

CAPACITY BUILDING AND WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN FARMERS' COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN KENYA: A SURVEY OF COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN KERICHO COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

Kenyan economy predominantly depends on small holder agriculture which supports about 80% of the population. Farmer organizations play a fundamental role in harnessing the capacities of economically weak farmers through collective bargaining power. Women farmers play a critical role in provision of agricultural labor and hence food and nutritional security as well as economic development of their households and communities. Besides, women farmers form a considerable proportion of members of the cooperatives. However, their contribution and benefiting from both agriculture and in the farmer organizations is hindered by various socio-cultural factors. Women often have limited opportunities to participate in governance and management of the cooperatives with reason being lack of capacity to undertake the roles therein. However, development proponents have progressively made different efforts including capacity building aimed at changing this situation in the agricultural sector. The objective of the study is 'To determine the effect of capacity building programmes on performance of women leadership in farmer cooperative in Kenya. The specific objectives of the study are: to evaluate the effect of governance training on women leadership and to assess the effect of financial management training on women leadership. The study utilized descriptive research design and survey method focusing on farmer cooperative societies in Kericho County.

The target population was 15,000 registered members from farmer cooperative organizations in Kenya from which a study sample of 397 respondents selected through simple random sampling. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires and interview schedules while secondary data was collected through literature review of documents such as capacity development reports. Analysis was done using descriptive statistics, thematic and content analysis. Pearson regression test was utilized to establish the relationships between capacity building programmes and performance of women leadership in farmer cooperative societies. The findings indicated that there is a moderately positive association (that is statistically significant) between governance training and women leadership as revealed by a correlation coefficient value ($r = 0.573$ and $p \text{ value} = 0.001$). The results also revealed that there exists a moderately positive association between financial management training and women leadership demonstrated by coefficient value ($r = 0.563$ and $p = 0.001$). It can be concluded that capacity building has a positive influence on the performance of women leaders in farmer cooperatives.

Keywords: Farmer organizations, collective bargaining power, capacity building programmes, farmer cooperative, governance training, financial management training, women leadership

INTRODUCTION

The Kenyan economy is predominantly reliant on agriculture with approximately 80% of the population engaging in small holder farming (GoK, 2010). Farmer organizations play an important role in harnessing the capacities of the economically weak farmers to enhance their potential through collective bargaining power which ultimately increases their incomes (Woldu, Tadesse & Waller, 2013). Farmer Organizations including farmer cooperatives and groups continue to play a critical role in coordination of agricultural value chain activities and services particularly in enhancing production, aggregation and marketing in both developing and developed countries (Shiferaw & Muricho, 2011). They offer input, agronomic and aggregation services as well as market opportunities. Agricultural cooperatives are important in building the economic capacity and social-cultural status of individual small holder farmers (World Bank, 2009; Woldu, et al., 2013). However, the farmer organizations in developing nations remain faced by various challenges some of which relate to political interference as well as governance and leadership/management which hinder them from achieving their goals and objectives optimally (Shiferaw & Muricho, 2011).

Evidence have shown that women living in the rural areas play important roles in agriculture hence food and nutritional security as well as economic development of their households (FAO, 2011). However, it is worth noting that women are disadvantaged in reaping benefits that accrue from agriculture including farmer cooperatives' membership benefits despite them being majority in the production stage (ACDI/VOCA, 2013). According to a report by ACDI/VOCA (2013), culture and other social norms are significant factors that hinder meaningful and equal participation of women in various spheres of life including leadership of agricultural cooperatives. Most African countries uphold social cultural norms and perceptions that propagate the belief that men are better than women and that men have enhanced leadership skills (Aris, 2012). Besides, the traditional African culture confines the role of a woman in the household and as such the woman is not allowed to hold leadership positions. Gizachew (2011) continues to point out that the woman is also burdened by too many chores around the household and community not to mention the reproductive role all of which denies the woman availability of time to play leadership roles. Besides, women particularly in the rural areas lack the motivation to seek leadership positions in the cooperatives due to reasons such as lack of education and relevant skills for leadership and poor social background (Gizachew, 2011).

According to Woldu, et al. (2013), women farmers in most developing nations are marginalized in participating in leadership and management of farmer cooperatives despite their immense contribution to the agricultural sector. This has led to various efforts being undertaken by both government and other stakeholders towards addressing barriers that hinder women's meaningful and equal participation in farmer organizations (USAID, 2012). Within Africa and in particular Kenya, there has been progressive interest by development proponents to support various institutions to empower women to take up leadership opportunities in all spheres including agricultural cooperatives due to their contribution to livelihoods of the vulnerable rural communities (Aris, 2012). UNDP (2009) agrees to this

view by indicating that development practitioners have for a long time made innumerable efforts towards contributing to sustainable development among various nations globally, key among which is capacity development. Some of these efforts are geared towards the formulation and implementation of gender sensitive agricultural policies and programs and capacity building programmes targeting women to enhance their participation in leadership (USAID, 2012).

The government have also made some efforts including promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) which advocates for ‘not more than two thirds of the members of the same gender in elective bodies and other organizations (Rift Valley Institute, 2018). This have tremendously contributed to efforts of enhancing women leadership as well as performance of women leaders through various empowerment strategies in the Country including capacity development (Rift Valley Institute, 2018).

Capacity development of the members of agricultural cooperatives have been undertaken by various stakeholders to strengthen the ability of the members to change their mindsets, perception and attitudes towards women and leadership (Woldu, et al., 2013). According to FAO (2012), capacity building of women have also been undertaken to enhance their self-confidence and improve their leadership skills to take up leadership positions. The ultimate goal of capacity building efforts by development proponents is to improve the performance of women in leadership positions so as to influence and motivate others to take up leadership.

The capacity of farmer cooperatives to support women leadership have also been built through trainings on issues such as institutional capacity, governance, gender-sensitive policies, communication, conflict management and advocacy among others (Horst & Rijpma, 2016). Development partners and other stakeholders invest considerable resources in the capacity building programmes of women leaders in farmer cooperatives and there is need to evaluate the effect of such programmes on performance of their leadership.

Gender equality have become a development policy objective as well as a constant program and project design standard consideration for development proponents (GIZ, 2018). International, national, community-based organizations, farmer institutions among other different institutions have invested time, expertise and financial resources towards gender equality and equity issues with one of the focus issues being women empowerment (GIZ, 2018). The focus on women empowerment including leadership is founded on the rationale that women are not able to equally participate in all spheres of life owing to historical and cultural practices and laws that tend to be discriminatory (UNDP, 2018). Promotion of women participation in leadership and decision making is now a fundamental focus for many organizations that aim to achieve sustainable development (UNDP, 2018). This study aims to evaluate the effect of capacity building programmes on women leadership in farmer cooperative societies in Kericho County, Kenya.

One such cooperative where stakeholders have made capacity building efforts through trainings is Kipkelion District Cooperative Union which deals with milling and grading of

coffee (Horst & Rijpma, 2016). The cooperative union has a membership base of 50,000 members and offers a wide range of services including input provision, processing and milling of coffee as well marketing of the coffee (Horst & Rijpma, 2016). This study sought to determine the effect of capacity building programmes on performance of women leaders in farmer cooperatives in Kericho County, Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Farmer cooperatives play an invaluable role in coordination and provision of agricultural services to small holder farmers in Kenya (Maleko & Msuya, 2015). However, about 60 percent of the cooperatives are faced by a myriad of challenges particularly related to dense political interferences (30%), and weak leadership and management problems (40%) due to and poor governance structures which hinder their development. (Makoni, et al., 2014; Baka, 2013). Worse still, more than 80 percent of leadership positions in the farmer cooperatives are occupied by men with few women holding senior or executive positions in the farmer cooperatives including Kenya (IFAD & SNV, 2014). Maleko and Msuya (2015) asserts that it is estimated that women form 9% of leaders in farmer cooperatives and 40 % of the employees. According to Baka (2013), only 1 woman leader out of 10 leaders is involved in the decision-making processes and governance of the cooperatives yet most of the decisions made in the cooperatives affect them directly.

Maleko and Msuya (2015) further indicates that women not only form the bulk of the membership of the cooperatives but also constitute about 70% labor in production stage of agricultural value chain. This means they are an integral component of farmer cooperatives as they supply the agricultural produce to the cooperatives and are majority of the members. The invaluable role played by women in enhancing productivity and livelihoods of small holder farming in Kenya, has not gone unidentified by stakeholders in the agricultural sector (Baden & Pionetti, 2011). Some efforts have been undertaken towards unlocking the barrier of participation of women in leadership. According to Shiferaw and Municho (2011) governments and development partners have continually played a fundamental role in stimulating development of farmer cooperatives and their sustainability through investments such as market infrastructure, financing, creating an enabling legal and regulatory environment and capacity building. Of importance to note is the fact that capacity building particularly training is one of the strategies that development partners have heavily invested in to address governance, leadership and management gaps including limited women leadership in farmer cooperatives (Oxfam International, 2013). This study sought to evaluate the effect of capacity building programmes on performance of women leadership in farmer cooperatives in Kenya through a survey of cooperative societies in Kericho County.

Objectives of the study

- i. To find out the effect of governance training on women leadership in farmer cooperatives in Kenya.
- ii. To assess the effect of financial management training on women leadership in farmer cooperatives in Kenya

Theoretical Review

A theoretical framework is guide for research based on the existing theories upon which an investigator constructs the research hypothesis (Adom, et al., 2018). According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), theoretical framework guides the researcher to contextualize proven theories in their research enabling them to find a suitable research methodology and analytical tools for the research problem under investigation. This study will be based on two theories of governance, communication and policy advocacy including sociological institutionalism and transformational learning theories.

Sociological institutionalism theory

Sociological institutional theory attempts to explain the relationship between subjects and objects with one of its main assumptions being the social construction of reality in which the principles of people occur in a subjective manner through an in-depth complex association of institutional processes (Carvalho, et al., 2017). This theory proposes that individuals who are leaders are obliged to adopt processes, structures and practices that ensure legitimacy by incorporating cultural elements of the subjects being led including their values, myths, beliefs and symbols (Carvalho, et al., 1999). The theory explains that organizations are not only productive systems but also socio-cultural systems that are required to satisfy the needs and expectations of the environment and public they serve (Scott, 2001). According to this theory, an institution is made up of cultural and regulative elements intertwined together to ensure the operations of the institutions run smoothly while meeting the socio-cultural needs of the people working in the organization (Carvalho, et al., 2017). This is a balance requires that requires good leadership.

To this extent, this theory is applicable to the current study because farmer organizations are institutions which are formed to satisfy social, cultural and economic interests of its members. Farmer cooperatives and unions put in place governance structures and processes that should consider the social constructs of its members such as its values and beliefs which includes gender equity (Shiferaw & Muricho, 2011). Farmer organizations are expected to adopt governance structures that ensure participation of both gender (UNDP, 2009). Thus, this theory is applicable in the study whose one of its objectives is to evaluate how inclusive governance trainings affect women leadership in farmer cooperatives.

Transformational learning theory

Transformational learning theory was developed by a social scientist called Jack Mezirow in 1978 (Mezirow, 2009). Though the theory has progressively evolved over the years, the underlying principles of the theory states that the process of "perspective transformation" can be described in three dimensions namely psychological, convictional and behavioral (Esthermsmith, 2017). According to Christie, et al., (2015), this theory elaborates that for transformation of a person to occur, there has to be changes in understanding of the self (psychological), one's belief systems (convictional), as well as in one's way of life (behavioral). It is applicable in adult learning where it proposes that for adults to learn, their way of thinking, belief and lifestyle have to be disoriented with new knowledge and skills for them to transform (Christie, et al., 2015).

According to Mezirow (2009), people progressively utilize critical self-reflection to deliberate on their beliefs, experiences and behavior and progressively change their views on different issues with time. They are able to identify dysfunctional issues in their life which present a "disorienting dilemma" obliging that fail to align to their current beliefs and views about different issues and the world at large (Mezirow, 2009). This basically makes people to reconsider their beliefs in a manner that is adapted into new experiences which align into the rest of the world.

Transformational learning theory supports the process of deep, productive knowledge acquisition that allows adult to engage in critical thinking and intentionally draw meanings and conclusions of what they learn (LaMorten, 2019). This theory supports learning process which it allows adults to question knowledge and the status quo resulting to world view change which critical in any transformation process. According to Mezirow (2009) transformational learning enables the learner to assess the relevance of knowledge before making an interpretation a process. Transformational learning often that leads to significant changes in the learner's thoughts, opinions, feelings, perceptions, views and behaviors which is necessary for radical changes (LaMorten, 2019).

It is important to note that communication plays a fundamental role in the disorientation of people from their current beliefs and views and thus in the transformation process (Luthra, 2015). Communication is a critical aspect in changing people's psychological, convictional and behavioral opinion's and perspectives (Luthra, 2015). In this regard, transformative theory is applicable in this study in that, development partners and other stakeholders provide new knowledge and skills to trigger critical thinking of cooperative members and leaders on participation of women in leadership through communication trainings. Development practitioners conduct capacity building through communication trainings to pass new ideas that trigger critical thinking and interrogation of society and member's assumptions and beliefs on women leadership (Luthra, 2015). It is also applicable in the study because development proponents offer communication trainings, skills development and sharing of knowledge resources to cooperatives with the goal of offering new perspectives that cause a change in behavior specifically women leadership (Esthermsmith, 2017).

Empirical Literature Review

Empirical review involves systematic analysis of existing literature from previous studies with the aim of collecting data to answer specific research questions of a study (Musembi, 2017). Empirical literature review enables the researcher to examine and analyze an array of past studies that are related to their current study to obtain more clarity on the research questions and study objectives (Musembi, 2017). The review involves selection and analysis of the findings of previous studies that have focused on the research question under study. This study will review the findings of previous studies which have focused on effect of governance, financial management, policy advocacy and communication training on women leadership.

Governance training and women leadership

Hoare and Gell (2009) conducted a case study on women's leadership and participation in development matters. The study was carried out against the background that failure to involve women in decision making of issues affecting the society reveals a sign of unjust power relations and poor governance practices. It involved eight case studies and the findings indicated that women are change agents in economic, social and political development thus it recommended the need to involve them in governance of various institutions.

USAID & GAPP (2015) also undertook a study through action research by implementing a project in Honduras whose objective was to build women capacity in leadership and policy advocacy. The project's background was that enhancing women participation in leadership and decision making was slow and there was need to increase it through trainings in leadership among other trainings. The outcome and impact of the project revealed that equipping women with leadership skills is fundamental in enhancing their participation in political and institutional agendas. The project recommended the need for more women to be reached through such trainings.

A similar study was done by Clugstone (2014) focusing on 'The Business Case for Women's Participation in Agricultural Cooperatives.' The research used case study method specifically Manduvira Sugarcane Cooperative. It was conducted against the context that few women participate in leadership and membership of farmer cooperatives in Paraguay. The study's objective was to gather from Manduvira cooperative to demonstrate that women possess the capacity to perform the roles and responsibilities for positions historically viewed to be for men. In addition, the study aimed to prove that women's participation and leadership in agricultural cooperatives have the capability to enhance overall business performance. The results revealed that gender diversity is an important aspect that provides different perspectives hence strengthening cooperative.

Other studies that have been done have focused on the impact of women leaders in organizations and firms. A study done by Deloitte Consulting firm which revealed that gender diversity in leadership of organizations is crucial in finding solutions to the complex

issues that affect institutions in the current dynamic world (Pellegrino, D'Amato & Weisberg, 2011). It illustrated that when men and women work together, they are able to find innovative solutions to problems affecting their institutions (Pellegrino, D'Amato & Weisberg, 2011).

For instance, a study by McKinsey and Company (2007), showed that approximately 89 European firms with the highest gender diversity in top management positions were the best performers in their industry. They achieved 10 % higher return on equity, 48 % higher operating outcome and 170 % higher stock price growth. In general, these studies revealed that firms and organizations with female board members or in other leadership positions are more resilient as compared to institutions without women in leadership positions.

Another study by Aseete et al. (2017), investigated the 'The potential and limits of farmers' groups as catalysts of women leaders, in Uganda. The study was founded on the background that the 'Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index' showed weak leadership and effect of women in society in the country. The study hypothesis was that collective action through farmer organizations could be exploited as a fundamental strategy for women members to strengthen their leadership power. The objective of the study was to evaluate the probable group characteristics that could act as promoters of women leadership. The study utilized survey method involving 65 farmers' groups in central Uganda and the data collected was analyzed through Tobit regression model. The findings of the study revealed that numerous leadership positions and women strong leadership skills, book keeping and inclusion of youth and women in the group were significant characteristics that acted as catalysts for female leadership.

Woldu and others (2018) also conducted a study in Ethiopia titled 'Women's participation in agricultural cooperatives in Ethiopia.' The study used survey method to collect data in seven regions where 1,117 households and 73 farmer cooperatives participated. The objective of the study as to evaluate the characteristics which determine women's participation in farmer cooperatives at the institutional, household, and individual levels. The results of the study revealed that lack of knowledge and various skills, gender roles, land ownership systems and education level are some of the major barriers to women's participation in farmer cooperatives (Woldu, et al., 2018).

Financial management training and women leadership

A study by Scott (2014) assessed the women's awareness levels on financial literacy. It involved particular groups of women as the targets who included women of young age, widows, uneducated and low-income women. The findings revealed that women have lower financial literacy skills compared to their men counterparts which denies them economic independence with the situation being reflected in both developed and developing nations (Scott, 2014). This was attributed to inadequate financial knowledge as well as economic difficulties that they face. The study recommended that financial skills are critical for women in management of personal and household finances as well as in entrepreneurial activities.

Oades (2014) also explored the challenges that women entrepreneurs face using a case study of Coca-Cola Company. The study showed that some of the major barriers for women's entry into entrepreneurship included lack of financial skills training and lack of mentors. The study revealed that women require trainings in both business and financial literacy skills. Coca-Cola company offered this training to 5 million women entrepreneurs. The impact of the training revealed that the training led to economic empowerment which improved both the family's and communities' livelihoods. This study focused on financial literacy and business skills of women entrepreneurs in the Coca-Cola value chain and did not focus on how these skills affect leadership of women in farmer cooperatives in Kenya which is the focus of this study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted descriptive research design to collect data on capacity building programmes and performance of women leadership in farmer cooperative societies. According to Creswell and Creswell, (2017), descriptive research design is an appropriate research design for collection of both quantitative and qualitative data for illustration of circumstances and relationships between variables at a particular point in time. The research utilized survey research method which enables the investigator to collect quantitative data and information from respondents by asking questions (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). Specifically, the researcher adopted conduct a cross-sectional survey to analyze how capacity building programmes affects women leadership in farmer cooperatives in Kericho County, Kenya. Cross-sectional surveys gather data that is utilized to make inferences about a target population at a specific point in time (Showkat & Parveen, 2017).

Target population

Target population refers to the total number of members, subjects or objects that have specific attributes which are of interest to a researcher (Lewis, 2015). The target population of the study was 50,000 registered members/farmers drawn from 32 farmer cooperatives in Kericho County.

Sample and Sampling Technique

According to Hanlon & Larget (2011), a sample is a subset of individuals, subjects or objects representative of the target population. The sample provides a researcher with specific data of interest about the study variables (Hanlon & Larget, 2011). On the other hand, sampling is the process of selecting a smaller number of individuals, subjects, objects from the target population for representation in a study (Bryman and Bell, 2015). This study adopted a formula developed by Yamane (1967) to calculate the sample size of the study (Ajay & Micah (2014). The sample size was 397 respondents as calculated using the formulae shown below.

$$n = \frac{N}{\dots}$$

$$\frac{1 + N (e^2)}{1 + N (e^2)}$$

Where n = sample size

N = target population size

cv= coefficient of variation

e= level of precision (0.05 at 95% confidence level)

$$n = 50,000 / 1 + (50,000) 0.05^2$$

$$n = 50,000 / 1 + 125$$

$$n = 50,000 / 126$$

$$n = 396.8$$

$$n = 397$$

Thus, the study involved 397 registered members of the society from different farmer cooperatives as the sample size.

Stratified random sampling will be used to get the number of respondents from the different farmer cooperative societies (strata) as indicated in table 4 below. To obtain the desired sample size from each stratum, the following sampling formula will be used $i = n (N/P)$, (Kothari, 2009).

Where: i = the number of respondents to be sampled in the stratum, n = sample size, N = population of the specific stratum, P = the population.

Table 1: Sample Size in Each Stratum

No	Name the Society	Membership	Sample Size	Percentage (%)
1.	Roret FCS	589	5	1.26
2.	Boma FCS	1381	11	2.77
3.	Kunyak FCS	980	8	2.02
4.	Sombo FCS	1,100	9	2.27
5.	Kamiwa FCS	3,120	25	6.3
6.	Burgei- Eut FCS	1,170	9	2.27
7.	Chepkitar FCS	2,150	17	4.28
8.	Tech-Gaa FCS	3,020	24	6.05
9.	Sereng FCS	2,670	21	5.29
10.	Torsogek FCS	765	6	1.51
11.	Kasheen FCS	630	5	1.26
12.	Kimologit FCS	1,600	13	3.27
13.	Sorwot FCS	2,130	16	4.03
14.	Koisagat FCS	1,430	11	2.77
15.	Chepnorio FCS	870	7	1.76
16.	Siwot FCS	2,360	19	4.79
17.	Kapkulumben FCS	1,535	12	3.02
18.	Songonyet FCS	530	4	1.01
19.	Kabngetuny FCS	3,780	30	7.56
20.	Lessan FCS	890	7	1.76
21.	Kiboiywo FCS	1,070	8	2.02
22.	Sotik FCS	2,410	19	4.79
23.	Kipsinende FCS	1,300	10	2.52
24.	Kichawir FCS	2,838	23	5.79
25.	Soymingin FCS	1,063	8	2.02
26.	Chilchila FCS	2,360	19	4.79

27.	Tuiyobei FCS	1,879	15	3.78
28.	Lelu FCS	450	4	1.01
29.	Cherara FCS	630	5	1.26
30.	Masare FCS	1100	9	2.27
31.	Kaptagas FCS	1,610	13	3.27
32.	Koisegem FCS	590	5	1.26
	Total	50,000	397	100%

Research Instruments

The research used different research instruments for data collection including questionnaires, interview guides and data checklists. Closed-ended questionnaires were developed based on the study objectives for collection of primary data from the members of the cooperative. Interview guides/schedules were also developed collect data from managers and leaders of the of the cooperative. A checklist was used as the instrument for secondary data collection. A checklist of relevant secondary data sources including published data, capacity development reports, cooperative policies, strategic plans and human resource documents that elaborated the governance and leadership structures of the cooperative was developed and utilized.

Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a pilot study involving 40 respondents including staff and cooperative members with the aim of pre-testing the research instruments. According to Flick (2014), a sample size ranging between 5-10% of the study sample is considered satisfactorily representative in a pilot study. The study sample size is 397 and the researcher will adopt a 10% of the study sample which is equivalent to 40 respondents.

The pilot study served to test the validity of the interview schedule and the questionnaire and the findings of the pilot be used to review the instruments for clarity. Validity refers to the precision and relevance of results of a study in reference to the study objectives or the extent to which data gathered truly represent the phenomenon being investigated (Merter & Reinhart, 2016). Validity will be tested through the interview responses of experts in the cooperative sector.

Reliability is a measure of the extent to which a research instrument yields consistent results even after recurrent trials (Merter & Reinhart, 2016). According to Whitehead, et al. (2015), reliability coefficient of a research instrument can be assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α). This study will adopt the interrater methodology using the Cronbach's alpha computation to test the reliability of the instrument and it will be computed as follows:

$$A = k/k-1 \times [1 - \sum (S^2) / \sum S^2 \text{sum}]$$

Where: α = Cronbach's alpha; k = Number of responses; $\sum (S^2)$ = Variance of individual items summed up; $\sum S^2 \text{sum}$ = Variance of summed up scores

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher utilized different data collection techniques together where each of the techniques will complement the other. The study used triangulation, which according to Bryman (2006) refers to the usage of various approaches to explore a research question to improve confidence of the study findings. Questionnaires were administered to the members of the cooperative for data collection while key informant interviews were conducted to collect data from the leaders and managers of the cooperative. Literature review was conducted where relevant data sources elaborated in the checklist will be analysed to collect data. The questionnaires and interviews collected primary data while literature review gathered secondary data about the research topic.

Data Analysis and Presentation

The data collected during the study was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The researcher used descriptive statistics, thematic and content analysis. All the questionnaires were referenced through coding to facilitate the process of data entry and minimize errors such as double entry. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistic tests such as percentages, means, and frequencies and presented in charts and frequency tables. On the other hand, qualitative data from the interviews was analyzed through thematic and content where key thematic areas based on context and relevance were identified and categorized into appropriate themes according to the study objectives. The researcher explored the data for explicit and inferred implications that were of analytic interest. The collected data was also analyzed through deduction and content analysis where key content emerging from the key themes were identified. Besides, secondary data sources were analyzed through content analysis where the data in the documents was divided into units of analysis including governance and financial management trainings and their effect on women leadership in farmer cooperatives examined. Pearson correlation model was used to get the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study's total sample size was 397 respondents. A total of 319 questionnaires were filled and returned on administration of the questionnaires to the respondents. This translated to a response rate of 80%. According to Babbie (2015) a return rate that is between 50-70% is acceptable for both analysis and publishing purposes. Consequently, the study was considered to have achieved an acceptable response rate for analysis. This is further illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Response Rate

Response	Total	Percent
Returned	319	80%
Unreturned	78	20%
Total	397	100

Trainings undergone by board members

The study also sought to find out the theme/subjects of the trainings that the board members of the Kipkelion cooperative had undergone in the last three (3) years. The results showed that 23% of the board members have undergone governance training, 18% financial training while 2% have undergone communication training. 21% indicated that the board members had been trained on Governance, Finance and Lobby while 14 % indicated that the board members had undergone all (governance, financial management, lobby and advocacy and Communication) trainings. In addition, 22% cited that they were not aware/did not know about the trainings that the board had been trained on. This is further illustrated in Table 4.2.

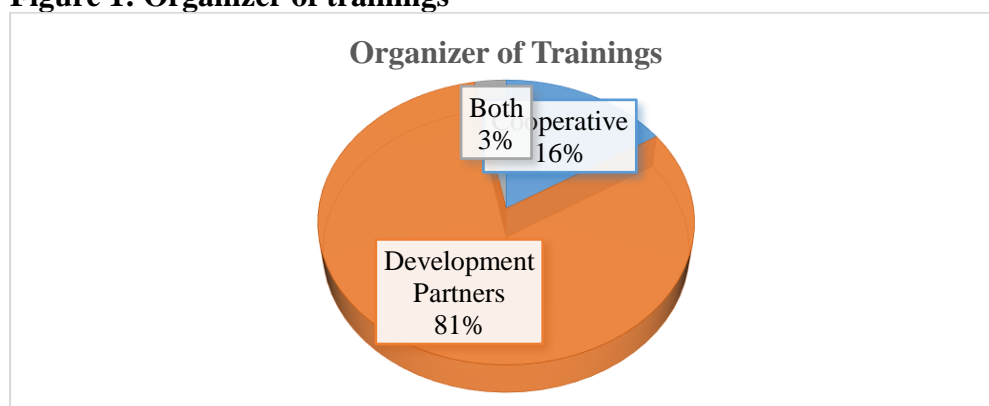
Table 3: Board Trainings in the last 3 years

Training		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Governance	72	23
	Financial	58	18
	Communication	9	2.0
	Governance, Finance and Lobby	68	21.0
	All	43	14.0
	Don't Know	69	22.0
Total		319	100.0

Stakeholders in farmer cooperative trainings

The results of the study showed that development partners were the dominant organizers of the board members trainings of the cooperative. 81% of the respondents cited development partners as the organizers of the trainings with 16 % and 3% of the respondents indicating that the trainings were organized by cooperative leaders and partnerships between cooperative and development partners respectively. Figure 1 further elaborated this.

Figure 1: Organizer of trainings



Effect of governance training on women leadership

The study sought to explore the perceptions of the respondents on the effect of governance training on women leadership by finding out their perceptions on the effect of the training on different aspects including leadership style, increase of women in leadership, introduction of programs targeting women, change in corporate governance practices, relationship change between members and the board among others. The findings of the study are presented and

from which a conclusion on the effect of governance training on women leadership was drawn.

The study sought to find out the effect of governance training on the leadership style of the cooperative. In this regard, the researcher explored the perception of the respondents on the effect of governance training. The results showed that majority 59% of the respondents agreed that the training had an effect with 35% agreed and 25% strongly agreed. 3 % of the respondents disagreed that the training had any effect while 22 % neither agreed nor disagreed and 16% of the respondents had not undergone the training and thus it was not applicable to them. This is further elaborated in Table 4.

Table 4: Perceptions on effect of governance training on leadership style

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Disagree	9	3.0
Neither	69	22.0
Agree	113	35.0
Strongly Agree	78	24.0
Not Applicable	50	16.0
Total	319	100.0

The findings of this study agree with those of Nakazi, et al. (2017) who indicates that empowerment of women through technology and information is a fundamental condition in advancing leadership of women in farmers’ organizations which include cooperatives (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2010). According to IFAD (2010), equipping women with information as a resource is one of the ways of enhancing their competence to participate in leadership in different spheres of life. Research by Njuki, et al. (2014) is also in congruence with the findings of this study where it revealed that farmer institutions were vehicles of women empowerment through leadership trainings. Njuki, et al. (2014) conducted the study in dairy cooperatives in Kenya and found that women accomplished higher adequacy in being leaders when trained on governance.

The study also sought to explore the perception of the respondents on how governance training had affected the percentage of women leaders in the cooperative in the last three years. The findings showed that majority of the respondents agreed that the training had indeed resulted to increase of women leaders taking up positions in the organization with the average mean of the responses being 4.03 (equivalent to agree). This is further shown in Table 5.

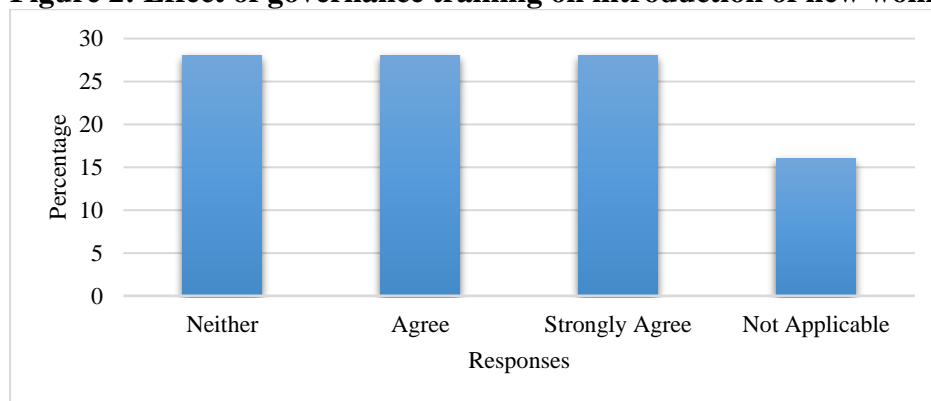
Table 5: Mean of the scales on women leaders increase in leadership positions

Women Leaders Percentage Increase		
N	Valid	319
	Missing	0
Mean		4.03
Std. Error of Mean		0.218
Std. Deviation		1.231

This finding agrees with that of Nakazi et al. (2017) who indicate that a few women leaders have taken up leadership positions in farmer groups and are efficiently representing the interests of other women and members. However, Penunia (2011) indicates that the situation is different in some farmer institutions where women are underrepresented. For example, in the Philippines, the Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development has ten-member national farmers’ organizations with mixed membership, but none of them is led by a woman.

The study also sought to find out the effect of governance training on introduction of new programs that are sensitive to women needs. The findings indicated that majority (56%) of the respondents agreeing that the training had led to introduction of new programs (28% agreed and 28% strongly agreed) while 28 % were not decided. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the training had led to new programs. This is further illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Effect of governance training on introduction of new women programs



This finding agrees to that of Agriterra (2015) who indicated that women are more likely to apply new knowledge and skills learnt resulting to adoption of new techniques, technologies and practices. From the findings of this study, it can be argued that the women who underwent governance training negotiated for introduction of gender sensitive programs.

The opinions of the respondents on the change of governance training on governance structure was also explored during the study. The findings indicated that majority of the respondents representing a total of 50% agreed that the training had led to change in governance structure and principles in the cooperative. 9.4 % of the respondents disagreed that there was any change while 25.0 % were not decided and responded neither. This is further illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6: Change in Governance structure after governance training

Response		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Disagree	29	9.0
	Neither	78	24.4
	Agree	49	15.3
	Strongly Agree	114	36.0
	Not Applicable	49	15.3
	Total	319	100.0

According to Delima and Ragel (2017) corporate governance practices includes clearly governance structures including including the board size, regular Annual General Meetings

and have clear description and segregation of responsibilities. In regard to this study, training women in governance resulted in change in corporate governance principles in Kipkelion Farmer cooperative union. Michelberger (2016) adds that good corporate practices promotes transparency, accountability and ethics in an organization.

The study also sought to explore how the respondents perceived the effect of governance training on understanding of roles by the board, relationship between the board and members, usefulness of the training and attitude change towards women leadership. The respondents agreed that the training had resulted in a change in all these aspects as shown by an average mean of about 4.00 in each of the aspects as table 4.6 shows. There was enhanced understanding of roles by the board, improved relationship between members and board and the respondents agreed that the training was useful and had resulted in attitude change towards women leadership.

Table 7: The effect of governance training on different leadership aspects

		<i>Board understanding</i>	<i>Relationship has improved</i>	<i>Usefulness to Female leaders</i>	<i>Attitude change towards Women Leadership</i>
N	Valid	319	319	319	319
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.22	4.31	4.31	4.44
Std. Error of Mean		.232	.203	.193	.195

This finding implies that generally, the cooperative’s governance processes improved after the women leaders underwent the training. According to FAO (2014), which is a hindrance to optimal performance. The finding that governance training improved relationship between the leaders and members implied that the women leaders practiced what they learnt and agrees with IFC (2020) who revealed that women in leadership tend to resolve conflicts peacefully without resorting to violence and advocate for social issues that benefit all. Women who are in management positions are also said to combat cheating and corruption which ultimately improves relationship between members and the board/leaders (IFC, 2020). Pearson correlations test was used to establish the association between the governance training and the percentage increase of women leaders in cooperative leadership in the last three years. The findings indicated that there is a moderately positive association between governance training and women increase in leadership positions as revealed by a correlation coefficient value ($r = 0.573$). The association is statistically significant with the p value $= 0.001$. This is further shown in the correlation matrix table 8.

Table 8: Effect of governance training on women percentage increase

<i>Correlation</i>		<i>Governance Training Effect</i>	<i>Women Leaders Percentage Increase</i>
Governance Training effect	Pearson Correlation	1	.573**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	319	319
Women Leaders Percentage Increase	Pearson Correlation	.573**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	319	319

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings of the study agree with those of Agriterra (2015) who indicate empowering women through training enhances their self-confidence resulting in enhanced female participation in governance activities. However, Aris (2012) indicates that men continue to hold majority of executive level positions within farmer cooperatives boards all over the world. This view is supported by Agriterra (2015) who indicate that only a small percentage of women leadership positions in agricultural cooperative boards. Agriterra (2015) points out that in Kenya, only 9% of board members are women while in the Netherlands women comprise 10% of the board.

The study further determined the relationship between training of women in governance and introduction of new women programs in the cooperative using Pearson Correlation test. The findings indicating that there is a strong positive relationship between governance training and introduction of new women programs (Pearson correlation value = 0.846). The relationship between the two variables is statistically significant as indicated by p value =0.000. This is further illustrated in Table 9.

Table 9: Correlation matrix for governance training and introduction of new women programs

<i>Correlations</i>		<i>Governance Training</i>	<i>Introduction of new women programs</i>
Governance Training	Pearson Correlation	1	.846**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	319	319
New women programs introduced	Pearson Correlation	.846**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	319	319

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The study results are in congruence with the finding of Agriterra (2015) who revealed that women are not only more likely to apply what they learn but also easily adopt new techniques and technologies. For this reason, Agriterra (2015) advocated the need to make services such as trainings accessible to men. In this study, it can be deduced that the trained women leaders advocated for the introduction of the programs.

The study also used Pearson Correlation test to determine relation between governance training and change on governance structure and principles. The results indicated that there is a strong positive statistically significant relation between governance training and governance structure as indicated by the correlation coefficient value ($r = 0.731$, p -value = 0.001). The results of the Pearson test were as presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Correlation between governance training and governance structures

<i>Correlations</i>		<i>Governance Training</i>	<i>Change in Governance Structure</i>
Governance Training Effect	Pearson Correlation r	1	.731**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001
	N	319	319
Change in Governance structure	Pearson Correlation r	.731**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	319	319

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

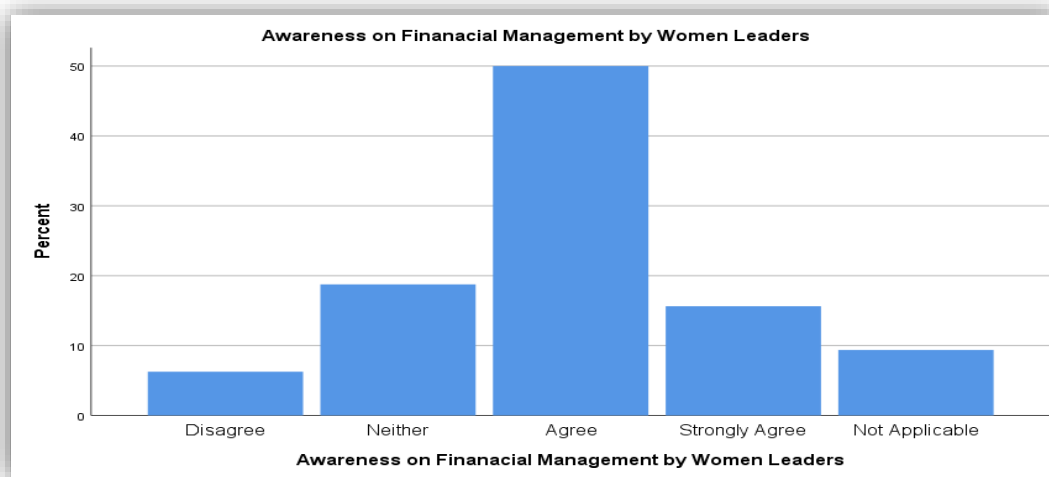
The finding of this study is in congruence with Agriterra (2015) who indicated that diversity in leadership of a cooperative is significant for competitiveness and that boards with a good mixture of men and women achieves better results. Research have demonstrated that if women have access to the resources they need for development, they produce 20-30% more compared to men that they reinvest the output up to 90% as compared to men who only reinvest 45% (Agriterra, 2015). This indicates that inclusion of women is fundamental for business strategy of every organization including agricultural cooperatives.

Effect of financial management training on women leadership in farmer cooperatives

The study also explored how financial management training had affected women leadership by exploring how it affected different features of leadership including awareness, involvement in financial practices/activities of the cooperative, execution of roles and taking of financial management leadership positions in the cooperative by women leaders.

As Figure 3 shows, 50% of the respondents agreed that women leaders are aware of financial management practices of the cooperative while 16% strongly agreed that this was the case. However, 6%, of the respondents disagreed while 19% were not decided and responded ‘neither’ 10 % had not undergone the training and therefore it was not applicable.

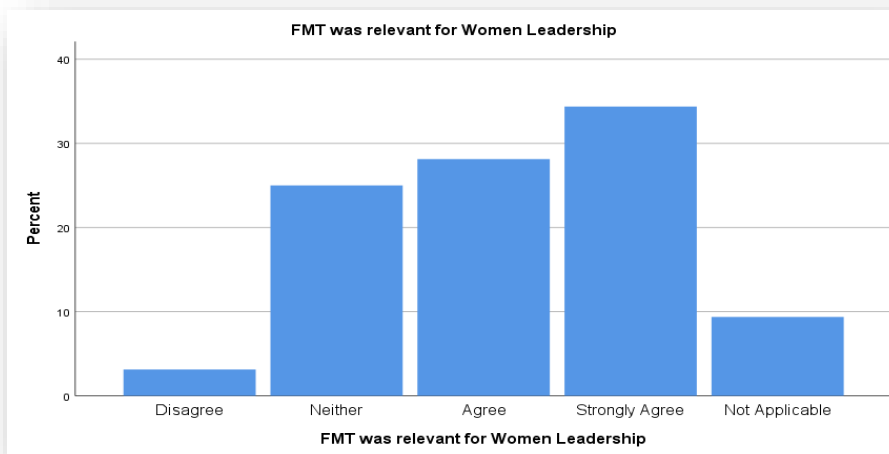
Figure 3: Awareness level of women leaders on financial management practices



The study finding contrasts that of Aris (2012) who indicates that one of the reasons why women in farmer cooperatives continue to be excluded from leadership positions is because of low literacy levels. A study by Zakic, et al. (2017), also disagrees to the finding by elaborating that the financial knowledge and literacy level of farmers (who are the members of the farmer cooperatives) is generally low and there is need to establish progressive financial education programs to enhance their knowledge and skills. However, the high financial management awareness levels notable in this study could be linked to the fact that women are said to be more likely to understand and apply new knowledge learnt than men (Agriterra, 2020).

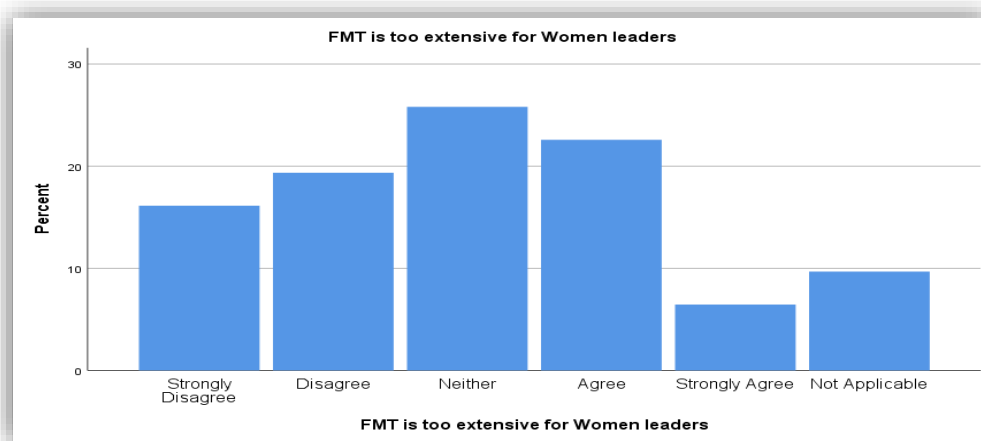
The study sought to find out if the financial management training was relevant for women leadership. The findings showed that most of the respondents either strongly agreed-34% or agreed 28 % that the training was relevant for women leadership. In addition, 3% of the respondents indicated that the Financial management training was relevant for women leadership, while 25 % indicated that they were undecided and responded neither. 9% of the respondents had not undergone the training the financial management training and hence the question was not applicable to them. This is further illustrated by the figure 3.

Figure 4: Relevance of Financial management training for women leaders



The study also sought to explore the perception of the respondents towards the extensiveness of the financial management training for women leaders. According to the study findings, 35% of the respondents disagreed to the statement that the financial management training was too extensive. In other words, majority indicated that it was not too extensive with 16% strongly disagreeing and 19% disagreeing while 26 % responded neither. Only 6 % of the respondents indicated that the training was too extensive for the women leaders while 10% noted that they had not participated in the training and thus the question was not applicable to them. This is further illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Extensiveness of financial management training for women leaders



According to Zakic, et al., financial literacy in farmers which entails financial management literacy of farmers should entail explanation of relevant terms that are applicable in their work including Fixed and working capital, liabilities, revenue streams, expenditures, price, profits and loss calculation which are critical in planning. The farmers should be taught on development of simple business plans (Živanović et, al., 2016).

The study also sought to explore how the respondents perceived the effect of financial management training on involvement women leader’s financial management activities of the cooperative. The research inquired how the training affected involvement of women leaders in financial practices, how it had affected execution of roles by women leaders and effects on women taking up position in the board specifically treasurer position.

As table 4.13 shows, Majority of the respondents agreed that women leaders are less involved in financial activities with 25% agreeing and 12.5% strongly agreeing to this view. 12.5% disagreed and 3.1% strongly disagreed that this was the situation. Besides, with regard to the effect of the training on how women leaders executed their roles, 49% of the respondents were in agreement (Agree-43%, Strongly Agree – 6%) that the training had affected the manner of execution of roles while 15 % were in disagreement (3%-strongly disagree, 12% disagree). Further, 15.6% of the respondents disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed that the training had led to an increase in women taking treasurer leadership position with only 15.6% of the respondents agreeing that there was an increase. It is notable that none of the respondents strongly agreed that the training led to an increase in women taking treasurer position in the farmer cooperative. The opinions of the respondents towards the effect of financial management training towards the different cooperative financial activities are illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11: Involvement Women leaders in financial activities and leadership

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Not Applicable</i>
Women Leaders are involved less in financial practices	3.1%	12.5%	31.3%	25.0%	12.5%	15.6%
Training affected how women execute their roles	3 %,	12%	22%	43%	6%	13%
Training led to an increase in women leaders taking positions as treasurers in the board	15.6%	25.0%	31.3%	15.6%	0%	12.5%

The finding of this study that women leaders are less involved in financial activities of the board disagrees with research by Women Deliver (2019) who revealed that capacity building promotes inclusiveness by equipping the disadvantaged groups with the pre-requisite skills required for inclusion and participation in different spheres of life. The study result shows that the training changed how women leaders executed their roles, is in concurrence with the research findings of Agriterra 2015 who indicated that women have a higher probability of applying new knowledge and skills acquired in their work when compared with men.

This research utilized Pearson correlation test to determine the association between financial management awareness and change in execution of roles among the women leaders of the cooperative. The study indicated that awareness and execution of roles by the women leaders are moderately and positively associated with the Pearson test yielding a correlation coefficient value of 0.551. The association between awareness and change in execution of roles is also statistically significant p-value =0.001. This is further illustrated by Table 12.

Table 12: Correlation between financial management training and execution of roles

<i>Correlations</i>		<i>FM Awareness in Women Leaders</i>	<i>Training effect on execution of roles women</i>
FM Awareness in Women Leaders	Pearson Correlation	1	.551**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	319	319
Training effect on women execution of roles	Pearson Correlation	.551**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	319	319

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A study by Women Deliver (2019) a Non-Governmental Organization agrees to this study by pointing out that provision of training to women, men and youths empowers the trainees to execute their roles effectively and meaningfully participate in decision-making.

Pearson correlation test was utilized to determine the association between financial management awareness and increase of women in leadership positions. The test revealed that there exists a moderately positive association between financial management awareness and increase of women in leadership positions Correlation Coefficient (r = 0.563). The

association is statistically significant ($p=0.001$). This is further illustrated in correlation Table 13.

Table 13: Effect of financial management awareness on increase of women in leadership

<i>Correlations</i>		<i>FM Awareness</i>	<i>Increase in women leaders taking positions</i>
FM Awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.563**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	319	319
Increase in women leaders taking positions	Pearson Correlation	.563**	.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	319	319
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

According to Leede (2020) pointed out that capacity building equips the leaders of an agricultural cooperative board with the capability to participate in decision making processes. Agriterra (2015) adds that enhancing access of resources for women results in more equal contribution of women in decision making at both household and cooperative levels. From the study, it can be deduced that by enhancing the capacity building initiatives targeting women members of the cooperative, would result in increase of women taking leadership positions.

Conclusion

From the findings of objective one, the study led to the conclusion that governance training is critical in improving corporate governance practices as well as changing attitude towards women leadership in a farmer cooperative.

According to the findings of objective two, the study arrived at the conclusion that financial management training is critical in enhancing financial knowledge and skills in women leaders which eventually result in efficiency in execution of roles.

Recommendations

It is recommended that leaders/managers and development partners develop and implement capacity building policies and programmes that promote progressive training of farmer cooperatives' leaders as one of the critical strategies in improving performance and competitiveness.

Based on objective one, governance training plays a fundamental role in improving women leadership, hence the study recommends that the management of farmer cooperatives support training of farmer leaders in governance to enhance their leadership capacities.

According to the results of objective two, the study recommends that the management and stakeholders of farmer cooperatives should develop strategies and plans to promote financial

management trainings among leaders to enhance financial performance of their organizations. From the findings of objective three, it is recommended that farmer cooperative leaders undergo policy advocacy trainings to enhance their negotiation skills which are necessary in demanding for their rights and change. It is also recommended that stakeholders and actors of farmer cooperatives allocate resources for training leaders in communication for enhanced clarity, confidence and trust besides effective leadership.

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