

COMMERCIAL INTEGRATED FARMING INITIATIVE PROJECT AS A STRATEGY FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN RWANDA. A CASE OF WOMEN FOR WOMEN INTERNATIONAL

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ABSTRACT

Though different Governments have registered progress in regard to women empowerment to gender laws and policies with several income generating projects, challenges remain in the areas of women's access to finance and other asset ownership. The overall objective is to assess the contribution of commercial integrated farming initiative project on women empowerment in Rwanda. This study would aid policy makers and practitioners in Rwanda. The study followed a case study design, the population in this study were 3000 women beneficiaries of the project. Others were 13 income generation trainers and Project Manager from Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative Project (CIFI). The researcher used (Yamane, 1967) formula to establish 97 sample size related to the population of the study. The 97 respondents were selected from 3000 women beneficiaries of the project using systematic random sampling method, where every 31st person on the list of women beneficiaries of the project were included in sample while staff were selected purposively. The coded data were then entered into SPSS for processing which generated frequencies percentages, mean, standard deviation through descriptive analysis. The inferential statistical analysis was used to establish relationship between variables. The analyzed data was then presented using tables and text while the bulk of the qualitative data were presented in descriptions and explanations. The study found that there exists a relationship between commercial integrated farming initiative projects and women empowerment as can be evidenced from findings of this study. Commercial integrated farming initiative projects enabled women to access income which translated into their empowerment witnessed in improved women material conditions, enhanced decision making at personal and family levels and playing a leadership role. The study concluded that Commercial integrated farming initiative project approach as a strategy and approach to empowering women should be scaled up to all urban and rural poor women in Rwanda since results of the study show that this was effective.

Key words: Project, Strategy, Women Empowerment

1. Introduction

Globally, the gender gap between men and women is now just four percent for health and seven percent for education, while rising to 41 percent for economic participation and 82 percent for resource empowerment (Agénor & Canuto, 2013). In 2011, 44 per cent of women were in jobs classified as vulnerable, compared with 26 per cent of men and in Western Asia, where the rates were 41 and 22 per cent, respectively. Women's participation in commercial integrated farming initiative project varies significantly across regions from a high of 64% in East Asia and the Pacific to a low of 26% in the Middle East (World Bank, 2012). Indeed, most commercial integrated farming initiative project providers specifically target women, in part with the explicit goal of empowering them" (Swain & Wallentin, 2008). It is believed that by supplying women with opportunities for commercial integrated farming initiative project, projects would help enhance "women's access, control and ownership of resources increase their participation in decision-making at the household and community levels and strengthen their social and political leadership opportunities (The Global Poverty Project 2013).

Women and girls who constitute more of the world's population are counted as 33% of the official labor force, yet they perform 67% of all hours worked" (Maguire, 1984) and receive only 10% of the world's income; own less than 1% of the world's real property. Furthermore, of the 1.3 billion people who live in absolute poverty around the globe, 70 percent are women. For these women, poverty does not just mean scarcity and want. It means rights denied, opportunities curtailed and voices silenced (Quisumbing & Benedicte, 2000).

Women's access to, control over and ownership of economic and financial resources is critical for the achievement of empowerment of women in turn leading to equitable and sustainable economic growth and development (Agarwal & Panda, 2005). Access to resources can increase respect from families and communities, provide greater financial security for older women and increase their role in leadership in both the family and community. Ownership of assets protects women from poverty in the face of divorce, separation or the death of a husband (Strickland, 2004). Women's access to resources, including education, paid work, credit, land, technology and other productive assets, have a far stronger impact on child survival, welfare and education than similar resources in men's hands (Smith, 2003). More than 80% of women working outside the commercial integrated farming initiative project (United Nations, 2012) are concentrated in informal sector jobs which often lack resources, training and market.

Rwanda in promoting favorable conditions for women, has over the past decade undergone legislative and policy-making achievements in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment (Abbot & Rucogoza, 2011). They mainly include the national constitution, land law, the civil code regarding matrimonial regimes, liberalities and succession, law on prevention and punishment of gender based violence, law regulating labour in Rwanda. However, Rwanda is still a society characterized by a patriarchal social structure in which men dominate women economically, socially, culturally and politically. Economically, women are said to be less empowered in terms of independent employment and access to financial services (Abbot, & Rucogoza, 2011). The case study will be the Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative Project (CIFI) in Kayonza which is women empowerment project in Kayonza district, Eastern province targeting rural poor women.

2. Problem Statement

The study of Muljono (2011) indicated that commercial integrated farming initiative project is very important, as through empowerment projects the access to knowledge and financial resources which are key determinants of progress of a society, may be passed on to the next generation. Commercial integrated farming initiative project which is considered a national investment, is expected to increase welfare and empowerment of women. The study of Nyaguthii and Oyugi (2013) also indicated that, most of women do not participate in commercial integrated farming initiative project, this leading to failure in implementation and affect women welfare. While the study of Okide (2011) said that there is symmetry between women empowerment and democratic governance in Nigeria, such that commercial integrated farming initiative project necessity democratic governance to influence welfare. Even though, several studies suggested the role of commercial integrated farming initiative project and several projects are being established in Rwanda, the survey in Rwanda in 2015 showed that poverty was 39.1% as of 2013/ 2014, extreme poverty was 16.3% while only 68% of Rwandan population aged 15 years and above were literate in the same period (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2015). Moreover, given the understanding of different scholars arguments on this topic and reports related to citizens' welfare, it leads the researcher in unbalanced academic position not conclude whether community empowerment project can influence the population welfare, especially in developing countries like Rwanda.

3. Objectives of the study

3.1. General objective

The overall objective is to assess the contribution of commercial integrated farming initiative project on women empowerment in Rwanda.

3.2. Specific objectives

- i. To analyze if women's access to resources in commercial integrated farming initiative project increased their incomes;
- ii. To analyze whether mobilization in skill based training in CIFI influenced women's participation in decision making;
- iii. To analyze role if commercial integrated farming initiative project promoted women's leadership role;

4. Research Questions

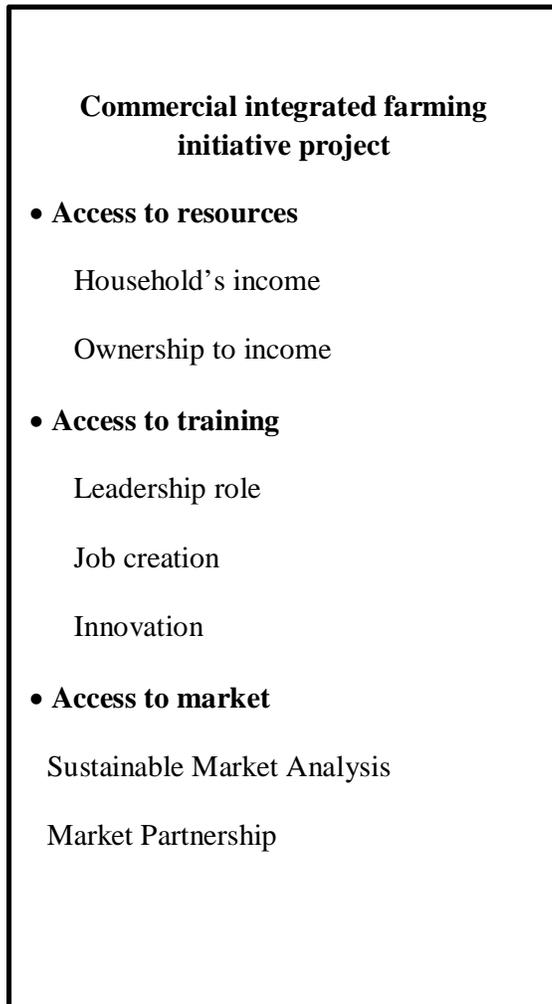
- i. Does women's access to resources in Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative Project increase their incomes?
- ii. Does Mobilization in Skill based training in CIFI increase women's participation in decision-making?
- iii. Does marketing in Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative Project (CIFI) promote women's leadership role?

5. Significance of the Study

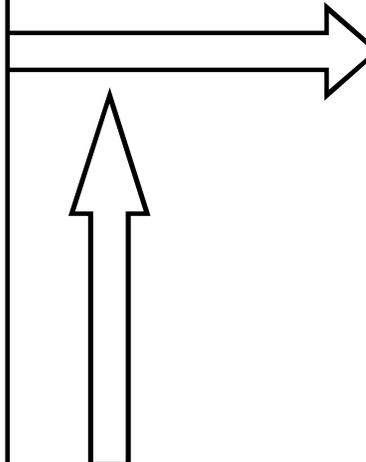
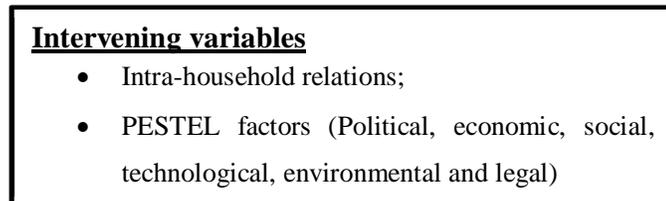
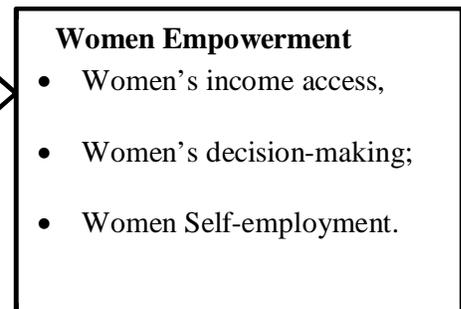
The study would add to the general literature and understanding of the dynamics and linkages of income and women empowerment in the Rwandan context. Additionally it would explore views, ideas and perspectives of stakeholders as relates to women empowerment, which may guide policies and initiatives towards women empowerment. As such, the views and perspectives that this study brought out may aid policy makers and practitioners in developing a greater understanding and more focused strategies to address women empowerment issues in Rwanda.

6. Conceptual Framework

Independent variable



Dependent Variable



7. Research Design

This is the specification of methods and procedures for acquiring information needed. Therefore, the study followed a case study design whereby the researcher examined situational conditions of women beneficiaries of Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative Project (CIFI) in Kayonza district, Eastern province. Both Quantitative and Qualitative data was gathered and analyzed to explore the women situation of Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative Project (CIFI) in Kayonza district, Eastern province. The qualitative data normally not expressed in terms of numbers but with descriptions and more subjective in nature involved examining and reflecting on perceptions in order to gain an understanding of women project beneficiaries and project managers.

8. Target Population

The population, the limits within which the study was carried out, and include total persons within which a study is concerned. The population in this study was 3000 women beneficiaries of the project. Others were 13 income generation trainers and Project Manager from Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative Project (CIFI).

Table 1. Target Population

Category	Target population
Trainer	13
Women beneficiaries	3000
Total	3013

Source: Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative Project (CIFI), 2015

9. Sample Size

This study needed to determine sample size related to the population under study, because the researcher has limited time and cost. The researcher used (Yamane, 1967) formula to establish sample size related to the population under study as follows;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} = \frac{3000}{1 + 3000 * 0.1^2} = 97$$

Where, N: Target population, e: Error of precision = 10%, and n =97 sample size.

The study also targeted 13 income generation trainers and a Project Manager from Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative Project (CIFI).

10. Data collection

The research was based on primary sources of data. Primary sources of data are the first hand data to be collected from study area. The study applied two tools for collecting primary data, namely questionnaire and interview. Primary sources are the main source to validate the objectives by establishing the correlation between the variables under study.

10.1. Data collection Instruments

For answering the research questions, employing only one method of collecting data would be unscientific. Multiple techniques for collecting data, thus, were used in this study. The major data collection techniques to be used in the study were self-developed questionnaire and interview method. This section further elaborates a detail note on those data collection instruments: All the information needed were collected through questionnaire and interview method. Both structured questionnaires and interview guide were used.

Structured questionnaires were used to interview women who are the project beneficiary group. Interviews were taken with all the sampled women. As this study focuses on income generation of women, it was considered to be most fruitful to concentrate on women in agribusiness chosen from the two cooperatives, who gained the skill based training and engaged in entrepreneur activities after. Information about the women will be from them by going to the cooperative farms or at their houses.

Key informants as a method was used to collect information about the operations of the project women beneficiaries, its managements, problems and its solutions and impact of the Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative Project (CIFI) on women beneficiaries. Key informants as mentioned earlier was in relation to funding and management of the Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative Project (CIFI). Key informants were interviews that will be taken face to face with few checklists questions. Their opinions and views concerning women empowerment, trainings, income generation activities and women involvement were collected.

10.2 Data analysis procedure

The research first established if adequate data was collected through respondents. Once ascertained, data duly collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlational. Statistical package for social scientists (SPSS) was then used to generate frequency tables. The coded data were then entered into SPSS for processing which generated frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation through descriptive analysis. The inferential statistical (Pearson correlation coefficient) analysis was used to establish relationship between variables. The analyzed data were then presented using tables and text while the bulk of the qualitative data was presented in descriptions and explanations.

11. Research Findings and Discussion

11.1. Demographic characteristics of Respondents.

The information collected on social–demographic characteristics includes: age group, marital status and level of education. They were collected and gathered to find out whether these intervening variables have influence in regard to women empowerment and their influence on the success of the commercial integrated farming initiative project. The results to respondents' views on these aspects were tabulated and indicated by tables.

Table 11: Age Distribution of Women Respondents

		Mean		Standard Deviation	
		Frequency	Percentage		
Valid	20-24	11	14.1	2.0225	.65674
	25-29	15	19.2		
	30-34	17	21.8		
	35-39	12	15.4		
	40-44	10	12.8		
	45and above	13	16.7		
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Findings as presented in Table 2 show the least represented age group as 40-44 at 12.8 percent; the highest represented age group as 30-34 at 21.8 percent, the youngest age group as 20-24 at 14.1 percent while the dominating age range is 20-39 years at slightly above 70 percent. It is apparent from research findings therefore, that most of the women respondents are within the economically active and productive population age bracket.

Table 12: Marital Status of Respondents

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Single	6	7.7	1.2022	.40395
	Married	62	79.5		
	Widowed	5	6.4		
	Divorced	5	6.4		
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Results reveal that 79.5 percent of the respondents interviewed are married, 6.4 percent widowed, 7.7 percent single and 6.4 percent divorced as presented in Table 4.3. It is important to recall that in Rwanda, marital status of women influences their level of participation within and outside the home in regard to decision making, leadership and other aspects of their lives.

Table 13: Educational Background of Respondents

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Non- formal	7	9.0	11.2022	.40395
	Primary	42	53.8		
	Middle school	12	15.4		
	Junior secondary	6	7.7		
	Others	11	14.1		
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Results in Table 4 indicates the highest represented women respondents as those with education levels up to primary level at 53.8 percent, while the least are those with junior secondary level at 7.7 percent. The non-formal group is at 9 percent while the middle school level is at 15.4 percent and those who have had home management oriented training at 14.1 percent. Education background especially numeracy capacity is expected to influence the success of the project while formal schooling levels directly influence the level of public participation and decision making debate processes.

11.2 Presentation of Findings

11.2.1. Access to resources in CIFI project and Increased Women's Income

In order to assess whether or not the Commercial integrated farming initiative project played any significant role in increasing women beneficiaries income, data gathered on: access to income, control over and ownership of resources were collected and analyzed through examination of key aspects of : work done before Joining the project; increase in income after joining the project, contributions to household monthly income, consultations in spending, ownership of assets and women's say in disposal of assets.

Table 14: Work Done Before Joining the Project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Housewife	51	65.4	3.1124	.37248
	Employed	4	5.1		
	Other	23	29.5		
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Collected data and findings in Table 5 give 5.1% only as those that had reasonably formal employment which allowed them predictable income. It is evident from the data that before joining the project most of the respondents 65.4% were and are still housewives (performing house hold chores), while 29.5% of the respondents were involved in other odd jobs identified as: street vending, prostitution and digging for others as mentioned by the respondents during the interview process. Some of the informal activities are prohibited by Rwandan law and besides, were not generating enough predictable income to allow them to look after themselves and their families. This was highlighted by one of the respondents as the reason for joining Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative Project.

Women' increase in income as a result of involvement with the project, following the training by Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative Project is assessed. Table 4.10, presents findings of women's increased income.

Table 15: Increase in Income after Joining the Project

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	78	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2016

Table 6 shows that all the women respondents at 100 percent testify to have had increase in income after joining the project. A woman respondent who was a former commercial sex worker, now a member of cooperative, who earns Rwf 80, 000 had this to say: Women previous work was risky, unlawful and demanding in all aspects yet badly paying, but now they earn almost four times what they used to earn averagely per month with certainty and they are able to support their children.

Table 16: Contribution to Monthly Household Income before Joining Project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Less than 30, 000	69	88.5	2.3640	1.16151
	30,000 –40,000	1	1.3		
	Other	8	10.3		
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Findings in table 7 shows that while the majority of the women respondent were at 88.5percent before joining the project, contributed less than Rwf30.000 per month, the least number of the women respondent at 1.3% contributed between Rwf30,000 –40,000 Rwf and 10.3 percent made contributions but not on monthly basis. This group was in the informal sector and some of their activities were prohibited by the Rwandan laws and some were not generating enough and regular income to allow them to look after their families. This partly explains why they were very eager to join Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative Project.

Table 17: Contribution to Monthly Household Income after Joining Project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Less than 150,000	65	83.3		
	151,000 –250,000	6	7.7		
	Others	7	9.0	1.8090	.18467
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Table 8 illustrate that, whereas the majority of the women at 83.3 percent contributed to their households less than Rwf 150,000, followed by 9 percent who contributed diverse amounts and the least of 7.7 percent contribution was between Rwf 151,000 –250,000. Respondent explained that before 2007, they were depending solely on their husband for everything, including her clothes. They grew vegetables on a large scale and jointly sells them to a variety of market and earns an income to cater for their needs.

Table 18: Consultations in Spending Before Joining the Project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Yes	50	64.1		
	No	28	35.9	1.9438	.055611
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Results show in table 9 that majority of the women respondents at 64.1percent consulted either their husbands or fathers before making any financial decision. 35 percent made no consultation.

After joining the project, women’s control over resources provided them with tools to challenge inequalities that suppressed them since women’s economic empowerment is gaining control over financial resources, as shown in their level of consultation in spending.

Table 19: Consultations in Spending After Joining the Project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Yes	32	41.0		
	No	46	59.0	2.9438	1.55611
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Table 10 shows that, the majority of the women at 59 percent made no consultations after joining the project and 41percent even after joining the project still make consultations regarding any spending. Women have been marginalized in relation to ownership of resources and cultural norms has mandated that resources (access to land, credit, access to property and employment among others) and factors of production be owned or passed through husbands or other relatives and women’s economic security has depended wholly upon their connection to the men in their lives.

Table 20: Ownership of Assets before Joining the Project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Yes	7	9.0	2.2921	1.04666
	No	71	91.0		
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Findings in table 11 show respondents status as regards ownership of assets, while 91percent had no ownership of assets, only 9 percent had ownership of assets. Women said that all things belonged to the man and nothing of their own. Measures that increased women’s control over household resources and laws that enhance the ability of women to accumulate assets, especially by strengthening their property rights, are of particular importance.

Table 21: Ownership of Assets after Joining the Project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Yes	74	94.9	1.3921	1.07666
	No	4	5.1		
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Table 12 shows that 94.9 percent of respondents own assets after joining the project, 5.1percent don’t own assets of their own. The project has enabled women beneficiaries through their cooperatives to be facilitated in accessing economic assets through a payment system that helps them to save money. Women suffer from inequitable land rights and restricted access to resources and inheritance and this inhibit their ability to access credit.

Table 22: Say in Disposal of Assets before Joining the Project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Yes	21	26.9	2.7865	1.10773
	No	57	73.1		
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Results in Table 13 show that the majority of the women 73.1 percent had no say in disposal of assets but 26.9 percent had a say. After joining the project, women through their savings started to acquire and own property, therefore they had a say in disposal of assets.

Table 23: Say in Disposal of Assets after Joining the Project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Yes	60	76.9		
	No	18	23.1	1.1865	.30673
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Findings from Table 14 indicate that 76.9 percent of the women have a say in disposal of assets and still other 23.1 percent do not have a say. This implies that when women got money from the sale of vegetables, they could use a small portion for buying food and then save the rest which they used to buy a piece of land and their husband have to agree with them first before selling anything.

Table 24: Women’s access to resources and increase in incomes

		Women’s access to resources	Increase in incomes
Women’s access to resources	Pearson Correlation	1	.842**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	78	78
Increase in incomes	Pearson Correlation	.842**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	78	78

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

Source: Field survey, 2016

Findings from Table 15, using Pearson correlation model Ω , shows that women’s access to resources is directly correlated to increase in incomes. Implication is that commercial integrated farming initiative project when well implemented and targeting the right kind of women group exhibits a direct positive relationship to increase in their incomes.

11.2.2 Mobilization in Skill based training in CIFI and Women’s Increased Decision Making

Decision making is the women’s capacity to define their own life choices and to pursue their own goals. Women’s ability to influence or make decisions that affect their lives and their futures can only be possible if women can work and earn money, then recognition and role in the household decision making process especially within the household is accorded.

Table 25 : Predominant Household Decision Maker before Joining the Project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Father/ Husband	48	61.5		
	Mother	3	3.8		
	Self	19	24.4	1.7565	1.9073
	None	8	10.3		
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Results in table 16 indicate that husbands or fathers take majority of household decisions totaling to 61.5 percent, 24.4 percent of women respondents take decisions themselves, followed by 10.3 percent decisions taken jointly and lastly mothers are the least to take decisions at 3.8percent. When the women were enrolled in commercial integrated farming initiative project, change in participation in household decision making started and women enjoyed respect in the family.

Table 26: Predominant Household Decision Maker after Joining the Project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Father/ Husband	10	12.8		
	Mother	1	1.3		
	Self	28	35.9	3.8315	2.62953
	None	39	50.0		
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Results in Table 17 show 50percent of the decisions taken jointly by both husband and wife, women respondents take decisions themselves at 35.9 percent, husbands or fathers take 12.8 percent of the household decisions and lastly mothers take 1.3 percent in household decisions. Women’s personal or family decision making can be enhanced by economic assets and income-earning capacity.

Table 27: Project’s Influence on Personal and Family Decision Making

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Both Personal and family decisions	78	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2016

Findings from Table 18 indicate that all women respondents have been impacted by the project to take both personal and family decisions. Analysis also was women’s decision-making capacity on various aspects, both at personal and at family level before joining the project: on personal level, buying personal items and arranging recreational facilities and decision making at family level include child’s education and health, child’s marriage and making big or small purchases.

Table 19: Decision-Making in Aspects before Joining the Project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Child education and health	7	9.0	5.8315	2.62953
	Child's marriage	10	12.8		
	Big purchases	5	6.4		
	Buying personal items	3	3.8		
	Arranging recreational facilities	1	1.3		
	No decision made	52	66.7		
Total		78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Results of Table 19 show that majority of women respondents' decisions on various aspects was: on personal level, buying personal items was at 3.8percent, and arranging recreational facilities is at 1.3 percent. As for decision making at family level: child's education and health 9.0 percent, child's marriage is at 12.8percent and making big purchases is at 6.4percent. Yet to a larger extent 66.7percent of the women took no decision. This depicts the subordinate status women respondents were in before joining the project. After joining the project, women respondents' decisions on various aspects regarding personal and decision making at family level improved.

Table 28: Decision Making in Aspects after Joining the Project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Child education and health	12	15.4	3.8315	2.62953
	Child's marriage	4	5.1		
	Purchases	30	38.5		
	Buying personal items	28	35.9		
	Arranging recreational facilities	4	5.1		
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Results of Table 20 show that majority of women respondents' decisions on various aspects in regard to personal level: buying personal items was at 35.9percent, and arranging recreational facilities is at 5.1 percent. As for decision making at family level: child's education and health 15.4 percent, child's marriage is at 5.1 percent and making big purchases is at 38.5percent. This depicts that after joining the project respondent women were empowered to take decisions.

Table 21: Skill based training and participation in decision making

		Skill based training	based Participation in decision making
Skill based training	Pearson Correlation	1	.853**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	78	78
Participation in decision making	Pearson Correlation	.853**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	78	78

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

Source: Field survey, 2016

Findings from Table 21, using Pearson correlation model Ω , shows that skill based training is directly correlated to Participation in decision making. Implication is that commercial integrated farming initiative project when well implemented and targeting the right kind of women group exhibits a direct positive relationship to participation in decision making.

11.2.3 Marketing in CIFI project's Role in Promoting Women's Leadership

Women are marginalized and take very minor part in leadership and other administration issues both at family, community and other higher levels. Given the patriarchal nature, the culture of most societies and households coupled with women's triple roles - reproductive, productive and community participation, constrain and undermine women's role in leadership. Findings depict different aspects and trends of women before and after joining the project in as far as leadership roles are concerned. Women's leadership roles before joining the project are presented in Table 22.

Table 29: Leadership Roles before Joining the Project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Yes	40	51.3		
	No	38	48.7	1.8090	.00467
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Results in Table 22 reveal that 51.3 percent of the women respondents played a role in leadership before joining the project and 48.7 percent of the women respondents played no role. Rwanda's Frameworks like 'Abunzi' (mediation committees) and national women council offered opportunities for women to play a role in leadership and this is the reason majority of the respondents played leadership roles. Women's economic success has played a role in shaping the community's perception of women respondents and Commercial integrated farming initiative project's contribution to women's Leadership capacity.

Table 30: Contribution of Project to Leadership Capacity

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Yes	66	84.6	1.7800	1.00467
	No	12	15.4		
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Results in Table 23 reveal that majority respondent's at 84.6 percent played a role in leadership after joining the project and only 15.4 percent of the women respondents played no role. The findings revealed that women's participation in project activities has improved their leadership role. Women's poverty and trying to make ends meet had made women beneficiaries of Commercial integrated farming initiative project to do odd jobs for survival and as such, women had no self-confidence in regards to their own self-rating in leadership.

Table 31: Self-Rating in Level of Leadership Capacity before Joining the Project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Chair of Cooperative	20	25.6	2.8090	1.68467
	Village leader	30	38.5		
	Cell leader	10	12.8		
	Sector leader	5	6.4		
	District mayor	1	1.3		
	None	12	15.4		
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Results in table 24 show that women self-rating in leadership before joining the project were at 38.5 percent for the position of the village leader, 12.8 percent for the cell leader, followed by 25.6 percent for the cooperative chairperson's , 6.4 percent for the Sector leader, the District mayor at 1.3 percent and finally 15.4 had no interest in leadership positions.

Women respondents appeared to feel more respected, mainly because they are contributing to commercial integrated farming initiative project of their families, and discussed how happy they were as men were taking on some responsibilities which traditionally were for women, especially looking after children while women were at the farms being trained After joining the project, with gained confidence women respondents vie for leadership positions.

Table 32: Self-rating in level of leadership capacity after joining the project

		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Valid	Chair of Cooperative	10	12.8	1.4090	1.54467
	Village leader	24	30.8		
	Cell leader	19	24.4		
	Sector leader	14	17.9		
	District mayor	3	3.8		
	Member of Parliament	2	2.6		
	None	6	7.7		
	Total	78	100.0		

Source: Field survey, 2016

Findings in Table 25 indicate that women’s personal self-rating in leadership after joining the project, were 30.8 0percent for the Village leader, 24.4 percent for the Cell leader followed by 12.8 percent for the Chair of Cooperative, the Sector leader at 17.9 percent, the District mayor at 3.8percent and finally 2.6 vied for the Member of Parliament.

Interviewed women respondents commented that they were now well respected in the community because of their status and their leadership roles in cooperatives were greatly emulated. One woman stated that all her neighbors respect her because they have seen what she has been able to do, and they now believe her family to be “well-to-do.” A woman commented that men no longer spoke to them disrespectfully but spoke to them rather in a more equal manner. Other women noted that they have been invited to participate in and speak at community meetings, whereas before they would have been ignored or excluded.

Table 33: Skill based training and participation in decision making

		Marketing in CIFI project	Women’s leadership role
Marketing in CIFI project	Pearson Correlation	1	.701**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	78	78
Women’s leadership role	Pearson Correlation	.701**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	78	78

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

Source: Field survey, 2016

Findings from Table 26, using Pearson correlation model Ω , shows that marketing in CIFI project is directly correlated to Women’s leadership role. Implication is that commercial integrated farming initiative project when well implemented and targeting the right kind of women group exhibits a direct positive relationship to Women’s leadership role.

12.1 Conclusions

This study explored the concept of empowerment of women through commercial integrated farming initiative project and the overall objective was to assess the relationship between commercial integrated farming initiative project and women empowerment in Rwanda. The study's analysis is based on the objectives of the study which are to assess if women's involvement in Commercial integrated farming initiative project increased their incomes, to find out whether Commercial integrated farming initiative project increased women's participation in decision making and to examine Commercial integrated farming initiative project's role in promoting women's leadership role as well as the relationship are henceforth discussed in the proceeding sections of this chapter.

Further the impact of demographic characterizes on women empowerment was also analyzed. The study shows that those women, who have accessed Income from Commercial integrated farming initiative women's project, have had their incomes increased, with access to, control of and ownership of assets. These women project beneficiaries therefore, are resultantly more empowered as demonstrated by changes in the involvement in household chores, participation in family decisions, improved status in family and community.

Involvement in the CIFI women's decision making both at family and community levels showed a positive contribution by the project. Women enhanced involvement in leadership at family and community levels after joining the project is also attested to. Women's self-rating in leadership capacity after joining the project, women respondents commented that they were now well respected in the community because of their status and their leadership roles in cooperatives were greatly emulated.

There exists a relationship between commercial integrated farming initiative projects and women empowerment as can be evidenced from findings of this study. Commercial integrated farming initiative projects enabled women to access income which translated into their empowerment witnessed in improved women material conditions, enhanced decision making at personal and family levels and playing a leadership role,

12.2 Recommendations.

There are elements of empowerment through commercial integrated farming initiative project. Commercial integrated farming initiative project can be used to address the complex relationships affecting women and their households' access resources, address decision-making, women's role in leadership at the household and community levels. In the light of above study conducted, following are the policy recommendation to the following:

12.2.1 The Government of Rwanda

Commercial integrated farming initiative project approach as a strategy and approach to empowering women should be scaled up to all urban and rural poor women in Rwanda since results of the study show that this was effective;

To establish a processing plant to improve quality of products of commercial integrated farming initiative project produce, so as to satisfy both local and international markets and promote entrepreneur aspects;

Commercial integrated farming initiative project should be strengthened and should expand their support to resource poor women;

Strategies to combat the lack of empowerment must be addressed not only the immediate need of poor women but must also focus on the root cause of women's powerlessness;

Incorporate programmatic elements such as literacy, skill based training or leadership opportunities that contribute to women's empowerment.

12.2.2 Government Partners

Support women involved in commercial integrated farming initiative project and who, currently have gained the momentum and have acquired basic skills to move to a more sustainable business, it will be essential to move towards a more robust business model and market-oriented approach, with more streamlined management and coordination.

The Cooperative Union should be given a larger role in project management and implementation, with a view to becoming an enduring and capable institution delivering appropriate services to its grassroots member cooperatives. For this to happen, however, it will need substantial, capacity-building inputs.

12.2.3 Project managers

Demo-farms for commercial integrated farming initiative produce and display centers;
Establish mechanisms for monitoring and follow up coupled with communication; Consult and collaborate more closely with other private, public and actors who can contribute relevant experience, guidance and support.

12.2.4 Women Commercial integrated farming initiative project beneficiaries

Put outreach mechanisms for other very poor women to come out of isolation and poverty; innovate value addition strategies that will add value to the produce for everyday use of a Rwandan.

13. Suggestions for further study.

Considering that the geographical coverage of the study was relatively small and in line with the positive results of the research it is recommended that this research be extended to other income generating projects targeting women in Rwanda so as to safely generalize and sustain the conclusions of this study.

There could be many aspects to explain the empowerment of women in addition to other issues which this study has not addressed. This research could not look into all aspects of access to resources, decision making and enhancing women's leadership. Moreover, the research could not deal with factors like culture and religion of respondent women, which may greatly influence their decision making capacity.

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