

Effect of Education and Training Role of Catholic Women Association on Women Empowerment in Nyandarua County, Kenya

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Abstract

This study's objective was to investigate the effect of education and training role of Catholic Women Association on women empowerment in Nyandarua County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design. A sample size of 224 subjects was used in the study. Simple random sampling and stratified random sampling and procedures were used to obtain study participants. Using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23, the researcher coded, entered and analysed quantitative data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were computed. The study found out that all (100%) of the participants agreed that education and training programs by CWA had provided women with skills on small business management and sustainability. A vast majority (97.5%) of the participants affirmed that new businesses had been started by women as a result of entrepreneurship training received from CWA in Nyandarua County. There was a statistically significant association between education and training offered by CWA to women and women empowerment in Nyandarua County, $F(5, 193) = 15.188, p = .000$. The study concluded that women training on small business management and entrepreneurship have resulted in start-ups of many income-generating activities by rural women that promote household income and reduce poverty levels. The study's recommendation is that both governmental and non-governmental institutions should support informal education and training programs for rural and informal settlement women to help them learn basic small business management skills, basic rights and litigations, peace building and conflict resolution strategies among other courses.

Key Terms: Catholic Women Association, Education and training, Women empowerment, rural women

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Introduction

In the modern world, the empowerment of women is an integral component of reducing poverty and promoting development all over across the globe. In fact, in the last few decades, a lot of focus has been put towards various potential methods to empower women. To mention but a few, the governments, non-governmental organisations, and religious institutions have supported the education of girls and young women, created job opportunities for women through gender equality rule, placed women in leadership and given them decision making roles, promoted women entrepreneurial ideas through the support of small businesses and income-generating activities, and mentored women professionally and personally among other approaches. For example, church women's groups play an important social and spiritual role in the lives of many indigenous women more, especially in rural and informal settlements. However, church women's groups rarely attract the interest of development practitioners concerned with women empowerment programs as a result of outwardly traditional stance - church women's groups appear to epitomise a welfare approach to women's development.

Empowerment expands entrance of women to financial resources that include occupations, monetary organisations, assets, aptitudes change and tangible property. According to Domingo, Menocal and Hinestroza (2015) women empowerment is the act of ensuring that women and girls are able to control their lives and have capabilities for actively participating in the social, religious, political and economic domain, it entails the act of realising true equality for men and women especially through education and training. Huebler (2014) felt that gender equality could be achieved by strengthening women rights

through the promotion of economic empowerment programs, and by expanding their part in the economy is a solution to the money related issues and the basis for financial flexibility and development among women. A UNESCO report (2010) revealed that more than 66% of the world's 796 million unskilled individuals are women, huge numbers of whom live in rural areas. Additionally, the worldwide optional school participation proportion of provincial young women is 39% rather than 45% for country young men. According to the International Labour Organisation Report (2013), women are usually more confined to informal employment as compared to men, and to unpaid care work, which also limits their chances of accessing education and training. A World Bank Report (2012) indicated that women face more barriers than men to become entrepreneurs and to start their own businesses. This is attributed to the inability to access productive assets like land and credit and lack of access to information or relevant networks and relevant educational skills. A World Bank Report (2010) recorded that only 53 countries across the world have achieved gender parity in education which serves as evidence of high illiteracy level among women as compared to men.

A UN Women Report (n.d.) established that globally, more than 2.7 billion women are legally restrained from having the same choice of jobs as men. Similarly, a World Bank report showed that of 189 economies assessed in 2018, 104 economies still had legislation prohibiting women from working in certain jobs, 59 economies had no laws regarding workplace sexual harassment, and in 18 economies, husbands can legally prevent their wives from working. To rescue this situation, the British Council Report (2017) revealed that the British Council had implemented

many European funded projects in partnership with other international bodies in the developing nations like Uganda, Morocco, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia with a purpose to strengthen women's participation in social and economic life as well as encourage a society where women and men have equal access to opportunities, resources and government development.

In African and the Caribbean nations, the efforts to empower women economically are making some progress although faced by many challenges. On the one hand, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2007) indicated that African women had not possessed the capacity to profit by venture and the development of rural exchange items because of the deterrents looked as far as constrained access to gainful assets, such as credit, land, transport and expansion administrations. The report further pointed out that although women produce up to 80% of basic foodstuffs, a survey of credit schemes in five African countries found that they received less than 10% of the credit given to male smallholders. Conversely, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India revealed that the Catholic Church in India has advanced the strengthening of women throughout the years and has made a vital commitment towards women's strengthening especially in the field of training and human services. Mohammed (2017) further observed that in India, the provision of vocational training and education among catholic women groups has a great impact on women empowerment. Thus, there is a dire need for all stakeholders to come together in order to train and educate women on their rights and to equip them with economic empowerment skills.

Onah, Okwuosa and Uroko (2018) showed that most Catholic archdioceses in Nigeria like the Kolping Society in

Umuhia Diocese and the Eu-Care Apostolate in Owerri Archdiocese render benevolent administrations and training to women groups in hairdressing, catering, fitting, carpentry, tiling and electrical works for poverty eradication. Similarly, Kesanta and Andre (2015) showed evidence from Tanzania that suggests that participation in the field of training and education is associated with a significant positive increase in women empowerment and transformation, decision making, boosting of self-confidence and general sustainable development of the country in terms of commitment and production. Additionally, Salia (2014) portrayed that in Rwanda, women empowerment through education and training programs has been associated with a significant positive increase social, economic and political transformation.

In Kenya, the East Africa Dairy Development Project (2011) contends that for a long time, women have depended on their care groups, pooling their assets as a method for enabling themselves and building up each other. The women group systems referred to locally as *Chama* are exceptionally instrumental to women advancement. In a *Chama*, women rally behind each other to address their financial and social needs. Abala (2013) revealed that about 40% of all Kenyan women have no access to finances at all and those that are lucky access through informal financial systems like merry-go-rounds through groups. The church has also put much effort to support women climb the economic ladder through capacity building. A report prepared by the County Government of Nyandarua (2018) established that agriculture - small scale subsistence crop farming and animal rearing, is the major source of livelihoods for the entire population and their livelihoods have overtime decreased due to climate change and high population growth rate of 2% annually, hence becoming vulnerable to poverty and dependency. Thus, it is with this



in mind that the study sought to investigate the effect of education and training role of the Catholic Women's Association on women empowerment in Nyandarua County, Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive research design, which was useful in describing the characteristics of the study population. The design allowed the use of a structured questionnaire that was the main tool the researcher used in data collection. The study targeted members of the Catholic Women Association in Nyandarua County. A sample size of 224 subjects was used in the study. Simple random sampling and stratified random sampling and procedures were used to obtain study participants from the different groups of members of the Catholic Women Association in Nyandarua County. The reliability of the instrument was estimated using Spearman's Correlation Coefficient, which is a measure of internal coefficient. For this study, a coefficient of 0.84 was achieved. To guarantee that the instruments were valid, content validity was utilised. Using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23, the researcher coded, entered and analysed quantitative data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were computed. Demographic data of the study participants and all the study findings were presented using frequencies and percentages and summarised using tables. The study also observed legal and ethical issues throughout the research process. These included seeking all research permits, giving a consent form to all participants, adhering to the principle of voluntary participation by the participants, ensuring the confidentiality of participants' information, ensuring the participants remained anonymous during data collection, and the researchers acknowledged other people's ideas to

avoid plagiarism and fraud. The researcher also disclosed the real purpose of the research to all the participants.

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Effect of Education and Training on Women Empowerment

The study sought to establish the effect of education and training role of Catholic Women Association on women empowerment. The study determined the frequency of education and training opportunities for rural women offered by CWA in Nyandarua County, the contents of education and training provided to women groups and the impact that education and training have on indigenous women's socio-economic empowerment.

Frequency of Education and Training Opportunities for Indigenous Women

The study participants were requested to indicate the frequency of education and training for indigenous women by CWA in Nyandarua County. The participants were asked to select either of the following categories: always, occasionally, rarely and never. Slightly more than two thirds (67.5%) of them were satisfied that the CWA carries out the education and training role occasionally. Another 30.5% of the participants felt that the role was rarely done while only 2.5% of them confirmed that it was never done.

Contents of Education and Training Provided to Women Groups

The study participants were requested to indicate the key areas covered during education and training provided to women groups by CWA in Nyandarua County. Slightly more than half (52.8%) of the participants stated that CWA takes women through business planning and entrepreneurship skill development. Nearly a third (32.8%) of the participants indicated that other areas covered by CWA were equipping

women with knowledge on nutrition, health and hygiene. Another 14.4% of them noted that CWA also educated indigenous women on peacekeeping and conflict resolution.

Impact of Education and Training on Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment

The study participants were asked to rate a number of items so as to assess the impact of education and training

offered by CWA on women socio-economic empowerment in Nyandarua County. The study used a Likert scale where: 5-Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3-Undecided, 2-Disagree, and 1-Strongly Disagree. Table 1 shows an analysis of the responses obtained from the study participants.

Table 1: Impact of education and training on women empowerment

Item		5	4	3	2	1
Education and training programs by CWA have provided women with skills in business management;	Freq.	75	123	-	-	-
	(%)	37.9	62.1	-	-	-
Family cohesiveness has been improved through education and training of women groups by CWA;	Freq.	61	125	11	1	-
	(%)	30.8	63.1	5.6	0.5	-
New businesses have been started by women as a result of entrepreneurship training received from CWA;	Freq.	37	156	1	3	1
	(%)	18.7	78.8	0.5	1.5	0.5
Education and training provided by CWA has promoted the awareness of rural women to their legal rights;	Freq.	36	123	9	12	18
	(%)	18.2	62.1	4.5	6.1	9.1
The nutrition and health of the populations in rural areas have increased as a result of education and training provided by CWA;	Freq.	36	127	3	18	14
	(%)	18.2	64.1	1.5	9.1	7.1
Through education and training, women have increased their capacity in managing financial resources at the family and local level;	Freq.	52	114	15	2	15
	(%)	26.3	56.7	7.6	1.0	7.6
Key: Freq. – Frequency; (%) – Percentage; n = 198						

As shown in Table 1, with respect to whether education and training programs by CWA have provided women with skills on small business management, more than a third (37.9%) and another 62.1% of the study participants strongly agreed and agreed with the statement respectively. On whether family cohesiveness has been improved through education and training of women groups by CWA, only 0.5% of the participants disagreed with the statement. Another 63.1% of the participants agreed with the statement. This was

further supported by 30.8% of the participants who strongly agreed.

The study further assessed if there are new businesses that have been started by women as a result of entrepreneurship training received from CWA in Nyandarua County. Even though 2% of the participants were in disagreement with the statement, a vast majority (78.8%) of them agreed, and another 18.7% of them strongly



agreed. With regard to whether education and training provided by CWA had promoted the awareness of rural women to their legal rights, more than half (62.1%) of the participants were in agreement. Another 18.2% of them strongly agreed with the statement, while 15.2% of the participants felt otherwise.

The participants were also required to indicate whether the nutrition and health of the populations in rural areas had increased because of education and training provided by CWA. Nearly two thirds (64.1%) of the participants agreed with the statement. This was also supported by another 18.2% of the participants who strongly agreed with the statement. However, 16.2% of them were in a contrary opinion, they disagreed. More than half (56.7%) of the study participants agreed that through education and training, women had increased their capacity in managing financial resources at the family and local level and another 26.3% of them also strongly agreed with the statement. Nevertheless, 8.6% of the participants opposed the statement.

Linear Regression Analysis

A linear regression model that was adopted in the study was as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \dots + \epsilon_i$$

Where:

Y = (Women empowerment) is the Dependent Variable

β_0 - is the constant

β_1 - is the regression coefficient or change induced in the Y by X_1

X_1 = Improved family cohesion

X_2 = Entrepreneurial skills

X_3 = awareness of human rights

X_4 = Improved health and nutrition

X_5 = Resource management skills

ϵ_i - Is the error term

To determine how well the independent variable (education and training offered by CWA to women in Nyandarua County) explained the dependent variable (women empowerment), a model summary was computed as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Model summary on the effect of education and training by CWA on women empowerment

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.531 ^a	.282	.264	.67707	1.517
a. Predictors: (Constant), Improved family cohesion, Entrepreneurial skills, awareness to human rights, Improved health and nutrition, Resource management skills,					
b. Dependent Variable: Women empowerment					

As shown in Table 2, the correlation coefficients R were 0.531. This means that there was a moderate positive correlation between the predicted and observed values. The coefficient of determination, R square, which refers to

the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable was found to be 0.282 implying that 28.2% of the variance in the women empowerment in Nyandarua County was explained by the



set predictor (education and training offered by CWA) variables. Thus, 71.8% of the variation in the outcome variable could be explained by other predictors which were not included in the study. The adjusted R square value of 0.264 means that 26.4% of the variance in the women empowerment in Nyandarua County could be accounted for by the set predictor if the model was derived from the total population from which the sample was taken. Further, a standard error estimate (SE est.) of 0.67707 is small, meaning many of the observed data points lay closer to the regression curve, this indicates it is possible to ascertain the goodness and representativeness of the regression curve as a description of the average relationship between the two series.

Durbin-Watson (DW) statistic informs whether the assumption of independent errors is acceptable. Durbin-

Watson tests for autocorrelation in residuals from a regression analysis. The Durbin-Watson statistic varies from 0 to 4: Values closer to 0 indicate positive autocorrelation; values close to 2 indicate no autocorrelation, and values closer to 4 indicate negative autocorrelation. Therefore, since the Durbin Watson statistic value of the data was 1.517, there is a positive autocorrelation between the predictors and the outcome variable; a unit increase in education and training offered by CWA leads to a proportionate increase in women empowerment in Nyandarua County, Kenya.

ANOVA was computed in order to establish whether there is a significant association between education and training offered by CWA to women and women empowerment in Nyandarua County. Table 3 shows the analysis of variance as computed.

Table 3: Analysis of variance

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	34.628	5	6.926	15.188	.000 ^b
	Residual	88.018	193	.456		
	Total	122.646	198			
a. Dependent Variable: Women empowerment						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Improved family cohesion, Entrepreneurial skills, awareness to human rights, Improved health and nutrition, Resource management skills						

According to ANOVA Table 3, the *F* statistic is equal to 15.188. The distribution is *F* (5, 193), and the probability of observing a value greater than or equal to 15.188 is less than 0.05 (*p* = .000). Thus, there was a statistically significant association between education and training offered by CWA to women and women empowerment in Nyandarua County.

To evaluate the relative importance of each Independent variable in predicting Dependent Variable, a linear regression model equation was computed. Parameter estimates (coefficients) are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of linear regression models coefficients

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.933	.635		9.346	.000
i) Improved family cohesion;	.153	.095	.111	1.604	.110
ii) Entrepreneurial skills;	.332	.098	.223	3.379	.001
iii) Awareness to human rights;	.372	.068	.523	5.445	.000
iv) Improved health and nutrition;	.166	.074	.225	2.248	.026
v) Resource management skills;	.119	.054	.155	2.201	.029
a. Dependent Variable: Women empowerment					

Table 4 reveals the relative contribution of the predictors to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights. The coefficient value signifies how much the mean of the dependent variable changes given a one-unit shift in the independent variable while holding other variables in the model constant. The linear regression model capturing the hypothesised association was as follows:

$$Y = 5.933 + 0.153 \text{ Improved family cohesion} + 0.332 \text{ Entrepreneurial skills} + 0.372 \text{ Awareness to human rights} + 0.166 \text{ Improved health and nutrition} + 0.183 \text{ Resource management skills} + \varepsilon_i$$

According to the regression equation established, the constant β_0 value of 5.933 shows that if all the investigated predictors were assumed not to have a significant effect, women empowerment in Nyandarua County would be influenced by a factor of 5.933 by other predictors apart

from education and training offered by CWA to women. The β values ($\beta_1 = 0.183$, $\beta_2 = 0.153$, $\beta_3 = 0.332$, $\beta_4 = 0.372$, $\beta_5 = 0.166$) show the association between women empowerment and the predictor variables. Holding other factors constant, a unit increase in improved family cohesion through education and training offered by the CWA will improve women empowerment in Nyandarua County by 0.153. A unit increase in entrepreneurial skills among women will improve women empowerment in Nyandarua County by 0.332. A unit increase in awareness of human rights improves women empowerment in Nyandarua County by 0.372. A unit improvement in health and nutrition improves women empowerment in Nyandarua County by 0.166. A unit increase in resource management skills as a result of education and training offered by the CWA to women in Nyandarua County improves women empowerment by 0.119.



Table 4 shows that equipping women with education and trainings on entrepreneurial skills ($\beta_1 = 0.332$, $t = 3.379$, $p = 0.001$), awareness to human rights ($\beta_1 = 0.372$, $t = 5.445$, $p = 0.000$), improved health and nutrition ($\beta_1 = 0.116$, $t = 2.248$, $p = 0.026$), and resource management skills ($\beta_1 = 0.119$, $t = 2.201$, $p = 0.029$) had a statistically significant effect on women empowerment in Nyandarua County. However, improved family cohesion had no statistically significant effect on women empowerment ($\beta_1 = 0.153$, $t = 1.604$, $p = 0.110$) in Nyandarua County. Therefore, the study provided enough evidence that education and trainings offered by CWA to women in Nyandarua County have a statistically significant association with women empowerment.

Discussion

All (100%) of the study participants agreed that education and training programs offered by CWA had provided women in Nyandarua County with small business management skills. As identified by more than half (52.8%) of the participants, CWA took women through business planning and entrepreneurship skill development. This is an indication that the majority of the CWA have prioritised training rural women on microenterprise management and sustainability. The study findings were inconsistent with a study carried out by Raven and Vu Le (2015) which showed that business training could improve microenterprise performance and has a number of other positive results, such as increasing motivation, success, and perceptions of entrepreneurs. According to Chinen et al. (2018), business training combined with cash transfers or life skills training among women had positive and statistically significant effects on the likelihood of self-employment. The results suggested that, on average, business training combined with cash transfers or life skills training among women increased the likelihood of self-employment by 73% in low - and middle - income countries.

With regard to whether new businesses have been started by women as a result of entrepreneurship training obtained from CWA in Nyandarua County, a majority (78.8%) of the participants agreed, and another 18.7% of them strongly agreed. This implies that basic entrepreneurial training among rural women has an impact on women empowerment. The start-ups of income-generating activities among trained women improve family income, thus reducing poverty levels in the region. This study finding was in agreement with another study that was conducted by Agetue and Nnamdi (2011) that revealed that entrepreneurship education enables beneficiaries to be employed, self-reliant, and to be economically empowered. Similarly, Nwodoh (2011) found out that entrepreneurship education and training attempts to prepare people to become responsible enterprising individuals that become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and who contributes to economic development and sustainable communities.

An overwhelming majority (80.3%) of the participants confirmed that education and training provided by CWA had promoted the awareness of women to their legal rights. Many women living in rural communities are excluded from decision-making processes and unable to access formal justice structures. The study finding implies that through education and training, Catholic Women Association works to empower rural women by enhancing legal knowledge and rights awareness, giving them tools to promote justice in their local communities, and promoting their professional participation in the justice sector. The study finding concurs with a study carried out by Ebadi (2017) on empowering rural women and local communities in Afghanistan, Burundi Kyrgyzstan and Myanmar. The

study established that by empowering women and promoting the rule of law in their communities ensure that everyone truly is equal before the law and equally protected by the law.

The study also established that nearly all (92.3%) of the participants supported that nutrition and health of the communities in rural areas in Nyandarua County have improved as a result of education and training offered by CWA. Clearly, women are the primary target group from a nutrition standpoint and central to food and nutrition security. Additionally, family health depends so much on women, especially the health of children. The study finding implies that lack of access by women to education and training also has a striking impact on community nutrition and health. This concurs with a HUNGaMA Report (2011) on hunger in India that found out that the education level of mothers influences their children's nutritional status, finding that the rate of underweight and stunted children was significantly higher among mothers with lower levels of education. In the same vein, a UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation Report (2011) estimates that if women farmers had the same access to education and technology as men, the agricultural output could be enhanced and the number of hungry people reduced by 100-150 million in the selected 34 developing countries. Thus, educating and training illiterate women on food security, i.e. good farming methods, farming technologies would improve food production in the communities.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that education and training offered by CWA to women in Nyandarua County have a statistically significant association with women empowerment. Women training on small business management and

entrepreneurship have resulted in start-ups of many income-generating activities by rural women that promote household income and reduce poverty levels. Education and training conducted by CWA also help women to gain knowledge on their rights to own assets, to participate in decision making, to take part in the economic development, to access credits and to be free from male dominance/gender inequality. The study recommends that both governmental and non-governmental institutions should support informal education and training programs for rural and informal settlement women to help them learn basic small business management skills, basic rights and litigations, peacebuilding and conflict resolution strategies among other courses. There is also a need to train smallholder farmers on good farming methods, technologies and marketing-oriented skills in order to increase agricultural production in Nyandarua County since agriculture is the economic backbone of the region.

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