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria, which may include a specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research.⁷¹ A total of twenty-eight informants were included in the study. Some types of research design necessitate researchers taking a decision about the individual participants who would be most likely to contribute appropriate data, both in terms of relevance and depth. For example, in researching the life history of Alicen Chelaite, some potential participants may be willing to be interviewed, but may not be able to provide sufficiently rich data. The researcher sampled twenty-eight informants who are thought to have the desired responses as per the objectives of the study. These were family members, her political competitors and men and women from Nakuru Municipality and Rongai Constituency who were present during her time of tenure. Snowball sampling was also used; this is when one informant directs

⁶⁹M.B Ongunyi, *Understanding research in social sciences*, (Ibadan, 1992), p .57.

⁷⁰ W. Wiersm, *Research Methods in Education*, (London, 1991), p. 209

⁷¹J. O. Ndagi. *the essential of research methodology for Nigerian educators*, (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1984) p. 84

the researcher to the next informant who is believed to have the relevant information and may be required to give very sensitive information. To ensure a systematic approach to the collection of the data, questions were formulated covering the major parts of the study. These questions were later recast in a questionnaire and were administered to the informants. Oral interviews were also conducted for both literate and illiterate respondents. The researcher and her assistants only guided the informants on subtopics and recorded data using a tape recorder. The sample size was twenty-eight which the minimum number is in historical research.

1.9.3 Data Collection Procedures

The proposed study mainly relied on both primary and secondary data. Primary sources were sought through oral narratives in the form of field interviews and eyewitness accounts or observations. Such data were therefore collected using interview schedules, tape recorders and observation methods. To supplement this, archival sources were sought from the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi and Nakuru; other primary data were obtained from past political and intelligence reports. Secondary sources included books, journals, newspapers, magazines, articles, unpublished theses, seminar papers, and periodicals. This involved the compilation of a thorough bibliography of published literature, grey literature, and archival sources; both current and historical. For further reading, information from the internet was used.

1.9.4 Data Analysis and Presentation

Three analytical frames were used in this study. These included theoretical reflection; documentary review and content analysis. Theoretical reflection involves parading the facts against the theory used. Content analysis involves itemizing collected data against the objectives set and chapters of the work, while document review analysis involves the identification of relevant documents then extracting the relevant information. Direct quotations were also used in document review analysis to reinforce the argument. Tape-recorded datum was transcribed then analysed. Oral information was utilised to fill the gaps by the archival and secondary data.

1.9.5 Ethical Considerations

The researcher got clearance from Laikipia University to conduct the study. A permit for carrying out the research was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The permit was given after presenting a soft copy of a final proposal to the Permanent Secretary, two passport size photos and an application form duly completed and endorsed by the Head of Department. This permit was used to secure permission from the County Education Commissioner and Sub-County Education Officer before conducting the research in the Sub-County. The study involved interviewing close family members of Alicen Chelaite, neighbours and former work-mates. Therefore, respondents were guaranteed confidentiality for the purpose of ensuring privacy where necessary. The dignity of all research participants was respected. The researcher respected the values and interests of the communities involved in this research and wherever possible protected the communities from harm. The study also sought to obtain consent of the participants before the research was carried out to ensure cooperation during the research. Clearance was obtained from relevant authorities to ensure voluntary participation of the informant.

CHAPTER TWO

ALICEN CHELAITE'S EARLY LIFE (1945-1977)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines Alicen Chelaite's early life from the time of her birth in 1945 up to the eve of her first involvement in public space in 1977. Focusing on the memories of her earlier childhood and childhood practice has been interpreted by contemporary scholars as a foundation for her moral basis that parallels her contemporary socio-political practice. This chapter underscores the ways that distinctive historical experiences have had different consequences for how family foundation was perceived in historical circumstances. In order to achieve that goal, the chapter, specifically examines the background of the village where Alicen Jematia was born and raised, it focuses on her birth, her traditional heritage, as well as, her Christian heritage. In addition, the chapter considers her primary education, initiation and professional training. The chapter ends with an examination of her involvement in various duty stations including Egerton College for Agriculture, *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* and Nakuru Wheat and Maize Board. It also discusses her marriage and family life.

2.2 Geopolitical Background of Kapropita Village

The inhabitants of Kapropita are the Tugen. The Tugen live around Baringo and parts of Nakuru. According to oral traditions, they migrated from the north, west and east of their place of settlement. The largest part of their population originated from the west, a place known as Saimo, in an area located between Mount Elgon and Cherangany Hills. For many years during the colonial period, Kapropita was governed as one administrative location. The same period, the study noted that the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) contributed greatly towards the establishment of many primary schools in various villages. This witnessed the rise of schools such as Kapropita Primary School where Alicen Jematia attended her primary education.⁷²

⁷²Chelaite, OI, 10 October 2019,
B. A. Ogot(ed), *Kenya before 1900* (Nairobi, 1976), pp.72-81

Notably, the AIM was established as a “faith mission,” with a basis that resembled that of the Kenya Inland Mission or the Sudan Interior Mission. It began its ministry in Kenya in 1895 under the direction of Peter Cameron Scott. The mission was interdenominational, and was composed of many Baptists, some Methodists, Presbyterians and Anglicans. The mission was first established in Ukambani, but after a number of incidents, C. E. Hurlburt moved it to Kijabe in 1901. AIM found acceptance among the various ethnic groups in Kenya based on Christian commitment and moral standing. The Council was headed by Rev. Charles Hurlburt, president of the Pennsylvania Bible Institute, the organization which provided most of the mission's workers in its very early years.⁷³

As a result of the spread of missionaries in Kenya, the mission erected a dispensary in Kapsowar in 1933.⁷⁴ The establishment of a dispensary in Kapsowar was the first major contribution that the missionaries made in Baringo, a move that drastically changed the development patterns in the area.⁷⁵ The AIM provided such people with an alternative route to power and status, just as others were being closed down, offered a refuge for some from the egregious aspects of domination by colonial chiefs and their colonial masters, and also furnished an opportunity for what some regarded as a more satisfying spiritual life within the Christian faith.⁷⁶ Consequently, in 1907, a station was opened at Kapropita among the Tugen people. The Mission became independent in 1943.⁷⁷ This is the mission that brought education to the interior of Tugen land, hence Alicen Chelaite’s fortunes and subsequent scholarship.

⁷³ J. K. Zablon, “The Growth and Development of the African Inland Mission and Africa Inland Church in Marakwet Kenya”, *Africa journal of Evangelical theology*, 24.2. 2005. p. 108.

⁷⁴ D. Anderson, *We Felt Like Grasshoppers*, (Leicester, 1994), pp. 31-38.

⁷⁵ Cf. T.G. McGee, *The Urbanization Process in the Third World: Explorations in Search of a Theory* (London, 1971); A. Portes, *Urban Latin America: the Political Conditions from Above and Below* (Austin, Texas, 1976), pp. 7–25.

⁷⁶ K. Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 253-266.

⁷⁷ Griffiths, *Our Extension in East Africa*, “The Missionary Echo of the United Methodist Church, June”, 1910, p. 123.

2.3 Alicen Chelaite and the Formative Years

Chelaite was born in 1945 at Kapropita location of Baringo District to Cheptoo Arap Cheron and Kobil Cheron who were small scale farmers and ardent followers of the AIM.⁷⁸ She was the third-born in the family of nine children. According to Alicen, this was a large family by any standards.⁷⁹ Cheptoo Arap Cheron being a staunch Christian, lived by the church's teaching that a good Christian should only marry one wife. However, in keeping with the African tradition, he named her daughter Jematia, a name which in Tugen means "something small". This indicates that the bearer was a girl born near the early morning at dawn. It was closely related to "Chepkoech", "Chelimo", "Chepkorir", and "Chepyego" in the sense of meaning which was derived from the time the child was born. Generally, among the Kalenjin, when a child was born the name was decided upon by the time, place and situation at birth; a name gave the child some form of identity and hence membership in the community. Other names might have been given based on consideration of faith and beliefs. Moreover, Alicen's parent's marriage was traditional and was therefore done according to the Tugen traditions. According to the Tugen, a man was not allowed to marry unless he had been initiated into adulthood. Before this could take place, a person was excluded from the serious business of society. But the age-category system also constrains marriage choices.⁸⁰

Alicen Chelaite's official government-issued birth registration documents indicate that she was born in 1945.⁸¹ However, according to her, her mother reliably told her that she might have been born earlier than that which is around the year 1943 at home. She narrates that during that time, women gave birth in the house, there were very few hospitals, and the emphasis for giving birth at the health centres was nil. She avers that she was born in the house at home in the village of Kapropita and so it was very traditional. There were very few hospitals and the few, which were there during that time, required that you walk several miles to access specialized medical and health services. Women were, therefore, used to giving birth in their villages through

⁷⁸Chelaite, OI, 10 August 2019.

⁷⁹Kamurian, O.I 21 August, 2019.

⁸⁰Chelaite, O.I 21 August, 2019.

⁸¹ Ibid

the aid of midwives with relevant knowledge and skills. “Therefore, most of us who were born during that time were not lucky to be born in a medical maternity or at least a dispensary. I thank God we survived and grew up healthy”.⁸²

Alicen Chelaite’s younger brother, Isaac Ronoh on his part, observes that Alicen Jematia Chelaite was born in a family of nine: four boys and five girls. Chelaite is the third-born of all the children. The first born was the late Norah Cheruto, Pauline Tamining Cheriyaot as second, the late Chagwan Ronoh as the forth-born, Esther Chepkongo as fifth-born, David Rono as sixth-born, Joseph Ronoh seventh-born, Isaac and Kibet Ronoh as eighth and ninth-born respectively.⁸³

Alicen Chelaite was born in Kapropita Location in the then Baringo District of Rift Valley Province, Kenya, which was then a British Colony. During her birth, Kapropita was a remote, underdeveloped village. She says that Kapropita was a remote area and that there was never any hope that it would develop to be what it is today. Chelaite further argues that her village Kapropita was a remote village, backward, underdeveloped: indeed, there was no hope that one day it would develop, modernize and grow to be what it is today. “We never knew what electricity was, no telecommunication, no roads, nothing at all. We just lived in the villages. You people of this day and age do not understand what I mean. I see my grandchildren living in shock whenever there is an electricity blackout... that was our life during those days. We used firewood to cook.”⁸⁴

During the colonial period, Baringo was among the forty-seven districts, which were established by the colonial secretary as administrative units by the colonial government. Baringo borders Turkana district and West Pokot to the North, Samburu district and Laikipia district to the East, Nakuru and Kericho to the South, Uasin Gishu to the South West and Elgeyo Marakwet to the West, all in the former Rift Valley Province. It covers an area of 8,655 sq. km. and lies between Latitudes 00 degrees 13" South and 1 degree 40" North and Longitudes 35 degrees 36" and 36" degrees 30" East.⁸⁵

⁸²Ibid

⁸³ Kamurian, OI, 12 November 2019.

⁸⁴Chelaite, OI, 10 August 2019.

⁸⁵ Google Maps, 2019

Chelaite was born a Tugen.⁸⁶ The Tugen are a sub-tribe of the Kalenjin people alongside the Nandi, Kipsigis, Keiyo, Pokot, Marakwet, Sabaot, Ogiek, Lembus and Sengwer sub-tribes.⁸⁷ It is argued that, unlike other Kalenjin sub-tribes, the Tugen are more diverse in culture and language. Lembus, Kakimor, Keben and Endorois share a lot in terms of language and culture. They have generally adopted Nandi circumcision rites which were initially practiced by Lembus alone. Aror and Samor follow Tugen circumcision rites. In terms of language, Aror is more isolated. They have a strong connection with the Marakwet people.⁸⁸ A younger sibling, Kamurian, posits that Chelaite is his elder sister and that he was much younger to remember most things. “Our other close sub-tribes whom we share several things in common including language, culture and socio-economic and political organization are the Nandi, Kipsigis, Keiyo, Pokot, Marakwet, Sabaot, Ogiek, Lembus and Sengwer”⁸⁹

Just like in most African societies, children were named strictly within the tenets of their community’s culture. Tuitoek⁹⁰ observes that the social significance of the Tugen women’s names clearly indicate how intimately they are connected with important events and occurrences which have either direct or indirect bearing upon the birth of the girl child. Once the child was born, the circumstance, or an event that was connected with the birth, was given a name. The name became meaningful and significant.

There were certain several prominent categories into which the names would seem to fall. For example, women’s names would express circumstances related to birth, others would signify time of birth, their characters and others signified procreation difficulties in a certain family inter alia. A good comparison is among the Luo people of Nyanza, the female name ‘Atieno’ means “night” - implying that she was born at night; while “Akinyi” means that the baby girl was born in the morning.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Chelaite, OI, 10 August 2019.

⁸⁷ See Kandagor, D. R, *The Economic Transformation of the Tugen of Kenya*, University of Nairobi, and p.15.

⁸⁸ Chesaina, C. *Oral Literature of the Kalenjin*. (Nairobi, 1991),P.56

⁸⁹ Kamurian, OI, 17 March 2020.

⁹⁰ Tuitoek, K. (2010). *The Tugen Community*. Nakuru. St. Mary's Printing Press.

⁹¹ Liyong, Taban lo. *Popular Culture of East Africa*. (Nairobi,1972),p.56

Alicen's name, *Jemaita*, (something small) in the Tugen community indicates that the bearer is a girl or lady and was born near dawn, between 4:00am and 6:00am. It is closely related to "Chepkoech", "Chelimo", "Chepkorir", and "Chepyego". On the other hand, *Chelaite* in Tugen community means a girl child born at sunset. Generally, among the Kalenjin community, when a child was born, the name was decided upon by the time, place and situation at birth; a baby would not be considered to be fully recognised until they are named. The other names might be given based on consideration of faith and beliefs.

During the child naming ceremony, the midwife chants all the names she can remember until the new child stops crying. When the child keeps quiet, it signals that it has accepted the name and is receptive to the ancestral spirit. For them, a woman who has just given birth cannot have sex for a period of two years. To ensure that this is followed, a traditional midwife ties a special belt on the new mother's waist which can only be removed in a special cleansing ceremony after two years. It was considered a taboo for the husband to even think about demanding conjugal rights before the end of two years. Failure to adhere to these rules was met with a fine of a cow and a goat.⁹²

Traditionally, the first male-child is named after the paternal grandfather whilst a girl child after the grandmother. Subsequently, the rest of the siblings follow suit. The new-born will stay in the house for seven days before being brought out for the traditional head shaving ceremony. The shaving of the baby's first hair is performed by the mother-in-law.⁹³ Her name "Alicen" - a female name, meaning "noble" has a common origin from German and Norman French, which is a diminutive of Alice. It was bestowed upon her during baptism hence becoming her first name when she started schooling at Kapropita Secondary school. This name was given to her as a baptismal name for having "accepted" Christianity.

Just like her age mates, Alicen Chelaite grew up as an ordinary village girl. She recalls how she played in mud, took roles in various childhood plays in the evening and any time she found it convenient to play with others. She reminiscences

⁹² See Kettel. *What's in a Name: Age-Organisation and Reincarnation Beliefs of the Tugen of Kenya*, University of Nairobi, Institute of Africa Paper no. 32, April 1972).

⁹³ See Tuitoek, K. *The Tugen Community*. (Nakuru,2010),p.6

their growing up in age-sets. Her closest childhood friend and age-mate is Zipporah Kitony, who would later serve as chair *Maendeleo ya Wanawake*, as well as, become a prominent Kanu politician. Chelaite vividly recollects growing up with Zipporah Kitony since she was her age-mate. They were also relatives. During that time, discipline and commitment to school was the order of the day. “Our parents emphasized the need for discipline and respect for the elders. Of course, we learnt from our grandparents about our cultures and social responsibilities.”⁹⁴

Among the Tugen, the social organisation centres on the age-set (*ibindo*). There are seven age-sets (*ibinwek*) which are rotational, that is, at the end of one age-set new members of that generation are born. They include 1) *Chumo*, 2) *Sawe*, 3) *Korongoro*, 4) *Kipkoimet*, 5) *Kiplelach*, 6) *Kipnyigei* and 7) *Nyongi*. Among some Kalenjin sub-tribes, an age-set called *Maina* still exists but among the Tugen, this age set is extinct. Legend has it that the members of this *ibindo* were wiped out by the Keiyo, in skirmishes between the two tribes near present-day Cheploch gorge in Ainabmoi in Baringo and Elgeyo-Marakwet county boundaries. For fear of a recurrence, the community decided to retire that age-set.⁹⁵

Ibindo was given out at initiation and by simple arrangements, there ought to be one *ibindo* between a father and a son. For example, a *korongoro* cannot beget a *kipkoimet*. The Tugen do not consider a woman to have an age-set, hence she can marry any age-set except that in which her father belongs to. The Tugen say "ma tinyei ibin kirkoswald' meaning they can be any age-set but they have their own age-set like *chesiran*, *masinya*, *chepigwek* and *mary*.⁹⁶ In each age-set, there were sub age-sets called *siritie*. Actually, the initiates were bundled into *siritie* or in simple words, a “team”. There were three teams or *siritoik* in each age-set (*ibindo*). There were the *chongin*, *kapchepsuei* and the *Barnot* (who were literally youth).⁹⁷

According to oral sources, Chelaite’s parents had very interesting origins and backgrounds. Her late father was born in Kapropita Location, Kasoiyo Division,

⁹⁴ Chelaite, OI, 19 August 2019.

⁹⁵ Kandagor, D. R, The Economic Transformation of the Tugen of Kenya, University of Nairobi, p.15 [online](#)

⁹⁶ Ibid, 15

⁹⁷ Ibid 15

Kabarnet in the then Rift Valley Province. He was of the *Chumo* age-set in the Kapmasirget family. His father, Kapmasirget, had two wives; Marsiget and Mingeche Chumo. Cherono Arap Cheptoo was the fourth-born out of eleven siblings in the first wife's household in the Chesumet's clan. The exact date of birth remains unknown.⁹⁸ Chelaite's mother, Kobilo Cherono, on the other hand, hailed from Saimo Location in Baringo. She is believed to have been born around 1900. Notably, since women did not belong to any age-set according to the Tugen culture, this perhaps explains why women would be married to men from any age-set. Kobilo was the third born in a family of twelve children: seven boys and five girls.

Chelaite's family depended largely on small-scale farming and trade since there was no existence of formal employment then. At that time, the colonial government jobs were not desirable at all and most people disliked being employed by the colonial masters who were distrusted following the Nandi resistance and persistent attacks. In fact, barter trade was still being practiced and the present use of currency had not been fully embraced. Cherono Arap Cheptoo, Alicen's father sold cows, goats and sheep in exchange for food crops and other household basic needs; this was his major source of livelihood.⁹⁹ At times, cattle rustling, as a cultural practice was encouraged, and he partook in it. Normally, this practice was not criminalised as it had cultural tags around it. Communities practiced cattle rustling as a social way of interacting with their neighbours. It was considered a sport and a cultural practice in which young men had to prove their worth.¹⁰⁰

During these formative years, families' wealth was measured by the number of cows, goats and sheep in their possession. The higher the number of livestock, the higher the respect a man was accorded in the community. It was, therefore, desirable and fashionable to always replenish herds through cattle rustling. The number of children in a family – especially boys - was an equally important consideration among the Tugen. This made polygamy a crucial consideration among members of this society. This explains why when Chelaite's mother gave birth to nine children with the first five being girls, her parents kept going on hoping that they would eventually

⁹⁸Kamurian, O.I August 15, 2019.

⁹⁹Kandie, O.I, November 12, 2019.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

bear boys since boys were valued in this society. Consequently, they successfully bore four boys at a late age as observed by Amdany.¹⁰¹

Alicen's family also practiced subsistence farming. The family used traditional farming tools such as hoes and sticks to cultivate subsistence crops such as sorghum, millet, maize and bananas. Other crops included beans which were planted during the dry seasons.¹⁰² The livestock which the family kept provided meat, milk and hides. Among the Tugen, milk is highly cherished to an extent that it has cultural tags. The Tugen believed that milk was a traditional medicine used to cure various ailments. It was also one of the items available during the performance of rituals. Children were given cow's milk to improve their immunity and protect them from witchcraft. *Mursik* was also used as a source of food. More interesting was the fact that it was also used as a lotion and a skin softener hence a source of aesthetics.¹⁰³ Hunting and gathering was also part of the family's source of livelihood. Alicen's brother hunted giraffes, zebras, gazelles and warthogs which roamed the Kerio Forest.¹⁰⁴ Hunting was both an economic and social activity. Among the Kalenjin, hunters were highly respected. Men who brought meat home were received as heroes and greatly respected. It was therefore expected that each household would be able to hunt and provide for its livelihood through hunting.¹⁰⁵

Alternatively, young girls and women, like Alicen, went out for gathering activities.¹⁰⁶ Generally, they collected wild fruits which grew naturally in the forests and along the pathways. Such fruits had well-known medicinal value. They collected firewood and leaves to help in ripening of bananas at home, as well as, fetched water from the rivers and streams for cooking and washing/cleaning. Alongside collecting such fruits, women and young girls also gathered traditional vegetables which were eaten together with *mursik*.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹Amdany, O.I September 23, 2019.

¹⁰²D. R. Kandagor, *The Economic Transformation of the Tugen of Kenya*, (Nairobi, 1992), p.15.

¹⁰³Ibid, p. 15.

¹⁰⁴Kimuge, O.I, May 13, 2019.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 16.

¹⁰⁶ Karani, O.I June 17, 2019.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 17.

It is important to note that Alicen's family depended highly on honey as a source of income. Young men learnt the skill of beekeeping and harvesting of honey at an early age. Normally, honey harvesting was done during the cold seasons or in the evenings when the bees were not active. This involved use of smoke that calmed and flushed the bees out of hives, paving way for honey harvesting.¹⁰⁸

Chelaite was born in a society that was highly patriarchal. The place of women socially, politically and economically was determined by a culture that was male-dominated. Women had little or no say at all on socio-economic and political matters in the society. Schooling opportunities were sorely reserved for boys. Girls were not allowed to be educated because they were considered as passers-by; simply implying that they would get married elsewhere.¹⁰⁹

Oppression of women is rooted in class structure, unpaid labour, sex and reproduction.¹¹⁰ African women have always been noted for their salient activities such as procreation, child care and collective preparation of the young ones for communal co-existence. These roles include parental, occupational, conjugal, domestic, kin, community and individual. Yet, specific economic and cultural determinants leave most women at the mercy of patriarchy. These women are in many cases confined to the four walls of their family home, in which their activities are restricted to procreation and household chores. Many of them struggle to attain economic independence, and socio-cultural and political encumbrances steeped in patriarchy put women in a position of bondage. In a patriarchy, authority is exercised by the male head of the family and inheritance occurs through the male children. Patriarchies define the constructs of masculinity and femininity, and as a practice they foster the political differences between freedom and subjugation.¹¹¹

Chepchumba observes that, in the Tugen culture, unlike the initiation of boys, girls also underwent a rite of passage. According to her, this was the most important

¹⁰⁸ Kandie, O.I, August 23, 2019.

¹⁰⁹Chelaite, O.I, August 25, 2019

¹¹⁰D. Haraway, *Simians Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. (New York, 1991), p. 34

¹¹¹C.M. Oppong, *A Synopsis of Seven Roles Status of Women: An Outline of a Conceptual and Methodological Approach*. World Employment Working Paper. Geneva International Labor Force (94) 1980

phase in the life of a girl. It was a way of promoting the girls from childhood to adulthood. She further argues that during that time, girls were taught values, virtues and morals which they would not reveal to any other person. In fact, sharing whatever one had been taught during the initiation process was considered a taboo. Additionally, she argues that after initiation, a lot of things changed especially in the way of life. A father for instance, was no longer called father, instead the initiated girls called their fathers “*Bager*.”¹¹² Chelaite concurs with Chepchumba’s argument since she was initiated at the age of 15. She observes that initiation was the best thing ever in teenage life since she was taught a lot of values that went a long way in helping her shape her political career.¹¹³

2.4 Education, Christian Missions and Chelaite’s Childhood

The biggest influence in Alicen Chelaite’s life was the AIM. Her name “Alicen”- a female name, meaning "noble" has a common origin from German and Norman French, which is a diminutive form of Alice, the name was given to her during baptism after which she became an active member of the church and was assigned a responsibility of teaching a Sunday school child. The missionaries who were heading AIC Kapropita became so impressed with her work because of her commitment and dedication in God’s work which was the principle aim of the missionaries in the area.¹¹⁴

Chelaite’s education can be categorised into two: formal, as provided in the school system, and informal, as provided in the homestead setting during occasions such as initiation. Formal education in the larger Baringo region was a product, to a larger extent, of the efforts of the Africa Inland Mission. In 1951, Chelaite joined primary school, where she received her early primary education. After four years, she sat for her Common Entrance Examination (CEE) before proceeding to Standard Five which was then referred to as intermediate school level. The Intermediate level of education which took three years (standards five to eight) was meant to be in

¹¹² Chepchumba, O.I, November 22, 2019.

¹¹³ Chelaite, O.I, November 24, 2019.

¹¹⁴ Chepchumba, O.I, November 22, 2019.

preparation for secondary school as a complete level on its own. It offered English and Mathematics which were also considered essential for secondary school colonial curriculum. Students were also offered practical subjects such as agriculture, home craft and handicrafts. Chelaite acquired a lot of skills from tailoring which was also offered in the colonial curriculum. This was meant for further training but also for full participation in society for those who left school at that level. Teacher training, therefore, included study of these practical subjects.¹¹⁵

Following Beecher's Report of 1949, the government realized the importance of supervision and inspection. The colony was divided into five regions for purposes of educational administration. Provincial Education Officers, District Education Officers and area Education Officers were appointed and mobilized. The idea of quality was further strengthened when the Kenya Inspectorate was formed in 1955.¹¹⁶

The medium of instruction was vernacular up to Standard Four and then English took over. However, in the mid-1950s, poor performance was noted in Asian and African schools in the Primary Examination. The Ministry of Education created a special centre - an off school of the Inspectorate to investigate and experiment with issues relating to education. The Centre introduced English as a medium to be used from Standard One in Asian Schools in 1957. The approach was experimented in African Schools in 1961.¹¹⁷ Leah observes that she was Chelaite's classmate at Kapropita Primary School. According to her, Chelaite was a wonderful student, she was thorough in her work. She was very organized and always neat. "She liked leading us and showing us direction. She always did her homework in time and most of us learnt a lot from her. She was hard-working in class and liked sitting in front. She was very punctual and teachers loved her."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Chelaite, O.I, November 24, 2019.

¹¹⁶W. Nabea, "Language policy in Kenya: Negotiation with hegemony" *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 2009, 3 (1), 121-138.

¹¹⁷ D. R. Kandagor, *The Economic Transformation of the Tugen of Kenya*, University of Nairobi, p.15

¹¹⁸OI, Leah Kangogo, Subukia, Nakuru County, May 2020



Figure 1: Kapropoita Girls School where Chelaite was educated.

Source: Kapropita School Library.

In 1955, Chelaite's father fell sick, which meant that he could no longer take care of his family as before. This came at a time when Chelaite was to commence her intermediate School. Elizabeth Kobilu Chesire, Chelaite's aunt, looked for ways of helping the young Chelaite to continue with her studies. Kandie, Chelaite's brother, observes that his two elder sisters were married in unclear circumstances; they eloped from home. So, Elizabeth Kobilu Chesire decided to hold Chelaite's hand since she had seen the potential in her. She used the friendship she had with the Moi's family to connect the young Chelaite with the Moi's family not just to work as a house help but also to be part of the family. Consequently, Chelaite moved to take care of Moi's children: Jonathan and Jeniffer. By that time, Moi was working as a teacher at Kabarnet High School in Baringo.¹¹⁹

While working as a house help, Moi's family welcomed her and she observed that she was loved. She asserted that while working for Moi as a house manager, she

¹¹⁹ Kandie, O.I, September 15, 2019.

was highly respected and treated as part of the family. Chelaite further observed that Moi took care of her intermediate level education.¹²⁰ In 1957, she sat for her Kenya African Preliminary Examination (KAPE).¹²¹ This was an examination done at Standard Eight before joining secondary level education. In the following year, Moi funded her education by enrolling her at Kapsabet Girls High School, for her secondary education. After completing her secondary education in 1960, she enrolled for a secretarial course.¹²² She went back home to be with her parents. At that time, Alicen would visit her aunties and uncles, as well as helping her mother with household chores. She was generally responsible and everyone admired her. She was loved by many because she was a hardworking young girl.¹²³

¹²⁰Chelaite, O.I, August 14, 2019

¹²¹Access to secondary school and to employment after primary school was determined entirely by the Kenya Preliminary Examination (K.P.E.).

¹²²Chelaite, O.I, August 13, 2019.

¹²³Kangogo, O.I, May 12, 2020



Figure 2: Alicen Jematia far left with her colleague church mates in 1966.

Source: Family album viewed in 2019

In 1961 after the death of her father, Alicen moved to Nakuru and with the help of Daniel Arap Moi, she secured a job at the Rift Valley Provincial Headquarters to work at the Provincial Commissioner's office where she dealt with confidential files and memos in the colonial government, including memos discussing internal administrative affairs and security matters. She remembers that all the officers working with her were white except for her, at least in the same office.¹²⁴ According to her, working in the colonial government during the colonial period was challenging especially for Africans. There were several incidences of coercion, forced labour and general labour abuse with insignificant labour. However, Chelaite argues that she

¹²⁴Chelaite, O.I, August 28, 2019.

never experienced any form of intimidation or abuse by the white majority while working at the PC's office as a clerk. She further asserts that there was mutual respect and cooperation among workers.¹²⁵ Chelaite further observes that leaving the first family did not disconnect her from Moi and his wife. She would still meet the family quite often.



Figure 3: Alicen inside her office at the Rift Valley provincial headquarters

Source: Family album

While working at the Rift Valley Provincial Headquarters, Chelaite decided to further her studies at the secretariat. In 1967, she reported to Nairobi having been trained and qualified. She was sent back to work in Nakuru at the Provincial Agricultural Office in Njoro, specifically, at the Agricultural Research Station which was under the management of Canadians at that time. She was stationed there as a secretary where she worked for close to 7 years - lasting up to 1972.

In 1972, Chelaite was transferred to Egerton University College of Agriculture. At Egerton College, she served as a secretary to the College deputy

¹²⁵Ibid.

principal for another five years, lasting up to 1976. Chelaite later rose through the ranks to serve as the secretary-head of the station.

In 1977, Chelaite was transferred to work at the Maize and Wheat Board in Nakuru as the secretary to the head of the station. While working here, she argues that she would create time to interact with women and support them. She became active in women's welfare issues as well. She was actively involved in the Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization, Children's Welfare Organizations (CWO) as well as a PTA member in several schools. This clearly indicates that Chelaite was a selfless leader. This was a leader who wished well for others, their socio-economic conditions notwithstanding. While working as a secretary at Nakuru Wheat and Maize Board, Alicen began to develop an interest in politics. This could be affirmed based on her involvement in various social groups, more specifically the development groups.¹²⁶



Figure 4: Alicen Jematia, far right, with fellow women during a Maendeleo Ya Wanawake meeting in 1977

Source: Family album

¹²⁶ Chelaite, OI, August 2019

2.5 Alicen Chelaite's marriage and family life

There is a general assumption that politicians use their marital status as a form of strategy. When politicians use the public sphere, they tend to act as role models and this requires that they have desirable attributes of a worthy Kenyan citizen. Marriage in Kenya is highly valued just as it is in Tugen if not more. In effect, it is considered a Tugen's basic value in political life and held to a higher standard compared to a single life. A candidate would probably be the first to run for a major office without being married because of the appeals and position of the party. It is interesting to see how Chelaite sailed through this murky culture and political life.

Alicen Chelaite got married to an American by the name of Joseph Roseden in 1978 but their marriage was never formal. Alicen did not formalize the marriage because it was against the Tugen customs; it was a taboo when a lady married a white man. Since Alicen Chelaite did not want to be the odd one out in their community, she had to part ways with the American.



Figure 5: Mr Elijah Chelaite and Hon Alicen Chelaite sharing a light moment.

Alicen then later got married to Wilson Bomet in 1980. Bomet was then the magistrate for Molo and then later Nakuru. Unfortunately, this marriage did not again last for long. Bomet was still with his first wife already and made life unbearable to Alicen and as a result, she had to quit the marriage. After the two failed marriages, Alicen decided to relocate to Nakuru Town and later in 1983, she met Chelaite, a

business man in Nakuru town whom she got married to him. Chelaite married Alicen as his second wife in a traditional wedding ceremony and in accordance with the Kalenjin traditions. They lived happily in their marriage.¹²⁷ They adopted five children: three boys and two girls for themselves. Tessy Chebet, Peter Kiprop, Edwin Kemboi, Jacob Chelimo and Eva Chelagat. She brought them up happily just as she would her biological children. Alicen Chelaite boasts of having several grandchildren.¹²⁸

Being female in Kenyan politics is not a walk in the park, as Elijah, Chelaite's husband describes her as an iron lady. She was caring, loving and had a lot of respect for those who visited their home. In many occasions, his wife being a politician had many friends and frequently hosted important guests. She was able to treat them with a lot of humility and generosity. As a matter of fact Elijah notes that as a family they never felt any gap as she always put her family first.¹²⁹

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has traced the early life of Chelaite right from birth through schooling and her first employment as a clerk in the colonial government. It is evident that Alicen was born in a poor family background with an uncertain future. Her father who was the bread-winner and provider of the family died and Chelaite was forced to live with her mother so as to provide for other family siblings who were still young regarding provision of basic needs. Alicen struggled to break all the odds to become a “meaningful” person in life. This chapter concurs with Herbert Spencer's argument that the environment where leaders come from plays a very key role in nurturing their leadership skills. The chapter has been informed by the Great Man Theory but critiqued to some extent. The next chapter will discuss her involvement in politics and how she manoeuvred her ways in the male-dominated class.

¹²⁷Tanui, OI, 12, Nov. 2019.

¹²⁸Chelaite, OI, 20 August 2019

¹²⁹ Elijah, OI, 12 May 2019

CHAPTER THREE

ALICEN CHELAITE'S POLITICAL CAREER (1978-2001)

3.1 Introduction

For this period, Chelaite's lifelong mission to foster democracy in Kenya has almost become ingrained in the fabric of Kenya's political structure despite the powerful counter currents of male chauvinism and dominance as well as political interference. Her continued role in politics upended Kenyan patriarchal power and hierarchies of privilege, age, and gender. As will be seen in this chapter, the only way to slow down her career was to eliminate her economic base, not through the ballot box but through fiscal authority. The chapter, therefore, traces Chelaite's ascent to political career from 1978 to 1996. She was appointed by the KANU party to become a councillor in Nakuru in 1978. Further, the chapter gives an account of her as the first woman mayor in Nakuru municipality and finally her involvement in national politics where she vied to become a Member of Parliament representing Nakuru's Rongai Constituency.

3.2 Chelaite and Political changes in Kenya, 1978-1996

For Kenyan women, the journey to political office began in colonial times. Some women held key leadership positions in the freedom struggle, and later in the colonial government; specifically, Priscilla Ingasiani Abwao was nominated as the first and only African woman to sit on the Legislative Council. This gave the impetus for Kenyan women to start agitating for parliamentary representation before independence. In October 1961, Priscilla Abwao and Phoebe Asiyo visited Jomo Kenyatta, then in detention, to lobby for nominations into the first Parliament but all were in vain. The first elected female Member of Parliament (MP), Grace Onyango, was elected into the second and third parliaments up to 1979. During the Kenyatta era, women's groups grew stronger through the spirit of working together, *harambee*, which was initiated by President Kenyatta. The spirit of *harambee* emphasized the spirit of working together and pooling resources for development. A good example is the *Nyakinyua* group that was advanced, in that, it acquired large tracts of land for its members in the former Central and Rift Valley provinces. In recognition of the contribution of women's groups to development, the Kenyatta government established

a special Rural Development Program to provide financial support to women's groups.¹³⁰

The genesis of Chelaite's long political career dates back to her time as secretary at the Wheat and Maize Board in Nakuru. In 1978, while working at the Maize and Wheat Board (which later changed its name to National Cereals and Produce Board-NCPB), was nominated as a councillor by the then ruling party – KANU, within Nakuru Municipality to represent women at the county council for having been actively involved in women and children's issues. Alicen loved working to improve the welfare and needs of the women and children at the grassroots. She considered children and women, especially at the grassroots levels, as being vulnerable. Alicen felt that they needed help and that is how she found herself working towards changing their lives which probably made get nominated as a councillor.¹³¹

In 1984, after serving as a nominated councillor for six years, she vied and won as Nakuru Municipality Councillor representing Ward 16, the current Kwa Rhonda Ward. This was a ward comprising a number of schools and Council members made her the most ideal person to serve the area. Thus, by 1985 she was not only a councillor, but was also the Chair of the Education Committee in the Municipal Council. In that year, she was among four councillors who was elected to serve as representatives of the people at the town council meetings.¹³² Though she won the election, she posits that Moi was not confident about her being in a leadership position as he feared her being victimized and intimidated by male leaders who dominated the municipalities in Nakuru. Before her election as a councillor, Chelaite was aware of the gender imbalance therein. She and a group of local women formed the Banda Women Group under the chair Chelaite.¹³³

The group served as a meeting place and problem solving forum for its members. As a Councillor, Alicen Chelaite will always be remembered for the

¹³⁰S. Sandhu, "The Civic and Political Participation of the Nairobi Female Elite in Kenya", (Ph. D. Thesis, The University of Nairobi, 1979), pp. 45-61.

¹³¹Chelaite, OI, August 12, 2019.

¹³² Municipal Council of Nakuru. *Annual Report*, 1985. Nakuru: Kenya National Archives

¹³³ Eunice, OI, August 12, 2019

contribution she made when she was the chairperson of Nakuru Housing Development Company, which was later changed to NABANAKA (shika nishike twende pamoja) which resulted into the NAKA estate in Nakuru. As the chairperson, she mobilized individuals from Baringo who had moved to Nakuru; there were 645 members. She was able to supervise the acquisition of 218 acres of land at 4.1 million in 1985. NAKA later became one of the prestigious estates in Nakuru. ¹³⁴



Figure 6: Alicen Chelaite in a political rally soliciting for votes in 1984.

Source: KANU office Nakuru Branch.

In 1985, Chelaite was elected the vice chairperson of the Public Health and Education Committee within the municipality. She spearheaded the renovation and upgrading of Nakuru Girls Harambee School to become a Provincial School. Chelaite worked closely with the then area Member of Parliament, Kimemia to ensure that the

¹³⁴ Katya, OI, January 21, 2020

school was upgraded. The school was later upgraded to the Provincial level after meeting the standards that were set by the Ministry of Education.¹³⁵

In 1989, Chelaite who was then serving as an elected municipal councillor, was elected the Chairperson for *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* because of her good leadership skills to represent Rift Valley Province. Rift Valley Province was the largest province of all the eight provinces in Kenya. *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* under the leadership of Chelaite, managed to accommodate a lot of women within Rift Valley Province. Chelaite initiated many sensitization programmes where women were empowered and taught their rights within their societies. Alicen observes that since she hailed from a patriarchal society, it was her principle aim to ensure that she changed that narrative of chauvinistic thinking.¹³⁶

Kangogo, who hails from Kapropita also observes that Chelaite worked tirelessly as the leader of *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* in Rift Valley to advocate for the rights of women whom she thought were being oppressed by their husbands. She further asserts that Chelaite was also an anti-Female Genital Mutilation campaigner within the region and most importantly, she improved the maternal services within the region. According to Kangogo, it was because of Chelaite that a lot of women from Rift Valley like Joyce Laboso, Lorna Laboso among others began to rise into the political arena.¹³⁷

Chelaite fitted well while working at this women's organization having been elected chair for the entire province. *Maendeleo Ya Wanawake* Organization is a national body for mobilizing women development whose aim is to support women in expanding their space for development from the grassroots to the national level. It was a national membership Non-Governmental Organization. It sought to unify, nurture and empower women socially, economically and politically to be able to deal with the unique challenges that face them in society.¹³⁸

¹³⁵KNA/GY 1/329. Minutes of the Municipal Council of Nakuru, 1985, p. 1.

¹³⁶Chelaite, OI, 10 September 2019; Kenya Census 2009

¹³⁷Kangogo, O.I September 21, 2019.

¹³⁸UN Women, "Stories of courage and transformation from women political leaders in Kenya", UN-Women Web-book, 2004.

Maendeleo Ya Wanawake (MYWO) was first organized by the Department of Community Development and Rehabilitation within the colonial government. At the time of independence, the leadership of the organization was turned over to African women. The new independent government rewarded MYWO's efforts by funding their projects and distinguishing the role of the organization as a welfare agency. Overtime, MYWO's grassroots network expanded to eight provinces of the country and the leadership was made up of a chain of elected representatives from the smallest administrative unit up to the national level.¹³⁹

The organization's efforts in women's mobilization were instrumental in building schools, clinics, and community centres across the Rift Valley region. The leaders were strongly influenced by the United Nations Declaration of the Decade for Women, following the World Conference for Women that was held in Mexico City in 1975. Correspondingly, MYWO oriented its programmes towards social welfare all the while providing a prominent voice for grassroots women's organizations.¹⁴⁰ In 1989, MYWO became affiliated to the then ruling party KANU. MYWO mobilized women for KANU and managed government programmes for women.¹⁴¹

At the same time, pressure had mounted on the Moi's government to repeal section 2A of the constitution, development partners declined to sponsor MYWO's development because of its alignment to politics. This was a way of coercing them to support the move to repeal section 2A. Ironically, this was the period MYWO acquired many assets in the form of vehicles and land/plots in urban areas as a reward for their manipulation by KANU. However, in 1991, MYWO still under the leadership of Alicen Chelaite in Rift Valley, joined the democratisation movement in Kenya and disengaged from KANU. Nevertheless, MYWO continued its role as a key political player. During the political transition from one party to a multiparty system in Kenya, MYWO, like many civil society organizations in the country, went through

¹³⁹L. M. Thomas, *Politics of the womb: Women, reproduction, and State in Kenya*, (California, 2003), p. 51.

¹⁴⁰A. Wipper, "The Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization: The Co-optation of Leadership", *African Studies Review in Africa*, (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 99-120.

¹⁴¹Kangogo, OI, 21 November 2019.

an identity crisis as it attempted to find its place in the reform movement to better take care of the interests of women in the new political dispensation.¹⁴²

Over the years, this organization had accumulated a wealth of experience in the management of development projects and had diversified and expanded its vision and mission to encompass community concerns. MYWO's past main programmes were: Reproductive Health, Women and Development, Economic Empowerment, Education, HIV & AIDS, Gender & Governance and Research and Development.¹⁴³ This was the biggest achievement ever made by Alicen Chelaite as the leader of the *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* in the Rift Valley. The fruits of her hard work and her leadership skills are still being enjoyed to date.

Against all odds, Chelaite managed to shine in the political arena. Several studies conducted locally and internationally concluded that indeed, women were more vulnerable as compared to their male counterparts. Violence against women and children is perhaps the most widespread and socially tolerated human rights violation, cutting across borders, race, class, ethnicity, and religion. Gender-based violence in Africa, as elsewhere in the world, is a complex issue that has at its root structural inequalities between men and women, young and old. This results in the persistence of power differentials between the sexes.¹⁴⁴

3.3 Alicen Chelaite and the Nakuru Municipality (1996-1997)

The Nakuru Municipal Council was charged with the management of the town's public service which entailed the management and provision of public housing, municipal roads and drainage systems, healthcare facilities, entertainment facilities and town cleanliness and hygiene among other functions. Nakuru, today a city, has always been a cosmopolitan town. Chelaite understood well the culture of the majority of its people, and this understanding was crucial to her career at both

¹⁴²A. Wehliye, "Change and continuity in the role of Kenya's National Assembly in Formulating Kenya's Foreign policy: 1900-1978". *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal* 7, no. 1, pp. 595-608.

¹⁴³<https://mywokenya.org/index.php/about-us/history> accessed on 24 November 2019.

¹⁴⁴ UN Women, "Stories of courage and transformation from women political leaders in Kenya", UN-Women Web-book, 2004.

local and national levels of government. Chelaite's political career made fast progress and not long thereafter she became mayor of the town.

In 1996, Chelaite was elected as the first woman mayor in Nakuru, a position that was male-dominated countrywide. It surprised many people when she was elected with an overwhelming majority as a mayor for the then Nakuru Town Municipality. The men, according to her, applied all forms of violence, ranging from physical to psychological warfare, and hurling insults to rumour mongering in order to scare women from politics. Women have had a long struggle in attempting to capture political seats and access to equal leadership opportunities like their male counterparts in Kenya and across Africa. This came as a beacon of the light of hope to thousands of women who thought that they could not compete for such positions.¹⁴⁵ Chelaite has been characterised by Suter as a focussed person. He recounts how they spent most of their time with Chelaite. Particularly, he describes Chelaite as a jovial person but very strict and that once a decision has been made about something, it had to be done.¹⁴⁶

S.K. Towett, a former mayor, argues that Chelaite was an "iron lady". Towett could still vividly remember how Alicen Chelaite went physical with her opponent Korir when she was denied entry into a meeting venue. Towett further observes that Alicen Chelaite was selfless and was ready to sacrifice her time and money for her fellow women. During her tenure as the town mayor, the entire sewage system in Nakuru municipality was under control. The town was clean and in good order, Towett observed, the town residents would forever miss the clean town under the leadership of Alicen Chelaite.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵Kiplangat, OI, 03 May, 2019.

¹⁴⁶Suter, OI, 03 May, 2019

¹⁴⁷Towett, O.I September 11, 2020.



Figure 7: Chelaite swearing in as Mayor for Nakuru Municipal Council in 1996.

Source: family album.

Having been elected mayor was not an easy venture for Chelaite. She faced several challenges stemming from male counterparts and wrangles within KANU including Korir who was then the branch Chairman, Nakuru. She narrates that it was not the position of women to be elected mayor in a patriarchal society at the time. Alicen alludes that she won the mayoral seat for the then Nakuru Municipal Council. It was not a walk in the park but through the help from the Moi family and other friends, she emerged victorious. Some men were against her; KANU did not give her relevant support. Instead, her party was against her election but God was on her side. Surprisingly, some male councillors were supporting her; therefore, they gave her a resounding win at the vote. Equally, her family gave her enough political support all through. Alicen nostalgically narrated how her husband and children encouraged her.

According to Alicen, it was her privilege to serve the people of Nakuru. This was a huge victory not just for her but for all women of Kenya as well explained by

Alicen.¹⁴⁸While serving as a mayor, Chelaite continued to champion for the needs of women and children. She presided over the passing of several Municipal Council Acts which were meant to improve socio-economic welfare of the society. Again, as the mayor for Nakuru municipality, Alicen will be remembered for streamlining the workers' salaries which were in arrears. By the time she was taking the mantle to lead the municipality, workers were already on strike. Alicen did manage to settle the issue and there were no more strikes in the municipality under her leadership.¹⁴⁹

Under her reign, the council made significant progress towards solving the municipality's housing shortages he managed to uplift the face of Nakuru municipality, for instance, from 1996 Chelaite managed to decongest the slums. By 1997, the council's housing demand had grown to 1500 and there was concern that 10,000 people living in the peri-urban areas of the municipality and working in the town, could not get houses that they seriously needed. However, it was important to note in its 1997 report that the municipality reported that 'the year 1997 showed a lot of good progress in the town and a fair deal of capital work was carried out throughout the town'¹⁵⁰

In addition to housing, Chelaite's administration was faced with several infrastructural projects. Other capital works carried out that year (1996) included roads within the slum areas making the slums accessible. This factor led the county government under Lee Kinyanjui to acknowledge her contribution by naming a road within Nakuru City after her.¹⁵¹It was with no doubt that her support was felt by so many individuals. She extended her helping hand to the orphanages as well a good example being the Bindura Children's Home. Muituri nostalgically recalls how she benefited from the orphanage which was supported by the town mayor, Alicen Chelaite.¹⁵²Furthermore, Chelaite, as a mayor, had to deal with the politics that came with being at the helm of a municipal council. Kenya's national political scene was

¹⁴⁸Chelaite, O.I, August 18, 2019.

¹⁴⁹Katya, O.I, February 12, 2020.

¹⁵⁰ Municipal and County Council, Chapter III, section 1a),expenditure for 1997,Nakuru,Kenya National Archives, p.10

¹⁵¹ Mercy Kahenda, 'Alicen Chelaite: How Moi's former house help became MP'. In the Standard, November, 2020, Nairobi: Standard Media.

¹⁵²Muituri, OI, January 14, 2020.

mired in heated Kenya African National Union (KANU) battles for the 1997 General Elections.

3.4 Chelaite's race to the National Assembly

Her career as the mayor of the town was the springboard from which she sprung to the next level of politics. In 1992, general elections were held in Kenya where voters elected the President, and members of the National Assembly. They were the first multi-party general elections in Kenya since independence and the first to feature a direct vote for the President, who had, in 1964, been elected by the National Assembly, and, following a 1969 constitutional amendment, been automatically declared winner of non-held popular elections, held alongside parliamentary elections, in 1969, 1974, 1979, 1983, and 1988. The results were marred by allegations of large-scale intimidation of opponents, harassment of election officials, and ballot-box stuffing, as well as targeted ethnic violence in the Rift Valley Province. Human Rights Watch accused several prominent Kenyan politicians, including President Daniel arap Moi and then vice president George Saitoti of inciting and co-ordinating the violence. Voter turnout was 69.4 percent.¹⁵³

Though the early milestones made by women in the political arena were small, other women like Grace Anyango, Priscilla Abwao, and Phebe Asiyo set firm rungs on the ladder for women's steady but slow numerical ascent in the political arena. Since then, women have painstakingly increased their representation. After the 1992 elections, seven women were present in Kenya's first multi-party Parliament. By 1997, nine women were in Parliament.¹⁵⁴

After the elapse of the five years, another general elections were held in 1997, the result was a victory for the ruling Kenya African National Union, which won 107 of the 210 seats in the National Assembly, and whose candidate Daniel arap Moi won the presidential election. Following the election, Moi appointed a further 12 members to the Assembly. Making history that same year, Charity Ngilu and Wangari Maathai

¹⁵³ W. Oyugi, "Ethnicity in the electoral process: The 1992 General Election" *African Studies Review*, Vol 2, No.19 (Dec 1993), 41-69, p.56

¹⁵⁴ S. Sandhu, *The Civic and Political Participation of the Nairobi Female Elite in Kenya*, (Ph. D. Thesis, University of Nairobi, 1979), p. 56.

stood as Kenya's first female presidential candidates. Following in the footsteps of Kenyan women leaders like Prisca Abwao and the likes of Charity Ngilu and Wangari Maathai. Alicen Chelaite having gained more experience in politics thought it wise to compete for a bigger seat.

Subsequently, in 1997, she vied for Member of Parliament for Nakuru Town Constituency in a hotly contested seat, all her competitors were men. During that period, Chelaite, like the other women politicians, was bombarded with questions, which mostly had nothing to do with her ability or capacity to lead. Thus, she could spend considerable campaign time convincing the electorate of her moral aptness, honesty, accountability and integrity to stand for political office instead of articulating political issues for the ward. In fact, the campaign trail for female candidates resembles a court martial wherein they have to defend their sexual morality. Whereas the hallmark of the electoral campaigns was mudslinging as usual, for most men it constituted issues concerning corruption, political affiliations, ability and capacity to perform. But for women, concerns raised were different ranging from slurs regarding their marital status, sexuality, to the whereabouts of their children and husbands.¹⁵⁵

Nakuru Town Constituency was located within the Nakuru municipality. The elections were not free and fair as rigging was the common denominator then, her opponent ended up being declared the winner while according to her she truly believed that she had won the election. She sought to appeal the verdict in a court of law and the case dragged on in court for too long. However, the court ruling was not in her favour.¹⁵⁶

Chelaite was directed to compensate the defendant with Ksh 4.2 million. This was a difficult period in her life but through the support of her husband, family and friends she was able to pull through.¹⁵⁷ Chelaite, having lost in court battle, never lost touch with the community and her work for women empowerment. She established and registered a welfare organization Centre for Education, Peace, Environment and Democracy (CEPED) with the aim of empowering and informing communities on women's human rights issues and addressing child molestation, rape, female genital

¹⁵⁵ Chelaite, O.I, August 20, 2019

¹⁵⁶ Ibid

¹⁵⁷ Muituri, O.I, January 14, 2020

mutilation, (FGM) and gender-based violence among other issues. The projects included income-generating activities such as cash crop farming and poultry keeping. They also established revolving funds which were given to the members for their projects. The women groups also took up projects such as tree planting, construction of schools, roads and bridges and adult literacy programmes.

The initiative to form women groups with development-oriented activities was taken up by the women themselves. Through this initiative, she gained popularity and trust from her electorates. She continued with this service up to 2001 when she again involved herself in campaigns to acquire a Parliamentary seat.¹⁵⁸ At the same time, her involvement with welfare organisations had given her an insight into the problems facing the least privileged members of society and the will to deal with them effectively and efficiently.



Figure 8: A poster of Alicen Chelaite during the 1997 elections campaigns.

Source: KANU office in Nakuru town

¹⁵⁸ Ngozi, O.I, 27 October 2019.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have examined how Alicen Chelaite's political career formed between 1978 and 2001. The chapter explained how she first got herself involved in politics and how her political star kept shining every single day. Being elected the first woman mayor in Nakuru municipality was one of the greatest achievements ever in her life. This is a factor that motivated her to even aim higher in her political career, she vied for a Member of Parliament seat representing Nakuru town constituency in 1997 and failed but she never gave up. As a leader of *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* Organization, Alicen Chelaite made immeasurable achievements including leading her group to fight for multi-party democracy in Kenya.

CHAPTER FOUR

ALICEN CHELAITE'S ROLE DURING KIBAKI REGIME (2002-2007)

4.1 Introduction

In 2002, Kenya held a historical election that marked a transition from arbitrary and personalised leadership to the institutionalisation of governance in constitutional structures. The general elections were also billed as a defining moment in Kenya's political history in the sense that it was expected that they would mark a break from autocracy, impunity, ethnic and rent-seeking politics to a new dispensation characterised by national cohesion, respect for the rule of law, accountability and a general reorientation of Kenya's politics. Hence the phrase 'second liberation', the first, having been from colonialism. This period provided women with robust opportunities in political life and as we shall see, the Kibaki presidency played a major role in the Chelaite's re-entry into politics.

As such this chapter discusses Chelaite's political life during the NARC regime. It goes ahead to explain how and why she abandoned KANU, the party that was the most popular in the whole of Rift Valley Province and her contributions as the Member of Parliament representing Rongai constituency. Her contributions as an assistant minister for gender and sports is also discussed, and all her undertakings in the political arena are discussed in this chapter. The chapter ends by discussing the involvement of Alicen in community development projects after retiring from elective politics in Kenya including small-scale farming just to mention but a few.

4.2 Alicen Chelaite and the 2002 General Elections

By the time the 2002 elections were taking place, Chelaite asserts that she joined and supported NARC because it had accepted to incorporate the manifesto of women on the prosperity and posterity of women of Kenya. Alicen was passionate about women's prosperity; therefore, it was easy for her to easily fit into the NARC coalition, and her joining of NARC did not disappoint her. The era was characterized with tremendous involvement of women in leadership and politics. She explained that

the number of women politicians and parliamentarians in parliament increased to a meaningful figure.¹⁵⁹

In preparation for the 2002 elections, Kibaki's Democratic Party affiliated with several other opposition parties to form the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC). A group of disgruntled KANU presidential aspirants then quit KANU in protest after being overlooked by outgoing President Moi when Moi nominated Uhuru Kenyatta to be the KANU presidential candidate, and hurriedly formed the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). NAK later teamed up with the LDP to form the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). On 14 October 2002, at a large opposition rally in Uhuru Park, Nairobi, Kibaki was nominated the NARC opposition alliance presidential candidate after Raila Odinga made the famous declaration: "Kibaki Tosha!"¹⁶⁰

On 3rd December, 2002, Kibaki was injured in a road accident while on his way back to Nairobi from a campaign rally at Machakos junction, 40 kilometres (25 miles) from Nairobi. He was subsequently hospitalized in Nairobi; then, later at London, after sustaining fracture injuries in the accident which curtailed his movement and walking. The rest of his presidential campaign was conducted by his NARC colleagues as he took a medical leave of absence. The campaign was led by Raila Odinga and Kijana Wamalwa (later he became the Vice President) who went ahead to campaign tirelessly for Kibaki.¹⁶¹

On 27th December, 2002, Kibaki and NARC won a landslide victory over KANU, with Kibaki getting 62 percent (%) of the votes in the presidential elections, against only 31 percent for the KANU candidate Uhuru Kenyatta. This saw the Moi regime, which lasted for 24 years under KANU, come to an end. Kibaki was sworn in as the President under the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC). The prospects for democracy in Kenya were enhanced by the resounding defeat of KANU.

¹⁵⁹ Chelaite, O.I, August 23, 2019.

¹⁶⁰T. Wanyoni, "The deal and deal makers in Kibaki's 2002 victory", *The Daily Nation*, Feb. 2003 p. 12.

¹⁶¹P. Kamau, "Moi is gone and nyayo era past tense, but impunity lives on", *The Daily Nation*, March, 2020, p. 24.

The NARC coalition¹⁶² was an alliance of several political parties which had been formed to oust Moi from power.

The 2002 elections, therefore, became very significant for women in Kenya in the sense that they served as the first transition elections where a living president hands over to a newly elected one. President Moi retired and all political developments focused on his succession. KANU became an endangered party and the majority of leaders abandoned it to support the Mwai Kibaki presidency. Behind the scenes, women organizations were negotiating with parties to gain entry into the campaign arena. Their main goal was to secure more parliamentary and civic seats for women. Alicen Chelaite shifted to NARC having been a member of KANU for 24 years and she emerged victorious in Rongai constituency with a NARC ticket in a KANU backyard.¹⁶³ This was a clear manifestation that change was always inevitable.

Before Kenya's 2002 general elections, women across the country mobilised themselves to form the Kenya women's political manifesto in which they described their political agenda for the country which specifically focused on the key agenda the government wanted to address. In their manifesto, for example, women pushed for affirmative action, where at least one-third representation in parliament and local government was to be prioritized. They had hoped it would give them the opportunity to ascend to key geopolitical positions in the country. They also wanted a new government under Kibaki to discourage violence, encourage voter participation, discourage fraud, and prosecute corrupt leaders together with intimidation during elections. This is of course after a persistent attack on women aspirants who had been side-lined in the historical past. Consequently, women wanted the government to formulate regulations governing elections campaign financing for political leaders and candidates to discourage commercialisation and commodification of politics.

During this period, women also developed a manifesto which also focused on poverty and economic empowerment, as well as education for girls and women, especially from the marginalised regions. The manifesto also included HIV/AIDS as

¹⁶²The National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) is a political party in Kenya. As an alliance, it was in power from 2002 and 2005 when it collapsed due to disagreements between members over a constitutional referendum

¹⁶³Ng'ok, O.I, September 21, 2019.

a major impediment which affected women and children more than their male counterparts. This was after a health survey report that revealed that the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate and new infections was high among the women in Kenya. Since women were caregivers, they were more likely to be affected and infected as compared to their male counterparts.¹⁶⁴

4.3 Chelaite in the National Assembly

Chelaite was aware of her society's social set-up and the dynamics of its peoples' varied social roles. Though she was a member of parliament at a time when feminism was at its height in the West, she was still part of a society in which women defined themselves as, an important part of the community. It follows that once in parliament, Chelaite raised and contributed to a wide range of issues, a few of which relate to women in particular. In parliament, she did not fail to give satisfactory answers when pertinent questions were asked. It is important to note that she made twenty-four contributions in parliament according to the Kenya National Assembly Official Report. The study highlighted a few of her contributions. On 17th October, 2007, she urged members to consider gender parity when forming the Constituency Development Committees so that women could also be included. This was her contribution on the Constituencies Development Fund Amendment Bill.¹⁶⁵

She also championed for the enactment of several legislations which saw enactment of laws that addressed sexual violence, rape and female genital mutilation. Her ministry generated the Sessional Paper on Gender and Development which was approved by the cabinet. The policies spelt out gender equality and empowerment. The Sessional paper No. 2 provided the framework for operationalization of gender mainstreaming in policy planning and programming in Kenya.¹⁶⁶

In 2007, Mt Elgon district was faced with insecurity issues and a lot of Kenyans lost their lives and property. When tabled in parliament for discussion,

¹⁶⁴D. Nyakwaka, "The Gendered Political Transformation in Luo land", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Egerton University, 2012

¹⁶⁵ Kenya National Assembly Official Report Vol.III.Part II July 1963

¹⁶⁶National Assembly Official Report, Adoption of Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2006 on Gender equality and Development.

Chelaite was courageous enough to tell the house that the government should get to the root cause of the problem. She further pointed fingers at the Ministers' of State for Administration and National Security and Minister for lands and urged them to take action as soon possible.¹⁶⁷

She set the pace for the empowerment of women, even after she had left parliament. Together with Njoki Ndung'u, they advanced this concept through the controversial sex offenders' bill where a motion was tabled in parliament and canvassed till it was passed. This bill sought to address the rising problem of rape and sexual assaults.

She campaigned the Gender Policy Bill which was initiated by Julia Ojiambo and aimed at protecting women and girls from sexual exploitation and harassment. In addition to this, she championed for the Children's Act-2001 in addressing some of traditional practices that affect girls' retention in the school system such as female genital mutilation and forced early marriages by introducing the return to school programme for pregnant girls. She was a member of the 9th Parliament that will go down in history as having the highest bills proposed by women. As a member of KEWOPA (Kenya Women Parliamentary Association), they presented gender issues to President Kibaki to improve the welfare of women in parliament. They felt sidelined in the day-to-day running of legislative affairs; that is, the number of women considered for parastatal jobs, cabinet positions and ambassadorial postings were inadequate. Together with other women, she championed for affirmative action that provided that at least 30 percent of new public service jobs to be giving to women.

4.4 Chelaite and institutionalisation of Rongai Politics

Against all odds, Chelaite contested as a member of parliament for Rongai Constituency.¹⁶⁸ She was the only woman candidate among several other men who contested from other rival political parties. KANU had sponsored a powerful candidate by the name Eric Morogo who had the backing of the then retired president

¹⁶⁷ Ibid

¹⁶⁸Rongai Constituency is an electoral constituency in Kenya. It is one of eleven constituencies in Nakuru County. The constituency has eight wards, all electing councillors for the Nakuru County Assembly.

Moi. Alicen Chelaite won the elections under NARC. This era marked the beginning of the end of KANU's popularity. Alicen alludes that her victory helped to personify the struggle to place women in leadership in Rift Valley. That was at a time when Rift Valley was considered the backyard of the then President Daniel Arap Moi's KANU party. Despite running on an opposition party, National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC), she was elected to the ninth parliament.¹⁶⁹

Names of Contestants	Votes
Alicen Chelaite	17, 256
Erick Morogo	15,199
Patrick Miri Gichuhi	529
Kennedy Karungu	304
Jonathan Mbuthia Kameana	243
Peter Ngugi Njuguna	214

Source: 2002 General Elections Scorecard. *The Weekly Review*, November 9, 2003

According to her legislative objectives, Chelaite aimed at embarking on rural development as the key to a better quality life for her people.¹⁷⁰ As a Member of Parliament for Rongai Constituency, Chelaite laid a lot of emphasis on ensuring that the youth of Rongai received adequate education.

During Chelaite's tenure as a member of parliament for Rongai Constituency from 2002-2007, she initiated several projects which transformed the constituency in a tremendous way. This was majorly supported by the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) which was launched by the Kibaki government to replace the then District Focus for Rural Development. The fund was to be utilised towards social-economic development within the constituency as a unit of administration.¹⁷¹ At the constituency level, she organised many fundraising rallies and contributed in paying school fees for needy students. During her tenure, she initiated several development projects, among these projects were the construction of Rongai Health Centre and Lengenet Dispensary.

¹⁶⁹ The Parents Magazine, Issue 351, October 2015, p 27.

¹⁷⁰ Ochieng, O.I, September 21, 2019

¹⁷¹S. Wamalwa, An almost sure seat for the opposition, *Daily Nation*, June 3, 2002, p. 23, Chelaite, OI, 03, Jan. 2019

The establishment of these facilities went a long way in changing the medical history of the constituency since it took care of so many outpatients within the constituency. Kipkorir, an electorate who hails from Rongai observes that the health centres came as a great beacon of hope to the people of Rongai. According to him, Chelaite will forever be remembered for that great achievement.¹⁷² Before the establishment of the health facilities, Chelimo observes that a lot of child births were done at home with the help of the midwives. According to her, just a few infants could survive at birth since there was no adequate medical attention. She further argues that with the establishment of Rongai Health Centre, child fatality rate at birth greatly reduced.¹⁷³



Figure 9: Photograph showing the Rongai Health Centre.

Source: Authors collection from the CDF Office at Rongai Sub-County.

¹⁷² Kipkorir, O.I, November 12, 2019.

¹⁷³ Chelimo, OI, September 11, 2019.



Figure 10: A photograph showing Lengenet Dispensary

Source: Author's collection from the CDF office Rongai.

As a Member of Parliament, she invested a lot in education and more, specifically, girl-child education. To ensure that girls remained in schools, she issued them with free sanitary pads. In the Kalenjin culture, talking about sanitary pads was considered a taboo; notwithstanding, Alicen Chelaite changed the narrative through educating girls on the importance of sanitary pads. She distributed them freely to all girls in her constituency. She also constructed a school in Waseges ward and the school was named after her.¹⁷⁴

The Kibaki government launched one of the most successful programmes called Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in 2003 through the CDF Act and appeared in the Kenya Gazette Supplement No. 107 (Act No.11) of 9th January, 2004. The fund comprises an annual budgetary allocation equivalent to 2.5 percent of the government's ordinary revenue. Seventy five percent (75 %) of the fund is allocated

¹⁷⁴ Ng'ok, O.I, September 21, 2019.

equally amongst all 210 constituencies. The remaining twenty five percent (25 %) is allocated as per the constituency poverty index. CDF is managed through 4 committees, 2 of which are at the national level and 2 at the grassroots level.¹⁷⁵ During her tenure, Rongai constituency was ranked number one in Kenya in terms of development. Other constituencies began to benchmark in Alicen's constituency, especially in the utilisation of CDF.¹⁷⁶

By the end of her term as a Member of Parliament for Rongai Constituency, Chelaite had initiated more than 129 projects which were funded by the CDF Funds. The breakdown for the funds received was thus: in the financial year 2003/2004: ksh 6 million, 2004/2005: ksh 25 million, 2005/2006: ksh 33 million and in 2006/2007 the constituency had received a total of ksh 45.5 million.



Figure 11: A signage showing A CDF funded project in Rongai Constituency.

Source: Constituency Newsletter.

¹⁷⁵ S. Auya and Peter Oino, (2013). *The Role of Constituency Development Fund in Rural Development: Experiences from North Mugirango Constituency, Kenya*. International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR), India Online ISSN: 2319-7064.

¹⁷⁶Muthama, O.I, November 13, 2019.

Out of the 129 projects, at least 22 projects were water-related, 17 health-related and numerous bursaries given to needy students. According to Chelaite, the people of Rongai Constituency needed water much more than anything else. She notes that women had struggled by walking long distances to fetch water which put them at risk of being raped or hindering young girls from accessing education. She explains that she felt that water was an important commodity; therefore, it required to be available so as to enable women and girls to be safe. Alicen saw a situation where women had to walk long distances to fetch water which affected their full concentration in school since they spent most of their time checking for water.¹⁷⁷

Chelaite established primary and secondary schools across the constituency as well as building additional classes for the already existing schools within the constituency; this was meant to achieve universal access to education and 100 percent transition where all primary school going children were expected to join secondary school. Among the schools included Athinai Secondary School, Kiamunyi Secondary School, Ol Rongai Secondary School, Ol Manyatta Secondary school, Kambi ya Moto Zonal Education Office, Athinai Primary School, Banita dispensary Maternity wing, Chebinyiny water project, Kware cattle dip, Maji Tamu Chief's office, Gakweni Primary School, Mutuku Mixed Secondary School, Bomasan Secondary School and Boror Primary School among others.

Chelaite is very passionate about education; therefore, talking about her legacies would centre on education and the numerous schools that she established. Kipkanyelik, an employee at the CDF office in Rongai Sub-County observes that Chelaite invested a lot of her time in developing schools within the constituency. He observes that the constituency had never seen such massive developments before. The constituency under the leadership of Chelaite constructed Sarambei Primary School, Lelechwet Primary School, Kipsyenam Primary School just to mention a few of them. Naturally, education became the integral part of her legacies in the constituency.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷Chelaite, O.I, August 23, 2019.

¹⁷⁸ Kipkanyilak, O.I, August 21, 2019.



Figure 12: A photograph showing Sarambei Primary School.

Source: Author's collection from the CDF office Rongai.

Chelaite will forever be remembered as one leader who tirelessly fought for the two third gender rule together with other female leaders like Chebii Kilimo and Esther Keino. Achieving this goal has proven futile in the National Assembly, but at least it is envisioned in our constitution. This is one of the achievements that Chelaite is and will always be proud of. Her major concern was about women empowerment; she gave civic education to women leading to their subsequent appointment as chiefs and assistant chiefs.¹⁷⁹

4.5 Chelaite and the Rise to the Cabinet

In 2003, Chelaite was appointed to serve as the Assistant Minister, Ministry of Gender and Social Services under the Kibaki Cabinet. As mentioned earlier, Chelaite had spent much time working for the disadvantaged members of the community who were victims of gender-based violence. As a minister, she was involved with the formation and implementation of national policies, especially those aimed at enhancing the status of women in all sectors. Chelaite worked with national women

¹⁷⁹Ng'ok, O.I, September 21, 2019.

organisations including, *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* and National Council of Women of Kenya.

At the international level, Chelaite was among those who attended the United Nations Beijing Conference on Women in 2004. This conference changed Chelaite's perceptions on the image of the African woman. It was an eye-opener since she saw a new Kenya that would embrace women in their country's development. Upon their return home, it was clear that these women had drastically changed not only in their opinions, but also the way they interpreted the plight of Kenyan women in general. To her disappointment, Chelaite realized that this matter received resistance from some conservative Kenyan men who felt that the women were challenging the status quo. Some men complained publicly that the conference had only "spoilt their women". To Chelaite, it was obvious that these men did not necessarily understand the relevance of this conference.¹⁸⁰

As a fearless woman, Chelaite revealed in the *East African Standard* of 28th December, 2004 that female MPs were accused of get sexual advancements from their male counterparts and this discouraged most female MPs as their focus is on national development.¹⁸¹ She therefore encouraged that the two sexes must learn to exist competitively. Since she was campaigning for the creation of more slots for women in government, the NARC government sent her to Beijing to represent Kenya. Alicen did observe that, her country's constitution sought to empower women in areas of previous discrimination. It addressed such issues as equality before the law, protection of matrimonial property, legal aid, and included a government commitment to fulfil international obligations.¹⁸²

Chelaite's appointment as the assistant minister for Gender and Social Services made her put more effort to make the ministry more active. In 2003, she attended the international conference on Female Genital Mutilation to implement the Maputo Protocol. This was one of the world's most comprehensive and progressive

¹⁸⁰ Chelaite, O.I, August 12, 2019.

¹⁸¹ 'Female M.Ps Struggles in the house' *East African Standard*, 28 December 2004, p.16.

¹⁸² Chelaite, O.I, September 23, 2019. United Nations, "Development efforts, peace process require women's equal participation to succeed, women's commission told", *conference paper*, 2004.

women's human rights instruments, the protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol) was adopted by Heads of State and Government in Maputo, Mozambique on 11th July, 2003.¹⁸³

In the same year, she flagged off the Men's Travelling Conference from Nairobi after a brief address. Sifuna who chaired the initiative explained how Chelaite courageously addressed a group of men who were preparing to travel all over the country to advocate for gender equality.¹⁸⁴ This was an initiative by Men for Gender Equality Now (MEGEN) aimed at reaching out to men and boys at the grass-roots levels in order to promote gender justice and curb Gender Based Violence. The organization strived to contribute to the development of a society where males and females are valued equally. The Men's Travelling Conference helped the organisation to bring about social justice by reaching out to men, boys and institutions, so as to mitigate Gender-Based Violence in communities, create awareness and advocate for policy formulation to help prevent and respond to gender issues.¹⁸⁵

Moreover, Chelaite was actively involved in the country's Transnational Policy on Gender and Development, which aimed to transform international instruments into a domestic context. According to Alicen Chelaite, the Government had also outlined strategies for eradicating gender inequalities, and also had analysed socio-economic and political factors that hindered equitable development, and was encouraging men to promote gender issues. The biggest worry that Alicen Chelaite had was that despite the significant progress that had been made to advance gender equity, cultural practices still restricted the lives of women and girls in several areas. Alicen Chelaite will still be remembered for her great contribution at the Beijing Five conference where she proved that she was indeed a true fighter for gender equality.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ www.equalitynow.org

¹⁸⁴ Sifuna, O.I, October 2019.

¹⁸⁵ Case Study on Men's Travelling Conference, Kenya. IFAD, Oct 2014

¹⁸⁶ Chelaite, O.I, September 23, 2019.



Figure 13: Hon Alicen Chelaite front row far right, during the Beijing Five Conference in 2004.

Source: National Assembly

Gender-based violence (GBV) was one of the most widespread human rights abuses and public health problems in the world today with devastating short and long-term consequences for victims' physical and mental health. The United Nation (UN) General Assembly gave a list of what it felt constituted gender-based violence. These were physical abuse, sexual and psychological violence within the family, child sexual abuse, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation (FGM), rape and sexual abuse, sexual harassment in the workplace and educational institutions, trafficking in women and forced prostitution.

The existence and enforcement of Anti-GBV laws vary widely in the world with some countries establishing women police stations and others establishing gender desks. According to the UN women website, the gender desks are specialised focal points, desks or units that deal with gender issues (or specifically on violence against women) in the police stations or in a country. Their roles are the following: to

investigate cases of GBV and charge the perpetrators accordingly improving the response to violence survivors. This may include referrals to medical facilities and other organisations/institutions for professional services, promoting procedures and protocols on investigations, interviewing, enforcing protection orders, etc. increasing public awareness of gender-based violence and the role of the police and gender desk in assisting survivors and serving as a focal point for reporting sexual harassment.¹⁸⁷

Perhaps, Chelaite's international experience having travelled far and wide in several countries while working as an assistant minister shaped her thinking to support the establishment of a gender desk as a remedy towards ending gender-based violence in Kenya. At the global level, there are international instruments that ensure human rights are observed indiscriminately. Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention¹⁸⁸ adopted in 1949 provided that women were supposed to be protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, forced prostitution, or any form of indecency. The spirit of the Convention on the *Elimination of All Forms of discrimination against Women* was rooted in the goals of the United Nations to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women.¹⁸⁹

Other tools included the Vienna Conference on Human Rights (1993), Beijing Platform for Action and the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, which all aimed at reinforcing the international laws, conventions and resolutions against sexual violence.¹⁹⁰ To ensure the implementation of these conventions the individual countries were expected to put their legal frameworks in place.¹⁹¹ Some countries established women police stations while others established the women desks to

¹⁸⁷ United Nations, 'Development efforts, peace process require women's equal participation to succeed, women's commission told', conference, 2004.

¹⁸⁸W. R. Keylor, *"The Twentieth-Century World and Beyond," The Geneva Convention relative* (New York, 2011)

¹⁸⁹United Nations, *Treaty Collection*". *Un.org. Archived from the original on 6 September 2015*. Chelaite, OI, 13, Nov. 2019.

¹⁹⁰C. Norchi, "Human Rights: A Global Common Interest". In Krasno, Jean E. (Ed.). *The United Nations: Confronting the Challenges of a Global Society*, (Lynne, 2004), p. 87.

¹⁹¹Jean F. Jean, "United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China (1995) – "Global Framework" of the Platform for Action", in DeLamotte, Eugenia; Meeker, Natania; O'Barr, Jean F. (eds.), *Women imagine change: a global anthology of women's resistance from 600 B.C.E. to present*, (New York, 1997), pp. 502–510.

enforce the Anti -GBV laws. For example, among the countries that established the Women Police Station (WPS) were India, Nicaragua, Argentina, Brazil, Afghanistan, Colombia, and the United States. According to a study by the UN on Women Police Stations (WPS), Brazil had 475 WPS, Ecuador had 34, Nicaragua had 59 and Peru had 27. The WPS were able to make violence against women visible and be viewed as a crime. The roles of the WPS in these countries included prevention, receiving and investigating complaints. They dealt with different forms of violence (physical, psychological or sexual violence) against specific victims (adult women, girls and boys under 18 years), the victim's relationship with the aggressor.¹⁹²

In 2007, together with Joyce Laboso, Elachi observed that they came up with a programme of empowering women and girls. The programme was named (The Rift Valley Women Empowerment Network) and it targeted school girls in support for their education and mentorship.¹⁹³ Keino, on the other hand, argues that in the recent past has been providing basic needs to needy girls in Rift Valley and the young people during school holidays would go to Egerton University where they interacted with university students and academic staff. Keino further observes that the programme has illuminated the lives of many young girls, and according to her, that was a very great achievement made by Chelaite.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹²Ibid, p. 513.

¹⁹³Quinter, O.I, September 10, 2019.

¹⁹⁴Keino, O.I, October, 12, 2019.



Figure 14: Alicen Chelaite and other members of Rift Valley Rural Women Empowerment Network.

Source: Author's collection from family album.

While serving as the assistant minister, the great gender differences, and in particular the subordination of women and young girls across Kenya became her central point. Alicen's philosophy was that gender equality plays a central role in the discourse of democracy and human rights. Chelaite argues that women in Kenya still had much ground to cover if they were to achieve the right to participate in political decision-making and be regarded as equals by both the men and the government. She observed that she was among those that pushed to have the gender desk set up in police stations to help deal with gender-based violence cases sensitively and professionally. According to Chelaite, her appointment to the cabinet was a major win for the women of Kenya.¹⁹⁵

In as much as Chelaite was praised by many for commitment and dedication to serve her constituents and the nation at large, she was also criticised on the grounds that she applied the divide and rule policy to govern her people. Lang'at, a retired

¹⁹⁵Chelaite, Nakuru O.I, August 11, 2019.

teacher and a resident of Rongai regrettably told how Chelaite divided the constituency into two segments. According to him, Chelaite only focussed on the areas where she garnered votes and side-lined areas where the electorates never voted for her for example Kirobon. To him, this was a serious factor that led to Chelaite's downfall as she did not retire from politics willingly.¹⁹⁶

4.6 Chelaite: Life after Parliament

Chelaite has observed over the years that despite the obvious push and pull between men and women in Kenya and the women's cries for equality, women are still not taken seriously. In fact, very few people would even understand what feminism is all about, or how it operates. That is why, although efforts to empower women in Kenya have been put in place, there has been a great paradigm shift.¹⁹⁷

On current politics, Chelaite vividly remembers how it was difficult to get support from women apart from her relatives. According to her, any woman today can come into leadership because there certainly exist a vacuum that women can fill. She appreciates the constitution for giving women the opportunity and power to do this.¹⁹⁸ Yusuf explained how together with Chelaite, they have encouraged women to participate in politics when they were given an opportunity during the Building Bridges Initiative public forum in Nakuru Town Hall.¹⁹⁹

Chelaite further observes that since women have been exposed to education that connects them to power, they admonished handouts. According to her, it is the women who encourage politicians to bribe them. They are the ones who run to take bribes out of the need to provide basic needs for their children. Instead, she insists that they should compel the politicians to bring long term solutions such as tapped water in their homesteads and maternity services in their areas.

Chelaite also believes that devolution through the constitution has created opportunities for women. She therefore does not see what could make any woman shy from attempting to fill up the gaps. It is encouraging, however, to note that Chelaite

¹⁹⁶ Lang'at, Rongai O.I, 22 July, 2020.

¹⁹⁷ Chelaite O.I, August 2019

¹⁹⁸ Chelaite, O.I, August 2019

¹⁹⁹ Yusuf, O.I, December 2021

has attempted to empower women to the best of her ability. She has been able to implement various projects, though at small-scale, targeting women in the grassroots level through village gatherings. Nevertheless, as Chebet explains, Chelaite came up with the ‘SIGEN’ Women Group, an initiative to empower old women through a merry-go-round. However, she has noticed that none of these women has ever sat in any forum with their contemporaries in other constituencies to discuss issues pertinent to them, they feel excluded from the planning stage of matters which are central to their welfare. As a result, most of them do not take the projects handed to them seriously.²⁰⁰

After having served as a public servant for many years from the Moi era and finally the Kibaki era, Chelaite decided to retire from active politics and instead engage in community service and development. Chelaite became an active AIC church member at her residential place in Ngata, Rongai constituency where she worshipped with other members of the community. She belonged to several church groups where she actively participated through advising and counselling. Such church groupings included building and development, investments and entrepreneurship, women development, as well as active evangelism. In the community, she also served as the board chair of Kiamunyi Secondary School till 2018 when her term ended and other learning institutions around Nakuru particularly in Rongai constituency. She supported many of the institutions through networking and resource mobilisations.²⁰¹

She also continued to push for water and electricity connections for the Rongai constituency’s residents. She believed that all development projects, which must be initiated by the government, must be for the best interest of women and children as well as youth in the society. Having served as a member of parliament for only one term, she was not entitled to any pension or retirement benefits. However, she believed in a cheerful heart. She, therefore, shared the little she had with the less fortunate members of the community. She is a passionate farmer and therefore she is able to make use of her farm in Ngata.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Chebet, Nakuru, O.I, 5 May, 2020

²⁰¹ Simon, O.I. Subukia.14.12.2020

²⁰² Njunge, O.I. Subukia 27.11.2019



Figure 15: Alicen Chelaite drying her farm produce.

Source: Family Album

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter focused on Chelaite's political life in the first phase of the Kibaki era from 2002 to 2007. It brought forth the numerous contributions made by Alicen in her constituency and even the contributions she made as an assistant minister. As an assistant minister, the chapter discusses her involvement in the Beijing Five conference and how she advocated for the issue of gender equality. The chapter ends by discussing some of the activities that Alicen Chelaite got herself involved in after retiring from public space. The Great Man Theory did inform this chapter, the chapter showed how Alicen, her gender notwithstanding, managed to compete in the male dominated fields and emerged victorious. The next chapter gives the summary, recommendations and conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The study set out to write a biography of Alicen Chelaite. The study was guided by three objectives namely to trace the early life of Alicen Chelaite ,1945-1977; to account for Alicen Chelaite's life during Moi regime ,1978-2002 and finally, to find out Alicen Chelaite's life and times during Kibaki regime ,2002-2007. The study used both secondary and primary sources. Primary information from the Kenya National Archives and the Kenyan Parliament were gathered and used in the writing of the biography. Field interviews were conducted in Kapropita, Rongai and Nairobi. Secondary information was gathered through review of books, journals, articles and magazines. All the data from both the primary and secondary sources was pieced together to construct a biography of Alicen Chelaite. The study applied three theories: Subaltern, Great Man and Feminist Theory. Alicen was just a modest girl from a humble family who rose to power and became great in the society. For example, Alicen Chelaite became the first woman mayor in Nakuru Municipality, a male dominated seat. In 2002, she became a Member of Parliament representing the Rongai Constituency.

The study observed that Alicen Chelaite was born in 1945. Focusing on her memories of earlier childhood and her childhood practice has been interpreted by contemporary scholars as a foundation for her moral basis that parallels her contemporary socio-political practice. The study underscores the ways that distinctive historical experiences have had different consequences for how family foundation was perceived in historical circumstances. In order to achieve that goal, the study, specifically examined the background of the village where Alicen Jematia was born and raised, focused on her birth, her traditional heritage as well as her Christian heritage. In addition, the study reviewed her primary education, initiation and professional training.

It was evident that for a long period, her lifelong mission to foster democracy in Kenya has almost become ingrained in the fabric of Kenya's political structure, despite the powerful counter currents of male chauvinism, dominance and political interference. Her continued role in politics upended Kenyan patriarchal power and hierarchies of privilege, age, and gender. As was seen in the study, the only way to

slow down her career was to eliminate her economic base, not through the ballot box but through fiscal authority. The study went ahead to trace Chelaite's ascent through her political career from 1978 to 1996. She was appointed by the KANU party to become a councillor in Nakuru in 1978. It also discussed her marriage and family life; this ought to have come much earlier but the study explained the events behind this. Further, the study accounted for her as the first woman mayor in Nakuru Municipality and finally her involvement in national politics where she vied to become a Member of Parliament representing Nakuru Town Constituency.

In 2002, Kenya held watershed elections that were seen as a mark of transition from arbitrary and personalised leadership to the institutionalisation of governance in constitutional structures. The general elections were also billed as a defining turn in Kenya's political history in the sense that it was expected that they would mark a break from autocracy, impunity, ethnic and rent-seeking politics to a new dispensation characterised by national cohesion, respect for the rule of law, accountability and a general reorientation of Kenya's politics. Hence the phrase 'second liberation', the first having been from colonialism. This period provided women with robust opportunities in political life and as seen, the Kibaki presidency played a major role in Chelaite's re-entry into politics.

As such, this study discussed Chelaite's political life during the NARC regime. The study explains how and why she abandoned KANU, the party that was the most popular in the whole of Rift Valley Province and her contributions as the Member of Parliament representing Rongai constituency. Her contributions as an assistant minister for gender and sports were also discussed, and all her undertakings in the political arena were discussed in this study. The study ends in chapter four by discussing the involvement of Alicen in community development projects after retiring from elective politics in Kenya including small-scale farming, just to mention but a few.

The early life of Chelaite right from birth through schooling and her first employment as a clerk in the colonial government was discussed. It is evident that Alicen was born in a poor family background with an uncertain future. Her father who was the bread-winner and provider of the family died and Chelaite was forced to live with her mother so as to provide for other family siblings who were still young regarding provision of basic needs. Alicen struggled to break all the odds to become a

“meaningful” person in life. This chapter concurs with Herbert Spencer’s argument that the environments where leaders come from plays a very key role in nurturing their leadership skills. The chapter has been informed by the Great Man Theory but critiqued to some extent. Notably, the objective of the chapter was achieved.

Alicen Chelaite’s political career formed between 1978 and 2001. Chapter three explained how she first got herself involved in politics and how her political star kept shining every single day. Alicen did get married formally at a very late age and the chapter discusses the narrative behind that. Being elected the first woman mayor in Nakuru municipality was one of the greatest achievements ever in her life. This is a factor that motivated her to even aim higher in her political career, she vied for a Member of Parliament seat representing Nakuru Town Constituency in 1997 but after failing, she never gave up. As a leader of *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* Organization, Alicen Chelaite made immeasurable achievements including leading her group to fight for multi-party democracy in Kenya. The objective of the chapter was achieved.

Chelaite’s political life in the first phase of Kibaki era from 2002 to 2007 brought forth the numerous contributions made by Alicen in her constituency and even the contributions she made as an assistant minister. As an assistant minister, the chapter discusses her involvement in the Beijing Five conference and how she advocated for the issue of gender equality. The chapter ends by discussing some of the activities that Alicen Chelaite got herself involved in after retiring from public space. The Great Man Theory did inform this chapter, the chapter showed how Alicen, her gender notwithstanding, managed to compete in the male dominated fields and emerged victorious. The chapter’s objective was achieved.

In conclusion, therefore, the study observes that Alicen Chelaite rose from scratch to a political class. Her involvement with the Moi family played a vital role in shaping her political career. It could be deduced without any fear of contradiction that Alicen was a fearless woman and that is why she managed to compete with men in the political arenas which were male dominated. Alicen could sometimes go physical with the male opponents who were trying to undermine her because of her gender. Her involvement in active politics was an eye-opener to many other women who later realised that women could equally compete favourably in the political arena. A biography of Alicen Chelaite is an important contribution to the history of modern Kenya. It illuminates the contribution of women in the Kenyan politics. This study

has, therefore, unearthed important historical data. This data can be used to gauge Alicen as a politician and assistant cabinet minister alongside her contemporaries. The study also serves as a point of departure for more research on Alicen Chelaite and other leading figures in Kenya.

In view of the findings of the study, some recommendations emerged. The emergence of Alicen into the political arena came as a great beacon of light and of hope to many women especially in the Kalenjin community. Alicen's achievements in the political space could not go unnoticed, a clear indication that women's leadership is as good as men's leadership and sometimes even better than men's leadership. Going forward, the study recommended that there is a need to give women due space in the political sphere. Women leaders are yet to be given due attention that they deserve in the history books. Further research needs to be undertaken to examine and explore the relationship between Alicen and Moi after she ditched KANU in 2002.

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1	Amdany, Beatrice	67	Farmer	Rongai	03.09.2019	30
2	Chelaite Elijah	88	Businessman	Nakuru	10.09.2019	50
3	Chelaite, Alicen	76	Retired politician/a farmer	Rongai	09.01.2020	56
4	Chelimo, Eunice	75	Businesswoman	Rongai	20.02.2020	48
5	Chepchumba, Risper	65	Retired teacher	Kapropita	11.11.2020	40
6	Kamau, William	48	Staff at Rongai Constituency CDF Offices	Rongai	23.10.2020	24
7	Kamurian, Isaac	52	Teacher	Nakuru	24.09.2020	20
8	Kandie, Dennis	58	Driver	Subukia	12.09.2019	30
9	Kangogo, Leah	64	A farmer	Kapropita	17.09.2020	40
10	Karani, David	50	Teacher	Nakuru	10.10.2019	25
11	Katya, Isaac	55	A businessman	Kapropita	12.11.2019	36
12	Keino, Edward	49	Staff at Rongai Constituency CDF Offices	Rongai	15.01.2019	27

13	Kipkanyilak, Timothy	65	A businessman	Kapropita	20.12.202 0	32
14	Kiplangat, Simon	39	Teacher	Subukia	14.12.202 0	25
15	Kipkorir, Rodgers	43	Driver	Rongai	17.02.202 0	20
16	Kimuge, Daniel	58	Businessman	Nakuru	20.08.202 0	33
17	Muituri, Dancun	61	A farmer	Subukia	11.10.201 9	42
18	Muthama, William	44	Teacher	Rongai	22.04.202 0	24
19	Ng'ok, Daniel	42	Youth Leader	Rongai	09.08.202 0	20
20	Njunge, Patrick	67	Chief	Subukia	27.11.201 9	24
21	Ochieng, Daniel	68	Farmer	Nakuru	28.11.201 9	45
22	Okwaro, Rodgers	52	Teacher	Rongai	05.01.202 0	30
23	Quinter, Beryl	44	Teacher	Subukia	12.02.202 0	24
24	Sifuna, William	48	Driver	Nakuru	23.03.202 0	23
25	Suter, Edwin	61	Farmer	Rongai	22.11.202 0	46
26	Tanui, David	56	Businessman	Nakuru	10.04.202 0	30
27	Towet Samuel	60	Businessman	Nakuru	02.10.202 0	40
28	Yusuf, Muhammad	55	Businessman	Nakuru	23.10.202 0	35

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Name: Sex Male () or Female ()

Occupation.....

Place of Residence..... Date of Interview.....

Childhood information of Alicen Chelaite

1. When and where was Alicen Chelaite born?
2. What was her family background like?
3. Where did she attend her primary and secondary education?
4. How best can you describe Chelaite in terms of character while in primary school?
5. How did she associate herself with her fellow village girls while at home?
6. Did Alicen Chelaite have any brothers and sisters?
7. When did she get married?
8. How did she perform in her secondary education?
9. Who sponsored her education?
10. How did her education influence her political achievements?

Chelaite's Life during Moi Regime



1. How did Chelaite, s entry into politics at an earlier age shape democracy during Moi' regime?
2. What role did Chelaite play during the Moi regime that you think changed the political landscape in Kenya?
3. Apart from politics what other activity did she engage herself in and more especially after abandoning politics?
4. Do you think that her involvement in politics early in life affects her social life more so than marriage?
5. Did the Kibaki and Moi governments honour Chelaite for her role in the second liberation of this country?
6. What are your opinions about Chelaite's treatment by the Moi government?
7. How did she help women as the deputy chair in charge of Rift Valley?

8. Why was she nominated as a councillor in Nakuru in charge of special needs specifically in regards to women developments?
9. How was she elected as the first woman mayor of Nakuru town?
10. What challenges did she face in the era of Moi?

Chelaite's Life and Times during Kibaki Presidency

1. How did Chelaite become a member of parliament in a community full of gender bias against women?
2. What did she achieve as an assistant Minister for Gender and Social Services?
3. How do her colleagues feel about her?
4. What do other leaders feel about her?
5. What qualities make her a good leader?
6. What is Chelaite like as a person?
7. What are her personality strengths and weaknesses?
8. What did she do best and not do as well?

APPENDIX II: Research Permit

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
RefNo: 688488	Date of Issue: 18/December/2019
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Ms. IRENE RONOH of Laikipia University, has been licensed to conduct research in Nakuru on the topic: A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF ALICEN CHELAITE for the period ending : 18/December/2020.	
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OFFICE OF DIRECTOR
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Ref: MH23/2195/14

5th November 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: IRENE KANGOGO RONOH - REG. NO. MH23/2195/14

The above mentioned is a Postgraduate student of Laikipia University undertaking a Master of Arts in History Degree under the Department of Public Affairs and Environment Studies, School of Humanities and Development Studies .

Her Research Proposal entitled: **"ABIOPGRAPHICAL STUDY OF ALICEN CHELAITE, 1945-2018"** has been **Examined and Accepted** by the Board of Postgraduate Studies.

She is hereby authorized to conduct her research.

Any assistance accorded to her will highly be appreciated.

Thank you

Sincerely,

Mr. S. Muehendu
For Director



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