ABSTRACT

Women being the backbone of rural economies in developing countries and specifically in Africa, play a significant role to ensure their families' well being. This is seen in terms of providing food, shelter, health and education for the children. Most of the rural women provide for their families through subsistence farming and other agricultural activities supplemented by petty trade or micro enterprise. Despite their continuous contribution to the society and to the economy in particular women continue to be educated at an inferior rate to their counterparts, increasing their reliance upon men. They are also limited from owning, acquiring, and controlling property throughout Kenya, regardless of social class, religion, or ethnic group. If women attempt to assert property rights over men or in-laws, they are often obstructed by their families and communities. Due to the recognized contribution of women to economic development, and the persistent discrimination of the women many programs and conventions have been set globally to assist women and empower them to enhance their positive contribution to the society and the economy in general. At the 1993 and 1994 World Conference on Human Rights, the slogan 'women's rights are human rights' sent a powerful message on achieving equal status for women and men, and women's empowerment with the Programme of Action of the United Nations International Conference on Population & Development (IPCD). The ICPD's Programme of Action recognized the necessity of going beyond public manifestations of women's status (such as increased participation in the labor force or improvements in women's education) to addressing women's lack of power and influence within private and public arenas to empowerment of women. "Empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their value systems lead to the development of a good family, good society and ultimately good nation. Despite the above steps of setting empowerment programs' many challenges face rural women and their empowerment programs. They include: competition from well established male-dominated programs or, enterprises, lack of accurate information, support, and finance for expansion, risk-taking propensity, domestic commitments, and stereotyping among others. (Mason, Karen Oppenheim. 1995). The other challenges affecting the success of rural women include: lack of effective communication to negotiate or bargain favourably, management of debts, proper record keeping and issues to do with domestic matters such as balancing a woman's role in the home and the enterprise expectations. Nyamira District being a rural setting in Kenya, its Women are faced with the above challenges just like any other rural Districts and this study was therefore out to identify the challenges facing service delivery in women empowerment programs in Nyamira District. This study sought to identify the challenges facing service delivery in Women Empowerment Programs in Nyamira District. The study was out to achieve the following objectives: to investigate how the level of education influence service delivery in women empowerment programs in Nyamira District, to establish the extent to which men influence service delivery in women empowerment programs in Nyamira District, to determine how social cultural factors influence service delivery in women empowerment programs in Nyamira District, to find out how access to finance influence service delivery in women empowerment programs in Nyamira District and to examine how information influences service delivery in women empowerment programs in Nyamira District. The study findings were hoped to be beneficial to the following category of groups: the women empowerment programs would, use 'the recommendations of this study to improve their operations to
make them more relevant and profitable, the government would be able to realize the problems facing the women empowerment programs and try to assist them overcome the problems and the interested bodies like NGOs and those funding the women empowerment programs would be able to assess the possibility of assisting the programs to mansion full benefits. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study targeted 40 women groups and all its members who were 2630. A sample of 10% was taken. Hence the researcher sampled four programs at random, and their respective members. Structured questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect information from the respondents. Content validity was ascertained through expert judgment while reliability was established through test retest. Questionnaires were hand delivered by the researcher and picked the same way. She at the same time conducted interviews during the visit. Data analysis was done by both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data was analyzed by use of simple descriptive statistics that is frequencies, percentages, and averages and computing indexes on the likert scale. The qualitative data was analyzed and reported in narrative form. Data analysis presentation and interpretation was done though the use of tables and a summary of the findings, conclusions and its recommendations were made. The study suggested that a similar study can be done to identify the factors promoting the growth of women empowerment program in the same area. It also suggested that a similar study can be done to access the impact of the existing programs in the same area.