AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS OF SELF-HELP GROUP APPROACH ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN MTWAPA

By

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Abstract

Despite the many efforts by the Government of Kenya and its policy makers to improve the quality of life and the dignity of its citizens, significant poverty reduction among the very poor has remained elusive. Part of the reason poverty levels have not reduced significantly since 1965 when the country developed its first development blue print is the lack of involvement of the poor in the design and implementation of development initiatives and the often top-down approaches to development. The other reason has been the challenge of multi-dimensional nature of poverty, which cannot be addressed if the country views poverty from economic lenses alone. This research seeks to study the characteristics of Self-Help Group (SHG) approach, its ability to address the multiple dimensions of poverty and the effects this has had on the lives of members of SHG. It is case study of the application of SHG approach in Mtwapa, Kilifi District in Kenya in increasing SHG members' levels and quality of social, political, financial, physical and natural capitals and hence reducing their poverty levels. It then recommends the approach as one of the major development strategies that can effectively address the challenges of poverty in Kenya. The research results show that the SHG approach has had major effects in reducing poverty among its members. The approach is holistic and its self-reliance principles should be utilised by development professionals and policy makers to design and implement sustainable development programmes.

Key Words

Poverty, Anti-poverty, Self-help groups approach, Sustainable Livelihood Framework, Poverty reduction, Social capital, Political capital, Physical capital, Financial capital, Natural capital, Vulnerability, Kenya

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