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**Involvement of Men and Women and Poverty Reduction in Hunger Stricken
Regions. A Critical Literature Review**



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Involvement of Men and Women and Poverty Reduction in Hunger Stricken Regions. A Critical Literature Review

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Abstract

Purpose: Gender inclusiveness in poverty eradication has been constantly emphasized. The Beijing Platform for Action of 1995 made a commitment to 'promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming gender perspective in the monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes. The overall objective of this study was to examine involvement of men and women and poverty reduction in hunger stricken regions. A critical literature review

Methodology: The paper used a desk study review methodology where relevant empirical literature was reviewed to identify main themes and to extract knowledge gaps.

Findings: The study concluded that the anti-poverty projects have had a positive effect on their lives as they have been able to get soft loans to cater for their needs and discipline required to save for future has been instilled in them. The projects have also helped to strengthen the members' social ties and have enabled them to look after the less fortunate and vulnerable groups in the hunger stricken areas in the Sub-Saharan Africa.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: This study recommended that that the sponsors and the management of the projects should look for more ways of attracting the involvement of men in the projects since it seems they are apathetic to these income generating projects thus leaving it to women who form the bulk of the members. They should come up with men friendly strategies in order to pull more men to these poverty reduction initiatives and make them more representative and all inclusive. They should also strive to erase the notion that such empowerment projects as those in hunger stricken areas target women alone. Empowerment without addressing the burden of domestic chores on women may not achieve much in fighting poverty affecting them.

Keywords: *Influence, Involvement, Men and Women, Poverty Reduction, Hunger Stricken, Regions.*

INTRODUCTION

The success or failure of any anti-poverty programme depends on how best it captures gender differences among other interests in its poverty analysis, design, and implementation, monitoring and evaluating systems. According to Brady (2018,), poverty analyses, however, have concentrated on the population below and above the poverty line rather than addressing social differences like gender. Such analyses perpetuate gender disparity in poverty and lead to gender neutral solutions. Gender mainstreaming as a gender equality strategy was adopted at the Fourth World Conference of Women in 1995, in Beijing, and among the critical areas identified as in need of mainstreaming was poverty alleviation. It called for gender analysis to be done before undertaking development policies and programmes (United Nations, 2015).

This conference nonetheless, from the outset, made it clear that poverty affected women more than men, and called for sound economic policies to address this. Some studies have contested the argument on feminization of poverty while others have supported it as a social fact (Chen,2015). This study argues that women are more vulnerable to poverty than men due to inequalities created between them and men in ownership and control of productive resources and assets. It is this state of inequality that gender mainstreaming seeks to address. Gender mainstreaming in a development project should start at the very conception of the project and should be an integral component of every level of the project. According to Islam (2018), the OSCE programmes serve as an example.

These programmes insist on including both men and women in the project management and the team members are also made to understand and respond to different gender needs in the host country and field operations. This acts as a pointer to what is expected in the entire programme; that gender interests are as important in outcome as in the design and implementation of any anti-poverty programme. In the implementation phase, a gender sensitive approach seeks to ensure equality in participation of women and men in development. A review of ACCESS, a five year empowerment programme funded by AusAID in Indonesia, indicated a very consistent relationship between the indicators for project implementation procedures and those for impact, suggesting that the procedures prescribed for implementing and monitoring a project have greatest influence on impact (Kitheka, 2016).

To ensure that a project is on course in addressing gender interests, the indicators used for monitoring it should be gender sensitive. European Commission projects, use an approach called Results Oriented Monitoring in which gender assessment of the project is compulsory (Macharia, 2019). Such monitoring ensures equity in the mobilization of human and other resources and therefore a high likelihood of the projects and programmes being beneficial to men and women, boys and girls. Care should however be taken to ensure that the project work does not overburden women who already have the household and mothering responsibilities.

It is perhaps due to realization of this that a report on supporting growth oriented women entrepreneurs in Uganda, calls for gender monitoring of all MSEs and development initiatives by

the government to track the impact of government and donor funded projects on women (Stevenson and St-Onge,2016). This kind of monitoring would help to explain why Ugandan women entrepreneurs are underrepresented nationally, despite Uganda being a highly entrepreneurial nation as shown by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report (Walter et al., 2016). Lack of effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks is a factor that has made gender mainstreaming a continuous challenge both at the national and community levels in Kenya (RoK, 2019). According to SID (2019), Vision 2030, Kenya's development blueprint covering the period 2008-2030 in spite of being very categorical on mainstreaming gender into all government policies and programmes lacks a proper evaluation mechanism.

This is caused, in part, by lack of clear gender benchmarks and indicators in the implementation of the sectoral projects. The government, in its District Development Reports has, however, come up with ways of developing gender benchmarks for development (Okollo, 2022), but gender imbalances are still clearly visible. At the completion of a project, it should again be evaluated with gender in mind. This is a very important stage of a project cycle since it helps expose the success level of a project and where improvements are needed. One of the undoubted strengths of Oportunidades, which is one of the most successful anti-poverty programmes in Latin America, is that it is subject to regular evaluations, including by outside bodies, and has been responsive to suggestions for improvements and modifications (Molyneux, 2016). Since proper evaluation is mandatory for the success of any project since a project is as good as the results of its evaluation, this study aimed at exploring whether and to what extent gender inclusiveness has been addressed in the entire project cycles of the projects to be studied in hunger stricken regions.

Promoting gender equality is essential for any effective development strategy. Effective poverty reduction programmes should involve both men and women and ensure that all benefit equally (World Bank, 2015). This study, however, argues that women empowerment should be part of these programmes since women are more vulnerable to poverty than men. Women are weighed down by the reproductive roles and therefore unable, due to time constraints to fully participate in development programmes (Siringi, 2021).

Having observed this in their gender analysis, some programmes have succeeded in creating a level of empowerment for women both in the household and at community levels. Mainstreaming is sometimes therefore confused with women's empowerment since most of the benefits of gender mainstreaming seem to accrue to women for in most cases they suffer more from the effects of poverty than men. Microcredit programmes have been one effective method of empowering women to participate in development. These programmes whose majority clients are women, have helped them to some extent, be economically independent and manage household budgets without necessarily relying on their husbands or male figures. Though this sometimes creates conflicts in families, it has been an effective way of pulling women, especially single mothers out of poverty and has significant positive effect on household incomes and child schooling (Morrison et al., 2017). A study of Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia, a microfinance institution aimed at poverty reduction,

modelled on the principles of the very successful Grameen Bank for instance, showed that women constituted a majority of the beneficiaries, were diligent in investing their funds and using them to improve their standards of living. They were also noted to be more willing to be freed from the poverty trap (Nair, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Despite efforts by the government, non-governmental, faith and community-based organizations to fight hunger among the poor; hunger levels in many Saharan regions are increasing. Developing countries are experiencing rapid urbanization, which may lead to increase in poverty in the informal settlements within the urban settlements if all dimensions of poverty, gender included, are not recognized and fully addressed in anti-poverty programmes adopted. This study set out to assess whether involving men and women in projects leads to poverty reduction in hunger stricken regions.

Objective of the Study

The overall objective of this study was to examine influence of involvement of men and women and poverty reduction in hunger stricken regions. A critical literature review.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will benefit the residents of hunger stricken regions by pointing out to them their role in poverty reduction and the need for their participation in all cycles of the projects aimed at improving their welfare. The study will also contribute to the body of knowledge in respect to poverty reduction in the informal settlements and will guide policies on gender mainstreaming in all anti-poverty project cycles in hunger stricken regions by the government and other development agencies.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

This study benefited from strain theory proposed by Merton (1938).

Strain Theory

Strain theory formed the foundational framework for this study. The strain theory was postulated by Merton (1938), who argues that a discord between goals and means results in disfunctionality. To the researcher, people's social goals were material wealth and success. However, there was inequality in achieving these goals, hence bringing about strain in people between the goals and the legally accepted means to achieve them. According to Agnew (1992), people experience strain after they have failed to achieve what that society has set as a success. He points out that in many societies, one is only considered to be successful if he or she makes a lot of money and enjoys fame. When one fails to achieve this feat, he or she will experience so much strain which will later result in frustration and stress.

Strain theory presupposes that social factors such as lack of gender mainstreaming quality education and lack of income may put pressure on individual persons and force them to commit crime (Burton Jr & Cullen, 1992). Merton first proposed the idea of strain theory in 1930s. According to the classic strain theories, disadvantaged social groups are driven to crime due to their inability to meet the common aspirations that they have with other social groups. For instance, individuals with income that fall below the poverty line are likely to fail to achieve the common socially accepted ambitions by using legal means. Consequently, they have to take a path of criminality to meet these goals.

Criminologists Richard Rosenfeld and Steven Messner would later rephrase Merton's theory to form the general strain theory (Broidy, 2001). They added explanations for middle-class delinquencies and address the inconsistencies that exist when people hold expectations that are different from the available means of fulfilling them. Under the general strain theory, strain-derived crime emphasizes the role of emotion in pushing individuals to criminality. People with a lot of money and large houses are well respected by the members of society and every one compares themselves with them. Youth experience stress after losing a job or staying unemployed for a long time (Hay & Evans, 2006). Unemployment will automatically lead to poverty. Due to unemployment, many youths fail to meet their needs through legal activities, forcing them to turn to illegal income activities to achieve their goals. Merton's theory focused more on those who are poor as the only ones predisposed to criminality. However, this might not be the case in the contemporary world because those with money and power and are already considered being successful continue to experience strain. Robinson (2005), argues that criminality is widespread among the elites like CEOs and CFOs, who have not had enough but continue striving for more through the use of both legitimate and illegitimate means. Robinson (2005), concludes that this could be the reason why corporate crimes are on the increase in the United States.

Empirical Review

Ewesian (2021), conducted a study to evaluate how strategic preparation and strategic control affected the Hunger Safety Program's performance in Turkana County. The study used a cross-sectional survey design and gathered data from the agencies in charge of coordination and payments. The informants for the study were gathered through a census conducted by the Equity Bank in Turkana County and the National Disaster Management Authority. A sample size of 40 respondents was used, all of whom belonged to the middle and senior levels of management, as determined by primary data collected via standardized questionnaires. This analysis used material to construct validity, while the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure the testing instrument's reliability, yielding a value of 0.73. Elements of descriptive statistics and inferential analyses were applied in the examination of the survey data. Whereas descriptive statistics included percentiles, frequency, standard deviation, and mean, the inferential statistics was made up of different approaches including analysis of Pearson's correlation, factor analysis, and multiple regression. The results of the study showed that strategic planning has an impact on the success of

HSNP. However, strategic partnership, strategic control, and technology adoption had no impact on the program's performance. To ensure that Turkana County experience sustainable and successful hunger safety net program, the study recommended that the National Drought Management Authority and Equity Bank review and improve their strategic influence, strategic partnership, and technology adoption. The study concluded that affordable interest rates for mortgages help to improve the performance of the bank. The study used a cross-sectional survey design presenting a methodological gap as our study will use desktop review design.

Uthutu (2018), conducted a study on the extent to which family based factors influenced school attendance among children aged three-to-eight years. The research employed a mixed research method approach which involved both qualitative and quantitative methods. Descriptive survey design was used. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Questionnaires were administered to teachers while interview schedules were used to collect data from parents. Pilot study was conducted in four schools to test the validity and reliability of the instruments. Qualitative data analysis was done through thematic analysis while quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. The data were presented in bar graphs, charts and tables. Findings revealed that parental care, food insecurity, parental attitudes and family violence influenced school attendance among children aged three-to- eight years. The study concludes that there is a direct relationship between the family based factors and the rate of school attendance of three- to- eight years old. The study recommended that the School committees consider the means by which parents/care givers could have access to school information from a range of sources such as holding class based meetings and telephone Help lines. The study presented a methodological gap as it utilized descriptive research design while our study will utilize a desktop review approach.

Mbunge (2017), conducted a study that evaluated impacts of home grown school meals programme to the access, retention and performance of pupils in primary schools in Waita Zone; assess issues and challenges experienced in the management of Home Grown School Meals Programme in the Zone; identify strategies that can be employed to make the programme more effective and efficient to the schools. The study employed descriptive research design with qualitative and quantitative techniques of data collection. The study established the programme had positive impact on access and retention, but little impact on performance. Moreover, the study found that the biggest challenges included rising of food costs, insufficient funds and lack of procurement and management skills. The study also established that the class of drop-outs were higher before but the rates were checked after the introduction of HGSM. The study presented a conceptual gap as it focused on evaluated impacts of home grown school meals programme to the access, retention and performance of pupils in primary schools in Waita Zone; assess issues and challenges experienced in the management of Home Grown School Meals Programme in the Zone; identify strategies that can be employed to make the programme more effective and efficient to the

schools while our study will focus on examining influence of involvement of men and women and poverty reduction in hunger stricken regions.

Kitivi (2014), conducted a study to establish the influence of stakeholders' involvement, staff competencies, monitoring and evaluation, as well as availability of resources in the performance of donor funded projects. The respondents included Project managers, administrators, ICT personnel, finance officers, and other staffs. The 75 respondents in the survey filled questionnaires to allow for collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. The data collected was classified and tabulated in a systematic manner. Data analysis was done by use of descriptive tools. In addition a statistical package for social science (SPSS) was used to speed up data analysis process. The data was presented by use of frequency distribution tables. The major findings of the study revealed that stakeholder's involvement, staff competencies, monitoring and evaluation, as well as availability of resources all greatly influenced the performance of the donor funded projects. The study however presented a conceptual gap as it focused on influence of stakeholders' involvement, staff competencies, monitoring and evaluation, as well as availability of resources in the performance of donor funded projects while our study will focus on influence of involvement of men and women and poverty reduction in hunger stricken regions.

Muturi (2012), conducted a study that examined the performance of selected Micro finance Institutions in Nairobi especially as relates to their provision of credit to SMEs. The study realized that MFIs have a huge role to play towards poverty alleviation through credit accessibility to SMEs. Their performance was, however, affected by factors such as limited financial resources, delinquent loans, and loans lack of a management information system, wide geographical coverage, poor research and development department, among other factors. Sustainability was also found to be a thorny issue. Achievement of sustainability was found to be constrained by factors such as inadequate savings by clients, huge operating costs, and provision of non-financial services, legal constraints, and subsidized interest rates, among others. The study found out that the regression results were not significant at 5percent level of significance. However, there was positive correlation between the dependent variable (performance) and loan amounts, repayment rate and sustainability. Cost per unit of currency lent was negatively correlated to performance. The study however presented a geographical gap as it focused on Nairobi in Kenya while our study will focus on hunger stricken region in Sub Saharan regions.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop literature review method (desk study). This involved an in-depth review of studies related to influence of involvement of men and women and poverty reduction in hunger stricken regions. Three sorting stages were implemented on the subject under study in order to determine the viability of the subject for research. This is the first stage that comprised the initial identification of all articles that were based on influence of involvement of men and women and poverty reduction in hunger stricken regions. The search was done generally by searching the

articles in the article title, abstract, keywords. A second search involved fully available publications on the subject on influence of involvement of men and women and poverty reduction in hunger stricken regions. The third step involved the selection of fully accessible publications. Reduction of the literature to only fully accessible publications yielded specificity and allowed the researcher to focus on the articles that related to influence of involvement of men and women and poverty reduction in hunger stricken regions which was split into top key words. After an in- depth search into the top key words (influence, involvement, men and women, poverty reduction, hunger stricken, regions), the researcher arrived at 5 articles that were suitable for analysis. This were findings from:

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SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study concluded that the anti-poverty projects have had a positive effect on their lives as they have been able to get soft loans to cater for their needs and discipline required to save for future has been instilled in them. The projects have also helped to strengthen the members' social ties and have enabled them to look after the less fortunate and vulnerable groups in the hunger stricken areas in the Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition to that, they have been able to meet their basic needs and change the social outlook of the slums by being responsible and responsive to new ideas and initiatives that bring economic empowerment to them individually and as a group thus reducing poverty.

Recommendations

This study recommended that that the sponsors and the management of the projects should look for more ways of attracting the involvement of men in the projects since it seems they are apathetic to these income generating projects thus leaving it to women who form the bulk of the members. They should come up with men friendly strategies in order to pull more men to these poverty reduction initiatives and make them more representative and all inclusive. They should also strive to erase the notion that such empowerment projects as those in hunger stricken areas target women alone. Empowerment without addressing the burden of domestic chores on women may not achieve much in fighting poverty affecting them. It is therefore recommended that the project sponsors should look into the possibility of free child care programmes to go hand in hand with the projects. This would help to free women thus increasing their time for project activities and reducing their poverty in the long run.

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