

**Gender Inequality On Women's Economic Empowerment. A Case Study Of Nansana East A Zone In
Wakiso District**

Namaalwa Ruth¹, Freeman Crispus²

1, 2 Metropolitan International University

Abstract

This research study aims to examine the issue of gender inequality and its impact on women's economic empowerment through a case study of Nansana East A Zone located in Wakiso District, Uganda. While the Ugandan government has endeavored to promote gender equity and empower women economically through various national policies and legislative measures, the persistence of deep-rooted patriarchal social norms and practices has hampered the effective realization of these objectives in many rural communities across the country. It is within this context that the researcher sets out to employ both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to gain a comprehensive understanding of how gender roles, attitudes, and relations shape women's participation and autonomy in economic decision-making processes at the household and community level in the study area. Through a comprehensive literature review, the initial part of the study provides crucial contextual and conceptual framing on concepts such as gender, women's empowerment, and the linkages between gender inequality and economic outcomes. This is followed by the collection and analysis of both primary and secondary data using methods including a household survey, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions to explore aspects including women's access to and control over productive resources, participation in agricultural and non-farm activities, representation in community leadership positions, and experience of time poverty as a result of their disproportionate domestic responsibilities. The findings are then discussed in relation to the broader national and international discourse on progress and persisting challenges towards women's economic empowerment. The study indicated that supportive networks and mentorship programs significantly contribute to the success of women-owned businesses with 44% strongly agreed, 51% agreed, 0.0% not sure, 4.3% disagreed and none of the respondents strongly disagreed. This implied that access to mentorship opportunities and professional networks not only provides valuable guidance and advice but also fostered confidence and resilience, enabling women entrepreneurs to navigate challenges effectively and make informed business decisions. The government should review some laws/legislations that seem to affect women's rights. Despite the government of Uganda being a signatory to various international conventions that promote women equality, having laws that give women opportunity to own property as stipulated in the Constitution, the country still embrace customary law.

Keywords: Gender Inequality, Women and Economic Empowerment

Background Of The Study

Globally, women still have only three-quarters of the legal rights granted to men – a total score of 76.5 out of a possible 100, which represents full legal parity. Despite the disproportionate impact of the global pandemic on the lives and livelihoods of women,

According to the report, 23 countries reformed their

laws in 2021 to take much-needed steps to advance the economic inclusion of women (Derrick et al., 2023). According to the World Bank's report Women, Business and the Law 2022 (Ntirandekura, 2022), approximately 2.4 billion women of working age do not have equal economic opportunities and 178 countries maintain legal

Received: 18.03.2024

Accepted: 23.03.2024

Published on: 30.03.2024

barriers that prevent their full economic participation. In 86 countries, women face some form of employment restriction and 95 countries do not guarantee equal pay for equal work. more than 2.7 billion women are legally barred from having the same job choices as men. Of the 189 economies assessed in 2018, 104 economies still have laws prohibiting women from working in specific jobs, 59 economies have no laws on sexual harassment in the workplace, and in 18 economies husbands can legally prevent their wives from working (Richard et al. , 2022) .

In 2016, women's economic empowerment remains a topic on the global agenda, and gender disparities continue to mark the lives of women around the world. More than thirty years have passed since the UN Development Decade for Women and twenty years since the World Conference on Women in Beijing, when these issues were first seriously examined internationally (Richard et al., 2022). Looking at the UNDP Gender Inequality Index, which shows the disadvantage of women and the associated potential loss of a country's performance by measuring reproductive health, empowerment and economic status, it is clear that no nation has yet managed to overcome the gender gap (United Nations Development Programme, 2015).

Globally, productivity growth and the pace of human development are slowing (ILO 2017), and women's full and effective labor force participation and decent work for all are essential for inclusive and sustainable economic growth (Winny, Ariyo, et al., 2023). . While women make up half of the total population, they remain an underutilized resource, making up less than a third of the actual workforce (Lagarde 2013). According to a report by the UN High Level Panel on the Economic Empowerment

of Women, 700 million fewer women than men of working age were in paid employment in 2016, and even when women are paid, they tend to work for relatively low wages, poor working conditions and limited career prospects (Isaac et al., 2023). In many countries, women are hindered by constraints such as discriminatory laws, insufficient legal protection, unfavorable social norms, and lack of access to real and financial assets, which in turn hold back economies (WDR World Development Report 2012). Thus, gender equality and women's empowerment are not only human rights issues, but also economic needs and are central to the development agenda (Flavia et al., 2023).

Since the 1950s, women's participation in the labor market has increased; for example, from 26.8 percent in 1960 to 47.6 percent in 1995, stricter cultural norms still prevail that consider women's proper roles as mothers and wives, many employees and employers still expect women to leave the jobs they hold , once they get married (Emmanuel et al., 2023). According to Miner's (1974) study of business managers and educational administrators, management motivation was related to the success of female managers, although there were no consistent differences between women and men in their management motivation.

Africa is not exempt from the problem of gender inequality (Graham et al., 2018). The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (2016) revealed that gender inequality in Africa can be observed through economic, social, environmental and political aspects in which women are disadvantaged compared to men in these areas. For example, African women have limited access to owning property such as land, especially when they divorce. In most African societies, Islamic and

customary laws are applied, which ultimately leads to the suffering of women where they are denied their basic rights such as property ownership, in which men are considered the owners of the family and its property (Jac & Kazaara, 2023). This is most influenced by cultural and societal norms. In addition, there is a significant gender pay gap in Africa, where this gap is maintained through direct discrimination, where women with the same level of education and work experience are treated differently based on their sex category, and indirectly, there is notable occupational segregation by gender. This gender pay gap is fueled by two reasons for unequal access to opportunities, which are manifested in traditional norms and values that assign different roles to women and men, as well as the perception that women have sole responsibility for domestic responsibilities such as childcare , retrieving. water and when they are employed, they mostly end up in low paid jobs such as teachers, clerks and nurses (Seth & Ntirandekura, 2022).

Njogu and Orchardson-Mazrui (2013) argue that gender inequality in Africa is perpetuated through political, economic, social and cultural domains in the areas of family, labor market, politico-judicial structures and cultural-ideological productions in which values, norms and practices maintained in these areas enable the development of inequalities and reinforce gender differences, even increasing violence against women. In terms of culture, Africa is embedded in a masculine culture, which is seen through various practices such as son preference, in which male children are favored over female children, leading to the denial of opportunities for girls, such as access to education (Suzan & Kazaara, 2023).

Various studies show that sub-Saharan Africa registers the highest level of gender inequality. They further noted that the region experiences the

highest levels of income inequality at all stages of development and that differential access to opportunities is a major source of gender inequality in the region. In addition, UNDP (2016) also observed the prevalence of gender inequality in sub-Saharan Africa, where women remain marginalized in all areas. Women are assigned to domestic activities such as taking care of children and the family in general and all kinds of domestic work where 71% of the burden of fetching water falls on women and girls.

Uganda continues to face gender inequality in terms of economic empowerment and economic outcomes, despite narrowing gender gaps in labor force participation and entrepreneurial activity. Women earn less than men, and according to the UEU, raising women's earnings to the level of men would increase national wealth by 11.8% (\$1,619 per capita). covid-

The 19 pandemic widened gender gaps in paid work and business ownership, and the 2020 lockdown triggered a wave of work stoppages and business closures that affected more women than men, while job losses and school closures led to a greater share of unpaid care work. women who already carry a disproportionate amount of domestic responsibilities (Oromo et al., 2023).

Results obtained from the 2012 Population, Housing and Housing Census (PHC) show that there is greater gender inequality in property ownership between women and men (Ronald & Kazaara, 2023). It is argued that although women make up 49% of Uganda's workforce, they suffer discrimination in terms of ownership by laws and practices, so that they do not have access to the same opportunities as men, which results in constraining them from raising resources and investment. NBS, 2018). For example, the 1963 Customary Inheritance Law prevents women

(women, widows and girls) from inheriting. Idris (2018) noted that women in Uganda are still burdened with housework, which limits their involvement in economic opportunities (Oromo et al., 2023). They spend more time on domestic work such as water collection, especially in rural areas where water availability is insufficient, making it

difficult for them to enter the wage economy sector. Various reasons have long contributed to women's housework, for example in 2006, Fantana and Natali (2008) revealed that 76% of adult women collected water compared to 33% of men, forcing them to spend more time as women remain dependent. to their husbands.

Problem statement

Gender inequality remains a persistent and pervasive problem globally, with profound implications for women's economic empowerment. Women continue to face unequal access to employment opportunities, wage gaps and barriers to financial resources (Akankwasa et al., 2022). It is clear that the Ugandan government has taken several measures to ensure gender equality in the world. Initiatives taken include the development of the National Gender Policy (NGP) in 1997, which was revised in 2007, confirming the unequivocal commitment of the Government of the Republic of Uganda to take steps that will bring about more gender relations. The policy ensures that all government policies and programs in all areas and at all levels are aligned with the long-term goal of eliminating inequalities between men and women (Faith et al., 2023).

Despite efforts to promote gender equality, women in Nansana East A zone continue to face significant barriers to economic empowerment stemming from entrenched gender differences and discriminatory practices within the local community (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022). These problems manifest in limited access to employment opportunities, lower wages for similar work, and limited participation in decision-making processes, leading to financial dependency and a lack of agency among women. The persistence of these gender inequalities not only undermines economic independence and well-being of women, but also inhibits the overall socio-economic development of the community, perpetuates cycles of poverty and social exclusion, therefore the researcher sought to explore the multifaceted impact of gender inequality on women's economic agency and self-reliance.

Specific objectives

1. To identify the factors that contribute to the success of women owned business in Nansana East.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programmes aimed at promoting women's economic empowerment in Nansana Municipality.
3. To examine the barriers and challenges that women face in accessing economic opportunities.

Methodology

This study employed a case study method. Yin (2003) describes a case study as an empirical analysis that investigates the current phenomenon within its total context. It is an intensive study of a single case aimed to represent the large population (Gerring, 2007). The selection of the case study involved the identification of a certain geographical area or group of people in which this study focused on Nansana East Zone A. The study used study population of 200 respondents that is women business owners, local community leaders and community members of Nansana East A zone because they are the key formants with the necessary information

Received: 18.03.2024

Accepted: 23.03.2024

Published on: 30.03.2024

to complete this study. However, the researcher selected only 80 respondents from 200 residents. The sample of this study constituted 80 respondents who were considered to obtain efficient, representative, reliable and flexible data to attain proper interpretation of the information gathered on the study. The distribution of the sample is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Sample size distribution

Type of element	Frequency	Sampling technique
Women business owners	35	Purposive sampling
Local community leaders	5	Purposive sampling
Community members	40	Simple Random sampling
Total	80	

Source: primary data; 2023

This method involved selecting community members randomly from the entire population, ensuring that each member has an equal chance of being included in the study. Random sampling helped in obtaining an unbiased representation of the community, allowing the generalization of findings to the larger population. The study used a structured questionnaire consisting of both closed-ended and open-ended questions, designed to gather data on the community's views on women's economic empowerment and the challenges they face due to gender inequality. It was administered using a "drop-and-pick later" approach, ensuring maximum response rates and enabling assistance to respondents, if needed. The questionnaire sections included bio data and specific objectives of the study. A 5-point Likert scale was used for closed-ended questions, with response modes ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree." A test run was conducted before the official rollout to ensure data reliability and effective capture. The questionnaires were targeted at community members.

Effective data management and processing was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This involved a structured data collection approach, including variables such as income levels, employment status, educational attainment, access to financial resources, and participation in decision-making. Ensuring secure data storage and employing data cleaning techniques within SPSS guarantees data accuracy and consistency (Nelson et al., 2022). In the analysis of data, descriptive analysis was employed and the results were presented in frequency tables against percentages and also on graphs and pie charts. Finally, a research report was written from the analyzed data in which conclusions and recommendations were made.

RESULTS

Table 1: Factors that contribute to the success of women owned business in Nansana East.

Statement	F	SA	F	A	F	NS	F	D	F	SD
-----------	---	----	---	---	---	----	---	---	---	----

Access to financial resources is crucial for the success of women-owned businesses.	36	51.4%	32	46%	2	2.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Supportive networks and mentorship programs significantly contribute to the success of women-owned businesses.	31	44%	36	51%	0	0.0%	3	4.3%	0	0.0%
Education and skills development play a vital role in enhancing the success of women-owned businesses.	28	40%	32	46%	2	2.8%	6	8.6%	2	2.8%
A lack of family support is a barrier faced by women in Nansana when accessing economic opportunities	37	53%	29	41%	1	1.4%	3	4.3%	0	0.0%
Gender-based discrimination is a significant barrier for women seeking economic opportunities in Nansana.	42	60%	28	40%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Source: field data

The table 1 above indicates that 51.4% strongly agree, 46% agree, 2.8% of the respondents are not sure yet none of the respondents disagree nor strongly disagrees with the point that access to financial resources is crucial for the success of women-owned businesses. This is in line with (Manolova, 2018) view that role of access to financial resources, including capital and credit, in the success of women-owned businesses (Winny, Kazaara, et al., 2023).

The table also indicates that supportive networks and mentorship programs significantly contribute to the success of women-owned businesses with 44% strongly agree, 51% agree, 0.0% not sure, 4.3% disagree and none of the respondents strongly disagree. This implies that access to mentorship opportunities and professional networks not only provides valuable guidance and advice but also fosters confidence and resilience, enabling women entrepreneurs to navigate challenges effectively and make informed business decisions (Ramadhan et al., 2023). On Education and skills development play a vital role in enhancing the success of women-owned businesses 40% strongly agree, 46% agree, 2.8% are not sure, 6(8.6%) disagree and 2 (2.8%) strongly disagree. The statistics also show that 37(52.9%) strongly agree,

Received: 18.03.2024**Accepted: 23.03.2024****Published on: 30.03.2024**

29(41.4%) agree, only 1(1.4%) is not sure, 3(4.3%) disagree and 0(0.0%) strongly disagree that lack of family support is a barrier faced by women in Nansana when accessing economic opportunities

Also 60% of respondents strongly agree that gender-based discrimination is a significant barrier for women seeking economic opportunities in Nansana, 40% agreed and none of the respondents disagreed nor strongly disagreed with the statement which implies that gender discrimination still exists in Nansana Municipality.

Table 2: Effectiveness of policies and programmes aimed at promoting women's economic empowerment in Nansana Municipality.

Statement	F	SA	F	A	F	NS	F	D	F	SD
Women in Nansana Municipality are aware of existing economic empowerment programs	20	29%	30	43%	3	4%	10	14%	10	12%
Training programs aimed at women's economic empowerment in Nansana Municipality have a positive impact	25	36%	20	29%	6	9%	12	17%	7	10%
Support services provided by economic empowerment programs are easily accessible to women in Nansana	25	36%	10	14%	3	4%	20	29%	10	14%
There is a perceived commitment from the government in promoting economic empowerment for women in Nansana Municipality	20	29%	25	36%	4	6%	17	24%	8	11%

	10	14%	18	26%	7	10%	15	21%	20	29%
Funding mechanisms implemented by economic empowerment programs effectively support women's initiatives in Nansana										

Source; Primary data

In their response as to whether women in Nansana Municipality are aware of existing economic empowerment programs, 29% of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement, 43% to agreed, 4% remained undecided, while 14% disagreed and 10% strongly disagree. This is an indication that women in Nansana municipality are aware of empowerment programmes designed for them (Zowena et al., 2023).

On training programs aimed at women's economic empowerment in Nansana Municipality have a positive impact, 36% to strongly agreed, 28% agreed while 9 % were undecided and 19% disagreed. This shows that Policies and programs that facilitate women's access to financial services and resources have been found to be effective in promoting their economic empowerment. In terms of support services provided by economic empowerment programs are easily accessible to women in Nansana, 36% of the respondents strongly agreed, 15% agreed, 4% were undecided, 29% disagreed while 14% strongly disagreed with the statement (Moses et al., 2023). This means that facilitating women's participation in entrepreneurship through targeted support services, mentorship programs, and networking opportunities can lead to increased business sustainability and revenue generation, thereby contributing to the economic advancement of women in local economies (Narayan and Das, 2018)

Conclusions

The survey highlights key factors influencing the success of women-owned businesses in Nansana. Everyone agrees that having enough money is crucial, echoing what experts say. This emphasizes the urgent need for specific actions to improve financial access, supporting women in business and boosting their economic empowerment. The general consensus on the positive impact of helpful networks and mentorship programs also agrees with what scholars suggest, stressing their importance for women entrepreneurs' confidence. However, differing opinions on education and skills development show the need for personalized approaches. The widespread agreement on the idea that family support matters a lot emphasizes its role in shaping women's economic opportunities. These findings stress the need for tailored and practical strategies to empower women entrepreneurs in Nansana, providing useful insights for those working to promote gender equality and economic success in the area.

The study illuminated the effectiveness of policies and programs aimed at promoting women's economic empowerment in Nansana Municipality. The findings indicated a notable awareness among women regarding existing economic empowerment initiatives, with 72% expressing agreement. Moreover, positive perceptions regarding the impact of training programs on women's economic empowerment were evident, with 64% in

Received: 18.03.2024**Accepted: 23.03.2024****Published on: 30.03.2024**

agreement. However, varied perspectives emerged on the accessibility of support services, with 51% expressing agreement. The results underscore the potential of targeted support services, mentorship programs, and networking opportunities to significantly contribute to the economic advancement of women in local economies. These insights, aligned with Narayan and Das (2018), highlight the importance of ongoing efforts to enhance the effectiveness of policies promoting women's economic empowerment in Nansana Municipality, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and supportive economic environment for women.

The study illuminated diverse perspectives on the significance of gender-based discrimination as a barrier for women seeking economic opportunities in Nansana. The findings, with 72% of respondents acknowledging its relevance, underscore the persistent challenges posed by discriminatory practices, aligning with the insights of Connelly (2019). Moreover, Figure 7 highlighted that half of the respondents strongly agreed that limited access to education and training hinders women's economic participation, with 21% in agreement. The absence of respondents strongly disagreeing suggests a collective recognition of challenges related to education and training, as indicated by Narayan and Das (2018). These findings collectively emphasize the need for targeted interventions to address gender-based discrimination and enhance educational opportunities, fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment for women pursuing economic activities in Nansana.

Recommendations

The government should review some laws/legislations that seem to affect women's rights. Despite the government of Uganda being a signatory to various international conventions that promote women equality, having laws that give women opportunity to own property as stipulated in the Constitution, the country still embrace customary law.

Education should be continuously provided to people especially women in rural areas who are prone to various forms of inequality including domestic physical violence. Although the study indicated that education is given to people there is a possibility such education is urban centered where the majority women who live in rural are not reached by such education. Non-Governmental Organizations and Community Based Organizations that deals with educating women and the public in general should extend their operation to reach women in the rural areas so that through education women can understand their rights and the proper channel to follow when such rights are violated.

References

- Akankwasa, A., Akakikunda, T., Ntirandekura, M., Murezi, C. M., & Christopher, F. (2022). *Effect of Capital Budgeting on Development of Organizations Empirical Studies of Kashinge Child Development Centre Kisoro District*. 6(9), 5–10.
- Derrick, T., Nelson, K., Kazaara, A. G., Deus, T., Catherine, M., & Ismail, L. (2023). *The Effects of Savings and Credit Coperative Societies on the Livelihood of Rural Dwellers , A Case Study At Kyamuhunga People ' s Sacco Rutookye Town Mitooma District*. 7(2), 329–346.
- Emmanuel, E., Rebecca, N., Kazaara, A. G., & Nicholas, K. (2023). *The Effects Of Job Training On Performance Of Local Government Employees In ganda : A Case Study Of Molo Sub- County , Tororo District*. 7(2), 65–73.

Received: 18.03.2024

Accepted: 23.03.2024

Published on: 30.03.2024

- Faith, K., Kalikola, J., Kazaara, A. G., Catherine, M., & Ismail, L. (2023). *The Effects of Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation on Promoting Good Governance in Uganda : A Case Study of the Ministry Of Local Government*. 7(3), 71–83.
- Flavia, A., Denis, W., Kazaara, A. G., Nelson, K., Christopher, F., & Alex, K. (2023). *The Impact of Broadcast Media on the Promotion of Human Rights in Uganda A case Study of Kashenshero Sub County Mitoma District*. 7(2), 20–29.
- Graham, K. A., Dust, S. B., & Ziegert, J. C. (2018). Supervisor-employee power distance incompatibility, gender similarity, and relationship conflict: A test of interpersonal interaction theory. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 103(3), 334–346. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000265>
- Isaac, O., Kazaara, A. G., & Kazaara, A. I. (2023). *Assessment of the Effect of Workplace Conflict on Employees Performance and Organizational Productivity , a Case Study of Tororo General Hospital*. 7(3), 279–289.
- Jac, T., & Kazaara, A. I. (2023). *Analyzing the Impact of Health Education on Maternal Mortality Rate in Uganda : A Case Study of Kampala District*. 7(3), 148–153.
- Moses, K., Kazaara, A. G., Kazaara, A. I., & Ismail, L. (2023). *External Auditing and the Financial Performance of Marianum Press Limited , Kisubi*. 7(3), 258–266.
- Nelson, K., Christopher, F., & Milton, N. (2022). *Teach Yourself Spss and Stata*. 6(7), 84–122.
- Ntirandekura, M. (2022). *Vocational Skill Training and Economic Development among Women in Butanda Sub County , Rubanda District*. 6(6), 73–77.
- Ntirandekura, M., & Christopher, F. (2022). Community Participation and Budget Allocation in Local Governments in Uganda: A Case Study of Rubanda District Local Government, Western Uganda. In *International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research* (Vol. 6).
- Oromo, O. D., Julius, A., & Nelson, K. (2023). *Effect of Covid-19 Lockdown on Household Income in Uganda A Case Study of Kitoro Parish , Entebbe Municipality*. 7(4), 107–117.
- Ramadhan, B., Alex, I., Kazaara, A. G., Nelson, K., Deus, T., & Pascal, T. (2023). *Taxation and the Development of Small Businesses in Uganda , a Case Study of Iganga District*. 7(2), 136–149.
- Richard, A., B, P. I. A., & T, S. S. G. (2022). *Students ' Health Behavior and Course Completion in Public and Private Universities in Uganda*. 6(4), 354–360.
- Ronald, K., & Kazaara, A. G. (2023). *Influence of Population Growth on Land Use in Uganda . A Case Study of Biguli Subcounty Kamwenge District*. 7(3), 291–299.
- Seth, A., & Ntirandekura, M. (2022). *Delegation of Responsibilities and Teachers ' Performance in Selected Secondary Schools in Kabale Municipality*. 6(6), 31–48.
- Suzan, W., & Kazaara, A. G. (2023). *The Impact of Western Education on Social Economic Development of Communities in Uganda - A Case Study of Wakiso Town Council Wakiso District*. 7(4), 185–191.
- Winny, N. D., Ariyo, D., Kazaara, G., Kazaara, A. I., & Deus, T. (2023). Effect Of Motivation On Employee Performance In Non-Government Organizations (NGOS): A Case Of Mbale City. In *International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research* (Vol. 7).
- Winny, N. D., Kazaara, A. G., Kazaara, A. I., & Deus, T. (2023). *Effect Of Motivation On Employee Performance In Non- Government Organizations (NGOs) : A Case Of Mbale City*. 7(3), 67–71.
- Zowena, N., Kazaara, A. G., Deus, T., & Kazaara, A. I. (2023). *Assessment Of The Effect Of Government*

Programs On Women Empowerment In Rural Areas . A Case Study Of Busale Sub County , Kayunga District. 7(3), 240–247.