

# Perceptions and Practices of University Students and Employees Regarding the Influence of Women's Empowerment on the Economic Development of Rural Kenyan Families

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**Abstract:** *Despite challenges including resource scarcity, gender-based violence and discrimination, women's empowerment is still a vital tactic in the fight against poverty. Rural women worldwide often face limited personal and economic empowerment, which constrains their capacity to influence economic development within their families and communities. The objectives of this study were to examine how Tangaza University students and employees perceive the influence of women's empowerment on economic development in rural Kenyan families, to determine the practices of students and employees at Tangaza University to promote women's empowerment within their families and entire Kenyan families, and to identify the perceived challenges women in rural areas encounter in pursuit of economic development. The study involved a sample comprising 50 students and 30 staff members drawn from Tangaza University using stratified random sampling. Data was collected utilizing structured questionnaires and information was gathered about participants' perceptions and actions regarding women's empowerment and how it influences rural Kenyan families' economic development. A qualitative section of the instrument comprised open-ended questions whose verbatim responses were thoroughly examined using content analysis while descriptive measures were used to analyse the quantitative data. The findings reaffirmed that economic development in Kenya's rural households is positively influenced by women's empowerment. Furthermore, women's empowerment in Kenya was supported locally and nationally by Tangaza University staff and students who encouraged women in their families to pursue education and skill development and fought for equal opportunities for women in the community and workplace. The recommendations included that the National and County Governments should work closely with Universities to come up with projects and programs that promote women's empowerment including education to all, business empowerment, and leadership empowerment to enhance sustainable economic development among women in rural areas.*

**Keywords:** perceptions and practices, women, economic empowerment, development, rural families

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## INTRODUCTION

Economic development involves multidimensional improvements across an economy, including increased income levels, poverty reduction, enhanced living standards, and sustained economic growth. Achieving such development often requires both quantitative and qualitative transformations in the economic structure of a firm or region (WEF, 2017). Scholars and institutions such as the OECD (2014) and McKinley (2010) emphasize that the integration of human capital and the provision of equitable economic opportunities for all individuals are fundamental to global economic progress. Despite this, significant gender disparities persist, with women earning lower incomes than men even when they possess comparable levels of education (World Bank, 2016).

The social exclusion of women in many Central Asian countries, particularly in rural areas, significantly limits their full participation in national economic development (UNICEF, 2016; 2021). For example, to address these challenges, the Afghan government approved the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF, 2017–2021) in 2016, which aimed to promote inclusive economic growth with a strong emphasis on women's economic empowerment. Despite such efforts, women remain underrepresented in the public sector worldwide, holding only 22% of government jobs globally (ILO, 2016).

Karthik (2021) emphasized the critical role of women's economic participation in advancing women's rights and strengthening their impact on society, which is essential for achieving just and balanced societies. However, persistent gender inequalities continue to affect many women, particularly those experiencing multiple forms of discrimination based on ethnicity or caste. Research shows that women tend to reinvest a higher proportion of their income in their families and communities, thereby contributing significantly to broader economic growth (Karna, 2020). Supporting this view, Buheji (2018) stressed the importance of expanding women's economic engagement to enhance financial resilience and long-term economic success, while also highlighting the challenges women face during periods of crisis, including job losses and unfavorable working conditions. Despite these barriers, such as limited access to resources and the disproportionate impacts of abuse, discrimination, and poverty, women's empowerment remains a key strategy in poverty reduction.

Women's economic empowerment has far-reaching benefits that extend beyond individual women to families and entire communities. Kamberidou (2020) highlights the positive ripple effects of women's economic advancement, demonstrating that when women are fully empowered, broader social and economic benefits follow. Similarly, women in leadership roles challenge entrenched gender stereotypes and inspire social transformation by serving as agents of change (Council on Foreign Relations, 2017). Despite these well-documented benefits, significant barriers continue to hinder rural women's full participation in economic development (UN Report No. 47638, 2020).

In addition to contributing substantially to sustainable development, women play indispensable roles in both family life and society at large (Council on Foreign Relations, 2017). According to UN Women (2018; 2020; 2021), women constitute nearly half of the global workforce and are essential contributors to household and societal well-being, acting as wage earners, managers, administrators, leaders, spouses, and mothers. Women's empowerment is therefore not only fundamental to protecting their rights but also crucial for achieving broader development goals such as poverty reduction, social welfare, and economic growth (Kumari, 2020).

Nevertheless, persistent disparities in employment opportunities and income between men and women indicate that many development initiatives continue to favor men (Kumari, Ferdous & Klalidah, 2020). Women often balance caregiving responsibilities with the pursuit of financial independence, yet they are frequently confined to low-paying and insecure employment (Eke, 2021). Furthermore, limited access to property ownership diminishes women's bargaining power and restricts their ability to benefit from formal financial institutions and better economic opportunities.

Despite facing numerous global challenges, including unequal pay, limited access to resources, and restricted employment opportunities, women's empowerment remains central to the overall well-being of families, communities, and nations (Hasin, Hasan & Musa, 2018). World Vision reports that women in developing countries are often marginalized and confined to domestic roles, reinforcing perceptions of their lesser value compared to men. The International Labour Organization (2016) further notes a significant leadership gap, with women being three times less likely than men to occupy leadership positions worldwide. Globally, women bear a disproportionate share of caregiving responsibilities, which severely constrains their career advancement and leadership prospects.

As individuals and families progress through different stages of life, they encounter social and economic challenges that directly influence economic growth. Eswaran (2014) argues that women's unequal domestic workload negatively affects their income levels and labor force participation. UNESCO similarly reports that many women dedicate most of their lives to unpaid domestic and caregiving work, limiting their opportunities for career advancement and broader societal contributions.

A family, defined as a social unit connected through emotional, legal, and often biological ties, plays a foundational role in society by fostering mutual support, shared values, and socialization (Merriam-Webster). However, families face significant challenges related to employment, access to capital, entrepreneurship, land ownership, and property rights. Pope Francis (2016) emphasizes the importance of strong support systems in helping families navigate difficult economic circumstances. Lohani (2017) further asserts that women's emancipation is a prerequisite for sustainable development.

Despite their critical role in development, women continue to face obstacles in accessing essential assets such as land, employment, financial services, and other productive resources. Gender inequality marginalizes women and restricts their economic advancement, while societal discrimination undermines their contributions and dignity (Lohani & Aburaida, 2017). Women's lack of financial independence further exacerbates these challenges, particularly in managing household and familial responsibilities.

Globally, structural and cultural barriers continue to impede women's empowerment especially in rural areas. The Global Fund for Women notes that women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are denied inheritance and land ownership rights, significantly constraining their economic empowerment and national economic growth (Hyland, Djankov & Goldberg, 2021). Similarly, deep-rooted cultural norms in rural Nigeria restrict women's social and economic mobility, placing them at a persistent disadvantage (Lohani & Aburaida, 2017). Despite numerous strategies implemented worldwide to promote women's empowerment, progress remains limited.

Many African countries (EAC, 2020) recognizes that although women face distinct workplace challenges compared to men, gender equality yields benefits for both sexes. However, systemic injustices continue to marginalize women, leaving them financially insecure. Inadequate engagement by gender departments especially at the county level has weakened women's empowerment initiatives, resulting in limited resource mobilization, insufficient capacity building in agribusiness sectors such as poultry and dairy farming, weak market linkages, and a lack of value-addition skills among women.

In Kenya, data from the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census indicate that women constitute 50.5% of the population. However, gender disparities persist in key areas, particularly access to information and communication technology (ICT), which is critical for women's economic independence and career advancement. Limited ICT access hampers women's ability to engage with peers, access information, and participate fully in the digital economy. Although Kenya has made notable progress in establishing legal and policy frameworks to promote gender equality, gaps in implementation remain. These shortcomings continue to undermine women's empowerment across social, political, and economic spheres, perpetuating gender inequality through regressive social norms, legal constraints, and economic disparities.

Rural women are generally underprivileged in both personal and professional spheres, a condition that significantly limits their capacity to contribute to development within their families and communities. Their bargaining power remains minimal, largely due to economic disempowerment, which restricts their ability to influence decision-making and effect meaningful change. In the absence of economic empowerment and equitable access to resources, families and societies are likely to experience persistent financial instability and poverty. Moreover, when women are denied autonomy and negotiating power, particularly in rural and marginalized settings where they

constitute a substantial proportion of the population, these communities remain socially and economically marginalized. Ensuring that women are empowered and enjoy equal rights with men is therefore essential for inclusive and sustainable development.

Given that women often constitute the majority in disadvantaged communities, their continued exclusion from decision-making and economic opportunities not only perpetuates social suffering but also undermines broader economic growth. Without the ability to negotiate, empower themselves, and uplift others, these communities remain trapped in cycles of poverty and dependency. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to examine how women's empowerment influences the economic development of rural Kenyan families. The specific objectives of the study were:

- i. To examine the perceptions of University students and employees regarding the influence of women's empowerment on the economic development of rural Kenyan families.
- ii. To assess the practices adopted by students and employees at Tangaza University to promote women's empowerment within their own families and across Kenyan communities.
- iii. To identify the perceived challenges faced by women in rural areas in their pursuit of economic development.

While raising more awareness of gender disparities in empowerment, the findings of this study will guide stakeholders, donors, and government initiatives in promoting women's economic participation particularly in rural areas. Ultimately, the study seeks to strengthen family welfare and contribute to national economic growth.

This study is grounded in Social Cognitive Theory, Feminist Theory, Capability Approach and Empowerment Theory. The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) emphasizes the role of observational learning, social interactions, and environmental influences in shaping behaviors and attitudes. In the context of this research, SCT provides a framework for understanding how university students and employees adopt and reinforce behaviors related to women's empowerment. It also offers insights into their perceptions regarding the potential influence of empowerment initiatives on rural economic development. Supporting this perspective, Luseno and Chang'ach (2020) highlighted the relevance of SCT in exploring gender-related behaviors within educational settings, noting that both the environment and observed actions significantly shape students' attitudes toward gender equality and empowerment. Feminist Theory provides a critical lens for examining gender inequalities and the systems that sustain them. It is particularly useful for understanding how Tangaza University's community perceives women's roles in economic development, revealing cultural and institutional biases that shape these perceptions for rural context. Amartya Sen's Capability Approach focuses on individual freedoms and capabilities as measures of development. This framework helps assess how Tangaza University's empowerment initiatives influence the capabilities of rural women, affecting their economic and social well-being. Empowerment Theory examines how individuals and communities gain control over their lives and make decisions that affect their well-being. It provides insight into how Tangaza University's community promotes women's empowerment and its impact on rural economic development. Gichuki et al. (2019)

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK highlighted the role of educational and community initiatives in fostering women's economic independence in Kenya.

## METHODOLOGY

This was a cross-sectional study where mixed methods were used to establish the perceptions and actions of students and employees of Tangaza University regarding women's empowerment's influence on rural Kenyan families' economic development. Because of its varied population, which represents a range of backgrounds and viewpoints, Tangaza University acted as the primary location for data collection. The study's target population consisted of working and school-going adults in the 18–50 age range. Due to their diverse cultural backgrounds and ability to provide insightful and detailed information, these participants were chosen to represent Kenya's diverse communities. The majority of those engaged work full-time and possess a thorough understanding and experience of the subject matter. Stratified Random Sampling was used to select participants from the schools. The study involved a total of 80 participants including 50 students and 30 employees due to limited resources. A sample of 30 participants or more is considered a large sample in Statistics. The questionnaires were used for data collection. A qualitative section of the instrument comprised open-ended. Descriptive and content analysis of data were used and the ethical considerations were absolutely upheld.

## RESULTS

Regarding the Perceptions that students and employees at Tangaza University College have about the influence of women's empowerment on the economic development of rural families in Kenya, taking a scale of 1-5 where 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5 = strongly agree, the findings are presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 Women Empowerment and Economic Development in Rural Families**

Statement		1		2		3		4		5	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Women in rural areas in Kenya Receive sufficient economic empowerment	13	16.3	31	38.8	14	17.5	14	17.5	8	10
2.	Men in Rural areas are more Economically Empowered compared to women	2	2.5	9	11.3	14	17.5	29	36.3	26	32.5
3.	Women's empowerment positively influences the economic development of rural families in Kenya.	1	1.3	1	1.3	4	5.0	22	27.5	52	65.0



## Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK

4.	Empowering women in rural areas leads to increased household income.	1	1.3	3	3.8	0	00	16	18.8	61	76.3
5.	Women's involvement in decision-making enhances the economic well-being of their families in rural Kenya	1	1.3	3	3.8	6	7.5	12	15.0	58	72.5
6.	Access to education and resources for women is crucial for the economic growth of rural communities.	3	3.8	5	6.3	3	3.8	49	61.3	20	25.0
7.	Gender equality contributes to sustainable economic development in rural areas of Kenya.	0	00	3	3.8	1	1.3	16	20.0	60.0	75.0

The findings in Table 1 above indicated that the majority of the respondents (55.1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that women in rural areas in Kenya receive sufficient economic empowerment. Further, the majority of the participants (68.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that men in rural areas are more economically empowered as compared to women. It was also noted that the majority of the respondents (92.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that women's empowerment positively influences the economic development of rural families in Kenya. Additionally, the majority of the participants (95.1%) reported agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement, that empowering women in rural areas leads to increased household income. Further analysis showed that the majority of the respondents (87.5%) agreed / strongly agreed that women's involvement in decision-making enhances the economic well-being of their families in rural Kenya. Majority (86.3%) affirmed that access to education and resources for women is crucial for the economic growth of rural communities. Finally, (95%) agreed / strongly agreed that gender equality contributes to sustainable economic development in rural areas of Kenya.

The study further sought to know other perceptions of employees and students of Tangaza University about the influence of women's empowerment on the economic development of families in Kenya. Findings were presented in verbatim form.

*"Empowering women in rural areas has a significant impact on societal development and improves the living standards of many families. Since rural women are closely connected to the needs of their households, they can be resourceful and proactive when opportunities are made available to them. Therefore, establishing dedicated women's resource centers would provide a supportive environment where women can access essential resources, guidance, and networking opportunities" "(Respondents, 2024).*

Further,

*“Women empowerment can lead to poverty reduction by providing them with opportunities for economic independence and financial stability. We need to celebrate women’s achievements to empower them and encourage them to strive for more. Further, education would impact more on women. Because of my family issues, I would recommend women to be helped to be assertive in their business/ economic education endeavours, this is because sometimes men put down women in rural areas particularly. There is still a need to continue creating more awareness towards empowerment and capacity building in all aspects and leadership”*(Respondents, 2024).

Furthermore, it was revealed;

*Women in the families struggle a lot because they are not employed. There is a need for direct involvement in economic policy formulation regarding friendly financial infrastructure accessibility by women in rural communities. Women should be supported in their business premises by providing them with financial credits. This should also be a property for both national and County governments; policies should be developed and deliberate attempts to be made to implement these policies on women’s empowerment to facilitate economic empowerment in Rural Kenyan families”*(Participants, 2024)

The study sought to understand how Tangaza University staff and students helped promote women's empowerment locally and nationally in Kenya by rating how frequently they have engaged in the practices to promote women's empowerment, taking a scale of 1-5, where 1 = never 2= rarely 3= occasionally, 4 = often, and 5 always. Findings are displayed in Table 2.

**Table 2 Practices and Advocacy for Women Empowerment in Rural Areas**

Statement		1		2		3		4		5	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Encouraging women in your family to pursue education and skill development.	2	2.5	8	10	18	22.5	52	65.0	0	00
2.	Promoting skill development.	1	1.3	10	12.5	16	20.0	53	66.3	0	00
3.	Empowering women in decision-making processes within the family.	1	1.3	3	3.8	9	11.3	24	30.0	43	53.8
4.	Advocating for equal opportunities for women in the workplace and Community	1	1.3	2	2.5	10	12.5	22	27.5	45	56.3
5.	Providing financial support or resources to women entrepreneurs or aspiring business owners.	2	2.5	6	7.5	28	35.0	34	42.5	10	12.5
6.	Engaging in community initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.	4	5.0	5	6.3	21	26.3	25	31.3	25	31.3



From Table 2 above, majority of the respondents (65.0%) often encouraged women in the family to pursue education and skill development. Further analysis affirmed that the majority of the participants (66.3%) often promoted skill development. It was further noted that majority of the respondents (53.8%) always support women in decision-making processes within the family. Furthermore, the majority of the participants (56.3%) are always advocating for equal opportunities for women in the workplace and Community. The majority of the participants (42.5%) often provided financial support or resources to women entrepreneurs or aspiring business and only 12.5% always do it. Majority (31.3%) are always engaging in community initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment while 31.3% often do the same.

The qualitative analysis highlighted the following:

*“There is a need for encouraging savings and investments and again embracing self-help groups. Service learning initiatives empower women, and scholarships to women too can facilitate their empowerment. Offering skill development programs such as training and workshops, focused on developing skills relevant to women’s empowerment such as leadership, negotiations, and entrepreneurship”* (Participants, 2024).

It was added:

*“Direct involvement in economic policy formulation regarding friendly financial infrastructure accessible by women in rural communities. There is a need to engage them in women's groups that have income-generating activities. Taking self-initiatives and innovation with courage and confidence and believing in self-abilities and potential. Tanagaza University has programs such as resource mobilization and sustainable development to provide education on self-empowerment more particularly to women. According to my argument, women should be promoted based on their merits and qualifications”* (Participants, 2024).

This section presented information on what is seen as the main barriers preventing rural women from achieving economic empowerment and whether Tangaza University has taken any steps to address these obstacles. On a scale of 1-5, the extent to which respondents believed the statements, where 1 = not at all, 2= slightly, 3= moderately, 4= very much 5= extremely, is shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3 Challenges of Economic Development among Women in Rural Areas**

Statement		1		2		3		4		5	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Limited access to education for Women	1	1.3	6	7.5	24	30.0	23	28.7	26	32.5
2.	Cultural norms that restrict women's roles in economic activities.	5	6.3	9	11.3	16	20	28	35.0	22	27.5
3.	Lack of financial services such as credit and savings facilities for women in rural communities.	2	2.5	5	6.3	14	17.5	27	33.8	32	40.0
4.	Limited infrastructure	3	3.8	7	8.8	17	21.3	25	31.3	28	35.0
5.	Legal and regulatory barriers that hinder women's participation in economic activities and land ownership.	11	13.8	12	15.0	12	15.0	25	31.3	20	25.0

Results in Table 3 above indicated that the majority of the respondents (61.2%) believed that limited access to education for women very much or extremely contributes to their economic development in rural areas while. Furthermore, the majority of the participants (62.5%) asserted the existence of cultural norms that considerably restrict women's roles in economic activities. It was further noted that the majority of the respondents (73.8%) affirmed that the lack of financial services such as credit and savings facilities for women in rural communities hinders their economic development to a great extent. Additionally, the majority of the participants (66.3%) reported limited infrastructure very much/extremely affects women's economic development in rural areas. Finally, majority of the respondents (56.3%) highlighted that the legal and regulatory barriers hindered women's participation in economic activities in rural areas.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study on women's empowerment and economic development align with Duflo (2012), who argued that empowering women can have a positive impact on both household and community economic outcomes. Similarly, Kabeer (2005) emphasizes that promoting gender equality and empowering women is essential for achieving global sustainable development goals. The results also correspond with Mwaura et al. (2021), who demonstrated that community-based initiatives aimed at empowering women can significantly influence societal beliefs and behaviours regarding gender equality and economic progress.

In rural Kenyan households, social and cultural gender norms strongly shape perceptions of women's roles and capabilities. Limited access to education, restrictive cultural norms, and

inadequate financial services, such as credit and savings facilities, severely constrain women's economic participation. Additionally, insufficient infrastructure and legal or regulatory barriers further hinder women's engagement in economic activities in rural areas. These findings are consistent with Owino et al. (2018), who also highlighted the substantial influence of social and cultural gender norms on how women's roles are perceived in rural Kenya.

The study's findings offer valuable insights into the perceptions, practices, and challenges surrounding women's empowerment and its impact on the economic growth of rural Kenyan families. These insights have important implications for policy formulation, practical applications, and future research endeavors. The study reveals notable gender disparities in economic empowerment in rural Kenya, with men having greater economic power than women. This finding highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions to address these inequalities. Policymakers and development practitioners must focus on initiatives that specifically empower women economically, such as increasing access to credit, improving financial literacy, and supporting women's entrepreneurship (Miedema et al., 2017; Chakraborty and Dasgupta, 2020). The consensus among respondents that women's empowerment positively influences the economic development of rural families indicates that empowering women is not only ethically important but also a practical approach to enhancing household income and community welfare. This is consistent with research that demonstrates the widespread economic benefits when women are empowered (Chowdhury et al., 2019). The strong support among study participants for women pursuing higher education and acquiring new skills underscores the importance of education in women's empowerment. This suggests that universities and educational institutions should continue expanding educational opportunities for women and offering programs that equip them with the skills necessary for economic participation (Malhotra and Schuler, 2017). Despite the support for women's education and skill enhancement, the lack of consistent backing for women's decision-making in the household reflects ongoing gender biases. This emphasizes the need for continuous efforts to shift cultural norms and promote shared decision-making within families, which is critical for achieving genuine gender equality (Vyas and Watts, 2018). The participation of study respondents in community-based programs that promote gender equality and women's empowerment is promising. However, the findings suggest that more efforts are needed to involve men and the broader community in these programs to ensure that cultural norms are effectively transformed and that women are supported both publicly and privately (Akinola & Okwuosa, 2020). Tangaza University's employees and students' support for women's empowerment indicates that higher education institutions can play a pivotal role in advancing gender equality. Universities have the potential to advocate for policies that facilitate women's economic participation and collaborate with local communities to implement empowerment initiatives (Mishra et al., 2018). The study identified several significant barriers to women's economic participation, including limited access to education, restrictive cultural norms, inadequate financial services, poor infrastructure, and legal challenges such as land ownership issues. These findings suggest the need for comprehensive strategies to address these barriers, including legal reforms to secure women's property rights, improvements in rural infrastructure, expansion of financial services, and efforts to challenge cultural norms that limit women's economic roles (World Bank, 2020; Gaddis et al., 2021). Overcoming the challenges highlighted in the study will require a multisectoral approach, involving

government agencies, educational institutions, financial organizations, and community groups. Collaboration among these stakeholders can create a supportive environment for women's economic empowerment, which can lead to sustainable economic development in rural areas (UN Women, 2018).

The findings underscore the necessity for additional research into the gender dynamics in rural Kenyan communities, particularly how cultural norms and legal barriers influence women's economic empowerment. Future research could explore strategies for overcoming these challenges and examine the long-term effects of women's empowerment on family and community well-being (Boserup et al., 2019; Peterman et al., 2021). Continuous monitoring and evaluation of women's empowerment programs are crucial for assessing their effectiveness and making necessary adjustments. Research that tracks the outcomes of empowerment initiatives over time can provide valuable insights into best practices and areas needing improvement (UNDP, 2020).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that empowerment for women positively affects economic development in rural families. Men in rural areas are perceived to be more economically empowered than women. It can also be concluded that giving women the possibilities for empowerment positively influences the economic development of rural families in Kenya. The empowerment of women should be done through women's involvement in decision-making, access to education and resources, and gender equality to contribute to sustainable economic development in rural areas of Kenya. Tangaza University staff and students helped promote women's empowerment locally and nationally in Kenya by encouraging women in families to pursue education and skill development. Similarly, advocating for equal opportunities for women in the workplace and Community, and providing financial support or resources to women entrepreneurs or aspiring business owners contribute to economic development. Finally, it was concluded that various challenges including limited access to education for women, cultural norms that restrict women's roles in economic activities, lack of financial services such as credit and savings facilities for women in rural communities, and legal and regulatory barriers hinder the economic development of women in the rural communities of Kenya.

The following recommendations were made:

- i. The National and County Governments, in collaboration with universities, should develop and implement integrated programmes aimed at women's empowerment. These programmes should emphasize equitable access to education, business and entrepreneurial development, and leadership training to foster sustainable economic development among women in rural areas.
- ii. The National and County Governments should strengthen the enforcement of existing gender equality policies. Effective implementation of these policies would address persistent gender stereotyping and structural barriers, thereby enhancing women's economic participation, wellbeing, and growth.

- iii. Universities and other development-oriented organizations should mobilize financial, institutional, and technical resources while ensuring the active involvement of women in decision-making processes. Inclusive participation is critical for promoting economic development and achieving long-term empowerment of women in rural communities.

Since the current study focused on how women's empowerment influences the economic development of Kenyan families, a future research needs to address the economic empowerment and development of both men and women in the Communities in Kenya for the generalization of the findings.

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