

Gender Mainstreaming In Community Development Studies In Kenya

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Abstract: Community development helps individuals at the grassroots level come together for collective action to change their situation for the better. It focuses on economic, social and political aspects of communities. As community development seek to empower communities in finding solutions to their problems, it is linked to gender equality which seek to ensure that both women and men benefit equally from such solutions. Gender mainstreaming is therefore important in community development. It refers to the assessment of the consequences of any planned action, policy or initiative for women and men, in all fields and at all stages, before any decision is taken and throughout the entire process. However, unbalanced sectoral focus can only undermine gender mainstreaming. This paper sought to understand approaches used for gender mainstreaming and sectoral balance of gender mainstreaming in community development studies in Kenya for the last five years. It is guided by two specific objectives; to determine approaches used for gender mainstreaming in community development studies in Kenya, and to assess sectoral balance of gender mainstreaming in community development studies in Kenya.

Data was collected from secondary sources. Peer reviewed journal articles on community development in Kenya for the last five years were searched from three academic electronic databases; ERIC (7), Springer Link (10), and Science Direct (10). This search yielded 411 journal articles. Relevance, sector, and methodology were used to eliminate 384 articles narrowing down to 27 that were reviewed and analysed. Systematic review and synthesis were used to process selected studies.

The findings show that most of the studies in community development have focused on gender integration. Targeting and dialogue approaches have lagged behind. Gender integration, rather than being regarded as one of the approaches, have been confused with gender mainstreaming. On sectoral balancing, social, political and cultural sectors dominate community development studies. The environment and economic sectors have lagged behind. Few community development studies were able to combine many sectors adequately. Education and health under the social sector have been the most covered. Gender mainstreaming in community development in Kenya is not well understood. There is a bias towards gender mainstreaming in the social, political, and cultural sectors ignoring environment and economic sectors of community development.

Stakeholders in community development should raise awareness on gender mainstreaming and its different approaches of implementation. Community development scholars and practitioners should ensure gender mainstreaming is upheld in all sectors.

Keywords: Gender, Women, Men, Equality, Community development, Mainstreaming, Social, Economic, Cultural.

I. BACKGROUND

Community development is a process where people at the grassroots level come together for collective action to

change their situation for the better. This entails empowerment of community members to develop solutions for their problems. Community development range from small initiatives involving few individuals or groups in a community

to large programs encompassing broader community. Such programs focus on social, economic, cultural, environmental and political aspects of communities. The purpose of community development is to empower communities achieve participative democracy, rights, exploit economic opportunities, sustainable development, equality and social justice.

Gender mainstreaming refers to the assessment of the consequences of any planned action, policy or initiative for women and men, in all fields and at all stages, before any decision is taken and throughout the entire process (Shepard, 2015; United Nations, 1997). It can be traced back to the 1985 Third World Conference on Women that took place in Nairobi, Kenya. Gender mainstreaming also prominently featured in Beijing Platform for Action document from 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women that took place in Beijing, China. The principles of gender mainstreaming include prioritizing gender equality (True, 2010; Lombardo, 2005), incorporating gender in governance, policy and decision making (Shepard, 2015), promoting gender equality in conflict resolution and peace building efforts (Handrahan, 2004), changing institutional structures and culture to embrace gender equality (Bibbings, 2012), and gender sensitive budgeting (UNESCO, 2015). The main goal of gender mainstreaming is achieving gender equality in all spheres of life where women and men benefit equally from development programmes. The United Nations development community and many donors have particularly embraced gender mainstreaming policies in their programmes.

As community development seek to empower communities in finding solutions to their problems, it is linked to gender equality which seek to ensure that both women and men benefit equally from such solutions. Gender mainstreaming is therefore important in community development. It is a way of making sure that the issues and perspectives of both genders are an indispensable part of the structure, execution, supervision and assessment of policy initiatives and development programs. Gender mainstreaming is therefore not an end in itself but a framework for supporting gender equality.

II. PROBLEM OF FOCUS

There are three major approaches used in gender mainstreaming implementation; gender integration, targeting and dialogues on sensitive gender issues with stakeholders. Lack of clear understanding of gender mainstreaming have seen many practitioners and scholars focus on some approaches leaving out others. Moreover, gender mainstreaming is supposed to take place in all sectors of community development; economic, social, cultural, environmental and political spheres. Unbalanced sectoral focus can only undermine gender mainstreaming. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to understand approaches used for gender mainstreaming and sectoral balance of gender mainstreaming in community development studies in Kenya for the last five years. It is guided by two specific objectives; to determine approaches used for gender mainstreaming in community development studies in Kenya, and to assess

sectoral balance of gender mainstreaming in community development studies in Kenya.

III. METHODS

Data was collected from secondary sources. Peer reviewed journal articles on community development in Kenya for the last five years were searched from three academic electronic databases; ERIC, Springer Link, and Science Direct. This search yielded 411 journal articles. Relevance, sector, and methodology were used to eliminate 384 articles narrowing down to 27 that were reviewed and analyzed { ERIC (7/119), Springer Link (10/163), and Science Direct (10/129)}. Systematic review and synthesis were used to process selected studies. Gender mainstreaming approaches and sectoral focus were used in analysis and synthesis of selected studies. Three gender mainstreaming approaches namely integration, targeting, and dialogue were employed. Five major sectors of community development were used to classify selected studies. They include social, political, cultural, economic, and environmental sectors.

IV. ANALYSIS

The studies reviewed were 27 of which 19 (70.4%) used gender mainstreaming approaches. A high proportion of the studies reviewed 8 (29.6%) did not use any gender mainstreaming approaches. Among the studies that used gender mainstreaming approaches, majority of them 13 (68.4%) focused on integration approach of gender mainstreaming. Only 4 (21.1%) of the studies used targeting approach while 2 (10.5%) used dialogue approach in gender mainstreaming.

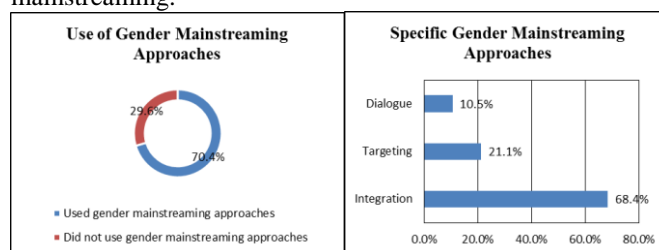


Figure 1

The studies reviewed covered multiple sectors in community development among them social, cultural, political, economic and environmental sectors. A study could combine a number of sectors. The most covered sector was social sector with 25 (92.6%) studies followed by political sector with 10 (37%) studies and economic sector with 7 (25.9%) studies. Environmental and cultural sectors lagged behind with 5 (18.5%) studies each. The results show that community development studies using gender mainstreaming approaches mostly covered social (89.5%), political (36.8%) and cultural (26.3%) sectors. Environmental (15.8%) and economic (21.1%) sectors lagged behind.

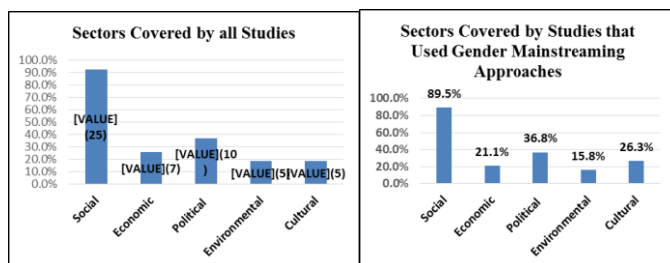


Figure 2

V. FINDINGS

The study by Crick, Eskander, Fankhauser and Diop (2018) was about how micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries have adapted to climate risks. It revealed that financial barriers have prevented firms from sustainable adaptation measures. Sustainable adaptation to climate variability builds resilience to climate change for SMEs. Public policy interventions can facilitate sustainable adaptation to climate risks of SMEs through support and a conducive business environment. This study demonstrates little in terms of gender mainstreaming. Only gender disaggregated data on ownership was collected and did not amount to much in the analysis.

Miedema, Haardörfer, Girard, and Yount (2018) focused on women's empowerment as an indicator of social change and a priority of the Sustainable Development Goals. The study provides a standardized measure of women's empowerment that can be applied to monitor women's empowerment cross-nationally in East Africa, and possibly beyond. This measure has three domains which include women's human or social assets, women's gendered attitudes and beliefs (intrinsic agency), and the extent of women's participation in household decision-making (instrumental agency). The scope of the study was narrow and clear, targets a specific group (married women aged 15-49 years), and targeted a specific issue (measures of women empowerment) as expected of a study using targeting gender mainstreaming approach.

Acey, Kisiangani, Ronoh, et al (2019) looked at the willingness to pay for access of safely managed sanitation services in low income neighborhoods. The willingness to pay was found to be significantly high for wealthier, younger customers and those with high water bills. The study had gender disaggregated data captured and analyzed but did not inform conclusions and recommendations of the study. Although many data collection methods were used in this study including qualitative and quantitative, gender perspective was missing from the onset.

Bennett, Chepogeno, Evandrou, Falkingham (2015) examined the protective role of social networks for older people in times of adversity such as conflict. The study revealed that enhancing formal local networks reduced the detrimental effects of the post-election violence for older people's wellbeing, whilst household environment and informal local and non-local networks did not influence the relationship. Supporting inclusive community organisations which are accessible to older people can be valuable in promoting the resilience of this population group. There was

gender disaggregated data collected but resulted into nothing in the analysis, discussion and conclusions of the study.

Izugbara, Egesa, and Okelo (2015) focused on notions of abortion safety. The study exposed a tension between lay and public health definitions of abortion safety. The study narrowed down to women treated for post-abortion complications. It targeted one issue; understanding abortion safety and dealt with it exhaustively.

Kane, Kok, and Ormel (2016) looked into community health workers empowerment experience using four dimensions of empowerment: meaningfulness, competence, self-determination and impact. The study revealed that community health workers empowering efforts are frustrated by lack/absence of control over their work environment, and the feelings of being unsupported, unappreciated, and undervalued. There was no gender perspective in the study despite it touching on empowerment and health.

Crocker, Shields, and Venkataramanan (2016) focused on training and capacity building for water, sanitation and hygiene policies, strategies and programs. It found that training and capacity building program resulted in learning of new skills, and improving their individual performance through application of advocacy, partnership, and supervision soft skills. This study did not have any gender disaggregated data captured or any gender analysis. It therefore missed an opportunity to analyze gendered perspectives of training and capacity building in water, sanitation and hygiene policies, strategies and programs.

Barasa, Molyneux, and English (2017) focused on priority setting and resource allocation practices in hospitals. Priority setting and resource allocation practices in hospitals were found to be influenced by inadequate financing level and poorly designed financing arrangements, limited hospital autonomy and decision space, and inadequate management and leadership capacity in the hospital. There was no gender disaggregated data captured and analysis despite there being a likelihood that priority setting and resource allocation in hospitals affected women and men differently.

McGiverna, Nzinga, and English (2017) examined implementation of quality improvement in health care systems. It revealed that participation in constructive practices gave network leaders pastoral status to then inscribe use of evidence and data into routine care, through championing, demonstrating, supporting and mentoring, with the support of a constellation of local champions. The study did not have any gender perspective in data gathering and analysis. It lost an opportunity to evaluate how pastoral leadership and relationships between women and men have promoted or hindered implementation of quality improvement in healthcare systems.

Steege, Taegtmeiera, and McCollum et al. (2018) focused on how gender roles and relations shape Close-To-Community providers experience at the individual, community, and health system levels. It highlights the importance of safety and mobility at the community level, influence of family and intrahousehold dynamics at the individual level, and career progression and remuneration at the health systems level. Gender roles and relations shape CTC provider experiences across multiple levels of the health system. Therefore, gender dynamics should be considered by policymakers and

implementers during both the conceptualisation and implementation of CTC programmes to strengthen their equity and efficiency. The study targeted close-to-community providers and have shown clearly how influence CTC providers. Gender norms in the communities they work in have also influenced their experiences despite them having the ability to alter them. There are other factors that come into play preventing CTCs from seamlessly altering gender norms where they work. These factors are entrenched in political structure, historical context, and a myriad axes of inequalities.

Yurco (2017) focused on livelihood transition in Laikipia. While conservation efforts have succeeded, pastoralists livelihoods have been adversely impacted. The pastoralists lose decision making power to wealthy ranch owners who employ them as herdsmen. Women are excluded in the new livelihood arrangements and their access to resources curtailed. Few herdsmen are allowed to invite their families to stay in the ranches they work. The communal interests of the pastoralists are not taken into consideration in the emerging structure of conservation and livestock production. The study has gathered data based on gender and has incorporated it in analysis, discussion and conclusion. It is one of the few studies that has been able to achieve this from design to implementation.

Kagunyu, Thurairira, and Wanjohi, (2017) looked into the role of development agents in helping pastoralist community in Isiolo county cope with climate variability. It revealed that various development agents who included government departments, NGOs and faith-based organizations assisted the pastoralists of Isiolo with resettlements, human and livestock medicine, restocking, destocking, subsistence funds for the old people, relief foods and livestock feeds. Although the study collected gender disaggregated data, there is nothing else in the analysis or even discussion and conclusions to suggest efforts of gender analysis or mainstreaming.

Byrne, Caulfield, and Onyo et al (2016) examined Skilled Birth Attendants (SBAs) and Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) collaborative care model among pastoralist communities in Kenya. The TBAs provide practical and emotional care to women during and after pregnancy following their traditional practices of which some could be harmful to women. The SBAs have valuable technical skills and resources for safe deliveries but there is a perception they mistreat women. Both have challenges in their work and have been in informal collaboration in mutual respect to provide services to women. The integrated perspectives of both genders in data gathering but these perspectives are not pronounced in analysis and conclusions.

Caulfield, Onyo, and Byrne (2016) focused on socio-demographic factors and cultural beliefs and practices that influence place of delivery for pastoralist women in Laikipia and Samburu, Kenya. Among the factors that hinder women from delivering in health facilities are distance, poor roads, and the difficulty of obtaining and paying for transport. There is also a perception that the treatment and care offered at health facilities is disrespectful and unfriendly; lack of education and awareness regarding the risks of delivering at home; and local cultural values related to women and birthing. The study gathered data from both genders but its analysis and

conclusions did not reflect gender issues although common among pastoralist communities.

Chege, Ndungu, and Gitonga (2016) assessed food security and nutritional status of children under five years in households affected by HIV and AIDS in Kiandutu informal settlement, Kiambu County. It established that HIV status affected the occupation due to stigma and frequent episodes of illness adversely affecting earning capacity of affected households. Medication also took a significant proportion of income leaving little for food. Food insecurity resulted in consumption of inadequate nutrients hence poor nutritional status. Children under five end up wasting, stunted or underweight due to poor nutritional status. The study did not gather any data on gender perspectives concerning food security and nutritional status of children under five in households affected by HIV and AIDS. This missed an opportunity to establish whether there is a variance between women and men headed households.

Jessani, Kennedy, and Bennett (2016) focused on individual attributes, capacities and skills of academic faculty identified as knowledge brokers (KBs) in schools of public health (SPH) in Kenya. It established that KBs' reputations benefitted from their professional qualifications and content expertise. Practical knowledge in policy-relevant situations, and the related professional networks, allowed KBs to navigate both the academic and policy arenas and also to leverage the necessary connections required for policy influence. The study gathered data disaggregated based on gender but did not bring out gender analysis in the results. In the recommendations however, the study points out that future research should look for gender differentials.

Jimmy, Martinez, and Verplanke (2019) examined the association between residential fragmentation and quality of life. It revealed that slum residents felt the least integrated symbolically compared to the planned non-gated and gated community residents. Gated community residents have higher quality of life satisfaction compared to other types of fragments. Although the study gathered data based on gender, there was no analysis to show whether there was gender differentials in integration and quality of life satisfaction.

Mwanri and Gatwiri (2017) focused on stories of Kenyan women who had developed obstetric fistulas following prolonged and obstructed childbirth and female genital mutilation. It established that FGM is practiced among traditional, patriarchal communities. Although the practice aims to bind community members and to celebrate a rite of passage, it may lead to harmful health and social consequences. Some women with fistula report that it was caused by FGM. The study targeted women who had developed obstetric fistulas following prolonged and obstructed childbirth and female genital mutilation. Gender analysis was lacking to show how gender inequalities contribute to traditional and cultural practices that harm women.

Mwaura, Koske, and Kiprotich (2017) assessed costs and benefits, viability for water harvesting adaptation and whether benefits exceeded costs. It found that pastoralists have embraced agro-pastoralism. Benefits from harvesting water exceeded costs, making the investment viable for adaptation. The study did not gather any data disaggregated by gender.

Although it acknowledged that women and girls bear the blunt of water scarcity, there was no analysis to show what contributes to the situation and what can be done to amend it.

Ochomo, Atieli, and Gumo et al (2017) sought to determine the knowledge of risk factors, signs and symptoms of cervical cancer and screening services' availability amongst Community Health Volunteers to enable them sensitize the community about cervical cancer in Kadibo Division, Kisumu County, Kenya. It established that the level of education, occupation, health facility of attachment and years of service as a CHV influenced the knowledge of CHVs about cervical cancer. The study collected data disaggregated by gender. Little analysis was done based on gender.

Maiyo (2015) focused on interdependence between education and households' poverty levels and its influence in internal efficiency of primary schools in Kenya. It was established that the household's poverty level had a significant relationship with school internal efficiency measures which included repetition, dropout, survival rate, cohort wastage, academic achievement and transition rate. There was no data disaggregation by gender hence no analysis to determine whether there was gender differentials in the interdependence between education and households' poverty levels.

Syomwene and Kindiki (2015) focused on the relationship between women education and sustainable economic development in Kenya and its implications for curriculum development and implementation processes. The study shed light on the fact that more educated women tend to earn more income, raise healthier families, effectively participate in agricultural activities, participate in political decision making, control population growth and participate in the labour market. All this translates to women empowerment and eventually to improved sustainable economic development. The study was a discussion supposed to bring on board as many perspectives as possible. However, it overrelied on perspectives that are for women education without addressing other opposing perspectives. This is not a balanced dialogue capable of countering beliefs and myths associated with women education especially among traditional communities.

Ngugi, Mumiukha, and Fedha et al (2015) examined the extent to which universalisation of primary education has contributed to advancement of access to basic education and the obstacles that have hindered its success. Although success in mass enrollment of pupils has been recorded, inequalities still exist. There is inadequate learning materials and costs of other inputs by households such as uniforms and books has increased. The study gathered and analyzed gender disaggregated data. In the conclusions and recommendations, however, gender equality is missing and the only term used that is closely related is inequalities. Bundling gender inequality with other forms of inequalities undermine gender mainstreaming.

Tanui and Chepkuto (2015) focused on identifying the perception and understanding of the local community on land use and utilization of the Nandi Hills Forests. It found that there is progressive increment of participation of the local community in the management of the Nandi Forests, exemplified by the already several existing CBOs in the area. This in return has contributed to the increased awareness and

consciousness of the local community on the need and importance of conserving the forests not just to them but for the future generations. There was no gender disaggregated data and analysis in this study. It missed an opportunity to highlight the role of women and men in forest conservation and use of forest resources.

Choge (2015) examined the challenges facing women leadership development in Kenya. The study revealed that good leadership is not specific to gender. Female head teachers' success was attributed to their traditionally perceived characteristics, such as caring leadership, multitasking and ability to develop good human relations. Cultural practices and stereotyping have influenced perceptions on women leadership. The study has focused on women leadership and the associated challenges in its development. Cultural stereotypes were highly attributed to such challenges but other equally important factors were missing.

Okilwa (2015) focused on highlighting challenges that minimize educational opportunities for young people in northeastern Kenya. The study revealed that historic political isolation and marginalization, sociocultural practices (nomadic lifestyle, female genital mutilation), resource deprivation and poverty, harsh geographic conditions, and poor infrastructure create challenges that minimize educational opportunities for young people in northeastern Kenya. The study has gathered and analyzed gender disaggregated data. However, gender issues affecting northeastern Kenya were not adequately covered. Focus was on the segregation and deprivation without much concern on whether such has affected women and men differently.

Mulwa, Kimosop, and Kasivu (2015) examined students' view on participatory school governance in secondary schools of the Eastern region, Kenya. Key decision makers in curriculum and design were the teachers, principals and students. In students' management and welfare, it was the principals, teachers and Boards of Management while in school community relations it was the principals. Though there is emphasis on the application of students' governance through the students' councils, students believe that teachers' interference with the process of electing their leaders make the structure of governance to be like prefects system. The data gathered was disaggregated by gender but the analysis, conclusions and recommendations did not show any gender analysis of the issues that the study addressed. It missed the opportunity to show whether perceptions of participatory governance were different among female and male students.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

A high proportion of community development studies in Kenya do not use gender mainstreaming approaches. This has a likelihood of neglecting gender inequalities existing in communities where development programs are implemented. If the status quo is left to continue, the gender inequalities will be entrenched and will not only affect vulnerable groups such as women and girls but the whole community.

The understanding of gender mainstreaming among scholars and practitioners in community development is wanting. Many have perceived gender intergration as synonymous with gender mainstreaming which is not the case.

Gender integration is an approach of implementing gender mainstreaming just like targeting and dialogue approaches. While most studies used integration gender mainstreaming approach, a deeper analysis showed that many of them just captured gender disaggregated data but did not analyze it to bring out gender issues that needed redress. The discussion, conclusions, and recommendations of many of these studies also did not show gender perspectives. Few studies employed targeting and dialogue gender mainstreaming approaches.

There is a bias towards social, political and cultural sectors in community development studies in Kenya. While there are many areas of concern in community development in Kenya, education and health issues are the most dominant. The economic and environmental sectors have lagged behind. This has significant implications for gender mainstreaming as the sectors lagging behind affect vulnerable groups of populations such as women and girls. The economic sector revolves around resource allocation, production capital, income generating activities and livelihoods. The environmental sector is closely related to the economic sector as it entails conservation, sustainable use of natural resources, and mitigating effects of as well as dealing with impact of climate change. These are critical sectors that determine participative democracy, rights, exploiting of economic opportunities, sustainable development, equality and social justice.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study outlined the following recommendations;

- ✓ Scholars and practitioners in community development should embrace gender mainstreaming in their work and encourage others to do the same to cultivate a culture of gender equality in the field.
 - ✓ Concerned stakeholders should raise gender mainstreaming awareness among community development scholars and practitioners as they play an important part in helping communities find solutions for their common problems.
 - ✓ Gender and Equality Commission of Kenya should train scholars and practitioners not only in community development but also in other fields to ensure gender perspectives are considered in research, policies and strategies in all sectors.
 - ✓ The concerned stakeholders should ensure clear understanding and use of other gender mainstreaming approaches such as targeting and dialogue which at the moment are rarely used.
- ✓ The community development community should ensure balanced sector approach to issues affecting communities.
 - ✓ Community development scholars and practitioners should enhance research in critical sectors such as environment and economic issues.

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