



ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY NGOs AND THEIR IMPACT TOWARDS POVERTY REDUCTION IN KASIPUL CONSTITUENCY, HOMABAY COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract:

Ending poverty in all its forms everywhere is the first of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by which United Nations member countries including Kenya committed themselves to eradicate poverty by the year 2030. In this paper focus has been placed on the programme activities of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and their impact in reducing poverty in the area. The paper is a part of a study that was conducted in Kasipul Constituency in which the author sought to establish the role played by NGOs towards reduction of poverty. The aim of this paper is therefore to identify NGOs working in Rachuonyo South and analyse the programme activities through which they engage to reduce poverty in the region and the impact of such activities. The study engaged eleven NGO representatives in a survey that used questionnaire to collect data from the NGO's perspective. This was followed by key informant interviews targeting community leaders and finally six focus group discussions were held with community members in selected locations within the constituency. The results of the study show that out of the 11 NGOs working in the area, improving agricultural productivity and HIV/Aids management and control were the leading poverty reduction programmes being undertaken. Nonetheless, water and sanitation were found to have contributed most to poverty reduction outcomes. The study recommends that there is need for NGOs to invest more in establishing programmes that improve the economic conditions of the people by increasing the people's household incomes.

Keywords: poverty, NGOs, reduction, economy, programme activities, development, welfare

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1. Introduction

Eradicating poverty is one of the enduring development challenges facing the world today despite efforts by stakeholders at the local, national and international levels over the years. This realization led the United Nations member countries to prioritize “*ending poverty in all its forms everywhere*” as the first Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by the year 2030. However, poverty is a complex problem and reducing it depends upon many interconnected factors. The existence of poverty in any location cannot be attributed to one cause nor its reduction be based on one strategy. Consequently, it is necessary that the root causes or structural factors that cause or exacerbate poverty be addressed rather than focusing on the short-run response of relief and welfare activities.

According to the UNDP (2000), the focus of poverty reduction has to be on improving the poor people’s capability to avoid or limit their deprivation, which includes; recognizing and developing their potential, increasing their productive capacity and reducing barriers that limit their participation in society (UNDP,2000). Thus, from a wholistic perspective, poverty reduction must focus on the poor and their access to decision-making (ILO, 1993) and activities to achieve such objectives must be carried out in a manner that provides sustainability, builds self-reliance and avoids dependency relationships among donors, partners and beneficiaries. This has been a problem especially in Africa where foreign involvement in developmental programmes has led to increased dependency on donors (Kelter, 2018; Moyo, 2009).

While several countries have focused on growth strategies and more social expenditure, and that appreciable improvement have been noted in many parts of the developing world, in most African countries, poverty levels increased in the 1990s. This has led to reviewing of these strategies and the World Bank report of 2000/2001, proposed a three-part strategy towards poverty reduction namely; promoting opportunity, facilitating empowerment and enhancing security (World Bank, 2001). These strategies require intervention from the state, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the local communities working in close collaboration to improve the living conditions of the poor. It is in this context that the author in this paper assess the activities that NGOs use to tackle the menace of poverty in the study locale. NGOs due to their heterogeneity, defy any attempt to adequately define and classify them (Kanyinga, 1990). According to Werker and Ahmed (2007), NGOs are private organizations that are primarily cooperative or humanitarian and not commercial in nature.

2. Literature Review

According to a report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 1996), three types of anti-poverty strategies can be distinguished. The first one deals with promoting the redistribution of existing productive assets notably land and water and related services to increase productivity, employment and incomes of the rural poor. This strategy, the

report says, is usually accompanied by greater investments in human resources (education, health, housing and rural infrastructure). The second strategy works to redirect the flow of realized increase in rural income or income from the rich, through fiscal measures. Projects under this strategy include rural development projects, food subsidies, and food for work programmes, child nutrition and school feeding programmes. The final strategy is the conventional strategy of overall Gross National Product (GNP) growth, which is supposed to benefit all groups of the population through market forces, with little government intervention in prices and wages.

All the above strategies have certain limitations, although each plays a part in poverty reduction. First, redistribution of productive assets may be impossible due to political reasons (like the land problem in Zimbabwe) and does not guarantee sustainable improvement in living conditions. The governmental action to tax the rich more to finance the poor may act as deterrence to entrepreneurship and private sector growth, besides it does not go down to challenge the structures that perpetrate the inequalities (Green, 2012). The GNP growth strategy is the most widely criticized of all the strategies above. In most cases it has worsened the income distribution and neither has it benefited the poor (FAO, 1996). It is also based on the "trickle-down" approach to the development that has been largely discredited by development scholars.

Sustainable efforts at reducing poverty levels need to bring together the key players in a country's economic development. This is where NGOs come in, for they have been shown to possess certain strengths including: strong grassroots links, field-based development expertise, the ability to innovate and adapt, participatory methodologies and tools, long term commitment as well as emphasis on sustainability and cost effectiveness (World Bank, 1995). Working in partnership with both local and national governments, the community members as well as international development partners, NGOs have in the past made a significant contribution in the fight against poverty in the developing countries.

NGOs have been actively involved in anti-poverty programmes at both project levels and policy levels. Their numbers have risen steadily especially due to the preference of donors to channel funding through them in countries where the governments are perceived not to be transparent and accountable (Banks et al., 2015). Locally, the number of NGOs has increased to about 2180 (UNDP, 2004) and more NGOs are still being formed. They are perceived to be more efficient and effective compared to the government (Fowler, 1985) in that they have a greater reach to the poor and are able to construct high quality relationships with the poor due to their commitment to participatory approaches. The World Bank (1995) in seeking closer collaboration with NGOs in its projects concurs that NGOs bring several benefits to the bank in its poverty alleviation programmes. NGOs engage in activities that aim at promoting the interests of the poor by relieving suffering through environment protection, provision of basic social services and development of the poor communities especially in developing countries. Although there is no consensus in literature on the specific activities through which

NGOs sustain this contribution, there is a broad agreement on the competencies and value-adding abilities that NGOs bring into development work.

3. Methodology

The study was carried out in Kasipul constituency, one of the four constituencies in Rachuonyo South Sub County of Homabay County. According to the 2019 Population Census Rachuonyo South had a total population of 130,814 composed of 61,663 (male) and 69,151 who are female (KNBS, 2018). It is bordered by Kabondo Kasipul Constituency on the eastern side and Rangwe Constituency on the west. On the north is Karachuonyo Constituency and on the south is Kitutu Chache constituency in Kisii County. The constituency is divided into five wards namely West Kasipul, South Kasipul, Central Kasipul, West Kamagak, and East Kamagak respectively.

Poverty is a major challenge in the constituency as is the case in the whole of Homabay County. According to KNBS (2018), the proportion of population who live below the poverty line in the county is 44% which is above the national average of 36.1%. This is manifested in inadequate health facilities, poor nutrition, poor housing and little access to treated water. The Constituency reports low levels of education among the residents. The HIV prevalence rate in the county is the highest nationally at (26%) against the national figure of 5.9% (MOH, 2016) a situation which has resulted in considerable numbers of mortality leaving several orphans and widows.

The study population comprised all the NGOs working in the region, community leaders and community members. The NGOs were purposively sampled based on three characteristics thus; having an ongoing project in at least one location in the study area and known to the local administration especially the assistant chiefs and chief. Second, they should have been working in the area for at least two years since the project began to enable evaluation of their programmes to be feasible. Finally, the programme should have at least one staff working within the community fulltime, who would be resourceful and give relevant detailed and up-to-date information on the NGO operations, challenges and effectiveness according to the study design. Community leaders on the other hand were first clustered according to their leadership roles. They were then randomly selected and interviewed as key informants while community members were randomly drawn from six locations.

The first technique in data collection was through the use of a standard open and closed ended questionnaire. The questionnaire which was administered to NGO representatives sought to obtain data on knowledge of poverty and poverty reduction strategies, nature of poverty reduction programmes or projects by the NGOs, assessment of the impact of the programme/project on poverty reduction as well as challenges faced by NGOs in their work. The second technique were in-depth interviews with community leaders using interview guides and the questions sought to get information on poverty knowledge, interventions by NGOs for poverty reduction in the area as well as their views on effectiveness of these interventions. In addition, group discussions with

community members with the help of a Focus Group Discussions(FGD) guide were carried out with the members of the community to corroborate the account given by NGOs staff and community leaders. The FGDs focused on three major themes namely poverty knowledge, groups that are having interventions in the area, effectiveness of these interventions. Finally, the author also observed by visiting the sites of NGO projects and their offices, visiting households of the community members, going to the markets, attending the CBO meetings and training sessions organized by the NGOs amongst other efforts. The collected data was largely qualitative and was analyzed descriptively and thematically.

4. Results of the Study

4.1 Poverty reduction programmes undertaken by NGOs in Kasipul Constituency

The first objective of the study was to document the poverty reduction programmes undertaken by NGOs in Kasipul Constituency. Following the tradition of most development scholars to conceptualize poverty reduction into two approaches, the programme activities that NGO in Kasipul Constituency undertake have been classified into these two categories of welfare and development and the result are captured in Table 1:

Table 1: Poverty Reduction Programmes of NGOs in Kasipul Constituency

Welfare programmes	No. of NGOs	Developmental programmes	No. of NGOs
HIV/Aids control and Management*	9	Improving agriculture (livestock/crop) production	10
Children support (orphans)	6	Gender programmes	9
Nutrition and health education*	5	Small enterprise support	7
Maternal child health(MCH)	3	Technical training	6
Disabled support	3	Technology transfer	5
Family planning	2	Education	5
		Environmental education & conservation	4
		Water & sanitation	4
		Advocacy	3
		Livestock development	3
		Poverty assessment	3

Source: Field data.

A. Welfare Programmes

As can be seen from the Table, nine out of the eleven NGOs surveyed undertake programmes dealing with HIV/Aids control and management. This is explained by the high prevalence of HIV/Aids cases in the area. The NGOs involved in this sector conduct a number of activities including awareness creation, counseling, home based care and assistance to widows and widowers through giving them graded cows and building houses. They also offer support to orphans by providing clothing, school uniforms, and levies in primary schools, fees in secondary schools and treatment of opportunistic

diseases. Six out of eleven NGOs were involved in children support with most of the beneficiaries being orphans from parents who had succumbed to HIV/Aids. The activities carried out under this programme include total sponsorships (food, education, and clothing), paying school levies and uniforms for primary school children and providing food regularly to the orphans.

Five out of the eleven NGOs undertook nutrition and health education related programmes. Such programmes included training women on ways of preparing foods that are more nutritious and on better food handling techniques. It focused on having a well-nourished family with the emphasis being on using local foods to provide a balanced diet. Health education encompassed trainings on hygiene practices like boiling water or treating it with chlorine, use of toilets and racks for utensils and training community health workers on primary health care. Three NGOs were undertaking Maternal Child Health programmes (MCH) and support for the disabled. The MCH programmes aim at encouraging expectant mothers to attend antenatal clinics to avoid birth complications and fetal deaths. They also include post-natal visits to the health centers for immunization and vaccination. The NGOs were especially involved in mobilization of mothers with young children to attend the clinics where they subsequently received education, counseling and medical services at subsidized rates. Two NGOs were involved in family planning and their activities included creating awareness on advantages of small families and offering counseling on reproductive health issues.

B. Developmental Programmes

From the table, improving agricultural production was being undertaken by ten out of eleven NGOs surveyed with agriculture broadly defined as both crop farming and livestock husbandry. The NGOs implementing these programmes sought to increase agricultural output of the community in order to ensure food security and increase household incomes. A number of activities were undertaken including training of farmers on more effective farming techniques, providing loans (in form of seeds, fertilizers and cash), provision of dairy cattle, agricultural tours and shows, provision of veterinary services to livestock farmers and providing ploughs and bulls to widows and orphans (Bull scheme). The high number of NGOs working in this sector was due to a number of factors. First, most of the community members are peasant farmers who rely on agriculture and so the community holds intervention in this sector as apriority. Secondly, there had been a decline in output over the years. Because of poverty, a number of people were not able to prepare the farms for planting, buy quality seeds, afford fertilizers and weed all the farms prepared. There had also been a decline in soil fertility due to overuse of land. Finally, during participatory poverty assessments conducted by NGOs when designing their programmes, assistance in agriculture featured prominently as an area of need from the community.

Gender programmes were conducted by nine out of eleven NGOs. The main activities undertaken in these programmes were seminars aimed at creating awareness

on disparities based on gender regarding education, decision making and holding of property. Most programmes included a gender component where they encouraged women to participate alongside the men in development efforts. Some of the NGOs included both men and women in their programmes while some of the NGOs worked largely with women beneficiaries. Gender issues featured prominently due to two factors namely; donor conditions and the differential impact of poverty on women and men. The donors fund projects that are sensitive to gender issues and enforced this when evaluating project proposals as was the case with NGOs surveyed. The fact that men and women experience the effects of poverty differently required that NGOs come up with programmes to counter such effects.

Seven NGOs were involved in programmes aimed at supporting micro-enterprise initiatives in farming and businesses especially by helping the local people to initiate and manage business ventures. These NGOs had a micro-finance scheme in which they promoted small enterprises as a way of creating employment and raising incomes. Their activities included; training the businesspersons on proper management and accounting procedures, facilitating exchange programmes, helping to accumulate saving and providing capital on loan- both start up and for expansion purposes. The popularity of these micro-credit schemes was due to various reasons. First, majority of the people did not have means of earning income apart from selling portions of their agricultural produce. Second, in poverty reduction raising income levels of households is more effective than providing direct material support. Further, the policy environment had been supportive of micro-finance ventures with the government encouraging investments in the informal sector.

Seven NGOs had capacity building initiatives in their programmes and undertook activities including offering trainings to specific groups e.g. women groups, youth groups, committees, and other specialized trainings. These NGOs hold seminars and workshops aimed at passing information, consensus raising and mobilizing the community members to improve participation in development issues. The main idea behind capacity building is to provide the people with skills and knowledge necessary to be self-reliant. Capacity building important since the chances for sustainable development are enhanced when the local people are willing and able to use their resources to meet their needs without relying on external support. Initially external support may be necessary to enhance the local community's ability to initiate and manage development projects.

Technical training was undertaken by six NGOs as their poverty reduction strategy. Under this approach, the NGOs provide technical skills to the community members to enhance income creation. Their activities here include sponsoring technical training centres where the youths were trained in tailoring, dressmaking, and providing start-up capital (on loan) for those who qualify from these training institutions to establish their own business establishments. It was a preferred way of assisting the groups because after learning the skills, they not only got money for their upkeep but also train others in the community. Further, at a time when unemployment is high white-

collar jobs are rare and opportunities for employment lie largely in self-employment and technical training prepares one for entry.

Five NGOs mentioned education as a poverty reduction programme they undertake. The role of education in poverty reduction development needs no justification for it provides skills and capabilities for both personal and communal empowerment. The activities undertaken to promote education here includes; building schools or classrooms, sponsoring needy children to pursue secondary education, paying levies, buying uniforms for orphaned children and providing textbooks and other facilities (desks) to schools to improve the learning environment.

Technology transfer was mentioned by five NGOs as one of their programme activities. It involved extending to the community certain techniques and equipment that improve efficiency in the use of resources in order to increase productivity. Examples include fuel saving technology in cooking, use of animal draft power, and technologies to retain soil fertility through curbing erosion and rotational farming. Four NGOs out of the eleven studied were involved in water and sanitation programmes. The programmes aimed at providing safe and readily available water to the communities while also dealing with issues of safe waste disposal and promoting household hygiene and cleanliness. The NGOs were intervening to provide safe, clean and easily accessible water by protecting springs, digging wells and drilling boreholes. They also encourage the construction of pit latrines through provision of concrete slabs and technical support in digging.

Related to water and sanitation initiatives is health education focusing on promoting behaviour change with regard to hygiene practices. Four NGOs were implementing environmental education and conservation programmes. Preserving the environment is a pre-requisite to sustainable development. These NGOs focused on environmental education mainly through clubs in primary and secondary schools and through community meetings like the chief's *Baraza*. The main thrust was on highlighting to the community the dangers of environmental degradation like indiscriminate cutting of trees and down-hill ploughing, compared with the benefits of conservation like rain catchment, herbal medicine and increased agricultural production thus food security.

The final group of programmes implemented include poverty assessment and advocacy; both mentioned by three NGOs. Poverty assessment refers to a systematic study on causes, effects, and the distribution of poverty in a population. They carried out participatory poverty appraisal on the community and the results used for prioritizing their intervention. The advocacy programmes involved getting government extension officers to be close to farmers and visit them regularly. It also included appealing on behalf of orphans and widows dispossessed of land belonging to their parents and husbands respectively by their relatives.

4.2 The Impact of NGO Programmes in Poverty Reduction

The second objective was to assess to the contribution of these programmes in reducing poverty levels in the constituency. There is no single standard by which the impact of

poverty reduction programmes by NGOs can be assessed and different approaches have been employed by different evaluators. In this study, the approach employed was adapted from Edwards' (1998) framework. According to this model, impact of NGO programmes in poverty reduction can be looked at in three ways; on material living conditions (incomes and services), organizational skills and capacities (confidence and association strength) and on political empowerment.

4.3 Impact on Material Living Conditions

As is the case with most NGOs working in rural areas, data on project effects, costs and benefits tend to be far from complete and comprehensive (Ridell, 1990). In some cases, the NGOs are not ready to provide such crucial information as their income and expenditure accounts, annual reports, and evaluation reports, since they consider such information confidential. The NGO representatives were asked to provide details of the tangible benefits that the community had received due to their work and the results were analyzed and presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Benefits of NGO programmes to the Community in Kasipul constituency

NGO	Benefits
KWFT	160 members in 8 credit groups trained and advanced loans of between Kshs 1,000 to 100,000.
CMA	11 volunteer groups trained in HIV/Aids awareness creation and home-based care. 27,500 reached in the whole of Rachuonyo district.
RWD	100 groups trained in hygiene issues. Over 10 springs protected so far.
MYWO	Training to a number of women groups on starting business, nutrition and family life conducted so far.
CARE	4 wells under construction, due to be completed. 23 management committees trained in water and sanitation diseases and prevention plus basic management skills. 30 Artisans trained in digging and construction of wells 21 caretakers trained on maintenance of pumps 21 village health promoters trained on basic preventive healthcare "Dak achana" clubs introduced in schools to conduct HIV/Aids awareness. Pit latrine coverage has increased from 10% in 1999 to 46% in Kachien location
COMPASSION	10 widows receive monthly food provisions, 8 orphans being fully sponsored
JAM	806 orphans sponsored, 142 widows given start-up capital for business, 3 drop-in-counseling centres established, 1 primary school built
DECEMAC	15 orphans undergoing training in tailoring, at the project centre, 5 other youths undergoing same training.
HPI	258 people benefit directly by receiving dairy cows and bulls, 578 benefited indirectly. 3 groups trained in livestock management and HIV AIDS awareness.
CATEK	1114 people had benefited from training's and seeds for establishing tree nurseries. Organized a cleanup event for local town once.
GSI	5 boreholes drilled and 2 springs protected. Tree nursery with over 5,000,000 seedlings planted and maintained.

* Dak Achana means better livelihood.

Source: Field data.

It is evident from the table that the greatest impact on the material living condition of the people in the constituency was on the provision of water. Four NGOs had been involved

in this sector, with visible though various levels of success. The most successful projects in this approach were spring protection, digging of wells and drilling of boreholes. Thus, in every location, there was a water source that had been done by one of the NGOs—either a protected spring, hand dug well or borehole. This had improved the availability of clean water in the constituency with several spillover effects including decline in water borne diseases and freeing more time for women fetching water from distant places.

This was corroborated by a community leader who in an interview commented that: "*Rural water Development has done a lot. They have improved the level of sanitation in the area and the living standards have improved due to presence of latrines and fresh spring water. Women can be sure that the water they are fetching for drinking in the house is not contaminated by either those washing, bathing, or cattle because the water points have been fenced.*"

Reducing the impact of HIV/Aids was also notable as HIV/Aids widows and orphans were provided with bulls and ploughs for them not only to cultivate their farms, but also as a means of raising income by ploughing for other households. This project had enabled households within these groups to plough their farms and improve on their food production. The other tangible output of the NGOs noted was in sponsorship of orphans. The region has a number of orphans due to the HIV/Aids related deaths. Three NGOs had programmes on child sponsorships that were successful as the children received food, clothing, school levies and uniforms and in some cases, houses are built for them and their farms prepared. This had reduced school dropout rates by these orphans and improved the overall wellbeing of these orphans and acted as safety nets to these vulnerable groups in the community.

Evaluation of the impact of the NGO programmes from the community varied from positive appraisal to cynicism. In an FGD forum it was noted that: "*The orphans have benefited from schools Levies, uniforms and book bought for them... Widows and orphans have received bulls for farming and in some cases houses have been built for them.*"

Some community members and leaders were however critical of the NGO efforts. The most critical were the local politicians who mentioned having seen little or no results emanating from NGO work as these comments show: "*In this location (Kunuonga) the NGOs have not done much... they are only two and it is the community organizations that have been most helpful through self-help groups.... Harambees (fundraising) have also been very helpful. Only a family in the whole community benefits from this NGO (JAM). They are joking with the women groups that they want to help them but do not. About the NGOs there is very little I can say because they are not many in our area. The few that exists helps only certain individuals not everybody.*"

These sentiments show that some sections of the community had not yet experienced the kind of improvement in their living standards that they had envisioned at the beginning of NGO work, which showed that their expectations had not been met.

4.4 Impact on Organization Skills and Capacities

From the table several NGOs studied were doing some form of capacity building and institutional strengthening of local groups through: education, training and mobilization

of community to form groups; seminars for local leaders and group leaders; financing training for community leaders outside the division and giving moral support to the grassroots organizations to be vibrant and active. One NGO (Kenya Women Finance Trust) for example, invested in training the prospective clients on elementary bookkeeping, business management and savings. They organised exchange programmes for women in one division to go to another area to benefit from others' experiences. Another case was where one NGO had trained a team of volunteers in HIV/Aids awareness, causes, symptoms, home based care and counseling. The volunteers were organized in groups and were useful in managing the HIV/Aids cases in the villages, especially in providing home-based care to the sick.

In poverty reduction, it is not enough to provide for the poor peoples' direct material needs. It is important to build their capacities to be able to, "*develop themselves*". Capacity building and institutional strengthening is important as it leads to increased participation, transparency and accountability, benefits of which accrue to the community in terms of improved technical and managerial abilities and self-sufficiency (Meyer, 1997). The level of training and exposure given by the NGOs varied from programme to programme but they contributed to building their capacities for organizing themselves beyond the NGO purposes and a number of them proceeded to do other things especially "Merry-go-rounds"-rotational assistance in farming and credit provision among group members.

4.5 Impact on Political Empowerment

In the constituency, it can be seen from the table that impact on political empowerment as indicated by advocacy efforts, were weak. Two NGOs were involved in mobilizing the farmers to demand agricultural extension services from the government extension officers. The results of these interventions were visible, for example during the field visits, the NGO staff were often accompanied by government agricultural officials. The impact of advocacy on behalf of HIV/Aids orphans and widows on land issues was less visible to the community members as noted by one of them: "*These NGOs which come up with HIV/Aids awareness should be banned....Instead the amount should be invested in other areas like building orphanages, paying school levies for orphans or given to the widows.*"

However, it needs to be observed that most of the NGOs surveyed were not focusing on empowerment and human rights and this partially explains why they were not strong in this area. Empowering local communities to demand their rights and to speak out against the structures that keep them poor is a vital antipoverty measure. The poor in many cases have no voice when it comes to decisions and policies that affect them that are made by various government ministries and agencies.

5. Discussion of the Findings

Based on the study findings presented in the foregoing section with a number of activities in which NGOs engage towards poverty reduction in Kasipul constituency, it is clear that

these organizations have contributed positively to improving the lives of the constituents of Kasipul who are beset by poverty as characterized by the poor health and education standards, lack of sanitised water, high rate of environmental pollution and poor economic state among others. This study corroborates what other studies exploring the contribution of NGOs both in rural and urban communities have documented.

Firstly, the findings are concurrent with the observation made by Ishita, Tanzil and Amit (2018) in a study that pointed to the contributions made by NGOs in Bangladesh's socio-economic development. The trio acknowledge that NGOs have proved to be the 'savior' of countless number of people in Bangladesh ranging from lack of food, education, cloth as well as the basic necessities of health services.

The finding also corresponds with findings of a study done by Dahie (2019) which focused on the contribution of Non-Governmental organizations in poverty reduction in Mogadishu, Somalia. The study observed that the three programme activities undertaken by the NGOS working in that region, namely livelihood improvement, food security and microfinance had a direct impact on reducing the level of poverty in the region. The study however noted that NGOs would have higher level of impact if they followed an integrated approach.

The findings also agree with the observations made by Mohamed (2010) whose study sought to explore the role of NGOS in poverty reduction in Kibera Slums of Nairobi Kenya. The study showed that NGOs has registered considerable success in providing clean water, sanitation services and building social capital for poor households that had low access to government services in the area.

In assessing the contribution that NGOs make in poverty reduction, it is important to factor in that NGOs face limitations of funding as well as the short term and small scale nature of their operations (Dahie, 2019). Moreover, some of the causes of poverty are structural in nature and require policy responses from the government. However, even with these limitations, this study confirms that NGOs working together with other actors in development, play an important role in alleviating poverty at the community level.

6. Conclusion

The study sought to assess the programme activities that NGOs in Kasipul constituency engage in towards poverty reduction and their impact on reducing poverty experience by the community. The number of NGOs and other development partners in the division, the scope and diversity of their programme activities attest to the reality of the challenge of poverty in the area. The study established that the leading poverty reduction programmes implemented by the NGOs were in improving agricultural programmes, HIV/Aids management and control, capacity building and gender programmes. The least implemented programmes were advocacy, poverty assessment and family planning.

The study also revealed that the most successful programme in improving the material living conditions of the poor in the constituency was in the area of water and sanitation where it was found out that several households had improved access to clean

water, better hygiene practices and enhanced sanitation conditions through building of Latrines. The impact of NGO programmes on improving organization skills and capacity was also noted. The least impact was on political empowerment. It can be concluded from this study and other studies cited that NGOs continue to play an important role in reducing poverty both in urban and rural communities especially when they work in partnership with other development partners.

7. Recommendations

NGOs should invest more in establishing programmes that improve the economic conditions of the people by increasing household incomes. There is need for NGOs to empower the people to tackle poverty not only by trainings, improving rural infrastructure and advocacy but also by direct economic empowerment. They can strategically include income-generating components in their programmes to deal with income poverty where the conditions on the ground are conducive. The challenge with this strategy is that not all the NGOs have the capacity to manage such initiatives and it may derail some NGOs from their core programmes. In addition, when implementing such programmes, attention has to be given to building the capacity of beneficiaries of such assistance to deal with their vulnerability to disaster such as diseases and adverse climatic condition for the farmers.

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