

**‘POVERTY DEFINITION’ AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO PROJECTS FAILURE IN
KILIFI COUNTY, KENYA.**

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ABSTRACT: *It is evident that poverty has remained a key challenge to mankind worldwide with a lot of resources being used to address the same with little success. It is worth noting that the definition of the single word has been the focus despite having different interpretations, with little concern put on its interpretation while coming up with projects to address the same. It was against that background that a cross sectional survey was conducted on two dairy projects targeting poverty reduction in Kilifi County Kenya. Forty farmers supported with dairy cows by Heifer International and Plan international were surveyed. The study observed that inadequacy in resources, knowledge, responsibility, skills and or ability played a key role in projects success and defining poverty. The study led to the definition of poverty as; “**the inadequacy in resources, responsibility, knowledge, skills and/or ability to sustain a livelihood and/ or richness in a given community**” A Regression model was also suggested to address the five variables in poverty reduction projects.*

KEYWORDS: *Poverty, resources, responsibility, knowledge, skills and ability*

INTRODUCTION

Countries, development organizations, communities and individuals apply a variety of strategies available to meet the needs of those persons and groups who are less advantaged and usually in poverty in communities. Ndou (2012) noted that Community based projects are established in most of the communities as a strategy to create jobs and alleviate poverty. Schiller (1989) reported that, the view of poverty we ultimately embrace will have a direct bearing on the public policies we pursue which ultimately influences the impact of the project in poverty alleviation. Similarly Bradshaw (2005) noted that regardless of how we look at the “science” of poverty, it remained essential to retain focus on the fact that the definition of poverty and the policies addressing it were all shaped by political biases and values. The study by Bradshaw finally concluded that increasing the effectiveness of anti-poverty programs required those designing and implementing those programs to not only develop adequate theories of poverty to guide programs, but make sure the community development approaches are as comprehensive as possible.

Aluko (2003) observed that in Nigeria Poverty remained widespread, however what was controversial was the choice of appropriate strategies for its' reduction. The major suggestions put forward are; that the strategies must be multidimensional, the society needs to be committed, disciplined and consistent with all the ideals that have been stipulated. It is in recognition of this that various strategies comprising of economic, political, social, agricultural and ideological policy options were suggested. Despite all the above suggestions success rate of projects has remained low.

Okoh (1997) defined poverty as a state of deprivation, in terms of both economic and social indicators, such as income, education, and healthcare, access to food, social status, self-esteem and self-actualization. According to Obadan (1996) the poor are those who are unable to obtain an adequate income, find a stable job, own property or maintain healthy living conditions. Similarly, Olayemi (1995) described the poor as those who had no access to the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing and decent shelter; are unable to meet social, economic, political obligations. United Nations on the other hand described poverty as the inability of getting choices and opportunities, which is a violation of human dignity. World Bank defined Poverty as pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life. World Bank has also defined poverty as an income level below some minimum necessary to meet basic needs.

The definition agreed by the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 is that Poverty is a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services. Based on the above definitions, poverty index has been used for years to inform decisions in project development by many countries but the results have always been wanting, with many countries and leading international organizations rarely turning back to look at the root causes of the projects failures. Literature on why projects rarely succeed points out to a variety of reasons from corruption to vagaries of weather. However missions keep on planning on how to pump money into countries and local communities. My work in the agricultural extension in The Kenyan Coast spanning well over 15 years has observed that the contentious and conflicting definitions of the word 'poverty' which is the basis of most projects funding has played a critical role in projects failure or not meeting the projects expectation.

Wabwoba and Wakhungu (2013) observed that Kenya is one of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa not able to feed its population sufficiently and therefore, relies on outside assistance. A study on factors affecting the sustainability of community food security projects funded by various organizations between 2005 and 2009 in the Karai and Ndeiya divisions of Kiambu County, Kenya concluded that food security projects are not sustainable. Despite much food security projects having been funded by both the Kenyan government and other development

partners in an effort to mitigate against food insecurity and rampant 'poverty' the impact remained low as revealed by assessment reports. The study did not however establish the root causes of the projects failure but dwelt on general management issues, which even when addressed might not lead to sustainability of the projects.

PDA Coast (2012) noted that over 95% of all Njaa marufuku projects had collapsed due to resource challenges, project prioritization, and leadership related problems thus leading to a total loss of over 30 million shillings used for funding the projects. PDLP Coast (2012) similarly reported that most livestock based projects were doing poorly due to lack of proper feasibility studies done to establish the opportunities and challenges to the projects.

Kilifi county Kenya received financial support for dairy farming through Heifer International and Plan International since early 1990's but due to various challenges, sustainability and performance remained below average for some of the beneficiaries. However over the same period of time some of the farmers supported have moved up the income ladder. PDLP Coast (2012).

The definition of poverty therefore stands a better chance at unlocking how to identify beneficiaries and strategies to enhance well being of various rural and urban based poor populations.

Statement of the problem

Kenya remains a net food importer despite numerous interventions by the government and external support to enhance the income and food security of the poor population. However the trend remains less focused on factors which could improve success rate of initiated livelihood improvement projects.

Kenya ushered in the new constitution in 2010 with devolved system of governments where agriculture is a function of the county governments. Kilifi County Kenya like all other 47 counties has not done an analysis on how previous food security related projects fared to inform prioritization of other new projects. Under the Rapid Results Initiative' the county intends to spend over 10 million in various agriculture based projects within 100 days without due analysis on how other organizations like Heifer International and Plan International have fared so as to draw lessons and move on. It was against that backdrop that the study was conceived so as to come up with findings which could inform prudent allocation of resources by the county governments and shape future project implementation based on a prudent definition of poverty and beneficiary identification.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to establish how 'Poverty definition' contributed to projects failure in Kilifi County, Kenya.

Objectives of the study

The objective of the study was to establish relationship between ‘poverty definition’ and projects failure in Kilifi County Kenya.

Research Question

1. What is the relationship between ‘poverty definition’ and projects failure in Kilifi County Kenya?

Significance of the study.

The study findings would play a role in shaping projects prioritization and selection as well as identification of beneficiaries.

The policy makers would be able to use study findings in prioritizing project implementation in various parts of the country.

County governments as well as national governments going into poverty alleviation projects would be able to use the findings in making informed decisions.

International organizations would also be able to use the study findings in reviewing their poverty definition which has been used as a basis for projects implementation.

Scholars and Researchers would be able to use the findings as a basis for further research.

Delimitations of the study

The study was limited to dairy farmers groups supported by Heifer international between 1996 and 1999. Members of dairy farmers groups supported by Plan International with dairy cows were also targeted. The study was a cross sectional survey.

Definition of terms

Ability is the quality of being able to do something, especially the physical, mental, financial, or legal power to accomplish something

Knowledge refers to "the ideas or understandings which an entity possesses that are used to take effective action to achieve the entity's goal(s).

Livelihood refers to "means of securing the basic necessities of life".

Responsibility is being accountable for who you are and what you do.

Resource is an economic or productive factor required to accomplish an activity, or as means to undertake an enterprise and achieve desired outcome

Richness-having abundant and costly possessions.

Skill is the learned ability to carry out a task with pre-determined results often within a given amount of time, energy, or both.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a review of literature on the various key factors that determine success of 'poverty alleviation' projects.

Poverty and projects' success

Bradshaw (2005) highlighted the five popularly referred theories in poverty alleviation projects as below;

1. Poverty Caused by Individual deficiencies that is, individuals are responsible for their poverty.
2. Poverty Caused by Cultural Belief Systems that Support Sub-Cultures of Poverty
3. Poverty Caused by Economic, Political, and Social Distortions or Discrimination
4. Poverty Caused by Geographical Disparities
5. Poverty Caused by Cumulative and Cyclical Interdependencies

The study however did not conclusively observe the role of each theory in a poverty alleviation project or how the various theories could be integrated to come up with a workable and balanced definition of poverty.

Wanjohi, (2010) on a study of Sustainability Issues facing Community Based Projects in Rural Areas of Mbeere District in Kenya revealed that poor project management processes, local and team leadership and financing issues influenced projects success. Similar sentiments were echoed by Kerzener (1992) who reported that the project manager or leader must possess skills, knowledge and competences that facilitate smooth and efficient operations. The two studies however made the role of the beneficiaries' secondary, despite playing a critical role in the project success.

Pitt (1998) argued that organizations needed to choose strategies based on how they are organized and their ability to carry out the strategies. For any strategy to succeed; planning system, information system and adequate control system must be in place. The report however, failed to expound on what those three elements entailed and how they could be integrated with the beneficiary characteristics to enhance success of projects.

In Nigeria, Maduagwu (2000) indicated that Governments should not presume that they knew what will benefit the poor better than the poor themselves. Projects embarked need to be demand driven and on clear sustainability frameworks. Mansuri and Rao (2004) noted that community development was more effective where the community was more cohesive, better educated and better managed. The findings however did not indicate the level of complexity of the project and implementation; whether it was at individual or communal level. In Japan, similar sentiments were raised by Pandey and Okazaki, (2005) who argued that Community programs initiated by

the government and the international donor agencies failed to be sustainable at local level after completion of project. Kakaza (2009) further indicated that it was necessary to have the community involved during the project initiation so as to enhance the success rate of the project. Proper communication and information sharing was also observed by Magano (2008) as critical in enhancing projects success. The level of beneficiary involvement was not clearly spelt out in the report to enable adoption by other projects.

Patricio (2013) reported that aspirations' failure among the poor may be a consequence of poverty, rather than a cause. The study however failed to expressly support the sentiment especially on why aspirations could not be both a cause and consequence of poverty. It was also not clear on how the aspirations could be enhanced alongside other factors so as to enhance projects success among the poor.

Bradshaw 2005 stated that, increasing the effectiveness of anti-poverty programs required those designing and implementing those programs to not only develop adequate theories of poverty to guide programs, but ensure that the community development approaches are as comprehensive as possible.

Josiya (2012) indicated that if poverty alleviation players understood the theory of a system, and the role of cooperation in optimization of all of its parts, they can promote change through a cooperative mode rather than adversarial competition.

Ndou (2013) revealed that lack of funds, poor project management, poor management of funds, lack of commitment and motivation, low level of education of project members, lack of youth involvement in community-based projects, lack of monitoring and evaluation by government officials and community leaders, lack of training and unavailability of workshops for project members and lack of government involvement in addressing project challenges were the reasons for failure of community-based projects. The study however failed to disaggregate the various reasons so as to know how to deal with them for future project success.

Lalima (2013) observed that for any poverty alleviation project to work at individual, community or national level, a policy framework that prominently includes an orientation towards integration into the global economy needs to be put in place. The finding points out to the fact that, as one develops or escapes out of poverty, needs to be aware of all that happens around him or her and where it is above his/her means then the government or international community needs to come in.

The literature reviewed clearly defines a lot of issues that could make one not able to adopt or adapt in project implementation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research design used, the target population, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection instruments and procedures as well as the methods of data management and analysis.

Research design

A cross sectional survey research design was used.

Target population

The target population included 50 dairy farmers supported by Heifer International with dairy cows between 1996 and the year 2000. Also targeted were 20 dairy farmers supported by Plan International Kenya in Kilifi County Kenya.

Sampling procedure

A stratified random sampling used for the study so as to come up with the representative sample.

Sample size.

A sampling frame of 70 dairy farmers drawn from Kilifi County who were supported by Heifer International and Plan International The list of the farmers was drawn from the farmers groups who benefited from the projects.

Target population for the study

Table

Support agency	Population	Sample size	Percentage
Heifer International	50	29	73
Plan International	20	11	27
TOTAL	70	40	100

Data collection instruments

The data collection instrument used was a questionnaire, document analysis and observations as detailed below.

Questionnaires

A Questionnaire was the main data collection instrument for collection of primary data

Document analysis.

Farmers' production records were analyzed for coming up with the highest amount of milk produced by the farmer's best cow.

Observation

Observation was used to ascertain on data provided from the questionnaire especially on highest milk production, resources availability and management skills.

Data collection procedures.

Interview Schedule was used as a method of data collection and the data collected by the Researcher. The study was conducted in the month of October 2013.

Data analysis techniques.

The Data collected was analyzed using Statistical package for social scientists (SPSS) where descriptive statistics was used to describe the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents while inferential statistics computed through correlation.

RESULTS

The section deals with presentation, analysis and interpretation of the study findings.

Response rate

The study was able to get 100% response rate due to proper sensitization and mobilization of the respondents. 73% of the sample came from Heifer International sponsored farmers while 27% came from Plan International supported farmers.

Demographic Characteristics.

The study observed that 12.5% of the farmers surveyed were illiterate 30.% had attained primary level of education. 32.5% secondary level while 25% had post secondary level of education. The sample was composed of 52.5% male and 47.5% female respondents.

The minimum age of the respondents was 33 years and highest was 70 years with a mean of 48.10 and standard deviation of 9.870.

Some of the farmers were illiterate but majority were literate and the mean education level was post primary education.

The farmers experience in dairy ranged from two to nineteen years with average being nine years.

The total number of cows owned by a farmer was one to nine with an average of 4 cows.

The highest amount of litres of milk produced by the farmers' best cows was two to seventeen litres with an average of seven litres.

Correlation of demographic characteristics

Correlation between education level of farmers and number of dairy cows raised was 0.146 at 0.367significance level. That shows a positive relationship between a farmers' education level and the number of dairy cows kept, though very low.

Correlation between number of years a farmer has been in dairy farming and number of dairy cows raised was 0.516** at 0.001 significance level. This indicates that as a farmer's experience in dairy farming is positively related with the number of dairy cows kept. Correlation between number of years a farmer has been in dairy farming and highest number of litres of milk per day from best cow in the farm was -0.083 at 0.611 significance level. A negative relationship exists between the number of years a farmer has been in small holder dairy farming and the highest amount of milk produced by the farmer's best producing cow. Correlation between age of a farmer and highest number of litres of milk per day from best cow in the farm was -0.292 at 0.067 significance level. That shows a negative correlation between the age of the farmer and the highest amount of milk produced by the farmer's best cow.

Correlation between age of a farmer and number of years a farmers has been in dairy farming was 0.747** at 0.000 significance level. There was a positive relationship between the age of farmer and number of years in dairy farming. Correlation between age of a farmer and number of dairy cows kept was 0.589** at 0.000 significance level. There was a positive relationship between a farmer's age and number of dairy cows kept. Correlation between age of a farmer and education level was 0.267 at 0.096 significance level. That was a positive relationship between a farmer's age and education although not very strong. Correlation between education level of farmers and number of dairy cows raised was 0.146 at 0.367 significance level. That was a positive relationship although not very strong

Descriptive statistics of 'poverty definition' determinants of dairy projects.

The study observed that 32.5% of the farmers' dairy projects were affected by resources availability, 30% knowledge base, 15% responsibility 15% skills base and 7.5% by ability.

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is evident that the upcoming dairy farmers at community level are literate and thus can easily be capacity built to enhance production. It is also worth noting that the average production of the best cows was very low considering the fact that the other cows in the farm produced less. Farmers were therefore not enhancing their income bases and thus escape from the poverty dragnet as expected. For a poverty reduction strategy it is necessary that the financing agency establishes all the resources required for the project to run and be sustained. The level of responsibility also needs to be identified so as to be able to determine the type of project for the beneficiaries. A tool to identify the level of responsibility could make use of previous history where one had opportunities to get out of poverty or enhance ones livelihood but neglected. Other workable tools could also be used. The knowledge base plays a critical role on tapping available opportunities. Therefore it is necessary to establish whether a beneficiary of any project has the ability to absorb and operationalize a project based on the current knowledge base and ability to acquire more. Projects should invest more in enhancing knowledge of beneficiaries as it can be a prerequisite to skills development. Skills are required for projects execution especially for hands on enterprises. Closely related to knowledge skills play a critical role in projects success.

Farmers' ability similarly plays a key role in poverty alleviation projects. Inability due to old age or health factors needs to be well articulated during projects beneficiary identification. The study findings are broadly similar to the various findings as reviewed in the literature section. It is also worth noting that the results point to the various specifics and the need to work out strategies to ensure both the projects succeed and the expected poverty alleviation realized.

A simple Regression equation can explain the relationship between poverty and the various determinants.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \epsilon$$

Where Y = Dependent variable, that is; Poverty

β_0 = the constant or the Y intercept

β_1 - β_5 = the regression coefficients or change induced in the dependent variable (Y) by each independent variable (X)

X_{1-5} = the independent variables;

X_1 = Resources availability

X_2 = Responsibility of the farmer

X_3 = Knowledge base of the farmer

X_4 = Skills base of the farmer

X_5 = Ability of the farmer.

ϵ = the error

The poverty level of a farmer can be analyzed based on their resources availability, responsibility level, knowledge base, skills, and ability of the farmer.

A simple definition of the word poverty can possibly mark a pointer towards future poverty alleviation strategies.

Poverty can be defined based on the study findings and literature reviewed as '*the inadequacy in resources, responsibility, knowledge, skills and/or ability to sustain a livelihood and/ or richness in a given community*'.

The above definition encompasses all the issues raised in other definitions of the word poverty and causes of poverty reported. It is also worth noting that the definition as indicated on the model could also be a basis for any project implementation. A simple analysis on how a community or individual can navigate out or around the five variables could determine the ability of the project to meet its goals.

Richness on the other hand could thus be the adequacy *in resources, responsibility, knowledge, skills and/or ability to sustain a livelihood and/ or status in a given community*'. Looking at how the rich nations have succeeded and how the poor nations how remained so; the five variables come into play. The same applies to successful businesses and those that have failed. Poverty and richness being conditions means one can easily get in and out depending on whether one grows in adequacy or inadequacy of one of the five variables.

Most definitions of poverty or richness focus on several factors which sometimes remove the responsibility of the individual to the government. However it is necessary to realize that even in rich nations we have poor people while in poor nations we have rich people too. Integration of the countries well being or status with the citizens status has for long made the definition complicated.

The above definition tries to demystify that and make it possible for one to track and dispel all early signs of sliding to the unfavorable state. That is why an organization sets targets for the workers, does research, marketing, and staff training or enhances their technologies among others, just to remain relevant and sustain the status.

Similarly the same principle can be used in community projects implementation where the beneficiaries are assessed on the five variables and supported based on their adequacy and or their inadequacy level and area so as to enhance the success level and the targeted beneficiaries move up the ladder in status and are able to sustain or enhance it. There is therefore need for more studies on the relationship between the responsibility level of the management/government/donor and the success level of a project in poverty alleviation. Studies on specific fields based on the variables could also give a pointer on the degree of contribution of the various variables in the model.

The various definitions of poverty focus on the causes, effects, indicators and generally accepted levels of well being of a community or individual. Seemingly the misconceptions in the definition have made project targeting difficult. The five poverty theories articulated by Bradshaw (2005) form a good background for poverty definition as all facets of poverty are articulated; however it is worth noting that some causes of poverty could also be effects or indicators of poverty in other instances. Poverty alleviation strategies and projects should be premised on the proper definition of the word poverty as earlier identified, if sustainable performance is to be achieved. Proper segregation of the root causes, indicators, effects, generally accepted wellbeing standard and roles of various players need to be articulated for any sustainability to be realized.

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