

**Surname** NSENGIYUMVA  
**Other Names:** JEAN DAMASCENE  
**Reg No:** 10/A/MAPPM/019/PG  
**Gender:** MALE  
**Programme:** MAPPM  
**Academic Unit:** ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS STUDIES  
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**Supervisor:** BARIGYE GODFEY  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This research looks at the focus of tomato production and processing on socio-economic development of communities in Rutsiro district. The sector of agriculture is considered by the Rwanda Government as a key area for the wellbeing of its population. Thus, agricultural crop production in Rwanda can be grouped in three categories: food crops (leguminous, cereals, roots and tubers, bananas), and the traditional cash crops (coffee, tea pyrethrum). Food crops occupy 92 % of the total cultivated land; while coffee and tea occupy respectively 6, 3 and 1, 6 % of the total cultivated land. The average cultivated land in the 1997-2003 periods was 1,428,033 hectares. This surface area was divided as follows: cereals 18%, tomatoes 26%, bananas 26%, roots and tubers 28%. To assess the levels of tomatoes production from the farms in Rutsiro district; to explore different challenges tomato growers are facing; to assess the feasibility of new processing unit in Rutsiro district; to assess the profitability of this processing unit and its contribution to the socio-economic development of the communities in Rutsiro district. Random sampling was used to sample 89 members of the two tomato cooperatives that are operating in Rutsiro district; 15 persons among the employees of these cooperatives and 12 people from the communities from Kigeyo and Kivumu Sectors. There are these persons who answered to the research questions. Executive secretaries and sector agronomists were interviewed about technical support they provide to tomato growers and the estimation of production as well as the challenges growers can be facing. A focus group discussion was also carried out among 12 members of the communities in order to investigate on the contribution of the production on socio-economic development of the communities.