
An Evaluation of Management Practices And Strategies In Curbing Rural Poverty: A Case Study Of Border Christian Community Agricultural Development Programme.

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *The major purpose of the study was an evaluation of the management practices and strategies in curbing rural poverty: A case study of Border Christian Community Agricultural Development Program. Research objectives were; to find out the managerial practices employed in CBOs' management, to determine the management strategies which are crucial in CBOs' management and to find out factors hindering the application of management practices in curbing rural poverty*

Design/methodology: This is a research paper

Research limitations and implications:

The subject of evaluating management practices and strategies in curbing rural poverty has not been fully researched in the field of strategic management. The research study was limited by literature on the subject of curbing rural poverty through the lenses of management practices and strategies.

Practical implications

Rural people involved in CBOs must work hard to reduce poverty through individual effort. The results of the findings indicate that, poverty must be won at the household level through individual initiative and knowledge. External support from the government, the Church and the donor community is considered as a catalyst and a means but not the primary foundation upon which poverty must be reduced. It was also found that management practices (planning, organizing, coordination, implementation, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation) and strategies (formulation of vision, mission and goals) was little understood by majority of the CBO members but largely by the top management of the CBO.

Originality and value

This paper fills the gap in research work in that it brings out the ideals that for rural poverty to be reduced, management practices and strategies need to be properly inculcated among the rural folk. It is through proper vision formulation, accurate planning and tangible implementation that poverty may be reduced to acceptable levels.

KEY WORDS: *management practices, management strategies, poverty, curbing, rural*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of poverty

The World Bank (2003, 6) argues that when crafting an effective rural development strategy focused on the rural poor, it requires an understanding of who the poor are, where they live, and the challenges posed by the prevailing poverty levels in their respective habitats. This is because the rural poor are not homogenous groups but people of different categories such as; the landless who have no crop land, the farmers with less than two hectares of land, the un-settled pastoralists who derive their income and livelihood from livestock and women headed households.

The way poverty is defined and measured can be politically sensitive. Because governments will wish to show that they have succeeded in reducing poverty and there can be pressures to ensure that poverty figures show a decline (Matovu, et al, 1996, 31).

Poverty is defined as a sense of helplessness, dependence and lack of opportunities as well as lack of self-confidence and self-respect on the part of the poor where they see themselves as powerless and voiceless.

Kenyan view of poverty

Nzioki (1998, 21) points out that the first study to estimate rural poverty in Kenya was done in 1994 under the analysis of the Integrated Rural Survey 1 (IRS 1). The poverty incidence by 1994 was estimated to be at 30 percent using a poverty line of Kshs 2,200 per month for small holder households. The report continues to argue that quantitative approach to measuring poverty defines the poor as those who cannot afford basic food and non-food items. In 1997 the absolute poverty line was estimated at Kshs. 1,239 per person per month and Kshs 2,648 respectively for rural and urban areas according to the Welfare Monitoring Survey (PRSP, 2001-2004, 11).

Through the 7th national Development Plan, the Government committed itself to enhancing the participation of communities in development planning and implementation, and promotion of the private sector in order to stimulate investments and savings, increase household incomes and create job opportunities (Nzioki, 1998, 28)

Nzioki argues that in an effort to reduce poverty, the government of Kenya introduced the structural adjustment programs (SAP') whose short-term negative impact brought worsening poverty conditions of the majority of the population because they brought cost-sharing for basic social services such as health and education. SAPs also brought retrenchment in the public service, privatization and sale of non-strategic enterprises (removal of price controls and trade liberalization for basic consumption commodities, removal of governmental subsidies in a range of basic production inputs especially in the agricultural sector.

Furthermore, Nzioki (1998, 29) say that, national policies and programmes originally meant to assist the poor have missed the target due to; conceptually flawed designs leading to failure to target and reach the vulnerable groups, implementation programmes related to lack of delivery of capacities or mismanagement and failure to take into account the needs and preferences of the affected communities. Supporting Nzioki's (1998) concern about policies is Gichaga et al (2009, 148) who accepts that poverty today is caused by structural sin like institutionalized corruption, bad governance and economic mismanagement by individuals and governments. People will

continue being poor as long as governments make economic and political policies that impoverish people. For example, economic policies that do not support farmers but impoverishes those in rural areas engaged in dairy and cash crop farming. People may also become poor because they are lazy or waste resources.

Musamas et al (2010-2011, 233) argue that women constitute over 50% of the total population of the adults in the country, and therefore, their commitment to economic productivity may reverse extreme poverty and hunger. Women are the primary players in agricultural and informal sectors. For example, in the case of rural areas, women have fostered the development process through the formation of self-help and income generating activities.

Another cause of poverty in Kenya, Nangulu (2010-2011, 249) points out that it is skewed unequal distribution of resources. The portrait of an inequitable Kenya replicates itself over and over again. The Kibaki government inherited a situation where Kenya was ranked among the ten most unequal countries in the World and the most unequal in East Africa. As noted by BO Govansson, for every shilling a poor Kenyan earns, a rich Kenyan earns Kshs. 56. Thus, the distribution of power and resources makes poor people very poor and the rich very rich. Considering that the poor are not only oppressed by denial of justice and rights, they are also often neglected in the socio-economic life of the nation.

Chikati (2011,15) says that the common reason given to the failure of a project is lack of high-level political commitment to it, and the lack of strong management and leadership that accompanies this. Matovu (1996,30) says that whereas donors and governments have frequently focused on technical and financial aspects of designing and implementing poverty alleviation programs, these programs necessarily evolve within a particular political environment. The key stakeholders, whose opinions and actions will largely determine the fate of these programs are usually more concerned with how proposed programs will affect their own interests than they are in specific and final aspects of each project.

Kabaji (1997, 18) argues that political interference in the running of women groups has led to their stagnation and failure. This is because political occasional interference with the management of women groups by imposing their own people as leaders, thereby causing a lot of disaffection among the women members. Political interference also has created an environment that condones misappropriation of funds, a problem leading to the failure of many groups. Kenya Episcopal Conference, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and the Dan Church Aid Report (KEC-CJPC) (2007, 5) on their national survey on political patronage, access to entitlements and poverty in Kenya, found out that political patronage had been and still was limiting Kenyans in their entitlements and therefore keeping them in perpetual cycle of poverty through selective or partisan-led accessibility to entitlements. Poverty is therefore politically borne, bred and perpetuated through exploitative structures of dependency on leaders mainly politicians, all for the sake of preserving the political elite.

Mulwa (2010,209) quotes Bergdall (1993,5-8) who said that hijacking from above leads to the collapse of grassroots organizations because leadership tends to pledge its loyalty and accountability to the sponsors as opposed to the membership, better-connected members of the rural organizations tend to hijack organizational leadership and end up reaping more benefits as compared to ordinary members.

Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and South Africa (OSSREA) (2009,4) synthesis report points out that though Kenya's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) seems to be broad-based, it has not been so due to lack of genuine participation or ownership by the poor. OSSREA report says that PRSP strategy emphasized quantitative outputs rather than qualitative outcomes by underlining such factors as greater access to social services like education and health, and hence, failed to comprehensively address concerns with direct bearings on the livelihoods of the poor like income and access to basics or essentials of life.

Theuri and Getui (2002, 7) agrees with the World Bank (2001) by saying that many people live in abject poverty in developing countries, majority of them women. 41 percent of Kenyans live in the rural areas and continue to experience the blunt of increasing poverty due to price changes in international markets for agricultural products, forcing members of the household to work even harder.

Government policies seem to be understood by the political class who manipulate them to suit their interest not the interests of the majority rural poor. The politicians know that through empowering the poor people they will have no ground to trade their political agendas since politics does better when few people know what is taking place and the majority is led for the benefit of the few. Though people participate in development affairs of their communities, they do not have the knowledge of management practices and strategies which means that their participation does not bring positive and long lasting results towards poverty reduction.

Citing the issues of gender mainstreaming shown above, Matovu (1996, 81) argue that many projects are identified, appraised and designed with implicit assumption that they will be implemented by men. In fact, most agricultural social sector and small programs are likely to be implemented equally by women and men, if not mainly by women. Matovu et al., (1996, 69) quotes Gittinger and others (1990) who identified major constraints facing African women with respect to the participation in economic, social and political developments as; the burden of production, a symmetric rights and obligations within the household, different role models and their limited access to resources and information particularly on credit, land, education, agricultural extension and appropriate technology.

In addition, Theuri and Getui (2002, 8) agree with Matovu et al (1996) by commenting that in Kenya, 70 Percent of women live in the rural areas making a livelihood out of agricultural activities. In the agricultural sector, women provide 80 percent of the agricultural labour force, while agricultural education, extension and training is mainly targeted on men Watkins (2000, 45) concurs with Theuri and Getui (2002) by saying that gender is one of the key determinants of the distribution of benefits from education. Many development projects have ignored the gender balance issue and as the result they have failed to benefit women positively. And to correct such an imbalance, gender analysis has to be done to reduce such an inequality, such that roles played by women and men are known to facilitate the exploitation of the latent potential in both genders and make project planning more gender sensitive (Esuruku 2007, 30).

Kabaji (1997, 16) points out that for women groups to be effective, a number of problems have to be addressed which form the majority impediments to the success of these women groups. These challenges include; limited capital to start and maintain business, lack of technical know-how which may make women shy away from projects and lack of managerial skills, coupled with poor record-keeping contribute to the failure of women projects. Sweetman (2000, 29)

agrees with Kabaji (1997) by saying that media have positively influenced public attitudes on many issues of human rights, but failed to challenge gender-based discrimination in societies across the World.

THE MEANING OF CBO (COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION)

Mulwa (2010, 207) defines community based organizations as voluntary associations where people organize themselves together in order to mobilize the potential of their collective power, especially lobbying for change in public policy in their favour, coming together to decide and act on issues which can best be solved through collective action, learn from sharing experiences and building confidence. Voluntarily people work for a common goal in CBOs.

The types of CBOs in Kenya range from community-wide associations to small groups of a few individuals within a locality. These can be further classified into women's groups, welfare associations, savings and credit associations, communal self-help groups and youth groups (Wanyama, 2001: 64).

The concept community-based organizations is used in this discussion to refer to voluntary and autonomous local level self-help organizations that are endogenous to a community, with established rules, regulations and procedures of operation Nyong (2002) quoting (Chitere, 1994:99). They are usually formed for mutual attainment of goals specific to the members or, at times, the entire community.

Community based organizations have many advantages over government agencies since they are relatively unencumbered by bureaucratic rules and regulations, and they possess a flexibility that government agencies often lack. CBOs work in remote areas, which typically have large concentrations of the poor, which government often cannot reach. They also stress participatory and integrated approaches, encouraging the poor to contribute their views and involvement at every stage, from planning and to monitoring and evaluation (Deolalikar et al, 2002, 35).

Mulwa (2009, 214) highlights the benefits of CBOs as instruments for community participation. These benefits are; by coming together, people create for themselves the opportunity for collective analysis of their situation, many people are reached within a short period, are cost effective as they seek to maximize the use of local resources, it is cheaper to reach individuals through their groups than through their individual farms.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Management practices and strategies are strongly intertwined that one cannot speak of one and leave the other if poverty is to be curbed. Management practices and strategies go hand in hand. Boone (2010, 28) argues that planning is the primary function of management as it starts the overall process of the organization. In its simplest conception, planning is nothing more than picking where the leader-managers take their vision for the organizational success and articulate them clearly enough for everyone to not only see the same future but also accept the organization's envisioned place in that future.

Maylor (2005, 83) points out that the plan is the first step in providing the means of satisfying the requirements of the project owner and sponsor. It is an explicit statement of the intended

timing of the project activities and the basis for establishing the resource requirements, the problem and error prevention, rather than rectification, is one of the drivers of the planning process. Maylor (2005) further argues that objectives of the planning process are to optimize the project process and to prevent problems in the process. This is achieved through the systematic evaluation of the project's consistent activities, their duration, and the logical linkages (sequencing). He continues to say that a Gantt chart is a time-scaled graphical planning tool, which gives a static representation of the relationship between activities and their duration.

On the other hand, Lokong (2006, 15) brings out the plan as an idea of the design phase of the project as one of the fundamental steps of any project development process because it is a stage whereby the conceptualized vision, mission, goal and objectives are defined to fit within the framework of the desired developmental interventions. Lokong further says that for the design or plan to be effective, the participants should allow a free flow of feelings.

In addition to planning as a management practice, organizing is an important function because it shows exactly how much effort will be required to bring about the organization's desired future. On the other hand, controlling is the reality check function where the managers compare the organization actually is to where their plans want it to be and then act accordingly (Boone, 2010, 28). Palhan (2005, 59) indicates that project implementation means doing the tasks identified in a plan. He continues to say that before implementation, it is important to check of the following tasks, which are prerequisite for effective implementation of the project plan.

Lokong (2006, 42) says that monitoring and evaluation is a continuous or periodic surveillance of the physical implementation of a project to ensure that inputs, activities, output and external factors are proceeding according to plan. It is a process of routinely gathering information on all aspects of the project in order to ensure that the project is proceeding in the right direction, at the right speed and is likely to achieve its initial set objectives.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Sababu (2007, 7) argues that strategic issues (vision, mission, goals, objectives and activities) are present and future oriented. They require careful considerations on the organizational external environment because all business exists in an open system. On the benefits of strategies, Sababu comments that strategic management activities do provide the organization with an integrated and coordinated guidance; it creates more pro-active management which is conscious to the environment and brings the future to the present. It helps to integrate behaviour of individuals into total effort and gives encouragement to individuals' forward thinking.

Yabs (2010,10) agree with Lokong (2006, 22) that a vision is a mental picture formulated by the founders of the enterprise in which they would like to see the firm achieve in the future. Maylor (2005, 53) states that the mission shows where an organization is going and is realized through the organizational strategy in the first instances by providing the focus for all the activities of the organization.

Barness et al (2012, 417) argue that organizational aspirations, frequently referred as goals, are central to strategic decision making. Setting goals and objectives is a long-standing component of scientific management and strategic planning. Boone (2010,28) says that a goal is the state of affairs that a plan is intended to achieve and that, when achieved, terminates the behaviour

intended to achieve it. Agreeing with Barness (2012), Shinkle (2012, 416) mentions that organizational aspirations are desired outcomes and have been also called goals or reference points and are central to strategic decision making, setting objectives and a long-standing component in scientific and strategic planning

Mehta et al (2009, 1026) quote Bunderson and Sutcliff (2003) and Dragoni (2005) who indicated that team goal orientation refers to the shared perception of team members regarding their team's climate.

Chikati (2010, 15) argues that cultural misfit of project objectives and activities within the environment and a lack of local knowledge and understanding leads to failure. This is because such a culture leads to the rejection of the project by the intended beneficiaries. For example a notable failure in agricultural projects occurred in West Africa because the project planners assumed that men would own and farm the land whereas in fact women play a pivotal role in agriculture in this region. Chambers (1996, 173) says that most outsiders to projects are men and tend to meet and interact with men.

Boone (2010, 238) defines the budget as a moral as well as a functional document as it reveals the values and priorities of the organization. The principal financial budget statements of the organization are; the balance sheet, the statement of activities and the statement of cash flow. The balance sheet shows where the organization is financially at a particular point in time. It lists the organization's assets its liabilities and the organization's fund balance (the original investment, plus profits, less losses since inception. While on the other hand Mutiso (2009, 37) defines a budget as a comprehensive financial plan designed by management to estimate revenue and expenditure for a given period of time.

Vargas (2008, 2) supports Chikati's (2010) assertion by mentioning some of the causes of failure of projects as targets and objectives are poorly defined or not understood by the lower ranks, financial estimates are poor, project based on insufficient or inadequate data, nobody has checked that people involved in the activities have the necessary knowledge to perform them and people are not working to the same standards, or work standards have not been established.

Concerning evaluation, Nguluu and Mulwa (2003, 30-41) defines it as a process which determines as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, effectiveness and impact of activities in the light of their objectives, aims and purposes. Hence evaluation helps in making informed decisions for improving the programme, for effective impact assessment, for accountability and an education process.

Mulwa (2010, 213) quotes Bergdall (1993,17) who said that through the accomplishment of small-scale projects, villagers can gain experience in the practical management of organizational details like budgeting, time and money, working together and accounting for funds. Hence, CBOs should be made of small and manageable size membership whose strength comes from linkages and networking with other like-minded groups.

The poor understanding of what management practices and strategies are is a cause for failure of the CBOs. As the result rural poverty will be tackled well when the local communities have been educated to understand and apply the management practices and strategies.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study applied the descriptive research design whereby both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The study was deliberately chosen by the researcher after having nine years of working experience in the same area. The structured questionnaire with both open ended and closed questions was used for collecting the data. Face to face interviews and participant observation methods for data were also applied. A sample size of 120 respondents was targeted with purposive sampling procedure being applied. Data was organized, analyzed and presented with the help of SPSS (Software program for Social Sciences) and Excel program.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Vision formulation

Table 17 shows the findings on the formulation of the vision in the CBO

Table 17 Vision formulation

	Frequency	Percentage
Executive members	9	10.8
All members	32	38.6
Donors	3	3.6
Don't know	38	45.8
Total	83	100.0

Table 17 shows that 45.8% of the respondents said they did not know how to formulate the vision. Yabs (2010, 10) agrees with these findings that it is difficult to participate in vision formulation because it is a mental image (which many people cannot comprehend) formulated to reflect about the future of an organization. Maylor (2005, 53) says the vision is realized through organizational strategy in the first instance. This makes it impossible for many people to understand while doing routine CBO activities. Again 38.55% of the respondents said vision formulation was the responsibility of the all members of the CBO. 10.84% said it was the duty of the executive members to formulate the vision. Lastly, 3.61% of the respondents said that it was the donors' duty to formulate the vision.

Vision formulation is the first step in developing management strategies. It goes hand in hand with planning. The future which is unforeseen and uncertain, the CBO management has to ensure that it has been aligned with proper planning for it to be realized.

Mission formulation

Table 18 reveals the findings on the respondents' understanding in mission formulation in the CBO.

Table 18: Mission formulation

	Frequency	Percentage
Executive members	8	9.6
All members	31	37.3
Government officials	2	2.4
Donors	3	3.6
Don't know	38	45.8
Total	83	100.0

Table 18 shows the percentage of the findings in mission formulation as reported by the respondents. 45.78% representing 38 respondents said they did not know about mission formulation, 37.35% of 31 respondents said all members of the CBO were involved in mission formulation, 9.54% said only the executive members were involved and 3.61% representing 3 respondents said donors were involved in mission formulation. Mission formulation was difficult to formulate for reasons given above by Yabs (2010, 10) and Maylor (2005, 53) in the literature review. The mission spells the values of the organization and any practice or strategy has to be guided by these values upon which the CBO works. Values such as hard work, cooperation and discipline are included in the mission of the CBO.

GOAL FORMULATION

Chart 7 reveals the field findings on the goal formulation among CBO members. 44.58% representing 37 respondents said they did not know anything about goal formulation. 39.76% of 33 respondents said the goal was formulated by all members of the CBO. 10.84% of 9 respondents said goal formulation was done by executive members. And lastly, 3.61% of 3 respondents said goal formulation was the donors' responsibility. A goal is achievable within a short period and it enshrines the aspirations and hope of the people in an organization. Barness et al (2012, 415-420) argue that organizational aspirations, frequently referred as goals, are central to strategic decision making. Setting goals and objectives is a long-standing component of scientific management and strategic planning. Agreeing with Barness (2012), Shinkle (2012, 416) mentions that organizational aspirations are desired outcomes and have been also called goals or reference points and are central to strategic decision making, setting objectives and a long-standing component in scientific and strategic planning.

In the CBO, people must have a goal to achieve. Without the goal in mind, the members of the community remain stagnated because they have not envisaged anything to achieve in the future. The goal propels and pushes people to implement the activities which result in poverty reduction.

PLANNING

An examination of Chart 2 shows the results on who was responsible for planning in the CBO affairs. The study shows that 37.35% of 31 respondents said planning was done by the executive committee members, 34.94% said they didn't know what was planning, 24.10% said planning

was done by all members of the CBO while 2.41% said planning was done by donors. 37.35% of 31 respondents who said that planning was the work of the executive members. Esuruku (2007, 35) agrees with these findings by saying that in project planning, the logical framework helps the internal logic and synergy within a plan and summarizes the project key features into a simple frame and it requires the expert knowledge to manage it..

Planning is the first step in running the project for it entails doing the stakeholder analysis, which is the process of identifying and assessing key actors and their interest affect the project. Maylor (2005, 83) agrees with the findings that planning is the first step, and explicit statement of the intended timing of project activities and the basis for estimating resource requirements. While Boone (2010, 28) also conforms to the findings that planning is considered the primary function of management, as it starts the overall process of seeing that the envisioned activities are fully implemented to completion and as per the objectives.

Therefore to lay the strong foundation of curbing poverty in the rural area planning as the first step in management practices has to be clearly understood by all the stakeholders; the CBOs, the government, the Church and donors.

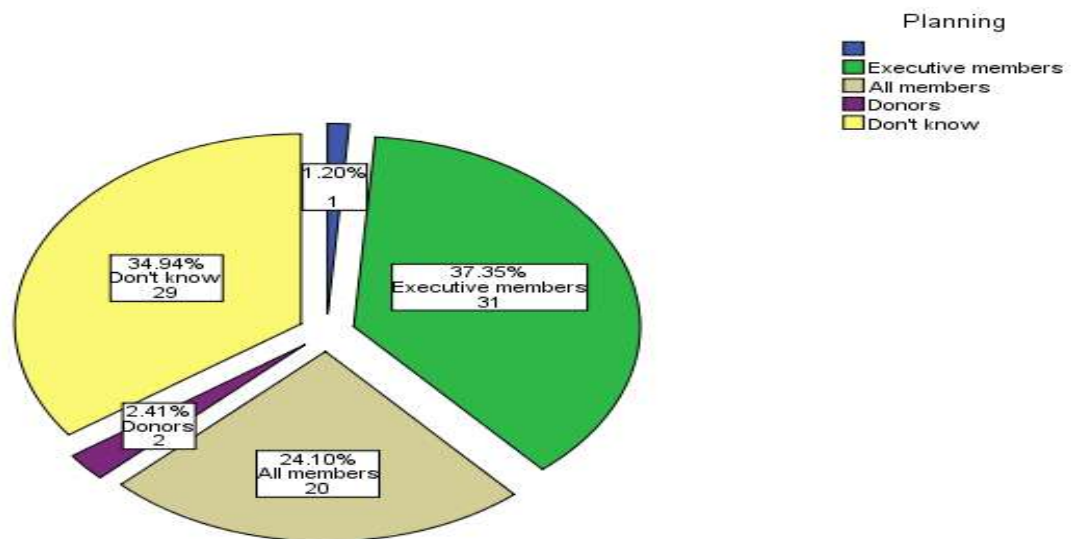
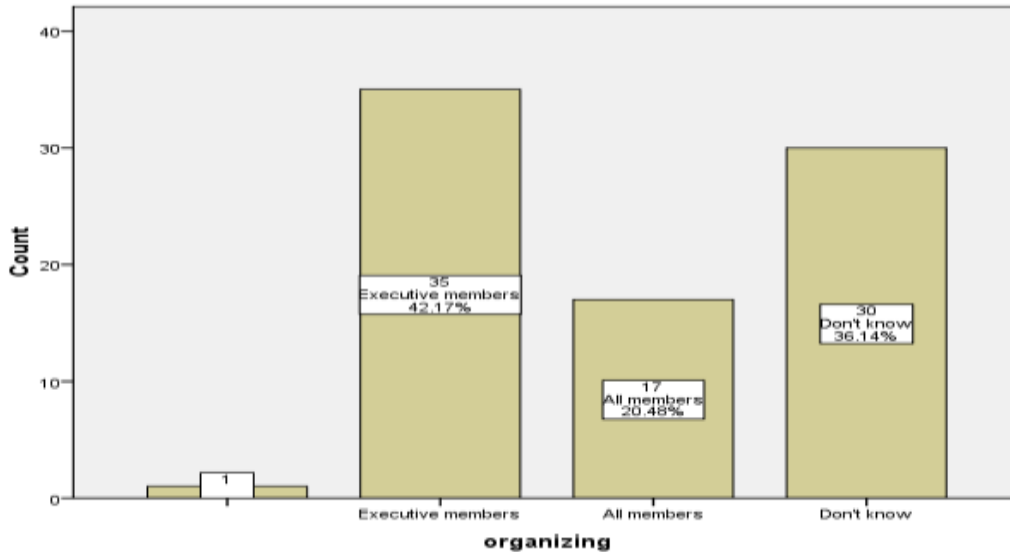


Chart 2: Percentage of respondents' source on the idea of planning

Respondents' responsibility in organizing

In addition to planning, the study was organized to find out whether the respondents knew the responsibility of organizing within the CBO affairs. An examination of Graph 3 reveals the findings on who was responsible for organizing. 35 respondents representing 42.17% said organizing was done by executive members, 36.14% said they did not have the knowledge on organizing and 20.48% representing 17 respondents said organizing was done by all members. Boone (2010, 28-29) agrees with this findings (42.17% organizing was done by executive members, who are the top management of the CBO) saying that organizing is an activity

involving those people with specific knowledge of how organizations actually operate bringing it to the desired future.



Graph 3: Percentage of respondents' source on the idea of organizing

4.7.3 Respondents' responsibility on implementation

Besides planning and organizing, the researcher further wanted to find out the responsibility of carrying out implementation among the respondents in the CBO. The findings are shown in chart 3.

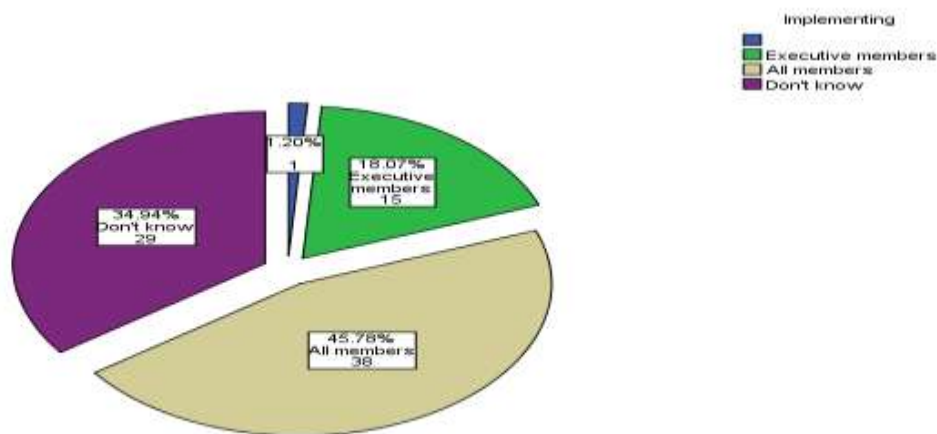


Chart 3: Percentage of respondents' source on the idea of implementation.

Chart 3 reveals the findings that 45.78% representing 38 members said that all members carry out the implementation of activities in the CBO. 34.94% of respondents representing 29 they didn't know anything concerning implementation while 18.07% said implementation was done

by the executive members only. Confirming to the high percentage (45.78%) of participation in project implementation is Mulwa (2010, 214) who quoted Bergdall (1993, 17) who said that villagers, in that sense rural people, gain experience in the practical management of organizational details by working together. Lokong (2006, 42) agrees with Mulwa(2010) and Palhan (2005,59) and the field findings by asserting that implementation is the running of project activities or tasks by the various organs of the departments under the guidance of the manager as spelled down in the plan. Once planning and organization correctly done, implementation becomes easy when realizing the activities of the CBO. Failure to implement the activities well leads to failure of the CBO affairs, hence continued poverty in the rural areas.

4.7.4 Respondents' responsibility in coordination

Chart 4 shows the field findings on who was responsible for coordinating the affairs of the CBO. 45.78% representing 38 respondents said coordination of CBO activities was done by executive members, 34.94% said they didn't know what coordination was or who did it, 14.46% said coordination was done by all members of the CBO and 2.41% said coordination of activities was done by donors. When the CBO has not attained its planned goal and activities of reducing poverty, it employs controlling as a practice to direct it towards realizing its goal and objectives. Boone, (2010, 29), agrees with this assertion by saying that controlling is a reality check through which the outcome achieved are compared to results expected and acting accordingly.

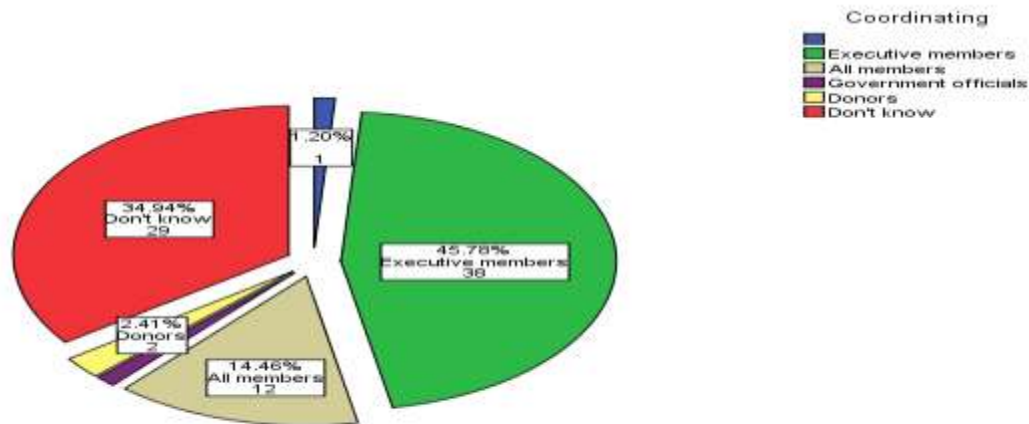


Chart 4: Percentage of the respondents' source on the idea of coordination

4.7.5 Budgeting

Chart 5 shows the field findings on who was responsible for budgeting of the CBO's funds.

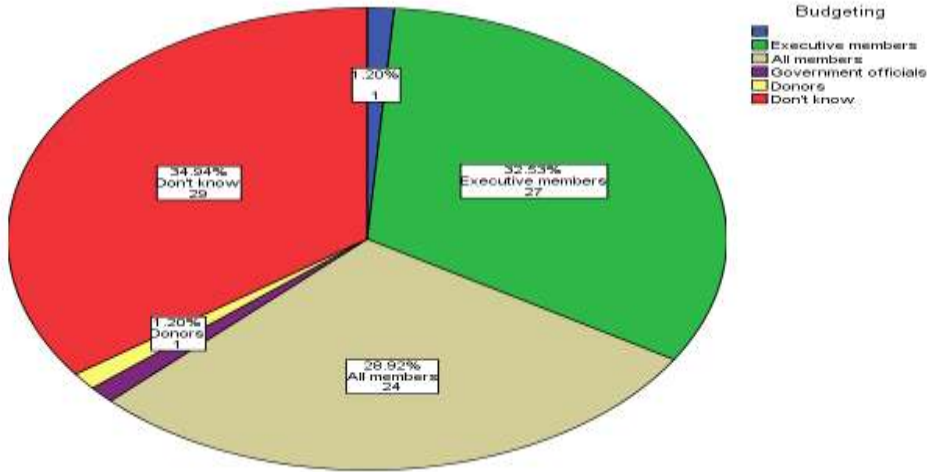


Chart 5 Percentage of respondents' source on budgeting

An examination of Chart 5 shows the findings that indicate that budgeting was done by the executive members, which was 32.53% representation. 28.92% said it was done by all members, 34.94% said they did not understand the concept of budgeting and 1.2% representing said equally that budgeting was done by the donors and government officials. The budget is a moral as well as a financial document as it reveals the values and priorities of the organization (Boone 2010, 237). Agreeing to the agency theory, the results of the findings showed that fund resource control was done by the executive members (56.63%) who are the agents of the CBO. The results also showed that the other members (shareholders) of the CBO did not know what budgeting entailed. Financial resource management is a hinge upon which the success or failure of the CBO is checked. Proper financial record keeping, transparency in spending and being accountable are the values which go together with budgeting.

4.7.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

Chart 6 shows the field findings on who was in-charged and responsible of doing monitoring and evaluating of CBO activities.

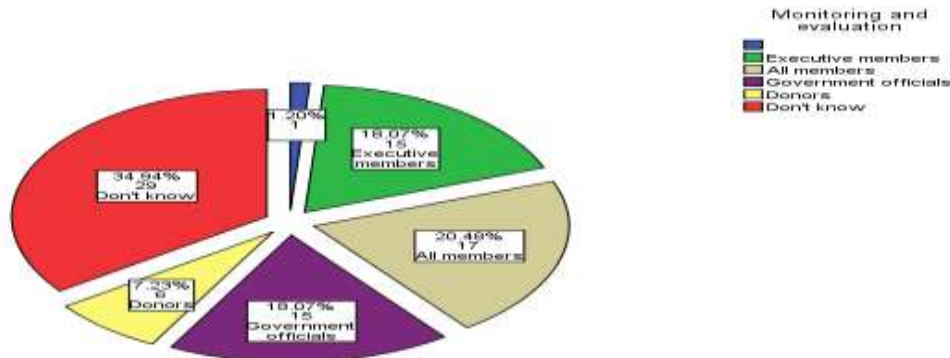


Chart 6 Percentage of respondents' source on the idea of monitoring and evaluation

Chart 6 show that 34.94% of the respondents said they did not know what was monitoring and evaluation. 20.48% representing 17 respondents said all members did the monitoring and evaluation. Equally, 18.07% of 15 respondents said that monitoring and evaluation was done by the executive members and the government officials. While 7.23% representing 6 respondents said that monitoring and evaluation was done by the donors. This percentage (34.94%) of the field findings agrees with the World Bank Operations Evaluations department (1999, 33) which indicated that monitoring and evaluation of CBO activities is weak whose origin is poorly structured projects which are not result oriented. In addition to poor structuring of projects, Lokong (2006,50) quotes Rossi, Freeman and Lipsay (1998) who said that evaluation is a retrospective analysis against the set objectives to measure relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, effects on the immediate consequences of the project outcome on the intended beneficiaries, the socio-economic impact and sustainability of the activities following the termination of external funding. To this end, evaluation is difficult and requires few people who can do the retrospective analysis well.

As a strategy, monitoring and evaluation helps to check whether the CBO is progressing towards achieving it vision, mission, goal and objectives. When these strategies are not realized it means that the CBO management has to revisit its plans and vision and restructure it so that poverty reduction as the target would be realized.

The causes of poverty

The concept of poverty was given attention in chapter two in three categories. That is, the global concept of poverty, African concept of poverty and the Kenyan concept of poverty. The closed ended questions sought to find out the feelings, the thoughts and comprehension of the rural people on the issue of poverty as they experience it.

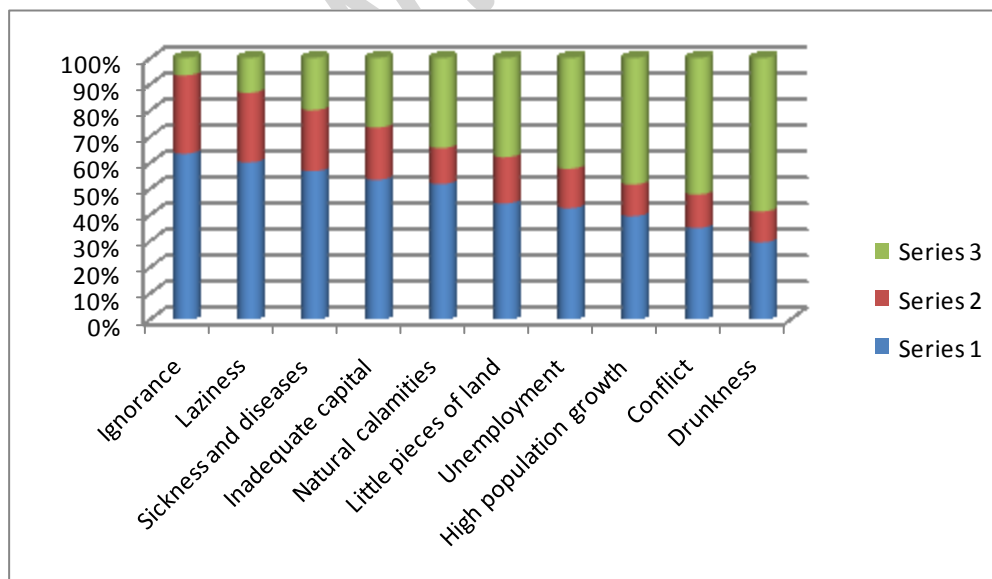


Chart 8: Respondents' ideas on the causes of poverty in the rural areas

Chart 8 gives the summary of the views of the people concerning the issue of poverty. Out of the 83 questionnaires filled and returned, it was found out after sampling and tallying them, 90% of the respondents said ignorance was the major cause of poverty. These category of respondents said that ignorance was associated with lack of education, lack of information, illiteracy, mismanagement of resources, poor utilization of the available resources and poor saving habits. Laziness which accounted for 85% of the 83 respondents was the second major cause of poverty. Laziness was understood as lack of commitment, not being active, non-involvement in any work, no dedication or devotion in any work done.

In addition to ignorance and laziness, diseases and sickness became the third cause of poverty accounting for 75% of all the 83 respondents reached. The fourth major cause of poverty given was inadequate capital for starting any substantial and meaningful business. Lack of capital included such aspects such as inaccessibility to credit facilities and lack of security for accessing loans. Natural calamities accounted for the fifty cause of poverty which was 60% of the 83 respondents interviewed. Natural calamities were such phenomenon as prolonged drought, heavy and stormy rains and changes in climatic patterns.

The sixty cause of poverty was little pieces of land and unemployment, which both accounted for 55% of all the 83 respondents interviewed. The seventy cause of poverty was cited as high population growth which accounted for 45% of all the 83 respondents interviewed. Conflict and alcoholism (drunkenness) as causes of poverty took position eight and nine, which accounted for 45% and 43% respectively of the 83 respondent interviewed.

As noted from the findings, ignorance was the major cause of poverty and as such calls for greater attention to deal with it. People have to get knowledge, skills and news ideas so that ignorance among them may be reduced. The management practices and strategies in curbing rural poverty would be possible once ignorance has been stumped out of this rural community. This calls for trainings, seminars and workshops through which management practices and strategies will be taught to the people.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this study was an evaluation of the management practices and strategies in curbing rural poverty. The findings revealed that the management practices and strategies were not professionally, scientifically and technically applied hence accelerated poverty levels in the rural areas.

From the study, it was evident that CBOs will do well when proper planning and vision formulation are well done from the very beginning of the CBO activities. The main findings were;

1. Demographic information; age sex/gender, educational level and occupation have direct influence on the performance of CBOs.
2. The needs, aspirations and hopes acted as the catalysts and energizers for people to pool their talents and resources towards economical, social and religious well-being.

3. The idea of CBO is disseminated first and faster among the community members than when done by the government, the Church or donors.
4. Sound and better planning mingled with the vision lays the foundation for the success of the CBO
5. Management practices and management strategies are distinctively and closely tied.
6. Ignorance and laziness were singled out as the major causes of poverty and the reason why management practices and strategies fail to curb poverty in this rural area.
7. The extreme poor person was one who is a beggar, wears rags and he/she is physically and mentally challenged. He/she lacks almost all the basic necessities.
8. The government, the Church and donors have not done much in this rural area to curb poverty in the household level.
9. Individual effort at the household level was singled out as the better way of reducing poverty than depending on the Church, government or the donors.
10. Advocacy campaign is the final and last tool for enforcing change in management practices and strategies once the other ways have failed.

The studies identified the following suggestions that would help improve the management practices and strategies in curbing rural poverty

1. Training, seminars and capacity building on management practices and strategies need to be strengthened by all the stakeholders
2. The government to formulate a policy that would be easily understood by its implementers and those who experience it, especially the rural poor.
3. Poverty would be reduced to tolerable levels when the government, the Church and donors target the households rather than putting their efforts at the institutional levels or targeting only the economically and politically able people in the community
4. The pro-poor strategies of targeting the rural poor to be jointly by formulated by the government, the Church and the donor world.
5. The government to equitably give the national resources to all areas in the country with an aim in mind of the CBO towards poverty reduction.

Finally, the study recommends the following areas of research in an effort to curbing rural poverty through CBOs.

1. An examination of the cultural factors contributing to poverty reduction at the household level.
2. The role of the donor world in rural poverty reduction at the household level.
3. The role of the Church in poverty reduction at the household level.
4. The governments' efforts in poverty reduction at the household levels in the rural areas.
5. An examination of gender balance and its role in poverty reduction at the household level.

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