THE ROLE OF WOMENS' ORGANIZATIONS IN EMPOWERING WOMEN IN MWINGI DISTRICT, KENYA

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for award of a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated with a lot of love, respect and appreciation to my husband Mr. Peter Mukungi**,** daughters Maggy, Graca and Ruth**.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACCRONYMS

CDF   Constituency Development Fund

GOK   Government of Kenya

MFIs   Micro Finance Institutions

UN   United Nations

UNESCO   United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organizations

SPSS   Statistical Package for Social Studies

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the roles of women's organizations in empowering women in Mwingi District, Kenya. It was guided by four objectives which included the following: to establish how the women's organizations create awareness in ownership rights to empower women; to determine how gender policies by women's organizations influence empowerment of women; to determine the influence of income generating activities by women's organizations on the empowerment of women; and to establish the extent to which women's organizations mobilize resources to empower women. The study was based on the systems theory of organizations which is an approach in philosophy of science aiming at understanding the world as a set of systems. The descriptive survey research design was used since it would collect data from members of the population in order to determine the current status without manipulating the variables. The target population consisted of all 20 women's organizations and a total membership of 500 members in Mwingi District. Data was gathered by use of questionnaires analyzed using the quantitative and qualitative method in frequency distribution tables, pie-charts, bar graphs and percentages. 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; that men be sensitized to influence their wives to join women's organization groups; that women's organization groups, be founded to enable them invest more in income generating activities and that women's organization groups in Mwingi District collaborate with others from other districts to exchange ideas on similar projects. Based on suggestions for further research, the study recommended that a similar study should be carried out in other districts for comparison purposes. More women in the society should participate in women's organization groups. Women should be made aware about their ownership rights and investigate challenges women's organizations face when implementing their roles in empowering women.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In many countries, problems facing women and obstacles towards genuine progress on socio-economic empowerment are slight and precarious. There has been neither significant access to sources of production nor any real sharing of power with their male counterparts. There are ever-widening disparities in wealth, employment and productive resources among men and women. Disregard of women's rights in social and economic spheres is common. Moreover, the ground gained by the first UN decades women conference held in Mexico City in 1975 on the plight of women especially in Third World countries 'has not helped to reverse the power relations and burden on women (UNESCO, 1985).

At the close of the 20th century, it became apparently 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 basic social services was declining (UNICEF, 2000; cited in Mugenda, 2010). 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 poor countries will require a combination of approaches that specifically promote efficient and transparent use of local resources, public funds and foreign aid; promote and strengthen international trade; increase internal and global security and

achieve gender equity (UNDP, 2005; cited in Mugenda, 2010:3), and integration of women in the process.

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

According to Sahbarwal (cited in Makokha, 2008), women groups are a form of self-help groups which are voluntary associations for poor people, "who join efforts, ideas and resources for the purpose of addressing 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.

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 (Republic of Kenya, 1965; cited in Makokha, 2008). In the colonial era, women were organized into small groups to provide labour in the white farms. The grouping approach was effective in terms of control of labourers, 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 advancement of women's groups movement was synergized by the national philosophy that promoted unity and the spirit of togetherness (Makokha, 2008). Among the early structured womens' groups is the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization founded in 1952, primarily to mobilize women into small regional groups and promote their socio-economic and political welfare. In addition, it was mandated to promote skills in areas such as handicraft, basic home economics, child care and immunization, basic agricultural knowledge and family planning.

Women groups ensure the survival of both rural and urban women, through merry go-rounds, which provide affordable sources of financial resources that could be invested in income generating activities as well as personal development (Makokha, 2008:27). Women in the rural areas play an important role in community based development activities, which are very broad and complex. The major activities are agricultural, comprising both food production and cash crops to supplement the family income (Kamar, 1999). The diversity of activities that women groups undertake is an indication that they ought not only be fully integrated in the economy, but also the developmental input process of womens' efforts and the acceptance of womens' participation in the process of determining the distribution of what they produce (Were, 1985). Because women comprise more than a half of the world's human resources and are central to the

economic as well as to the social well-being of societies, development goals cannot be fully realized without their participation.

Over the years, women's groups have served as a platform for empowering women and increasing their participation in the economic development of the country. Women's groups have been seen as bringing business ideas and services closer to members. In this regard, they have often promoted the involvement of women in the design, management and delivery services (Makokha, 2008).

Kenyan rural women contribute more than 50% of food crop production labour force and a further 50% for cash crop production. Though they are the major producers of agricultural production, they are not rewarded or recognized. Agricultural extension services credit facilities and land titles are in favour of males. As a result of colonization, traditional roles and rights of women changed in support of the men. (GOK Report, 2002). Women's socio-economic status in both pastoral and agricultural communities is subject to their marital status. Their control over land, which is the basic means of agricultural production, is based on their obligations as wives and mothers.

Post colonial land reforms have left women landless thus forming the poorest households and their exclusion from owning legal titles denies them access to credit on their own. In order to address their plight, women have come together in groups to enhance their socio-economic position. Women therefore form the base for socio-economic well-being of their families; hence they feel they are responsible for seeking solutions to their needs provided the society gives them the opportunity and institutional support to participate in

income-generating and sustainable economic activities. Women attribute their under privileged situation to their unequal share of new options and the way in which new economic opportunities have been controlled by men. What unites all women in developing nations is the remaining hope that organization education and resistance would in the long run provide many with a means of escaping from, or at the very least loosening the tight grip of poverty and subordination.

Women experience many problems ranging from both reproductive and productive responsibilities which are very demanding in terms of finances, yet they do not have control over these issues. Most women in rural areas who are 45 years or older have cases of hypertension (high blood pressure), depression, arthritis and ulcers, brought on by they believe, frustrations and stress caused by their husbands, family worries and responsibilities and the large amount of work that they have to do. The research therefore aims at investigating the impact of women's organizations in empowering women in Mwingi District.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In many parts of the third world countries, women have formed organizations in response to their common problems. Though other groups came into being due to external initiatives like the church and Non-governmental organizations, they all aimed at enabling women to achieve/attain advancement and improve their quality of life. In Mwingi district, the number of women's organizations, women in political positions and

income generating projects by women's organizations is low as compared to other neighbouring district in the same ecological zones as shown in table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Women's organizations, women in political leadership and income generating projects by women in Mwingi, Machakos and Kitui districts in the year 2012

	Number of women organizations	**Women in political positions**	**Income generating projects by women's organizations**
Kitui	240	10	40
Machakos	300	20	100
Mwingi	80	5	20

Source: Ministry of Gender, Children and Sports (2010)

Data on the number of womens' organizations, data on women in political leadership and data on income generating projects by women in the neighbouring Kitui and Machakos districts indicate that Mwingi district has the least number of womens' organizations, least number of women in political leadership and the lowest number of income generating projects by women's organizations. No study has been done on the role of women's organizations in empowering women in Mwingi District, Kenya. It is for this reason that the researcher is seeking to explore the role of women's organizations in empowering women in Mwingi district.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of the role of women's organizations in empowering women in Mwingi District, Kenya.

1.4 Research Objectives

i.   To establish the extent to which women's organizations create awareness in ownership rights to empower women in Mwingi District.

ii. To determine how the gender policies by women's organizations influence the empowerment of women in Mwingi District.

iii. To determine the influence of income generating activities by women's organizations on the empowerment of women in Mwingi District.

iv. To establish the extent to which women's organizations mobilize resources to empower women in Mwingi District.

1.5 Research Questions

i.   To what extent do women's organizations create awareness in ownership rights to empower women in Mwingi District?

ii. How do gender policies by womens' organizations influence empowerment of women in Mwingi District?

iii. How do income generating activities by women's organizations influence empowerment of women in Mwingi District?

iv. To what extent do women's organizations mobilize resources to empower women in Mwingi District?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study may provide policy makers in the government of Kenya with insights on the role played by women's organizations in empowering women and this will assist them in formulating policies meant to encourage women's organizations. Researchers may also benefit from the data collected and information gathered that will be a source of new knowledge in the role of women's organization in empowering women. The findings of the study will encourage formation of more women's groups due to the benefits which accrue to women due to the organizations. The research findings will form the basis for further studies in the area of the role of women's organizations in empowerment of women.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of the study is that some of the women's organizations may not be registered with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Sports therefore making it difficult to locate them. Another limitation is the schedule of meetings of the women's groups for different groups meet at different days.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

The study involved women's organizations in Mwingi district only. The study will involve all women's organizations i.e. both registered with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Sports and those not registered.

1.9 Basic Assumptions

There are both registered and unregistered women's organizations in Mwingi District. It is also assumed that the target population gave adequate responses.

1.10 Definition of Significant Terms

Affirmative Action   Refers to an approach which gives women better chances in all spheres of development especially in employment.

Empowerment Refers to increasing the capacity of individual or groups to make choices and transform those choices to desired action and outcome.

"Harambee" Refers to collective effort which incorporates ideas of mutual social responsibility and community self- reliance.

Income generating projects Refers to projects that allow autonomy and self sufficiency.

Self Help Groups Refers to groups formed to help members to advance economically.

Size of the Group Refers to the number of the registered members of a given group.

Socio-Economic Status Refers to the ranking that an individual holds in a given community.

Women Enterprise Fund   Refers to an initiative of the government of Kenya positioned within the Ministry of Gender, Children and Sports that offers access to finance Kenyan women facing difficulties accessing loans from existing Micro Finance Institutes (MFIs) and banks.

Women Groups   Refers to Association formed by women with common interests for mutual benefit.

Women in political leadership Refers to women leaders who hold position in the political sphere.

1.11 Organization of the study

This study is organized in five chapters. Chapter one contains introduction of the study, background of the study problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitation of the study, delimitation of the study, assumption of the study, definition of the significant terms and the organization of the study. Chapter two consists of review of related literature and Chapter three consists of research methodology, which includes the research design, target population, sample and sampling procedure, research instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis techniques. Chapter four consists of data analysis Interpretation and Discussion, and Chapter five consists of Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviewed literature related to the roles of women's organizations in empowering women in Mwingi district. The literature review focuses on women contribution in development, brief history of women groups in Kenya, gender and poverty, participation of women groups in poverty reduction, roles of women's organizations in development from a global perspective, role of women's organizations in development in Kenya.

2.2 Women's' contribution in development

What unites all women in developing nations is the remaining hope that organization, education and resistance would in the long run provide many with a means of escaping from, or at the very least loosening 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 has 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 (Hale, 1991).

Development in human society 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 which develop within any given social group are crucial to 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.

Development in the past has always meant the increase in the ability to guard the independence of the social group and indeed to infringe upon freedom of others. A society develops economically as its members increase jointly their capacity for dealing with the environment. This capacity for dealing with the environment is dependent on the extent to which they put that understanding into practice by devising tools (technology) and the manner in which work is organized.

2.3 Brief 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 (Gathigi, 2000). 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 group. 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 participation in the country's development. The clubs that existed prior to 1940 were 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 (1958) [Were, 1985; cited in Gathigi, 2000, cited in Ogeno, 1993]. 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 interest. In 1955, an agricultural, health, nutrition and hygiene training for African women was started under the umbrella of M .Y.W. O. The clubs were further used as a means for developing skills essential to their participation in political sphere. During the peak of the Mau 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 (Browne, 1975; cited in Gathigi, 2000). With such joint efforts, the women hoped to assume their husband's previous roles on top of the expected ones.

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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 achievement of political independence did not materialize (Ouko, 1985; cited in Ogeno, 1993). They had to change their focus to match the new realities which meant devising their own 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' 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 endevours in the country. The result was formation of various self-help projects and groups all over the country. Women began to organize themselves along formal lines of women groups. Through these groups, they would be able to promote their interests (Gathigi, 2000). In the 1970s Kenya experienced 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 over women groups' activities. Its formation was a reflection of the government's official acknowledgement in efforts being made by women in rural development (Ogutu, 1985; cited in 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

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aim was to enable women 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 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 leadership and increasing their involvement in development projects. It also aimed at increasing the women skills in the use of local resources (both personnel and material) in group management and planning (Ogeno, 1993:33). According to Chitere and Mutiso, 1991, the expansion of the women's group movement is demonstrated by 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. Their projects and activities comprise a significant percentage of self-help concern in the countryside (Ogeno, 1993).

2.4 Gender and poverty

A gender perspective means recognizing that women stand at the cross roads 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, 2010).

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 land, grinding grain, carrying water and cooking. This is not easy burden. In Kenya, women can burn up to 85% of their daily calorie intake just 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 fundamental human right. But 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 are 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. To UNDP (2010), gender equality and women's empowerment is central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Yet,

while there are positive 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 parliamentary participation, women are still outnumbered four-to-one in legislatures around the world.

According to Kimani and Kombo (2010), commitment of Kenya government to eradicate poverty is manifest in its current development strategies as demonstrated with efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, especially No. 1, on 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 these interventions, the increase on the number of the poor both in rural and urban Kenya has been worrying. This creates a need to intensify poverty reduction efforts in planning and programming, especially as regards to 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).

The increasing incidence and poverty of households headed by women emerged as an issue with significant policy implications for both industrialized and developing nations in the mid-1970s. Subsequently, research in the third world has provided data on women's share of poverty and has made an impact largely because it has focused on

household rather than the individual and therefore has yielded results that can be incorporated into more recent frameworks of research on poverty in the third world (Bunivic et al, 1983). Essays in the book show that women are indeed the second sex in the poor countries of the world: they are less educated than men, have fewer occupational options, and earn less when they work. Married women with young children work more hours per day than married men, unmarried women are more likely than men (married or unmarried) to be poor, and their burdens are usually greater, for they must care for children and the household and also contribute to the family income. In fact, the research makes it clear that poverty is very much a woman's issue, at least in part because of women's double roles. Poor women have needs and make contributions that are different from those of poor men, thus, their problems command qualitatively different solutions. Time-use studies indicate that the typical woman spends most of her day working, not only in the labour market, as men do, but also in home production. The home production activities of women are not included in the conventional household and labor force surveys in poor countries, yet they are a critical part of the poor household's total production and are important in any understanding of the dynamics of poverty. To escape poverty, women must become more productive, and societies must seek ways to make these possible because of the context of womens' double roles (Bunivic et al, 1983:13).

2.5 Participation of women groups in poverty reduction

According to Kabeer (2003), in September 2000, at the United Nations millennium summit, 189 governments across the world made a commitment to take collective responsibility for halving poverty by 2015. The millennium declaration laid down a

number of key development goals framed to reflect its fundamental values. Along with the reduction of poverty and hunger, this included commitments to promotion of human development, environmental sustainability and development partners.

In addition they included an explicit commitment to gender equality as an end in itself: "no individual and no nation must be denied the opportunity to benefit from development. The equality rights and the opportunities of women and men must be assured." Because women continue to be perceived primarily in terms of their reproductive roles, there is no explicit mention of gender inequality in relation to millennium development goal 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 of the inclusion of gender equality in relation to participation of women groups in poverty reduction.

Over the years, women groups have served as a platform for empowering women and to increase their participation in the economic development of the country. They have been focused on bringing business ideas and services closer to members. In this regard, women groups have often promoted the involvement of women in the design, management and delivery (Makokha, 2008).

Women have always made a significant contribution in society in the economic, social and political spheres. It is, however, essential to stress that the concept of women groups

and related activities is as ancient as history (Were, 1990). Women groups, often numerically dominated by women, undertake many activities that include income generation, asset building, commodity marketing, and socio-cultural functions. These activities could be grouped in the following categories: Educational activities; Construction activities; home improvement activities; social activities; and income generating activities.

Consequently, women groups fall into two broad types of orientation. In the first place, there is the social welfare type whose concern is to improve the living conditions in members' households and the local community. Such activities as improved nutrition, child care practices, home improvement such as developing water supply, and construction of health centre fall in this category. On the other hand, there is the commercial type whose primary focus is income generation (Kusimba, 1987:31). While existing literature on women's groups often tend to treat the women's welfare activities and economic activities simultaneously, it is also recognized that the majority of the activities the groups undertake are of economic nature. Even those predominantly social welfare groups often have, as their future plans, participation in economic activities (Ogeno, 1993).

The most effective way of participation of women in development seems to be through self-help groups and Community Based Organizations (CBOs). Through these, communities have been involved in activities such as water and irrigation projects. According to a study conducted in arid Northern Kenya (Coppock et al. 2005), in a

highly risky and poverty-stricken environment such as Northern Kenya, women groups helped create relatively deep pools of social, human, and diversified economic capital. Many of these processes filled large gaps in public service delivery and could be encouraged by policy makers. The groups had taken an active role in mitigating drought impacts on their members and the scope of drought mitigation appeared to expand as groups matured over time. Initial activities often focused on group involvements in farming for cereal and vegetable production; respondents noted that farm produce could be sold quickly and made good profits. Dairy marketing, poultry marketing, and a variety of micro-enterprises (butchery, hides and skins, honey, bakery, and handicrafts) were also pursued as initial income-earners. Profits from all of these activities were then deposited into the group accounts or invested in livestock production and the purchase of key technologies like grain milling equipment (Coppock et al. 2005). All the above activities generally seemed to uplift the living conditions of women in Northern Kenya thus reducing poverty levels in the area.

According to this study, women groups participate in various activities, programmes and projects that are geared towards poverty reduction. All key-informants (women groups' leaders) interviewed agreed that in deed their groups were actively involved in poverty reduction efforts in the district.

2.6 Role of women's organizations in development from a global perspective

Historical evidence indicates that African women's participation in economic life was deeply rooted everywhere on the continent. In a large number of early African societies,

the gender division of labour allocated responsibility for cultivation to women, who could barter or sell their excess produce, while men engaged in hunting. The division of labour was different in other societies, for example in Ethiopia, men ploughed the fields and women weeded and harvested along with them. In parts of Kenya too, women and men farmed side by side. (World Bank Report, 2008).

Clearly, in traditional African societies whilst it cannot be said all women were equal to men, despite class differences, a balance of economic responsibilities did prevail between men and women, and the work of both was valued in a largely non competitive division of labour, parallel gender based institutions were common in such an environment and men's and women's groups each managed their own affairs.

In South Western Nigeria for example, there were women's courts to impose fines and women were the market 'authorities who fixed prices and settled quarrels. In Cameroon, the best of the Bemilike female farmers belonged to a special women's society. Both men and women participated in some functions of overall government and women at times reached positions of high authority.

Profound changes took place in women's participation in the economy with colonialism and its new technologies, cash crop and wage economy. Colonial officials tended to visualize women in terms of a Victorian image of what a woman (a lady) should be, instead of observing women's actual function they envisioned women's responsibilities as largely limited to nurturing and tending the society, while men engaged in political and

economic activities. In the colonial system, as in many other systems at the time, men were favoured with opportunities for education, employment and access to resources.

The worst setback for women came when land consolidation and settlement schemes gave title deeds to men as heads of households even when they were absent from the farm. This was a direct contradiction to the land rights that were customary and this encouraged women's productivity with title, became men's right to the proceeds of the land, including the products of women's labour that women had previously contributed to family maintenance. Women's historic protest against colonial economic policies laid the ground for them to join men in the struggle for independence movement.

In Kenya more than eleven thousand women were jailed during the Mau Mau emergency of the 1950's (Margaret, 1995). In the industrial world, the effects of oppression on women were more glaring than elsewhere after centuries of civilization and the women's reactions were extreme in these countries. Until recently, women could not participate in voting, which means that they did not take part in the political organization of their countries. Women in Europe organized themselves to fight for their rights, but it was not until 1963 that the first acceptance on world scale of the bias against women received recognition in the United Nations. The United Nations capped its resolutions on women in 1979 with its convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. This declared that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women as well as men.

It was against this background of the restive statements on women that United Nations declared the Womb's Decade in the 1975 in order to focus the world's attention on women's crucial role and contribution to the development of the human race, equality, development and peace, became the major themes of the decade and various reports related to the theme have highlighted many areas of improvements made by women in obtaining expertise and excellent performance in positions previously considered to be the exclusive domain of men.

2.7 Role of women's organizations in development in Kenya

The origin of women's organizations in Kenya is varied. Some were started during the colonial regimes as a means of educating women, but have now taken root and become independent and strong African movements. For example, Maendeleo Ya Wanawake (1952) Ismalia Women Association (1926), National Nurses Association (1958). The Nairobi Business Women (1955) East African women's League (1917) and 1he Home Economics Association of East Africa (1958). Some emerged as branches of world movements such as Y.W.C.A. (1912) and Kenya Girl Guide (1920). The churches also began some for example the Mothers Union (1955) started by the Church Province of Kenya (Abel 1985).

After independence, women were quick to realize that political independence in Kenya did not translate into economic and social improvements especially for them and their immediate families. This led to change of focus by the organizations formed after

independence, such as Kenya Association of University Women 1965. Mfangano Women Groups (1973). They all now realized that they had political, social and economic roles to play in the country (Maria, 1991). A variety of inputs for income-generating profits have been made available by the government and NGOs to various women groups. Such inputs include livestock, seeds, fertilizers, farming implements such as oxen and ploughs, bee keeping equipment, fishing equipment, funds to purchase posho mills, and constructions materials, just to mention but a few examples.

Kenya's Coast Province women are taking serious steps in the country's development in their different areas as exhibited by the Digo women. The Digo women engage in all kinds of economic activities. Inside the home, there are no strict rules concerning gender segregation. Although women and men do not eat together, they have their meals in different rooms and at different times. Both men and women participate in farming. Men maintain a relative dominance over cash crops and women over food crops.

Women tend to have a greater share in planting and weeding, whereas men are mainly occupied with first clearing of land and harvesting. Women are the main cultivators, i.e. they produce the staple food crops and do most of the farm work as compared to other family members. The traditional division of labour and lack of educational opportunities for women, until now have determined how inevitable it is for women to remain as farmers. In Diani - Ukunda husbands sometimes assist with the actual farm labour like, chasing the monkeys away during the night as well as acting as overseers on their farms.

In Mtwapa men are less likely to assist their wives with food crop production (Maria, 1991).

The majority of men are engaged in off farm labour hence their input in crop cultivation is limited. Girls and young women in conformity with the prevailing division of labour and level of education are more likely to work regularly on the farm. But they are also likely to be married quite young. As tailoring is rather popular among girls, women's groups in Mtwapa provide for training facilities by organizing tailoring classes. In this way they hope to offer their daughters a means of making a living and also as a way of preventing them from hanging idly. (Muthoni, 1985).

In addition to the food crops grown for domestic consumption, women cultivate food crops for trading purposes, sell surplus from food and tree crops (except coconuts,) and work as casual labourers for other women who are also engaged in off-farm activities to raise cash. They make and sell 'makutis' and trade in all kinds of raw and prepared food.

Some women are employed, while a big number of women are concerned in production and sale of handicrafts and sales of processed foods. Apart from earning wages through labour, women also participate in the so called chama's rotating saving schemes once a week or once a month. The members of charna deposit a set of amount of money as fund which is given to a member. A "chama' offers women a chance to deposit a large amount of money at one time, which enables them to pay for school fees or to buy school uniforms or furniture. A rotating savings club also functions partly as an insurance. A woman can apply before her turn when she needs the money for emergencies e.g. visit a

local doctor or visit a relative in prison (Muthoni, 1985).To many people, Maasai women are associated with tradition, beauty and decoration, inspite of the cultural constraints that limit their access to education.

Maasai women have decided to step out and take a step further in the public activities. Maasai women are very active in development and also in many income generating projects such as making very attractive Maasai beads for sale (Muthoni, 1985). Women's groups in Kenya have been effective in reaching poor women encouraging women's participation in decision making , teaching technical and managerial skills, allowing poor women to develop skills and confidence without male competition, providing access to resources, raising women's awareness of gender issues and building their self-confidence.

2.8 Socio-cultural aspects which hinder women's participation in development

Among most ethnic groups in Kenya, customary land law dictates that men inherit land while women acquire rights of access through marriage. A woman who does not marry, or is separated or divorced, can only gain rights to use land from her male siblings or kin. These arrangements can be terminated at any time, since the woman does not have legal rights over the land. The situation has been compounded by the fact that the land availability in Kenya has been decreasing rather fast. As a result of high population growth which means that more and more people face the threat of landless. This pressure on land has made women as a social group in the society, more vulnerable to landlessness than men.

This situation also makes it hard for rural women to expand their farming activities for they cannot get access to credit for failure to provide the necessary collateral. For instance Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) which gives credit to farmers requires that before they consent to give credit one must provide a title deed of the land, which in most cases women do not have, as land is usually registered in their husbands or male children's name.

Another problem facing women in development is the fact that the vast majority are uneducated. This has resulted from some cultural practices, that the boy child is valued more than the girl child. Hence most rural families especially among the poor will give priority to the education of the boy, while the girl is seen as a source of wealth to the family. Therefore, the girl may be married off at a tender age and hence terminating her education. Adult literacy classes are well attended by women, and although these courses are geared towards basic education and practical skills, they usually are not coordinated with other projects. For example when reading about hybrid-maize women could be supplied with maize seeds and other inputs.

Women also lack agricultural training and extension advice even when improved food crops such as hybrid maize are promoted, training and inputs are usually received by male household head and not by women. The development of low-cost agricultural implements has been neglected: women continue to use short-handled hoes for breaking land and weeding. The extension services are constrained by social sanctions, which prevent visits from the male-dominated extension staff for among many ethnic groups,

culture prohibits a male 'stranger' from visiting a married woman. Responsibilities of women tend to increase with introduction of labour intensive crops, education of children and off-farm employment for men. Further, shortages of house hold labour increases the womens' responsibilities for others chores like fetching water, firewood and milking livestock (Achola, 1979).

In marketing cooperatives, the position of women is at the peripheral. Most cooperative societies in the past accepted only male members. Membership tends to be in the name of the husband, this creates problems. There is evidence to indicate that when a cash crop under male control competes for labour with food under female control, the cash crop tends to be neglected until work on the food crop is completed. Moreover, women may refuse to work on a crop or do so inefficiently when the income will go to the male household head as illustrated by a cooperative society that was set up for the marketing cotton in Kitui. This was formally a plantation crop whose labour was supplied by women and children, whose small fingers were hotter, suited than men's to the delicate operation of plucking the wool. Independent Kenya adopted the policy of substituting cooperative marketing from individual holdings for wage labour.

The plot-holders were men and so were the cooperative members, so though the women were still expected to do most of the work, when the crop was sold the proceeds went to the men and the women no longer got what they earned before from their employers. The cooperative did not assist (Lucy, 1984). Despite the wide spread movement towards democratization in most countries women are largely under represented at most levels of

government especially in ministries and other executive bodies and have made little progress in attaining political and legislative power. The traditional working government structures continue to be barriers of women's participation in public life. Women may be discouraged from seeking political office by discriminating attitudes and practices, family and child care responsibilities and high cost of seeking and holding public office. For instance among the Kamba, women are considered not to be "hard" and should therefore take a back seat. This tradition has made it very difficult to seek public offices especially from the grass root levels. For in most cases they are dismissed by the male dominated society.

Women also face an additional handicap by bearing the brunt of scarcity of medical services while producing the largest percentage of food. Many rural women are also living in customs and traditions that impose undue burdens (Abel, 1985) one significant factor among many other things, the rural women must bear a number of children and do endless back breaking jobs. For instance among the Kamba women who only bear one or two children are not considered to have given birth, and if a woman also gets only girls, she too has no children, hence these traditional customs, force many women to give birth to many children so as to attain a social status for their husbands, and also to avoid being divorced or their husbands marrying another wife. This puts the health of the woman at risk.

Violence against women is another obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equal development and peace. Violence against women both violates and impairs or deprives

the women of their human rights and freedom. In most Kenyan societies women and girls are subjected to physical sexual and psychological abuse that cuts across income, class and culture. Lack of funds is another constraint to women and development. The projects that women have engaged in require funds, if they are to succeed. The women groups are in most cases composed of women from rural and urban areas who have no other sources of income than what they expect from their husbands.

Almost all the projects that women embark on require to be run by personnel who have technical know-how to run these projects.   There are very few women's groups who-.have these personnel. Women also face stiff competition from other business organizations in trying to market their produce.   Quite often failing groups are pointed at quite unfairly as another example of how things organized and managed by women cannot succeed where the projects have succeeded. However, women have found it difficult to keep away enterprising businessmen wishing to cash on the project.

2.9 Mobilization of resources by women's organizations for development

Mwingi women are also very active in many ways. These consist of some very outstanding farmers, who are also involved in business as well as in active politics. They have formed income generating groups, which have grown from small merry-go-round groups to commercial projects. One such example is the Achievers Women Group with a membership of 80 women. They rent tents and chairs and offer outside catering services to people carrying out big functions like weddings and funerals. They are targeting to purchase a building that they will use as a shopping mall in the town. Another industrious

group is the Goodwill Women Group. This one has 60 members and has a posho mill, keeps layers and does a business of buying and selling goats.

2.10 Summary of literature review

Women therefore play an important role in the socio political and economic development of our country. The problems faced by women range from exploitation to vulnerability and they arise out of ideologies, structures and customs in the spheres of kinship and marriage, politics, law, education and religion.

It is therefore important that there should be a creation of an educational and social environment in which women, men, girls and boys are treated equally and encouraged to achieve their full potential. They should be encouraged to respect each other's freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief. Educational resources should do away with non-stereotypical images of women and men, therefore eliminating courses of discrimination against women and inequalities between men and women.

2.11 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study was based on the systems theory of organizations. General system theory is particularly an approach in philosophy of science aiming at understanding the world as a set of systems. It defines a system as, "a set of elements standing interactions" a group of things which have something in common. This includes any level of groupings with any sort of relationship i.e. people, forest or anything (phenomena).

This theoretical paradigm suited the discussion owing to the complex nature of the community development, its activities and intricate elements involved. Some of the concerns in community development such as understanding the inter- groups (community dynamics) relations, assessing power, influence and considering the changes that are involved in planning development activities can be understood and explained through general systems theory.

Bertalanffy (1901) brings forth his terminologies into perspective by introducing the tenets of a systems; sub-systems, closed and open systems, systems boundaries, feedback and system balance (homeostasis). This was used in vividly understanding the complex interactive nature of community development as systems. Bertalanffy 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 a boundary (an imaginary line) which determines the internal and external activities of a system. In this study, a system referred to the larger village community Mwingi and the rest of the region or territory. 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 John, 1989) describes this in a term, cybernetics (control and regulation

mechanisms found within a system). This was used by Greeks in underscoring the necessity of a working system.

The theoretical explanation above creates a major reflection on the community development activities. Individuals as entities (subsystems) need to be in constant interaction, communication, innovation are among the elements that form the community's interaction. Community participation is characteristic of community heterogeneity. In this study, it is of importance in looking at the influence of the independent variables i.e. literacy, resources, governance, technology and participation. Community groups therefore adopt this theoretical idea in their intertwined relationships and activities.

The energy posed by them should be constantly countered through generation or exchange of energy in influence across the boundaries from one system to another. This interaction enables people build community (groups), embrace each other and knit the social-economic fabric. For the overall benefit of the community development, values, customs and traditions are important in considerations for implementation and economic sustainability of the projects. Some community projects often collapse due to various factors, most of which have proven to be low or non participation of key stakeholders in decision making keeping the energy constant. There was need therefore to understand the complex nature of these organizations, in relation to functionality.

Bertalanffy (1901) introduced the term, "open" and "closed" systems in relation to community development. He argues that all organic systems including human beings and their communities are open systems; that is each has a boundary which is open to some extent and which makes it possible for energy or influence (information, goods, technology) to pass out of these systems. He joins this discussion by asserting that openness is vital for undertaking the system theory, in looking at the environment and man. This keeps the system alive and functioning properly.

System theory's framework is inadequate in that it gives too much emphasis on the relationship between components of various sub-systems, and other elements of other larger systems. It further explains that because of the interaction of social and systematic integration, mechanism can have perverse effects, disrupting and colonizing the domains of cultural production. William (1998) sums up his heavy criticism by categorically stating that, "it is only a road map to reality and not reality itself its imperfect and exactness is not always to be full in some explanations". Despite the pros and cons in the analysis of this theory, general system theory   distinct among the theories in critically understanding the multi-faceted nature of community development and   its complexity. This   enhances the effectiveness   and   effiecny   in   the multi-dimensional approach in community management.

2.12 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is a diagrammatic representation of how different variables interrelated.

Fig 1.1 Role of women's organizations in empowering women

Conducive environment   **Women empowerment**

Womens' organizations - Achievers' women group - Goodwill women group

Socio - economic factors - Land - Income generating activities

- Proper management of physical and human resources - Organizational skills

- Improved health nutrition - Increased enrolment in school - Increased awareness on family planning - Reduced cases of domestic violence

Socio-cultural factors - Domestic violence - Gender disparities

Resource mobilization - Buying and selling of goats - Poultry keeping

In this conceptual framework, the main focus is the women empowerment. Women organizations, conducive socio-economic factors, socio cultural factors and resource mobilization influence performance of women's organizations in empowering women.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher focuses on the methodology used in the study. This chapter covers the research design, the target population, sample size and sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection and data analysis techniques.

3.2 Research design

The research design has been defined as the process of creating an empirical test to support or refute a knowledge claim. Borg and Gall (1989) define research design as a plan showing how the problem under investigation was solved. The study employed descriptive survey. The choice of this design is based on the fact that the purpose of the study is to explore the role played by women's organizations in empowering women. Best and Kahn (1990) observes that descriptive survey is concerned with practices that prevail, beliefs, points of view, attitudes that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are being felt, or trends that are developing. This method can give statistical information about an event as well as give an idea about how people experience it.

3.3 Target population

Borg and Gall (1989) define the target population as the population to which the researcher wants to generalize the result of the study. Mwingi district has 20 womens' organizations with a total membership of 500 members. The target population for this study comprises 20 womens' organizations and 500 members.

3.4 Sample size and sampling technique

A sample is a small proportion of the target population. Sampling means selecting a given number of subjects from a defined population as representatives of that population. Any statements made about the sample should also be true of the population (Orodho, 2002). It is however agreed that the larger the sample the smaller the sampling error. The study targeted 20 women's groups and the 500 members.

3.5 Research instruments

The research instruments that were used are questionnaires and document analysis. According to Oppenheim (1992) a questionnaire offers considerable advantages in its administration. It can be used for large numbers of population simultaneously and also provide the investigation with an easy accumulation of data. (Gay 1992) maintains that questionnaires give respondents freedom to express their views or opinions and also make suggestions. Questionnaires and document analysis will be used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.6 Validity of the research instruments

Validity indicates the degree to which an instrument measures what it is purports to measure. That is the extent to which differences found in the measuring instrument reflect true differences among those who will be tested Kothari (2004). To ascertain content validity, the instruments will be analyzed by the supervisors. They assessed the relevance of the content to be used in the instruments, develop and make structural

changes for purpose of improvement and reinforcement of the instrument before embarking on actual data collection.

A pilot study was done in Mwingi District using two womens' groups. The pilot study enabled the researcher to check whether the instruments to be used were valid and reliable. It also enabled corrections of any other ambiguities.

3.7 Reliability of the research instrument

Mugenda and Mugenda (2010) define reliability as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trial. To enhance reliability of the instruments, a pilot study will be conducted in two women's groups in Mwingi District. In order to improve the reliability of the instrument, the researcher will employ test-retest technique for the questionnaire. This will involve administering the same questionnaires twice to the respondents in the pilot sample after two weeks.

The spearman rank correlation coefficient was used to determine the extent of correlation.

$$r = \frac{N\Sigma XY - (\Sigma X)(\Sigma Y)}{\sqrt{[N\Sigma^2 - (\Sigma X)^2][NY^2 - (\Sigma Y)^2]}}$$

A correlation coefficient of 0.8 was established. This shows the instrument was reliable. A correlation coefficient of above 0.7 deems the instrument reliable according to (Mugenda & Mugenda 2008).

3.8 Data collection procedures

The researcher sought a research permit from the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST) before embarking on the study. The researcher then paid a courtesy call to the District Commissioner and the District Gender and Social Development officer in Mwingi to and explained her intention to carry out the research.

The researcher then made appointment with the chairladies of the women groups. On arrival at the villages on the agreed dates, the researcher created a rapport with the chair ladies and the members and explained the purpose of the study and then administered the research instruments to them. According to Best and Kahn (1990) the person administering the instrument has an opportunity to establish a rapport, explain the purpose of the study and the meaning of items that may not be clear. The respondents were assured that strict confidentiality would be maintained in dealing with their identity. The researcher personally administered the research instruments to the respondents. The chairladies of the groups accompanied the researcher, introduce her to the members and allow her to administer the questionnaires. The researcher then collected the questionnaires immediately after they are filled.

3.9 Data analysis techniques

This is the process of summarizing the collected data and putting it together so that the researcher can meaningfully organize, categorize and synthesize information from the data collecting tools. Data gathered was coded for analysis. This was done after editing and checking out whether all questions have been filled in correctly. Quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and the results

presented using frequency tables, pie charts, bar graphs and percentages to make meaningful conclusions.

This is deemed to be easy in interpretation and is convenient in giving general overview of the problem under study. Qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis which in turn was analyzed by organizing data into themes, patterns and sub-topics. The researcher came up with conclusions of the content and data analysis of instruments that cannot be quantified.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of results and findings obtained from field responses and data, broken into two parts. The first section deals with the background information of the respondents, while the other five sections present findings of the analysis, based on the objectives of the study where descriptive statistics have been employed in this analysis and discuss the issues in the best way possible.

4.2 Response Rate

From the data collected, out of the 500 questionnaires administered, 488 were filled and returned.

This represented 97.78% response rate, which is considered satisfactory to make conclusions for the study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a 50% response rate is adequate, 60% good and above 70% rated very good. This also collaborates Bailey (2000) assertion that a response rate of 50% is adequate, while a response rate greater than 70% is very good. This implies that based on this assertion; the response rate in this case of 97.78% is very good. As shown below:-

Figure 4.1 Questionnaire return rate
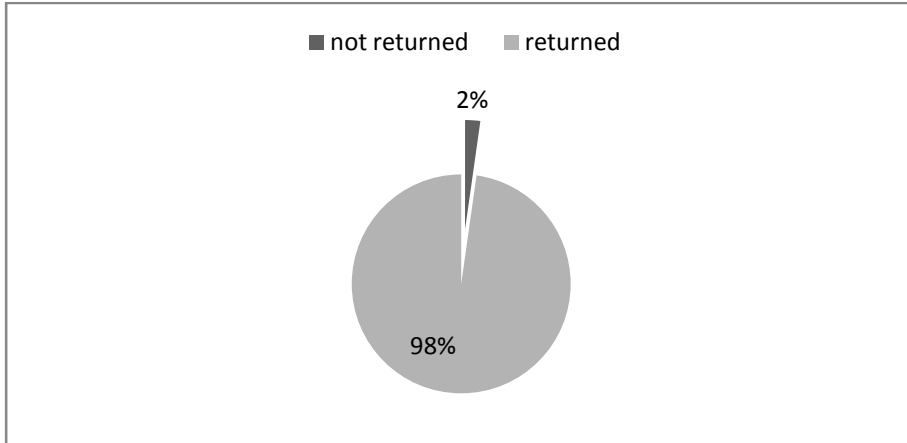
This high response rate can be attributed to the data collection procedures, where the researcher pre-notified the potential participants of the intended survey (organization members), the questionnaire was self administered to the respondents who completed them and these were picked shortly after.

4.3 Marital status of the respondent

The study sought to determine the marital status of the respondents in order to establish whether the status of women influenced   women empowerment. The result were as shown in figure 4.2

Figure 4.2 Respondents Marital status
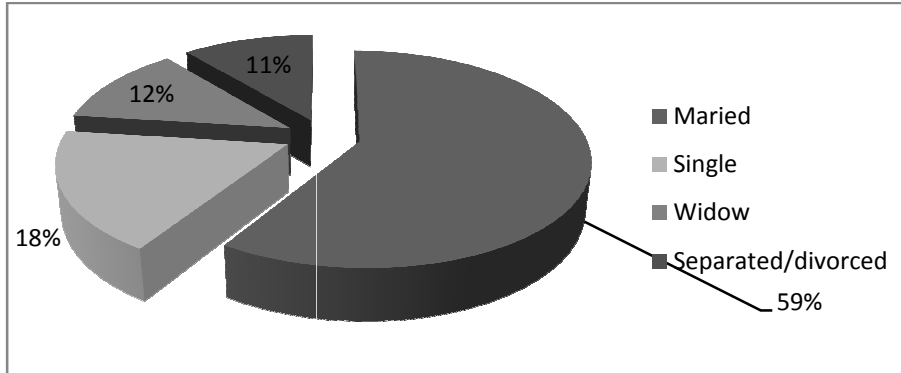
From the findings as indicated in Figure 4.2, majority (59%) were married. This implies there were more married women in women organizations. This meant that men encouraged their wives to join womens' organizations through giving financial support to empower themselves economically and socially.

4.4 Main occupation of the respondents

The study further established the main occupation of the respondents. The result were as shown in figure 4.3

Figure 4.3 Main occupation of the respondents

From the findings in Figure 4.3, majority indicated that they were business womens', followed by a large number who indicated that they were house wives, with a few in

farming and a very small number indicating that they were salaried. This implies that majority of the respondents were business women who participated in womens' organizations to boost their capital and also housewives who struggle to empower themselves economically.

When further interviewed the majority of the respondents indicated 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 majority indicated that they both (with husband) assist each other in paying the school fees.

4.5 Gender policy influence on women empowerment

The study sought to determine the respondents' views on gender policy influence on women empowerment. First the study sought to determine if any member of the group attend any of the leaders meetings in the levels indicated. The findings were as indicated in Table 4.1

Table 4.1 Attendance of any leaders meetings

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

The study findings shows that majority of the respondents indicated that in any leaders meeting at least there is a member from the organization attending in all levels as shown by a large mean percentage of more than 67%. This implies that leaders meetings are very crucial in providing information and therefore attendance by any member is very important so that she can come and teach others on arising issues that may be of importance to the group.

When further asked if they propose as a group the agenda to be tabled by the representative, majority 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.

Further the study sought to determine if any member of the group participated in the last Poverty Reduction Programme at any level. The findings were as indicated in Figure 4.3

The study sought to determine if any member of the group participated in the last Poverty Reduction Programme at any level. The findings were as indicated in Figure 4.4

Figure 4.4 Participation in the last Poverty Reduction Programme
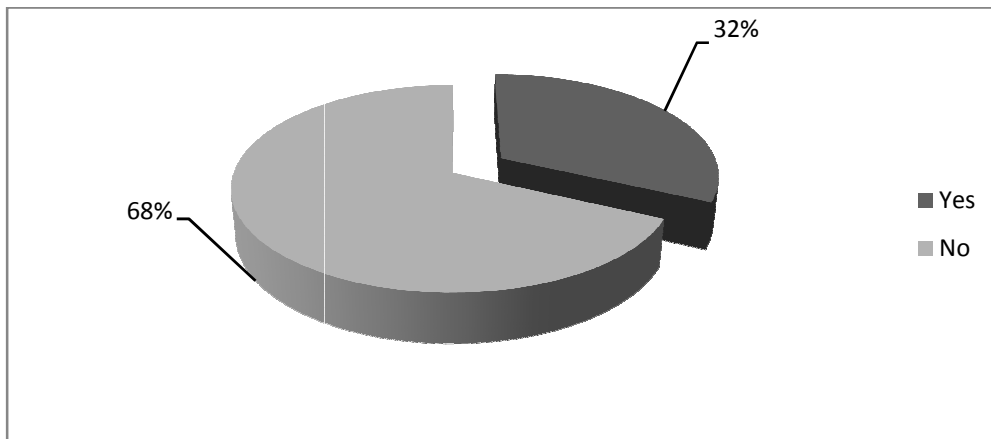
From the study findings majority 68% indicated that there was no member in their group who participated in the last Poverty Reduction programme at any level. When further interviewed if they have any link/collaboration with any other women associations, majority indicated that they have collaboration but at locational/divisional level. This confirms with earlier findings that group members attend most of the locational/ divisional meetings therefore establishing networks which result to women empowerment. A study carried Kabuga Z.N (2010) in Oljoro-orok Division Nyandarua District, concurs that gender roles and stereotypes, sometime interfered with their work.

4.6 Income generating activities and empowerment of women

The study sought to determine the source of the respondents' household income. The findings were as indicated in Figure 4.5

Figure 4.5 Source of the respondents' household income
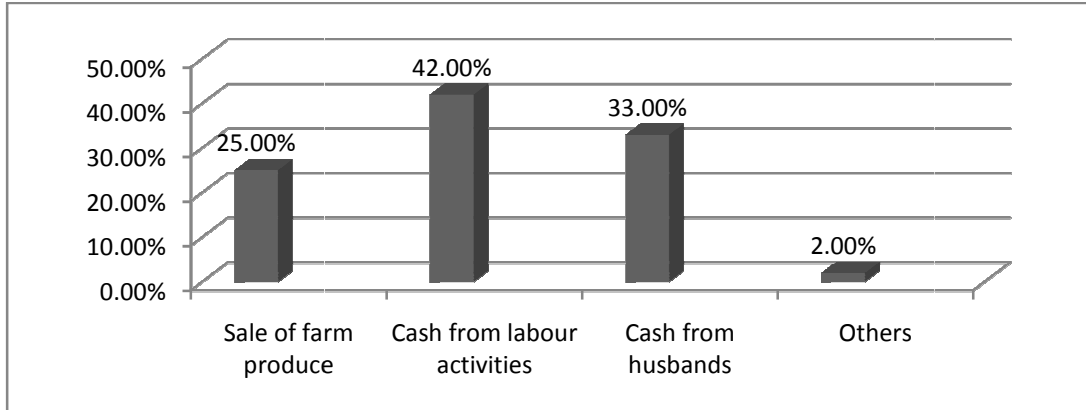
From the study findings majority indicated that they get household income from cash from labour activities, while a smaller number indicated cash from their husbands, others get income from sale of farm produce with only few indicating they get income from other sources e.g. extra money from the businesses they operate.

When further interviewed about their husbands/spouse occupation, majority indicated that their husbands engage in self employment activities, followed by those who indicated that they are farmers with only few indicating that their husbands are salaried. This implies that most of the women in womens' organizations had husbands who were self employed and therefore their wives join organizations to help them get daily bread for their children. A study by Asami R.C (2010) in Kakamega concurs that those activities women groups participate in seem to have positively impacted on the living standards of the people of Emuhaya. This could be seen through the benefits reaped from the groups by individuals, households and the community at large. Among the benefits are: economic empowerment through financial and material support, basic needs such as

food, education, medication and housing being met, psychological fulfillment, skills such as farming, tailoring, weaving and basketry.

Further the study sought to determine if the organizations have positively impacted on their socio-economic status. The findings were as indicated in Figure 4.5

The study sought to determine the impact on socio-economic status. The findings were as indicated in Figure 4.6

Figure 4.6 Impact on socio-economic status
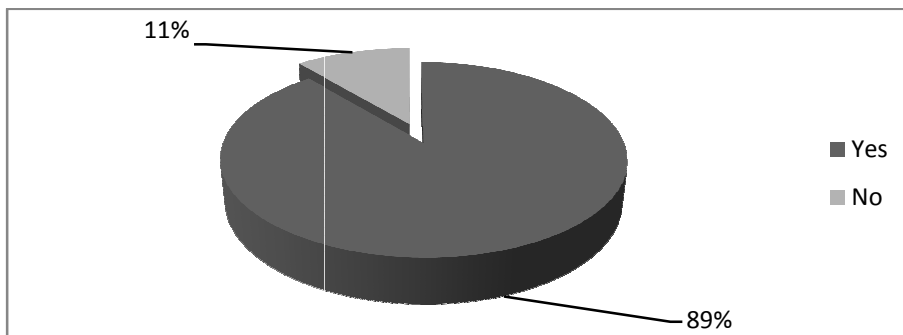
Further the study sought to determine if the organizations have positively impacted on their socio-economic status. From the study findings majority indicated that their organizations have positively impacted on their socio-economic status with only few indicating that their organizations have not positively impacted on their socio-economic status. This implies that women organizations are very crucial in the socio-economic development of the women in the society. Thus the organizations have also benefited their families to very high extent through school fees, nutrition, hospital and farming, others including capital for their businesses. A study by Kipkurui (2003) conducted in Kericho Municipality concurs that womens' organizations enable women to participate in income generating activities which result into women empowerment economically.

4.7 Awareness in ownership rights and womens' empowerment

The study sought to determine if women in the organizations own any asset of their own. The findings were as indicated in Figure 4.7

Figure 4.7 Asset ownership
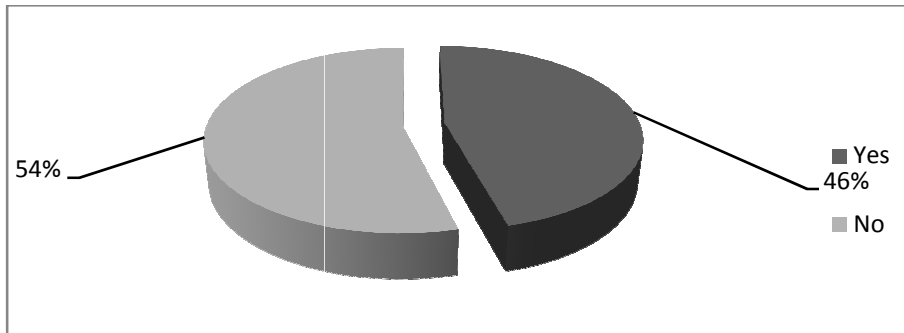
From the study findings majority (54%) indicated that they do not own assets of their own. Such asset includes business premises and farm equipments. Those who indicated that they don't own assets of their own gave reasons such as husbands being the overall in ownership and that they lack money to buy. This implies that the culture gives a husband an upper hand to control all the assets in the homestead regardless to who bought them.

Further when interviewed over land, majority indicated that the land they live on belongs to their husbands and he is the one in 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. The researcher therefore recommends that women in rural areas

should sensitize through the District's Department of Social Service through seminars and workshops on their rights to own properties and on sources of funding such Women Enterprise Fund.

In orders to improve the existing activities and projects, there is an agent need to come up with modern innovative ways of increasing agricultural production which in turn could serve as a strategy in the fight against poverty.

4.8 Resource mobilization and women empowerment

The study further sought to determine if members of the group earn any income from the group projects. The findings were as indicated in Figure 4.8

Figure 4.8 Income from the group profits
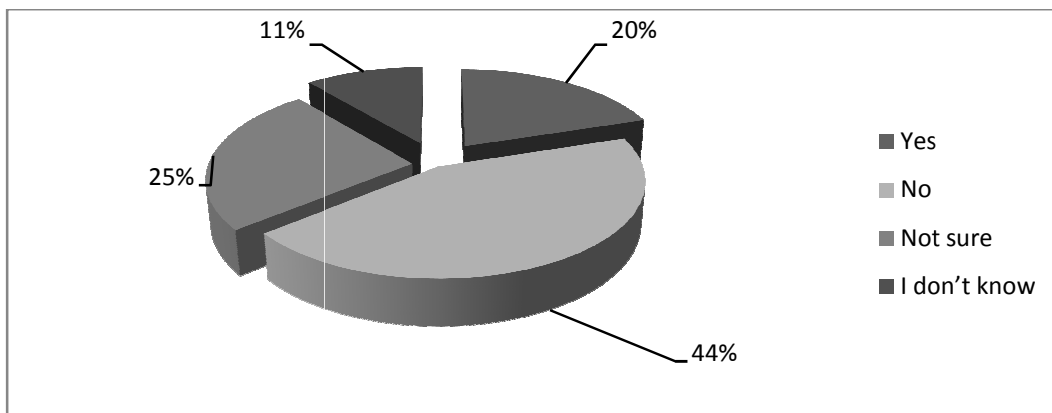
From the findings the majority (44%) indicated that they do not earn income indicating that the profits accruing from the organizations are re-invested and those who indicated that they get income said that they buy food and meet children needs e.g. school fees and medical bills. The findings concur with the study findings by Asami R.C (2010). which assert that the activities and projects of the women groups in the study area, had raised

the living standards of the people in different ways. 76.3% of the economically through their families since they could raise fees for children, meet their basic needs such as food and medication as well as shelter. On the other hand, 6.6% of the respondents stated that the fact that they belonged to a specific group, that sense of belonging had given psychological fulfillment.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
5.1 Introduction
This chapter summarizes the findings of the study and presents conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary
The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of women's organizations in empowering women in Mwingi District, Kenya. It was guided by four objectives that focused on how women's organizations create awareness in ownership rights to empower women in Mwingi District; how the gender policies by women's organizations influence the empowerment of women in Mwingi District; on how income generating activities by women's organization influence the empowerment of women in Mwingi District; and on the extent to which women's organizations mobilize resources to empower women in Mwingi Distrcit; the influence of income generating activities by women's organizations on the empowerment of women in Mwingi District and extent to which women's organizations mobilize resources to empower women in Mwingi District.

The study applied descriptive survey research design. The target population included all 20 womens' organizations and 500 members in Mwingi District. The data was collected by use of questionnaire. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze quantitative data, and then presented using frequency tables, pie-charts, bar graphs and percentages.

5.2.1. Women's Organizations Creating Awareness in Ownership Rights to Empower Women
Regarding ownership of assets
The majority of women who responded represented 54.0% who indicated that they do not own assets of their own because the husbands are the sole owners due to lack of money to buy and due to the fact that culture gives husbands an upper hand to control all the assets in the homestead regardless of who bought them. On the other hand, those who own assets responded represented 46.0% who indicated that the assets they own, they bought through the benefits they derive from their organizations.

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Regarding ownership of land

The majority who responded represented 85.0% who indicated that the land they live on belongs to their husbands who are in control over its use.

5.2.2. How Gender Policies by Women's Organizations Influence Empowerment of Women

Regarding attending leaders meetings

The majority of members who responded represented 67.0% who indicated that in any leaders' meeting, there is at least a member from the women's groups attending in all levels. This provides information which they use to sensitize others later on arising issues that might affect the group.

Regarding proposing the group agenda to be tabled by the representative

The majority of members who responded represented 70.0% who indicated that they do propose as a group the agenda through representatives and are involved in agenda formulation.

Regarding participation in poverty reduction programme

The majority of members who responded represented 68.0% who indicated that there were members in their groups who participated in the last poverty reduction programme at different levels.

5.2.3 Influence of Income Generating Activities by Women's Organizations on the Empowerment of Women

Regarding sale of farm produce

The group members who responded represented 25.0% who indicated that they get household income from the sale of farm produce showing that the majority do not depend on the sale of farm produce.

Regarding cash from labour activities

The group members who responded represented 42.0% who get household income from cash they earn through labour activities indicating that almost the majority depend on it.

Regarding cash from husbands

The group members who responded represented 33.0% who get household income from cash provided by their husbands indicated that most women do not depend on their husbands for household income.

Regarding other sources

The group members who responded represented 2.0% get household income from other sources apart from the sale of farm produce, cash from labour activities and support from their husbands.

5.2.4 Women's Organizations Mobilize Resources to Empower Women
Regarding income from the group projects

The majority of members who responded represented 44.0% who indicated that the profits accruing from the organizations are re-invested showing that women are empowered to an extent to own assets they re-invest in and develop more projects to work on.

Regarding raise of their living standards

The majority of members who responded represented 76.3% who indicated that the activities and projects of the women's groups had raised their living standards economically through providing their families with basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medication and school fees for their children.

Regarding sense of belonging

The majority of members who responded represented 66.6% who indicated that the fact that they belonged to specific groups had given them psychological fulfillment. This shows that they accept being empowered in one way or the other.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the data of the study the following are key findings of the study. The majority of 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, that the majority of women indicated that their groups are represented in leaders' meetings at all levels; and that they participate in poverty reduction programmes. The majority indicated that they had income generating activities through sale of farm produce, cash from labour activities and cash from their husbands. Lastly, 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 fulfillment through the sense of belonging to specific groups.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in view of the research findings:

(i)   Leaders should establish women's councils through which the women can participate in leadership matters. This will empower them regarding organizational matters and they feel that they are part of agenda formulation and decision making;

(ii)   Men should be sensitized to influence their wives to join womens' organization groups. This will help them focus on progress and improve the living standards of their families;

(iii)   The governor for Kitui County should fund women's organization groups in Mwingi District to enable them to invest more in income generating activities and projects to empower themselves; and

(iv)   Women's organization groups in Mwingi District should collaborate with others from other districts to exchange ideas on similar projects and discuss further advancements concerning their income generating activities and projects.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, other studies may be done on the following:

(i)   Given that the research focused only on Mwingi District, a similar study should be carried out in other districts for comparison purposes and to generalize the results.

(ii)   The research suggests that more women in the society should participate in women's organizations to empower themselves socially and economically through the benefits they receive from such organizations.

(iii)   The research suggests that women should be made aware about their ownership rights like owning assets and involve themselves in income generating activities to empower themselves.

(iv)   The research suggests investigating challenges that women's organizations face when implementing their roles in empowering women.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introduction Letter

Eunice Keli Wambua

P.O. Box 154 -90400

MWINGI.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a student at The University Nairobi in pursuit of a post graduate degree. I am currently carrying out a research titled the Role of Women's Organizations in Empowering Women in Mwingi District, Kenya.

You are therefore kindly requested to respond to the items attached to the questionnaire to the best of your knowledge.

Yours faithfully,

Eunice Keli Wambua

Appendix II: Questionnaire for Members of Womens' Organizations

INTRODUCTION

I kindly ask you to participate, in this research by filling in this questionnaire which is designed to gather information for research purpose.

Be assured that the information given is only for research purposes on the role of womens' organizations in empowering women in Mwingi district, Kenya and will be kept confidential. Please do not write your name.

PART A

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please fill in blank spaces or indicate the appropriate option by a tick (√)

1. In which year were you born?...

2. What is your marital status ?

   (1)   Married ( )   (2) Single (   )   (3) Widow (   )

   (4) Separated/divorced ( )

3. What is your main occupation? (1) House-wife   (2) Salaried

   Employment

   (3) Business Woman   (4)   Farmers *(5)* Others Specify...................

4. How many years did you spend informal education?......................years

5. a) How many children do you have? (1) None (2) 1-3   (3)   4-6

   (4) Over 6

   b) Dependents?...

6. How many are in School?   (1) All (2) None (3) 1-3   (4) 4-6

7. How much school fees do you pay on average for all these children in a

   year? (a) Primary........ (b) Secondary......(c) College..................

8. Who pays the school fees (1) Husband (2) Self (3) both (4) Donations

   (5) Others Specify ....

SECTION B*: Policy Influencing*

1. Does any member of your group attend any of the leaders meeting?

	Yes	No
Sub-locational		
Locational		
Divisional		
District		

2. If yes to any of the above; Do you propose as a group the agenda to be tabled by your

   representative

   (1)   Yes   (b)   No

3. Who decides the agenda during your meetings?

   (1)   Executive   (2)   Members   (3)   Others Specify

4. Did you or any member of your group participated in the recent constitutional

   review process (1)   Yes   (2)   No

5. If Yes, at what level? (1)   Division   (2)   District

   (3)   National (4)   Others (Specify)_____

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6. What key issues did you or your group raise to be included in the

  constitution?

…………………………………………………………………………………

7. Did you or any member of your group participated in the last Poverty

  Reduction programme at any level?   (1)   Yes   (2)   No

8. If yes, what key issues did you or your group raise to be included in the

  poverty reduction programme ?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………

9. Do you have any link/collaboration relationship -with any other women

    Association? (1)   Yes   (2) No

10.   If Yes, at what level

County council	
Municipal council	
Location/Division	
Provincial	
National	
International	

11. Have you as a group had any formal audience with any leader (Mayor. DO.

    Chief. M.P., D.C etc) where you presented your concerns as women

    (1)   Yes   (2)   No

12.   If Yes,

    (a)   What were the issues/concern you raised ?   ....

    …………………………………………………………………..

    (b) How was it addressed?_____

    (1) Very well addressed (3) Fairly addressed

    (2) Well addressed   (4) Addressed a little bit (5)Not addressed

13. Is there any policy issue that you as a women group have lobbied to

    Addressed through Councilors or your area MP(s) recently

    (1)   Yes   (2)   No

a)   If yes, at what level? ……………………………………………….

b)   If yes, which one?..

SECTION C: Socio-Economic Impact of women groups

1. What are the main sources of your household income

    (1)   Sale of Farm Produce   (2)   Cash from labour activities

    (3)   Cash from husband   (4)   Others (Specify)............

2. What does your husband/spouse do for a living   (1)   Salaried

    (2)   Farmer   (3)   Self-employed   (4)   None

    5) Others Specify...

3. What is your main occupation?...

4. How much from your income do you spend on the family on average?

Kshs…………………………………………………………………………………….

5. How do you ensure the supply of the family daily needs?

       (1)   Self (2)   Spouse   (3)   'Both (4)   Parents

       (5)   Children 6) Others (Specify)..

6. Has group activities improved your socio-economic status?

       (1)   Yes   (2)   No

7. If Yes, how much?

       (1)   Not much   (2)   Fairly much (3)   A lot

       (4)   Very Much

8)   a)   Do your think the family has benefited from this? (l)Yes (2) No

       b)   If yes, to what degree? (1) Very much (2) Much   (3) Fairly much

               (4) Little   (5) Very little

     c) If yes, in which areas? 1) School fees 2) Nutrition 3) Hospital

              4) Farming (5) Others (Specify)

SECTION D: Socio-Cultural Impediments

1.   Do you own any asset of your own (1)   Yes   (2)   No

2.   If Yes, list them:

     ………………………………………………………………………………

     …………………………………………………………………………………...

3.   If No. why (1)   No money to buy   (2)   Husband does not allow

(3)   Husband has overall ownership   (4)   Others

     Specify...............

4.   Who owns the land that you live on (1)   Husband (2) Self (3)

    Both (4) Parents   (5) Others Specify..

5. Who decides on the use of this Land?   (1) Husband   2) Self (3)

    Both (4) Others Specify..

6.   Who decides on the use of things you own? (1) Husband   (2) Self (3)

    Both   (4)   Others Specify...

7.   How often do you attend group meetings   (1) Regular   (2) Rare

    (3)   Don't attend

8,   If not regular, Why? (1) Have young children at home (2) Take care

    of farm activities   (3) Husband do not allow (4)   Others

9.   What problems do your group face?...

    …………………………………………………………………..

SECTION E: Resource Mobilization

1.   Why did you form or join the group?..

2.   Has the group contributed in anyway towards meeting (1) above?

    (1)   Yes (2)   No

3.   If Yes, how much? (1) Very much   (2)   Much (3)   Not much

4. Do you earn any income from the group profits   (1) Yes (2)   No

5. If, Yes, how often   (1)   Regular   (2)   Rare

(3)   Others Specify..

6.   How is the income accruing from your group shared?   (1)   Shared

(2)   Re-invested   (3)   Others Specify...............................

7.   If shared, how do you use your share (1) Buy food (2) Buy utensils

(3) Meet children's needs (4) Others specify............................

Appendix III: Research Permit

PAGE 2

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss/Institution

Eunice Keli Wambua

of (Address) University of Nairobi

P.O.Box 30197-00100, Nairobi.

has been permitted to conduct research in

Location

Mwingi Central   District

Eastern   Province

on the topic: The role of women's organizations
in empowering women in Mwingi District,
Kenya.

for a period ending: 30th June, 2013.

PAGE 3

Research Permit No. NCST/RCD/14/013/821

Date of issue   28th May, 2013

Fee received   KSH. 1,000

Applicant's
Signature

for Secretary
National Council for
Science &Technology

Appendix IV: Research Authorization Letter

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Telephone: 254-020-2213471, 2241349, 254-020-2673550
Mobile: 0713 788 787 , 0735 404 245
Fax: 254-020-2213215
When replying please quote
secretary@ncst.go.ke

P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA
Website: www.ncst.go.ke

Our Ref: **NCST/RCD/14/013/821**

Date: **28th May 2013**

Eunice Keli Wambua
University of Nairobi
P.O Box 30197-00100
Nairobi.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application dated **16th May, 2013** for authority to carry out research on *"The role of Women's organizations in empowering Women in Mwingi District, Kenya."* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Mwingi Central District** for a period ending **30th June, 2013**.

You are advised to report to **the District Commissioner and District Education Officer, Mwingi Central District** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.

DR. M. K. RUGUTT, PhD, HSC.
DEPUTY COUNCIL SECRETARY

Copy to:
The District Commissioner
The District Education Officer
Mwingi Central District