

ABSTRACT

Beekeeping is a socio-economic activity practiced by both women and men all around the world. It entails the rearing and management of bees for commercial production of honey and other beehive products. In Kenya, beekeeping is mostly a male's dominated venture but with advocacy programme smallholder women have ventured the field. Despite the efforts of county governments and nongovernmental organizations encouraging women participation in beekeeping there is low uptake of this venture, thus the gap between the norm and the practice. This study therefore investigated the selected socio-cultural factors affecting women participation in beekeeping in Baringo South Sub-county. The study sought to investigate how cultural norms and stereotypes affects women participation in beekeeping. Survey research design was used. The study population was 700 women who practiced beekeeping in the areas. From the study population, a study sample size of 128 women participants was selected using simple random sampling procedure. Data was collected using questionnaires for the respondents and interview schedules for the key informants who included the chairs of the women groups and the branch manager of an NGO. The instrument was piloted in Baringo North Sub-county in Kenya. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Majority of the respondents (82.8%) indicated that they had cultural beliefs and stereotypes that hindered them from practicing bee keeping. Most of the stereotypes revolved around beliefs that beekeeping is purely a male's role, no woman should own beehives because she will die. The study therefore recommends more awareness and campaigns to be done on the importance of including women in beekeeping. Policies on gender mainstreaming to be implemented in the area to enable to change the community's perceptions on stereotypes that hinder women from practicing beekeeping. This will enhance women participation in beekeeping in order to create employment and income.

Keywords: cultural norms, socio-cultural factors, women participation,