

## **Influence of Age on Social- Economic Development of Peri-Urban Women in Nakuru East Constituency of Kenya**

**Maureen Ndung'u<sup>1</sup>, Lily Njanja<sup>2</sup> & David Gichuhi<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Maureen Ndung'u is a Masters of Developmental Studies Student at St. Paul's University, Kenya

<sup>2</sup>Lily Njanja is an Associate Professor, Faculty of Business Studies at St. Paul's University, Kenya

<sup>3</sup>David Gichuhi is a lecturer, Faculty of Social Sciences, St. Paul's University, Kenya

Received: March 10, 2018

Accepted: March 28, 2018

### **Abstract**

*The role of women in development has until lately been indiscernible. This has fundamentally been as a result of disregarding the issues of women and gender within the theory and practice of development. The exclusion of women from the various developmental aspects has made women to be seen as impediments to the process of development. This study sought to examine the influence of age on peri-urban women social- economic development. It found that majority of the women in the peri-urban areas were elderly and not able to engage in vigorous and multiple income generating activities. Thus, old age was found to have affected the women's social-economic growth. The study recommended that the government should review its policies related to women funds for the purpose of ensuring consistency and equal distribution of funds to all women age groups in the Peri-urban areas.*

**Keywords – Social –Economic Development**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Issues relating to women have taken on new directions and received diverse approaches by the United Nations and its affiliated agencies over the decades. Although there has been a huge global pronouncement to affirm equal rights and equality between men and women, existing literature reveals that women currently represent an insignificantly small fraction of people participating in decision making both in politics and leadership. The Cairo Conference that was on Population and Development (1994), the 4<sup>th</sup>World Conference on Women (1995), as well as the World Summit for Social Development also held in 1995 acknowledged that in spite of the advancement made worldwide in advancing the wellbeing of women, there are still gender discrepancies, particular in regard to involvement in electoral politics, economic activities and education.

Failure of women to actively participate in these areas impinges on their progress to improve the legal and regulatory structure for enhancing gender equality. This occurs because of the lack of participation of women in either the legislative process or the leadership structure. The Beijing Platform for Action advocated for women's economic independence, together with employment and allocation of equal access for all women to factors of production, employment opportunities and public services. Increasing women's share of employment away from the agriculture was adopted as a pointer of women empowerment in the Millennium Development Goals on gender equality. Later, full and productive employment together with availability of decent work for all including women and youth were added as a foundation for women empowerment in relation to the MDG on reducing extreme poverty by half.

The assumptions that the only place for women is the kitchen; the belief that women are subordinate have not only impeded their status but also handicapped their contribution

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to wealth creation and economic development. Underlying this assumption is the lack of recognition that in the household, women have distinct rights and obligation as well as distinct functions with regard to economic activities. Their situation is determined by their multiplicity for the care and wellbeing of their families and communities, household tasks, farming and other income generating activities that cannot readily be monetized (FAO; 2011).

Women take part in income generating activities not defined as ‘economically active employment with regard to national account systems, but which are critical in the welfare of the family unit(FAO; 2010).To a great extent women work is also under valued because it is on average under compensated and usually restricted to the domestic or household arena(Fontana ,2010). Society relegates responsibilities such as caring for children; the elderly and the ill to women and girls. The women and girls take on domestic tasks such as collection of water and fuel, maintaining family circles and preparing food (Fontana, 2010). Whereas they are often hidden, silent and not appreciated, women possibly represent the world’s most powerful untapped natural resources (Adekanye, 2009). The dynamic changes in development process over the past twenty years have neither reduced poverty as expected nor have they reduced women vulnerability situation. Of the entire workforce in the modern sector women only account for 30%.In 2011, Kenya’s estimated labour force was 18.39 million. Out of this, only 2,127,000 million or 11.5% are salaried employees within the formal sector (681,100 in the public sector and 1.446 million in the private sector. In figures, about 8,300,000 million are thought to work in the massive informal sector, with the bigger number of women restricted to non-paying occupations (KIPPRA, 2012).

Women are disadvantaged because they are incapable of accessing decent work where they can be influential to advance their economic well-being together with their social progression and political involvement (FAO/IFAD/ILO, 2010b). This seems to be the same case with peri-urban women of Nakuru East Constituency. When women have economic empowerment, their families are able to have guaranteed and secure livelihoods. The economic empowerment of women also increases their respect, status, and self-confidence. It also increases their decision-making power in their households, communities, and within institutions. There is the need for transformation that fully includes women and impacts positively on them. What is required is more than adjustment in their situation as they also comprise of a considerable percentage of labor in their family farms whether producing for family use, for enterprise or both(UNIFEM; 2005).This transformation needs to be interconnected with their social and cultural principles, to achieve the objective of women empowerment.

The term ‘peri-urban’ has been used to define ‘a place, concept or process’ (Narain & Nischal,2007: 261). ‘Peri-urban’ thus refers to the urban fringe and the geographic edge of cities as a place, it refers to the movement of goods and services between physical spaces and to the transition from rural to urban contexts as a process and finally, as a concept, it refers to an interface between rural and urban activities, institutions and perspectives (Iaquinta & Drescher, 2000). Peri-urban areas can be described as locations of doubtful or illegitimate land occupancy, minimal or no infrastructure, low incomes and lack of recognition by formal governments. People settle in peri-urban areas for rational reasons, mainly because land prices or rents are low. These informal settlements begin with the legal landowner illegally subdividing and selling the land without formal land registration or basic

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service provisions. Families often pay the former owner or occupant the full purchase price, but receive in return no registered title to the land. In some peri-urban areas of Nakuru East Constituency such as Kivumbini and Flamingo residents exchange or sell the municipal council houses (now the county government) by way of selling the houses to second or third parties without proper formal documentation such as title deeds.

Around the world, women in their unique, resilient and resourceful nature contribute in numerous ways through diverse livelihood approaches to lift their families as well as communities out of the danger of poverty. They take up jobs in temporary and permanent employment, some in agriculture and agro-industries; others as entrepreneurs, traders, as providers of services; and others as leaders. Women are also employed as technology researchers and developers; and as caretakers of children as well as the elderly (FAO 2011a). Although women work long hours, their work is not generally considered as important, because it is assumed that much of what they do, they ought to do it their families. However, these activities are indispensable for the well-being of their families (FAO, 2011a). Women also represent a considerable proportion of work force on their family farms, sometimes producing for family consumption and other times for enterprise or for both (UNIFEM, 2005). In peri-urban areas, households do not enjoy a regular income and large numbers of these households are headed by single women who operate in the informal economy engaging in activities such as women selling tortillas in the market. Informal economy is unsteady and unreliable and therefore residents tend to have the lowest income levels of all workers.

### **II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

To examine if age influences social- economic development of peri-urban women in Nakuru East Constituency.

### **III. RESEARCH QUESTION**

What is the influence of age on social- economic development of peri-urban women in Nakuru East Constituency?

### **IV. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Women and Socio-Economic Development**

In a research by Sun Start & Kehan (2004) in Bangladesh, women have very low social status to sustain the economic activities because women have very little role in economic development issues. Women of Bangladesh have in -adequate level of skills, thus lie low to (male) dominance in the social sphere(Sun Start & Kehan,2004). Through the nongovernmental organization (NGOs) based on development initiatives women have improved greatly and are now able to sustain their projects. Women non-governmental organizations helps in coordinating and funding of strategies that promote the socio-economic progression of women as well as marshalling the conventional power of women in order to encourage their involvement in the development of human and natural resources for sustainable livelihood in rural and poor urban areas. WNGO's gather together women for the betterment of their livelihoods through collective resources and action performance. Through empowerment, women are able to establish self-help groups that generate income which enables them to build sustainable development projects.

In china, according to rural elite women (IFAD (2004) women tend to be more active than men in establishing small sustainable income generating projects. However women that have

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access to production resources also need to use the resources efficiently. They require good training to enable them run these projects efficiently and effectively. Education is an important tool required to improve their welfare and develop higher self-esteem and more visible in their community. Wider input can include greater respect for women rights and better ability to sustained development.

In developing countries including Nigeria, national development depends on a wide range of factors such as natural resource endowments, cultural and socio-economic environment and historical factors. The backbone of the agricultural sector has been attributed to the women accounting for about 50% (world), 61% (developing countries) and 79% (least developing countries) of agricultural labour and responsible for over 80% agricultural and food production (FAO,2010). According to (FAO, 2010), world statistics; women generally make up two-third of the work force in agriculture. Despite all these, women are still perceived as mothers and house-keepers due to tradition. In Nigeria, women non-governmental organizations engage in numerous activities the first to empower women to become actively involved in rural community and national development. They reach out to the women groups through already existing projects (Adjuonal, 2004).It was noted that when women work in groups it helps them become self-reliant and help them start sustainable projects.

In Uganda non-profitable organizations are run by Ugandan women groups. European care organization provides physical and psychological support to women to set projects e.g. making baskets, bee keeping and fishing projects. The organization empowers women through education programmes and vocational training. They support around 80 women who are widows and vulnerable children in groups to be self-independent. The EACO provides gardening suppliers so as to be able to grow their own food and able to improve their welfare in terms of finance and economic status. The organization has facilitated women projects in various sections of Uganda. There are over 100 women/girls that are provided with training on how to run their projects.

In Kenyan, women are known for forming their own investment groups, commonly known as "chamas", which aim to build a nest egg for retirement (CNN, 2011). Existing statistics reveal that three (3) out of every five Kenyan women are part of a given "chama" and some banks have created niche products to target these groups (CNN, 2011). Women organizations in Kenya have a long and varied history. This history can be traced back to small women groups that are formed by women to promote one another socially, economically as well as physical circumstances of the individual in the group Osongo (2000). These organizations include Maendeleo ya Wanawake (1952), Islamic Women Association (1926), and young women Christian association (1912) among others. The principle goal of these groups is to improve the welfare of women and their households. According to the National Development Plan 1974-1978 there were about 200,005 registered women groups in 1973 with an estimated membership of 126,150 mainly in the rural areas. The government views them as a potentially useful medium of dissemination of knowledge for improving the quality of life in rural areas.

Such groups facilitate to instigate financial independence for local women and challenge them to develop the necessary skills and improve their education. Studies by UNWTO (2011) indicate that when women have acquired a good education and are financially independent they have enhanced self-esteem which enable them to have more equitable relationships

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in families and communities (UNWTO, 2011). Education plays an important role in giving women more control over many aspects of their lives, including how many children they have. According to the Institute of economic affairs (2008) enabling women to get actively involved in social and economic wellbeing is important in the long run and for sustainable development in both political and economic dimensions. Kenya has already put in place various interventions including legislation of female specific policies, programs and plans that aim to address action to promote girl child education and introduction of women development fund (WDF). However, it is critical that Kenya renews her commitment to the well-being of its women and girls by allocating more public resources to programs that promote socio-economic development of women. The policies and interventions made by Kenya need to translate into tangible action to realize the benefits envisioned in those policies.

### **Age And Socio-Economic Development**

Ideally, the socio-economic activities that people engage in are influenced by their foundation and the environment in which one interacts with. (Salway et. al. 2003). The choices or decisions that women make on labour force participation are to a large extent influenced by their age. This can be hypothesized in two ways. To begin with, the older a woman gets increases her need to participate in gainful economic activities mainly as a result of (i) bigger family size units and as a result, income dilution effect (ii) older women are considered to have more work experience and therefore higher wages in a later age, (iii) awareness and age positively correlates, (iv) older women have older children in the household to look after household chores and perform other tasks liberating mothers for labor, and (v) the fact that older women have more and relaxed social contracts as compared to younger women. The second hypothesis is that older women have comparatively older children as compared to younger mothers and in poor households these children increase the financial status of the household by participating in the economic activities. Therefore, there is minimal likelihood of having older mothers' participation in the labour force. In the labour force participation, women of younger ages have been found to conduct themselves differently from older ones. Wage and income elasticities have as well been found to be higher for older than for younger women.

In a study by Rana & Tasnim (2006) married women in the age bracket of 16-60 years the probability derivative of mother's age was found to be positive and the age square was found to be negative. This implied that the likelihood of having married women participate in socio-economic activities increases with increase in their age. The work force participation was found to reach a maximum at 39.49 years. The average age estimated was at 41.61 years. The result was supported by the data collected nationally where labor force participation of women was expressed to be highest in the age group of 40-45 years (FBS, 2003). In addition, it was estimated that one year increase in age would raise participation in labour force by 4.2%. The probable exposition may be that for the younger women, there are social restrictions that are stringent and do not permit them to go outside the home and get involved in the socio-economic activities. On the other hand, married women who are younger have smaller family sizes due to a fewer number of children so they are not enthusiastic or they are less compelled to participate in the labor force. Equally, intensive child-bearing age may obstruct labor force participation. It was further estimated that after the age of 39.49 years the labor force participation of mothers decline. The probable reason was that after that age women

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have younger age children who may support their households financially as the labor force participation of children is an evident occurrence in Pakistan.

### **V. METHODOLOGY**

This study entailed use of descriptive survey design as well as inferential statistics and targeted 26,223 women above 18 years of age in Nakuru East Constituency. According to the 2009 Kenya National censurs report, the population is distributed as follows, Biashara ward 6726, Kivumbini ward 4212, Flamingo ward 3406, Menengai 5905 and Nakuru East 5974. Naissuma (2000) formula was used for estimating a sample size where by 100 respondents were picked from the 5 wards using cluster random sampling technique. Data collection was by means of questionnaires involving both qualitative and quantitative data. Likert scale response items were assigned numerical values to facilitate quantitative analysis. The responses formed the themes for analysis in line with the study variables and objectives. SPSS (Statistic Package for Social Sciences) computer software version 22 was used for data entry and analysis. Qualitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages and frequencies). Inferential statistics inform of correlation and regression were also employed to show association and influence in the concerned variables. The results were presented in form of tables.

### **VI. FINDINGS**

The study sought to examine if age influences social- economic development of peri-urban women. All respondents were reached and there was 85.7 % return rate as indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Response Return Rate**

Respondents	Administered	Returned	Percentage return rate
Women Leader	5	3	60
Women	100	87	87
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>85.7%</b>

Source: Research Data (2016)

Kathuri (2007) indicated that a 55% return rate is adequate enough for a study hence the total return rate of 85.7 % respondents was representative enough for the study.

#### **Age of the Respondents**

The researcher then sought to establish the age of the respondents. The age of the respondents determined their level of experience and ability to give useful information concerning factors influencing socio-economic development among peri-urban women in Nakuru East Constituency, Kenya. Table 2 shows the distribution:

**Table 2: Age bracket of the Respondents**

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18 -34yrs	18	20.0
35-44years	33	36.7
45-54yrs	28	31.1
Above 55 yrs	11	12.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

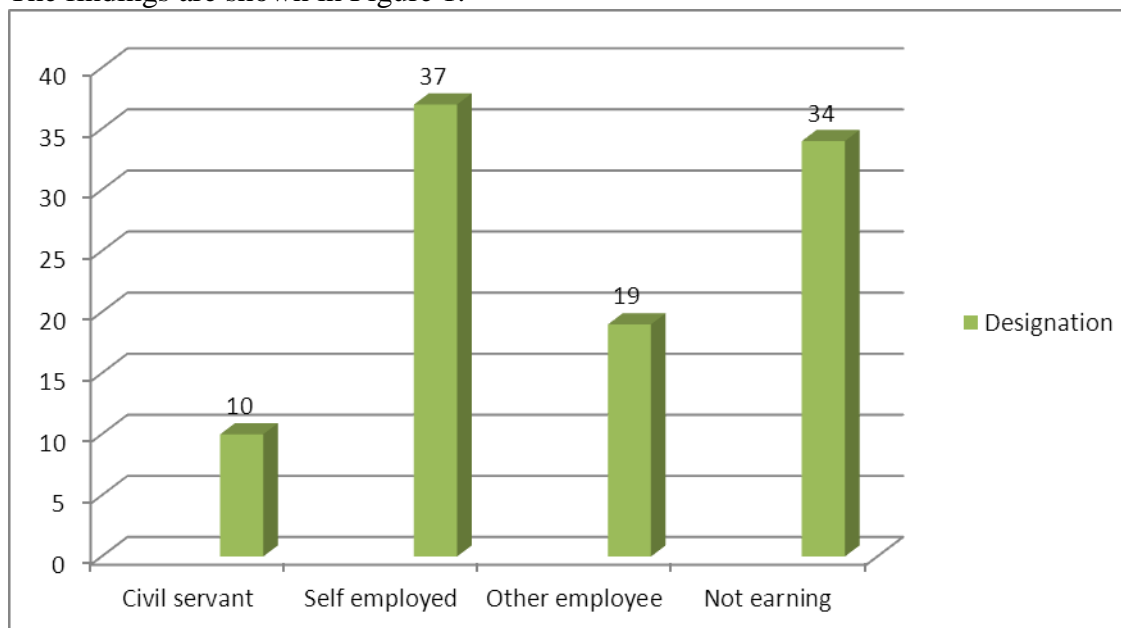
Source: Research Data (2016)

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An analysis of the age of respondents revealed that majority of the women were between 35-54 years at 36.7% followed 45-54years at 31.1%, 18-34years at 20.0% and the least group was above 55 years at 12.2%.

### Designation of Respondents

The researcher also found out the various designations of the respondents in terms of employment. This would show their level of involvement in social economic development. The findings are shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1 Designation of Respondents**

Source: Research Data (2016)

The Figure 1 indicates that the majority of the women were self-employed representing 37 % of the total sampled respondents. Another majority 34% were not earning and probably were house wives at home taking care of the children an engaging in other domestic work. Another 19% were employed but not civil servants while the least majority (10%) represented the civil servants.

### Involvement in Economic activity

The researcher further attempted to find out if the respondent had engaged in any form of economic activity. A Majority (66%) of the total sampled respondents said that they had engaged in an economic activity. The minority 34% who had not engaged in any form of economic activities sited various reasons as indicated in Table 3:

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**Table 3: Reasons For Failure To Engage In Any Economic Activities**

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of capital	7	20.6%
Lack of ideas	3	8.8%
Lack of time/Domestic work	9	26.5%
Discouragement from other people	3	8.8%
Nature of Jobs available –To masculine.	3	8.8%
Lack of market	2	5.9%
Cultural limitation	2	5.9%
Social discrimination by men in business.	5	14.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Research Data (2016)

As indicated in the Table 3, the majority(26.5%,20.6% & 14.7%) of the respondents who had not engaged in any economic activity sited lack of time/domestic work, lack of capital and social discrimination by men in business respectively, as the main reasons why they did not engage in economic activities. This was followed by respondents who sited discouragement from other people, lack of ideas and masculine nature of the available jobs as the main reasons for their failure to engage in economic activities each at 3%.Other reasons included lack of market and cultural limitation each at 2%.Those who had been involved in economic are as shown in Table 4:

**Table 4: Economic Activities Engaged In**

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Service Industry (e.g. saloon, barber, transport, repair etc.)	13	19.7
Agriculture/Animal rearing e.g. farming, poultry, cows etc.)	18	27.2
Hawking (e.g. household goods, food etc.)	10	15.2
Entrepreneurship (e.g.shopkeepers, cloth line, tailoring etc.)	11	16.7
Employed (e.g. civil servants, private companies/firms etc.)	14	21.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Research Data (2016)

As indicated in Table 4, the majority (27.2) % of the respondents in economic activity were involved in Agriculture and animal rearing followed by 21.2% in employeement,19.7% in the service industry,16.7% in entrepreneurship while 15.2% were in hawking business. Finally, the researcher examined how long how long they had been engaged in these economic activities .The findings are shown in Table 5

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**Table 5: Years Of Experience In The Economic Activities**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	16	24.2%
6-10 years	28	42.4%
11-15 years	12	13.3%
Over 16 years	10	11.1 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Research Data (2016)

Table 5 indicates that the majority(42.4%) of the respondents involved in economic activities in the area had between 6-10years of experienced, followed by 1-5years experience at 24.2%,11-15 years at 13.3%and only 11.1% had over 16 years of experience. The years of experience in economic activity influence the respondent’s knowledge about the challenges of that economic activity and their ability to give valuable information for this study. The years for experienced was found to be adequate for this study.

### Age and Social- Economic Development of Peri-Urban Women

The study objective sought to examine if age influences social- economic development of peri-urban women in Nakuru East Constituency .Reponses are summarized in Table 6

Key: SA=strongly agree (5), A= agree (4), DK = Don’t Know (3) (D= disagree (2), SD= strongly disagree (1)

**Table 6: Age and Social- Economic Development of Peri-Urban Women**

STATEMENT	SA	A	DK	D	SD
My age does not affect the nature of my work	20%	31%	4%	23%	22%
Most young women discriminate me because of my age	56.2%	19.8%	3%	11 %	10%
I have more clients of my age group	3%	27%	10.5%	12%	47.5%
Most women become economically empowered with age	33%	27%	0%	19%	21%
The society does not engage freely with elderly women	48%	49%	2%	0%	1%
Older women view me as inexperienced	37%	16 %	1%	26%	20%
I feel intimidated by my seniors/juniors’	5%	12%	0%	28%	55%

Source: Research Data (2016)

Table 6 indicates that the majority (51%) of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement “*My age does not affect the nature of my work* “.Another majority (76%) of the respondents agreed with the statement“ *Most young women discriminate me because of my age*” This fact was however disagreed by 20% of the remaining respondents. The researcher also investigated whether the respondents had more clients of their age. Some 58.5% of the respondents disagreed to this fact. Another majority (60%) the respondents agreed with the statement “*Most women become economically empowered with age*”. Further more a majority (97%) of the respondents agreed with the item “*The society does not engage freely with elderly women*”. Another 53% of the respondents agreed with the statement that “*Older women view me as inexperienced*”. Finally, a majority (83%) of the total sampled

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respondents did not agree with the statement that “*I feel intimidated by my seniors/juniors*”. These findings agrees with Rana & Tasnim (2006) who found that among married women in the age bracket of 16-60 years the probability derivative of mother’s age was found to be positive and the age square was found to be negative. This implied that the likelihood of having married women participate in socio-economic activities increases with increase in their age. The labor force participation was found to reach a maximum at 39.49 years. The average age estimated was at 41.61 years.

Further corroborating was FBS, (2003) data collected nationally where it was discovered that labor force participation of women was expressed to be highest in the age group of 40-45 years. In addition, it was estimated that one year increase in age would raise participation in labour force by 4.2 %. The probable exposition may be that for the younger women, there are social restrictions that are stringent and do not permit them to go outside the home and get involved in the labor force activities. On the other hand, younger married women have a comparatively smaller family sizes due to a fewer number of children so they are less compelled to participate in the labor force. Equally, intensive child-bearing age may obstruct labor force participation. It was further estimated that after the age of 39.49 years the labor force participation of mothers decline.

### Inferential Statistics

To evaluate the relationships between the dependent and independent variables, Pearson product moment correlation and multiple linear regression analysis was done and the findings presented in the following subsections.

### Correlation Analysis

In this subsection a summary of the correlation analyses is presented. It seeks to first determine the degree of interdependence of the independent variables and also show the degree of their association with the dependent variable separately. These results are summarized in Table 7. According to Table 7, at 0.05 significance level, *there is a statistically significant relationship between age and socio-economic development among peri-urban women*. It was inferred that right age predicated socio-economic development among peri-urban women. Age has a positive relationship with socio-economic development among peri-urban women ( $r=0.571$   $p<0.05$ ).

**Table 7: Correlation Coefficients Between The Variables**

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Peri-Urban Women Socio-Economic Development	Age .571**
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\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## VII. CONCLUSION

The study arrived at the conclusion that majority of the women in the peri-urban areas are elderly and not able to engage in vigorous and multiple income generating activities. Thus, age was found to be influencing the socio-economic development among peri-urban women.

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## VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that the Ministry of Social and Gender should review its policies related to women funds for the purpose of ensuring consistence and equally distribution of funds to all women groups in the peri-urban areas.

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### **How to Cite This Article;**

Ndung'u, M., Njanja, L., & Gichuhi, D. (2018). Influence of Age on Social-Economic Development of Peri-Urban Women in Nakuru East Constituency of Kenya. *International Journal of Business Management and Processes (IJBMP)*, 2(3), 42-53.