

**FACTORS AFFECTING MEN'S PARTICIPATION IN
DEVELOPMENT GROUP ACTIVITIES
A CASE OF SIMANJIRO DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the factors influencing low men's participation and has used Simanjiro District as the case study. A cross-sectional design was employed in obtaining data which were collected using focus group discussion, key informants interviews and survey methods. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for quantitative data and Content analysis technique for qualitative data. It was found that men's participation in development group activities was influenced by community norms whereby men viewed groups as women's responsibility. Another factor was the trade-off in terms of time of groups' activities in relation to other private activities. The study recommended that in order to increase men's participation in development groups, men's awareness should be raised against the attitude that groups are a women thing, and planners and other development partners should design gender sensitive and motivating programmes to incentivise men to take part in groups.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introducing participation and development

The implementation of development initiatives has undergone two main consecutive stages around the globe. In the fifties to the early seventies an individualistic type of involvement (state-based top-down approach) dominated in various project formulation and implementation and proved satisfactory in results. However, in the mid seventies participation became eminent because development efforts were observed to have little impact on poverty alleviation leading to failure of projects (Botes and van Rensburg, 2000). Some scholars attribute this failure to the lack of active, effective and lasting participation of the intended beneficiaries in various programmes (de Vanus, 1993; FAO, 1990; White, 1999).

Participation is an ambiguous concept with its meaning often being an interpretation of the organizational culture defining it; it has in many instances been variously described as both being a means and an end (World Bank, 1995; Jennings, 2000) and so are the ways of assessing it. Among the definitions of participation include: involving project beneficiaries in the planning and implementation process; moral imperative which is seen as going side by side with empowerment as some advocates of participation believe that participation is a pre-condition for empowerment and because of that it facilitates development in itself (Green, 2000; World Bank, 1995); involvement of local people in the creation, content and conduct of the project, and in the evaluation of, and benefit sharing from a programme or policy designed to change their lives (Cohen and Uphoff, 1977; Jennings, 2000). This however, poses questions on how to assess the process in order to ascertain programme achievements (Arnstein, 1969; Chambers, 1994; Chambers, 1997; Oakley 1991; Korten, 1990).

According to Pretty (1995) (citing Adnan et al., 1992) the interpretation of the term participation can be arranged in form of a ladder often termed as “the ladder of participation” with seven steps ranging from *passive* participation in which people are simply told what is going to happen or that which has already happened to *active* participation or self- mobilization where people take responsibility for and actively contribute towards the project. In between active and passive ends

lie other combinations of participation suggested as the typologies of participation including: participation in information provisioning, participation by consultation, in terms of obtaining material incentive, functional participation, and interactive participation (Pimbert,1995; Kinyashi, 2006).

Different perspectives exist in the literature as regards the importance and necessity for people's participation in development activities. On the one hand, some scholars contend that people's participation: can increase the efficiency of development activities; bring about effectiveness where the people involved obtain a say in the determination of objectives and actions, among others; builds local capacities to manage and negotiate development activities; increases coverage as it intends to reach and involve a wider scale of the disadvantaged rural people. Furthermore, these scholars contend that participation promotes sustainability of projects as the beneficiaries assume ownership of project activities, and it as well promotes self-reliance as participation demolishes people's over-dependency attitude, and it enhances awareness, confidence and self- initiative (Chambers, 1994; White, 1999). On the other hand, other scholars have challenged people's participation saying that: it's time and money consuming while it has no guaranteed impact upon the end product; it is driven by ideological flavour, is less concerned with seeking to ensure direct benefits for people, and it can result in the shifting of the burden onto the poor.

As for the concept '*participation*', there is no universal definition for the concept '*development*' because it is a contestable concept that does not assume the same meaning globally (Dale, 2004). As such, different scholars have defined the term differently. Rodney (1972) in the 1960s defined development as a series of increased stages of economic growth, (Ryan and Mallick, 2005) thereby viewing development in terms of economic development. Later in the 1970s the development dimension was expanded to include people's capacity, for example, Rodney (1972) defined development in two ways; first, as the increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and material wellbeing. Secondly, Rodney conceptualized development as an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relationships. Because development is a multifaceted concept, the definition should be concept specific capturing economic, social, cultural, environmental and political features (Martinussen,

1997). In the preset study development refers to a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations (Korten, 1990).

Participation and development are the interlinked concepts. Participation is a term that has come to play a central role in the discussions of rural development practitioners and policy makers since 1950s (Vettivel, 1999) and has become a popular concept in development activities in the recent years. Community participation and development therefore are inseparable because most community development work involves the participation of beneficiaries (Smith, 1998). Smith argues that participation creates a sense of ownership of projects, reduces risks, and brings credibility through a wide involvement which creates a positive image for the project. Furthermore, participation develops technical and managerial skills as well as an entrepreneurial spirit important for mobilizing and increasing resources for various projects and act as a way of bridging the knowledge gap between planners and beneficiaries which makes it easy to achieve real and relevant lasting change.

1.2 Development groups and participation

The term “group” also has got multiple interpretations with different people attaching different meanings according to the context of its use. For example, Forsyth (2006) defines a group as two or more individuals who are connected to one another by social relationships. Planned groups are specifically formed for some purpose, as Forsyth notes, they offer people the opportunity to work together on tasks, are sites of socialization and education, and can be places where relationships can form and grow. Furthermore, a group is a site where people can find help and support from other people. For the case of this study a group refers to a collection of individuals who have regular contact and frequent interaction, mutual influence, common feeling of trust, and who work together to achieve a common set of goals¹.

Development initiatives have been advocating for group (in this study referring to as development groups) formation. These groups take development related activities such as

¹ (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/group.html#ixzz1lFsz1Sof/> Accessed 2/2/2012)

collective marketing and Village Community Banks acting as instruments to meet certain needs (Madeley, 2010). These collective initiatives have become part and parcel of almost many projects as a way of easing development activities. Development agencies have been interested in group participation in various programmes because of the growing evidence that groups drive into achieving sustainability of projects. There has emerged a belief that it is only through group approaches that a large number of the marginalized rural people can be reached by the government and other development actors (Sanginga et al., 2005; Carr, 2004).

Participation of people in rural development in Africa is not a new thing; it is something that has been existing, practiced broadly within social practice and development for many years and in many different ways (Dinedge, 2001), thus labelling them a type of social capital that has been used by farmers for generations (Davis and Nagash, 2005). Groups perform many functions and are important because they provide a means of collective action for people; provide resources such as credit, labor and information enabling people to obtain new technologies, benefit from economies of scale as well as socially and spiritually (Place et al., 2003; Stringfellow et al., 1997).

In Tanzania the government agencies and other development actors emphasize on citizen participation in development projects through among others forming groups, a strategy that has been adopted by many as a framework for looking at development issues (NSGRP, 2005; Davis and Nagash, 2005; TDV, 2005; URT, 2009). In Simanjiro District, similarly, the issue of participation is emphasized. The district has been endowed with a number of development projects undertaken by both the government and NGOs, programmes that aim at improving people's livelihoods. Execution of project activities is done through development groups of 30 members each, formed intentionally for this purpose. In these groups, however, not all people participate equally with men showing up in lesser numbers and sometimes unwilling and hesitant to perform development group activities.

Studies on people's participation in development projects that involve men and women have noted that such participation is a complex phenomenon. For example, Davis and Nagash (2005) and Agarwal (2006) have reported a significant higher participation among men at the beginning

of the project cycle but as it evolves men's participation decreases sharply while a relative proportion of women continue to increase until it dominates the group. This may imply that men have different ambitions and intentions of joining the groups and their tolerance limit declines over time when such intentions do not appear to be attained.

Scholars on the interactions between people's participation and development activities have tended to provide general reasons as regards the drivers for people's participation, taking the sex categories - women and men - as being homogeneous entities. In fact these categories contain individuals whose participation is driven by different reasons and intentions. While studies exist on the relationship between participation of men and women in development groups, less has been documented as regards the factors influencing individual men's participation in the development group activities. Therefore this study aimed at determining factors influencing men in their participation in the development initiatives and uses the Simanjiro district as the case study. The study purposely focused on men because our previous observations in Simanjiro district have indicated that men were reluctant in participating in development group activities.

Simanjiro District is one among the five districts of Manyara region. It lies on the northern part of Tanzania and is administratively divided into 12 wards with an estimated population of 178,693 people (Tanzania National Census, 2012). Various economic activities are conducted in this district including fishing and farming to improve people's livelihood. Specifically, these activities are aimed at diversifying and increasing income and food security. In this district, goat and onion production as well as related marketing activities have been initiated by NGOs including VECO, World Vision and Care International.

In order to provide the answer to the general question "what factors influence men's participation in development group's activities in Simanjiro district", the following specific questions were answered: What development activities are conducted by farmer groups in the study area? What are men's perceptions about participation through development groups? How were the development groups established and how are they run? How does the participation of men in development groups activities vary? What factors influence men's participation in the development groups?

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Data collection

The research adopted a cross-section research design to study the population at a single point in time wherein data were collected once (Bailey, 1998). Sampling procedure involved both purposive and simple random sampling. Purposively, Ngorika, Msitu wa Tembo, Ruvu Remit and Loiborsoit wards that implemented group-based development activities under the initiative of VECO a Belgian NGOs in Manyara District were a focus of this proposed study. Of these four wards, one ward was randomly selected, that is Ngorika. Then, two villages namely Nyumba ya Mungu and Ngorika and two farmers' groups of 30 members each, one group involved with onion production and another engaged in dairy goat keeping, were randomly selected. Random sampling was adopted so as to give equal chances to the villages and farmers' groups because all of these villages and groups were involved with onion or dairy goat production. In addition, each group was involved with Village Community Bank (VICOBA) activities.

The sample of respondents for the survey was randomly drawn from a complete list of farmer group members whereby a total of 48 respondents were selected out of whom 24 were men and the other 24 were women to cater for sex variability, and to increase the validity of the information collected.

Both primary and secondary data were collected in order to address the study objectives, and qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The methods included survey using semi-structured questionnaires in which both close and open-ended questions were included. Qualitative data were collected using key informants interviews, focus group discussion and observation; these methods enabled the researcher to acquire an understanding of events and actions, and gain insights into various issues that took place in the study area and hence provide a more in-depth description (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods intended to increase the validity of results (Richardson, 2003; Thomas, 2003). Besides, the quantitative methods were used for statistical representation while qualitative methods were intended for generalization of the findings. Relevant secondary data were obtained from published and unpublished reports collected from the study area and from journal articles through the internet. These were useful in broadening the data base from which specific generalizations could be made (Saunders et al., 2000).

2.2 Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were employed to analyze the data. The quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS); data editing and coding preceded quantitative data analysis. Using the SPSS, descriptive statistics in terms of frequencies, statistical means, and percentages were computed. Qualitative data were analyzed using Content (qualitative) analysis technique. Through this technique, the qualitative data were organised into general themes which were then used to complement the quantitative information gathered through questionnaires.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.2 Activities implemented in groups and organizations for collective action

Various development projects implemented in the study area comprised of dairy goat keeping, onions production through irrigation schemes, and Village Community Banks (VICOBA) projects. These activities were promoted and financed by Vredeseilandein Copibo (VECO) Tanzania, a Belgian organization whose headquarter was located at Same district. This NGO supported development projects for the aim of improving the wellbeing of the rural poor and hence for enhancing local development. Group participation was the most advocated means in the implementation of the projects funded by the above- mentioned NGO.

To effectively implement their activities farmer respondents formed development committees (DPs) to steer collective actions. However, there existed different views among the group members regarding the appointment of members to the DPs. While 43.2% of the respondents uncovered that the committee members were appointed by the villagers, 37.8% said it was the village leaders who elected the committee members. The 19% of the respondents yet revealed that the committee members were appointed by the group members. These findings (Figure 2) generally indicate that the community lacked awareness on actors that appointed the members of DP committees.

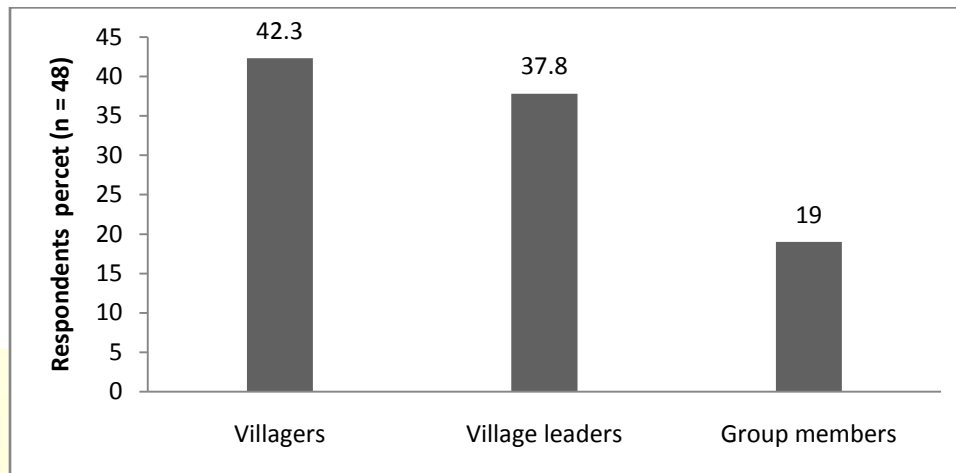


Figure 1: Awareness on actors responsible for appointment of committee members

4.3 Perception among men about participating in groups

About half of the men respondents (45.7%) perceived groups as an instrument for improving their wellbeing. These viewed groups as fields where both men and women participate. However, more than half of the respondents (54.3%) regarded groups as meant for women only (Figure 3). On the other hand, the majority (71.7%) of respondents viewed time as a constraint for individual men to participate in groups though these were of view that participation in development group activities was important for one's development. These men respondents further perceived groups as life savers especially in the villages.

However, focus group discussion with some men revealed that groups have been viewed as a "women's thing" simply because most external based programmes/projects have in most cases focused on women. Thus, men do not want to be seen participating alongside women in fear of being teased by their fellow men. In some situations, men thought that it was not necessary for them to participate because women can handle groups on their own. This finding agrees with those reported by Nkuoh et al. (2010) who found that most men consider participation in different programmes a good practice but though they can provide funds to enable women's participation, few of the men participate.

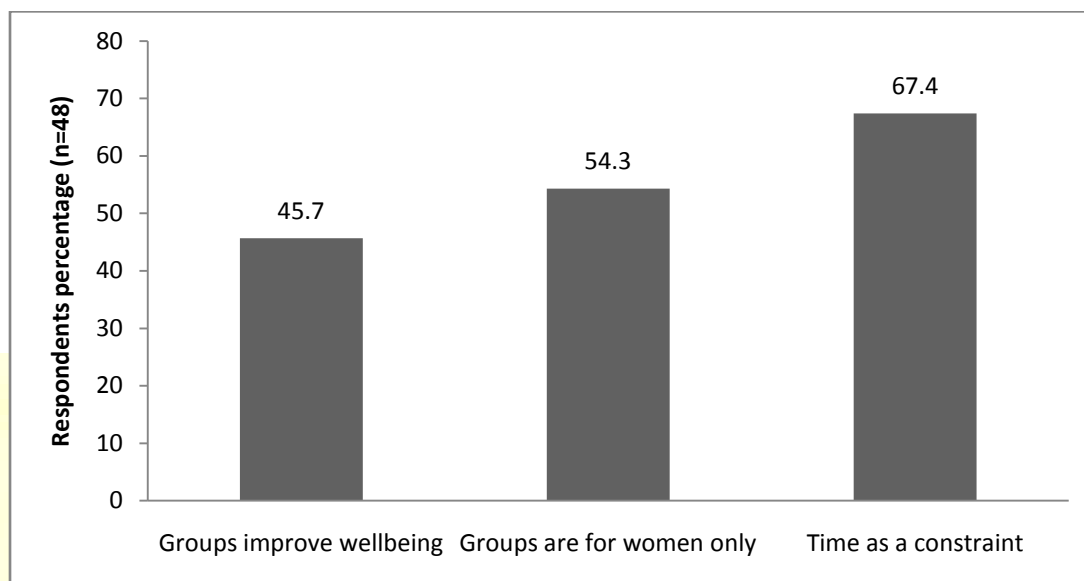


Figure 2: Perception among men regarding group participation

4.4 The approach used in establishing and running groups

The approach used in establishing and running groups was important because it was assumed that men's low participation could be caused by their not being involved both in the group establishment and running.

4.4.1 Approach for group establishment

The approach used to influence the farmers to form groups can affect their motivation in terms of participating into the groups' activities. Whereas the idea of forming groups was imposed by the Copibo NGO, the act of forming these groups was done by farmers themselves. As such, those who received the idea decided to work on it and hence there could be interaction among the farmers to persuade one another to join the groups to make a minimum of 30 members (Table 1) the number which was proposed by the NGO.

The approach used may have implication of motivating or de-motivating group participants to engage in the group activities. This is especially the case when the people feel that they were not part of the decisions which were achieved. From the findings above, it shows that the approach used for establishing the groups gave the group beneficiaries power and mandate to make decisions on their own. Therefore, low men participation in the group may hardly be attributed to their not being involved during the group establishment process as the local people were given the authority to establish the groups by the development NGO.

4.4.2 Approach used for running the groups

As for the formation of the groups, running of the groups was undertaken in a participatory way. Group members were observed to take part in the project activities in one way or another. Results from household survey (69.6%) and key informants interviews showed that the majority of group members were participating at various stages of the project activities. Seventy five percent of all the respondents were involved at the implementation stage, 6.2% in planning and 3.2% in monitoring and evaluation while 9.4% were involved in all stages and only 6.2% involved in both planning and implementation stages (Figure 5). As such, the majority of the respondents were involved at the implementation stage than at other stages of the programme implying that the external project stakeholders were the ones who made decisions regarding planning, monitoring and evaluation. Little involvement of local people at some stages may result in their lack of the sense of ownership of the projects; the target beneficiaries may view projects as being imposed on them. This can partly explain why men may have lacked motivation to participate actively in the groups. Their low participation could also imply their anticipation of some possible benefits that may occur at some later time.

The running of the groups also entailed some specified roles: leadership and member roles. Most respondents (75.9%) were members while few of them (24.1%) were leaders in various groups, and women participated more in the role of membership while men assumed leadership positions (Figure 4) although no significant association existed between sex and the role which one played in the group ($P > 0.05$).

Men's domination of leadership positions can be attributed to the patriarch nature of most societies. The patrilineal system gives men the power to head the community simply because women are regarded as inferior. Danner and Young (2003) support this contention. In their study they argue that the institutions of the globalized world are masculine and take two forms whereby, in the first instance, men dominate these institutions and, on the other hand, such institutions serve as sites where particular notions of masculinity are created, maintained and legitimized in the context of on-going global processes.

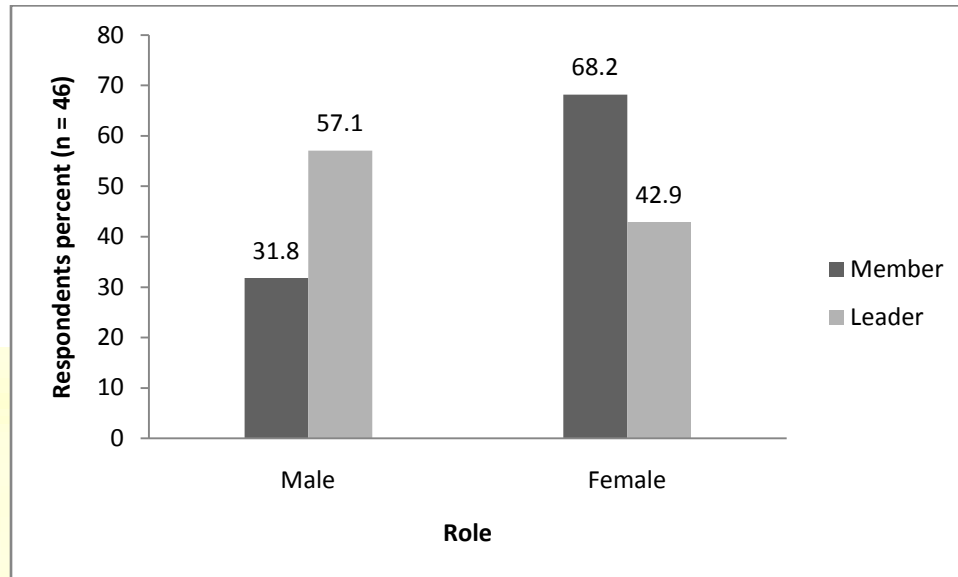


Figure 3: Relationship between sex and one's role

Extent of involvement

As regards the extent of involvement, 59.4% of the respondents have reported to be actively involved while others (40.6%) reported to have been passively involved. Active involvement in this case means involvement in the day to day running of the activities in terms of decision making from the beginning of the project where the individuals views were sought and incorporated in the project. On the contrary, passive involvement means that members do not take part in the daily activities of the group.

Active and passive participation is an indication that some villagers are in fact willing to engage with groups viewing them as tools that can enhance their development. On the other hand, others may have some expectations from the groups that keep them stay at the moment but in actual sense are not much interested with groups as reflected in their passive involvement.

Further analysis on the relationship between sex and the level of involvement (Table 2), indicated that most females were actively involved in the projects while males were passively involved. However, no significant relationship was observed between sex and the level of involvement ($P > 0.05$), perhaps because most men get information from women though these men rarely showed up for project activities.

Table 1: Mode of participation in development projects

Attribute	Freq	%
Mode of participation		
Individual participation	4	8.9
Group participation	41	91.1
How one was involved		
Actively	19	59.4
Passively	13	40.6
One's role in the group		
Member	22	75.9
Leader	7	24.1

Table 2: Relationship between Sex and the level of involvement

Attribute	Nature of respondent involvement (%)		
	Passively	Actively	TOTAL
Sex of the respondent			
Male count% of total	7 (21.875)	7 (21.875)	14 (43.75)
Female count of total	6 (18.75)	12 (37.5)	18 (56.25)
TOTAL	count % of total		
	13 (40.6)	19(59.4)	32 (100)

Note: number outside the brackets is frequency while number inside the brackets is percentage

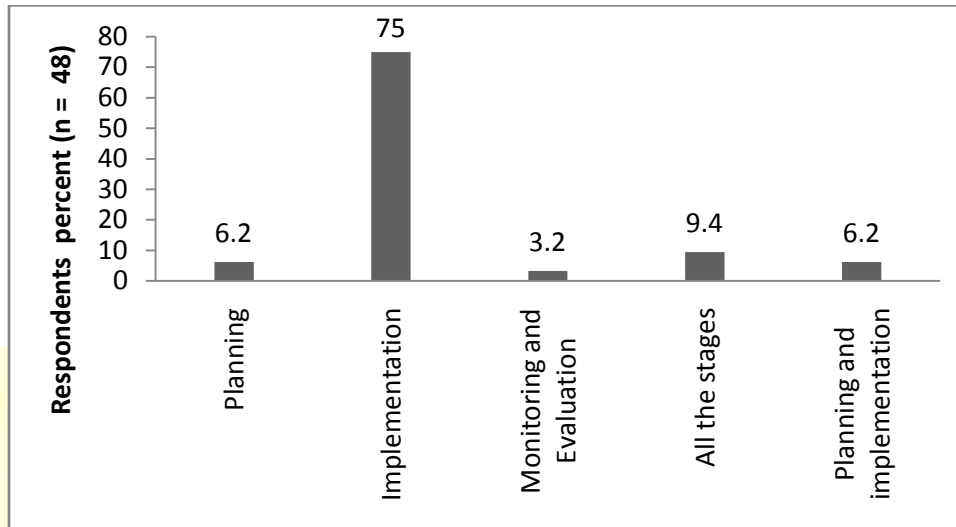


Figure 4: Stage of participation in development projects

4.5 Variations in participation in development groups among men

In terms of their participation in group activities, men were divided into two categories. There were those who participated in groups constantly while others participated occasionally. Non-regular participation to group activities is attributed to men's participation to other activities which are affected by seasonal variability. Some men group members were simultaneously involved with livestock keeping at their households. Thus, most of them were engaged in cattle herding and therefore tended to migrate in search of pasture and water for their flock during dry seasons (around August to October). Changes in the availability of a range of resources trigger non-participation to group activities; group activities become important when in the first place household requirements are met. Thus, there is always a tension between participating in groups and personal activities as Coltrane et al. (2004) noted.

As regards the trend of participation of men in groups the studied respondents had different responses. Whereas the majority (75%) said that the participation of men in groups was decreasing, about one-fifth (17.7%) said that it was increasing while few (6.7%) did not know whether the participation was increasing or decreasing (Figure 6). Men's declined participation trend was reported in terms of their attendance whereby at the beginning of the projects they used to show up in large numbers and participated actively but as the time went-by men's attendance declined. According to the respondents, the main reasons for men's decreasing participation trend were: pride; fear in taking part with women in the same groups, by claiming that group participation is a women thing; and lack of time because men had a lot of things to do.

However, other respondents said that the men do not know the importance of participating in groups and their related activities. Nkuoh et al. (2010) in a study conducted in Cameroon on barriers to men's participation found a similar case whereby men identified their occupations as barriers to their participation. In that study, men reported that the demand of their work does not permit them to take an active role in different group-based programmes.

MAP (2001) working in rural and urban areas of South Africa described community's norms as barriers for men's involvement in activities regarded as women work. On the other hand, Watson (2005) in her analysis of men's participation contends that the constraint to men's involvement often comes from men themselves as they do not want to change their beliefs holding that group participation should be the concern of women.

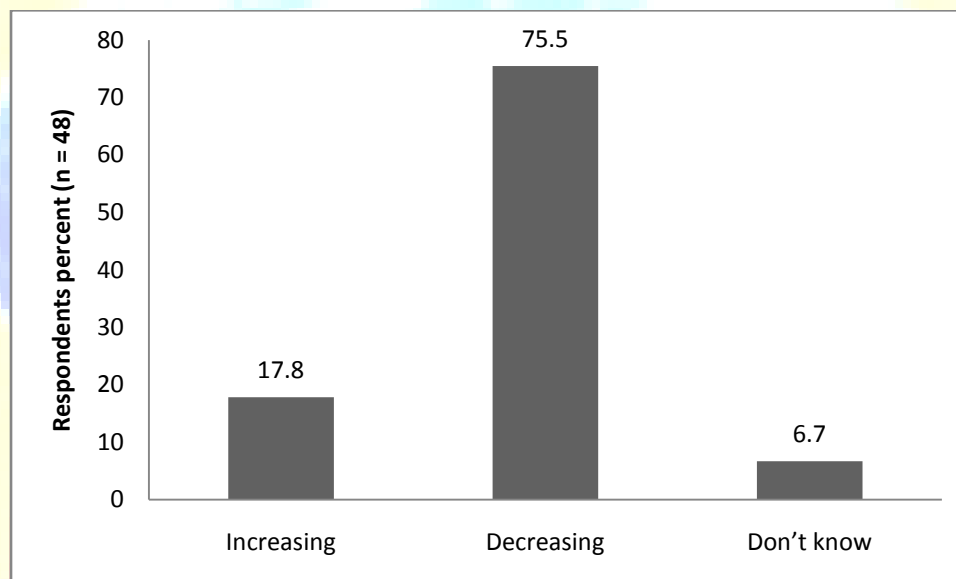


Figure 5: The trend in men's participation

Coltrane (2000) identifies predictors of men's participation to be relative resources, gender, attitudes and time availability which partly agree with this study's findings (Figure 7). In corroboration with findings from the present study, other studies from a health related field (Gender Health and Hope, 2003) in Soweto and UNAIDS (1998) conducted with men in Tanzania elaborate more on traditional gender roles identified by men expressing their worries of losing respect from their peers as a significant deterrent to their participation. Similarly, Nkuoh et al. (2010) noted men's participation being affected by socio-cultural barriers centred on tribal beliefs and traditional gender roles including the belief that participation, pregnancy and other

things similar to those are a “woman’s affair”; men’s role thus is primarily to provide for financial support.

Furthermore, these studies give a clear picture on men’s lack of involvement which revealed that occasionally male heads of households would wish to do more to take part in group related activities but were constrained by cultural definitions of maleness and the roles identified as determining masculinity. Similar findings have often been obtained in ‘men as partners’ (MAP) workshops in their focus groups whereby men have normally described the fear of being unaccepted and ridiculed by other men in the community; this explains men’s reluctance to be more actively involved in domestic activities including care and support and for this case in development group activities.

On the other hand, however, Twiggs (2003) in her study ‘What’s wrong with South African Men’ supports Reverend Bafana Khumalo, a gender equality commissioner on challenging the notion of culture being a factor that prevents men to participate in various activities. The two authors argue that “...men use culture to hide behind (it) simply because it provides comfort. These same men on the other hand speak English, wear western clothes and hold down untraditional jobs. Thus, people call upon African culture only when it oppresses others”. The scholars further contend that men are being selective but only use culture as pretence.

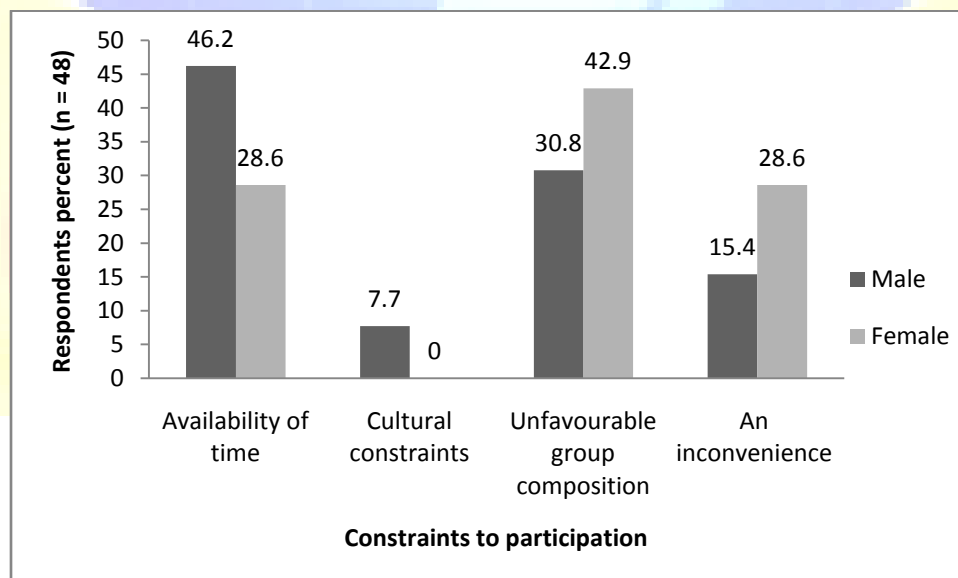


Figure 6: Relationship between gender and barrier to participation

4.6 Driving forces towards participation

Motivation towards participation

Factors that drive individuals in the study area to join groups are indicated in Figure 8. These include financial, income and technical reasons. The financial reason ranked the first and was reported by 65% of the respondents. The second in the priority was income improvement (60%) through easy access to markets for their produce. The third factors were to get access to technical support (54.3%) and networking purposes (54.3%).

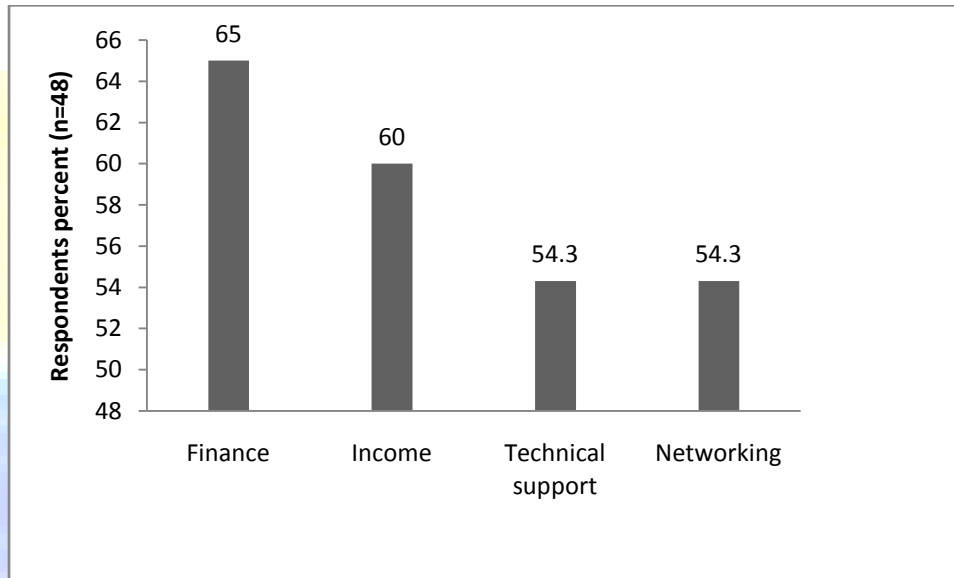


Figure 7: Motivation towards participation

Note: summation of percentages goes beyond 100% because of multiple responses.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

The present study assessed the factors that influence men's participation in development group's activities in Simanjoro district. The following are the conclusions of this study:

- Men are aware of and perceive participation as a useful attribute and some get involved in groups. However, most of them participate less and their reluctance is partly attributed to their norms regarding development groups as women's role and responsibility.

- With regards to the approach used in establishing and running the groups, the local people organized themselves into small groups although it was the external agency (NGO) which advised the farmers to form groups.
- There was a difference in men's participation in development groups. While some of them participated constantly, others participated occasionally because of frequent movements in search for pasture for their livestock especially during dry seasons when pasture availability was scarce.
- Men's participation was found to be influenced by financial, income, and technical factors as well as the timetables conflicts especially when men were engaged in multiple personal activities.

5.2 Recommendations

- The awareness of the society should be raised to get rid of the beliefs that hinder amalgamation of men and women in various development projects as they can collaboratively contribute towards social and economic development. This awareness raising could be done through community leaders and members in campaigns led by women and participating men can act as a motivator to those not participating hence enable men become effective change agents.
- Development planners and stakeholders should ensure that they design gender sensitive projects/programmes and use highly knowledgeable staff or a team that is gender conscious to motivate different gender groups and promote their active participation into development projects as united not isolated entities.
- Local governments may provide necessary social services nearby the settlements of the people. Sites for grazing should be planned and improved by for example planting grass, and improving water infrastructure; also, social services e.g. medical and other facilities should be provided

which will reduce the distance that men have to travel to access/acquire these services. By so doing, men will have time to attend to various development-group activities.

- Because this study has revealed the important influence of culture in men's participation, to obtain concrete recommendations, further research is suggested on the interaction of culture and participation among the multiple Tanzanian ethnic groups.

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