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Drought Management by Formal and Informal Organizations of Kajiado County, Kenya; Special Reference to Role of Women.

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The study aimed at investigating the role of women's organizations in the management and reduction of drought impact formally and informally in Kajiado County, Kenya. The study, therefore, examined how women's organizations create awareness in ownership rights to empower women and determined how gender policies by women's organizations influence the empowerment of women. The study also examined how income generating activities by women's organizations led to women's empowerment and the extent to which women's organizations mobilize resources to empower women. The systems theory of organizations was used to understand the dynamics of women group organizations. A total of 20 women group organizations were included in the study, accounting for 500 members. Questionnaires were used for data collection and the data was analysed through quantitative means. Most women's organizations creating awareness in ownership rights to empower women do not own assets of their own and believe that the land they live in belongs to their husbands and that they are in control over it. Most of the organizations generate income for women through activities such as the sale of farm produce, cash from labour activities and cash from their husbands. Based on the findings, the study recommended that leaders should establish women's councils to participate in leadership matters to empower them and be part of agenda formulation and decision making.

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INTRODUCTION

In many countries, women face problems that limit their social and economic development as compared to their male counterparts. There are ever-widening disparities in education, employment and wealth, characterized by the disregard of women's rights. If anything, the gains underscored by the UN decade's Women Conference held in Mexico City in 1975 on the plight of women especially in Third World countries have not helped to reverse the power relations and burden on women (UNESCO, 1985).

At the close of the 20th century, it became clear that poverty was ravaging some parts of the world at an alarming rate. In developing countries, the number of people living on less than one US dollar a day was increasing rapidly and their access to quality social services was declining (UNICEF, 2000). This problem has been compounded by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, gender inequalities and social and political upheavals in this century. The current argument is that poverty reduction in developing countries will require a combination of approaches that specifically promote the efficient and transparent use of local resources, public funds and foreign aid to achieve gender equity (Bari, 2005) and integration of women in the process.

Governments have created forums for women groups to address socio-economic and political issues affecting their well-being. Through such groups, members gain through economic empowerment, skills development, and the creation of awareness, social interaction and moral support.

Makokha (2008) defines women groups as a form of self-help groups which are voluntary associations for poor people, "who join efforts, ideas and resources for the purpose to address issues affecting them through self-help and mutual help". Self-help groups promote small-scale savings among their members, which are often kept with a bank under the name of the group. In most cases, membership to such groups rarely exceeds twenty members per group.

In Kenya, the women's groups' movement emerged in the pre-independence era and scaled up in the wake of independence in response to the development aspirations targeting illiteracy, poverty and disease burden (Makokha, 2008). In the colonial era, women were organized into small groups to provide labour in the white farms. The grouping approach was useful regarding control of labourer's, moral support and the amount of output. This form of organization became a culture that transcended into the independence period because women realized that by embracing the group mentality, they were able to achieve many things, let alone higher output in the farms.

The pastoral community in Kajiado County suffered during the 2013 drought considering their only source of income was destroyed by drought. Hence poverty levels went high but the county government came to their rescue by providing bursaries for the children and also opening up dairy farms for them to supply milk.

The Country Government also opened up markets so the women could sell their Maasai ornaments. Immediately after the inter-county cultural day in 2016, a number of women got the scholarship to go abroad and learn how to improve their skills in doing business. Other organizations also helped women in the community to manage the effects of drought include the Neighbours' Initiative Alliance (NIA) and National Drought Management Authority (NDMA). The organizations help in giving early warnings to pastoralists; establishing measures to curb the drought and also educated and trained the communities prior to during and after the drought has struck.

In November 2017, the National Council of Governors started the *Ushanga* Kenya Initiative, which involved seven counties. Several women groups registered under *Ushanga* Initiative in Kajiado County, thereby becoming legible to receive loans and equipment grants to enable them to undertake their daily business activities. This was helpful to the women considering that they were the most affected by drought, as they remain at home while the men went searching for pasture and water for their animals.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Women Contribution to Development

Women in developing countries are united by the hope that organization, education and resistance would in the long run provide many with a means of escaping from or minimizing the tight grip of poverty and subordination. Although the process of modernization with its emphasis on capital accumulation and the move away from artisan production is not necessarily gender specific, its effects have often been to deprive many poorer women of ready access to reliable revenue based on subsistence production.

This process has been reinforced by the male-oriented development profits and employment opportunities in the capitalist waged sector which has reinforced the subordination of women. Development policies are addressed directly to women and formulated for them that they may be able to alleviate this plight (Afshar, 1991).

In the human society, development is a many-sided process. At the level of an individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. The relations that develop within any given social group are crucial to the understanding of the society as a whole. At the level of social groups, development implies an increased capacity to regulate both internal and external relationships.

History of Women Groups in Kenya

The history of women groups dates back to the early period where membership was ascribed. One became a member of a particular group by virtue of birth, age, and adoption into a kin or territorial unit. There existed the traditional mutual assistance groups among different Kenyan ethnic groups, which formed the nucleus of the prevailing women groups. Such groups were known as *Ngwatio* among the Agikuyu, *Mwethya* among the Kamba, *Ematotryok* among the Maasai, *Saga* among the Luo and *Obwasio* among the Abaluyia (Gathigi, 2000).

In the agricultural cultivation areas, the above groups were a form of cooperative working groups. Women assisted each other in planting, weeding, harvesting, firewood collection and other chores. From such mutual assistance, women were able to play their roles as farmers effectively as well as that of food provision in the household (Gathigi, 2000). During the colonial period in Kenya (1940-1960), the colonial authorities established more women clubs. The aim was to promote women's participation in the country's development. The clubs that existed prior to 1940 were the East African Women League (1917) and Kenya Girl Guides (1920).

Among those formed between 1940-1960 were Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO) (1952), the Nairobi Business Woman (1955), Mother's Union (1955) and the National Nurses Association (Gathigi, 2000). Though most of the early clubs and associations were dominated by the wives of white settlers and African administrators, they worked within the framework of traditional groups on mutual assistance. These clubs became focal points in protecting and furthering women's interests. In 1955, agricultural, health, nutrition and

hygiene training for African women was started under the umbrella of the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization.

The clubs were further used as a means for developing skills essential to their participation in the political sphere. During the peak of the Mau uprising there began to emerge rural women groups in the country. Women members consisted of those who lost their husbands or those whose husbands had left their homes for liberalization struggle. Their efforts were mainly directed to shelter and home improvement in general (Gathigi, 2000). With such joint efforts, the women hoped to assume their husband's previous roles on top of the expected ones.

With the attainment of independence, many more women's organizations came up, sometimes with a changed focus, having realized that some of the economic benefits some of the earlier organizations had expected to reap from the achievement of political independence did not materialize. They had to change their focus to match the new realities which meant devising their means of turning the opportunities offered by political independence into economic gains, and fighting its shortcoming to the women members of the organization (Ogeno, 1993).

After Kenya attained independence in 1963, the national motto of 'Harambee' which means 'together as one' adopted a similar line to that of traditional mutual assistance groups and the Yoruba 'Esusu'-cooperative rating credit schemes. The national motto called for collective effort, cooperative enterprises and all forms of self-reliance endeavours in the country. The result was the formation of various self-help projects and groups all over the country. Women began to organize themselves along the formal lines of women groups. Through these groups, they would be able to promote their interests (Gathigi, 2000).

In the 1970s Kenya experienced the widespread formation of women groups. In 1975, the women's bureau, under the then Ministry of Culture and Social Services was formed. It was charged with the responsibility of overseeing women groups' activities. Its formation was a reflection of the government's official acknowledgement of efforts being made by women in rural development (Gathigi, 2000).

Following the efforts of the women's bureau, there was a shift from women groups' activities being organized on purely home improvement and social welfare activities to encompass income generation activities. The aim was to enable women to improve their economic status and that of their families through the income obtained. In the rural sector, we today find the greatest number of formally organized women organizations in the country. These are the small associations introduced into the country in 1971 as part of the Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP) and built on the foundation provided by traditional groups. The stated objective of the SRDP was the improvement of rural life through the strengthening of women's leadership and increasing their involvement in development projects.

It also aimed at increasing women skills in the use of local resources (both personnel and material) in group management and planning (Ogeno, 1993). According to Chitere and Mutiso 1991, the expansion of the women's group movement is demonstrated by the increased number of groups that carry out agricultural and other welfare activities in rural areas. Women groups in Kenya today form relatively more successful categories applying the principles of self-help development if we view women aside against other social groups. The women's projects and activities comprise a significant percentage of self-help concerns in the countryside (Ogeno, 1993).

Gender and Poverty

A gender perspective means recognizing that women stand at the crossroads between production and reproduction, between economic activity and the care of human beings and, therefore, between economic growth and human development. They are workers in both spheres-those most responsible and therefore with most at stake, those who suffer most when the two spheres meet at cross-purposes, and those most sensitive to the need for better integration between the two. There is overwhelming evidence that women and girls are more disadvantaged than men and boys, both across societies and among the poor (Sen & Mukherjee, 2014).

Six out of ten of the world's poorest people are women, who must, as the primary family caretakers and producers of food, shoulder the burden of tilling the land, grinding grain, carrying water and cooking. This is not an easy burden. In Kenya, women can burn up to 85% of their daily calorie intake just by fetching water. Yet some 75% of the world's women cannot get bank loans because they have unpaid or insecure jobs and are not entitled to property ownership. This is one reason why women comprise more than 50% of the world's population but own only 1% of the world's wealth (UNDP, 2010).

According to UNDP (2010), equality between men and women is more than a matter of social justice; it is a fundamental human right. However, gender equality also makes good economic sense. When women have equal access to education and go on to participate fully in business and economic decision-making, they become a key driving force against poverty. Women with equal rights are better educated, healthier, and have greater access to land, jobs and financial resources. Their increased earning power in turn raises household incomes.

By enhancing women's control over decision-making in the household, gender equality also translates into better prospects and greater well-being of children, reducing poverty of future generations. Gender equality and women's empowerment are central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. While there are defined trends in gender equality; there are still many areas of concern. Girls account for the majority of children not attending school, almost two-thirds of women in the developing world work in the informal sector or as unpaid workers in the home. Despite greater political participation, women are still outnumbered four-to-one in legislatures around the world (UNDP, 2010).

According to Kimani and Kombo (2010), the commitment of the Kenyan government to eradicate poverty is manifest in its current development strategies as demonstrated with efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, especially goal number one, regarding the eradication of poverty to less than 30% of the Kenyans by 2015 and the Kenya vision 2030.

However, the reality on the ground indicates that despite Government and non-Governmental interventions, the increase in the number of the poor both in rural and urban Kenya has been worrying. Creates a need to intensify poverty reduction efforts in planning and programming, especially as regards human resource development, health, employment, physical infrastructures, agriculture, rural development, trade, public safety, law and order, all of which are instrumental in scaling up the development process and poverty eradication. Moreover, sustainable poverty reduction strategies must engage both women and men as actors and beneficiaries (Kimani and Kombo, 2010).

Women Groups in Poverty Reduction

According to Kabeer (2003), the United Nations Millennium Summit, in which 189 governments were represented, committed to taking collective responsibility for halving poverty by 2015. The millennium declaration laid down some key development goals framed to reflect its fundamental values. Along with the reduction of poverty and hunger, this included commitments to the promotion of human development, environmental sustainability and development partners. In addition, they included an explicit commitment to gender equality as an end in itself where no individual or nation should be denied the opportunity for benefiting from development.

The equality rights and the opportunities of women and men must be assured. Since women continue to be perceived primarily in terms of their reproductive roles, there is no explicit mention of gender inequality to millennium development goals and poverty eradication. Indeed, gender equality largely appears in the millennium development goal in relation to health and education. Women's economic agency as a force for poverty reduction continues to be overlooked in the policy discourse. It is because of this that the researcher saw the need for the inclusion of gender equality in relation to the participation of women groups in poverty reduction (Kabeer, 2003).

Theoretical Framework

According to Hammond (2010), a system consists of sub-systems, closed and open systems, systems

boundaries, feedback and system balance (homeostasis). This is was helpful in understanding the complex interactive nature of community development as systems. Hammond perceived community development as an interactive entity. Community development can refer to the general community, its institutions, structures and activities. Larger systems include donors, NGOs and government.

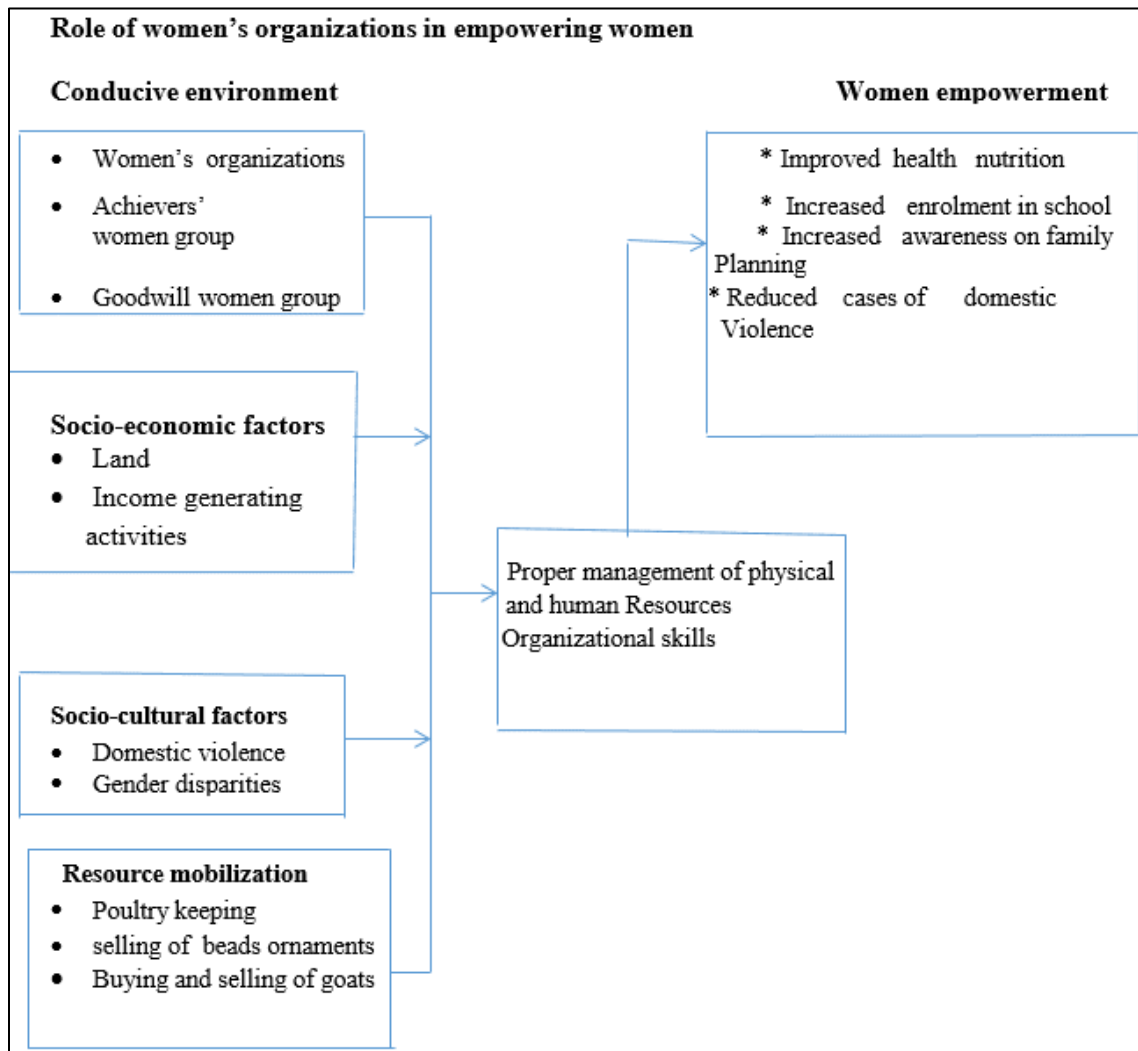
It was emphatic that a system is defined by a sort of boundary (an imaginary line) that determines the internal and external activities of a system. In this study, a system referred to Kajiado County. It is within this geographical area that exists a cluster of

women groups. The women’s group activities, institutions' policies and procedures form the sub-systems.

These must be intertwined to give one whole towards achieving the organizational goals. Inclusive of this is the "entropy" a force or tendency which is present in all systems. It exists in monitoring the balance, between the internal and external systems hence homeostasis. (Little, 1970) describes this in a term, cybernetics (control, regulations mechanisms found within a system). This was used by Greeks in underscoring the necessity of a working system.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



METHODOLOGY

The primary and secondary data were used in the study. The primary data was collected using questionnaires. A sample of 20 participants was drawn from a target population of 500 members of women organizations in Kajiado County. The validity of the questionnaire was ascertained through consulting with the research supervisors on the content and the data collection tool.

The reliability of the questionnaire was attained by conducting a pilot study where two women from Kajiado County who are involved. The data collected was analysed through processes that included organizing, categorizing and synthesizing. The data was coded for subsequent interpretations.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Rate of Response

The study had a response rate of 98% whereby 488 questionnaires were returned out of the 500 questionnaires that were distributed. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of above 70% is considered to be a very good response.

The high response rate was attributed to the data collection procedures, where the researcher pre-notified the potential participants of the intended survey and the questionnaires were self-administered.

Marital Status of the Respondent

The findings indicated that most of the respondents (59%) were married. This implies there were more married women in women's organizations. This meant that men encouraged their wives to join women's organizations by giving financial support to empower themselves economically and socially

Main Occupation of the Respondents

The findings indicated that the majority of women were in business; the second significant number of them were farmers, with a few housewives and a very small number indicating that they were salaried. This implies that the majority of the respondents were businesswomen who participated in women's organizations to boost their capital and also housewives who struggle to empower themselves economically.

Interviewed respondents claimed that they have children ranging from 4-6 and mostly all are in school. This may be a factor that encourages most women to participate in women organizations to source school fees for their school going children. This was further evidenced when the majority indicated that they both (with husband) assist each other in paying the school fees.

Gender Policy Influence on Women Empowerment

Attendance of Any Leaders' Meetings

The study findings show that the majority of the respondents (67%) indicated that in any leaders meeting at least there is a member from the organization attending at all levels. This implies that leaders' meetings are very crucial in providing information and therefore attendance by any member is very important so that they can come and teach others on arising issues that may be of importance to the group.

The majority of the respondents indicated that they do propose as a group the agenda to be tabled by their representatives and that during the meetings members are majorly involved in agenda formulation.

Table 1: Attendance of Any Leaders' Meetings

Level	Mean (%)	Standard deviation
Sub-locational	70.08	4.051
Locational	67.23	5.219
Divisional	71.03	3.902
District	68.33	5.190

Participation in the Last Poverty Reduction Programme

The findings showed that the majority of the respondents (68%) indicated that there was no member in their group who participated in the last Poverty Reduction programme at any level. When further interviewed if they have any link/collaboration with any other women associations, a majority indicated that they have collaboration but at locational/divisional level.

This confirms earlier findings that group members attend most of the locational/divisional meetings, therefore, establishing networks that result in women empowerment. Gender roles and stereotypes sometimes interfered with their work.

Income Generating Activities and Empowerment of Women

The findings showed that the majority of the respondents get household income from cash from labour activities, while a smaller number indicated cash from their husbands, others get income from the sale of farm produce with only a few indicating they get income from other sources such as extra money from the businesses they operate.

Interviewed participants claimed that their husbands engage in self-employment activities, followed by those who indicated that they are farmers with only a few indicating that their husbands are salaried. This implies that most of the women in women's organizations had husbands who were self-employed and therefore their wives join organizations to help them get daily bread for their children.

According to Asami (2010), the activities by women groups of Emuhaya, in Kakamega County have positively impacted their living standards through economic empowerment. The women are now able to acquire basic needs such as food, education, medication, housing, including psychological fulfilment; they have also acquired skills such as farming, tailoring, weaving and basketry and making beads ornaments.

Impact on Socio-Economic Status

The findings of the study demonstrated that findings majority of the respondents (89%) indicated that their organizations have positively impacted their socio-economic status, while (11%) indicated that their organizations have not positively impacted their socio-economic status. This implies that women's organizations are very crucial in the socio-economic development of women in the society. In particular, the organizations have benefited their families to a very high extent through enhancing access to school fees, nutrition, hospital and farming, including capital for their businesses. A study by Kipkurui (2003) conducted in Kericho Municipality concurs that women's organizations enable women to participate in income generating activities which result in women empowerment economically.

Awareness in Ownership Rights and Women's Empowerment

The findings of the study indicated that a majority of the respondents (54%) do not own assets such as business premises and farm equipment. Those who indicated that they do not own assets of their own gave reasons such as husbands being the overall in ownership and that they lack money to buy. This implies that the culture gives a husband an upper hand bought them to control all the assets in the homestead.

Most respondents indicated that the land they live on belongs to their husbands and they lacked control over its use. Further majority also indicated that they do not attend meetings regularly because they are engaged in some other activities like taking care of young children at home; taking care of farm activities and occasionally their husbands do not allow them to attend meetings especially the long-distance meetings.

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Resource Mobilization and Women Empowerment

The findings revealed that most of the respondents (44%) do not earn income indicating that the profits accruing from the organizations are re-invested; those who claimed that they get income said that

they use it to buy food and meet children needs such as school fees and medical bills.

The findings concur with Asami (2010) who established that the activities and projects of the women groups raised the living standards of the people in different ways including raising fees for children and meeting their basic needs such as food, shelter and medication

CONCLUSION

Most women's organizations creating awareness in ownership rights to empower women do not own assets of their own and believe that the land they live in belongs to their husbands and that they are in control over it. A majority of women indicated that their groups are represented in leaders' meetings at all levels; and that they participate in poverty reduction programmes.

Most of the organizations generate income through activities such as the sale of farm produce, cash from labour activities and cash from their husbands. Besides, mobilization of resources to empower women through income from the group projects, raise their living standards through activities and projects of the women groups and also provide psychological fulfilment through the sense of belonging to specific groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that leaders establish women's councils through which the women can participate in leadership matters; which will then empower those regarding organizational matters and make them feel that they are part of agenda formulation and decision making. The study also recommended that men should be sensitized to influence their wives to join women's organization groups. This will help them focus on progress and improve the living standards of their families.

Furthermore, the study recommended that the government of Kajiado County should fund women's organization groups in Kajiado County to enable them to invest more in income generating activities and projects to empower themselves; and stabilize their families. Besides, women organizations in the county should collaborate with others from other Counties so as to exchange ideas

on similar projects and discuss further advancements concerning their income generating activities and projects. Future research studies on the same subject should be focused on counties other than Kajiado, for the purpose of comparing and generalizing the findings.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The first and second authors participated in the research process from research conception to the development of research tools, data collection, analysis and writing of the research report.

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