

# **HOUSEHOLD EMPOWERMENT AND HOUSEHOLD GRADUATION FROM SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES: THE CASE OF CASH FOR ASSETS PROGRAMME IN TAITA TAVETA COUNTY, KENYA**

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**International Academic Journal of Law and Society (IAJLS) | ISSN 2519-772X**

**Received:** 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019

**Accepted:** 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Full Length Research

**Available Online at:**

[http://www.iajournals.org/articles/iajls\\_v1\\_i2\\_374\\_394.pdf](http://www.iajournals.org/articles/iajls_v1_i2_374_394.pdf)

**Citation:** Adiema, C. M., Wainaina, L. & Mbataru, P. (2019). Household empowerment and household graduation from social protection programmes: The case of cash for assets programme in Taita Taveta County, Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Law and Society*, 1(2), 374-394

## **ABSTRACT**

Social Protection interventions have been part of modern government models and are key components of social well state. In Kenya, social protection has been embedded in the legislation through the Basic Social Protection Law and the Constitution respectively. The Social protection programmes provide cash incentives to households to sustain household welfare. The Cash for Assets (CFA) programme is the only productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) that targets food insecure households affected by protracted drought. Social Protection programmes have shown potential in systematically graduating food insecure households from dependence on cash support. Trends in the CFA programme, whose implementation is coordinated by the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) under the Ministry of Devolution and Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL), has demonstrated the contrary without following a systematic process. Graduation is a new concept in Kenya's social protection strategies. It is necessitated by the need for households that have become resilient to food security shocks to systematically rather than voluntarily draw themselves off cash support. This study aimed to analyse and bring out the pathways in household graduation that has enabled household self-reliance from initial dependence on cash support. A descriptive research design was employed to examine household graduation from cash support to self-reliance in social protection programmes; the case of cash for assets programme in Mwatate Sub-County, Taita-Taveta County. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling technique were used to derive a representative sample of beneficiary and implementation partners respectively. The Sustainable Livelihood

Framework was used as the theoretical framework to analyse the determinants of household graduation as attained by households. Primary and Secondary data was collected using interviews and semi-structured questionnaires and analysed using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Inferential statistics were used to draw conclusions from the collected data and presented in pie charts, bar graphs, frequency tables and percentages where applicable, to aid in further data analysis. The study findings established that household empowerment, household food security, market linkage through surplus production and adoption of livelihood strategies had a positive effect on graduation. The impact of market linkage through surplus production and adopted livelihood strategies were found to be very significant in the graduation pathway. Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that self-reliance which led to graduation from social protection programmes such as CFA is heavily dependent on empowerment of the beneficiaries in term of skills and knowledge. Beneficiaries with adequate and relevant skills and knowledge were more likely to become self-reliant when the skills were applied to support household food security. The study further concluded that household food security facilitated subsequent graduation. The study also recommended that stakeholders should devise context specific graduation models using the relationships between the determinants to develop systemic graduation thresholds in social protection programming.

**Key Words:** *household empowerment, household graduation, social protection programmes, cash for assets programme, Taita Taveta County, Kenya*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Social Protection Programmes in Africa have increased in demand in the past decade. Initially recommended to intervene in drought emergencies, social protection programmes have shifted to longer term promotive and transformational functions. Beneficiary graduation from social assistance markedly raised the interest of stakeholders to the progressive nature observed in the cash transfer for social assistance programmes (Adato & Hoddinott, 2008). The growing demand in identifying social protection programmes that can contribute to household graduation through strengthened household food security and resilience is foreseen in the emerging potential of households developing livelihood strategies that enable resilience to food security shocks whilst benefiting from conductional cash incentives invested in productive asset creation (Arriagada, 2011).

Graduation is a new concept in Kenya and is necessitated by the need for households that have become resilient to food security shocks to systematically rather than voluntarily draw themselves off cash support. Over time expectations have become more realistic about the time required for households to be able to graduate from support Garcia, et al (2012). Considering sustainability is the overarching objective of any government programme, Gracia et al (2012) lay emphasis on the fact that graduation is becoming a key component to be considered by governments implementing social protection programmes.

Devereux et al (2009) state that a graduated household is one that could satisfy their own annual food consumption needs independent from PSNP in kind and cash transfers. According to Devereux the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Ethiopia acknowledged that households under cash interventions and are linked to support institutions have greater potential to graduate. PSNP beneficiaries were linked with agricultural and income generating programmes that contributed to their gradual independence from cash incentives through labour contributions in agricultural production (Devereux et al, 2009).

The role of social protection programmes in promoting labour participation in agricultural production is linked with the growing interest for PSNP approach that invests in the 'productivist' focus for many governments Golooba et al, (2013). This study focused on households, under the CFA programme, engaging in productive asset creation through agricultural production. The study analysed the households' attainment of determinants of graduation towards self-reliance through innovative use of the cash incentive, labour contributions and productive assets created that have gradually transformed their lives towards self-reliance (Golooba et al, 2013).

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The CFA programme in Kenya evolved from an emergency response programme with the sole objective to save lives of vulnerable households from the effect of drought. In the process of programme implementation there lacked a clear criterion to systematically wean households that had attained self-reliance, out of the programme. The CFA programme in Taita-Taveta evolved from a relief food aid programme intended to save lives from the effect of protracted drought to a resilience and recovery programme intended to build household self-reliance through food and/or cash assistance. Although certain households were observed to voluntarily opt out of the programme, on attaining self-reliance, a significant majority still remained under

cash support. Kenya, having attained a middle level income economy status and devolved resources to county level, stakeholders gradually came under pressure from donors and other support partners to devise strategic ways through which the beneficiary households could be monitored through the programme transition. In order to demonstrate the impact of the CFA programme stakeholders were required to identify households on achieving self-reliance and ensure that they are supported towards self-reliance to demonstrate the CFA programme's impact. There has not been adequate research and documentation of the graduation concept in Kenya (Evie Browne, 2013). To address this contextual gap, this study focused on assessing the determinants of household graduation from CFA programme among beneficiaries within Taita Taveta County in Kenya in an effort to contribute to the requirement to wean households off cash support in a more systematic manner. Among the recommendations identified by the evaluations in the Oportunades programme in Latin America was the importance of knowing the "exit doors" and the "graduation" mechanisms that were key in informing graduation thresholds used to monitor impact. Similarly, studies in the PSNP programme in Mexico also brought out the gaps in weak monitoring and evaluation systems that could not provide evidence-based impacts of the CCT programmes Hall (2006). The CFA programme implemented in Taita Taveta has gradually experienced unsystematic beneficiary voluntary graduation without a clear demonstration of impact on the households' welfare. It is also eminent that the different stakeholders implementing the CFA programme were unable to jointly document this occurrence with concrete evidence in Taita Taveta. This study is designed to assess and analyse the determinants of graduation to bridge the knowledge and conceptual gap on harmonised indicators which can be used to evidently bring out the impact that the stakeholders' contributions have had on households' welfare throughout the graduation pathway. The graduation study of the SAGE programme identified that households were enrolled into the social protection programme using universal standards which may not have been adaptable locally (Barnes & Kayondo, 2012). In this context, heterogeneity of households as an aspect of social protection programming has not been put into perspective during the design and implementation of the targeting processes, yet this plays a significant role in determining the capacity of households' uptake of programme benefits, pace in progression in attaining self-reliance and eventual graduation. This study is designed to address this knowledge gap that has been realised in the application of standard universal targeting processes and blanket (uniform) distribution of food and/ or cash transfer of incentives in social protection programmes. Additionally, studies in this area such as CFPR-TUP programme in Haiti conducted by Huda (2009) did not consider economic status, habitats and gendered aspects in beneficiaries households in the baseline for strategic CCT programming. To bridge this methodological gap, this study analysis focused on specific intra-household characteristics such as age, marital status, gender and level of education to relate heterogeneity to progression in the graduation pathway.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To determine the effect of household empowerment on graduation of households from the social protection programme in Kenya.
2. To analyse the effect of household food security on graduation of households from the social protection programme in Kenya.

3. To assess the effect of market linkage on graduation of households from the social protection programme in Kenya.
4. To establish the effect of livelihood strategies on graduation of households from the social protection programme in Kenya.

## **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

### **Household Empowerment**

Intra-household analysis in the fields of economics sociology, and anthropology provides ample evidence across a range of cultures that women tend to invest more in children in their households (Haddad et al. 1997). Some of these investments occur in non-agricultural women enterprises activities, further improving the long-term prospects of beneficiary households beyond the cash transfer, through diversification of income generation sources. In the long-run, these investments may also yield to significant changes in women's empowerment and insertion in economic networks Rawlings, L. B. (2006). Considering the CFA programme in this study identified women as custodians of the cash incentive, household empowerment was analysed to bring out the impact on knowledge and skills invested in households that enabled self-reliance in the long run.

In regard to household empowerment, Bastagli et al (2009) explain that the broad aim of conditionality is to improve human capital outcomes and promote resilience through impacts on behaviour. In the cash transfer pilot project carried out by WFP and the government of Sri Lanka, household decision making was found impacted by the cash transfers. 60 percent of the couples reported taking the decision about spending jointly rather than only men as per the tradition in Sri Lanka (Sandstorm & Tchatchua, 2010). The researchers attribute transformation in decision making processes to enlightened spouses who have embraced gender transforming aspects of the programme through acquired knowledge, skills and subsequent empowerment. Similarly, cash transfer programmes directed to women was found to improve gender equity and empowerment in the Admam and Nicobar Island, 2004 Indian Ocean Tsumani EMOP. Provision of services was made to ensure men were able to fully participate in the programme, for instance, according support in child care facilities as such allowing intervals for breastfeeding breaks for infant feeding. Also, women were encouraged to challenges gender stereotypes by taking up activates such as fishing (Action Aid 2008) which are largely associated with the male fraternity in their context. All this was in an effort to promote behaviour that would support households' concerted efforts in enhancing their wellbeing whilst applying what has been learnt.

According to Punkurst (2009) it is believed that households need to be involved in other food security initiatives, notably improving their production, particularly through the extension package inputs and especially credit through imparted knowledge and skills. While cash incentive and labour contributions made by men and women were assessed as programme inputs, knowledge and skills were assessed as applied to attained determinants of graduation to enhance household welfare.

Lack of or inadequate capacity to acquire knowledge and skills impeded application of the same for the benefit of the household. Purkust (2009) adds that vulnerable and female-headed

households who did not access adequate extension services were not able to benefit from the technology and sold bee-hives at half the price for which they had obtained them on credit in the PSNP implemented in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopia PSNP results indicated 67 per cent of female-headed households did not feel ready to graduate, in comparison to 47 per cent of male-headed households (Sabates-Wheeler et al, (2012). Household empowerment in this study was analysed from a gender lens to derive the empowerment of men and women in the programme enabled by attainment of skills and confidence to voluntarily opt-out of cash support. In this study, self-graduation is largely unsystematic as it is voluntary. Similar to the findings in the Ethiopian PSNP, a larger proportion of the households in the CFA programme are not ready to graduate even if they have relatively attained the a combination of determinants that would enable self-reliance.

### **Household Food Security**

Household food security manifests as a result of a combination of factors affecting individual households. In his conference paper Pankhurstm (2009) highlights that the Government's Food Security Coordination Bureau issued a Graduation Note suggesting that: "It is not expected, however, that the productive Safety Net programmes, such as the Conditional Cash transfer, alone will move households towards food sufficiency and graduation. Additional interventions are required to build household assets and address vulnerabilities that make households food insecure". Once household vulnerabilities are addressed, positive impacts on income, employment, food security and assets are assessed to remain largely sustainable in the long run (Misha & Das, 2010). Evidently in this regard, 41 per cent of the households had crossed the extreme poverty line by 2008 in the Bangladesh CERF/PUT as a result of a combination of interventions targeting household food security (Hashemi & Umaira, 2011).

Documented impacts of the Cash transfer programmes in Kenya in 2009, and in Ethiopia the same year resulted in positive outcomes in food security and nutrition. In the Kenya Refugee camps 2007, Cash transfer increased the dietary diversity among targeted households and allowed vendors to expand their businesses Dunn (2009). More recent findings show that beneficiary households under the CFA programme and those under FFA programmes had larger proportions with acceptable food consumption score indices at 71 and 70 percent respectively WFP Kenya (2016). This implied that household under CFA interventions were consuming a wider variety of food and in more portions and that these foods both available and accessible from own produce or purchased from the local markets.

Although cash is most likely to be spent on immediate consumption in a relief or emergency context, O'Donnell et al, (2008) discusses that in 2005, after a severe drought, cash transfers arrived in 2006 in Kenya when the situation was less acute. 85 percent of the times, the cash was used on productive investments such as livestock breeding rearing for household food. In Zambia, the Oxfam emergency cash transfer programme can be seen as an appropriate and effective response to a potential food security crisis. The intervention helped people to get through a difficult year, protect assets and avoid negative coping strategies and deepening poverty Harvey and Morogwe, (2006). Cash transfers were more cost-effective in increasing food utilisation, education and health expenditures at household level Aker (2014).

In this study household food security is looked at as a determinant of graduation. This concept will be assessed to understand the progressive contribution of the CFA programme to household resilience to food security shocks. The second question therefore assesses the households' ability to meet food gaps especially over lean periods of the year in the graduation pathway.

### **Market Linkage**

Having undergone transformation from relief food intervention to cash assistance, cash incentives in the CFA programme has proven to be a good alternative or complement to in-kind (food) assistance in humanitarian contexts, provided that both domestic and commercial markets respond with demand for local produce. Markets, therefore, play an important function in the socio-economic aspects of food security in the social protection programming Gentilini, et al (2009). Findings in the humanitarian cash transfer research carried out in Congo highlighted that existing evidence on providing cash transfers in humanitarian crisis not only stimulates markets but also represents value for money sourced for its implementation compared to in-kind alternatives that only address short term food needs Morey (2017).

The plausibility of a cash transfer programme relies on the needs of the potential beneficiaries to utilise the cash incentive and the ability of the markets to absorb and to circulate the monetary injection that a cash transfer programme brings. There is, therefore evidence that cash transfer interventions have multiplier effects on the local economy to stimulate economic recovery through surplus production for trade in market linkage (DFID, 2016). Households in the CFA programme gradually attained the potential to produce food in surplus, sell to local, area and private markets. Subsequently, they were able to earn cash income to purchase other food commodities from the same markets.

In this study market linkage was associated with surplus production at household level that potentially enabled sustainable trade as such stimulated market economies. The third research question endeavoured to probe households' ability to market surplus produce that gained households cash income that in turn supplemented their own production sustainably meeting household food needs.

### **Livelihood Strategies**

Barnes and Kayondo (2012) state that cash transfers allow people to invest in rebuilding their livelihoods and repaying debts as such boosting their resilience to future shocks. UNICEF's ARCC approach bases its argument on the realisation that families who receive cash assistance will make purchases that will increase access to basic goods, services, and livelihood opportunities, ultimately enhancing their well-being and resilience (Morey, 2017). Barnes et al also highlight that finding of the evaluation of WFPs livelihood programme indicated that the diversification of livelihoods through stronger engagement in crop production and broadening the range of agricultural enterprises is a welcome concept considering livestock livelihoods had been prone to both climatic and prevailing rustling in the community.

Prize (2002) also explains that, cash can promote productive investment in the context where the situation is less acute, or the total amount paid is large enough to support community-based micro-investments. In the CFA programme, success stories that have caught the attention of

the media portray that CFA has contributed to community cohesion where households carry out joint investments to expand household resources Standard media, Kenya (2018). The Brazil's Bolsa Família study show that CCT programmes do appear to support strong entrepreneurship skills. Beneficiaries have the confidence to run businesses or to take microfinance loans, which indicates a higher level of participation in the labour market (Machado et al., 2011).

The Brazil's Bolsa Família study shows that CCT programmes do appear to support strong entrepreneurship skills. Beneficiaries have the confidence to run businesses or to take microfinance loans, which indicates a higher level of participation in the labour market (Machado et al., 2011). It is in this regard that the fourth research question assessed the potential household innovations in IGAs for self-reliance. This question probed further to obtain information on households' investment in saving and loans that facilitated adoption of livelihood strategies that enabled graduation.

### **Graduation from Social Protection Programmes**

Starting in 2006, CGAP and the Ford Foundation have been exploring how a "graduation model" can create pathways out of extreme poverty. In their extensive research, the BRAC model (Figure 2.1) was developed for the CCT programme in Bangladesh and has been a reference for the modification development and analysis of series of 10 pilot projects in eight countries involving a broad range of partners to test and apply the universality of the BRAC. The BRAC model depicts five building blocks in the graduation process. 1; selection criteria that targets poor households for the intervention, 2; Consumption support which entails availing cash support for households until they are able to benefit from productive assets with support from the programme. 3; Savings and investments that build assets through financial discipline 4; skills training to manage the assets 5; Asset transfer which help the households decide which assets are most suitable or their livelihood on acquisition of skills. This CFA graduation study was moulded upon four determinants of graduation namely; 1; acquired knowledge and skills 2; household food security 3; market linkage and 4; diversified food and cash income livelihood strategies. The determinants in this study adopted a customised sequence of the building blocks in the BRAC model.

Chirwa, et al (2011) explain that graduation takes place when households are able to withstand certain levels of shock and stresses. Chirwa's argument suffices in the study where the graduation model to be constructed dwells on the beneficiaries' gradual ability to rely less and less on the CFA cash incentive. The BRAC graduation rate indicated that 95 percent of the programme beneficiaries graduated based on participants fulfilling 6 out of 9 indicators, such as food security, diversified income sources, asset ownership, improved housing, and school enrolment. The results also estimate that over 75 percent of these households were food secure and managing sustainable economic activities, El-Zoghbi et al (2009). This study benefited from the experience gained in the implementation of the BRAC study to derive progressive determinants as indicators for household graduation. The study also endeavoured to determine the association of the determinants with each other and with graduation.

According to Hashemi and Umaira (2011), the BRAC model was developed through concerted efforts with host government and non-state actors to derive a policy direction on household

graduation from cash support. This study benefited from experiences gained by both state and non-state actor respondents that are stakeholders in the CFA programme and that are also potential participants in the social protection policy formulation processes at county level.

### **Condition Cash Transfer Graduation Models**

Although there has not been a significant investment in graduation studies from social protection programmes in Kenya, it is becoming a requirement for the Kenya National Social Protection Policy development process to incorporate specific graduation models for conditional cash transfer programmes (Republic of Kenya 2011). Social protection programming typically evokes a debate over traditional programming areas, including the appropriateness and design of conditionalities – whether or not to link transfers to certain activities; the type of transfers – cash, food or vouchers; or targeting mechanisms Gentilini, et al (2009). Concerted efforts from the state and non-state actors continue to play an integral role in customising the conditionalities for graduation from conditional cash transfer programmes and other social assistance programmes in Kenya.

According to Rawlings (2006) conditional cash transfer programmes mainly use untied monetary transfers, in the belief that the households themselves can make best use of the cash transfers to meet their priority or preferred food and household needs or even innovate sustainable livelihood options. The BRAC model guided the study to pay attention to the households' choices that met both their food and cash requirements and which also, had a bearing on what options they took to best promote households' welfare through resilience to food security shocks and self-reliance.

Rawlings (2006) further argues that in practice, more emphasis has been placed on defining rules for leaving programmes than on graduation strategies. This study benefited from BRACs universality to aid the conceptualisation of the CFA graduation process. Additionally, gaps in literature reviewed on graduation model, beneficiary targeting, heterogeneity in households, CCT programme transitions, partnerships and inter-sectoral inclusiveness as well as monitoring and evaluation were instrumental to inform derivation of a conceptual design of a systematic graduation model for the CFA programme.

**Targeting – SAGE programme, Karamoja Uganda:** In their findings Barnes and Kayondo (2012) indicated that the evaluation showed that households under this programme were targeted using international standards with acceptable threshold indicators which may not have been adaptable locally for beneficiary graduation. The targeted 95, 000 households (600,000 people) received a cash incentive of 10 USD monthly derived from universal standards for this category of CCT. The evaluation of the SAGE programme discussed that the national partnership approach supported three major categories of social groups. Cash grants were issued to the elderly poor, vulnerable families and orphans and vulnerable children as long as they were labour constrained and required aid. The CFA programmes in this study encompassed the analysis of respondents' views in the beneficiary selection process. This study therefore sought to interview respondents on their selection into the CFA programme to determine if the criteria was customised locally or derived from international or other standards.

**Heterogeneity of Households - CFPR-TUP Study, Haiti:** The study on CFPR-TUP indicated that development programs and policies need to address situations of poor households putting it into consideration that they are heterogeneous: that gendered poverty exists, and that farmers, landless, rural and urban dwellers, all have a varying spectrum of needs (Huda, 2009). For this study to coin a model that can be incorporated into progressive and continuous cycles of social protection interventions it considered sensitive contexts of gender, age, cash income generation, livelihood strategies, and livelihood zones that the beneficiaries of the CFA programme associated with. Analysis was done to obtain unique household characteristics in the achievement of graduation milestones.

**Partnerships and Inter sectoral inclusiveness - IGVGD study, Bangladesh:** IGVGD graduation study findings indicated that partnership between WFP, several ministries of the Government and BRAC was forged to incorporate an inter-sectoral approach in the implementation of BRAC graduation processes. Fresh contracts for every cycle (consisting of two years) had to be negotiated between the parties. Considering the negotiation processes took six months and the development of components of the programme provided by BRAC, such as different types of training, saving and offering credit to a large number of beneficiaries all over the country were to be completed within 18 months. Sulaiman (2008) upholds that the IGVGD programme implementation and governance was itself part of the problem. Sulaiman, adds that day-to-day logistical and coordination related trouble-shooting leaves little room for paying the kind of attention needed on important requirements for programme quality such as quality of training, building confidence and cohesion among IGVGD beneficiaries, follow-up, supervision and mentoring that make graduation more likely. The CFA programme in this study takes a multi-sectoral approach and is implemented by various agencies; WFP, department of Social protection, department of ASAL, National Drought Management Authority, National and International non-state actors and financial service providers that have demanding prerequisites and inflexible internal processing requirements in the programme delivery. This sought from the stakeholders the contributions a multi-sectoral approach made towards graduation.

**Programme Transition - PSNP programme in Ethiopia:** Kebede (2006) argues that the shifts from food aid to food assistance in social protection programmes can undermine the prospects for graduation and growth as such requires a range of complementary measures to be undertaken enable households adapt to the changes. Kebede (2006) refers to the evidence from the first year of implementation of the PSNP cash-based livelihood development programme which suggested that shifting from food support to cash-based transfer programmes has implications for targeting, availability of and price of food in local markets. The CFA programme in this study is experiencing the effects in the shifts over the years of implementation. This study was informed by the actions taken by the households to adapt to changes in the programme during its implementation; when the targeted households progressively required to be re-targeted for transition into resilience building interventions, get introduced to the cash incentive with gradual withdrawal of food aid, and their adjustment to the intensity of a multi-sectoral approached in strengthening of IGAs for sustainable livelihoods options in the graduation pathway.

**Monitoring and Evaluation– PSNP Bolsa Família in Mexico:** According to Hall (2006) the coverage of Bolsa Família was impressive, however, systematic evaluation of its social and economic impacts was lacking. The implication of a weak monitoring and evaluation system can contribute to difficulties in giving accurate impact of a CCT programme. Having yielded evidence that the programme has increased food security and asset production among beneficiary households, Hall reiterated that governments felt confident in continuing to increase internal financing to expend on PSNP monitoring, evaluation and assessment processes. This study referred to food security assessment reports and CFA programme process monitoring reports to obtain evidence-based information with regards to increased food security. The study therefore analysed indicators of the determinants of graduation that linked to the secondary data information relating food security and resilience to climatic shocks with self-reliance in the graduation pathway.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD FRAMEWORK**

According to Carney, (1998) the Sustainable Livelihood Theory's central element is resilience to stress and shocks and the requirement that livelihoods must also be able to maintain capabilities and assets into the future. Scoones (1998) elaborates further that the SLF analyses how household food security and livelihood diversification are outcomes realised with support from various institutions investing in the six capitals.

The SLF adopted by DFID to analyse how livelihood capital, assets, strategies and outcomes are affected continuously by transforming structures, processes and vulnerabilities in the attainment of sustainable livelihoods in a programme life cycle. According to Levine (2014), Standard SLF diagrams show livelihood strategies as being shaped by the assets that household have invested in which they can claim. Various institutional factors (or 'policies, institutions and processes' – PIPs) mould the establishment of the livelihood strategies adopted by the communities, from which livelihood outcomes are realised in the long run.

Adato and Meinzen-Dick (2002) state that activities such as skills transfer in learning, food production, trade, savings and investments practiced by beneficiaries while implementing livelihood strategies culminate to sustainable livelihood diversification which characterises sustainable graduation. In the same light Pankhurst (2009) argues that safety net programmes on their own may not allow large numbers to graduate from food insecurity, but if combined with the other food security programmes they will be able to do so. This study therefore, refers to the SLF to assess the extent to which the livelihood capitals; financial, physical, natural, human, political and social capital have been strengthened and sustained by the supporting structure in the CFA programme.

In Kenya, the graduation concept in social protection for CCT programmes has not been adequately researched and documented. Previous, more comprehensive researches have been conducted in countries affected by the food, fuel and financial crisis of 2008-9 and countries facing rapid and slow onset weather-related shocks where CCTs have been set up to respond to shocks Evie Browne (2013). This section reviews the stages undergone by households in their transition towards self-reliance that elicit determinants of graduation. The study conceptualised the determinants of graduation; household empowerment, household food security, surplus production for market linkage and livelihood strategies adopted by households. This section

also highlights the determinants of graduation and relates them to how the research questions apply in the knowledge gaps realised in the development of graduation models.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study adopted a descriptive research design. The study used descriptive research design as it allows for the use of the elements of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The research design also allowed for description of variables under investigation. It further allow the study to address the questions, why, when where and what in regard to household empowerment and graduation from the social protection programme hence it was deemed appropriate. Additionally, the descriptive design enabled comprehensive description of the state of affairs. Kothari (2004) states that descriptive studies are not only restricted to fact findings but may often result in formulation of important principles of knowledge and solution to significant problems. Interviews were conducted with respondents sourced from both CFA project beneficiaries and representatives from stakeholders who work in institutions that implement and support the CFA beneficiaries in attaining self-reliance.

### **Study Variables**

The research variables in this study were used to describe a transition process in the CFA programme. The independent variables, categorised into four areas; Household empowerment, Household food security, Market linkage and livelihood strategies are assessed as determinates of household graduation. Graduation as the independent variable is attained when households acquire the individual or a combination of determinants that will enable households attain the components of graduation. Ideally sustainable graduation may not imply termination of support on attaining determinants but on-ward linkages to other programmes to strengthen acquired strategies in a more comprehensive way. Misha et al (2010) propose that positive impacts on income, employment, food security and assets are assessed as largely sustainable in the long run under the lenses of a graduation model. Notably 41 per cent of the households had crossed the extreme poverty line by 2008 in the Bangladesh CERF/PUT (Hashemi and Umaira, 2011) in the course of attaining various graduation bench marks as depicted in the components of the determinants.

### **Area of Study**

Taita -Taveta County has a total of four sub-counties namely: Wundanyi, Voi, Mwatate and Taveta. It has a total area of 17,083.9 square kilometres whereby Tsavo East and Tsavo West national parks make up 62 percent, range land 24 percent and land suitable for rain-fed agriculture 12 percent of the total area. It has a population of 284,657 (KNBS, 2009). The county has three major livelihood zones namely; mixed farming (food crops and livestock) 34 percent of the total population, mixed farming (horticulture and dairy) 21 percent, mixed farming (irrigation and livestock) 11 percent and the other livelihoods which make up the remaining 34 percent include business (13 percent), Casual waged labour (20 percent) and Formal employment (one percent). The county is classified as being in the 'None' or 'Minimal' (IPC Phase I) phase across all livelihood zones except for some areas in the mixed

farming (food crops, livestock) zone of Mwatate Sub county which are in the 'Stressed' (IPC Phase 2) phase (Republic of Kenya, 2017).

### **Target Population**

The target population of the study included CFA beneficiaries that are still enrolled in the programme, CFA beneficiaries who had graduated from the CFA programme and state and non-state stakeholders the supported the beneficiaries in the implantation of the programme. At the time of the study, the programme had 990 beneficiaries currently enrolled, 22 stakeholders responsible for programme implementation and 170 beneficiaries who had self-graduated from the programme. Therefore, the target population of the study was 1182 respondents.

### **Sampling Techniques and Sample Size**

According to Mugenda, (2003) 10% of the information collected from the target population is enough to represent the study population. This means the study sample size of 116 CFA beneficiary households is scientifically representative, it comprises of households. A simple stratified random sampling technique was used to select the respondents such that each enlisted respondent will have an equal chance to be selected (Kumar, 2011). Each individual in this study was chosen randomly by selecting every fifth respondents from the sampling frame. Purposive sampling was used to select the sub-county where CFA programme is already being implemented in Taita Taveta County and so were respondents from stakeholders of the state and non-state actors.

### **Research Instruments**

Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect data from the two categories of respondents; beneficiaries and stakeholders. The questionnaires are economically appropriate for the large amount of data that is to be collected within a limited period of time. Additional information was sourced from focus groups discussions to ensure the researcher engages beyond the questionnaires and probe further to understand intricate issues to guide in the coining of inferences.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The study sought research authorization before data collection from relevant institutions which included Kenyatta University, NACOSTI, Taita Taveta County government, World Vision Taita Taveta and WFP\_KCO management. During the field study, data was collected through enumerators. The enumerators were those able to speak the local language to ease translation from English and Kiswahili during the interviews. The respondents that were interviewed were direct beneficiaries of the CFA programme, stakeholders from state and non-state actors from various sectors implementing the programme in Taita-Taveta County. Related secondary documents including assessment reports, journals, newsletters, magazines produced by the stakeholders were also reviewed for additional information.

### **Data Analysis**

According to Kothari (2004), descriptive statistics concern the development of certain indices from the raw data. The measures used to summarize the data included central tendency, dispersion, asymmetry, and relationships. This study used measures of central tendency and

frequencies to summarize the data. Key tools to present the data included graphs, charts, tables and pie charts. Statistics Package for Social Scientists (version 21.0 SPSS) was used to facilitate data processing since as it covers a broad range of statistical procedures. In addition, the regression model was used to establish the association between independent and dependent variables. The following multivariate regression was used by the study to test the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where: Y = Graduation; X1 = Household Empowerment; X2 = Household food Security; X3 = Market linkage; X4 = Livelihood Strategies;  $\varepsilon$  = Error Term (represents variables not in the model);  $\beta_1 \dots 4$  = Regression Coefficients which represents the sensitivity of the dependent variable to changes in independent variables;  $\beta_0$  = Value of dependent variables when all independent variables are equal to zero.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

The study sought to test whether empowerment of beneficiaries, household food security, marketing of surplus production and whether adopted livelihood strategies enabled graduation. The following subsections contain the major findings of the study.

### **Effect of Empowerment of Beneficiaries on Graduation**

The first objective of the study sought to test the effect of empowerment of beneficiaries on graduation. The findings revealed that the knowledge and skills obtained while practicing agricultural production especially those learnt through RWH techniques and livestock production significantly contributed to household empowerment that enabled households make informed choices in the adoption of sustainable livelihood strategies. Similarly, experiences gained from market information and agricultural extension service stimulated the households' potential in sustaining surplus production for trade, especially in local markets such as schools and hospitals. Subsequently, trade in local markets stimulated agribusiness skill development among beneficiaries. Village savings and loans investments were also noted to significantly empower households in developing a savings culture. This also provided them with a platform to develop sustainable IGAs that supported their self-reliance in the graduation pathway. The findings evidently implied that empowerment of beneficiaries significantly influenced their graduation from cash support. The finding of correlation and analysis of variance further revealed that empowerment of beneficiaries was positively related to graduation but least related to household food security. The regression analysis, however, showed that the effect was insignificant.

### **Effect of Household Food Security on Graduation**

The second objective of the study sought to test whether household food security influenced graduation of CFA beneficiaries. According to the study findings majority of the respondents agreed that RWH techniques applied at household level for agricultural production supported the households meet their food needs throughout the year, especially in lean seasons. Trade in local and area markets earned household sufficient income to complement the cash incentives to purchase adequate food that met their food needs in the same seasons. Similarly, initiatives in village savings and loans with investments in IGAs encouraged a savings culture that

allowed for future investments that could prevent the households from disposing their assets to meet food needs in protracted drought seasons. The finding therefore revealed that food security was a strong determinant of graduation from CFA programme. This finding was further reinforced with the findings of correlation analysis that showed that household food security was strongly correlated to graduation. The correlation analysis also revealed that household food security was strongly correlated to surplus production for trade in markets. Regression analysis results on the other hand showed positive but insignificant effect of households' food security on graduation.

### **Effect of Marketing of Surplus Production on Graduation**

The study further sought to ascertain whether marketing of surplus production by beneficiaries of the CFA programme influenced their graduation from the programme. According to this study findings, livestock production, trade in local and area markets and own and village savings and loans with investments in IGAs enhanced surplus production for trade in markets which was sustained and enabled household graduation. This finding is substantiated by both correlation and regression analysis which revealed that market linkage had a significant impact on graduation. The correlation analysis also revealed that given the strong correlation between market linkage and sustainable with food security at household level, the former was enabled by the households ability to remain food secure.

### **Effect of Livelihood Strategies on Graduation**

The study finally sought to test whether livelihood strategies adopted from CFA influenced the rate of graduation. The results showed that respondents agreed that adoption of livelihood strategies derived from investments in livestock production and RWH techniques sustained self-reliance. Surplus production for marketing linkage in local and area markets earned household sufficient cash income. Own, registered groups and village savings and loans investments were prominent determinants of graduation. The regression coefficients indicated that livelihood strategies had a significant impact of graduation. The results from the correlation analysis showed that livelihood strategies were least correlated with graduation but still remained prominent determinant.

## **INFERENCE STATISTICS**

The study employed inferential statistics to infer the effect of empowerment of beneficiaries, household food security, and market linkage with surplus production and adoption livelihood strategies on the rate of graduation of CFA beneficiaries. The study used correlation and regression analysis in this section. The following multivariate regression was used by the study to test the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where: Y = Graduation; X<sub>1</sub> = Household Empowerment; X<sub>2</sub> = Household food Security; X<sub>3</sub> = Market linkage; X<sub>4</sub> = Livelihood Strategies.

The correlation analysis findings showed that household empowerment and graduation were strongly correlated with a Pearson's correlation value of  $r=0.552$ . Similarly, household food security ( $r=0.620$ ) and market linkage with surplus production ( $r=0.688$ ) were found to be

strongly related with the rate of graduation of beneficiaries from the CFA programme. Also, strongly related are correlation between marketing of surplus production with adopted livelihood strategies and households graduation with  $r=.605$  and  $r=.688$  respectively among the respondents. According to the findings, household food security has a notable correlation with livelihood strategies adopted and graduation with,  $r=.583$  and  $r=.620$ . The correlation between livelihood strategies and graduation was found to be weak ( $r=0.451$ ).

Also low was the Correlation between household empowerment to household food security was low at  $r=0.416$ . These findings agree with Adato and Meinzen-Dick (2002) who stated that activities such as skills transfer in learning, food production, trade, savings and investments practiced by beneficiaries while implementing livelihood strategies culminate to sustainable livelihood diversification are inter-related as such characterises sustainable graduation.

These findings also show that Household empowerment, household food security and market linkage each have the strongest Pearson's correlation value ( $r=0.552$ ,  $r=.583$  and  $r=.605$  respectively) to Adopted livelihood strategies. Each of the three determinants also have the strongest correlation value ( $r=0.552$ ,  $r=.620$  and  $r=.688$  respectively) to graduation. Household food security also has a significant correlation ( $r=.548$ ) to market linkage. This result also shows a progressive relationship between the determinants to graduation building onto one another. It also confirms the individual (respective) relationship between household empowerment, household food security and market linkage to graduation. The results affirm that household food security is least correlated with their empowerment as adopted livelihood strategies may be to graduation. The results show inter-relatedness of the determinants and can be used to define how one build onto another. The findings support Chirwa, et al (2011), who state that the practical determination of formal graduation from social protection programmes requires precise specification of both variables and thresholds defining the graduation.

Regression analysis was further employed to test the nature, magnitude and significance of the effect of empowerment of beneficiaries, household food security, and marketing of surplus production and livelihood strategies on rate of graduation from CFA programme. The finding indicated that empowerment of beneficiaries, household food security, and marketing of surplus production and livelihood strategies accounted for 67.7% ( $r\text{-squared} = 0.677$ ) of graduation from CFA programme. The finding implied that these variables were significantly related to graduation from CFA programme by the beneficiaries.

Analysis of the variance (ANOVA) indicated that the regression model used to link empowerment of beneficiaries, household food security, and marketing of surplus production and livelihood strategies and rate of graduation from CFA programme was statistically significant as shown by  $f=24.095$  with a corresponding  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$  which was less than critical  $p\text{-value}$  of 0.05. These findings implied that empowerment of beneficiaries, household food security, and marketing of surplus production and livelihood strategies significantly influenced graduation.

According to the regression coefficients results, empowerment of beneficiaries, household food security, and marketing of surplus production and livelihood strategies all had a positive effect on graduation. The effect of marketing of surplus production ( $\beta=0.937$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) and livelihood strategies ( $\beta=0.378$ ,  $p=0.036$ ) on graduation was found to be significant ( $p<0.05$ )

while empowerment ( $\beta=0.109$ ,  $p=0.671$ ) and household food security ( $\beta=0.035$ ,  $p=0.859$ ) had insignificant effect on graduation since their p-values was greater than 0.05.

The findings in the inferential statistics in this section further agree with Kebede, (2006) who also argues that to enhance the prospects for graduation and growth a range of complementary measures to be undertaken enable households adapt to the changes in the graduation pathway. In essence the results from the ANOVA, regression coefficient are in line with Chirwa, et al (2011) that the universality of the BRAC graduation model depicting five building blocks in the graduation process. (1; selection criteria 2; Consumption support through 3; Savings and investments through financial discipline 4; skills training to manage the assets 5; Asset transfer which help the households decide which assets are most suitable or their livelihood) is ideal for customisation of graduation models.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the most significant determinants of graduation were household empowerment; Beneficiaries have the highest potential to graduation if their progression in the graduation pathway followed this significant pathway or invested in each individual determinant to attain self-reliance depending on their level of empowerment.

On the relationship between household food security and graduation of the households from the social protection programmes, the study concluded that household with access to local markets, area markets, food from RWH Structures-large scale and food from livestock production contributed significantly to graduation. The rate of graduation from the social protection programmes increases when beneficiary achieve food security in their households.

The study also concluded that a market linkage plays significant roles in households' graduation from the social protection programmes. The study concluded that private market (commercial firm, companies, and organizations). Savings and investments through financial discipline help the households decide which assets are most suitable or their livelihood is ideal for customisation of graduation models.

The study also shows that the adoption of livelihood strategies may not necessarily lead to sustainable household graduation. Households should therefore be sensitised to understand that graduation presents an opportunity to broaden social protection development impacts through linkage with transforming structures and process such as institutions - comprising of the government, stakeholders, their policies, strategies, structures and mandates – contribute to the strengthening of household livelihood strategies.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In order to construct a comprehensive graduation model that would support systematic household graduation, the study made the following recommendations; First, stakeholders should make concerted efforts to understand the relationships between the determinants to establish context specific graduation pathways, for heterogeneous households to systematically wean off the programme, as opposed to just defining rules for exit from social protection programmes. It is in this regard that the study also recommends that stakeholders in social protection programmes should incorporate the identification and use of context-specific

graduation models that support adoption of appropriate livelihood strategies in agricultural production, market linkage and saving and loans management.

Secondly, the stakeholders of social protection programme should advocate for household food security which when sustained ensures sustained surplus production for household to earn income and save for increased diversified IGAs and investments VSLAs. The study revealed that the culture of savings and investment if adopted, will be the strategy that will ensure an increase in household cash income for sustained household food security, continued surplus production to sustain attainment of self-reliance through progressive determinants of graduation from social protection programme.

The study finally recommends that social protection programmes have potential to sustain self-reliance. In order to manage the 'fear' of programme closure, beneficiary graduation modalities should be incorporated at the entry of the programme with full knowledge and consent of enrolled or participating households.

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