

Women Participation In Income Generating Activities For Socioeconomic Development: A Case Study Of Mityana Municipality, Uganda

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Abstract: Globally, it is common knowledge that women empowerment is at the core of global agenda 2030 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. However, documentary and statistical analyses highlight that the desire for holistic empowerment of women is lackluster partly due to structural, legal, and socioeconomic gaps; and thus, there is great need to address this challenge in a systematic way. Basing on such a preamble, the research based on the study of women participation in income generating activities and economic development with focus on Mityana municipality in Mityana district in Uganda. As a new and continuously expanding municipality, the study aimed at identifying the main types of income generating activities that women participate in, the effects of such participation, the challenges and strategies to increase women participation in income generating activities. To achieve this, the study used a mixed research approach targeting 50 respondents and 10 purposive respondents in the 3 divisions of Mityana municipality-Central, Busimbi, and Tiamu. Questionnaires and key informant interviews were administered to respondents from December 2020 to January 2021. Study findings indicated that there is an increasing proportion of women participating in income generation activities. However, most women are engaged in informal and less lucrative activities mainly due to negative social perceptions towards women in business, inadequate fiscal support mechanisms and the rigid legal frameworks. The study concluded by giving recommendations such as increasing community sensitization on the value of women participation in income generating activities, setting up a specific department in charge of women affairs, and exploring the possibility of initiating women's SACCOs to increase financial incentives and support.

Keywords: COVID-19, Empowerment, SACCOs, Sociocultural perception

I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Since medieval times, women's efforts towards socioeconomic development at micro and macro-levels feature prominently (ADB, 2013). Archeological evidence alludes that women in early civilization were the pivots for household welfare through provision of services that linked production and supply chains (Arulnayagam, 2020) through small scale trade and activities such as weaving, marketing of goods, and farming (Asiimwe, 2014). Thus, strengthening women's entrepreneurial capacities and building of a robust, inclusive, and competitive business environment could be a recipe for women's economic empowerment and livelihood development at micro and macro levels (Azhar, 2019). However, the value

of women has been grossly undervalued-as most gainful employment opportunities were considered masculine (Belcher, 2003). Today, global effort towards increasing women in business and income generating activities has been in earnest through development frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals (UN, 2016), and Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable Development Goal 5 has set momentum for inclusive development and total empowerment of women for sustainable development (UN, 2017). This has led to the development of robust affirmative strategies such as Women in Development (WID), UN-Women, the International Labor Organization Women's Entrepreneurship Development (ILO-WED) framework, and myriad national women organizations aimed at unleashing the full potential of

women towards creating avenues and opportunities for socioeconomic growth and development (UN-Women, 2017). Such robust interventions have led to a gradual sprawl in the number of women entrepreneurs. Global statistics of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) report that, one in three formally registered businesses is owned by women (IMF, 2016). Eighty per cent of jobs world-wide are in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are disproportionately owned and run by women (UNCTAD, 2019). However, such massive strides are disproportionate with a sizeable number of women in developing and socially conservative communities curtailed from engaging in income generating activities or structurally incapacitated from gainful employment (CISP, 2018). For instance, 70 per cent of women-owned SMEs in developing countries are underserved or not served at all by financial institutions, women are considered socially acceptable if they remain home, and existing income generating activities are considered acceptable to males; leading to 'time poverty' (UNCTAD, 2014). They have on average lower sales and assets, and are often clustered in saturated and low-profit sectors and markets (WorldBank, 2018).

In Uganda, the government and private institutions and stakeholders are increasingly recognizing the value of women especially in small business and in the informal sector (EPRC, 2017). In rural areas, over 70% of agro-produce production and income generating activities are women-led (FAO, 2020). This has led to development of socioeconomic strategies with a gendered dimension such as the Agri-Finance Support Facility, and Microfinance support center to aid women inclusion and tap women's efforts in income generating activities to spur economic development (FAO, 2018). However, efforts for financial inclusion and gendered initiatives to encourage women's participation in income generating activities are pedestrian. Socio-cultural norms and customs, limited knowledge on business, financial constraints, and rigid financial acquisition regulations have increased disparities in the ability of women owned businesses to access finances, and resources to gain from income generating activities (Funmi&Anderson, 2020). Gender biases towards women entrepreneurs curtail recognition of women's formal rights and unequal access to training and market connections. They tend to be overrepresented in smaller, unregistered, and less productive enterprises and more driven by economic necessity than men (Harok, 2010). They are often drawn to self-employment in the hope of juggling care responsibilities with their economic needs (IORA, 2019). And their businesses are more likely to be in sectors that are crowded and have the least growth potential (Kitada, 2013). Female entrepreneurs have less access to land, capital, and other productive resources (Matovu, 2019). Such gaps form the foundation of this study that will aim to examine the level of participation of women in income generating activities by identifying the types of activities, benefits, challenges, and possible interventions that could be identified to boost economic development.

A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Globally, there is increasing evidence that women's efforts and successes towards socioeconomic development are gaining traction and recognition at global and national/local levels. The main focus on Agenda 2030 of the Sustainable Development Goals; especially Goal 5 on gender equality and inclusiveness has not only laid ground for the enactment of gendered frameworks for women's participation in gainful employment and income generating activities for better and sustainable livelihoods (UN-Women, 2017), but also laid ground for the development of National Action Plans (NAPs) for socioeconomic advancement of women and socially vulnerable people (CISP, 2018). In Uganda, such grandiose effort have led to the adoption of gendered affirmative action's that aim at increasing women entrepreneurs in crucial sectors of national development especially agriculture. This has been through development and extension of financial effort and legislation of women-led Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) (UBOS, 2018). However, despite the myriad effort, total acceptance of women in income generating activities and women employment in business is generally untapped and impeded by structural and socio-cultural bottlenecks and stereotypes about women. This has grossly led to the underutilization and exploitation of women in income generating activities curtailing socioeconomic development. This paradox formed the gist of this study that aimed at examining the level of women economic participation in income generating activities and economic development using Mityana Municipal Council as a case study.

The main objective of the study was to examine the level of women participation in income generating activities for economic development in Mityana Municipal Council. Specific focus was to: (i) find out the types of income generating activities that women participate in for economic development in Mityana Municipal Council, (ii) find out the effects of women participation in income generating activities and economic development in Mityana Municipal Council, (iii) find out the possible challenges to women participation in income generating activities and economic development in Mityana Municipal Council and to suggest possible strategies to increase women participation in income generating activities and economic development in Mityana Municipal Council.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. TYPES OF INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES THAT WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Recent studies highlight that the nature of women activities vary over space and time (Mazumdar&Gurswamy, 2016). There is an overt disparity in the type of income generating activities between women in rural and urban settings, and in developed and developing societies (CISP, 2018). Ethnographic studies highlight that these variations emanate from myriad historical and current socio-cultural, economic, and political regulations, norms, value systems, and

attitudes towards women participation in income generating activities (Belcher, 2003). A comparative study in India shows that cultural perceptions dictate that women are valued if they work from home in household activities such as cooking, parental care, and care for the elderly without much regard to paid work (Ogden, 2017). Thus, in some parts of India such as Kerala, strong attachment to cultural constructs has relegated women to participation in activities that hardly avail income to themselves (Stein, 2008). However, recent studies in urbanities in India indicate a paradigm shift where most educated youths and females are continuously engaging in paid work due to increase in literacy and reducing gendered gaps due to robust government policies (UNDP, 2017).

Most studies in sub-Saharan Africa acknowledge that historical dictates relegated women to unpaid employment such as farm agriculture, fish cleaning, and secondary trade activities as a form helping sustain family businesses without necessarily being paid (Arulnayagam, 2020). A study in Nigeria by Funmi and Anderson (2020) reflects a total change in perception towards women in business. Conclusive evidence shows that there is increasing recognition of women value to economic development emanating from increased capacity towards entrepreneurship and women businesses (Funmi&Anderson, 2020). This relates to studies in Kenya that show that though the level and type of women economic activities varies between rural and urban women from agriculture to services jobs, there is increased household welfare and women empowerment resulting from increased monetary gains reaped by women in business (CISP, 2018). This finding relates to studies in Uganda that show that most rural women in Uganda engage in agronomic activities and small businesses for their livelihood welfare (Asiimwe, 2014). This partly resonates with the level of education, access to financial services, and entrepreneurial knowledge. A survey of gendered income generating activities in Uganda shows that most urban women engage in services sectors and gendered income generating activities such as food vending and selling, marketing and sales, and corporate jobs depending on literacy; and a sizeable number of women are initiating small businesses (UBOS, 2018). However, most rural women are mainly engaged in subsistence activities that relate to agriculture. For example, rural women sell excess agricultural goods and produce to supplement their income (FAO, 2020). Thus, there is overt evidence that women are increasingly participating in income generating activities though their effort and net gain in such economic activities is low partly due to limited access to finances, and socio-cultural structural constraints that limit gendered participation in income generating activities.

B. THE EFFECTS OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Several studies indicate that increased women participation in income generating activities is increasingly boosting sustainable livelihood development (Vixathep, 2012). Literature on the monetary value of women participation in income generating activities globally highlights that economic development correlates with increased women participation in

subsistence and commercial activities (UNFPA, 2018). Most gendered studies conclude that entrepreneurship is held up almost as a universal “solution” for numerous problems including poor regions outside of Europe and North America, mostly low income, and with less developed economies (Adamson and Tsourapas 2020). Economically, entrepreneurship creates wealth and jobs (Carree and Thurik 2010); socially, it bolsters welfare (Anderson and Ronteau 2017) and can build women’s confidence (Mordi et al. 2010) and status (Kalden et al. 2017). Indeed, governments of emerging economies, policymakers, and international donor organizations have embraced entrepreneurship as a strategic tool for economic growth and inclusive social advancement (Al-Dajani et al. 2015). This paradigm projects entrepreneurship as a mechanism for independence, the ability to stand on one’s own legs for satisfying one’s needs without dependence on others (Goyal and Parkash 2011). For women, this independence is often typified as financial independence (Jamali 2009; Pettersson et al. 2017) or contextually presented as autonomy from male family members (Gray and Finley-Hervey 2005). The entrepreneurial self-fosters the fulfillment of human potentials. Entrepreneurship liberates from organizational and institutional impediments (Rindova et al. 2009). Accordingly, governments advocate female entrepreneurship as an element of women’s empowerment (Loh and Dahesihsari 2013) and a tool for their economic empowerment (Anggadwita et al. 2015). UNCTAD Report (2018) sums up this assertion neatly: women are good for entrepreneurship and that entrepreneurship is good for women. Thus, women emerge as capable of organizing themselves to be self-reliant and confident of exercising their independent rights to make choices, alongside controlling the resources that will foster challenging and even eliminating female subordination in a society. It includes access to economic power or income generation, education, health, rights, and political participation (IDRC, 2018). Thus, most literature and studies highlight that the involvement of women in income generating activities generates a typology of social, economic, and political gains that boost livelihood welfare of both women, men in different societies (UNCTAD, 2019).

C. CHALLENGES TO WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Since 1990s, a growing stream of literature began to examine the influences of gendered ascriptions on women’s entrepreneurial activities, exposing how gender discrimination and masculine bias frame the underlying assumptions of entrepreneurship and position women as being on the “losing side” (Foss et al. 2019). This apposite but complex line of debate has been explicated by several critical reviews, theories, and conceptual papers and clarified by empirical cases (Azhar, 2019). Granted that these prior studies embrace different viewpoints and methods, the compelling general opinion is that the ontological underpinnings of entrepreneurship are premised on a masculine normative (Ahl and Marlow 2012). This discourse has highlighted discordance between the fundamental assumptions of entrepreneurship as an open, meritocratic, and agented field (Al-Dajani et al.

2015) and the actualities of “everyday” entrepreneurship (Welter et al. 2017) restricted by ascribed social values and norms (Mole and Ram 2012).

Further, much of the literature explains the significance of and access to resources such as education and microfinance as enabling factors, or means, of empowerment that stimulate the empowerment process (Datta and Gailey 2012) while simultaneously underlining agency as the substance of women’s empowerment (EPRC, 2017). However, a comparative survey in Uganda on the gendered gaps to agrifinance highlights that women initiative to run business is hindered by stringent rules to access finances due to limited collateral, socio-cultural norms that relegate women to subsistence household work, and masculine perception (FAO, 2020) and attitudes that discourage acceptance of women in some businesses regarded a preserve of male by society such as coffee marketing (Asiimwe, 2014). A study on the nature of women jobs in India highlights that impediments to women engagement in income generating activities range from inadequate access to finances, rigid structural and legal frameworks that impede entry of women in business, limited appreciation of women in business, (Mazumdar&Gurswamy, 2016) and limited participation in leadership of business unions that hinders the advancement of women’s needs that could be used for economic empowerment (IORA, 2019). Women face inequitable laws and regulations in almost all countries. As of 2015, the World Bank found that of 173 economies, 155 had at least one barrier to women preventing gender equality (IDRC, 2018). These included gender-based restrictions on jobs in 100 countries, and laws that allow husbands to prevent their wives from working in 18 countries (UN-Women, 2017). Less common restrictions applied to business and banking (IMF, 2016). A sociological study on challenges to women in business summarizes that women entrepreneurs in developing countries face many concurrent barriers, at various levels (Belcher, 2003). For example, they have less recognition of their formal rights and unequal access to training and market connections (UBOS, 2018). They tend to be overrepresented in smaller, unregistered, and less productive enterprises and more driven by economic necessity than men (UNFPA, 2018). They are often drawn to self-employment in the hope of juggling care responsibilities with their economic needs (CISP, 2018). And their businesses are more likely to be in sectors that are crowded and have the least growth potential (Azhar, 2019). These constraints are further compounded by barriers women face more broadly, particularly the unequal distribution of domestic responsibilities (WorldBank, 2018).

D. POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO INCREASE WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Several studies and policy institutions have advanced a plethora of strategies and interventions to economically empower women (Women-Deliver, 2016). A report by UN-Women categorically summarizes three (3) dimensions of the interventions to boost women effort and gain in income generating activities encompassing social, economic, and political interventions (UN-Women, 2017). A study on

women’s empowerment in global value chains corresponds with such recommendations. Main conclusions highlight that women need to be financially equipped, politically empowered, and socially accepted to engage in gainful income generating activities (IORA, 2019). Such principles of action should be holistic, integrated, and strategic (ADB, 2013).

Some of the targeted efforts targeted efforts should relate to social training of women; the impact of business training and financial services on the growth of women’s businesses tends to be limited. Improving access to credit has seen some success in developing countries (UNDP, 2017). In Latin America, for example, initiatives by Proyecto Capital to promote financial services alongside cash transfers were shown to help small businesses expand. However, numerous case studies suggest the impacts of credit access for women-led enterprises are varied and often small (Funmi&Anderson, 2020). Thus, training should be flexible to match the socio-cultural and economic needs of women in a targeted area (Asiimwe, 2014). Many interventions combine financial services with business training and services (UBOS, 2018). Training for larger enterprises may also have a better chance of success than those targeting smaller businesses (Azhar, 2019).

Several studies highlight that there is need to develop women centered affirmative programmes and actions (UNCTAD, 2014). There is some evidence that supplier diversity programs, targeting SMEs and minority-led businesses, are ‘win-win’ —generating better returns for companies and opportunities for target groups (UNCTAD, 2019). According to WEConnect International and Walmart (2018), the demand for products by women-owned companies outstrips supply, especially in emerging economies (IMF, 2016). Documenting and comparing experiences across countries and sectors will help to validate this approach to creating opportunities (Azhar, 2019). A range of new business and investing models — such as impact investment and social investment bonds — aim to generate not just financial returns but social and/ or environmental gains (FAO, 2020). While these investment approaches hold promise, there is yet little evidence of how they support women’s economic empowerment (Funmi&Anderson, 2020).

Research on trade reforms highlights the need to anticipate and monitor their potential impacts on women in business (IORA, 2019). Public procurement, which makes up a significant proportion of a country’s GDP, is an area where governments can intervene to increase opportunities for women (Arulnayagam, 2020). This can be through microfinance support, legislation on employment of women in lucrative businesses, and a change in value chains to improve women access to markets (FAO, 2020). The International Development Research Centre summaries the policy interventions to boost women-owned businesses and income generating activities as: ‘backing legal reforms with efforts to strengthen enforcement and shift biased norms, strengthening women’s role in value and distribution chains, applying a gender lens to trade and procurement, and investing in closing gendered data gaps.’ (IDRC, 2018)

III. METHODOLOGY

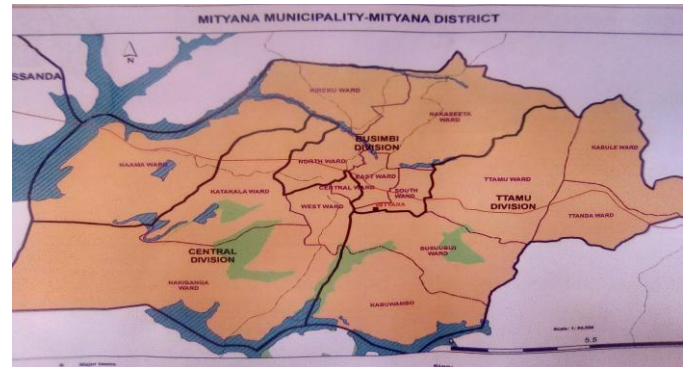
This study used a cross-sectional survey design. The aim of using a cross-sectional survey design was to investigate, explain, and describe the phenomenon of women participation in income generating activities through obtaining different viewpoints relating to objectives (Neuman, 2014), making it feasible to carry out the research within a short period of time and give accurate results.

In this study, numerical figures and descriptive information were obtained, giving it both a qualitative and quantitative research dimension. The study hence used both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. A Qualitative research method was used in order to generalize the findings of the study in relation to the objectives (Blanche et al, 2006) while a quantitative research method was used to provide the factual figures by quantifying the findings.

At the data collection stage, qualitative design involved administering 10 open ended interviews to the Mityana Municipal Community Development Officer, 3 Division Production Officers, Mityana Municipal Mayor, 3 Division Mayors, 1 leader of women groups or Mityana Traders' Association (MITA) 1 Chairperson of Mityana Municipal Central Market, and 50 questionnaires to respondents including women vendors, women-led Micro, Small Medium small business enterprises (MSMEs) owners, male vendors, and community social leaders while the quantitative design involved administering closed ended questionnaire questions. The sample size was determined using the Morgan Krejcie table/formula for sample size determination that equates an area population to sample respondents. This enabled the researcher obtain the target respondent number of 50. Data was collected from a representative sample of 50 respondents sampled from the 3 divisions of Mityana Municipal Council.

A. RESEARCH AREA

The research was done in Mityana Municipality located about 77 kilometers west of Kampala. Mityana Municipality is located between 00°24' north of the Equator and 32°32' east of the Greenwich in Mityana district in Central Uganda (www.en.m.wikipedia.org). The municipality covers an urban area of 8 square miles (21Kms²) with an average elevation of 3,967 feet (Uganda Districts' Handbook, 2018). The Urban Population density is 4,847 persons/square miles; with an urban population of 95,428 persons and about 24,000 households (UBOS Projection, 2020, www.city.population.de). Mityana Municipality has 15 wards/parishes and 144 villages (Mityana Municipal Council Statistics, 2020). Ttamu division has 6 parishes/wards and 59 villages, Central division has 4 parishes and 36 villages, and Busimbi has 5 parishes/wards and 49 villages (UBOS, 2019). However, Central division is the most urbanized and densely populated division (Mityana Municipal Council Statistics, 2020).



Source: Mityana District Electoral Commission Archives

IV. RESULTS

A. TYPES OF INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The largest proportion of respondents (42 percent) reported that the main economic activity that women participate in for income generation is informal food vending-especially in Mityana Central Market. However, some women own retail and beauty shops accounting to 26 percent of the sample. 10 percent of respondents with tertiary education are involved in teaching. Qualitative interview data from the Municipal Education Officer corresponds with the finding as it was reported that 'most women are engaged in formal activities especially food vending in Central division.'

N/o	Activity	Frequency/Count	Percentage (%)
1	Food vending	21	42%
2	Money lending	5	10%
3	Retail and beauty shops	13	26%
4	Tailoring	6	12%
5	Teaching	5	10%
Total			

Source: Field data

Table 2: Types of income generating activities women participate in for economic development



Plate 2: Small-scale retail business along Mityana Market Street (Field data)

B. EFFECTS OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Respondents highlighted that women involvement in income generating activities is associated with both positive and negative benefits. 30 percent of the respondents reported that it has boosted livelihoods through employment creation. Other benefits have been income generation, improved women social status, and leadership empowerment. However, 10 percent of the respondents highlighted that women participation in income generating activities has increased family neglect of responsibilities by men.

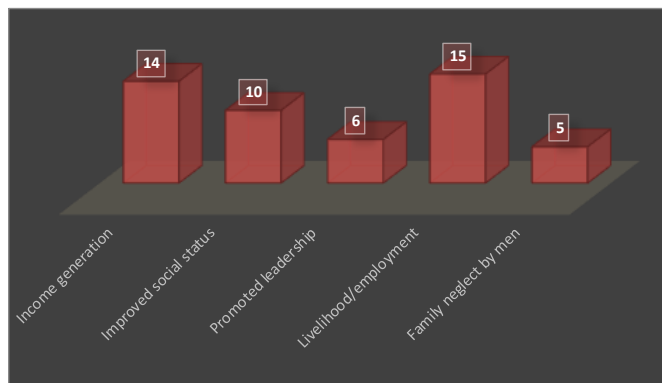


Figure 4: Effects of women participation in income generating activities (Field data)

C. CHALLENGES TO WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Despite the increased women participation in income generating activities, several challenges were reported. 26 percent of respondents reported that sociocultural negative perceptions of women in employment is rampant followed by high local taxes, high rental fees, financial constraints and COVID-19 related effects. An interview with the Mayor of Central division relayed such fears that 'there is double taxation of businesses both at local and central government levels.'

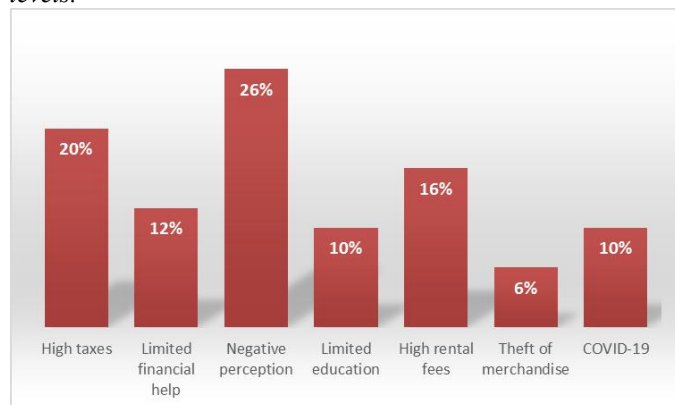


Figure 5: Challenges to women participation in income generating activities (Field data)

D. POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO INCREASE WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Several strategies have been earmarked to promote women engagement in income generating activities and economic development. 24 percent of respondents reported that there is sensitization of the community on the role of women in business, and 22 percent of respondents highlighted that there is increased training of women entrepreneurial skills. The Municipal Mayor revealed that 'several workshops to train women gainful employment skills such as securing of contracts and tenders are being organized at the municipal headquarters regularly.'

Other initiatives have involved setting up of bylaws, securing of quick loans, constant sanitation and hygiene, and encouraging women to diversify their income generating activities.

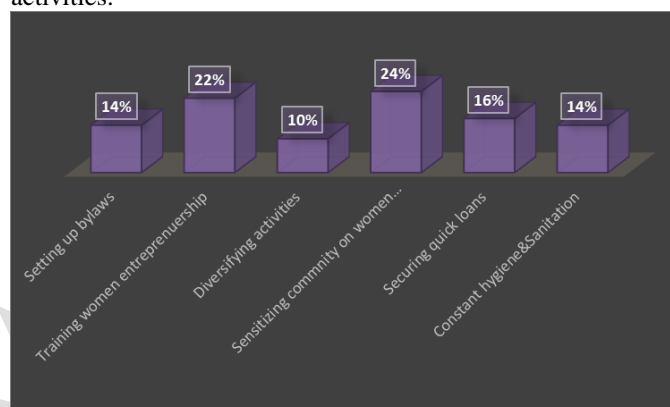


Figure 6: Strategies to increase women participation in income generating activities (Field data)

Field observations revealed that sensitization messages about health, sanitation, and hygiene are prominent especially at the entrance of markets and congested zones.



Plate 3: A notice to encourage constant hand washing to limit spread of COVID-19 and promote hygiene at the entrance of Mityana Central Market (Field data)

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

A. TYPES OF INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Study findings indicated that there is an increasing proportion of women participating in income generating

activities. However, statistical analysis of the findings highlights that most women are employed in informal jobs such as food vending that generate limited incomes (UN, 2017). This finding correlates with chronological studies on the level of women economic empowerment (CISP, 2018). An empowerment study in Kerala-India indicates that most women are engaged in secondary informal activities of fishing such as fish sorting, and cleaning that are less productive (Azhar, 2019). A comparative study in Nairobi concluded that the largest proportion of women in informal business is engaged in feminine jobs for daily survival (CISP, 2018). This trend is partly due to historical feminine stereotypes on formal employment, and limited training of women and exposure to entrepreneurial skills (Belcher, 2003). The study revealed that 26 percent of women are involved in retail businesses indicating a gradual progress in women participation in formerly masculine enterprises. A critical study on the value of women in productive businesses acknowledges that increasing levels of education are encouraging financial literacy among women creating avenues for business financial management (FAO, 2020) and involvement in small and medium enterprises that require large capital investments (EPRC, 2017). This implies that though there are concerted efforts to increase women participation in income generating activities, holistic and total empowerment of women for sustainable development is pedestrian.

B. EFFECTS OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Study findings reveal that women participation in income generating activities has led to a multitude of benefits whilst some socioeconomic negative effects have emerged. 90 percent of respondents reported that women in income generating activities has promoted livelihoods, generated incomes through jobs, and boosted the socio-political status of women. This observation correlates with systematic studies especially in sub-Saharan Africa and South and South-East Asia. A study on the empowerment of fisherwomen in India reveals that though most women are categorically employed in secondary and tertiary sectors of the fishing value chain, the socioeconomic status of women has been promoted through daily earnings, and ability to sustain family necessities. Recent studies in rural Uganda analyze that subsistence involvement of women in employment such as postharvest produce employment, weaving, and small-scale trade has gradually enabled women to sustain their basic livelihood needs.

However, study findings highlight that women participation in income generating activities has generated some social ills. 10 percent of the respondents revealed that most men are increasingly ignoring their household responsibilities; partly due to a belief that women have to soldier family livelihood needs especially since the outbreak of COVID-19 that led to the closure of masculine jobs. This observation is clearly explained by myriad reports that grossly highlighted that the outbreak of COVID-19 and enforcement of Standard Operation Procedures by government increased domestic conflicts and abandonment of families. However, a critical sociological study analyzes that women empowerment

in some African settings has distorted cultural norms and disadvantaged the ability of men to manage family responsibilities.

C. CHALLENGES TO WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A typology of sociocultural, economic, and legal challenges were reported that hamper effective women participation in income generating activities. 26 percent of the respondents reported that negative perception of women involvement in income generating activities is the most common challenge dotted with masculine and cultural discouragement of women employment in favor of family responsibilities. This finding rhymes with global literature that systematically highlight that sociocultural norms are the main impediment to women empowerment especially in the developing world (Arulnayagam, 2020) where women are regarded as fit for family management responsibilities (ADB, 2013). A related study on perception of women employment in India reveals that historical socio-religious dogma respects women who devote more time to family responsibilities to formal employment outside homes (Azhar, 2019). 20 percent and 16 percent of the respondents reported that exorbitant local taxes and high rental charges respectively hinder gainful employment and acquisition of profit from women businesses that are mainly informal. 10 percent of respondents reported that the outbreak of COVID-19 greatly affected the operations of informal businesses due to reduced demand and high supply costs of transporting produce. This systematically relates with chronological studies since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic that reveal gross supply and demand deficits that affected ease of doing business (FAO, 2020). A report by the Economic Policy Research Centre revealed that most informal businesses collapsed in the initial 3 months (March to June 2020) of total closure of business by government to tame the spread of diseases (EPRC, 2020). Economic statistics on the ease of doing business in Uganda corroborate that high government taxes render most informal Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises unprofitable, with short survival timelines (FAO, 2020; UBOS, 2018).

D. POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO INCREASE WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Field data revealed that a plethora of strategies are being encouraged or prospected to increase women participation in income generating activities. 24 percent of respondents revealed that the most prominent strategy is sensitizing of the community especially men on the benefits of women participation in income generating activities. A thematic finding on women empowerment in the marine sector correlates with the current study findings (IORA, 2019). Increased training of the community on mindset change and acceptance of women in business supplements household income (CISP, 2018) and creates avenues for robust investment in core aspects of socioeconomic household and community welfare (FAO, 2020). Furthermore, 22 percent of

the respondents revealed that increasing training of women entrepreneurial skills could help negate middlemen and loss of business revenue by women. A feasibility study on business losses along the agricultural business value chain in Uganda reveals similar findings that women-led MSMEs could reap more profits if women are trained financial and business management skills at all levels (EPRC, 2017; EPRC, 2020). Other robust strategies reported include helping women secure quick and soft loans, setting up bylaws by local administration for affirmative action, encouraging sanitation and hygiene, and diversifying of businesses to increase profit. Such findings resonate with the Bank of Uganda financial report (UBOS, 2018) that identified bottlenecks such as high Central Bank Rate and high interest on soft loans, and weak legal frameworks as some of the challenges to financial inclusion of women-led and youth MSMEs (EPRC, 2020).

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND FUTURE INQUIRY

There is overt evidence that women are increasingly participating in income generating activities. However, most women are involved in informal income generating activities that are vulnerable to socioeconomic shocks such as coronavirus, legislative instabilities, and economic disincentives that catastrophically reduce the profitability of businesses that women participate in for income generation and economic development. This has led to increased losses, and reduced economic benefits for socioeconomic development and household welfare. A holistic women empowerment strategy needs to be systematically developed and incorporated into local governance systems to increase the relevance of women involvement in income generating activities. A critical understanding of the AWESOME Framework for women empowerment could be explored in Mityana Municipality to promote inclusive women empowerment for sustainable development.

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