



THE CO-OPERATIVE UNIVERSITY OF KENYA

Proceedings
of The Eighth Co-operative
University of Kenya (CUK)
Annual Scientific Conference &
The Third Co-operative Movement
stakeholders' Conference,

"THE JOINT CO-OPERATIVE CONFERENCE 2025"

ON

Co-operatives Build a
Better World: Re-energizing
the Collective Power of
Co-operatives in Africa

July 22nd-24th, 2025

Isaac K. Nyamongo - Editor

THE GENDERED COOPERATIVE AND AWARENESS; A MISTY IN AFRICAN COOPERATIVES

Gratian Cronery Rwekaza¹ and John Mwela²

^{1&2}Department of Business Management, Kizumbi Institute of Cooperative and Business Education, Moshi Cooperative University

E-mail addresses: [1gratiancronery@gmail.com](mailto:gratiancronery@gmail.com); [2johnmwella@gmail.com](mailto:johnmwella@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT: Global awareness of the gendered nature of cooperative movements recognizes that gender equality is a crucial, yet often overlooked. This paper assesses the three components which were; Women status on cooperative business undertaking in Africa; women cultural norms and their relations in joining a cooperative; women societal expectations and the cooperatives participation; women economic realities in becoming a cooperative member. The article is guided by Feminist theory examines how gender relations are socially constructed and how these constructs impact women's lives and social structures. This article approves a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to critically explore the gendered issues in cooperatives assessing women participation in cooperative dilemma. The discussion indicates that; women show a small share compared to their counterparts that present significant challenges for women's participation and empowerment within African cooperatives. Also, women face several societal expectations that can make it challenging for them to participate fully in cooperatives. These include cultural norms, social roles, and economic factors that disadvantage women, often limiting their access to education, skills development, and leadership opportunities. It is concluded that, the challenges of women participating in cooperative decision making and business trend indicates an increasing participation and the positive impact in cooperatives with a gradual change effect. The article recommends to the cooperative movements across Africa to have programs on empowering women through education, skills development, and access to resources is crucial for overcoming these challenges. Also, a deliberate effort on advocating for policies that address structural barriers and promote women's participation in cooperatives is essential. Research should investigate how women's participation in cooperatives affects power relations within households, including decision-making regarding finances, labor allocation, and childcare. Comparative research can explore how different cooperative models (e.g., women-only vs. mixed-sex) influence intra-household dynamic.

Keyword: A gendered cooperative, Gender awareness, Women participation.

INTRODUCTION

A "gendered cooperative" refers to a cooperative organization where gender is a significant factor influencing its structure, operations, and outcomes (Raniga,2021). It acknowledges that gender roles, norms, and power dynamics can impact women's and men's participation, access to resources, and benefits within the cooperative. According to Vedres and Vasarhelyi (2022) this concept recognizes that cooperatives, while often advocating for equality, can still perpetuate gender inequalities if not designed and managed with gender considerations in

mind. Gendered cooperative awareness involves recognizing and addressing the distinct ways in which gender roles, norms, and power dynamics affect the participation, benefits, and outcomes within cooperative organizations (Mahlaba et al., (2022). It's about ensuring that cooperative principles of fairness, democracy, and shared benefit are applied equitably across all genders. Global awareness of the gendered nature of cooperative movements recognizes that gender equality is a crucial, yet often overlooked, aspect of their success and impact (Syukri, 2023). According to Kazimoto and Shitima (2025), cooperatives, while often advocating for democratic principles and member participation, can still face challenges related to women's participation and empowerment. This awareness highlights the need for intentional efforts to address gender inequalities within cooperatives and in the environments in which they operate. In African cooperative settings, gender awareness refers to recognizing and addressing the distinct needs, challenges, and opportunities faced by women and men within cooperative organizations and the broader community (Akter, 2021). This includes understanding how gender roles, power dynamics, and social norms influence participation, access to resources, and outcomes within cooperatives. In sub-Saharan Africa, understanding how cooperatives operate through a gendered lens is crucial for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment within and beyond cooperatives (Syukri, 2023). This involves recognizing that gender inequalities impact women's access to resources, participation in decision-making, and their overall well-being within cooperative structures. In East African Community (EAC) recognizes the vital role of gender mainstreaming in regional integration and development (Kazimoto and Shitima, 2025). The EAC Gender Policy aims to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, ensuring that women and men, boys and girls have equal rights, opportunities, and access to resources. According to Naiga et al., (2024) the EAC has also developed policy frameworks and initiatives to operationalize gender mainstreaming in various areas, including economic development and business. Rwanda promotes gender equality and actively uses cooperative structures to empower women economically and socially (Mkandawire and Toit 2024). The government supports women-focused cooperatives, provides training, and recognizes them legally, viewing them as a pathway to achieving gender equality. While the formalization process of cooperatives assumes benefits for women, further research is needed to fully understand the outcomes for female miners in particular. In Kenya, gendered cooperative awareness refers to the understanding and recognition of how gender roles, power dynamics, and social norms impact the functioning and outcomes of cooperatives, particularly for women (Njenga, 2018). This awareness helps to address gender inequalities within cooperatives, promoting more inclusive and equitable participation and benefits for all members, especially women. In Ethiopia, gendered cooperative awareness efforts focus on empowering women through various initiatives, including community conversations, incorporating gender equality training in agricultural and livelihood programs, and raising awareness of the value of girls' education (Kabeer, 2019). These efforts aim to address gender biases and promote equal access to resources and opportunities for women in cooperatives, especially in the agricultural sector. In Tanzania, understanding how gender roles affect cooperatives and awareness of these dynamics is crucial for successful and equitable development (Ezati, 2023; Kahamba and Xiuli, 2021). Tanzania faces challenges in promoting gender equality, with women facing disadvantages in education, health, and income (Bastida, 2020). While there are efforts to improve women's participation in decision-making and address violence, inequalities persist. In Tanzania, gendered cooperative awareness initiatives aim to enhance

women's access to economic opportunities, protect them from gender-based violence, and promote gender equality. These initiatives often focus on empowering women through education, skills development, and access to resources, while also addressing social norms that hinder gender equality. These initiatives aim to address the complex challenges faced by women in Africa, including cultural barriers, limited access to resources, and gender-based violence, by fostering their economic empowerment and political participation (Kakati and Kakoty, 2022). However, these initiatives had not tapped gendered cooperative strategy to increase gender awareness in terms of perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors related to cooperative participation and understanding. These affect the influence both women's and men's awareness in cooperatives, their motivations to join, and their experiences within the cooperative environment. This paper assesses the three components which were; Women status on cooperative business undertaking in Africa; women cultural norms and their relations in joining a cooperative; women societal expectations and the cooperatives participation; women economic realities in becoming a cooperative member. The article is guided by Feminist theory examines how gender relations are socially constructed and how these constructs impact women's lives and social structures. It highlights the importance of gender as a social category and analyzes how it interacts with other forms of social inequality like race and class. While there's no single "founder" of feminist theory, Mary Wollstonecraft is often considered a pioneer. Her 1792 work justification of the Rights of Woman, argued for women's equality and challenged the societal norms of her time (Andrew et al, 2025; Akter, 2021; Raniga, 2021). Cooperative theories, which emphasize collective effort and mutual benefit, often highlight the role of gender in shaping cooperative practices and outcomes. Women are disproportionately represented in cooperative movements, particularly in rural and developing contexts, and their experiences within cooperatives are often gendered. While cooperative principles aim for equality, cultural norms and power dynamics can limit women's access to resources, decision-making, and leadership within cooperatives. This article is in line with Economic Empowerment and Decent Work, SDGs 1, 5, 8 where women's cooperatives play a vital role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by empowering women economically, socially, and politically, while also contributing to sustainable development across various sectors. They foster inclusive economic growth, promote gender equality, and address issues like food security and climate resilience. Also, in achieving Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063, which aims for "an Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth". by empowering women economically and socially, cooperatives contribute to inclusive growth and sustainable development, a key objective of Agenda 2063. Further, in addressing East African development agenda by promoting economic empowerment, fostering social inclusivity, and contributing to poverty reduction. They address the unique challenges faced by women, who often have limited access to resources and opportunities compared to men. By enabling women to control their income, participate in decision-making, and access essential services, cooperatives contribute to broader development goals.

METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology: This article approves a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to critically explore the gendered issues in cooperatives assessing women participation in cooperative dilemma. The SLR approach is intended to generate an inclusive, clear, and reproducible combination of extant academic signal. This study design ensures

meticulousness in apprehending the issues of gender awareness based from African cooperative inferences and their extensiveness and complexity of current academic homily. Gender awareness cooperative understanding can facilitate the development informed insights into the cooperative frameworks underpinning gender awareness as a global prominence. The literature search was conducted across major academic databases including JSTOR, Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar to identify peer-reviewed journal articles, books, policy reports, and conference chronicles published. The search strategy employed Boolean operators and keywords such as “Women status on cooperative business undertaking in Africa”; “Women cultural norms and their relations in joining a cooperative”; “Women economic realities in becoming a cooperative member”; “Women societal expectations and the cooperatives participation”. Moreover, grey literature and working papers from leading institutions such as the international food security reports, International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), and the FAO reports were reviewed to capture emerging trends and policy relevant insights. The insertion criteria for the review were as follows, Journals that explicitly examine the intersection of gender awareness and cooperative organizational structures. Studies speaking gender awareness mechanisms, food security cooperative governance, and community ownership within gender awareness systems were reviewed. Research that explores gender participation mechanisms, gender awareness strategies, gender awareness-based challenges on cooperative matters. Based on ensuring of quality and credibility, only peer reviewed sources and high-quality institutional reports were included in the final synthesis. Each article was appraised for methodological soundness, conceptual contribution, and relevance to the research objective specifically, the role of cooperatives in delivering food security across economic, environmental, and social dimensions cooperative and gender awareness. In synthesizing the reviewed literature, this study aims to identify conceptual frameworks and practical models relevant to gender awareness and cooperatives, highlight research gaps and areas necessitating further empirical enquiry, analyses the ways in which gender awareness systems featured in the cooperative business models.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Women status on cooperative business undertaking in Africa: Women's perceptions and understanding of joining a cooperative are shaped by a complex interplay of factors, including cultural norms, economic realities, and personal experiences (Chavan and Apte, 2021). McLaren (2019) argued that, cooperatives can be empowering, women may face barriers like limited access to resources, societal expectations, and structural inequalities within the cooperative itself. Understanding these diverse perspectives is crucial for creating inclusive and effective cooperative models. Women are actively involved in cooperatives, particularly in leadership and governance roles, with statistics indicating increasing representation in various areas. Andrew (2024) contend that, the participation in decision making in cooperatives for women had been not always equal to men, women's participation in cooperatives is growing, especially in leadership positions and at Annual General Meetings (AGMs). Women make up a significant portion of board members and supervisory committee members in cooperatives, with some regions reporting even higher representation in leadership roles (Acharya, and Kumar, 2025). For example, in Tanzania, women comprise 40% of total board members and 38% of the supervisory committee, according to a survey by the International Labour Organization (ILO) (Sapkota, 2024). This indicates that, women show a small share compared to their counterparts. A study found that women comprised

20% of cooperative members but 25% of attendees at Annual General Meetings. According to Singh et al., (2014) and Andrew et al., (2025) present the findings that, on leadership roles, women are present on cooperative boards, with figures ranging from 24% in Kenya to 65% in Tanzania. Some studies suggest that cooperatives led by women are more successful. In many cooperatives, women's shareholding percentages vary significantly, with some cooperatives having a higher female representation in membership and shareholding than others. While some cooperatives have strong female participation, others face challenges related to women's access to resources and opportunities within the cooperative structure. In Japan, women represent 95% of members in consumer cooperatives and are in key governance positions (Syukri, 2023; Trinkenreich et al., 2021). In East Africa, women are estimated to represent between 30 to 42% of cooperative members in some regions, with lower representation at the leadership level (Ezati, 2023). While according to Díaz et al., (2024) in India, despite efforts done by government and other stakeholders, women's membership is only around 16% nationally, while they are primary dairy producers. Women are actively involved in African cooperatives, and their participation is increasing. In some countries, like Tanzania, women comprise a significant majority of cooperative employees (61%), while in others, like Kenya and Uganda, they make up a substantial portion of the workforce (45% and 36%, respectively) (Garcia et al., (2024).

Women cultural norms and their relations in joining a cooperative: Cultural norms, particularly regarding gender roles, present significant challenges for women's participation and empowerment within African cooperatives. According to Ezati (2023) these norms often limit women's access to resources, education, and opportunities, and can perpetuate stereotypes that hinder their ability to join and contribute to cooperatives. Winthrop and Simons (2025) argued that, traditional gender roles, which often assign women primary responsibility for household tasks, can prevent them from participating in cooperative activities, especially those requiring time and travel. Women may face barriers to accessing land, credit, and other resources, which are often essential for participating in agricultural or economic cooperatives. Based on contention raised by Raniga (2021) showed that, inadequate financial literacy can make it difficult for women to understand and engage with cooperative financial systems, potentially hindering their ability to join or benefit from cooperative activities. Based on stereotypes and biases, the cultural biases about women's suitability for leadership and decision-making can create obstacles for women seeking to participate in cooperative management or leadership roles (Sakai, 2020). Women may be excluded from social gatherings and networks that provide opportunities for cooperative membership and participation, further limiting their access (Bastida, 2020). In some cases, cultural norms may translate into legal restrictions that limit women's property rights or their ability to participate in economic activities, including cooperatives (McLaren, 2019). According to Soto and Sato (2019) the structural inequalities, such as unequal access to education, training, and skills development, can create barriers for women in joining cooperatives and succeeding in their activities. In Uganda, women face cultural and economic barriers to participation in cooperatives, limiting their access to resources and opportunities for economic empowerment (Browne, 2014). These barriers include gender inequalities, limited access to land and finance, and underrepresentation in cooperative leadership positions. In Nigeria, women face cultural challenges in participating effectively in cooperatives, which are crucial for their economic empowerment (Saha et al., (2021). These challenges include limited access to land, credit, and extension training, as well as increased

domestic workloads compared to men. In Sudan, women face challenges due to cultural norms and lack of access to resources, particularly within cooperatives (Browne, 2014). These norms restrict their participation in decision-making and access to land and employment, while also placing heavy responsibilities on them regarding family and domestic duties. Cooperative movements in Sudan, while offering potential for women's empowerment, can be hindered by patriarchal structures and a lack of inclusivity. In the African Arab region, women face cultural challenges that limit their participation in cooperatives, particularly in agriculture (Díaz et al., 2024). These challenges stem from traditional gender roles, limited access to resources, and discriminatory practices within cooperatives.

Women economic realities in becoming a cooperative member: Becoming a cooperative member, particularly for women, can significantly enhance their economic base by providing access to resources, opportunities, and support networks (Isobel, 2021). According to Sultana et al., (2022) cooperatives can act as a platform for women to increase their income, gain financial literacy, and access essential services like credit, banking, and healthcare. However, cooperatives have tried to empower women by giving them a voice in decision-making and promoting a sense of community and solidarity. Based on research done by Kahamba and Xiuli (2021) shows that, women in Shinyanga face several challenges when joining cooperatives, including limited access to finance, resources, and information. Cultural and structural constraints, lack of skills, and transportation issues also hinder their participation (Gibson, 2006). Additionally, societal norms and gender biases can limit women's ability to influence decision-making within cooperatives (Thabethe and Uzodike, 2013). Women often struggle to secure loans due to limited access to assets they can use as collateral. Microfinance institutions may view rural women as higher credit risks, making it difficult to secure loans. According to Sherlock (2020) when loans are approved, women may face unmanageable interest rates, hindering their ability to repay. On access to resources and information, women cooperatives may struggle to access information about market opportunities, prices, and demand (Bujang, 2024; Anggraini, 2023). Similarly, according to Akter (2021), transportation challenges become noticeable since, higher transport are female dominance and masculine that makes women difficulties in accessing transportation can limit women's ability to participate in cooperative activities and access markets. On structural and cultural constraints women are constrained with traditional gender roles and societal norms may limit women's access to land, resources, and decision-making roles within cooperatives (Raniga, 2021). Women may lack the necessary skills to effectively manage cooperative finances, develop business plans, and market their products. Based on argument raised by Naiga et al., (2024) the lack of training in areas like marketing, sales, and customer service can limit their ability to thrive within cooperatives. According to Rwekaza and Anania (2021) in many cooperatives, decision-making power is concentrated in the hands of men, limiting women's ability to influence policies and programs. On representation issues, women lack of representation in leadership roles; women may be underrepresented on boards or other decision-making bodies, hindering their ability to advocate for their interests (Bastida, 2020). Women may be more likely to operate in the informal sector, making it difficult to access formal financial services and support Saha et al., (2021). According to Kakati and Kakoty (2022) the legal barriers to land ownership and other property rights can limit women's ability to participate fully in cooperatives. Also, Rwekaza (2021) proposes that, traditional roles and

beliefs can limit women's ability to pursue economic opportunities and take on leadership roles.

Women societal expectations and the cooperatives participation: Women face several societal expectations that can make it challenging for them to participate fully in cooperatives. According to Anggraini (2023). These include cultural norms, social roles, and economic factors that disadvantage women, often limiting their access to education, skills development, and leadership opportunities. Additionally, women may feel less confident or believe they are not "good enough" due to societal expectations, leading to lower participation in cooperative (Rwekaza and Muhihi (2016). Women in cooperative businesses face challenges related to societal attitudes and perceptions, including limited access to resources and finance, cultural stigma, and a lack of recognition of their capabilities (Bujang, 2024). These challenges can hinder their participation, leadership, and overall success within cooperatives. According to Raniga (2021) traditional gender roles often portray women as primarily responsible for household duties, making it difficult for them to dedicate time and energy to cooperative activities. Cultural biases about women's suitability for leadership positions can hinder their advancement within cooperatives. According to the research by Acharya and Kumar (2025) showed that, limited access to education and skills development can hinder women's ability to participate fully in cooperative activities and take on leadership roles; as some leadership position requires a specified knowledge. Also, the inequalities among women and their counterparts in access to resources, education, and training can further exacerbate these challenges (Sakai, 2020). Legal restrictions and by-laws within cooperatives may indirectly limit women's participation, such as rules that only allow one member per family to join (Garcia et al., 2024). In some cases, women's rights to property and land are not legally recognized, which can make it difficult for them to join or participate in cooperatives that require ownership or access to resources. Structural exclusion from financial mechanisms and access to credit can also hinder women's involvement, this happened where in some cases, women are not recognized as the nominal owners of household assets, which can further limit their access to benefits and income within cooperatives (Njenga, 2018). Women often shoulder more domestic responsibilities, which can limit their time and ability to participate in cooperatives. Some women may lack confidence in their abilities and feel they are not "good enough" for leadership roles, leading to lower participation (Winthrop and Simons, 2025). Lack of access to resources and opportunities for networking and mentorship can further undermine women's confidence (Soto and Sato, 2019). Societal expectations can create a sense of obligation to prioritize household duties over cooperative activities, even if women are also employed (Kakati and Kakoty, 2022; Rwekaza, and Anania, 2020). Women may feel pressured to conform to traditional gender roles, making it difficult to challenge existing norms and advocate for change.

Women face structural inequalities when trying to join or participate in cooperatives, which are often rooted in socio-cultural norms, legal restrictions, and limited access to resources Singh et al., (2014). These challenges can hinder their ability to access benefits, achieve financial independence, and reach positions of leadership within the cooperatives. Discriminatory policies in banking and lending can further hinder women's ability to obtain loans or access financial services, which are crucial for participating in cooperatives (Syukri, 2023). This is attributed by lack of collateral since physical resources are named on the female counterparts. According to Andrew et al., (2025), limited access to

credit, banking services, and financial literacy can prevent women from obtaining loans or joining cooperatives that require membership fees. Also, Kazimoto and Shitima (2025) argued that, women are often underrepresented in leadership positions within cooperatives, which can limit their ability to influence decision-making and shape the direction of the organization. The cooperative model can contribute to gender equality by empowering women through increased economic opportunities, access to resources, and leadership roles. However, achieving true gender equality within cooperatives requires addressing structural and social barriers that limit women's participation and representation.

CONCLUSIONS

The Africa cooperatives are playing a significant role in empowering women, both economically and socially. It is concluded that, the challenges of women participating in cooperative decision making and business trend indicates an increasing participation and the positive impact in cooperatives with a gradual change effect. In the cooperative model, gender equality for women is both a challenge and an opportunity. It is concluded that, while cooperatives can empower women economically and socially, particularly in rural areas, they also face obstacles like cultural norms and lack of representation in leadership roles. Overcoming these challenges is through inclusive governance, skill development, and legal reforms can lead to greater gender equality and sustainable development within cooperatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender awareness is a cross-cutting phenomena that need multiple solutions. Community needs a social balance in addressing access and equality among gender issues. The article recommends the following. The cooperative movements across Africa, need to have programs on empowering women through education, skills development, and access to resources is crucial for overcoming these challenges. The cooperative movement and government machinery need to have a deliberate effort on advocating for policies that address structural barriers and promote women's participation in cooperatives is essential. Cooperative promoters, stakeholders and training institutions need to have program on raising awareness about the benefits of women's participation in cooperatives can help build support for these initiatives. Cooperative promoters, stakeholders and training institutions need to have program providing mentorship and networking opportunities can help women build confidence and leadership skills. General legislative changes, like Kenya's constitutional reform requiring a minimum of one-third of representatives of each sex on boards, can potentially influence women's participation in cooperative movements.

Areas for future research: The cooperative model, especially when women-led, presents a promising pathway for women's economic and social empowerment, but further research is needed to understand its nuances and impact on gender relations. Areas for future research include the impact of cooperatives on intra-household power dynamics, the role of gendered expectations and norms within and outside the cooperative, and the effectiveness of different cooperative models in addressing gender inequality. Research should investigate how women's participation in cooperatives affects power relations within households, including decision-making regarding finances, labor allocation, and childcare. Understanding the impact of increased female income and decision-making power on gender roles and social norms is crucial. Comparative research can explore how different cooperative models (e.g., women-only vs. mixed-sex) influence intra-household dynamic. The long-term sustainability of women-led cooperatives and their ability to adapt to changing economic and social

contexts. The impact of digitalization and technology on women's participation in cooperatives.

REFERENCES

- Acharya, S., & Kumar, R. (2025). Leadership and decision-making development in cooperatives. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 9(1), 15–30.
- Akter, F. (2021). *Community development and women's empowerment*. Practice Insights, Issue 15.
- Andrew, L., Borhani, N., Razali, I. A.-H., Ali, J. K., & Yacob, Y. (2025). Cooperatives and women's empowerment: Mapping research trends and future directions. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 9(2), 2871–2889.
- Andrew, T. (2024). Understanding group dynamics in cooperative decision-making. *Journal of Cooperative Studies*, 52(1), 40–55.
- Anggraini, D. (2023). Enhancing women's capabilities through ICT in cooperatives. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, 29(1), 60–75.
- Bastida, M. (2020). Women's contributions to household income through cooperatives. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 47(5), 623–638.
- Browne, E. (2014). Gender in community-driven development. *GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report*, 1079.
- Bujang, A. A. (2024). ICT training programs for women entrepreneurs in cooperatives. *Journal of Cooperative Studies*, 53(2), 90–105.
- Chavan, R., & Apte, M. (2021). Empowerment through women's cooperative leadership development programmes. *Indian Journal of Social Work*, 82(2), 200–215.
- Díaz, P., Silva, P. A., & Tuma, K. (2024). *The Equality Maturity Model: An actionable tool to advance gender balance in leadership and participation roles*. arXiv preprint arXiv:2407.02305.
- Ezati, B. A. (2023). Social diversity, gender, equity and public policy. In E. R. Aiyede & B. Muganda (Eds.), *Public policy and research in Africa* (pp. 142–152). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ezati, B. A. (2023). Social diversity, gender, equity and public policy. In E. R. Aiyede & B. Muganda (Eds.), *Public policy and research in Africa* (pp. 142–152).
- García-Azpurú, A., Izagirre-Olaizola, J., Etxezarreta-Etxarri, A., & Díaz Molina, L. (2024). Global care chains and empowerment through the social economy: Women's participation in care cooperatives. *CIRIEC-España, Revista de Economía Pública, Social y Cooperativa*, 111, 131–160.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2006). Community economic development and ethical decision-making. *Progress in Human Geography*, 30(5), 623–637.
- Isobel T. (2021). Gender Data 4 Girls?: A postcolonial feminist participatory study in Bangladesh. arXiv preprint arXiv:2108.10089.

- Kabeer, N. (2019). *Gender equality and women's empowerment: A critical analysis of the third millennium development goal 1*. *Gender & Development*, 13(1), 13–24
- Kahamba, J. S., & Xiuli, X. (2021). Effects of women's cooperatives on capabilities and gender relations: Empirical evidence from women's dairy cooperatives in Kilimanjaro Region, Tanzania. *International Journal of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Studies*, 8(4), 62–80.
- Kakati, B., & Kakoty, S. (2022). Women's confidence in cooperative decision-making in Jharkhand, India. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 68, 120–130.
- Kazimoto V, E., & Shitima, C. M. (2025). *Determinants of inclusive community participation in rural water project design in Dodoma*. *NG Journal of Social Development*, 17(1).
- Kazimoto, V. E., & Shitima, C. M. (2025). Determinants of inclusive community participation in rural water project design in Dodoma. *NG Journal of Social Development*, 17(1), 1–15.
- Mahlaba, S. N., Ige, K. D., & Tshabalala, N. G. (2022). Women participation and empowerment in the cooperative organisations in South Africa. *African Journal of Gender, Society and Development*, 11(1).
- McLaren, P. (2019). Challenging individualism and gender inequity in cooperatives. *Cooperative Journal*, 37(4), 70–85.
- Mkandawire, E., & du Toit, A. (2024). *Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender and inequality*. In *Handbook on public policy and food security* (pp. 142–152). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Naiga, R., Ananga, E. O., & Kakumba, U. (2024). Gendered participation in water governance: Implications for successful community-based water management and women empowerment. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 40(1), 1–15.
- Njenga, M. (2018). Gender as key in community participation. In M. Romania, M. Njenga, & R. Mendum (Eds.), *Recovering bioenergy in Sub-Saharan Africa: Gender dimensions, lessons and challenges* (pp. 68–69)
- Raniga, T. (2021). Role of economic development cooperatives in improving the livelihoods of women in Gauteng, South Africa. *Development Southern Africa*, 38(3), 1-15.
- Raniga, T. (2021). Role of economic development cooperatives in improving the livelihoods of women in Gauteng, South Africa. *Development Southern Africa*, 38(3), 1–15.
- Rwekaza G, C and Anania, P (2021). Promoting micro, small and medium business enterprises by integrating the co-operative and cluster development models; *Journal of Co-operative and Business Studies (JCBS) Vol. 6(1)1-17*
- Rwekaza G, C. and Muhihi B (2016) Cooperative development in Tanzania, at tool for equality and socio-economic development. *Journal of economics and sustainable development*. International institute for science, technology and education. London Vol no 7(6) 29-40.
- Rwekaza, G. C. (2021). Colonization and decolonization of co-operatives in Tanzania: An analysis of member ownership and control rights, *East African Journal of Social and Applied Sciences*, 3(1), 103-116

- Rwekaza, G. C., and Anania, P (2020). The power of members in co-operatives: Assessing members' participation in decision making process from selected Agricultural Marketing Co-operatives in Shinyanga region, Tanzania, *Journal of Co-operative and Business Studies (JCBS)*, Vol.5, Issue 1, 41-59
- Saha, S., Barsha, R., & Selim, R. (2021). Private dairy cooperatives and women's empowerment in rural Bangladesh. *Journal of Rural Development*, 40(1), 25–40.
- Sakai, M. (2020). Islamic savings and credit cooperatives and women's economic independence in Indonesia. *Journal of Islamic Finance*, 9(2), 45–60.
- Sapkota, M. (2024). Cooperative membership and women's economic activity in rural Nepal. *Nepal Journal of Development Studies*, 21(2), 55–70.
- Sherlock, S. (2020). Collaborating with civil society organizations to empower women's cooperatives. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 47(3), 350–365.
- Singh, D., Lample, M., Jones, M., & Earnest, J. (2014). Capacity building and community development: A community dialogue on equality in rural Uganda. In R. Tiwari, M. Lommerse, & D. Smith (Eds.), *M² Models and Methodologies for Community Engagement* (pp. 25–40).
- Soto A, M., & Sato, Y. (2019). Women's cooperatives in rural Mexico: Building horizontal solidarity. *Latin American Perspectives*, 46(3), 112–128
- Sultana, S., Turzo, A. K., & Bosu, A. (2022). Code reviews in open-source projects: How do gender biases affect participation and outcomes? *arXiv preprint arXiv:2210.00139*.
- Syukri, M. (2023). Gender Policies of the New Developmental State: The Case of Indonesian New Participatory Village Governance. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 42(1).
- Syukri, M. (2023). *Gender policies of the new developmental state: The case of Indonesian new participatory village governance*. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 42(1).
- Syukri, M. (2023). Gender policies of the new developmental state: The case of Indonesian new participatory village governance. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 42(1), 3–24.
- Thabethe, S., & Uzodike, U. O. (2013). Community development strategies and gendered poverty. *African Journal of Public Affairs*, 6(2), 45–60.
- Trinkenreich, B., Wiese, I., Sarma, A., Gerosa, M., & Steinmacher, I. (2021). Women's participation in open-source software: A survey of the literature. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2105.08777*.
- Vedres, B., & Vasarhelyi, O. (2022). Inclusion unlocks the creative potential of gender diversity in teams. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2204.08505*.
- Winthrop, R., & Simons, K. A. (2025). Can international large-scale assessments inform a global learning goal? *International Journal of Education Development*, 40, 1–10.

The Co-operative University of Kenya
P.O. Box 24814-00502, KAREN, NAIROBI
TEL: +254 202430127/202679256
Mobile(office): +254 724311606
Conference link: <https://conference.cuk.ac.ke/>