

The Effects of Self-Help Groups on Socio - Economic Development of Women in Rwanda; A Case Study of Tuzamurane Women Self-Help Group in Karongi District, Gitesi Sector, Kayenzi Cell

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Abstract: *Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are increasingly becoming very important methods of organizing women to take action and transform their lives. The strength of Self Help Groups is based upon the fact that the people who are facing problems are likely to be the most committed to solve them. The inability of formal credit institutions to cover poor rural areas is generally attributed to high cost of administering the large number of small loans. The main objective of the study was to examine the effects influencing the growth of self-help groups in Karongi District, Gitesi Sector. The study was guided by the following objectives: to determine the influence of entrepreneurial skills on the growth of self-help groups, to examine the influence of personal attributes on the growth of self-help groups, to determine the extent at which record keeping skills affect the growth of self-help groups and to analyze the influence of access to finance on the growth of self-help groups in Karongi District, Gitesi Sector. The design that was used in the research was descriptive survey. The target population of the study was 25 self-help groups in Karongi District. The study used the census approach where all the members of the target population were included into the study sample. The study used primary and data collection method. The primary data were collected using questionnaires. First, the researcher went through the instruments and compared them with the set objectives and ensured that they contained all the information that answered the set questions and address the objectives. Secondly, experts (supervisors) were consulted to scrutinize the relevance of the questionnaire items against the set objectives of the study. The instruments were taken for piloting on a population that is similar to the target population in Karongi District. The data collected for the purpose of the study was adopted and coded for completeness and accuracy of information at the end of every field data collection day and before storage. The data from the completed questionnaires will be studied, re-coded and entered into the computer using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 19. This research is expected to yield both qualitative and quantitative data. The findings of the study were that; entrepreneurial skills, personal attributes, record keeping skills and access to finance significantly determined the performance of self-help groups and that every unit increase in the independent variables would cause a positive change in the dependent variable with the following quantities; 1.851 (Entrepreneurial skills), 0.22 (Personal attributes), 0.555(Record keeping skills) and 1.522(Access to finance). 0.05), significantly. It was also observed that Entrepreneurial skills and Access to finance have the highest contribution to the regression equation compared to the other variables. The model fit summary shows that the coefficient of determination R square is 0.542 which implies that 54.2% of variation in the dependent variable is determined by the independent variables (predictors). It also means the goodness of fit test is fulfilled. The recommendations of the study are that; the District should frequently organize training forums for the self-help group leaders on management, book keeping and investment, the self-help groups should be sensitized on the available sources of finance like, the banks so as to diversify the finance sources, the banks should over loan facilities to the self-help groups at a reduced interest rate so as to encourage, them get loans the government should come up with a revolving fund for financing the self-help groups.*

1. Background of the Study

Women comprise half of human resources that have been identified as key agents of Sustainable development and women's scholastic equal approach towards stabilizing new Patens and process of development. The contribution of women and their role in the family as well as in the economic development and social transformation are pivotal. Women constitute 90 per cent of total marginal workers of the country. Rural women who are engaged in agriculture form 78 per cent of all women in regular work. Experience of NIRD action research projects reveal that, the operational aspects, such as the extent of enabling that goes into the community self-help processes and sharpening the mind set of women (Harendar Kumar, 2009). SHGs have been instrumental in empowerment by enabling women to work together in collective agency. Women's networks favors as they command few economic resources and frequently rely on time and non-monetized labour exchange.

However, self-help groups, when combined with savings and credit, have enabled women to benefit economically by monetizing their contributions and in the process have empowered them to become agents of change. A related aspect is that self-help groups have facilitated the formation of social capital, where people learn to work together for a common purpose in a group or organization.

Self Help Groups have emerged as one of the major strategies for the convergence of services and activities for purposes of empowerment. Purba Basu (2004) indicates that Self Help Groups in India have emerged as a successful means of improving the socio-economic conditions of rural families with very little administrative expenses. Seibel and Khadka (2002) state that vast number of SHGs had been established in India in the recent past are self-reliant, autonomous and despite the fact that they were mostly from the lowest and other disadvantaged groups, they had proven to be the better savers, borrowers and investors.

Volume 7 Issue 9, September 2018

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Sub-Saharan Africa is among the areas where poverty is geographically concentrated, and it is so pervasive that many of the policies concerned with poverty alleviation encompass practically most of the development plans. Ziderman (2003) asserted that small-scale informal sector enterprises presented enormous opportunities in Sub-Saharan Africa for the employment of women. The development of skills through targeted programs is essential to improving the livelihoods of disadvantaged groups, including women; training could enable women to function better in the informal sector. Rural communities are challenged by the task of organizing themselves for effective participation in economic and social development while ensuring equitable distribution of the benefits.

2. Statement of the Problem

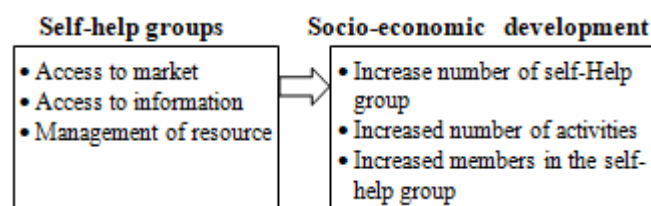
Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are increasingly becoming very important method of organizing women into action and transform of their lives. The strength of Self Help Groups is based upon the fact that the people who are facing problems are likely to be the most committed to solve them. The inability of formal credit institutions to cover rural poor is generally attributed to high cost of administering the large number of small loans.

This has promoted large number of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) to enter the rural credit scheme for organizing the poor into informal groups. For mutual help, these groups are instrumental in promoting informal structure of the poor to help them save and promote self-reliance in financing these needs through Self Help Groups. But still the poor are in financial crisis. Their poverty level still persists. A research carried out by Mutoro (2007) in North Maragoli of western Region in Kenya revealed that formation of women groups, especially with welfare objective was not a new phenomenon. The aspect that was new for many women in that area was the formation of income-generating groups and the formalization of groups through registration. Self Help Groups are a common phenomenon among most Rwandan communities and their role in economic improvement of households has been controversial for long because some men have viewed them with suspicion due to their effect of economic empowerment of women. The main purpose of formation of women self-help groups is to ensure that women are economically empowered and hence improved livelihoods. If the self-help groups disintegrate, then their original and main purpose will not be achieved. This means that the poverty cycle will continue as the women will have challenges in meeting their household needs. Thus, this study seeks to fill the research gap by examining the factors influencing performance of self-help groups in Karongi District.

3. Objective of the Study

To determine the influence of entrepreneurial skills on performance of self-help groups.

4. Conceptual Framework



Research Design

The design that was used in this research is descriptive survey. It involved collection and analyzing of data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of study. Descriptive survey was used because it is intended to provide statistical information about aspects of discipline to educators.

Target Population

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) define a target population as a specific proportion of the entire population that can be narrowed to achieve research objectives. They also argued that they are members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events or objects to which a researcher wishes to generalize the results of the research study. The target population for this study is 75 self-help groups in Karongi District Gitesi sector Kayenzi cell. From this groups chair persons, treasurers and one group member will be used in the research.

Sample size determination and Sampling procedure

The study used the census approach where 5 members of the self-help groups were included in the sample size. a census is often construed as the opposite of a sample as its intent is to count everyone in a population rather than a fraction. However, a population census relies on a sampling frame to count the population. This is the only way to be sure that everyone has been included as otherwise those not responding would not be followed up on and individuals could be missed. The fundamental premise of a census is that the population is not known and a new estimate is to be made by the analysis of primary data. The use of a sampling frame is counterintuitive as it suggests that the population size is already known.

Data Collection Instrument

This study used primary data collection method. The primary data was collected using questionnaires. Questionnaires were prepared for respondents to fill and avail data for the purpose of study as a qualitative approach to obtain data. All the data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed to identify any inconsistencies and institute the necessary corrective measures.

5. Research Findings

Entrepreneurial skills and performance of self-help groups
The first objective for this study was to determine the influence of entrepreneurial skills on performance of self-help groups in Karongi District Gitesi sector Kayenzi cell To achieve this objective the respondents were required first to indicate whether they had acquired any entrepreneurial skills during meetings.

Table 1: Those who acquired skills

Category	Frequency	Percent
Yes	75	100
No	0	0
Total	75	100

Source: Primary data, 2018

Table 1 show that all the respondents (100%) had acquired some entrepreneurial skills during meetings. The researcher further requested the respondents to indicate the skills they had acquired. Those that had acquired skills according to the researcher were seen to be improving in performance. The skills they had acquired helped propel the groups forward. Managerial skills were the skills acquired by most of the respondents. With the Managerial skills acquired the performance of the self-help group improved.

Table 2: Skills Acquired

Skills	Frequency	Percent
Managerial	36	48
Financial	21	28
Customer service	9	12
Others	6	4
Total	75	100

Source: Primary data, 2018

Table 2 shows that majority (48%) of the respondents had learned managerial skills during the meetings. This was followed by those who had learned financial skills (28%). Those who had acquired customer service were 12% while the least (4%) were under others. The researcher further requested the respondents to indicate whether the entrepreneurial skills improved growth as an individual member in the group.

Table 3: Benefits of the Acquired Skills

Benefits	Frequency	Percent
Improved performance	60	80
Not sure	9	12
Not improved	6	8
Total	75	100

According to Table 3, majority (80%) of the respondents indicated that the entrepreneurial skills significantly improved their growth as an individual member in the group and consequently improved the performance of the self-help groups. 12% were not sure while 8% had not improved. The researcher further sought to establish the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and performance of self-help groups. This was done by testing the hypothesis number 1 using Pearson correlation coefficient.

H01: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills and performance of self-help groups.

Table 4: Relationship between entrepreneurial skills on performance of self-

		Entrepreneurial Skills	Performance of self-help groups
Entrepreneurial skills	Pearson Correlation	1	0.82**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	75	75
Performance of self-help groups.	Pearson Correlation	0.82**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	75	75

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 significant level

Table 4 shows that there is a strong positive correlation at 95% confidence level between entrepreneurial skills and performance of self-help groups ($r = 0.82$, $p = 0.000$). We do therefore reject the hypothesis and conclude that there is significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills and performance of self-help groups ($p < 0.05$). This implies that an increase in the entrepreneurial skills will lead to an increase in the performance of self-help groups. These results agrees with.(Khanka, 2009) who argued that training builds them to achieve better co-operation with customers and it increases performance.

Training boosts staff morale for it assist to reduce complaints, dissatisfaction, absenteeism, grievances and rate of turnover. Training is generally accepted as a problem - solving device in any organization ((Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). The main objectives of training is to develop the competences and skills of employees, helping people grow within the enterprise in order its future needs for human resources can be met from within and finally to reduce the learning time for employees starting in new jobs on appointment, promotion or transfer (Khanka, 2009).

6. Conclusions

This study concludes that characteristics; Entrepreneurial skills, personal attributes, record keeping skills and access to finance significantly determined the performance of self-help groups. This is because there is a positive correlation between all these independent variables and performance of self-help groups. The meetings for the self-help groups helped the members to acquire managerial and financial skills which helped in the management of the self-help groups. The personal attributes influenced the performance of self-help groups and that the members with a positive attitude towards the group helped in improving the performance of self-help groups. There were minutes books in most of the groups where they recorded attendance, loans and savings and that the major source of finance for the self-help group was members contribution.

7. Recommendations from the Findings

Based on the findings of this study the researcher recommends that:-

- 1) The District should frequently organize training forums for the self-help group leaders on management, book keeping and investment. This would improve their Management skills.
- 2) The self-help groups should be sensitized on the available sources of finance like the banks, so as to diversify the finance sources
- 3) The banks should over loan facilities to the self-help groups at a reduced interest rate so as to encourage them get loans.
- 4) The government should come up with a revolving fund for financing the self-help groups.

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