

**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN
MIGORI COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATIONS AND APPROVAL

Declaration by the Student

This project is my original work and has not been presented for the award of Degree in any other University.

Signature..... Date.....

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MDS/2023/41369

Approval by the Supervisor

I confirm that the work reported in this project was carried out by the candidate under my supervision.

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DEDICATION

This project report is dedicated to my loving parents Wilfred Ogungu and Judith Akinyi for their relentless support, encouragement and patience during my study period.



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ABSTRACT

Studies reveal that while women empowerment positively influences their participation and the success of community development projects, efforts to empower women remain limited. In contrast, in countries where women are empowered, they play a key role in driving development initiatives. It is in this realization that this study was carried. The main objective of the study was to look on women empowerment and community development projects in Migori County, Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to examine the influence of women's control of resources on community development projects in Migori County, to examine the influence of women's leadership in community development projects in Migori County, to examine the influence of women's access to job opportunities on community development projects in Migori county and to identify strategies for enhancing women's empowerment for community development. Kabeer's framework of women's empowerment and Sen's and Nussbaum's capabilities approach served as the study's guiding principles. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research methodology. This study adopted a descriptive case study design. The total target population of the study was 279,109 respondents. Using stratified random selection technique 384 women respondents were selected for the study. 16 County officials, 2 from each of the 8 sub-counties, were purposely selected to aid in the study. The tools of primary data collection were a guided questionnaire for women respondents and an interview schedule for the county government officials. To establish the validity of the research tools, the researcher sought guidance by consulting with the study supervisor and research specialists at Mount Kenya University regarding the content of the instruments. In order to assess the reliability of the tools, a pilot study was conducted in which the questionnaires and interview guides were pre-tested to evaluate how effectively they gathered the intended information. The collected quantitative data was subjected to descriptive analysis, employing measures such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Additionally, Pearson's correlation was applied to examine the relationship between the study variables. Qualitative data was thematically analyzed and presented in narrative formats. The study found that women's empowerment is a critical factor in the success of community development projects. It was found out that women's access to job opportunities on community development projects, women's leadership and decision-making on community development projects, women's access to job opportunities on community development projects and strategies for enhancing women's empowerment for community development projects in Migori County enhance community development projects. From the qualitative data, it was found that women's empowerment improves community development projects in Migori County. There was a strong positive correlation between women empowerment and the success of community development projects statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Based on the findings, the study recommends that stakeholders should implement mentorship programs to equip women with employable skills, implement policies that support women's leadership and decision-making processes, ensure women have a role in managing community resources and increase public awareness on women's rights through community sensitization programs.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

CBOS - Community based organizations

CDPs – Community Development Projects

CDTF – Community Development Trust Fund

DLAO - District land adjudicating officer

GOK - Government of Kenya

NGO - non-governmental organization

SPSS - Statistical Package for Social Sciences

WID -Women in Development



Mount Kenya University

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Participation in development projects has been widely recognized as a crucial element in order to achieve prosperity and long-term viability of development initiatives globally (Smith, J. A., 2022). Over the decades, participatory approaches in development have evolved, shifting from top-down to more inclusive, bottom-up methods that emphasize local engagement, empowerment, and collaboration (Hickey & Mohan 2020). According to Peet and Hartwick (2019), early development models in the 1950s and 1960s were often characterized by top-down, technocratic approaches where decisions were made by external experts, with little input from local communities. This model began to shift in the 1970s and 1980s with the emergence of participatory approaches, which sought to involve communities in decision-making processes.

Participation was formalized in development practice through initiatives that emphasized the importance of local knowledge and the active engagement of local residents in the design, execution, and assessment of projects (Chambers, R. 2019). As indicated by Cornwall and Gaventa (2023), participation can be viewed through various lenses, ranging from passive participation-where individuals are informed about decisions already made-to interactive participation, where local communities actively engage in decision-making and the implementation of development projects. Pretty (2018) distinguishes between different forms of participation, including manipulative, passive, consultative, functional, and self-mobilization, each with varying levels of local involvement and control over decision-making. Pretty goes on to note that participation has become a cornerstone of global development practice, with considerable evidence supporting its benefits for project success, sustainability, and

empowerment. However, meaningful participation requires careful attention to power dynamics, capacity building, and a genuine commitment to inclusive decision-making. As the global development landscape continues to evolve, particularly in response to challenges such as climate change, inequality, and globalization, participatory approaches will remain crucial in shaping development outcomes.

According to Cornwall and Rivas, there are several benefits of participation which include: Empowerment- by involving individuals gain confidence, skills, and influence over decisions that affect their lives, Sustainability- Projects that engage local communities are more likely to be sustainable. Local buy-in often leads to better maintenance and management of development projects, such as infrastructure, agricultural practices, or health interventions and improved outcomes- participatory approaches often lead to development initiatives that are more in line with the needs, inclinations and capacities of local populations. This improves project effectiveness and ensures that the benefits are felt by the intended beneficiaries (Cornwall and Rivas, 2019).

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of participation, several challenges hinder its full realization. Participation may be symbolic or tokenistic in some projects, where local input is solicited but not genuinely incorporated into decision-making processes (Mansuri and Rao, 2021) Power dynamics can also affect participation. Local elites or powerful groups may dominate participatory processes, marginalizing the voices of women, ethnic minorities, or lower-income individuals. In many low-income settings, communities may lack the resources, knowledge, or capacity to fully engage in development projects. This can limit the effectiveness of participatory approaches unless adequate training, education, and support are provided (Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. 2018).

While many studies generally view participation in development positively, there is ongoing debate about its effectiveness and implementation. Scholars like Cooke and Kothari (2017) critique participation as a “new tyranny,” arguing that it can be used by development agencies to legitimize pre-determined projects while providing the illusion of inclusivity. They argue that without genuine commitment to shared decision-making and empowerment, participatory processes may perpetuate existing inequalities rather than challenging them.

Women's involvement in development initiatives is becoming more widely acknowledged as vital for sustainable development (UN Women, 2020). Historically, women's contributions have often been overlooked, yet their involvement has profound effects on the success and sustainability of development initiatives. Globally, various efforts have been made to involve women in the process of making decisions, project planning, and implementation in diverse sectors such as agriculture, education, health, and governance. (Yunus, M., 2020). According to Kabeer, N. (2019), women's participation in development projects is important and not only a question of gender parity in achieving sustainable development. Although progress has been made in many areas, challenges such as traditional practices, restricted accessibility to resources as well as political barriers continue to restrict women's full participation. Ensuring that women are empowered to take part in decision-making processes and development initiatives will lead to more inclusive, effective, and sustainable development outcomes worldwide (Kabeer, N., 2019), Research by Endalcachew (2016) found that in affluent nations such as the United States, Europe, China and several regions of Russia, women's empowerment is widely supported, and women actively participate in development efforts. Several nations in developing continents, including sections of Asia, Africa, and South America have demonstrated that women are underrepresented for a variety of grounds. In the Philippines, for instance, women's engagement

in community development initiatives in Manila has been and remains around 32% for over 15 years (UNDP, 2015). A number of variables have been identified as contributing to women's diminished involvement in community development projects, including poor gender stereotypes and categorizations low levels of financial security for women, poor cultural and traditional contributions that disregard women the right of owning property, low levels of academic achievement, poor religious subscriptions and categorizations that prejudice against women in some community prospects, and other factors not listed (Moser, C.O.N., 2021).

Global examples of participatory development include Latin America where initiatives for participatory budgeting in countries such as Brazil have empowered local residents to directly influence the distribution of public monies, enhancing transparency and accountability in local governance. And Asia where participatory approaches have been integrated into agricultural development programs in countries like India and Bangladesh, where farmers are actively involved in the development and dissemination of new farming technologies (Cornwall, A. 2020).

Empowering women is a key factor in promoting long-term and sustainable development within communities. across Africa. Various studies have shown that when women are actively involved in decision-making, resource management, and leadership within community development projects, the outcomes tend to be more impactful and sustainable (Acheampong, 2021). Women have been offered less opportunities in Africa than males, despite the fact that women provide far more in terms of community resource mobilization, community labor provision, and so on (UN Women, 2016). Nevertheless, in nations such as South Africa and Liberia, whereby women have received significant attention via different initiatives for women empowerment, their contributions to projects to community development are significant (Murunga, 2017).

According to Bayeh (2016), women in underprivileged areas ought to be empowered to engage in community-building programs, as they are often in charge of family tasks and needs in Ethiopia. Based on his assessment, public institutions should partner with various stakeholders to organize additional workshops aimed at raising community awareness on the importance of empowering women to participate actively in community development. (Bayeh, E., 2016).

Wema (2015) asserts that even though the various administrations have advocated for the use of affirmative action, which would require a third of women to be included in all areas of economic growth; nevertheless, women in the country have been and continue to be marginalized and future trends may reflect the same. In her survey, which had a sample size of 182, almost all of those who responded firmly agreed that women are disadvantaged and have long been marginalized. According to the research, women in Tanzania are disadvantaged in a variety of ways, including being excluded from development-related bank credit, being excluded from advancement decision-making processes, experiencing restrictions in accessing educational opportunities afforded to men, lacking the same entitlements as men to inherit land, being excluded from equal ownership rights to land compared to men, facing limitations in securing legal rights to own property on the same terms as men and many more.

According to the OECD (2023), Tanzania's large regional development gap can be on account of minimal levels of women's empowerment. Although women make up a substantial portion of the total population, poor trends in women's empowerment prevent them from engaging in development programs. For instance, Arusha has seen a documented rise in household income since 1980 as a result of the municipal and local governments' emphasis on the value of training girls in the community following independence. This has resulted in a population of empowered women who offer relatively less expensive labor for development initiatives, women with the

requisite competence and women who participate in decision-making processes on an equal basis with men (SIDA, 2016).

Murunga (2017) states that women's empowerment and their place in community development remains an obstacle in Kenya. He claims that women in Kenya face severe discrimination, undermining, and never being placed in positions of advancement. He mentioned, for instance, the 2008 post-election violence, which mostly affected women and children. The regions most impacted by the crisis were Nairobi, Nyanza, the Coast and the Rift Valley. But there were only two women seated on the large bench throughout the reconciliation era, and the males who dominated them occasionally strongly disagreed with their opinions.

Omweri (2015) observed that demographic factors like marital affiliation, lack of funds, cultural values, education level, and lack of knowledge had a detrimental influence on rural women's engagement. When women engaged in community development and had some degree of empowerment, their influence was significant. For instance, Omweri (2015) claims that women were observed to be extremely adept at managing tasks assigned to them, that they offered labor at a relatively low cost, that their methods of resolving disagreements in projects were generally equitable, and that all of these factors had a favorable impact on project participation and execution. The study's findings demonstrated the need for much more work in raising rural women's awareness of the value of being involved in community development initiatives.

Research has shown that women in Kenya continue to face marginalization and lack of empowerment when it comes to taking part in community development initiatives. As noted by USAID (2023), conventional perceptions of the roles assigned to girls and women greatly limit their potential to participate meaningfully in Kenya's economic development, even though they are highly capable of overseeing a range of development initiatives when given the chance.

These notions, however, prevent women from making significant contributions to development objectives, particularly in the areas of economic expansion, dietary security, and nutrition. For instance, women have a low representation in positions of decision-making in Kenya. Additionally, they have fewer access to jobs, land, and education. structural and Constraints stemming from social and cultural factors continue to limit the full potential of women in community development. Chebet and Wekesa (2020) argue that despite national gender policies, patriarchal norms, limited land ownership, and low literacy levels continue to limit the full participation of women in development initiatives. Tackling these issues calls for not only legal reforms but also community sensitization and capacity-building programs. In the words of Omondi et al. (2022), Economic empowerment, particularly by utilizing financial support from microfinance institutions and initiating revenue-earning projects, has also shown notable effects. The nation's 2010 adoption of a new constitution offers a strong basis to achieve gender parity. Rights for women activists in Kenya are starting over with this initiative, which attempts to redress the longstanding subordination of women and encourage their complete active role in all dimensions of growth and development. For example, USAID has been encouraging women to take advantage of their constitutionally granted rights. The findings demonstrate that empowered women have the ability to develop additional assets like land and even monetary resources allocated toward community development programs often include contributions from women, who provide both their labor and skills across a range of projects. Additionally, women have significantly contributed to resolving conflicts and minimizing risks within their communities (USAID, 2023). Considering the wide-ranging advantages associated with empowering women and fostering community growth, it is essential to explore how women's empowerment impacts the success and sustainability of community development initiatives.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although women's empowerment is globally acknowledged as a key driver of sustainable economic growth and poverty alleviation, women in Migori County, Kenya, still encounter major obstacles that limit their active involvement in community development initiatives. Nationally, only 29% of women aged 15-49 are considered empowered, with urban women nearly twice as likely to be empowered unlike their peers in rural locations. This imbalance is evident in Migori County, where development indices rank alarmingly. The county ranks 30th in women's literacy, 35th in fertility rates, and 40th in child mortality out of Kenya's 47 counties, indicating substantial disparities in key development indicators. These statistics suggest that women in Migori County are lagging behind in development and underscore a critical gap in women's access to job opportunities, leadership roles, and control over resources within the county. The limited participation of women in leadership roles and decision-making forums continues to exacerbate this issue, limiting the effectiveness and inclusivity of community development initiatives. Moreover, existing strategies to enhance women's empowerment appear insufficient, as evidenced by the persistent socio-economic challenges faced by women in the region. Several development projects have been implemented by the Migori County government to spur economic development among women; however, the intended outcomes have not been fully realized. Studies have found that women in Migori County rarely participate in development projects and when they do, it is primarily at the level of information sharing. This limited engagement suggests that existing development communication programs may not be effectively reaching or empowering women. Addressing these gaps is essential for the holistic development of Migori County. Empowering women by improving access to employment, promoting leadership opportunities, and ensuring control over resources can lead to more

effective and sustainable community development projects. Hence, this research aimed to examine how women's empowerment impacts the implementation and progress of community development projects in Migori County focusing on job opportunities, leadership and decision-making, resource control, and strategies for enhancement. It is important to highlight that no prior research, whether by a student or any other research organization, has been carried out on women's empowerment and community development initiatives within Migori County.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine women empowerment and community development projects in Migori County, Kenya.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

This study's objectives were:

- i.) To establish women's access to job opportunities and community development projects in Migori County.
- ii.) To analyze women's leadership and decision-making and community development projects in Migori County
- iii.) To investigate women's control of resources and community development projects in Migori County
- iv.) To identify strategies for enhancing women's empowerment and community development in Migori County.

1.5. Research Questions

The study's research questions were:

- i.) What is the extend of women's access to employment on community development projects in Migori County, Kenya?

- ii.) How do women's leadership roles and decision-making influence community development projects in Migori County?
- iii.) What is the influence of women's control of resources on community development projects in Migori County, Kenya?
- iv.) What strategies can be implemented to enhance women's empowerment and community development in Migori County?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study is anticipated to provide valuable insights to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection—particularly the Department of Gender and Women—at both national and county levels. It will shed light on the significant contributions women have made in advancing development efforts and highlight the importance of enhancing their participation in community development initiatives through a range of empowerment programs.

The findings of this study could provide significant value to various NGOs and community-based groups focused on women's empowerment. It may offer insights into more effective strategic approaches to empowering women and highlight the vital roles empowered women can play in advancing community development initiatives. These organizations are expected to gain a clearer understanding of the types of interventions that can promote women's empowerment in Migori County, as well as how empowered women can contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of their communities.

The work might potentially be extremely beneficial to future academics and intellectuals. It is worth mentioning that no similar study has been conducted in this area of study, thus the researcher's results will greatly contribute to an abundance of literature in the academic world.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of a research study outlines the specific parameters guiding the investigation (Creswell, 2019). This particular research was carried out across the eight sub-counties within Migori County. It concentrated exclusively on women participants and relevant officials from the county government. The central focus of the study was to explore the connection between the empowerment of women and the implementation of community development initiatives. It was focusing exclusively on addressing the research questions outlined in this study and was completed within a two-month period from February to March 2025.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

The study was done on specific locations within Migori, such as urban areas which are easily accessible. Some areas in Migori county were difficult to access due to poor infrastructure and that affected the data collection process. To overcome this limitation and ensure coverage of all the targeted locations, the researcher commenced the data collection process ahead of schedule. In order to access the more remote or difficult-to-reach areas, flexible means of transport, particularly motorcycles, were employed. Additionally, some participants expressed hesitation in giving responses due to concerns that their information might be misused. To address this, the researcher reassured them that the study was solely intended for academic purposes. This assurance was further supported by presenting an official letter of introduction from the university, affirming that all information gathered would be treated with strict confidentiality and used exclusively for scholarly research.

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

The research study was conducted within Migori County and only used four objectives. The study involved women and county government officials from Migori County as respondents, and data collection was conducted solely through the use of structured questionnaires and interview guides. Since the research was confined to women within Migori County, the results may not be generalizable to a broader population. Consequently, the study's findings might not be universally accepted by all researchers and scholars, as differing contexts or environments could potentially yield significantly different results.

1.10 Assumptions of the Study

This study was conducted based on several underlying assumptions.

First, it was presumed that the tools used for data collection would accurately capture the intended variables. Additionally, it was assumed that the participants chosen for the study would provide honest and accurate responses to the questions posed. Furthermore, the study operated on the belief that empowering women within a community contributes to beneficial and constructive outcomes. in the success and sustainability of community development projects.

1.11 Operational Definitions of Key Terms

Access to job opportunities refers to the extent to which women are able to find, qualify for, and participate in gainful employment or income-generating activities within the framework of community development initiatives.

Community development project is a planned initiative or series of activities aimed at improving the well-being, economic prospects, and overall quality of life within a specific community.

Control of resources refers to the ability of women to access, manage, make decisions over, and benefit from the use of key economic, social, and material resources that are essential for participating meaningfully in community development initiatives.

Leadership refers to the extent to which women can influence, guide, and participate in frameworks for choosing between alternatives, mobilize community members, and designing strategies, selecting among alternatives, implementing decisions, monitoring implementation, and evaluating results of community development initiatives.

Participation refers to the active and meaningful involvement of women in all stages of community development projects — including organizing future actions, developing alternative options, implementing selected strategies, monitoring ongoing activities, and evaluating the results achieved. — with the aim of influencing outcomes, asserting agency, and contributing to sustainable community transformation.

Project implementation is the phase where the plans, policies, and strategies related to women empowerment and community development are put into action through coordinated efforts, resource mobilization, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring of progress to achieve intended outcomes such as improved livelihoods, increased participation of women in decision-making, and sustainable community growth.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presented a review of literature relevant to the study's objectives, as well as the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that informed the research. It also includes a summary of the reviewed literature.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Empirical literature review involves analyzing and synthesizing existing studies that are based on empirical evidence (data-driven research) rather than purely theoretical discussions. These studies include experiments, surveys, case studies, and observational research that collect and analyze quantitative or qualitative data (Snyder, H., 2021). In an empirical literature review, the reviewer focuses on assessing the methods, findings, and contributions of these studies to identify trends, gaps, or patterns in the research field (Rahi, S., 2020)

2.2.1. Women's access to job opportunities and the success of community development projects

The relationship between women's access to job opportunities and the success of community development projects has been a focus of research for many years, particularly in the fields of gender studies, economics, and development (Kabeer, N., 2022). Studies consistently show that empowering women economically—primarily through increased access to job opportunities—not only benefits individual women but also significantly contributes to broader community development (Buvinić, M., & Furst-Nichols, R. 2019).

Singh and Bhatia (2020), ascertain that women's access to job opportunities often correlates with greater involvement in leadership roles within community development projects. Empowered

women tend to assume leadership positions in local governance structures, leading to more inclusive decision-making processes. According to Chopra and Zambelli (2021), communities with higher female participation in leadership positions experience more equitable and sustainable outcomes in development projects. This is due to the fact that female leaders tend to place a greater emphasis on promoting social fairness, access to services, and environmental sustainability.

According to the FAO (2021), women are essential contributors to the advancement and growth of communities, particularly in low-income and developing regions. Their involvement in economic activities leads to multiple positive outcomes, including improvements in health, education, and social cohesion. As women gain access to jobs, their economic contributions improve the well-being and living standards of their households and the wider community. According to Kabeer (2019), the involvement of women in the workforce brings about significant and transformative effects, enhancing both household well-being and community dynamics by allowing more resources to be allocated toward essential services like education and healthcare.

Despite the recognized importance of involvement of women in community advancement activities various barriers still limit their access to job opportunities. These barriers include cultural norms, lack of education, and discriminatory labor market practices (World Bank, 2024). According to a study by the International Labour Organization (ILO), gender discrimination continues to hinder women's full participation in the workforce in many regions, particularly in rural and traditional communities. In turn, this reduces their capacity to actively participate in and gain advantages from community development efforts. Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach (ILO, 2019). Providing women with education and vocational training,

creating gender-sensitive labor policies, and offering microfinance opportunities are some strategies that have been shown to be effective. For instance, microfinance institutions that specifically target women have significantly increased female labor participation in rural communities, leading to the success of numerous small-scale development projects (Chant & Sweetman, 2019).

Kabeer, Mahmud, and Tasneem (2018) notes that economic empowerment through access to jobs allows women to contribute to their household income, improve their overall quality of life, and participate more fully in the economy. The study by Kabeer, Mahmud and Tasneem emphasizes that women taking part in livelihood-generating endeavors leads to greater financial autonomy, which in turn improves their ability to influence household and community decisions. The study concluded that, communities that actively include women in the workforce see improved outcomes in health, education, and overall development indicators. In many developing countries, women's economic participation remains limited due to cultural, legal, and educational barriers. As noted by Smith (2019), reducing these barriers not only helps women but also fosters overall community resilience and sustainability. When women have access to meaningful job opportunities, they reinvest in their communities, improving access to essential services like education and healthcare, which are vital to community development efforts. Huq (2023) found that when women hold leadership positions in community development initiatives, there is often a reduction in corruption and mismanagement, as women tend to adopt a more collaborative and an all-encompassing strategy toward governance.

Governments and international organizations have implemented various initiatives and strategies designed to enhance women's involvement in the labor market. These initiatives, including microfinance programs, vocational training, and gender-sensitive labor policies, have been

instrumental in enhancing women's access to employment. According to these policies not only provide economic opportunities for women but also, advance gender equity and enable women to assume positions of leadership in community development projects. (Cornwall, A. 2021),

Several case studies highlight the positive impact of women's job access on community development projects. In India, millions of women have been with employment, which has led to improved infrastructure and public services in rural areas. These improvements are closely linked to the increased decision-making power of women, who prioritize investments in essential community needs like water supply and schools (Pattenden, 2019). Similarly, in Latin America, the involvement of women in community-based projects has been pivotal for the success of various initiatives aimed at poverty reduction and social welfare improvements. Women's involvement in local governance has not only resulted in more efficient resource allocation but also enhanced the social capital within communities (Buvinić and Furst-Nichols, 2019).

Access to job opportunities enables women to gain economic independence, which not only improves their personal financial situation but also boosts the economic well-being of their households and communities (Duflo, E. 2019). Kabeer (2021) emphasizes when women participate in the labor market, they bring diverse skills and perspectives, which contribute to innovation and sustainability in community projects. Economic empowerment also allows women to reinvest their earnings into local economies, creating a multiplier effect that enhances the overall prosperity of the community.

According to Ogunbiyi and Abioye (2021), women's access to job opportunities has emerged as a critical factor in community development projects, particularly in African contexts where gender disparities have historically impeded economic progress. Ogunbiyi and Abioye (2021)

research indicates that enhancing women's participation in the labor market positively influences community development initiatives, fostering economic growth, improving social outcomes, and reducing poverty. In contexts where women have limited job opportunities, development projects often struggle with sustainability. Akinyemi and Okechukwu (2020) propound community development projects in Africa are often designed to address socio-economic challenges like poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Women's access to job opportunities plays a crucial role in the success and sustainability of these projects, given their unique position as caretakers and contributors to local economies. Tembon and Fort (2020) in their study on "Women in Leadership: Strategies for Inclusive Community Development in Africa, African Development Perspectives" concluded that when women were excluded from leadership roles, community development projects were less likely to succeed, as they failed to address the specific needs of women and children. In contrast, women-led initiatives not only addressed these needs but also empowered other women to become financially independent, thereby reinforcing the positive feedback loop of development (Tembon, M. & Fort, L., 2020).

Several case studies from Africa highlight how women's access to job opportunities has successfully transformed community development projects. In Rwanda, for example, the Rwanda Women's Network (2020) implemented a project aimed at increasing women's participation in agriculture. The project resulted in a 20% increase in crop yields, improved household income, and enhanced food security. The success of the initiative was attributed to the active involvement of women in decision-making processes and job creation strategies tailored to their specific needs. A study by Tadesse, Bekele and Tefera (2019) highlighted that many development projects in sub-Saharan Africa failed to achieve their objectives because women's involvement was restricted by patriarchal norms. The authors argued that development projects

must incorporate gender-sensitive approaches to overcome these challenges, by ensuring that women not only have access to jobs but also receive the necessary support, such as childcare and equal pay.

In her study in Tanzania, Wema (2015) found that 181 out of 189 people who participated agreed that when given the chance, women convey affordable labor to community development projects, offering timely and effective expertise. They often possess superior understanding of the most suitable development initiatives for their communities, demonstrate strong commitment by dedicating substantial time to their responsibilities, and are considered more trustworthy than men in managing high-value projects.

Women's employment not only improves their financial independence but also boosts their confidence and ability to participate in communal decisions. Nzomo and Kamau (2023) assert communities where women are economically active and involved in decision-making processes experience more balanced and effective execution of project activities, as women often prioritize long-term community benefits over short-term gains. Moreover, women's participation in the workforce is linked to greater transparency and accountability in community development projects.

Mwangi and Kinyanjui (2019) in their study "Barriers to Women's Employment in Rural Kenya: Implications for Economic Development" noted that in many Kenyan communities, Women are still commonly expected to place household duties above all other obligations and employment. Moreover, rural women face additional barriers such as lack of access to information, limited mobility, and inadequate childcare support. Addressing these barriers is essential for maximizing the influence of women's employment on community development

(Mwangi and Kinyanjui, 2019). A study by Wambui (2019) on women's cooperatives in rural Kenya illustrates how these groups have contributed to the success of agricultural and small-scale business projects. By providing women with employment and leadership opportunities, these cooperatives have not only improved household incomes but also facilitated the broader development of their communities. Wambui's study underscores the importance of providing women with the skills and resources needed to participate in the formal and informal labor markets.

2.2.2 Women's leadership and decision-making and the success of community development projects

A study by Ahern, Jones and Smith (2023) highlighted that women in leadership roles bring unique perspectives to community development, especially in addressing issues related to public health, access to education, and economic advancement. Women leaders are often more attuned to the needs of vulnerable groups, including children and the elderly, which leads to projects that are more inclusive and community-focused. Ahern, Jones and Smith (2023) emphasize that women in leadership positions tend to adopt more collaborative and participatory approaches to decision-making, which increases the likelihood of achieving sustainable development outcomes. This participatory nature fosters greater community ownership of projects, ensuring their long-term success. Moreover, women's leadership has been linked to higher levels of transparency and accountability in project implementation. Kabeer (2023) found that projects led by women were more likely to involve regular community consultations and transparent financial management, which contributed to building trust between the community and project leaders. Additionally, women leaders tend to adopt a more democratic decision-making style, which contrasts with more hierarchical and authoritarian leadership styles often attributed to men. A Study by

McKinsey & Company (2022) show that organizations with women who hold leadership positions are more inclined to promote diversity and inclusivity, which in turn enhances creativity and problem-solving within community projects.

Cornwall and Rivas (2019) in their study state the involvement of women in decision-making processes has been shown to positively impact the success rates of community development projects. Women bring unique insights into household and community-level challenges, such as family health, education, and economic needs, which are often overlooked in male-dominated leadership structures (Cornwall, A. and Rivas, A. 2019). According to Osei and Dapaah (2022), community projects with a significant inclusion of women in leadership and policy-making positions are more likely to achieve their objectives because they reflect the real essential concerns and most important interests of the community, particularly women and children. Women's decision-making styles are often characterized by collaboration, transparency, and consensus-building, which contribute to smoother implementation and higher community engagement. Osei and Dapaah (2022) ascertain this participatory approach helps mitigate potential conflicts and encourages individuals to feel personally responsible for and connected to one another, increasing the likelihood of project sustainability beyond the initial implementation phase.

Women's decision-making tends to be more consultative and democratic compared to male counterparts. This inclusive decision-making fosters broader participation from community members, leading to decisions that better reflect the community's pressing concerns and most important interests. According to Rahman and Martin (2023), women leaders in community development projects often emphasize consensus-building, involving all stakeholders, including marginalized groups, in the decision-making process. This approach is key to ensuring that

community projects address the diverse needs of the population and have greater buy-in from all participants. Women's decision-making also tends to focus on long-term benefits rather than short-term gains. Bryson and Bebbington (2023) found that women leaders prioritize sustainable outcomes, including environmental protection and equitable distribution of resources, which contributes to the long-term success of community development initiatives. Community development projects where women are involved in decision-making, projects are more likely to meet long-term social and economic goals. Their focus on the holistic development of communities often leads to better planning, implementation, and monitoring of initiatives, ensuring that projects do not just meet short-term objectives but also create lasting improvements (Nawaz & McLaren, 2020).

The active contribution of women in decision formulation is directly linked to the success of community development initiatives. Studies show that when women are part of decision-making bodies, projects tend to be more holistic, addressing the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of development. Cornwall and Rivas (2018) argue that women's decision-making brings different perspectives that are often overlooked in male-dominated structures. They are more likely to focus on the well-being of the community as a whole, rather than on individual or elite interests, which can lead to more sustainable and equitable project outcomes.

In India, the introduction of women into village councils (Panchayats) has resulted in more effective governance and improved service delivery in sectors like healthcare and sanitation. Ban and Rao (2022) found that women-led councils were more likely to invest in public goods that directly benefited the community, leading to increased satisfaction and project success. A case study from Singh (2020) examining women's leadership in rural India's water management projects shows that when women were in charge of decision-making, there was greater

community involvement, better resource management, and higher project success rates. He concludes that empowering women leaders in development projects not only improves project outcomes but also leads to broader social and economic improvements.

Adetola and Mwangi (2020), state that in many African countries, women's leadership and decision-making roles have increasingly been recognized as critical for the success of community development projects. The achievement of goals in community-based development initiatives is often linked to the inclusivity and diversity of leadership structures. Women bring unique perspectives and experiences to leadership roles that contribute to more comprehensive and equitable project outcomes. According to Amadiume (2019), women leaders in Africa tend to prioritize community welfare issues such as education, healthcare, and environmental sustainability, which are essential components of development. Amadiume's study reveals that projects led by or involving women in decision-making are more likely to be sustainable because they are better aligned with the immediate needs of the community.

Women's leadership in development projects has been closely linked to their empowerment, which in turn fosters sustainable development. A study by Aklilu (2018) indicates that when women are empowered to lead and make decisions in community projects, they are more likely to advocate for policies and practices that ensure long-term benefits for their communities. Abebe and Kassa (2020) observed that empowered women leaders in Ethiopia have been instrumental in advocating for environmental sustainability, equitable resource distribution, and gender-sensitive development programs. This has had a direct impact on the sustainability of community projects, as women often focus on long-term solutions that address the root causes of community challenges. Women's leadership in Uganda has proven to be crucial for the achievement of goals in community-based development initiatives. According to Nalwoga and

Mugisha (2020), women leaders are often more attuned to the needs of marginalized groups, especially in areas such as health, education, and environmental conservation. Women's involvement in leadership positions contributes to projects being more holistic and responsive to the diverse needs of communities. Nalwoga and Mugisha's research demonstrates that when women hold leadership roles, they prioritize social welfare, which in turn improves community well-being and project success.

In Kenya, the involvement of women in leadership roles and their engagement in decision-making have become key contributors to the effectiveness of community development initiatives. According to Ngunjiri and Wambugu (2021), women in leadership positions tend to adopt more inclusive approaches, which promote participation from diverse community members. Women leaders are more likely to focus on grassroots issues such as health, education, and social welfare, which directly impact the well-being of the community. Ngunjiri and Wambugu (2021) note the emphasis on collaborative leadership ensures that community development projects are aligned with the broader goals of societal development. In rural Kenya, projects led by women's cooperatives have achieved significant success in improving water management and agricultural productivity. According to Smith, Johnson and Muriuki (2022) in their study "Women's Leadership and Decision-Making in Community Development Projects: A Case Study of Rural Kenya", these projects benefited from women's deep understanding of local environmental challenges and their ability to mobilize community members towards collective action.

Women are able to choose the most effective integration models for carrying out community development initiatives, and they are aware of the most worthwhile projects that the community should prioritize (Murunga, 2017). Since they prepare children for elementary school, choose the

kind of ECDE centers they should attend, determine the location and hours of ECDE centers, and make important decisions regarding implementation of community health initiatives, establishment of local markets, development of community water systems, and various other related matters, women are largely responsible for ensuring the proper implementation of county-run programs like Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) (World Bank, 2016).

2.2.3 Women's control of resources and the success of community development projects

The connection between women's ability to manage resources and the effectiveness of community development projects has been extensively discussed in development literature. Singh (2022) highlights that women's participation and control over resources are crucial factors that contribute to the effectiveness, sustainability, and success of development initiatives.

Women's access to and control over resources such as land, finances, and education are critical determinants of economic growth in community development projects. According to Kabeer (2018), empowering women by increasing their control over economic resources not only enhances their individual well-being but also promotes broader economic development within communities. Women are often responsible for household management, and their control of resources allows them to better allocate funds towards family health, education, and nutrition, which are key drivers of sustainable community development (Khan, S. and Ahmed, N. 2019). Projects promoting gender equality and guaranteeing that women have fair and equal opportunities to obtain and utilize resources tend to achieve better outcomes. Mayoux L. (2018) points out that when women control financial resources, community development projects are more inclusive and holistic. Women's unique perspectives often lead to more comprehensive

development strategies that address the needs of all community members, particularly vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly.

A study by Doss, C., Summerfield, G., & Tsikata, D. (2020) examines the influence of women's ownership of land on agricultural productivity and improvement of living standards and infrastructure in less urbanized regions. The findings suggest that women's control of land resources significantly improves agricultural outcomes and contributes to the success of community-based agricultural projects. Women with land ownership are more inclined to adopt sustainable agricultural practices and invest in the long-term health of the environment, which benefits the entire community. Dolan et al. (2023) emphasized that women's control of economic resources—such as land, income, or loans—has been linked to more successful community outcomes. When women have unrestricted ability to utilize and manage financial resources independently, they can contribute to local economies more effectively. The study by Dolan et al. (2023) emphasizes that women who manage household finances are more likely to allocate a greater portion of resources toward their children's education, health, and community welfare, leading to improved social outcomes. Their ability to manage resources also fosters greater decision-making power, which helps ensure that community development projects address the needs of all community members, particularly the most marginalized.

Beyond financial resources, women's control of social capital—such as networks, information, and community leadership - is essential to the achievement of success development initiatives. Women leaders are often more attuned to the social fabric of their communities and can mobilize others to participate in development activities (Nguyen, L and Tran, M., 2019). This ability to harness social resources strengthens collective action, fostering a sense of ownership and sustainability for development projects. Women leaders also tend to facilitate stronger

collaboration and partnerships within the community, which enhances project success (Molyneux, 2023).

Despite the positive impact of women's control over resources, numerous obstacles continue to hinder women's full involvement in and benefiting from community development projects. These barriers include cultural norms, legal impediments and denial of access to education and training. Many communities still uphold patriarchal norms that limit women's access to land, access to funding and roles involving authority over key decisions. As noted by Beaman, Duflo, Pande and Topalova (2020), socially constructed roles and systemic obstacles based on gender continue to restrict women's ability to control resources in many parts of the world. The authors argue that policy initiatives designed to enhance women's opportunities for obtaining education, legal rights, and financial services are essential for addressing and eliminating these obstacles and enabling women to contribute more fully to community development efforts. Ali and Bibi (2019) alluded that to fully leverage women's potential in community development, structural barriers must be addressed. The authors concluded that gender equality in resource control is not merely an issue of fairness; it also serves as an essential route toward achieving lasting community development.

According to a 2016 ILO data from Zambia, annual growth in per capita income is boosted by a 1% rise in the proportion of girls who finish secondary education. The GDP of the entire nation is expanding at the same pace (0.3%). Thus, countries as a whole may rise out of poverty faster if we educate girls. In summary: Achieving all of the development objectives set forth in the numerous treaties for the countries may be accomplished by empowering women. Future earnings for girls increase by 10–20% with an additional year of schooling and 15–25% with an additional year of secondary school.

Konayuma (2017) highlights that Africa's economic underdevelopment has largely been shaped by long-standing challenges, including deficient education systems, inadequate healthcare and nutrition in both urban and rural regions, political instability, and widespread corruption. These systemic issues have also posed significant barriers to the empowerment of women. Nonetheless, his comparative study involving three countries revealed that in South Africa and Ghana—where notable efforts had been made to empower women—there was a marked increase in their involvement in community development. The study examined women entrepreneurs and assessed their contributions to economic progress in these contexts. For instance, in Accra, Ghana, women make up up to 42% of family income and 45% of earnings obtained through a variety of credit channels, including financial institutions, village savings, and community development banks. In fact, his research has demonstrated that women are more adept at conserving money and acting as development agents than males, who are just 12% as good at regenerating money and other resources for the betterment of their communities.

In his own contribution, Bayeh (2016) observes that development occurs at a reasonably high rate in farming communities across Africa, including areas of Ethiopia, where women are permitted to own land and pursue education. These communities also benefit from women's ability to make critical choices about the execution of development programs. According to Ogunleye's (2022) research, women who possess empowerment are capable of raising and organizing financial resources to carry out community development initiatives. The strong women are able to organize the locals to contribute their property for important communal initiatives, such as water projects.

Kenya possesses sufficient resources that may provide cultural, economic, and directional fulfillment, all of which can eventually contribute to sustainable economic growth in different ways, according to Africa Resource Center (2017). But if they are owned and used equally by men and women, these resources can be useful.

The control of financial resources is one of the most critical aspects of women's empowerment and has a direct impact on the success of community development projects. According to Wanjiru (2020), when women have control over household or community financial resources, they are more likely to invest in areas that benefit the entire community, such as education, healthcare, and sustainable agriculture. Wanjiru's study suggests that women tend to prioritize the welfare of their families and communities, which enhances the overall success of development projects. Additionally, community-based financial initiatives, such as women's savings groups and microfinance programs, have proven to be effective platforms for resource control, leading to successful project outcomes. In Kenya, land is a key resource that significantly influences the success of agricultural-based community development projects. Traditionally, land ownership in rural Kenya has been dominated by men, limiting women's ability to engage fully in agricultural production and decision-making processes (Mwangi, J. 2022). However, studies have shown that when women gain control over land, agricultural productivity and community development outcomes improve. According to Ochieng (2020), women's ownership of land leads to more sustainable agricultural practices and better resource management. Ochieng's research highlights the role of women in maintaining soil fertility, managing water resources, and cultivating crops that support food security within their communities.

2.2.4 Strategies for enhancing women empowerment and the success of community development projects

According to Rosenberg (2023) empowering women is crucial for achieving sustainable and equitable community development. Various strategies can be employed to enhance women's empowerment, each addressing different facets of empowerment and community involvement.

Sustainable development goals which aim to promote sustainable progress, cannot be fully realized without achieving women's empowerment and gender equality. Therefore, gender equality is recognized not only as a fundamental human rights issue but also as a necessary condition and key indicator of sustainable development. (Alvarez and Lopez, 2013). According to Alvarez and Lopez (2013), gender inequality is pervasive in all cultures and has not been addressed seriously enough to lead to sustainable development. Thus, it is clear from such explanations that all of the aforementioned elements of sustainable development are impossible to attain without equitable participation of women in all spheres of development endeavors.

Some of the empowerment strategies that have worked in the past include education and skill development, gender-sensitive policies, addressing gender-based violence and awareness campaigns. According to a 2020 study by Kabeer and Sweetman, investment in education has a multiplier effect on women's empowerment, as it enhances their ability to secure employment, participate in decision-making, and improve their economic status. The study noted that Governments and NGOs should offer scholarships and training programs specifically aimed at young women, emphasizing STEM education and entrepreneurship skills. Vocational training equips women with specific skills that are marketable and can be directly applied in community development initiatives. This training includes entrepreneurship, agriculture, technology, and

handicrafts, providing women with the tools to improve their economic standing (World Bank, 2019). Providing vocational training and skill development programs tailored to women's needs ensuring the training includes digital literacy, financial management, and entrepreneurship to enhance women economic participation (Smith, A. (2020).

An Education and Skill Development Strategy focused on enhancing women's empowerment for community development involves several interrelated components that support both the socio-economic advancement of women and broader societal development. This strategy includes building inclusive education systems, promoting vocational and technical skills, ensuring gender equality, and encouraging entrepreneurship (Chisango, G., 2020). Chisango (2020) noted that when women acquire new skills through community-based training programs, their confidence increases, leading to more active participation in economic and social activities.

Education is one of the most crucial tools for empowering women and driving the success of community development projects. According to Akinola (2020), investing in education for women equips them with the knowledge and skills needed to actively participate in development initiatives. In many African countries, particularly in rural areas, limited access to education remains a barrier to women's empowerment. Akinola argues that both formal and informal educational programs, including vocational training, are essential for enhancing women's roles in community development. Such programs help women acquire technical skills relevant to agriculture, entrepreneurship, healthcare, and other vital sectors that drive development. Kinyua (2021) emphasizes that enhancing women's access to education—especially in rural areas—results in higher rates of women's participation in community projects and improved project outcomes. Skills training, particularly in areas such as entrepreneurship, leadership, and technical

skills also increases women's capacity to contribute to and lead community initiatives. This is consistent with the overarching objective of achieving long-term sustainable development, as empowered women can manage and sustain projects over time.

A well-structured strategy for enhancing women's empowerment and contributing to community development must integrate gender-sensitive policies. These strategies should concentrate on fostering conditions that support and empower women, promoting equal opportunities, addressing socio-cultural barriers, and promoting the inclusion of women in decision-making roles across all levels of leadership and governance (Patel and Singh 2020). According to Esping-Andersen (2020) designing social safety nets that prioritize women, especially single mothers, widows, and women from marginalized communities including unemployment benefits, childcare support, and old-age pensions enhances women empowerment for community development. Implementing gender-sensitive policies within community projects helps develop targeted solutions to the unique challenges encountered by women. These measures guarantee that women have fair access to engage in and gain from development efforts (UN Women, 2020).

Enhancing women's empowerment through community development can be effectively achieved through awareness campaigns. Al-Dajani and Marlow (2020) emphasized that working with grassroots organizations leads to deeper engagement and more sustainable empowerment outcomes, as these organizations understand local cultural nuances. They noted that partnering with local NGOs and women's groups to gain insights into the specific challenges women face in different communities, use of these partnerships to organize workshops, support groups, and local advocacy efforts empowers women in community development projects.

A 2021 research paper by Olaniyi et al. demonstrates that using social media platforms can dramatically increase the reach of empowerment campaigns, particularly among younger women. Awareness campaigns are effective tools for challenging harmful cultural norms and stereotypes. These campaigns can help shift societal attitudes towards gender equality, making it easier for women to participate in community development (Ridgeway, 2011).

Omondi (2021) in his own contribution towards strategies for enhancing women empowerment for community development attested that the establishment and enforcement of strong legal and policy frameworks are vital in enabling women to take central roles in planning and implementing community-based initiatives. The Kenyan government has made strides in implementing regulations that advance equal treatment of all genders and safeguard the rights of women. According to Omondi (2021), legal reforms such as the introduction of the two-thirds gender rule and the enforcement of land ownership rights for women have contributed to creating a more supportive and enabling setting for women to engage in community projects. These policies guarantee that women receive the same access to resources and opportunities as men, a critical factor in achieving effective and sustainable development efforts. For community development projects to be successful, it is crucial that they are designed and implemented in a gender-sensitive manner. This involves ensuring that project goals, strategies, and outcomes are aligned with the requirements and preferences of both women and men. Ndungu (2021) argues that gender-sensitive approaches to project design not only enhance the participation of women but also ensure that the benefits of the projects are equitably distributed. Projects that take into account women's specific needs, such as access to childcare or flexible working hours, are more likely to succeed as they foster greater involvement from women participants.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Kabeer's model of women's empowerment along with the capabilities approach developed by Sen and Nussbaum..

2.3.1 Kabeer's Framework for Women Empowerment

Scholars typically mix three models to represent resources, agency, and success. Kabeer defines empowerment as "the enhancement of individuals' capacity to make meaningful decisions about their lives in situations where they were formerly unable to do so" (Kabeer, 2001). She has highlighted resources, agency, and achievement as three interconnected aspects that might impact women's empowerment processes and the relevance of women's participation in the execution of development initiatives, making them important to this research.

From this perspective, she argues that human, material, and social resources can enhance individuals' capacity to make decisions and take action; however, this potential can only be realized if individuals are prepared to take action either on their own or in collaboration with others. This is accomplished by increasing people's awareness of the current situation and establishing support networks. However, poverty and established societal norms and beliefs might stymie the empowering process. Furthermore, empowerment can cause tension among family and community members.

This framework assisted in identifying empowering strategies used by various project strategists and community members to encourage women's engagement in project activities, as well as those that hampered women's participation. The methods and techniques for implementing

community development projects, as well as the duties of county governments and communities throughout project execution and planning were explored.

2.3.2 Sen's and Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach

The Capabilities Approach, developed by Amartya Sen (1999) and further expanded by Martha Nussbaum (2000), offers a theoretical framework for understanding women's empowerment and its influence on community development projects. This approach emphasizes individuals' freedom to achieve well-being and live the life they value by focusing on their capabilities, or real opportunities, to function in society. Sen highlights the importance of removing barriers that restrict individuals' access to resources and opportunities, while Nussbaum outlines a list of central capabilities essential for human flourishing, such as education, health, and political participation.

In the context of women's empowerment and its influence on community development projects, the Capabilities Approach underscores the significance of enabling women to access financial resources, education, and decision-making opportunities. The integration of Sen's and Nussbaum's principles into development policies ensures that projects are not only inclusive but also sustainable, by addressing structural inequalities and expanding women's access to opportunities.

By applying the Capabilities Approach, a research project on women's empowerment can better analyze how expanding women's capabilities directly impacts the effectiveness and long-term viability of community-based initiatives, aligning with broader goals of social justice and equity.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

This section described how the independent variables relate to and influence the dependent variable examined in the study. According to Swaen and George (2022), a conceptual framework

in research is an analytical tool that illustrates the expected relationships among variables within a study. It serves as a visual or narrative representation that connects the concepts, theories, and assumptions guiding the research, providing a structured approach to understanding the research problem.

Independent Variables

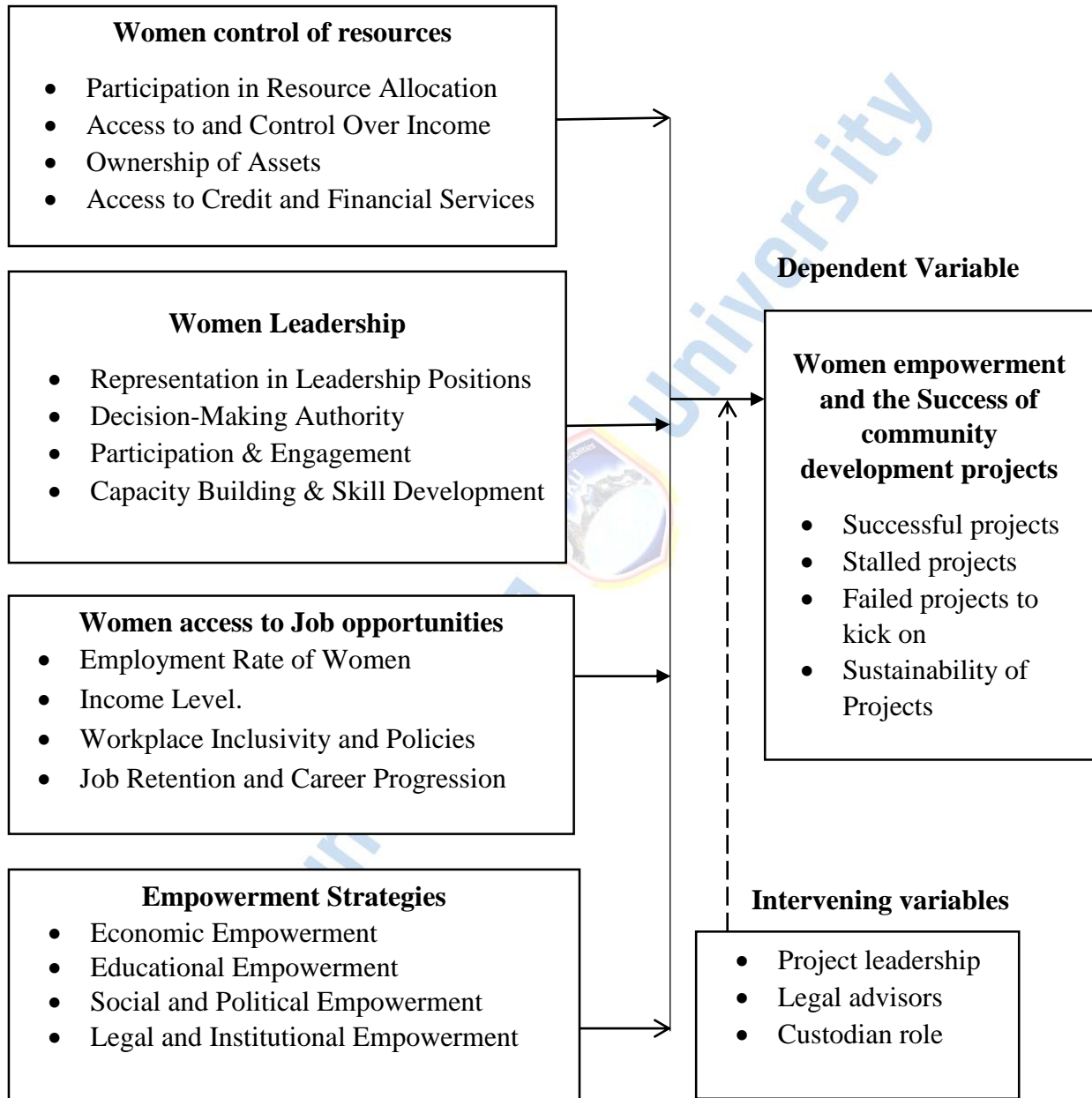


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2025)

The illustration in Figure 1 highlights the impact of women empowerment on the successful implementation of community development projects and effectiveness, with four key independent variables: women's control of resources, women's leadership, women's access to job opportunities and empowerment strategies. Intervening variables which are project leadership, legal advisors, and custodian role influence the direct connection between the empowerment of women and the results of community development projects. When women are empowered in the above areas, they are often better positioned to lead, contribute, and implement sustainable projects, ensuring long-term development success in their communities.

2.5 Recap of Literature Review

The evidence from the literature suggests that women's access to job opportunities is a critical factor influencing the achievement of desired outcomes in community-based projects. According to Amadu and Yahaya (2020), Women's economic empowerment not only improves their own quality of life but also fosters community-wide development by enhancing decision-making, promoting social cohesion, and ensuring that resources are directed toward essential services. Amadu and Yahaya (2020) however noted that significant barriers remain, and overcoming these will require concerted efforts from policymakers, international organizations, and communities themselves. The literature consistently demonstrates that women's access to job opportunities is a powerful driver of the success of community development projects. By fostering economic empowerment, social inclusion, and improved decision-making, women contribute to more sustainable and equitable community outcomes. Future development initiatives must prioritize removing barriers to women's employment and ensuring their active participation in the workforce. This approach will not only improve community development project outcomes but also promote gender equality and broader societal benefits (Singh, P. 2023)

When women receive unequal treatment compared to men, their capacity to engage in development initiatives is hindered, resulting in unsatisfactory outcomes (Chant, S. and Sweetman, C., 2021). Empowered women can make decisions about the best development projects to put into effect in society, which strategies and techniques to use in implementing the projects, they provide easily accessible labor, and women act as peacemakers when communities disagree on certain issues, among other things (Cornwall, 2021).

The literature on women's leadership and decision-making in community development projects highlights their crucial role in ensuring the success and sustainability of such initiatives. Women bring unique perspectives, prioritize inclusivity, and often adopt participatory approaches that contribute to more equitable and effective community development projects (Smith, J., & Doe, A., 2020). The literature also confirmed that women's control over resources significantly enhances the success of community development projects. Nkosi, T. (2024) contends that empowering women economically and socially leads to better decision-making, increased investment in social services, and stronger community cohesion.

Empowering women is a key strategy for ensuring the success of community development projects in Kenya. Kamau, J. (2022) in his study indicated that strategies such as enhancing access to education, promoting economic empowerment through microfinance and entrepreneurship, addressing cultural and gender-based barriers, and leveraging technology have proven to be effective in empowering women. The inclusion of women in leadership roles and the strengthening of legal frameworks further enhance their participation and contribution to community development and ultimately, these strategies contribute to more inclusive, sustainable and successful development projects in Kenya (Mokua, E., 2020).

Women's empowerment has been widely acknowledged as a critical factor in driving community development, with various studies emphasizing its role in enhancing social cohesion, economic growth, and decision-making capabilities (Ndungu, 2021). Research conducted in various parts of Kenya and globally underscores how empowered women contribute significantly for the effective implementation of community development initiatives. However, these studies exhibited research gaps, which are outlined in the table below.

Table 1: Research Gaps

Author(s)	Year	Topic	Purpose	Findings	Research Gap
Ngunjiri & Wambugu	2021	Role of women in grassroots development in Kenya	To investigate the involvement of women in local-level development initiatives.	Found that empowered women contributed to improved decision-making and project sustainability	Did not focus on specific counties like Migori or community development project performance
Johnson & Muriuki	2022	Women empowerment and economic development in rural Kenya	To investigate the link between economic empowerment and community growth	Economic empowerment led to increased household welfare and local leadership participation	Did not examine how empowerment influences specific development projects within communities
Mwangi, J.	2022	Leadership capacity of women in rural development	To assess the leadership influence of empowered women on development	Women leaders initiated more inclusive and sustainable development activities	Lacked focus on Migori County and did not assess different dimensions of empowerment (e.g., resource control)
Wanjiru, A.	2020	Gender dynamics in community project implementation	To explore gender roles in implementing community projects	Women faced cultural and institutional barriers despite being willing participants	Focused on barriers, but not on the impact of empowerment or strategies to enhance participation

Mwangi & Kinyanjui	2019	Institutional support for women in rural Kenya	To assess how institutions empower women in rural settings	Institutional training and support boosted women's confidence and involvement in projects	Did not link institutional empowerment to measurable community development project success
Omondi, B.	2021	Impact of women empowerment programs in Western Kenya	To evaluate the effectiveness of empowerment programs on community change	Programs improved awareness, participation, and skills among rural women	Did not assess the long-term impact on community project outcomes or sustainability
Ndung'u et al.	2021	Women and sustainable development in marginalized areas	To examine women's contribution to sustainability in development	Found that women promoted sustainability through environmental and social initiatives	Did not address development project implementation and performance in community settings

Source: Researcher (2025)

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research methodology, including the research design, study location, targeted population, sampling methods and strategies, selected sample size, development of research instruments, procedures for assessing validity and reliability, approaches used for data collection, methods and steps for analyzing the data, and the ethical principles observed throughout the study.

3.2. Research Methodology

This research employed a mixed-methods, which combines both qualitative and quantitative techniques in one study to offer an enhanced and more thorough grasp of the research issue. It combines the strengths of each method to offer deeper insights into complex issues (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This approach provides both breadth (quantitative) and depth (qualitative), leading to a nuanced understanding of the research problem (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2023).

Mixed methods approach was an excellent method to investigate the women inclusion in the processes of community advancement projects. It offered a comprehensive perspective by scientifically quantifying the performance of such programs while qualitatively investigating the complex experiences of the women participating. This blend improved comprehension and provided practical information for policymakers, development practitioners, and community leaders.

3.3 Research Design

A research design is the comprehensive plan or framework that guides the execution of a research study, detailing the specific methods and procedures used for data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Kothari, C. R., & Garg, G., 2020).

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. As defined by Creswell (2019), this approach entails gathering information from a specific target population to obtain detailed insights and understanding on selected subjects or issues of concern. This method is commonly used in social sciences, marketing, public health, and other fields that require data from large populations. This design collects data from a larger sample through structured questionnaires or interviews (Creswell, J. W., 2019).

As discussed by Ponto, J. (2022) this research design was well-suited for the study as it facilitated the gathering of a broad range of opinions and perceptions from a larger population, helped in identifying trends, correlations, and statistical relationships between empowerment and development outcomes, allowed the researcher to cover a wide geographical area, providing a more generalized view and lastly allowed the researcher to quantitatively assess the impact of women empowerment initiatives by gathering direct feedback from women involved in or benefiting from community development projects (Ponto, J., 2022).

3.4 Location of the Study

The research was carried out in Migori County, located in the southwestern part of Kenya within the former Nyanza Province. It lies at approximately 0.9366° South latitude and 34.4198° East longitude. Migori County shares its borders with Homa Bay County to the north, Kisii County to the northeast, Narok County to the southeast, and the Republic of Tanzania to the south and

west. It is also bordered by Lake Victoria to the west and has a boundary with Uganda through Migingo Island situated in the lake. The administrative and commercial center of the county is Migori Town. Administratively, the county is divided into eight sub-counties: Rongo, Awendo, Suna East, Suna West, Uriri, Nyatike, Kuria East, and Kuria West.

Migori County was chosen as the study area due to its culturally diverse yet relatively homogeneous population, which comprises ethnic groups such as the Suba-Luos, Luos, Kuria, Kisii, Luhya, and Somalis, along with smaller communities of Indians, Arabs, and Nubians. This diversity presents an ideal context for exploring how women's empowerment affects the implementation and outcomes of community development projects. The county faces economic disparities, which make it an interesting case for understanding how empowering women can contribute to the alleviation of poverty and sustainable development. Lastly the county government of Migori has shown some commitment to women's empowerment through its support of initiatives concentrated on women's well-being, access to education and involvement in economic activities.

3.5 Target Population

The population intended for investigation in this study comprised of women of various ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, and educational levels above 18 years residing in Migori County. Additionally, the study involved county government officials as key informants.

Based on the 2019 Kenya Housing and Population Census conducted by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), there are 580,214 females in Migori County. Out of these, 279,109 are aged above 18 years.

Table 2: Target population

Sub-County	Target population per Sub-County
Awendo	29,985
Kuria East	22,056
Kuria West	49,924
Nyatike	44,868
Rongo	33,093
Sune East	31,456
Suna West	32,921
Uriri	34,806
Total	279,109

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics Kenyan Housing and Population Census 2019.

3.6 Sampling Procedure and Techniques

A sampling procedure is the method used to choose a subset from a larger population for the purpose of conducting research or gathering data. It describes the approach used to identify participants or units in a way that ensures the selected sample accurately reflects the characteristics of the entire population (Singh, 2022). In this study, a stratified random sampling method was utilized to draw the sample. The strata for this study were the Sub counties in Migori County.

Using stratified random sampling helped ensure that the study captured the diverse experiences of women across different strata in the region (Kabeer, N., 2020). This led to more nuanced insights regarding how empowerment influences community development, ultimately enhancing the validity of the research findings. According to Creswell and Poth (2023), stratified random sampling is an effective method for ensuring that various subgroups within a population are represented in the sample. This approach can provide more accurate and generalizable results,

especially in research that examines women empowerment and community development initiatives (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N., 2023)

Using a stratified random sampling, a sample of 384 women respondents were selected across the county and a total of 16 county government officials were deliberately chosen to participate in the study.

3.7 Sample size

The determination of the sample size was guided by the formula proposed by Fisher and colleagues (1998); -

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

n represents the required sample size when the target population exceeds 10,000.

Z denotes the standard normal value, fixed at 1.96, which reflects a 95% confidence level.

p stands for the estimated population proportion, assumed to be 0.5 (50%) due to the lack of prior data on adherence rates.

q is the complement of p, calculated as $1 - 0.5 = 0.5$.

d indicates the acceptable margin of error, set at 0.05, which aligns with the Z-score of 1.96 used in the calculation.

Upon substitution

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.25}{0.0025} = 384.16$$

n= 384

Thus, the researcher needed approximately 384 women 18 years and above as the respondents of this study to achieve a 95% statistical certainty indicating that there is a 95% probability that the actual value of the population parameter is expected to fall within a range of plus or minus 5 percentage points from the sample estimate, regardless of the population being larger than 10,000.

Additionally, the study researcher purposively picked 16 county government staff members from the 8 sub-counties (2 from each) of Migori County to arrive to a sample size of 400.

To get the sample size per sub-county the researcher will use the formula below:

$$n = \frac{a \times b}{c}$$

Where n = sample size per sub-county

a = target population per sub county

b = sample size for the whole Migori county (384)

c = target population for the whole Migori county (279,109)

Table 3: Sample Size

Sub-County	Target population per sub-county	Sample size per subcounty
Awendo	29,985	41
Kuria East	22,056	30
Kuria West	49,924	69
Nyatike	44,868	62
Rongo	33,093	46
Suna East	31,456	43
SunaWest	32,921	45

Urii	34806	48
Total	279,109	384

Source: Researcher (2025)

3.8 Research Instruments

Research instruments are devices or methods employed to gather, evaluate, and interpret data within a research investigation. They vary depending on the type of research (quantitative or qualitative) and the specific data being sought. Research instruments are essential in ensuring data is gathered accurately and efficiently to answer research questions or test hypotheses (Taherdoost, H. 2021). The data collection tools employed in this study included a guided questionnaire and a planned interview schedule.

3.8.1 Guided Questionnaires for the women

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2021), a guided questionnaire in a research project refers to a structured set of questions designed to collect data from respondents, where the researcher plays an active role in guiding the respondent through the process. This method is commonly used when detailed responses are required, and it involves direct interaction connecting the researcher with the study participants. The researcher clarifies any ambiguities and ensures that the respondents understand each question before providing their answers, which helps improve the quality and reliability of the data collected (Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A., 2021).

The study used this research instrument for the women respondents so that the research assistants could guide the women to fill the questionnaire. The researcher used a guided questionnaire because of its low cost, it is devoid of bias, respondents have sufficient time to offer well-thought-out replies, and large samples may be used, making the results more dependable and

reliable (Rowley, J. 2022). According to Sánchez, E., & Morrow, S. L. (2018), questionnaires are a popular research instrument used to collect data from a group of people in a structured manner citing their advantages such as efficiency, anonymity and confidentiality, flexibility and reproducibility.

3.8.2 Interview guides for the county government officials

As highlighted by Cohen, L., Manion, L., and Morrison, K. (2020) in the eighth edition of their book “Research Methods in Education”, interview guides are detailed outlines or plans used in conducting interviews during research. They guide the interviewer through the process, ensuring that all relevant topics are covered consistently across interviews. According to Bryman (2020), an interview guide is an essential tool for conducting systematic, in-depth interviews in a research project because it ensures consistency while allowing for flexibility and exploration of the respondent’s experiences. The researcher utilized interview guides to facilitate and direct the interview process. Face-to-face interviews were carried out with personnel from the county government.

3.9 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

The researcher ensured the integration of quality control through the following measures:

3.9.1 Validity of Research Instruments

Heale and Twycross (2019) define validity as the degree to which a research instrument genuinely assesses the concept it is meant to evaluate. Essentially, a valid instrument precisely reflects the specific variable or constructs being studied. Validity is crucial in ensuring that the conclusions drawn from the research are sound and meaningful, enhances generalizability and ensuring accuracy. Ensuring validity is essential for the credibility of research findings, as it

demonstrates that the information gathered accurately reflects the subject being investigated (Mohajan, H. K., 2020).

To assess validity, the researcher consulted with the research supervisor and academic experts at Mount Kenya University. These professionals examined the instrument items in detail, offering feedback and constructive critiques, which were used to make necessary modifications and improvements. Based on the input, the interview guide and questionnaire wording were cross-checked and the whole instruments changed to mitigate ambiguity and achieve the required validity.

3.9.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments

According to McNeish, D. & Wolf, M. G., (2023) Reliability refers to the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent or stable results when applied to measure the same variable under comparable conditions. A reliable instrument produces the same results on repeated trials, assuming that what is being measured remains constant. Ensuring reliability is essential for producing credible and trustworthy research outcomes. Heale, R., & Twycross, A. (2019) notes that while validity focuses on accuracy, reliability ensures that the instrument produces consistent results, making it a key component of credible research. To check on the reliability of the research instruments, personal interviews were held with two county government officials from the adjacent Kisii County. These interviews provided valuable insights into the consistency and practicality of the interview schedules. In addition, the guided questionnaires underwent a pilot test in Kisii County to evaluate their effectiveness in collecting the intended data. This pilot study aimed to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaires and to identify potential difficulties respondents might encounter when answering the questions.

The pilot involved administering the questionnaires to a randomly selected group of 40 women from Kisii County, representing approximately 10.4% of the target population. This sample size aligns with Mugenda's (2003) recommendation that a pilot study should include at least 10% of the total study sample. The reliability of the instruments was assessed using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, which was employed to compute both the dependability coefficient and the overall reliability index.

3.10 Data Collection Procedure

Following the approval of the research proposal by the School of Social Sciences, the researcher secured a clearance certificate from the Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee (ISERC) along with an introductory letter from the School of Postgraduate Studies. These documents were used to apply for a research permit from NACOSTI. Once the permit was granted, the researcher sought and obtained permission from the Migori County Government Office to carry out data collection in the region. Furthermore, the researcher engaged two research assistants who aided with the management of the guided questionnaires and supporting the women respondents in completing the questions when circumstances rose. The researcher trained them to ensure that they understood the goal that this investigation is designed to accomplish and had a clear understanding of the tools of data collection. Lastly, apart from coordinating the fieldwork the researcher undertook interviews personally with the county government officials.

3.11 Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures

Data analysis in research involves the systematic use of statistical and logical techniques to arrange, examine, and interpret gathered data in order to derive insightful and meaningful

conclusions. The methods used for data analysis depend on the type of data collected (qualitative or quantitative) and the research objectives (Flick, U. 2021).

The study gathered both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data obtained through questionnaires was verified for accuracy, coded, and then entered into a computer for analysis using SPSS version 21.0. Bell (2005) concur that basic descriptive statistics—such as percentages—are particularly effective for presenting findings to a broad audience, as they are more easily interpreted than complex statistical methods. This view is supported by Borg and Gall (2018), who note that percentages are the most widely recognized and commonly applied measure of proportion. The quantitative data were analyzed using basic descriptive techniques, including frequency tables and percentage calculations. To examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, inferential statistical methods were employed, specifically correlational analysis. The strength of this relationship was assessed by calculating the coefficient of determination ($R = r^2$), which was then expressed as a percentage by multiplying the result by 100%.

According to Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006), analyzing qualitative data from interviews involves systematically interpreting and making sense of the non-numerical data collected, often through words, expressions, and stories shared by participants. The objective is to uncover trends, recurring themes, and meaningful insights that address the research questions. Relevant literature was revisited to support and validate the selection of the study topics. The results from the qualitative data analysis were organized according to themes aligned with the study objectives and presented in descriptive narrative form. The researcher subsequently analyzed both the quantitative and qualitative findings in comparison, highlighting similarities and

differences to offer a comprehensive perspective on women's empowerment and community development projects in Migori County.

3.12 Ethical Consideration Issues

Ethical considerations in research involve adhering to principles and guidelines that ensure the protection, respect, and integrity of research participants and the overall research process. These considerations are crucial for conducting research responsibly and maintaining public trust in scientific research, (Resnik, D. B. 2019)

The researcher committed to respect the following standards which seek to preserve the integrity and confidentiality of every individual who was asked to disclose personal information about themselves or others who were subjects of the research. Before becoming a research subject, every respondent was informed about the research's objectives, procedures, expected benefits, and any possible hazards, as well as their freedom to decline involvement in the research and withdraw whenever they choose. They were also assured of the confidential nature of their responses. The researcher introduced informed consent form where respondents provided their agreement to engage in the research. No coercion or enticement of any type was used to persuade a participant to participate in the study. The researcher only collected data from those willing to participate in the study.

The identity of persons from whom information was gathered throughout the course of the research was kept absolutely concealed. At the end of the research, all material that indicated the identity of persons who were participants of the study were erased. No information disclosing a person's identity was included in the final or any other papers generated throughout the project.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered to examine women empowerment and its impact on community development initiatives in Migori County, Kenya. The analysis was guided by the research objectives outlined in Chapter One, which aimed to: assess how women's access to employment opportunities affects community development projects in the county; evaluate the role of women's leadership and participation in decision-making; examine the impact of women's control over resources; and identify effective strategies to strengthen women's empowerment in support of community development. The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistical methods for data analysis, including the use of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. Descriptive statistics helped to organize and summarize data through frequency distribution tables, while inferential statistics facilitated the interpretation and generalization of findings. Qualitative responses were analyzed thematically in alignment with the study objectives and were presented in narrative form.

4.2 Response rate

The response rate in a research study serves as an important indicator of how actively and willingly the intended participants took part in the data collection phase. It reflects the extent to which the target population was involved and engaged in providing the necessary information for the study. According to Jamlin and Doltom (2018), achieving a response rate above 70%, assists in reducing the likelihood that certain groups or opinions being underrepresented. This is particularly important when generalizing findings to a broader population. In this case, out of the 384 questionnaires issued to the women respondents, 352 were returned resulting in a response

rate of approximately 91.7% as indicated in table 4 below. This indicates that a significant majority of the women respondents completed and returned the questionnaires, reflecting their engagement and interest in participating in the study. This suggests that the data collected was likely robust and reliable, as it reflected the views of a substantial portion of the target population.

In the case of the interview schedules, all 16 targeted county government officials responded to the interview, resulting in a 100% response rate. This indicates full participation, which strengthened the validity and reliability of the findings for the research on women empowerment and community development projects in Migori County.

Table 4: Response Return Rate

Respondent category	Number targeted for response	Number who responded	Percentage response rate
Women respondents	384	352	91.7%
County government officials	16	16	100.0%
Total	400	368	92.0%

Source: Researcher (2025)

4.3. Demographic Information of the Respondents

The study captured the respondents' demographic profiles, which encompassed the following characteristics: age, employment status, and academic background.

4.3.1 Age of Respondents

The research aimed to examine the respondents' age range. Understanding the age composition is essential as it provides insight of the participants, which may influence their perspectives and responses.

Table 5: Respondents' Age

Age Bracket	F	%
18 – 24 years	52	14.1
25 – 34 years	102	27.7
35 – 44 years	108	29.4
45 – 54 years	68	18.5
55 years and above	38	10.3
Total	368	100

Source: Researcher (2025)

The results in table 5 above indicate that the highest proportion of respondents falls within the 35–44 years category (29.4%) which had 108 respondents. The second-largest group (27.7%) consisted of respondents aged 25–34 years and had 102 respondents. 52 (14.1%) respondents were between the 18–24 years bracket while 68 (18.5%) were between 45–54 years. 38 (10.3%) were 55 years and above. All participants involved in the study were over 18 years old, suggesting they possessed the maturity needed to provide thoughtful and reliable responses, thereby enhancing the overall trustworthiness of the research findings.

4.3.2: Level of Education of Respondents

The educational background of the respondents plays a vital role in interpreting their viewpoints, experiences, and choices within the study. This part outlines how the respondents are categorized according to the highest level of education they have achieved

Table 6: Respondents' level of Education

Category	F	%
No formal education	23	6.3
Primary education	62	16.8

Secondary education	134	36.4
College diploma/certificate	102	27.7
Bachelor's degree	36	9.8
Postgraduate degree	11	3.0
Total	368	100.0

Source: Researcher (2025)

The results in table 6 above show that the largest proportion of respondents, 134 (36.4%) have secondary education as their highest level of learning and a significant 102 (27.7%) have obtained a college diploma or certificate. Only 36 (9.8%) and 11 (3.0%) had a bachelor's degree and postgraduate qualifications respectively. 62 (16.8%) of the respondents had only primary education while 23 (6.3%) had no formal education. 76.9% of the respondents had at least secondary education hence, it was assumed that the participants' responses in this study were both reliable and truthful.

4.3.3: Occupation of Respondents

Understanding the occupation of respondents is crucial as it provides insights into their professional backgrounds, economic activities, and potential influence on the research topic.

Table 7: Respondents' Occupation

Occupation	F	%
Self-employed	169	46.0
Employed	112	30.4
Unemployed	87	23.6
Total	368	100.0

Source: Researcher (2025)

The results in table 7 above shows that the majority of respondents (46.0%) are self-employed. 30.4% of respondents are employed, representing individuals engaged in public service, private

sector jobs, and NGOs. A notable proportion (23.6%) of respondents is unemployed, indicating challenges in securing stable jobs which limit financial independence, authority in decision-making and meaningful involvement in community development initiatives. This highlights the need for women empowerment programs that focus on skills training, vocational education, and employment opportunities to integrate more women into the workforce.

4.4 Women’s access to job opportunities and community development projects in Migori County

The first goal of the study was to establish women’s access to job opportunities and community development projects in Migori County. In order to examine this objective, the research used descriptive statistics such as percentages, means, and frequencies to measure the degree of agreement on a five-point Likert scale. Table 8 summarizes the findings.

Table 8: Women’s access to job opportunities and the success of community development projects

	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	SD
Women who are empowered contribute skilled labor that plays a significant role in the successful execution of community development projects.	141 38.3%	122 33.2%	17 4.6%	54 14.7%	34 9.2%	3.7	1.31
Women who are empowered contribute semi-skilled labor that plays a significant role in facilitating the execution of community development projects.	130 35.4%	134 36.4%	22 6.0%	48 13.0%	34 9.2%	3.8	1.31
The availability of affordable labor from empowered women in the county contributes significantly to the successful implementation of community development projects.	159 43.2%	146 39.7%	27 7.3%	19 5.2%	17 4.6%	4.2	1.06

Empowered women in the county provide abundant labor that influences the implementation of community development projects.	133	145	45	26	19		
	36.1%	39.4%	12.1%	6.2%	5.1%	4.0	1.11

Source: Researcher (2025)

Table 8 above shows that the majority of the respondents at 38.3% strongly agreed that women who are empowered contribute skilled labor that plays a significant role in the successful execution of community development projects, 33.2% also confirmed the statement, while 4.6% remained neutral. Only 23.9% of the respondents cumulatively disagreed with the statement. The results of Madhowe (2018) who conducted a study in Tana River County, Kenya, examining the impact of women's empowerment on the execution of community development projects in underserved areas aligns with this outcome. The research revealed that more than 95% of participants agreed that when women are empowered, they contribute skilled labor that plays a vital role in the successful implementation of such projects. The current study again established that women who are empowered contribute semi-skilled labor that plays a significant role in facilitating the execution of community development projects, as strongly confirmed by cumulative majority of the respondents at 71.8%. With a mean response of 3.8 and standard deviation of 1.31, it indicates that women who have been empowered contribute semi-skilled labor, which plays a significant role in the execution of community development projects in Migori County, as illustrated in Table 8 above. On this statement, 22 (6.0%) of the respondents were neutral while 48 (13.0%) and 34 (9.2%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. This result is in line with research by Ojong (2023), who found out that women who are empowered through skills training and community engagement programs tend to take on key roles in project implementation, often filling essential semi-skilled labor gaps in rural development efforts. In his

study he concluded that women involvement not only enhances project sustainability but also promotes a sense of ownership and accountability within communities.

Most of the respondents as revealed in table 8 above by weighted mean response of (Mean 4.2; SD 1.06), generally agreed that the availability of affordable labor from empowered women in the county contributes significantly to the successful implementation of community development projects. However, a few respondents (9.8%) collectively disagreed with the statement. This result agrees with a 2024 study by Muthiani and Wambua who examined the participation of women with increased capacity and influence participating in community development projects in Mukaa Ward, Makueni County, Kenya. The research found that women's involvement, especially through affordable labor and leadership roles, significantly enhanced project implementation. The study emphasized that the success of community initiatives significantly depends on the economic empowerment of women.

As indicated in Table 8, the findings of the present study further demonstrated that respondents generally concurred that empowered women in the county contribute significantly to the labor force, which positively impacts the execution of community development projects (Mean 4.0; SD 1.11). From the study an aggregate of 278 (75.5%) respondents agreed with the statement while only a total of 45 (11.3%) disagreed. This finding is supported by 2024 research of Kibe and Kirui conducted in Dagoretti, Nairobi County, examining how government policies and the strategies used to implement programs have an impact on women's empowerment initiatives. They found that policies promoting resource distribution, decision-making inclusion, and leadership opportunities for women led to increased participation in community-based organizations. This active involvement of women contributed to the effective execution of community development initiatives.

The respective standard deviations to the means on the above variable - women's access to job opportunities and the success of community development projects are small, indicating that the difference between the sample mean and the population mean is minimal. This suggests that the results obtained from the sample accurately represent the actual situation in the population.

Similarly, the qualitative information gleaned from the County Government officials' interview supported the findings that when women have access to job opportunities, the success of community development projects is enhanced. One of them had this to say;

“Women’s employment positively impacts the provision of social services such as education and healthcare. When women are economically empowered, they advocate for better schools, health centers, and community welfare programs. In regions where women have better employment access, there is noticeable improvement in infrastructure projects initiated through local women-led groups and organizations”. (Interview: CG Official 7, 7/03/2025).

4.4.1 Correlation between women’s access to job opportunities and the success of community development projects

To determine the connection between women's access to job opportunities and the effectiveness of community development projects in Migori County, a Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was carried out between the two variables. The findings are presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Correlation between women’s access to job opportunities and the success of community development projects

		Women’s access to job opportunities	Success of CDPs
women’s access to job opportunities	Pearson Correlation	.000	.362**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	368	368
Success of CDPs	Pearson Correlation	.362**	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	368	368

Source: Researcher, 2025

The analyzed results in table 9 above reveal that women’s access to job opportunities has a significant and positive effect on the success of community development projects, with a correlation coefficient of $r = .362$, significant at the $p < .001$ level. Additionally, the coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates that this factor accounts for 16.2% of the variation in the success of these projects. The above analysis in table 9 concurs with a study by Ndegwa, P. (2021) which focused on the broader socio-economic implications of women’s employment. His research demonstrates that increased access to job opportunities for women results in better community outcomes, such as improved health, education, and social welfare services, by empowering women to contribute more effectively at the community level.

4.5 Women’s leadership and decision-making and community development projects in Migori County

The second objective of the study focused on examining how women's roles in leadership and decision-making influence the implementation and outcomes of community development projects in Migori County. To analyze this objective, the research employed descriptive statistics, including percentages, means, and frequencies, to assess the level of agreement using a five-point Likert scale. The findings are summarized in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Women’s leadership and decision-making and the success of community development projects

	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	SD
The decisions made by empowered women regarding the types of projects to be undertaken have a significant impact on how community development projects are implemented in this county.	123 33.4%	109 29.6%	38 9.2%	64 17.4%	34 9.2%	3.6	1.35
The involvement of empowered women in deciding the site or	111	106	42	76	33	3.5	1.34

location of projects has an impact on how community development projects are implemented within the county.	30.2%	28.9%	11.4%	20.7%	8.8%		
The timeframe of project-related decisions made by empowered women affects how community development projects are carried out within the county	136 37.1%	124 33.4%	35 9.5%	49 13.3%	24 6.5%	3.8	1.24
The implementation of community development projects in the county is influenced by the decisions made by empowered women regarding the use and allocation of project resources.	137 34.5%	130 35.3%	56 15.2%	26 7.1%	19 5.2%	3.9	1.13

Source: Researcher (2025)

Table 10 above indicates that 109 (29.6%) of respondents agreed with the statement that the decisions made by empowered women regarding the types of projects to be undertaken have a significant impact on how community development projects are implemented in this county, while 123 (33.4%) strongly agreed, 34 (9.2%) strongly disagreed, 64 (17.4%) disagreed, and 38 (9.2%) remained undecided. The findings suggested that respondents generally agreed (Mean = 3.6, SD = 1.35) with the statement that decisions made by empowered women regarding the types of projects to be undertaken have a significant impact on how community development projects are implemented in this county. This result is consistent with the perspectives of several scholars. A study by Mbaka and Mogote (2024) in Mogotio Sub County, Kenya, revealed that women's empowerment, particularly in decision-making, is crucial for the successful completion of community development projects. The research highlighted that when women are involved in determining the nature of projects, there is a notable improvement in project performance and sustainability

Additionally, 111 (30.2%) of respondents strongly agreed with the statement that the involvement of empowered women in deciding the site or location of projects has an impact on how community development projects are implemented within the county, with 106 (28.9%) agreeing, 76 (20.7%) disagreeing, 42 (11.4%) undecided, and 33 (8.8%) strongly disagreeing as shown in table 10 above. The study further revealed that respondents generally agreed (Mean = 3.5, SD = 1.34) that involvement of empowered women in deciding the site or location of projects has an impact on how community development projects are implemented within the county. A substantial body of literature underscores this finding. Madhowe (2018) examined the advancement of women and the execution of community development initiatives in underserved areas of Kenya, with specific emphasis on Tana River County. The study found that over 80% of respondents agreed that involvement of empowered women in deciding the site or location of projects significantly influences project implementation. This underscores the critical role of women's involvement in decisions such as project location, which can affect accessibility and community acceptance.

Comparably, as shown in table 10, 136 (37.1%) respondents strongly agreed, 49 (13.3%) disagreed, 35 (9.5%) were unsure, and 24 (6.5%) severely disagreed with the assertion that the timeframe of project-related decisions made by empowered women affects how community development projects are carried out within the county. According to the results in table 10, most respondents (Mean = 3.8, SD = 1.24) thought that timeframe of project-related decisions made by empowered women affects how community development projects are carried out within the county. This suggests that women's participation in project duration decisions ensures efficiency. The finding aligns with a study by Omondi (2021) in Bungoma County, Kenya that investigated how women's empowerment influences the success of community development initiatives. The

research found that over 80% of respondents agreed that women's decision-making capacity influences project implementation. Specifically, decisions regarding project duration had a mean agreement score of 3.61 out of 5, indicating a moderate consensus on its influence.

Moreover, 130 (35.3%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that the implementation of community development projects in the county is influenced by the decisions made by empowered women regarding the use and allocation of project resources: 137 (34.5%) strongly agreed, 26 (7.1%) disagreed, 19 (5.2%) strongly disagreed, and 56 (15.2%) were unsure as indicated in table 10 above. According to the survey, most respondents (Mean = 3.9, SD = 1.13) believed that that implementation of community development projects in the county is influenced by the decisions made by empowered women regarding the use and allocation of project resources suggesting that women's involvement in financial and resource-related decisions is crucial for successful project implementation. Similar findings were made by Meinzen-Dick et al. (2019), who concluded that projects that integrate women's decision-making not only achieve higher levels of participation but also demonstrate greater efficiency and long-term success due to the inclusive planning process.

During the interview session with the county government officials, they supported these findings regarding women's leadership and decision-making and the success of community development projects. One of them had the following to say:

“From experience, women leaders are less likely to engage in corrupt practices and more likely to push for accountability, which ensures projects are completed successfully and benefit the intended communities. When women lead, we see more support for economic empowerment programs that benefit not just individuals but entire families and communities and most importantly when women are involved in budgeting decisions, we see more investment in social infrastructure, which directly impacts development outcomes. I advocate for increased support for women in leadership roles to enhance the effectiveness and longevity of community-driven projects”. (Interview: CG Official 11, 7/03/2025).

4.5.1 Correlation between women’s leadership and decision-making and the success of community development projects

To examine the association between women’s leadership and decision-making and the effectiveness of community development projects in Migori County, a Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted. The results of this analysis are displayed in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Correlation between women’s leadership and decision-making and the success of community development projects

		women’s leadership and decision-making	Success of CDPs
women’s leadership and decision-making	Pearson Correlation	.000	.364**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	368	368
Success of CDPs	Pearson Correlation	.364**	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	368	368

Source: Researcher, 2025

A Pearson Correlation Product was used by the researcher to examine the interrelationships of the objective variables. This study set out to answer the question, "How do women’s leadership and decision-making affect the success of community development projects?". By looking at the data shown in table 11 above, results showed a robust relationship between women’s leadership and decision-making and the success of community development projects at $r=.364^{**}$, $p<.001$ significant level, suggesting that the active involvement of women in leadership and decision-making plays a significant role in determining the success of community development projects. Additionally, the coefficient of determination (R) revealed that woman’s leadership and decision-making account for 23.1% of the variability in the effectiveness of community-based

development initiatives. These results from the Pearson moment of correlation in table 11 above are consistent with the perspectives of several scholars. Kennedy (2024) the CEO of Shining Hope for Communities, underscores the transformative impact of empowered women on impoverished communities. He observes that women's leadership in education and economic initiatives leads to sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Kennedy further emphasizes that empowering women in decision-making roles enhances educational outcomes and fosters community development.

4.6. Women’s control of resources and community development projects in Migori County

The third objective of the study sought to examine the influence of women's control of resources on community development projects in Migori County. To achieve this, the research utilized descriptive statistics—such as percentages, means, and frequencies— to quantify the degree of agreement on a five-point Likert scale. A summary of the findings is presented in table 12 below.

Table 12: Women’s control of resources and the success of community development projects

	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	SD
Women who are empowered play a key role in generating financial resources for projects, which in turn supports the successful implementation of community development initiatives within the county	157 42.7%	132 35.9%	17 4.6%	41 11.1%	21 5.7%	4.0	1.20
Empowered women contribute to labor creation within projects, thereby enhancing the execution of community development initiatives	148 40.2%	146 39.7%	22 6.0%	34 9.2%	18 4.9%	4.0	0.13
Women who have been empowered contribute land for the execution of projects, thereby positively impacting the implementation of	134 36.4%	130 35.3%	37 10.1%	38 10.3%	29 7.9%	3.8	1.25

community development initiatives.

Women who are empowered actively contribute to the preservation and improvement of environmental assets—such as cultural heritage and ecological resources—which in turn positively impacts the implementation of community development projects within the county.

233	103	8	18	6
63.3%	28.0%	2.2%	4.9%	1.6%

4.5 0.88

Source: Researcher (2025)

Table 12 above shows that, 157 (42.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 132 (35.9%) agreed, 41 (11.1%) disagreed, 17 (4.6%) were unsure, and 21 (5.7%) severely disagreed with the assertion that women who are empowered play a key role in generating financial resources for projects, which in turn supports the successful implementation of community development initiatives within the county. According to the results, most respondents (Mean = 4.0, SD = 1.20) thought that women who are empowered play a key role in generating financial resources for projects, which in turn supports the successful implementation of community development initiatives within the county. This finding concurs with that of Oduro and Djan (2022) who observed that women’s leadership in community-based organizations correlates strongly with improved project outcomes, particularly in areas related to education and healthcare. The study emphasizes that women’s involvement in budget planning and resource mobilization often leads to more equitable and efficient use of funds.

Comparably, 146 (39.7%) of respondents agreed with the statement that empowered women contribute to labor creation within projects, thereby enhancing the execution of community development initiatives, while 148 (40.2%) strongly agreed, 18 (4.9%) strongly disagreed, 34 (9.2%) disagreed, and 22 (6.0%) remained undecided as indicated in table 12 above. The

findings suggested that respondents highly agreed (Mean = 4.0, SD = 0.13) with the statement that Empowered women contribute to labor creation within projects, thereby enhancing the execution of community development initiatives. This finding is supported by Ojong and George (2020), who emphasized that when women are given decision-making power and access to resources, they can mobilize local labor more effectively and ensure that development projects align with community priorities. Their involvement tends to emphasize inclusive strategies that create employment opportunities, especially for marginalized groups within the community.

Additionally, as shown in table 12 above, 134 (36.4%) of respondents strongly agreed with the statement that women who have been empowered contribute land for the execution of projects, thereby positively impacting the implementation of community development initiatives, with 130 (35.3%) agreeing, 38 (10.3%) disagreeing, 37 (10.1%) undecided, and 29 (7.9%) strongly disagreeing. The study revealed that respondents generally agreed (Mean = 3.8, SD = 1.25) that women who have been empowered contribute land for the execution of projects, thereby positively impacting the implementation of community development initiatives. This finding is consistent with existing literature. Njuki and Kaler (2022) assert that empowering women through land rights is strongly linked to the effective execution of community development initiatives. The study highlights that communities where women possess decision-making power regarding land tend to experience more successful project placement and greater community support.

Moreover, 103 (28.0%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that women who are empowered actively contribute to the preservation and improvement of environmental assets—such as cultural heritage and ecological resources—which in turn positively impacts the implementation of community development projects within the county; 233 (63.3%) strongly

agreed, 18 (4.9%) disagreed, 6 (1.6%) strongly disagreed, and 8 (2.2%) were unsure as shown in table 12 above. According to the survey, most respondents (Mean = 4.5, SD = 0.88) believed that women who are empowered actively contribute to the preservation and improvement of environmental assets—such as cultural heritage and ecological resources—which in turn positively impacts the implementation of community development projects within the county. This approach is supported by the research of Agarwal (2021), who found out that women’s participation in forest and water management groups in South Asia led to more equitable and ecologically sound outcomes compared to male-dominated groups. The study emphasized that women often act as custodians of cultural heritage and traditional ecological knowledge, which are essential for community-based conservation strategies

Additionally, below were the words from one of the county government officials during the interview session who supported the above findings, regarding women’s control of resources and the success of community development projects

“Women have a stronger sense of accountability and commitment to long-term success, ensuring that resources are used efficiently. When women lead resource allocation, they engage diverse groups, ensuring that community development is a shared responsibility Women reinvest in their families and communities, creating a cycle of economic growth that benefits everyone”
(Interview: CG Official 15, 7/03/2025).

4.6.1 Correlation between women’s control of resources and the success of community development projects

A Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was carried out to assess the association between women's resource control and the effectiveness of community development projects in Migori County. The findings are presented in Table 13 below.

Table 13: Correlation between women’s control of resources and the success of community development projects

		women's control of resources	Success of CDPs
women's control of resources	Pearson Correlation	.000	.363**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	368	368
Success of CDPs	Pearson Correlation	.363**	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	368	368

Source: Researcher, 2025

Pearson moment of correlation returned an r value = 0.363** with $p < .001$ (at 95% confidence interval) as shown in table 13 above. This result indicates a strong and statistically significant positive relationship, with a p -value less than .001. Thus, there is steady positive and significant correlation between women's control of resources and the success of community development projects. The computed coefficient of determination (R) indicates that women's control over resources accounts for 18.2% of the variability in the success of community development projects, assuming all other factors remain constant.

The analyzed data in table 13 demonstrated that women's access to job opportunities has a positive and significant influence on the success of community development projects.

4.7 Strategies for enhancing women's empowerment and community development projects in Migori County.

This fourth goal of the study sought to explore strategies for strengthening women's empowerment in community development projects in Migori County. Descriptive statistical methods—specifically frequencies, percentages, and mean values—were applied to assess respondents' levels of agreement based on a five-point Likert scale, facilitating the analysis. The findings are summarized in table 14 below.

Table 14: Strategies for enhancing women’s empowerment for community development projects

	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	SD
There is greater success in community development projects when there is a policy to protect women against all forms of discrimination	234 63.6%	73 19.8%	27 7.3%	20 5.4%	14 3.8%	4.3	1.07
There is greater success in community development projects where advocacy for women participation has been done through community dialogue	247 67.2%	71 19.3%	17 4.6%	19 5.2%	14 3.8%	4.4	1.05
There is greater success in community development projects where job opportunities have been created specifically for women	204 55.4%	86 23.4%	32 8.7%	29 7.9%	17 4.6%	4.2	1.16
There is greater success of community development projects where one of the success factors of the project is based on gender or women empowerment	227 61.7%	84 22.8%	15 4.1%	23 6.3%	19 5.2%	4.3	1.13

Source: Researcher (2025)

Table 14 above shows that, 234 (63.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 73 (19.8%) agreed, 20 (5.4%) disagreed, 27 (7.3%) were unsure, and 14 (3.8%) severely disagreed with the statement that there is greater success in community development projects when there is a policy to protect women against all forms of discrimination. According to the results, the highest number of respondents (Mean = 4.3, SD = 1.07) agreed with the statement. This finding is consistent with the perspectives of several scholars. For instance, Klugman and Perkins (2022) argue that policies which protect women from gender-based violence and discrimination create

safer and more enabling environments for their active participation in community leadership and decision-making leading to more resilient and thriving community projects.

Furthermore, table 14 shows that 247 (67.2%) of those surveyed strongly believed that there is greater success in community development projects where advocacy for women participation has been done through community dialogue. 17 (4.6%) were unsure, 14 (3.8%) strongly disapproved, 19 (5.2%) disagreed, and 71 (6%) agreed. According to the survey, most of the respondents (Mean = 4.4, SD = 1.05) agreed with the statement. This finding concurs with a study by Mudege et al. (2020) who examined agricultural community development projects in sub-Saharan Africa and found that communities that employed participatory approaches—especially those incorporating gender dialogues—saw higher levels of project ownership, adoption of innovations, and sustainability.

In a similar vein, 204 (55.4%) respondents strongly agreed, 29 (7.9%) disagreed, 32 (8.7%) were unsure, 86 (23.4%) agreed, and 17 (4.6%) strongly disagreed that there is greater success in community development projects where job opportunities have been created specifically for women as shown in table 14 above. According to the results, the highest number of respondents (Mean = 4.2, SD = 1.16) agreed that there is greater success in community development projects where job opportunities have been created specifically for women. This assertion is supported by Duflo (2012), who emphasizes that empowering women economically has a multiplier effect, enhancing the effectiveness of community projects through increased agency, decision-making power, and resource control at the household and community levels.

Lastly, table 14 above shows that 84 (22.8%) of those surveyed agreed that there is greater success of community development projects where one of the success factors of the project is based on gender or women empowerment. 23 (6.3%) disagreed, 19 (5.2%) strongly disagreed,

and 15 (4.1%) were unsure. Of those who expressed agreement, 227 (61.7%) strongly agreed. According to the research, the highest number of respondents (Mean = 4.3, SD=1.13) agreed with this statement. This result aligns with the findings of Mbaka and Mogote (2024), who examined women's successful execution of community development projects. Their research revealed a significant positive relationship between strong social support systems among women and the successful completion of such projects. Through regression analysis, they determined that these networks explained about 56.3% of the variation in project completion outcomes. The research emphasized that empowering women to build and maintain social support structures is crucial for the timely and successful execution of community projects. The findings above were reaffirmed by one of the county government officials during the interview session who had this to say.

“For community projects to succeed, we must have deliberate policies that encourage women’s participation and provide them with the necessary financial and technical support. When there are strategies for women to participate in community development projects, they prioritize projects that address critical social needs such as water supply, health services, and child education, which strengthens overall community resilience” (Interview: CG Official 16, 7/03/2025).

The interview with the county government official reaffirmed that strategies for enhancing women’s empowerment are crucial for the success of community development projects.

4.7.1 Correlation between strategies for enhancing women’s empowerment and the success of community development projects

In order to assess the connection between strategies aimed at promoting women’s empowerment and the effectiveness of community development projects in Migori County, a Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Correlation between strategies for enhancing women’s empowerment and the success of community development projects

		strategies for enhancing women’s empowerment	Success of CDPs
strategies for enhancing women’s empowerment	Pearson	.000	.673**
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	368	368
Success of CDPs	Pearson	.673**	.000
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	368	368

Source: Researcher, 2025

Pearson moment of correlation returned an r value = 0.673** with $p < .001$ (at 95% confidence interval) as shown in table 15 above. This finding shows that there is a statistically significant and strong positive relationship, with a p-value less than .001. Thus, there is steady positive and significant correlation between strategies for enhancing women’s empowerment and the success of community development projects. The computed coefficient of determination (R) indicated that strategies for enhancing women’s empowerment accounts for 45.3% of the variability in attaining the intended impact of community development activities, given all other factors remain constant. The results from the above analysis in table 15 align with a study by Kassa and Sun (2021) in sub-Saharan Africa which highlighted those empowering women through strategies such as leadership, decision-making, and capacity building enhances not only individual agency but also the collective advancement of community projects.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the study by presenting a summary of the key findings, drawing informed conclusions, and offering practical recommendations grounded in the research results. Additionally, it outlines suggested areas where future research could be undertaken to expand the understanding of the topic and address gaps identified during the study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This research set out to examine women empowerment and community development projects in Migori County, Kenya. To direct the study, four research objectives were created: to establish the influence of women's access to job opportunities on community development projects in Migori County, to analyze the influence of women's leadership and decision-making on community development projects in Migori County, to investigate the influence of women's control of resources on community development projects in Migori County and to identify strategies for enhancing women's empowerment for community development projects in Migori County.

5.2.1 Women's access to job opportunities and community development projects

The first aim of the study was to examine the extent to which women are able to access employment opportunities and community development projects in Migori County. To examine this relationship, a correlation analysis was conducted between access to employment opportunities for women and the effectiveness of community development projects. The findings revealed a positive and significant influence, with a correlation coefficient of $r = .362^{**}$, $p <$

.001, demonstrating that women's access to job opportunities accounts for 16.2% of the variability in the success of community development projects.

The findings confirmed that women's economic empowerment through job opportunities is a key driver of community development, as it enhances financial stability, promotes active civic engagement, and fosters long-term social transformation. Strengthening policies that support women's employment can further enhance the success of community development projects.

5.2.2 Women's leadership and decision-making and community development projects

The second aim of the study focused on assessing the role of women's leadership and participation in decision-making within community development projects in Migori County. The results indicated that most respondents concurred that women's active engagement in leadership and decision-making processes plays a significant role in the success of these initiatives.. To assess this relationship, a correlation analysis was conducted between women's leadership and decision-making and the success of community development projects. The results showed a positive and significant influence, with a correlation coefficient of $r = .364^{**}$, $p < .001$, indicating that women's leadership and decision-making account for 23.1% of the variation in the success of community development projects.

These results show that when women actively participate in leadership and decision-making, community development projects are more likely to achieve their objectives. The study highlights the importance of empowering women in leadership positions by implementing policies that promote inclusivity, capacity-building, and gender-responsive decision-making. Strengthening women's roles in governance and community project management can lead to more sustainable and impactful development initiatives.

5.2.3 Women's control of resources and community development projects

The study's third goal was to look at how women's control over resources affected community development programs in Migori County. The data indicated that the majority of respondents believed that women's participation in resource management on community development initiatives adds to their success. To investigate this link, a correlation study was performed on women's resource control and the effectiveness of community development programs. A correlation value of $r = .363^{**}$, $p < .001$ indicated that women's leadership and decision-making contribute 18.2% to the effectiveness of community development programs.

The findings indicated that women's control over resources in community development programs contribute to success of community these projects. Based on these insights, policymakers and development practitioners are encouraged to implement policies that promote women's participation in resource allocation and management to maximize community development outcomes.

5.2.4 Strategies for enhancing women's empowerment and community development projects.

The study's final purpose was to explore strategies for enhancing women's empowerment in community development initiatives in Migori County. The findings showed that the majority of respondents thought that tactics for empowering women led to the success of community development programs. To analyze this relationship, correlation research was conducted on techniques for empowering women and the efficacy of community development projects. A correlation value of $r = .673^{**}$, $p < .001$ indicates that methods for strengthening women's empowerment contribute 45.3% of the efficacy of community development projects.

In conclusion therefore where there are strategies for enhancing women's empowerment in community development initiatives the success of these projects is significant.

5.3 Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between women's empowerment and community development projects in Migori County, Kenya. It specifically focused on four main areas: access to employment opportunities for women, their involvement in leadership and decision-making, their control over resources, and the strategies used to promote their empowerment. From the data collected, where most respondents expressed agreement with the stated objectives, several key conclusions were derived:

The study concluded that women's access to job opportunities significantly contributes to the success of community development projects. Economic empowerment through employment enhances household incomes, increases women's participation in development initiatives, and fosters sustainable community progress. Therefore, expanding job opportunities for women can positively impact the overall success of community projects. Furthermore, the research established a positive and significant relationship between women's leadership and decision-making and the success of community development projects. Women in leadership positions contribute to inclusive policies, effective decision-making, and better management of development initiatives. The study highlighted the need for promoting women's participation in leadership roles to improve the effectiveness of community projects.

Again, the study indicated that when women have greater control over resources, community development projects tend to be more successful. Access to and management of financial, natural, and social resources empowers women to drive sustainable development, improve

economic growth, and enhance project efficiency. Policies that support gender-inclusive resource allocation are essential for maximizing the impact of development initiatives. Lastly the study identified key strategies for enhancing women's empowerment to support community development, including policy frameworks that protect women's rights, capacity-building programs, advocacy for women's participation, and economic support initiatives. Implementing these strategies will strengthen women's roles in development and improve project outcomes.

In view of the above therefore, the research confirms that women's empowerment plays a crucial role in the success of community development projects in Migori County. By ensuring women have access to employment, leadership roles, and control over resources, communities can achieve sustainable development. The conclusions of the study directed that policymakers, development organizations, and local stakeholders should implement gender-inclusive policies and empowerment programs to enhance community projects effectiveness and long-term impact.

5.4 Recommendations

Drawing from the results of the study, the researcher proposed the following recommendations to be adopted to enhance women's empowerment and increase the effectiveness of community development initiatives:

- 1. Enhancing Women's Access to Job Opportunities:** stakeholders including the government of Kenya, NGOs and the community at large should implement vocational training and mentorship programs to equip women with employable skills. They should also provide financial support, grants, and micro-loans to help women start and expand businesses and again advocate for policies that ensure fair hiring, equal pay, and safe working conditions for women.
- 2. Strengthening Women's Leadership and Decision-Making:** stakeholders should promote women's participation in local governance, community organizations, and development

committees. They should also offer leadership training and mentorship to prepare women for decision-making roles and implement policies that support women's leadership and prevent discrimination in decision-making processes.

3. Promoting Women's Control over Resources: stakeholders should strengthen legal frameworks to ensure women can own, inherit, and manage land and assets and ensure women have a role in managing community funds, agricultural resources, and economic projects.

4. Implementing strategies for Enhancing Women's Empowerment: there should be increased public awareness on women's rights through conducting community sensitization programs to challenge cultural norms that limit women's empowerment. Also women should collaborate with government agencies, NGOs, and private sectors to create sustainable empowerment programs.

5.5 Suggestion for further study

The researcher suggests that additional studies should be carried out in the following areas:

- 1.** There is need to conduct research to evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies and government initiatives in promoting women's empowerment within community projects.
- 2.** The study was conducted in Migori County which means that it cannot be generalized for other parts of the country. A similar study should be conducted to compare Migori County's findings with other counties in Kenya and identify regional variations and best practices in women's empowerment.
- 3.** A similar study should be conducted to identify the barriers and limitations faced in implementing women empowerment programs and suggest practical solutions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Introductory Letter

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a postgraduate student pursuing a Master of Arts in Development Studies at Mount Kenya University. As part of my academic requirements, I am conducting a research study on *women empowerment and community development projects in Migori County, Kenya*.

Kindly, note that the research poses no risk to personal privacy or individual rights. It will not involve any ethically sensitive or objectionable procedures, and all responses will be treated with strict confidentiality. No identifying information of the participants will be disclosed.

Please find attached the following documents for your review:

- A copy of the questionnaire to be administered
- A set of interview questions
- The proposed dates for conducting the research

Your support and consideration in granting permission for this study are sincerely appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Jeff Onyango Ochieng

MDS/2023/41369



APPENDIX II: Consent Form for Participation in Research

Topic: Women empowerment and community development projects in Migori County, Kenya.

Dear Participant,

I kindly invite you to take part in my research study. I am a postgraduate student pursuing a Master of Arts in Development Studies at Mount Kenya University and am currently working on my final research project. The aim of this study is to explore and understand;

- i. The influence of women's control of resources on community development projects in Migori County
- ii. The influence of women's leadership in community development projects in Migori County

- iii. The influence of women's access to job opportunities on community development projects in Migori county
- iv. Strategies for enhancing women's empowerment for community development projects

Your involvement in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to decline participation at any point or choose not to respond to any specific question that you are uncomfortable answering. There are no anticipated risks beyond those experienced in daily life. All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. The collected data will be securely stored and reported only in summarized form. Individual responses will not be linked to you personally, and only the research team will have access to the completed questionnaires.

Although there are no direct personal benefits from participating in this study, discussing the issues raised may be of interest to you. Furthermore, your input could be valuable to the field of study and potentially help future individuals facing similar situations.

If you agree to take part, please complete the questionnaire to the best of your ability. It should take approximately five minutes to finish. Kindly return the completed form promptly to assist in the timely completion of the research project.

If you have any questions regarding this research, feel free to contact the lead investigator, **Jeff Onyango Ochieng** (MDS/2023/41369), at **0713 160 284**, or the research supervisor, **Dr. Judy Mwangi**, at **0712 198 382**. If you have concerns about your rights as a participant, please reach out to the Chairman of the Ethical Review Committee at Mount Kenya University, P.O. Box 342-01000, Thika.

Thank you for contributing to this important study.

Consent Form

I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided and have had the opportunity to ask any questions. I acknowledge that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any point without providing a reason and without incurring any cost. I also understand that I will receive a copy of this consent form.

I freely agree to participate in this research.

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____

Date: _____



APPENDIX III: Guided Questionnaire For the Women Respondents

Introduction

My name is Jeff Onyango Ochieng, a student at Mount Kenya University. I am conducting a research study on how women empowerment influences the success of community development projects in Migori County. I would like to ask you a few questions about your involvement in community projects and how you think women empowerment has helped in this. Your responses will be confidential and will only be used for research purposes. Thank you for your time and participation.

Part A: Demographics

1. Age Group

- 18 – 24 years
- 25 – 34 years
- 35 – 44 years
- 45 – 54 years
- 55 years and above

2. Level of Education

- No formal education
- Primary education
- Secondary education
- College diploma
- Bachelor's degree
- Postgraduate degree

3. Occupation

- Self-employed
- Employed (Specify: _____)
- Unemployed



Part B :Objectives Based Questions

Non Rated Questions (Nominal scale Questions)

1. In your opinion, does granting women access to employment opportunities contribute to the success of community development projects in Migori County? Yes () No ()
2. Do you agree that the involvement of women in leadership roles has a positive impact on the success of community development initiatives in Migori County? Yes () No ()
3. Would you say that women's ability to manage and control resources affects the effectiveness of community development projects in Migori County? Yes () No ()

4. Are there any existing measures or initiatives in Migori County aimed at promoting women's empowerment in support of community development projects? Yes () No ()

Part C : Measuring the Various Strategies on an Ordinal Scale (Likert Scale).

1. Kindly show the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding women's empowerment and its impact on the execution of community development projects within the county. Do so by placing a tick (√) in the box that best represents your opinion, using the scale: 5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 4 = Agree (A), 3 = Neutral (N), 2 = Disagree (D), and 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD).

1. Statement in Relation to access to job opportunities	SD	D	N	A	SA
	1	2	3	4	5
Women who are empowered contribute skilled labor that plays a significant role in the successful execution of community development projects.					
Women who are empowered contribute semi-skilled labor that plays a significant role in facilitating the execution of community development projects.					
The availability of affordable labor from empowered women in the county contributes significantly to the successful implementation of community development projects.					
Empowered women in the county provide abundant labor that influences the implementation of community development projects.					
2. Statements in Relation to leadership and decision -making capacity	1	2	3	4	5
The decisions made by empowered women regarding the types of projects to be undertaken have a significant impact on how community development projects are implemented in this county.					

The involvement of empowered women in deciding the site or location of projects has an impact on how community development projects are implemented within the county.					
The timeframe of project-related decisions made by empowered women affects how community development projects are carried out within the county					
The implementation of community development projects in the county is influenced by the decisions made by empowered women regarding the use and allocation of project resources.					
	1	2	3	4	5
3. Statements in Relation control of resources					
Women who are empowered play a key role in generating financial resources for projects, which in turn supports the successful implementation of community development initiatives within the county					
Empowered women contribute to labor creation within projects, thereby enhancing the execution of community development initiatives					
Women who have been empowered contribute land for the execution of projects, thereby positively impacting the implementation of community development initiatives.					
Women who are empowered actively contribute to the preservation and improvement of environmental assets—such as cultural heritage and ecological resources—which in turn positively impacts the implementation of community development projects within the county.					
4. Statements in Relation to empowerment strategies					
	1	2	3	4	5

There is greater success in community development projects when there is a policy to protect women against all forms of discrimination							
There is greater success in community development projects where advocacy for women participation has been done through community dialogue							
There is greater success in community development projects where job opportunities have been created specifically for women							
There is greater success of community development projects where one of the success factors of the project is based on gender or women empowerment							

Thank you for participating



APPENDIX IV: Interview Schedule for County Government Officials

Title of Study:

Women Empowerment and Community Development Projects in Migori County

Target

County government officials involved in community development, gender equality, economic planning, and other relevant departments in Migori County.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Name of Official (optional):

(Note: Respondents can opt to remain anonymous)

2. Position in the County Government:

(e.g., Gender Officer, Economic Planning Officer, Community Development Officer, etc.)

3. Department:

(e.g., Department of Gender, Department of Community Development, etc.)

4. Years of Experience in Current Position:

(e.g., Less than 1 year, 1–3 years, 4–6 years, 7+ years)

Section B: Influence of women's access to job opportunities on the success of community development projects in Migori County

1. Do you support the idea that Empowered women provide skilled labor that influences the implementation of community development projects Migori County?

.....

2. In your view, Empowered women provide semi-skilled labor which influences the implementation of community development projects?

.....

3. Have you noticed Cheap labor provided by empowered women in the county influence the implementation of community development projects in Migori County?

.....

4. Do you believe empowered women in the county provide abundant labor that influences the implementation of community development projects?

.....

Section C: Influence of women’s leadership and decision-making on community development projects in Migori County.

5. In your opinion, Empowered women’s decisions on site/location of projects influences the implementation of community development projects in the? If yes, how ? If No, why?

.....

6. In your experience, Empowered women’s’ decision on nature of projects to be implemented influences the implementation of community development projects in this

county in Migori County? If yes, how?

.....

7. Do you support the idea the duration of projects decisions by empowered women influences the implementation of community development projects in Migori County?

.....

8. In your opinion, do you support that empowered women’s decisions on the resources for projects influences the implementation of community development projects in the county?

Section C: influence of women’s control of resources on community development projects in Migori County.

9. Do you agree that empowered women ensure project financial resources creation influencing the implementation of community development projects in the county?

.....

10. Do you agree empowered women ensure projects labour creation influencing the implementation of community development projects in Migori County?

.....

11. Explain if empowered women provide land for projects implementation influencing the community development projects in this county?

12. Do you agree empowered women ensure an enhancement of environmental assets (culture, ecology) thus influencing community development projects implementation in the county?

Section D: Strategies for enhancing women empowerment for community development.


13. Are you on the opinion that there is greater success in community development projects when there is a policy to protect women against all forms of discrimination in Migori County?
14. Give your opinion if there is greater success in community development projects in Migori County where job opportunities have been created specifically for women.
15. Do you believe that there is greater success in community development projects where advocacy for women participation has been done through community dialogue in this county?
16. In your opinion, there is greater success of community development projects where one of the success factors of the project is based on gender or women empowerment in Migori County?

Section E: Closing

1. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding women empowerment and its influence on community development projects in Migori County

Thank you

APPENDIX V: Mount Kenya University Ethical Clearance Certificate


Mount Kenya University

REF: MKU/ISERC/4760 Date: 12 February 2025
TO: JEFF ONYANGO OCHIENG
REG: MDS/2023/41369

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INFLUENCE OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN MIGORI COUNTY, KENYA.

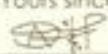
This is to inform you that **Mount Kenya University** has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is **3482**. The approval period is **12/02/2025 - 11/02/2026**.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- i. Only approved documents including informed consents, study instruments, MTA will be used
- ii. All changes including amendments, deviations and violations are submitted for review and approval by **Mount Kenya University**
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to **Mount Kenya University** within 72 hours of notification
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affect the safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to **Mount Kenya University** within 72 hours
- v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to **Mount Kenya University**

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Alfred Owino, PhD
Chairman, Mount Kenya University ISERC

MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY
HEAD, RESEARCH CENTRE
P. O. Box 342 - 01000,
THIKA

Main Campus, General Kigo Road, P.O. Box 342-01000 Thika.
Tel: +254 20 287 5000, Cell: +254 709 153 000
Email: info@mku.ac.ke, Web: www.mku.ac.ke
Chartered and ISO 9001 - 2015 Certified

APPENDIX V: Mount Kenya University Introduction letter



DIRECTORATE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

MDS/2023/41369

19th February, 2025

*National Commission for Science Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI)
Off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete,
P.O Box 30623- 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA*

Dear Sir/Madam,

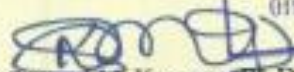
RE: JEFF ONYANGO OCHIENG - REGISTRATION NO. MDS/2023/41369

The purpose of this letter is to introduce the above named student who is pursuing **Master of Arts in Development Studies** in the department of **Social and Development Studies** in the school of Social Sciences.

The title of the research is "Influence of Women Empowerment on Community Development Projects in Migori County, Kenya." It has been cleared by the University's Ethics Review Committee (Certificate attached) and now has to proceed to the field to collect data between **March, 2025 and May, 2025**.

Any assistance accorded to the student will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.



Dr. Samuel M. Karenga, Ph.D
Director, Graduate Studies
Enc.

Mount Kenya University
P.O. Box 342-01000, THIKA
Office of the Director,
Graduate Studies

APPENDIX V: NACOSTI Research Permit



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

Ref No: 608610



**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION**

Date of Issue: 27/February/2025

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Mr. JEFF OCHIENG of Mount Kenya University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Migori on the topic: Influence of Women Empowerment on Community Development Projects In Migori County, Kenya for the period ending : 27/February/2026.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/25/416472**

608610

Applicant Identification Number



**Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &
INNOVATION**

Verification QR Code



NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

See overleaf for conditions

APPENDIX VI: Research Authorization Letter



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION
DEPARTMENT GENDER AND WOMEN

When replying please quote
Email Address: dgwmigorkg4@gmail.com

COUNTY DIRECTOR FOR GENDER
MIGORI COUNTY
P.O BOX 195-40400
MIGORI

Ref: DGW/CG/RES/134/VOL2/25

Date: 3rd March, 2025

Mr. Jeff Onyango Ochieng

MT KENYA UNIVERSITY

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR Mr. JEFF ONYANGO OCHIENG

I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research on "The Influence of Women Empowerment on Community Development Projects in Migori County, Kenya.". The research will be undertaken for a period ending 2nd June, 2025.

On completion of the research, you are expected to give a hard copy and a soft copy of the research report/thesis to this office.

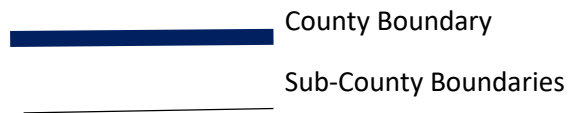
The research authorization is granted according to all existing rules and regulations in force from time to time as recommended by the relevant government MDAs.

The purpose of the letter is therefore to request you to accord him the necessary support to enable him accomplish this endeavor.

Thank you.

Peter Obuya
For County Director for Gender
Migori County

APPENDIX VII: Study Area Map



APPENDIX VIII: Similarity Index Report

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN MIGORI COUNTY, KENYA.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

20% SIMILARITY INDEX	15% INTERNET SOURCES	12% PUBLICATIONS	7% STUDENT PAPERS
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PRIMARY SOURCES

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