

Factors influencing women's participation in community development in Kwa-Vonza Division, Lower Yatta Sub-County- Kitui County

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Declaration

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

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This research project has been submitted to the university with my approval as the Supervisor

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Dedication

I dedicate this research project to my family for their moral support and encouragement that enabled me to accomplish the work. Thank you.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Almighty Father who has enabled me to go through this tedious work successfully. My special gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Lewis Ngesu and the chairman, Department of Educational Foundations, for his guidance and encouragement he gave me throughout this study. May God bless him abundantly.

I also thank the officers concerned in District Education Office and Adult Education Office in Lower Yatta District for the contribution they made to make this work a success.

I cannot forget women from different self-help groups from Kwa-Vonza division who gave me that accord and provided genuine information that helped in the success of this study.

ABSTRACT

The study investigated factors influencing women's participation in community development in Kwa- Vonza Division, Lower Yatta sub-county, Kitui County. The objectives of the study were to determine whether there was a relationship between the level of education and women's participation in community development, to find out whether there was a relationship between the age of women and participation in community development and to find out whether there was a relationship between marital status of women and participation in community development. The research design for the study was descriptive research and the target population was women from self-help registered women groups from Kwa-Vonza Division, Kitui County. Data was collected by the use of the questionnaire and interviews and was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science software programme. The study established that marital status, age and level of education of women influenced participation in community development. The study recommends that the government should develop initiatives aimed at creating awareness among women and empowering them to be able to contribute in development. Non-governmental organizations and religious institutions should also strive to give education to women in order to improve awareness. These recommendations if implemented will address major factors influencing women participation in community development.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

DPLG	:	Department of Provincial and Local Government
DV	:	Dependent Variable
ECDE	:	Early Childhood Development Education
FAO	:	Food and Agricultural Organization
IFAD	:	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IV	:	Independent Variable
NRMED	:	Natural Resources Management and Environment Department
UN	:	United Nations
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programme
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Globally, women participation in community development has been focused by many International forums such as the Beijing Declaration and United Nations (2000). All these forums concur that each member state should promote women's economic independence, gender equality, development and peace. A study by Hillary (1999) in New Zealand concurred with the point of view. At the time of the study, both the Prime Minister and the opposition leader were females which are a clear indication that women can hold senior positions in the government.

In Africa, women have played a significant role in community development especially in agriculture as a strategy to alleviate poverty Fabiyi, Danladi and Mahmoud (2007); FAO (2008:58); and Karki (2009:23)]. Even though women contribute significantly to the socio-economic development in their countries, they also face major challenges which differ from one country to another. Kabarie (2010:3) identified traditional and cultural norms as the major challenges that limit the access of women to agricultural input to the invisibility of women in agricultural development.

IFAD (2000) observed that women in Ghana have challenges in access to formal financial services. The report indicated that one rural bank office serves an average of 53 000 km² and no financial institution in the majority of districts. This denies most women access to loan facilities which can help women promote themselves economically.

In Kenya, women have joined hands in the fight against poverty through informal lending and borrowing money amongst themselves in their self-help groups which has elevated

their financial status as noted by Otieno (2002). She also noted that women have received skills and training on issues such as book keeping, market appraisal and business planning. A good example is women from Luanda in Vihiga District Kenya who have received training in timber production, horticulture, basketry, rope-making, tailoring, merry-go-rounds and revolving loans activities which help women to reduce starvation in their family and empower them financially

1.2 Statement of the problem

Women participation in community development has faced myriad problems. Some of them are political, social, cultural, economical and ethical in nature which if not well handled not only affect their participation in community development but also their socialization process. To address these problems, the government of Kenya has used many strategies, key among them being the training of women in financial management. Nonetheless, this goal appears to be elusive as evidenced by the registered number of women groups. Although these factors could be having a negative influence on women participation in community development, the extent to which age, marital status and level of education could be influencing women participation in community development in Kwa-Vonza Division has not been investigated in Kenya. This was the gap that the researcher intended to fill with a view of generating information that could hopefully address the problem.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate factors influencing women's participation in community development in Kwa-Vonza Division, Lower Yatta Sub-County in Kitui County.

1.4 Research objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives.

- i) To determine the relationship between the level of education and women's participation in community development.
- ii) To find out the relationship between the age of women and participation in community development.
- iii) To find out the relationship between marital status of women and participation in community development.

1.5 Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.

- i) To what extent does the level of education influence women's participation in community development?
- ii) Is there a relationship between age of women and participation in community development?
- iii) Is there a relationship between marital status and women participation in community development?

1.6 Significance of the study

It was envisaged that the study was to benefit the women groups, women leaders, researchers, administrators in social welfare groups, policy makers and the country at large. The study may further provide researchers with baseline information that could be useful in future related studies, especially studies designed to improve effectiveness of women participation in community development. Policy makers and administration in the Ministry of Gender and culture may have the opportunity to base their future policies on women participation in community development from the results of this study.

1.7 Limitations of the study

This study limited its operation at Kwa-Vonza Division, Lower Yatta Sub-County in Kitui County. It was targeting women in that area who were the respondents. The study was limited by financial constraints, stigma which hindered women from disclosing some information relevant to the study. To overcome these limitations, the researcher assured the respondents of confidentiality.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

The study confined itself to all registered women groups in Kwa-Vonza Division. Secondly, the study's main objective was to determine whether the variables of age, level of education and marital status had a bearing on women participation in community development.

1.9 Assumptions of the study

The study was based on the following assumptions:

- i) Information provided by women both literate and illiterate was a genuine indicator of the extent to which level of education, marital status and age influence women participation in community development.
- ii) All community groups in the study area held such functions as meetings weekly, monthly, annually and consulted with other agencies among other vital community functions.

1.10 Definitions of key operational terms

Community: Refers to a configuration of human beings who share the same values, morals, beliefs and attitudes.

Development: Refers to the liberating process aimed at justice, self-reliance and economic growth. It is essentially a people's participation in which the poor and the oppressed should be in active agents and the immediate beneficiaries.

Community Development: Refers to a process by which the effort of the people themselves are united with those of government authorities to improve economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities to the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute to national progress.

Women: Refers to a female being either single, married, widow or divorced

Women Participation: Refers to involvement of women into activities of the community which may improve their Social, political, economic and cultural standards and hence bring positive change in their lives

1.11 Organization of the study

This study was organized in five chapters. Chapter One highlighted the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, basic assumptions, definition of key operational terms and organization of the study.

Chapter two consists of review of related literature, concept of women participation, level of education and women participation in community development, age of women and community participation, marital status and community development and conceptual framework.

Chapter three consists of research design, location of the study, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, research instruments, validity and reliability, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical concerns.

Chapter four comprises data analysis, presentations and discussion of the study as well as findings. Chapter five comprises of a summary of the study, summary of the major findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 The Concept of community development

Community development is the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of the government's authorities to improve economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute to national progress (Department of Provincial and Local Development, DPLG 2005:5).

Reddy (1999), explains that in order to achieve community development, it is necessary for local governments to create environment that offers opportunities for effective engagement of people in local government development planning. He further reiterates that one way of creating favorable environment for people participation and especially women is by building a social capital, providing community leadership and vision to empower the disadvantaged and exchange groups including women and youth.

The non-government organizations through the government of Kenya has taken the initiative of sensitizing women on the importance of forming women groups and training them on borrowing and lending money among the members.

2.2 Level of education and women participation in community development

The level of education is one of the significant factors influencing participation of women in community development. Rad et al (2010:15) noted that education is one of the important factors that help development to be realized. He further asserted that education

both formal and informal is geared towards communicating accumulated wisdom and knowledge from one generation to the next.

Kongolo (2002:12) and Songelewa (2009:150) observed that women contribute significantly to the economy of the developing countries but they often find themselves lacking resources such as finance and inadequate education when it comes to contributing effectively to the economic output of their countries. The key barrier to women's advancement in the society is lack of education. This is because many African parents still prefer to send boys to school seeing little or no need of sending girls to school and so, illiteracy is still evidenced in most African countries among the women, Ravinder (2007).

Manuh (1999:9) asserts that in Africa, female illiteracy rates were over 60 percent in 1996 compared to 41 percent of men perhaps due to cultural social factors. A study by Natural Resources Management and Environment Department (NRMED) (2010:1), reported that illiteracy is a major constraint facing women in development. Some women are unable to understand and utilize the technical information because they lack formal education. The department further reported that illiteracy makes some women unable to read and understand the written materials provided by extension programs that educate farmers on agricultural farming methods.

Anselm et al (2010:128) states that education plays a significant role in positively influencing the status of women in farm decision. He further stated that highly educated women are likely to make higher contribution to farm decision making than uneducated

ones. It is therefore important for women to get quality education for their progressive participation in sustainable community development.

Abu & Klassen (2004) explains that education gives women the opportunity to participate and contribute to the National Development. They further noted that girls' education increases economic growth of a country. This is evidenced in Nigeria where educated women have become politicians, professionals, leaders of different organizations and bread winners. Women such as Professor Alele, former Chancellor of University of Benin, Dr (Mrs.) Ngozi Okonjo, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Mrs. Deziani Minister of education among others have contributed immensely to the economic development of Nigeria. Others include the first African President of Liberia Dr Mrs. Ellen Johnson and Mrs. Alizo Zomokunda who served as the Vice President of Burundi,(Igwesi 2012), just to mention a few.

Molagun & Taiwo (2000) advocates for women's education to be encouraged for it can promote total transformation of the society. Educated mothers could make useful contribution to the development of the society. Obi (2001) supported the study by noting that educated women are able to keep their homes neat and their environment, produce smart and healthy children and also cook neatly. She further argues that educated women can contribute to the development effort of their country, improve their family's health diet, and be responsible mothers, wives and good members of the society. Women's education further broadens their minds, help them develop self-discipline and esteem and prepare them to cope with domestic work and family.

Community development goes hand in hand with education of its members. Hughes (2005) argues that rural women are often the socially, economically, politically and linguistically marginalized and they lack access to educational facilities, information networks, alliances and capacity building opportunities. Most women cannot access information and lack the knowledge about government policies partly due to illiteracy.

A study conducted by Lodiaga and Mbevi (1995) in Kenya investigated women's employment level, opportunities and career advancement in selected public universities revealed that women were under-represented and in the appointed administrative posts, women were lacking. In all the Universities sampled during the study, there were no female deans of faculties.

In Tanzania, Elisilian (2010) conducted a study on the influence of level education on women's participation in community development and found that women with post-secondary training level of education work more than those with post primary level of education. The study further established that women with pre-school level of education knew nothing about loan programme. Nzomo (1995) asserted that inadequate formal education and training is a barrier for women's participation in community development especially in leadership.

2.3 Age of women and participation in community development

According to Mokate (2004), there is a strong relationship between age of women and their participation in community development. Women's participation in Japan forms approximately M-shaped curve and their participation declines during age of 25 and 40 years due to marriage, childbirth and child care.

Mokate further explains that the lowest point of participation and labor force corresponds to the age between 30-34years. Therefore one out of every two married women in this age bracket quit their jobs and in most cases stay at home to raise their children.

According to the United Nations Population division UNDP (2001), labor force participation rates of women in prime age of 25- 54 years continued to rise in the 1990s to between 60 to 80 percent for most developed industrialized countries. The report further noted that these countries experience the largest increase in female labor participation rate. The research also indicated that women who participate in economic roles and contribution at the prime age have financial security at old age and hence are able to contribute to community development throughout their lives.

A study by Elisilian (2000) indicated that women in the age bracket of 45-49, 20-24 years are 9.5 times more likely to be given loans. On the other hand, the study indicates that women aged 25- 29 years are 9 times more likely to be given a loan than those aged 45-49 and women aged 40 -44 are seven times more likely to be given loans as compared with those aged 45 -49.

The study further indicated that age of women, level of education and marital status are some of the factors that contribute to women's poor participation in social, political and economic activities which differ in magnitude.

Durnel (2010) conducted a study in Lund University on how age groups impact the female labor force participation rate in Turkey. In 1998, the female labor force participation rate was high at ages between 15 and 24. In 2008 however, the labor force participation rate for this age group was significantly lower. It was 17.1 percent at ages

between 15 and 19 while in 1988, it was 40.5 percent. At about after the age of 24, there was a dramatic decline, thereafter a smooth decrease followed. This significant difference in the last 20 years depended on the reform of education system (Tansel 2003, p.6). Girls are staying at school longer and they are keen to educate themselves more than before. At the ages between 19 and about 35 years, a fluctuation is seen up and down when it comes to female labor force participation rate in Turkey. This probably depends on the family building and also fertility might affect this up and down fluctuation. It is noted that a previous fertility analyses had shown that women in Turkey are more fertile at ages between 20 and 29. The study further indicates that women probably stay away from labor market when they have small children and as the children grow they might return to the market again.

2.4 Marital status and women participation in community development

Marital status refers to women who are either married, single, widow or divorced. Cakir (2008) in his study in Lund University observed that there is a negative effect of marriage on female labor participation. In his study in Turkey 2006, labor force participation rate for married female was 23.1 percent; and 78.2 percent for married men. After widowed females, married females have the lowest labor force participation rate for this group. It was noted that married females devoted themselves as a responsible for household activities, and; they were less likely to be in labor force. This study further indicated that unlike the married females, single females have the highest labor force participation rates after divorced females. It was 47.8 percent in 1988 and 34.3 percent in 2006.

According to Mokate (2004), marital status affects level of women's participation in community development. In his study conducted in Latin America, Asia and Caribbean, it was established that married women have high demands imposed on them in regards to time spent on their households as opposed to unmarried ones. He further noted that on marriage, biological factors such as motherhood becomes barriers to mothers due to lack of child care centers which would allow women more peace of mind and independence. The present situation requires exclusive allegiance to the motherly role forcing women to stop working for a period or delay career advancement. All this is due to a change in their marital status. The researcher also observed that divorced women undergo serious financial problems especially in cases where their former husbands do not provide for children upkeep and school fees. However, the divorced women sometimes work hard to become financially independent and educate their children hence contribute to community development.

Steffy (2008) asserted that women in America take up leadership roles in women led community based organizations regardless of their marital status. The researcher further explains that many divorced women in America have undergone federal divorce procedures and hence have the legal rights to become leaders and members of community based organization and are part of decision making processes for development agendas. The researcher recommends that women should be empowered politically, economically, socially for them to be able to participate fully in community development.

Nzomo (1995) contends that the socio-cultural beliefs and myths about role of women in the society are the major determinants of women's failure to advance to top positions in managements. Kombo & Njambi (2011) reported that married women could not attend

community development meetings due to lack of time, overburdened gender roles, restrictions from husbands to attend to project planning meetings and lack of economic empowerment accompanied with strict financial control by male partners made it difficult for the women to participate in development. Women in Kwa-Vonza seem to undergo through the same issues which are evidenced by the small number of registered women groups.

2.5 Conceptual framework

The study was based on the premise that women play a crucial role in community development. The study however, hypothesized that the degree to which women assisted the community towards this direction are contingent upon three independent variables. These are women level of education, age and marital status. The conceptualized relationship between the variables in this study is show in Figure 2.1

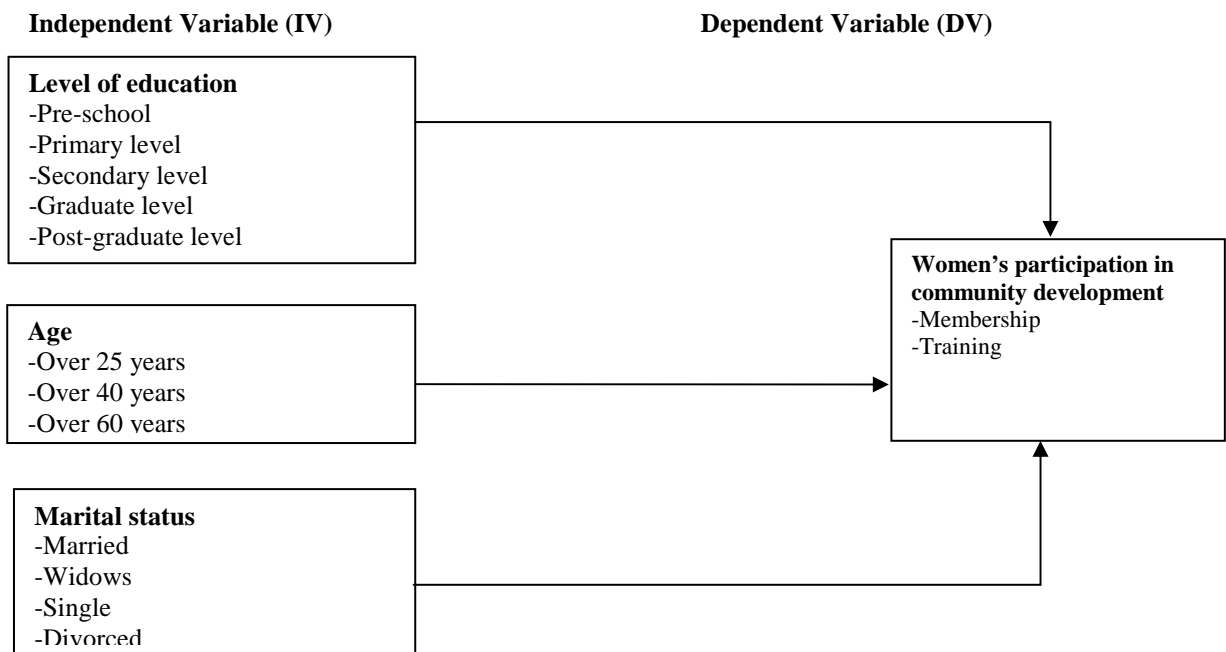


Fig 2.1: Link between level of education, age and marital status and women participation in community development

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. According to Orodho (2003), descriptive survey design is a method of collecting information by using questionnaire and interviews to a sample of individuals. The researcher collected information of varied magnitude that is women's level of education, age and marital status. The design was the most appropriate for it was capable of establishing the relationship between variables, in line with objectives outlined in section 1.4.

3.2 Location of the study

The study was conducted in Kwa-Vonza Division in Lower Yatta sub-county, Kitui County. Kwa Vonza is located along the Kitui-Nairobi highway. The area has people from low and middle class. The main economic activities in the division are small scale agriculture and livestock production. Most of the roads are poorly maintained and many households who reside far away from the centers are not served. The choice of Kwa Vonza division was motivated by the following factors namely: poverty levels, small number of self-help groups registered and literacy levels of the population.

3.3 Target population

The target population was 500 women from the 10 registered self-help groups with membership of 50 per group of Kwa Vonza division, Lower Yatta district (Chief office 2012, Kwa Vonza).

3.4 Sampling and sample size

According to Korathi (2004), a sample is a definite design for obtaining a sample from a given population. There are different types of sampling designs based on either unrestricted or restricted sample. According to Mugenda (2003), the researcher formulates a procedure of selecting the subjects or cases to be included in the sample upon deciding on the sample size. Purposive sampling was used to select Kwa Vonza division of Lower Yatta Sub County from which ten registered women groups in the division were selected to carry out the study. Simple random sampling was used to select 10 members from the 9 groups since one group was used in piloting study to get a sample size of 90. The sample comprised of 60 literate and 30 illiterate respondents.

3.5 Research instruments

The researcher utilized two research tools namely Questionnaire and Interviews.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

The study used a self-structured questionnaire administered to the students. The questionnaire consisted of mainly closed and open ended questions. The questions consisted two sections: Section A solicited data on women's age, academic qualification and marital status. Section B sought information on whether age, marital status and level of education have negative or positive effect on women's participation in community development. Use of the Questionnaire was the choice of the researcher because it saves time and easy to fill. The Questionnaires were filled by the literate women.

3.5.2 Interviews

The researcher used interviews to collect information from the illiterate women. This instrument helped the researcher to obtain accurate and direct information through cooperation from respondents. Data collected from interviews was recorded manually for further content analysis.

3.6 Validity and reliability

3.6.1 Validity

Validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences which are based on the research results. It is the degree to which results obtained from analysis of data actually represents the phenomenon under study Mugenda (2003). A pilot study was conducted by giving the instruments to a self -help group to check on how they were to respond to the questionnaire administered which was discussed by the researcher with the supervisor. The findings from the pilot study assisted the researcher to fine tune the instruments before the main study.

3.6.2 Reliability

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), reliability is the degree to which research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. The researcher used a test-retest technique. The instrument was prepared by the approval of the expertise. The researcher administered the instruments to the respondents and the results obtained were analyzed. The results obtained in the first and the second administration were the same and so the instrument was reliable.

3.7 Data collection procedure

The data collection process involved obtaining a letter of introduction to the self-help groups from the department of Education Foundations, University of Nairobi and from the National Council of Science and Technology. The letter obtained was used by the researcher to introduce her to the self-help groups and members of provincial administration. The researcher explained to the respondents the general purpose of the study and the interviews were conducted at an agreed time and venue with the respondents.

3.8 Data analysis

Data collected was processed, coded and analyzed to facilitate answering the research objectives and questions. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software program. The results of the survey were presented using tables, charts, percentages, frequencies and graphs.

3.9 Ethical consideration

The respondents were asked to provide the relevant information needed for successful completion of the study. The respondents were assured that Information given was confidential and were asked not to write their names or that of self help group in the questionnaire . The researcher acknowledged other peoples work by citing and quoting the author and hence produced original work.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Background Information

Table 4.1 represents background information on the broad categories of women population that participated in this study.

Table 4.1 Categories of sampled respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Literate	60	66.67
Illiterate	30	33.33
Total	90	100

As shown in Table 4.1, majority (66.67%) of the interviewed women were literate while the rest (33.33%) are illiterate. This shows that there was enough data for consideration in terms of level of education of the respondents and the research was fully inclusive of women in the sampled community. This also indicates that the uptake of formal education in the area under study is wanting since it is not past the 50% mark. This implies that most women still occupy traditional roles at the expense of formal education.

4.1.1 Age of the respondents

Table 4.2 Age groups of the literate women

Age group (years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
25-35	24	40
36-45	24	40
46-55	12	20
Over 55	0	0
Total	60	100

As shown in Table 4.2, all the literate women interviewed were above 25 years of age. 40% of those interviewed were between 25 and 35 years of age; a similar percentage were women between 36 and 45 years old. The minority (20%) of the women were between 46 and 55 years of age. None of the respondents was above 55 years of age. This shows that the most active women population in community development is between 25 and 45 years of age while another small population lies between 45 and 55 years of age. This implies that the respondent who filled in the questionnaire were mature and understood the implication of the study. Those interviewed (illiterate women) were not required to state their age.

4.1.2 Education levels of respondents

Table 4.3 Education levels of the literate women

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Pre-school	0	0
Primary	12	20
Secondary	30	50
Graduate	18	30
Post-graduate	0	0
Total	60	100

Table 4.3 shows that among those who filled in the questionnaire, none (0%) had pre-school qualification. This was found to be true because Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) is a recent programme. Minority (20%) had primary school as their highest education level. (50%) were secondary school graduates while 30% were graduates. This means that majority of the women in the area under study only take up their education up to secondary level after which majority gets married and become house wives. This has an impact on their participation in community development since they are involved in household duties and also find it difficult to access formal opportunities for participation in community development.

4.1.3 Marital status of the literate women.

Table 4.4 Marital status of the literate women

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	36	60
Widow	6	10
Single	12	20
Divorced	6	10
Total	60	100

As shown in Table 4.4 above, majority (60%) of the literate women were married. 10% were widows, 20% were single while 10% were divorced. This indicates that majority of the sampled population were family women who had responsibilities to take care of their children and husbands. The high number of married women participating in community development shows that marital status has an impact on the level of responsibility and hence the need to participate in matters relating to development. Illiterate respondents who participated in the study were not asked to state their marital status for this would have affected their level of participation. This was pegged on the Philosophy that most women do not expose their marital status in public.

4.1.4 Sources of income of literate women

Table 4.5: Sources of income

Sources of income	Frequency	Percentage %
Employed & salaried	24	40
Self employed	6	10
Unemployed	30	50
Total	60	100

Table 4.5 shows that 40% of those who filled in the questionnaire were employed and salaried. 10% were self employed women while 50% were unemployed. This implies that majority of the respondents were unemployed. Those employed participated in development by earning salaries and initiating projects while house wives participated by joining self help groups. The findings seem to suggest that unemployment is a major problem in the region. If this is not addressed, the gains of education are likely not to be actualized and achievement of vision 2030 will just but remain a dream especially on the social and economic pillars.

4.2 Influence of level of education on participation in community development

Table 4.6 Influence of level of education on community development.

Is there a relationship between level of education and participation in community development	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	36	60
No	24	40
Total	60	100

On whether the level of education has hindered the women from participating in community development of their area, majority (60%) said yes while 40% said no. This implies that the level of education has a great influence on the level of activeness in women as far as community development is concerned. Those highly educated have the ability to conceptualize highly innovative ideas relating to development. The findings concur with what was established during interviews with illiterate respondents. This is what one respondent said, “My failure to participate in community development has to do with my education. I wish my parents took me to school.” These desperate situations depict a pathetic situation in the community and the wider society and if not well addressed is likely to lead to social and economic instability. Table 4.6 shows the findings.

4.3 Influence of age on participation in community development

Table 4.7 Influence of age on participation in community development

Is there a relationship between age and participation in community development	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	6	10
No	54	90
Total	60	100

On whether age has influence on women participation in community development, majority of the respondents (90%) said no while only 10% said yes. This indicates that most of the women participating in community development do not view age as a limitation. This can be induced from the fact that those actively involved are between ages 25 to 55 years. Most of these women are either in employment or are involved in economic activities. They are also able to move around carrying out community development projects regardless of their age. A small fraction of the women are of old age and this may hinder them from active participation. This agrees with what was found out during interviews. Majority of the respondents reported that age was just but a number and were more than willing to participate in community development. This implies that participation in community development is an essential ingredient of a society. Table 4.7 shows the findings.

4.4 Influence of marital status on participation in community development

Table 4.8 Influence of marital status on community development.

Is there a relationship between marital status and participation in community development	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	18	30
No	42	70
Total	60	100

On whether marital status bars them from participation in community development, majority of the respondents (70%) said no while 30% said yes. This implies that majority of the women participated in community development despite their marital status; be it married, single, divorced or widow. This concurs with what was found out during interviews with illiterate respondents. It was reported that most widows were not financially stable and hence were not able to participate in community development. Further, some married women were denied permission by their husbands and hence were not able to participate in community development activities. The findings seem to suggest that marital status is not a significant factor in influencing women participation in community development. Table 4.8 shows the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate factors influencing women's participation in community development in Kwa-vonza Division, Lower Yatta Sub-County. The area is known for dry climatic conditions and extensive water shortage and hence the poverty levels are high. The research was guided by the following study objectives: To determine whether there is a relationship between the level of education and women's participation in community development; To find out whether there is a relationship between the age of women and participation in community development; and to find out whether there is a relationship between marital status of women and participation in community development.

The study utilized questionnaires and interviews to collect data from a set of women respondents. Data was collected from women of various social classes, ages, education levels and marital status. The questionnaires were developed to address specific objectives and research questions of the study. The data generated from the study was analyzed on the basis of research questions and objectives by use of quantitative and qualitative questionnaires. Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) were used to analyze the data and results were presented using charts and tables. The findings established that women face a myriad of problems as they participate in community development. The study recommends that women should be empowered in order to participate fully in community development. Empowerment can be done through initiatives such as training and financial aid.

5.2 Summary of the major findings

The following is a summary of the major findings of the study:

5.2.1 On the extent to which the level of education influences women's participation in community development

It was established that the level of education among the women largely influences their participation in community development. Most of the women actively engaged in community development have education level of secondary school and above. This is because they have the necessary skills and most of them have access to opportunities to enable them to contribute positively to community development.

5.2.2 On the relationship between age of women and participation in community development

It was established that there is a significant relationship between age of women and participation in community development. Women actively involved in participation were found to be of ages between 25 and 55 years. Those too old were found to have challenges in participating in community development.

5.2.3 On the relationship between marital status and women participation in community development

It was established that there is insignificant relationship between marital status of women and participation in community development. A large percentage of the respondents indicated that their marital status has no influence on participation in community development. However, a few women face hindrance from their marital status especially those with uncooperative husbands.

5.3 Conclusions

On the strength of the findings, it was concluded that women empowerment is significant in improving rural life with respect to participation and contributions to the development of the society. Women participation in community development remains significantly low because of financial constraints, stigma attached to marital status and cultural barriers. On the extent of the influence of age, level of education and marital status on participation in community development the study concludes that these variables are powerful in influencing women participation in community development.

5.4 Recommendations

The study recommended that the government should develop initiatives aimed at creating more awareness among women and empowering them participate in contribute in development. It was also recommended that other organizations like non-governmental organizations and religious institutions should strive to give teachings to women in order to improve lifestyles. These recommendations if implemented will address major factors influencing women participation in community development.

5.3 Suggestion for further studies

The study raises several possible avenues for further research due to its limitations and conclusions:

The study only covered one sub-county in the larger Kitui County, Kenya. The study needs to be replicated in other sub-counties so as to get a picture of the general situation in the whole country. Future studies on participation in community participation should

examine issues such as income level, religious affiliation, prejudice which are likely to enrich the understanding of the complexity of the issue.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Questionnaire for literate women

Dear respondent,

I am a post graduate student at the University of Nairobi pursuing a Master of Education degree in the Department of Educational Foundations. I am conducting a research on the factors influencing women's participation in community development.

You have been selected to participate in this research. All responses will be treated confidential. You need not to indicate your name on the questionnaire. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Grace.

Instruction:

Kindly fill this questionnaire by providing a tick (✓) in the boxes provided.

Section A

1. What is your age?

< 25 years
years

26 – 35 years

36 – 45

46 – 55 years

55 years >

1. What is your marital status?

Single

Married

Widow

Separated / Divorced

2. Which is your highest level of education?

Pre-School level

Primary level

Secondary level

Graduate

Post graduate

3. What do you do for a living?

Employed & Salaried

Self employed

- House wife
- Both employed & Self-employed
- None of the above

4. What is your monthly income in Kshs?

- Kshs 5,000.00 and below
- Kshs 5,000.00 – Kshs 10,000.00
- Kshs 10,000.00 – Kshs 20,000.00
- Kshs 20,000.00 – Kshs 30,000.00
- Above Kshs 30,000.00

5. What is your monthly expenditure?

- Above Kshs 5,000.00
- Above Kshs 10,000.00
- Above Kshs 20,000.00

6. Do you belong to any self-help women group?

- Yes No

What is the name of the group? (optional)

7. Do you have any post in the self-help group?

- Yes No

To what extent?

8. Is it useful to be a member of a self-help group?

Yes

No

9. Do you participate in any community development projects?

Yes

No

If no, explain how

Section B

10. Do you think your level of education has hindered you from participating in community development of your area?

Yes

No

To what extent?

11. Does age have a negative influence on your participation?

Yes

No

If yes, explain how?

12. Does your marital status bar you from participation?

Yes

No

If yes, explain how?

13. What do you think should be done by the following agencies to improve women participation in community development.

A. Government of Kenya

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

iv. _____

v. _____

B. Religious Institutions

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

iv. _____

v. _____

Thank You

APPENDIX II

Interview for illiterate women

Dear respondent,

I am a post graduate student at the University of Nairobi, pursuing a Master of Education Degree in the Department of Educational Foundations. I am conducting a research on the factors influencing women's participation in community development.

You have been selected to participate in this research. All responses will be treated confidential.

Yours sincerely,

Grace.

Q. 1. How helpful are self-help groups to you and the community?

Q. 2. a) Are there challenges that you face in community development?

b) Please explain

Q. 3. a) Is age a challenge that hinders you from participating in community development?

b) Please explain

Q. 4. a) Is your marital status a hindrance to your participating?

b) Please explain

Q. 5. a) Does your illiteracy affect your participation in community development?

b) Please explain

Q. 6. a) Do you receive support from any organization to assist members?

b) Please explain

Q. 7. a) What factors do you think influence women's participation in community development?

Q. 8. a) What do you think should be done by the following agencies to improve women participation in community development?

i) Government of Kenya

ii) Religious Organizations

iii) The family

Thank You