



SMALL-SCALE ENTERPRISES AS A MECHANISM TO EMPOWER RURAL WOMEN FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION

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ABSTRACT

Poverty represents one of the development challenges that faces the developing countries in general and Egypt in particular. Though poverty alleviation came on the top priorities of the third millennium goals, as in 2002 about 20.4% of Egyptian people were suffering from objective (absolute) poverty which means that about 13.7 million people are unable to fulfill their basic needs and about 31.8% suffer from subjective poverty.

Poverty risk looks ostensibly equal between men and women, but women in general and female headed households suffer more. Therefore small-scale enterprises are one of the mechanisms that lead to poverty alleviation especially among females. This requires coordination among all relevant stakeholders governmental and non-governmental, besides to reform the financial sector and stimulate it to deal with local and financial needs of small-scale enterprises, and to facilitate poor people's access to appropriate financial services.

In light of the previous review, the current study aims at describing poverty status in Egypt and the system that incubate small-scale enterprises and stakeholders as well as beneficiaries and rural

women in particular. The study depended on review of literature and secondary data and case studies that reflects one of the civil society organizations experience working in development through providing small-scale enterprises for poor people in rural areas.

The case studies covers three governorates: Fayoum, Beni-suef and Menia with a total number of 20 case studies who received livestock production projects with no interest rate, aiming at identifying the problems and solutions to improve the performance of small-scale enterprise providers as well as beneficiaries.

The results revealed that successful stories can be attributed to the strong will of beneficiaries to improve their livelihoods, besides the role of the organization in collaborating with local leaderships within the villages, which helped to identify and monitor those beneficiaries.

Based on contracting between the provider and beneficiaries to guarantee rights and obligations of both partners, also providing training and follow-up and evaluation played great role in the success of the projects and its sustainability. As for the failures, it was related to poor capabilities of the beneficiaries (widowers) who were affected by various challenges one of which is socialization, lack of skills and health problems.