

## Problems and Prospects of Rural Women Entrepreneurs in Kakamega County, Kenya

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**Abstract :** Women entrepreneurs in the rural areas of Kenya have continually been affected by culturally engraved gendered bias customs. This research investigates challenges and prospects of rural women entrepreneurship in Kakamega County, Kenya. We conducted the questionnaire survey and interviews among 153 women entrepreneurs in the County to better understand how traditional norms influence them in conducting or seeking small businesses. We found that Luhya customs significantly affect growth and performance of rural women enterprises. Traditional Luhya society does not recognize women's rights to land and higher education. The Luhya traditional roles of women are limited so that, without competing with men, they need to find gender biased works through networking activities. Also, without higher education degrees, their business prospects are limited. Among the respondents, 31% had primary education and about 5% had no formal education at all. We discuss how these women may succeed in businesses under these conditions.

**Keywords :** chama, culture, entrepreneurs, rural women

**Conference Title :** ICEMSD 2018 : International Conference on Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development

**Conference Location :** Tokyo, Japan

**Conference Dates :** October 08-09, 2018