

THE ROLE OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF RWANDA; A CASE OF IBYIRINGIRO COOPERATIVE IN MUSANZE DISTRICT

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Abstract: Woman is the heart of human existence on this planet. She plays an important role in the society, but her importance and roles are underestimated all over the world. In the 21st; century majority of poor women are home makers. The elementary reason for this suffering is illiteracy and this creates a hindrance for the women to earn their livelihood. Illiteracy along with social orthodoxy not only adds to the problem but makes it impossible for the women to work outside. The general objective of this study is to assess the role of women participation on socio-economic development of Rwanda. The study used descriptive research design. This method aims at collecting data from a sample and later generalizes the findings to the target population in relation to the researcher's interest. The target population under this study consists of 382 women who are members of Ibyiringiro cooperative in Musanze District. The sample size of this study is 196 women memembwes of Ibyiringiro cooperative. The views women members of Ibyiringiro cooperative in Musanze District on how they appreciate the participation in decision on socio-economic development of Rwanda. Their perception shows that 100% they appreciated their participation on executive organs, legislative organs and judiciary organs. The perception of respondents the role of women participation in community development programs on socio-economic development of Rwanda. women perception shows that 100% of women participate and get involved in the activities of Vision 2020 Umurenge Program, get involved in Girinka Munyarwanda interventions, involved in cooperatives and community development associations, involved in savings and credit cooperatives, involved in savings and credit cooperatives and get involved in community work known as umuganda. Based on the outcomes of the study, the role of women participation on socio-economic development of ibyiringiro cooperative in musanze is significant. Women's participation in various forums and committees is well recognized in Musanze District, especially in Ibyiringiro cooperative in Musanze District. Rwanda's Constitution stipulates an affirmative action policy for women's representation which has been instrumental for increased share of women in politics and decision-making. However the affirmative action policy needs to be strengthened at the lower structures of government. It is recommended that the Government explore the possibility of enforcing an affirmative action policy in training, entry into tertiary education and other areas relevant for women's economic empowerment.

1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Evolution of 'Women in Development' to 'Gender and Development' In the 1970s, research on African farmers noted that, far from being gender neutral, development was gender blind and could harm women. Out of this realization emerged the Women in Development (WID) approach, which constructed the problem of development as being women's exclusion from a benign process. Women's subordination was seen as having its roots in their exclusion from the market sphere and their limited access to, and control, over resources. The key was then to place women 'in' development by legislatively trying to limit discrimination and by promoting their involvement in education and employment. The Women in Development (WID) approach led to resources being targeted at women and made particularly women's significant

productive or income generating contribution, more visible. Their reproductive contribution was less well emphasized. While Women in Development (WID) advocated for greater gender equality, it did not tackle the real structural problem: the unequal gender roles and relations that are at the basis of gender subordination and women's exclusion. This approach also focused on what have been termed practical gender needs, such as providing better access to water, which would reduce the amount of time women and girls must spend in domestic activities and thus allow them more time for education or employment. There was no questioning why collecting water has been constructed as a female responsibility, or why improved access to water is a need of women and girls only (Chappell, L., & Waylen, G, 2013).

Rwanda's recent history has seen a variety of government and non-government programs that have helped increase women's political participation, awareness of rights and access to finance, and women's involvement in off-farm activities and other forms of paid work, particularly in rural areas. Rwanda makes the following commitments to increase the economic participation of women: Achieve gender parity in financial inclusion by 2030. To close the existing gap, the country pledges to work to increase access to financial services for women as well as improve use of available financial products. Rwanda also commits to achieve gender parity in waged non-farm employment. Currently, women account for just over a quarter of all off-farm jobs, and their transition from agriculture is slower than that of men. As part of this effort, Rwanda intended to triple the number of girls enrolled in Technical and Vocational Training by the year 2020. Finally, Rwanda commits to bridge the digital divide between men and women and to attain parity in ICT usage by the year 2020. Currently, only 35 per cent of women own mobile phones compared to 49 per cent of men. Women are also under-represented as ICT graduates in higher education (MIGEPROF, 2012).

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Woman is the heart of human existence on this planet. She plays an important role in the society, but her importance and roles are underestimated all over the world. In the 21st; century majority of poor women are home makers. The elementary reason for this suffering is illiteracy and this creates a hindrance for the women to earn their livelihood. Illiteracy along with social orthodoxy not only adds to the problem but makes it impossible for the women to work outside. According to all these views women are supposed to remain at home, where they get very little exposure. Women live in abject conditions, but times are changing fast and there is a ray of hope. It has been identified that it is necessary to educate the women for empowering and involve them in all corners and sides of the country's life. Many Non-government and government agencies are both working for bringing the women out of this condition. They are not only encouraging women's employment but also helping them to save and get financial support, a prerequisite for getting equal status in the society (Celis et al, 2008).

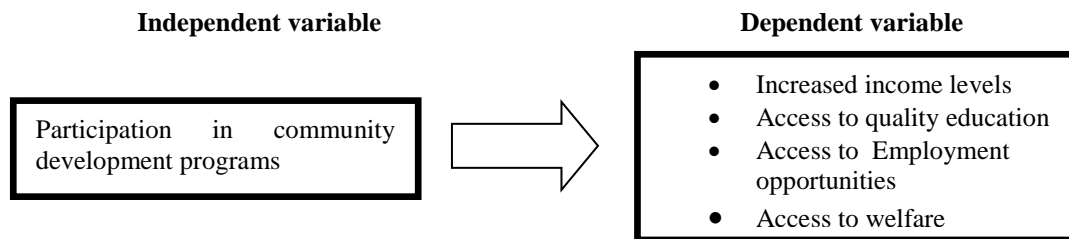
The contribution of women to the progress of the society cannot be put aside. This range from the economic growth like marketing, weaving, manufactured products and also household affairs. The society however did pay keen attention to the great contribution of women to the growth of the society and this has gone a long way to dampen their morals and make their effort fruitless. Vladimir Lenin (2007) asserts the importance of women in the society and says "We cannot go forward without Women", in spite of the efforts of women to strive to the higher place in the society, they are still at great disadvantage and seen as inferior by their male counter parts. The African society believes that, no matter how well a woman works, she can't be considered as being equal to a man, because a man is stronger physically than a woman (Mamah, 2015).

There is a bidirectional relationship between socio-economic development and women's participation and empowerment defined as improving the ability of women to access the constituents of development in particular health, education, earning opportunities, rights, and political participation. In one direction, development alone can play a major role in driving down inequality between men and women; in the other direction, continuing discrimination against women can, as it has been forcefully argued, hinder development. Their empowerment can, in other words, accelerate development (Duflo, 2012). Therefore; it is against this background that the researcher wants to assess the role of women on socio economic development of Rwanda taking the case of Ibyiringiro Cooperative located in Musanze district in Shingiro sector

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the role of women participation in community development programs on socio-economic development of Rwanda

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



5. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study used descriptive research design. This method aims at collecting data from a sample and later generalizes the findings to the target population in relation to the researcher's interest. The descriptive research design was suitable for this study because it highlights the relationship between the study variables.

6. POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The target population is the total group of individuals from which the sample might be drawn. The target population is the entire population, or group, that a researcher is interested in researching and analyzing. The target population under this study consists of 382 women who are members of Ibyiringiro cooperative in Musanze District.

7. SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

A sample is the group of people who take part in the investigation or study. Sampling procedure is the process of selecting a specific number of objects to form respondents for study (Ngulube, 2015). The data was collected from all the individuals a representative sample.

To achieve the objectives of this study a sample size was calculated using the Slovin's formula. The Slovin's formula states that: $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$, where **n** is the sample size, **N** is the population size, and **e** is the level of precision, the confidence level is 91% and the margin error of 0.05. Therefore the sample will equal to $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} = n = \frac{382}{1+382(0.05)^2} = 195, 8 = 196$ respondents

8. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Data was collected from the identified respondents using questionnaires that were distributed by the researcher. For those who can read, they were issued with the questionnaires which the researcher later was collected once they were completed. For those who could not read, the researcher was embrace a researcher assisted questionnaire collection mode where the researcher was asked respondents the formulated questions in the questionnaire in the order in which they was listed and recorded the replies in the spaces meant for the same.

9. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: The role of women participation in community development programs on socio-economic development of Rwanda

Statements	SD	D	UN	A	SA
In Rwanda; women actively participate and get involved in the activities of Vision 2020 Umurenge Program	-	-	-	5%	95%
In Rwanda; women actively participate and get involved in Girinka Munyarwanda interventions	-	-	-	-	100%
In Rwanda; women actively participate and get involved in Ubudehe Program	-	-	-	-	100%
In Rwanda; women are actively involved in cooperatives and community development associations	-	-	-	12%	88%
In Rwanda; women are actively involved in savings and credit cooperatives	-	-	-	-	100%
In Rwanda; women are actively involved in savings and credit cooperatives	-	-	-	-	100%
In Rwanda; women get involved in community work known as umuganda	-	-	-	3%	97%

The government of Rwanda is highly committed to the cause of gender equality and women's empowerment as transpired in the June 2003 national constitution, the national gender policy, the national gender machineries, the ratification of CEDAW, implementation of the Beijing platform of action (PFA), the vision 2020 and the development of the economic development and poverty reduction strategy (EDPRS), which highlight gender as cross cutting issue.

The above Table 4.5, shown the perception of respondents the role of women participation in community development programs on socio-economic development of Rwanda. women perception shows that 100% of women participate and get involved in the activities of Vision 2020 Umurenge Program, get involved in Girinka Munyarwanda interventions, involved in cooperatives and community development associations, involved in savings and credit cooperatives, involved in savings and credit cooperatives and get involved in community work known as umuganda.

In order to appreciate the progress Rwanda has made in mainstreaming gender in its development process, it is useful to consider the particular context of the country's recent historic traumatic experience of genocide. From 1994, Rwanda's post conflict experience has changed many social relations, including the gender ones, due to the unique country context. The 1994 genocide left behind unprecedented distortions in social relations and the exacerbated the already existing gender imbalances and inequalities. This is illustrated by the fact that today, 35% of households in Rwanda are headed by women. Women performing non traditional roles such as decision making, managing financial resources, constructing houses and many others have characterized the post genocide roles of women period in Rwanda.

Two approaches have been adopted in order to achieve mission of MIGEPROF. Firstly, the integration of gender dimension into the development process and secondly, the empowerment of women. To achieve this mission, MIGEPROF has developed a National Gender Policy (NGP) which is a framework for the orientation of interventions to serve as a foundation of gender equality and equity. This Policy demonstrates the Government's commitment to address all forms of gender inequalities in Rwanda. It defines the institutional framework and the mechanisms through which gender equality/equity, policies and programmes are developed, implemented, monitored and evaluated.

Women's participation in economic activities has been measured, at national level, at 56.4% while men's participation is 43.6%². Out of the 56.4% of the economically active women, 55.8% had an occupation and 87.6% of them were involved in agricultural activities³. In terms of employment gender inequalities are illustrated as follows: in rural area 66.3% of women are employed while men are 49.7%⁴. In urban area women employed represent 53.5% while men are 60.9%⁵. It is worth mentioning that majority of women employed are under the category of supporting staff while a significant number of men occupy the key positions. Only 18% of well structured companies are run by women. A large number of them are in the informal sector, generally comprising small businesses. Concerning access to employment, the majority of women are employed as unskilled labourers, traders or craftsmen. The analysis of the type of employment shows that women compose the majority of the labour force in agriculture and animal husbandry (86% as compared to 61.5% for men)⁷ and that in towns, they are numerous in the unskilled occupations. It is estimated that up to 15.2% of women are paid either as temporary or permanent employees in rural areas, the majority of which are house helpers. In towns this figure is estimated to be 33.5%.

10. CONCLUSION

Based on the outcomes of the study, the role of women participation on socio-economic development of ibyiringiro cooperative in musanze. Women's participation in various forums and committees is well recognized in Musanze District, especially in Ibyiringiro cooperative in Musanze District. While it is important for women's empowerment, participation alone does not make women equal beneficiaries of resources. Rwanda's Constitution stipulates an affirmative action policy for women's representation which has been instrumental for increased share of women in politics and decision-making.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

-While the country has made tremendous achievements in policy development, legal reform and increased women's participation in decision-making, it must be recognized that these achievements, while they are very important, are not the end results in themselves. They are the means to advance gender equality and empowerment of women. Therefore it is recommended that the gender strategy for the coming years consider accelerating the achievement of gender equality outcomes at all economic and social development levels.

-The importance of women's participation in various forums and committees is well recognized. While it is important for women's empowerment in different cooperative, participation alone does not make women equal beneficiaries of resources. It better to have both gender in the same cooperative.

-Rwanda's Constitution stipulates an affirmative action policy for women's representation which has been instrumental for increased share of women in politics and decision-making. However the affirmative action policy needs to be strengthened at the lower structures of government. It is recommended that the Government explore the possibility of enforcing an affirmative action policy in training, entry into tertiary education and other areas relevant for women's economic empowerment.

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