



GENDER MAINSTREAMING ON UPLIFTING THE LIVELIHOODS OF RURAL WOMEN IN RWANDA

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ABSTRACT

How gender mainstreaming affects livelihood remains a key challenge not only in Rwanda but even globally. Despite the fact that women are the main rural actors in uplifting livelihood, they still experience an array of socioeconomic challenges that exists. The purpose of the study was to assess the influence of gender mainstreaming on uplifting the livelihoods of rural women in Rwanda. This study adopted a descriptive approach where the target population comprised of the households from Gicumbi district, estimated to 395,606, with 86,075 households. The study selected a sample size of 45 households basing on Slovin's formula. Sampling technique was stratified random sampling. The research tool was structured questionnaire, which was tested for validity and reliability before administration. Gender mainstreaming had a statistically significant strong positive correlation ($r=0.538$, $p= .000$) with uplifting the livelihoods of rural women in Rwanda. Gender mainstreaming had a statistically significant contribution to uplifting the livelihoods of rural women in Rwanda ($F_{ratio}= 55.810$; $p< .05$) attributing 13.8% variance. It showed that for every one standard deviation increase in gender mainstreaming initiatives, uplifting livelihood improved by .194 units. In conclusion, gender mainstreaming among rural women has attributed to an uplifting livelihood in Gicumbi District, Rwanda. There was a statistically significant strong positive correlation between variations in gender mainstreaming and uplifting livelihood in rural women in Rwanda. Though gender mainstreaming among women attributed to the variation in livelihood, the contribution was quite big. This study identified the existence of policy functionality in terms of capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning for effective gender mainstreaming in civil society and public sector, but gender mainstreaming is treated as a goal rather than as a strategy. The study therefore recommended that the public sector should intensify its practice with a view to enhancing sustainable livelihood. Gender mainstreaming involve wide field with numerous operational interventions. Gicumbi District policy makers should therefore invest in research to identify various gender mainstreaming interventions to be used for uplifting livelihood of rural women in Rwanda. This study was not exhaustive. Therefore, further complementary researches should focus on topics that generate new approaches that push Rwandan society closer towards capturing changes in the lived realities of women throughout the world.

Key words: Gender Mainstreaming; uplifting the livelihoods of rural women in Rwanda

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INTRODUCTION

Globally gender mainstreaming has been a global concern as it remains widely accepted as the most practical means to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of rural women (FAO, 2010). Essentially gender mainstreaming is a contested concept and practice as it involves the reinvention, restructuring, and rebranding of key parts of feminism in the contemporary era (Catacutan & Naz, 2015)

According to United Nations Development Program (2016) gender mainstreaming is a propeller with underlined progress towards the ultimate goal of attaining gender equality. It transforms society positively through the elimination of discriminatory laws, norms and practices that limit women's and girls' voices, choices, and opportunities and impede them from achieving their full potential.

Over the last decade the advocacy for gender mainstreaming has been very successful and the ideas have been gaining ground (Ria, 2013). When it comes to equality of gender embracing the term gender mainstreaming as a strategy to address women's unequal position in twelve critical areas of concern, including education, health, armed conflict, as victims of violence, economy, decision making and human rights (Unit for the Promotion of the Status of Women and Gender Equality, 2010).

In developed countries various bodies including the United Nations have been formed since 1945 with an ultimate goal of eliminating all obstacles hindering active participation of women in all spheres of public and private life through an equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision making (Bridge (2014).

In Australia United Nations Development Program (UNOP) has put in place a number of policies and strategies to mainstream gender throughout its programmatic activities (Alston, 2016). Failure to understand and address gender dimensions within programs and projects, risks wasting of development resources and negative effects on

household welfare, women's equality, and environmental sustainability (Yudhoyono et al., 2009).

Gender inequality is sizable in South Asia or the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In fact, Asian Development Bank (2013) estimated that 0.9 percentage points of the 1.8 percentage point annual per capita growth difference between the countries in MENA and those in East Asia and the Pacific can be attributed to higher initial gender inequality in education there as well as a slower closing of the gap vis-à-vis East Asia and the Pacific. While these results are instructive, they are based on information on gender equality and economic performance until 2010.

Studies in Africa by Senay *et al.*, (2012) indicated that, if women farmers were given the same access to resources (such as land, finance and technology) as men, their agricultural yields could increase by 20 to 30 percent; national agricultural output could rise by 2.5 percent; and the number of malnourished people could be reduced by 12 to 17 percent. Adeleke, Abdul and Zuzana (2010) observed that eliminating gender-based discrimination under the law, ensuring gender-sensitive policies and programming decisions, and giving women greater voice in decision-making at all levels are necessary for mainstreaming gender in agriculture and enhancing food security.

In south Africa In Africa, gender mainstreaming has been taken into account in the areas of; education, remuneration, representation, employment, opinion and family (Goko, 2013). The whole society, including governments and other organizations are taking up the responsibility of reducing gender-based discrimination (Styodana, 2015).

Gender mainstreaming in Ghana has been going through a process of mobilization through involvement of various state and non-state actors (Azeem, Addah, & Ahuno, 2014). Through empowerment, people are beginning to realize that for gender equality to be effective, collective action is needed by everyone. Women are among the

poorest and marginalized in society, thus, the most affected by corruption due to the negative impact on their participation and empowerment (Ghana Integrity Initiative, 2016).

In East Africa women have faced several historical constraints such as: land tenure, access rights, and land management; credit access; access to input and output markets; infrastructure; extension services; institutional problems; climate change and food security; and global financial, food, and fuel price crises (Adeleke *et al.*, 2010). In Uganda the government is trying very hard to eliminate cultural factors that hinder gender mainstreaming as well as mobilizing human and financial resources to ensure that gender mainstreaming is effective (Beall, 2010).

According to a 2015 African Development Bank (AfDB) Report, Kenya has the highest percentage of women directors among the twelve sub-Saharan African countries surveyed. Kassie, Wagura, and Shiferaw (2012) women in Kenya face significant barriers in agriculture, especially inequalities in access to and control over crucial resources and inputs such as land, labour, fertilizer and formal finance. Women also face barriers to membership in rural organizations and cooperatives, agricultural inputs and technology such as improved seedlings, training and extension as well as in marketing services.

In order to ensure sustainable development, it has become imperative to recognize the importance of the two sexes (male and female) as complementary biological entities and moreover, to respect full equity and equality of each of the two genders. The roles of men and women are socio-political and cultural constructs, which have evolved through history, and vary from one society to another (Anupriya, 2014). It is in this context that Rwanda has put more emphasis in promoting and empowering women and it has been successful to the extent that 45.5% of civil servants are women and 54.5% are men (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda [NISR], 2011).

However, according to United Nations Human Development Index (2014), Rwanda is still among the least developed countries. For the total population of Rwanda estimated to 11 million, approximately 53% are women. Around 5.2 million women live in poverty and 3.6 million of them in extreme poverty (MINECOFIN, 2016).

The commitment of the Government of Rwanda to mainstream gender in national development for equitable growth and poverty reduction is evident in the establishment of different national machineries with different but complementary roles (Roopa, 2014). It should however be noted that gender inequality restricts the country's economic growth by limiting women's access to economic resources, participation in leadership, decision making, respect for human rights and capacity to tackle gender inequalities.

Elimination of inequalities gives societies a better chance to develop (Roxane, 2011)). Most scholars would agree that more energy is being directed towards promoting gender mainstreaming through development research (Abbott & Alinda, 2012). Furthermore, one important aspect regarding gender mainstreaming is that it emphasizes the role and involvement of both sexes in driving the process, something that is of crucial importance for advancing gender equality (Carson & Randall, 2013). It cannot be women's responsibility alone. Therefore, the study assessed the influence of gender mainstreaming on uplifting the livelihoods of rural women in Rwanda.

Statement of the problem

Gender Mainstreaming contributes towards the improving of livelihoods in rural communities or removing rural communities from poverty. It includes all aspects of project management. Despite efforts at the policy level and a growing awareness of the crosscutting gender issues in development programs, gender mainstreaming has been slow to translate from policy into action (Gender Monitoring Office, 2011b).

Rwanda has put more emphasis in promoting and empowering women and it has been successful to the extent that 45.5% of civil servants are women and 54.5% are men (NISR, 2014b). However, after more than a decade, Rwanda is still among the least developed countries. The country has managed to reduce the incidence of poverty by 3.5 percent but the poverty incidence is much higher in rural areas (66%) than in urban areas (11% in Kigali city) (Mukunda, Kazaire and Musindarwezo, 2011). While the incidence of poverty among FHHs (Female Headed Households) was reduced by 6.1%, the rate is still higher than that of the national average. The difference is more striking when comparing the percentage of FHHs living in extreme poverty (43.5%) with that of their male counterparts in the same group (35.1%).

Debate on gender mainstreaming, its theoretical concepts, as well as the manner in which it is implemented is highly complex and contested basing on either its proponents or opponents (Rwanda Women's Network, 2011).

Gender equality failed to reduce poverty in Rwanda because of the following factors: limited capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning for effective gender mainstreaming in all development sectors, including the public sector, private sector and the civil society; resistance to behavior change and poor understanding of gender concept; limited capacities, skills, agricultural assets and technologies to transform the agriculture of subsistence into a market oriented agriculture for food security and income generation; unsystematic and uncoordinated monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. It's against this background that the study assessed the influence of gender mainstreaming on uplifting the livelihoods of rural women in Rwanda.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender relations theory

This study was guided by Butler's gender relations theory which was developed in 1995. According to this theory, society views all activities that are

carried out to be based on social roles and interactions of men and women. The society seems to have ultimate authority on the precise nature of what women and men actually do, and their real contribution to production and reproduction which turns out to be prejudiced against women. The experiences of women in the society are not the same as those of their male counterparts.

Women still suffer and, in a family, setting they suffer more because they cannot give up their children. Moreover, the ultimate wellbeing of women is influenced by culture to a large extent. The society decides which cultural believes and practices govern women and take control of their roles and responsibilities. Men on the contrary a left with the role of defining these societal norms with full control being left to them. Their interaction on different levels is fully determined by societal norms. Economically the means of production and access are also controlled by the society. The society on a bigger angle

controls the process of development through resources (Hooks, 2010).

This study was based on this theory because it emphasizes on the influence of social norms, cultural norms, economic norms and standards which must be considered for gender mainstreaming to be effective. These norms are the factors that influence the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the government. Almost all the variables were captured by this theory. Gender mainstreaming is affected by cultural factors such as the patriarchal ideologies which are very dominant. Lack of awareness on gender issues is also an influencing factor as well as the limited nature of resources and dysfunctional policies.

Gender Mainstreaming

For gender mainstreaming, there must be policy functionality and resource mobilization that result in capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning in the public sector, the private sector and the civil society. There is another problem of gender equality, which is the tendency to treat

gender mainstreaming as a goal, rather than as a strategy for achieving equality between women and men (World Bank, 2001).

Despite the similarities between male-owned firms and female-owned firms, they take different routes to success based on the owner's preferences. Male and female entrepreneurs achieve similar success rates by different means although the difference between production and marketing activity reliance is not as great for females as it is for males. A key supposition in entrepreneurship research is that a firm's resources at the start-up are critical determinants of success and survival: Intangible assets in the form of human capital, and tangible resources from the environment (e.g. capital, partners, employees and suppliers). To the extent that deficiencies in human capital render new firms vulnerable, those started up by women are more likely to have higher odds of discontinuation than those started by men (Knotts, Jones & La Preze, 2004).

In a mapping study of women in agriculture (Abbott, Malunda & Tsinda 2014) the score on the gender sensitivity of programmes was 2.45 out of 3, indicating a high level of gender mainstreaming. However, the score on the Benefit Index, women's perception of the extent to which they are benefiting from programmes designed to promote gender equality, was only 1.85. The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index found that at least 30 per cent of women in agriculture have inadequate empowerment (Malapit *et al.*, 2014). Of the five domains they measured, the main contribution to the disempowerment of women was time allocation (28.4%), closely followed by community leadership (24.3%) and access to productive resources (24%), with control over use of income contributing 13.7 per cent and production decision contributing 9.7 per cent. Women were especially disempowered in access to and decisions on credit, group membership and control over and use of income

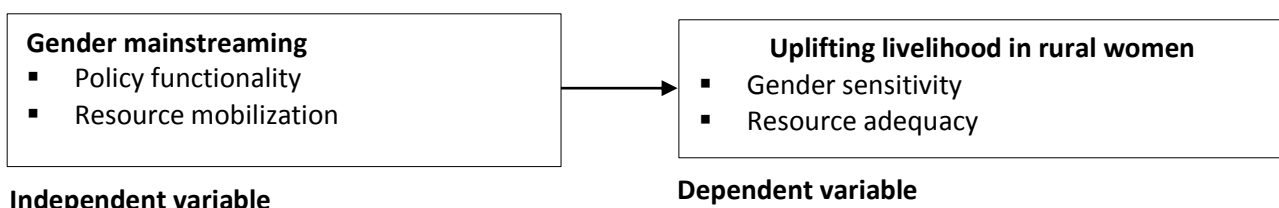


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

METHODOLOGY

This study applied both descriptive and quantitative research designs. Descriptive research was considered prior to be quantitative research design as it provides an overall overview as to what variables to test quantitatively. The target population comprised the inhabitants of Gicumbi district. They were estimated to 395,606, with 86,075 households. There were no exclusion criteria. A sample size of 45 respondents was selected using Slovin's formula. A closed ended questionnaire was used to obtain primary data. Interview and documentary technique were used to re-inforce the data collected. The data was analyzed by using Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used in data analysis in both

descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics involved description of data using statistics such as means, standard deviations and percentages while inferential statistics included using t-tests for relationship purposes.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Assessment of the Gender Mainstreaming on uplifting livelihoods of rural women in Rwanda

The study assessed gender mainstreaming on uplifting livelihood of rural women in Rwanda under the following subheadings:

Evaluation of capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning in public sector

For the researcher to assess gender mainstreaming in Gicumbi district, the question was formulated in such a way that the respondents gave details about capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning for effective gender mainstreaming in public sector. Table 1 showed that the majority of the respondents (91.11%) agreed while only 8.89% disagreed.

The respondents strengthened that in public sector concepts and objectives relating to gender equality are clear and when gender analysis was undertaken during design, it was linked in meaningful way to the expected results but gender mainstreaming is treated as a goal rather than as a strategy for achieving equality between women and men.

It was revealed that Rwanda had put more emphasis in promoting and empowering women

and it has been successful to the extent that 45.5% of civil servants were women and 54.5% were men. Changes in educational attainment and demographic profile of the population explained changes in the female-male gap in labor force participation in Gicumbi district. Changes in education and literacy also contributed to the explanation of variation in female labor force participation. However, a failure to integrate gender analysis with overall social, poverty and sustainability analysis did not decrease the likelihood that women could still be marginalized during design and implementation. Integrated social, gender and poverty analysis identified the different vulnerabilities of females and males to becoming poor, the different experiences of males and females living in poverty but did not identify the different options which females and males had to escape poverty, and their priorities.

Table 1: Views on the existence of capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning in public sector

There are capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning	F	%
Yes	41	91.11
No	4	8.89
Total	45	100

Evaluation of capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning in private sector

The respondents were also asked to give details about capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning for effective gender mainstreaming in private sector. Table 2 showed

that 93.33% of the respondents argued that there were not any capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning for effective gender mainstreaming in private sector. Only 6.67% of the respondents provided a positive answer.

Table 2: Views on the existence of capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning in private sector

There are capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning	F	%
Yes	3	6.67
No	42	93.33
Total	45	100

Views of the respondents, who pointed their finger to the confusion about concepts and objectives relating to gender equality, are illustrated in Table 3, which showed that among the respondents who denied the existence of technical skills in gender

analysis and planning in private sector, 97.62% stated that there was confusion about concepts and objectives relating to gender equality. Only 2.38% of the respondents were not aware of that confusion.

Table 3: Views on confusion about concepts and objectives relating to gender equality in private sector

There is confusion about concepts and objectives relating to gender equality	F	%
Yes	41	97.62
No	1	2.38
Total	42	100

It was discovered that the ongoing challenges of gender equality to reduce poverty in Gicumbi district is the confusion about concepts and objectives relating to gender equality. The word “gender” is commonly used as a synonym for “women”, and men were missing from a number of evaluations reports. This meant that there was little or no focus in these evaluations on gender relations (economic, social and power relations between men and women), how these relations influence women’s capacity to participate or benefit, and on the impact that development activities may have on gender equality.

The respondents who denied the existence of technical skills in gender analysis and planning in private sector were also asked to clarify if gender mainstreaming is treated as a strategy for achieving equality between women and men.

Table 4 shows that among the respondents who denied the existence of technical skills in gender analysis and planning in private sector, 88.10% stated that there is the tendency to treat gender mainstreaming as a goal, rather than as a strategy for achieving equality between women and men. Only 11.90% of the respondents were not aware of that tendency.

Table 4: Views on tendency to treat gender mainstreaming as a goal in private sector

Tendency to treat gender mainstreaming as a goal	F	%
Yes	37	88.10
No	5	11.90
Total	42	100

The focus on measuring goals and outcomes, mostly quantitatively, precludes other forms of learning that can provide valuable lessons to the women’s movement, such as challenges, unexpected consequences, most effective means of implementation, and the pathways and catalysts of intended change.

The respondents who denied the existence of technical skills in gender analysis and planning in private sector were also asked to give details about the linkage of gender analysis to the expected results. As Table 5 indicates, 85.71% of the respondents argued that when gender analysis was undertaken during design, it was not linked in meaningful way to the expected results. Only 14.29% of the respondents gave the positive answer.

This study has discovered that despite the growth of women-owned businesses in Gicumbi district, females still face challenges compared to men. Despite the similarities between male-owned firms and female-owned firms, they take different routes to success based on the owner’s preferences. There are potential gender differences in strategic orientation to determine the impact it had on survival for potential mass merchandizing supplies. When deficiencies in human capital render new firms vulnerable, those started up by women are more likely to have higher odds of discontinuation than those started by men. There are many investigated cases of female-owned enterprises that failed unexpectedly in Gicumbi district. However, they could have been succeeded if owned by male entrepreneurs.

Table 5: Views on linkage of gender analysis to the expected results in private sector

When gender analysis was undertaken during design, it was linked to the expected results	F	%
Yes	6	14.29
No	36	85.71
Total	42	100

Evaluation of capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning in civil society

This study was finally interested in capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning for effective gender mainstreaming in civil society. From Table 6, it is obvious that 84.44% of the respondents affirmed that there are capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning for effective gender mainstreaming in civil society. Only 15.56% of the respondents disagreed.

They supported their arguments stating that in civil society concepts and objectives relating to gender equality are clear and when gender analysis was undertaken during design, it was linked in meaningful way to the expected results. Gender mainstreaming is also treated as a strategy for achieving equality between women and men but the problem is the approach adopted for reporting program impact.

Table 6: Views on the existence of capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning in civil society

There are capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning	F	%
Yes	38	84.44
No	7	15.56
Total	45	100

Correlation between Gender mainstreaming and uplifting of livelihood in rural women

Correlation analysis was conducted to empirically determine whether Gender mainstreaming had a significant effect on uplifting of livelihood in rural women in Rwanda. Results indicated that Gender mainstreaming is significantly correlated to uplifting of livelihood in rural women in Rwanda ($r=0.538$, $p=$

.000) Gender mainstreaming had a statistically significant contribution to uplifting the livelihoods of rural women in Rwanda ($F_{ratio}= 55.810$; $p< .05$) attributing 13.8% variance. It showed that for every one standard deviation increase in gender mainstreaming initiatives, uplifting livelihood improved by .194 units.

Table 7: Correlation between gender mainstreaming and uplifting of livelihood in rural women

		Gender mainstreaming	Uplifting of livelihood
Gender mainstreaming	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
Uplifting of livelihood	Pearson Correlation	.538**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

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

Discussion of Results

The study findings agreed with A study commissioned by Asian Development Bank (2013) recognized the instrumental value of gender equality and conditions for the society as factors

leading to increased contribution of women to food security and adequate nutrition. This was in agreement with results of the current study which also showed that gender mainstreaming contributed significantly to food security. However,

while the current study considered both gender in equity measures, Asian Development Bank (2013) investigation was more inclined to women.

In addition, the study found out that: gender mainstreaming has uplifted livelihood of households in rural women in Gicumbi District This agrees with Bridge (2014) who revealed thousands of women and girls as lacking food and nutrition security because of their low status compared to men and boys. Such inequalities were found to have been compounded by women and girls" who often have limited access to productive resources, education and decision-making. While this study was more confined strengthening women, the current study looked at gender mainstreaming and found that it contributed significantly in uplifting livelihood of rural women in Rwanda.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There was a statistically significant strong positive correlation between variations in gender mainstreaming and uplifting livelihood in rural women in Rwanda. Though gender mainstreaming among women attributed to the variation in livelihood, the contribution was quite big.

This study identified the existence of policy functionality in terms of capacities and technical skills in gender analysis and planning for effective gender mainstreaming in civil society and public sector, but gender mainstreaming is treated as a goal rather than as a strategy. Concerning the private sector, capacities and technical skills in

gender analysis and planning for effective gender mainstreaming are missing because there is confusion about concepts and objectives relating to gender equality, the tendency to treat gender mainstreaming as a goal rather than as a strategy, and when gender analysis was undertaken during design, it was not linked in meaningful way to the expected results.

Gender mainstreaming has positively contributed to improved livelihood in Gicumbi district. The study therefore recommended that the public sector should intensify its practice with a view to enhancing sustainable livelihood. Gender mainstreaming involve wide field with numerous operational interventions. Gicumbi District policy makers should therefore invest in research to identify various gender mainstreaming interventions to be used for uplifting livelihood of rural women in Rwanda.

All development sectors, especially the private sector should treat gender mainstreaming as a strategy and when gender analysis is undertaken during design, it should be linked in meaningful way to the expected results

Areas of further research

This study was not exhaustive. Therefore, further complementary researches should focus on topics that generate new approaches that push Rwandan society closer towards capturing changes in the lived realities of women throughout the world.

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