**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY IN UGANDA A CASE OF KABALE DISTRICT**

**BY**

**LIBERTY CHRISTOPHER**

**A RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREEOF MASTER OF PROJECT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF**

**KABALE UNIVERSITY**

**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

* 1. **Overview**

The study investigates women empowerment and economic prosperity in Uganda. Chapter one elicits the background which unpacks four systematically linked perspectives namely; historical, theoretical, conceptual and contextual perspectives. It further presents the study problem, the general objective, objectives, research questions and the conceptual framework. In addition, the chapter highlights the scope and significance of the study.

The concept of women empowerment to attain economic prosperity has become a global agenda. It is embedded in various pronouncements and legislative mandates so as to attain gender equality and inclusive development. The women who have hitherto been disadvantaged and disempowered have attracted attention because of the benefits associated with tapping into their efficacy and potential.

# 1.2.1 Historical Background

The emergence of women empowerment is traceable to the feminist movements of the 18th century in Europe intensified with the publication of “A Vindication of the Rights of Women” with structures on political and moral subjects in 1792 by Mary Wollstonecraft. This was followed by “The Enfranchisement of Women” in 1851 by Harriet Taylor Mill and “The Subjection of Women” by John Stuart Mill in 1869 (Ozoya et al ,2017). This struggle was replicated in America by the publication of the woman’s bible in 1895 by Elizabeth Cady Stanton alongside 26 other feminists (McMillen, 2008). The overthrow of patriarchy or ‘patriarchal equilibrium’ was a major driving force of women empowerment (Bennett, 2016; Motta, Fominaya & Eschle (2011).

In Africa, women activism began in the middle of the 20th century, facilitated by the increasing independence of many African nations (Berger, 2008). However, most of the agitations were not as in the case of Europe and America which utilized the power of the media through publications although it later emerged (Afonso, 2017). The attempt to adopt the same pattern of activism in the Europe and America was highly hampered by the differences in language. Prior to the book by Ester Boserup titled Woman’s Role in Economic Development in 1970, there were other scholars who published books reflecting the plight of African women.

As a global effort to promote the course of women, consequent upon the rising intensification of feminist movements in the 1970s, the General Assembly of the United Nations declared 1975 as the International Women’s year. During the year, the General Assembly organized the first World Conference on Women, which was convened in Mexico City. The outcome of the meeting was the declaration of 1976-1985 as the UN Decade for Women followed by the approval of a voluntary fund for the decade. After the first world conference on women, three other sessions have been held, namely, Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), and Beijing (1995). Remarkably, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action has become the basis upon which the progress in women empowerment is assessed (Aina, 2012).

In January 2011, UNIFEM was amalgamated into UN Women, which is a composite entity of the UN. This was in conjunction with the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues (OSAGI), and Division for the advancement of Women (DAW). The actions were geared towards instituting policies that promote women’s access to political power and productive resources such as land, technology, and credit facilities (Abu-Lughod, 2009). Furthermore, the United Nations included gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls as goal number five in its Sustainable Development Goals in 2016.

The African continent contributed her quota to women empowerment through the African Union by declaring the year 2010 to 2020 as the African Women’s Decade with the theme: *Grassroots* Approach to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) (Martin, 2013). In Uganda, women empowerment initiatives were catapulted since 1986 with the national resistance movement which put in place various programs and affirmative strategies to empower women. To this end, political, economic social, and education affirmative programs were initiated.

The concept of economic prosperity can be traced back to the mid-1800s, when the theorist [Lysander Spooner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lysander_Spooner) was writing about the benefits of small credits to entrepreneurs and farmers to get out of poverty. [Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Wilhelm_Raiffeisen) founded the first cooperative lending banks to support farmers in rural [Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany) so as to realize economic prosperity (Bruton, & Khavul, 2011). Specifically economic prosperity for women has roots in the 1970s when the Grameen Bank of [Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh) with pioneer [Muhammad Yunus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Yunus) started (Yunus, 2011). [Muhammad Yunus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Yunus) ventured into providing some capital to 30 women to invest in bamboo. The results were positively enormous. This has since been replicated throughout the world (Turyahabwe 2017). In Uganda women prosperity has been undertaken since 1992 through women groups and village loans and saving groups (VLSA) (Kasujja 2020).

**1.2.2 Theoretical Background**

**This study choses** the stakeholder theory of [Edward Freeman](http://stakeholdertheory.org/team/r-ed-freeman/)  propounded in 1984 and the social role theory of Eagly, Alice.H. and Wood, Wendy of 1985 to underpin this study. The two theories complement each other and expand on the explanation of women empowerment and economic prosperity.

The stakeholder theory of Freeman (1984) states that stakeholders are groups that have a legitimate right regarding the undertaking. To this end, stakeholder theory emphasizes the involvement of the concerned. The stakeholder is any individual or group that may affect the achievement of goals or that is affected by the process of searching for objectives (Gilley, 2005). The theory is a fit for women empowerment since to be considered 'empowered', women themselves must be significant actors in the process of change. In other words, women must have strong stake in the empowerment process. The stakeholder approach emphasizes that women must be involved in the process of empowerment as key partners. They must take on the mantle in politics, social emancipation. The Stakeholder Theory is suitable since it addresses morals and values, related to [corporate social responsibility](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility) (Porter & Kramer, 2019). The value of stakeholder theory is observed in the incorporation of stakeholders’ views in the main structure of process (Davis, 2014). Similarly, women can only attain economic prosperity if they are involved and have a stake in wealth creation, business transactions and develop the socio-economic development acumen

The social role theory of Eagly, Alice.H. and Wood, Wendy of 1985 expounds on the sex differences and similarities in behavior that reflect gender role beliefs that in turn represent people’s perceptions of men’s and women’s social roles in the society in which they live. The theory propagates that in postindustrial societies, for example, men are more likely than women to be employed, especially in authority positions, and women are more likely than men to fill caretaking roles at home as well as in employment settings (Eagly, & Wood, 2012). Men and women are differently distributed into social roles because of humans’ evolved physical sex differences in which men are larger, faster, and have greater upper-body strength, and women gestate and nurse children. Given these physical differences, certain activities are more efficiently accomplished by one sex or the other, depending on a society’s circumstances and culture. The division of labor yields gender role beliefs, which then facilitate this division through socialization processes. Women have constraints and limitations which make it difficult for them to participate as fully as men in tasks that require speed of locomotion, uninterrupted activity, extended training, or long-distance travel away from home.

The theory suggests the prognosis for change in gender-based disparities in occupational and academic choices. There is need thus for empowerment in the education and labor market (OECD, 2017). The persistence of horizontal gender segregation in educational and occupational fields contributes decisively to the spread of gender-stereotypic beliefs about a natural fit of women in careers that are more expressive and human-centered. The social role theory (Eagly and Wood, 2012) suggests that gender roles and their occupants are highly visible in everyday contexts and that gender stereotypes emerge in response to the observation of women and men in different social roles and in role-linked activities related to occupational choice (Koenig and Eagly, 2014). This makes women empowerment critical to elude this conservative trajectory

From the social theory, it evident that men and women do not enjoy the same opportunities, and do not have the same chances to either benefit from or contribute to the social and economic development of their countries (Makorova 2019). The legitimate aspiration of women to play a more critical role in the economic development of their countries is often linked to the quest for civil and political rights. This makes women empowerment paramount for them to have equal stance in the social roles.

From the two theories, it is evident and clear that for women to attain empowerment, they need to take a decisive role as stakeholders. It is also imperative to realize from the social role theory, that certain factors have kept them behind their counterpart men in socio-economic development. The two theories merged together indicate that women need to have a stake in negating the traditional stereotypes and perceptions based on sex differences and gender roles. The social role theory indicates that women are disadvantaged by the sex and biological inclinations and therefore need some affirmative action (Cornwall and Edwards, 2016). Women’s empowerment is a process of personal and social change, taking place over interlinked and mutually reinforcing psychological, political, social and economic domains, and through which women individually and collectively need to participate to gain power, make meaningful choices and control over their lives (O’Neil et al., 2014).

1.9 Conceptual Framework

**Independent Variable (IV)                               Dependent Variable (DV)**

**Women Empowerment Economic Prosperity**

Contribution of women in economic empowerment programmes

- Participation in development

-Confidence

Property ownership

Financial decisions

Household expenditure

Determinants of women empowerment

-Policies –Activism

Relationship between women empowerment and economic prosperity

-social protection

-inclusion

**Fig 1: Conceptual Framework**

**Women Empowerment Economic Prosperity**

Increased incomes

Increased awareness

Good standard of living

Access to assets

Access to education and training

Good laws

Fig 1 shows the conceptual framework. it elaborates that women empowerment is independent variable while economic prosperity is the dependent variable. Women empowerment is operationalized into, Contribution of women in economic empowerment programmes, determinants of women empowerment and relationship between women empowerment and economic prosperity. Economic prosperity has indicators such as property ownership, financial decisions and household expenditure. Arrows have been used to show the flow of the relationships.

# 1.1.3 Conceptual Background

Empowerment is how much people participate in the decisions and actions of their lives (Sultan 2015). Empowerment is the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability. It is a process of change from disempowerment to empowerment by expanding people’s ability to make first order decisions that result in desired outcomes ((Karlan et al 2017). According to Sohail (2014) women empowerment is the women awareness of their rights, self-confidence, to have a control over their lives both at home and outside and their ability to bring a change in the society. It is the women’s ability to make own decisions and decide their destiny in life.

Women empowerment has many elements which depend upon and relate to each other say; economic, social, political and personal. Economic empowerment means to give a woman her rights in the economy. Social empowerment means status of women in the society to be equal to men by eliminating injustice and inequity. Political empowerment means women should have seats in political assemblies and giving one woman right of one vote. Personal empowerment means women should have freedom in their personal matters (Sohail 2014, Brody et al. (2015). There are three elements of empowerment: self-empowerment, mutual empowerment and social empowerment, and these three elements are related to each other. Self-empowerment means individual effort, mutual empowerment means relationships with others, and social empowerment is generated by removing social, political, legal and economic hurdles to get individual influence. Concentration on one or two elements of empowerment is not sufficient for achieving important change.

Economic prosperity is the advancement in terms of financial capacity, investments and property ownership there by increasing the standard of living (Ksoll et al., 2015). It paves an incentive to save money and get emergency support (Ksoll et al., 2015) and offers a poverty reduction mechanism (Kesanta and Andre, 2015). Economic prosperity leads to wealth accumulation and pecuniary wellbeing both in monetary and non-monetary terms. Economic prosperity leads to more equitable access to assets and services, land, water, technology, innovation and credit, banking and financial services which strengthen women’s rights and promote economic growth. Economic prosperity graduates women’s income-generating activities from survival level into strong and viable businesses to fully develop their productive assets, their land and their businesses. Women’s economic prosperity leads women to achieve equal access to and control over economic resources, and ensuring they can use them to exert increased control over other areas of their lives (Taylor and Pereznieto, 2014). Women empowerment with prosperity does not only increase in women’s access to income and assets but also with control over them and how they use that control in other aspects of life (Taylor and Pereznieto, 2014). In this study economic prosperity shall mean women’s emancipation in income, propensity to save, invest and spend.

**1.2.4 Contextual Background**

Kabale district is found in western Uganda. There are various programs that target to empower women. These include National Agriculture Advisory Services (NAADS), Youth livelihood programs and Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP). These disburse funds, inform of credit and property for wealth creation. For example, a total of 1038 women in Kabale district had so far benefited from UWEP since its launch in the district. In the financial year 2016/17 Kabale district received 366 million which benefited 82 women groups in the district. In the 2018/19 financial year, Kabale district received 106 million. In this financial year 2019/2020, it received 278 million shillings meant to benefit 48 Women groups in the district. NAADS and Youth livelihood program have distributed goats, cows, chickens and improved seeds. These programmes empower women so that they can engage in initiatives that will increase their household incomes.

In spite of women empowerment programs in the district, women are still vulnerable, they are dependent on husbands and their income levels have not improved to make an impact in the home and society (Kabale District Local Government Social Services Report 2019). It is therefore not clear the impact women empowerment has made on the economic prosperity of women in terms of property ownership, involvement in household investment decisions and household income and expenditure. This forms the basis of this study.

**1.3 Problem Statement**

Women are a component of society but they still have hindrances in getting their rights. Women perform 66% of the world’s work, and produce 50% of the food, yet earn only 10% of the income and own 1% of the property (Aaronson, et al 2017). Globally, women are denied equal rights of education, health, security, jobs, skills, decision making authority, better living standard, and respect (Alonso, et al. 2019).

Women contribute less household income, they have substantially lower decision-making power around household expenditures, particularly food, shelter, and health spending (Aaronson et al 2017). Women also lack collateral to access financial services and space to indulge in entrepreneurial ventures (Kasujja 2020). In Kabale district women still have a men dependence syndrome. Even those who have acquired support from empowerment programs still work along with men (Kabale district social services report 2018). Women business is still limited. They have little investment and ownership of property that is completely detached from their husbands (UWEP 2018). They are less venturous in political positions that involve adult suffrage (UEC 2021). This situation presents an anomaly, and if it is not addressed, is likely to compromise women empowerment programs to attain economic prosperity.

**1.4 General Objective**

To establish the contribution of women empowerment towards economic prosperity in Kabale

**1.5 Objectives**

1. To assess the contribution of women empowerment towards economic prosperity
2. To examine the determinants of economic prosperity
3. To establish the relationship between women empowerment and economic prosperity

**1.6 Research Question**

1. What is the contribution of women in economic empowerment programmes?
2. What are the determinants of economic prosperity?
3. What is the relationship between women empowerment and economic prosperity?

# 1.7 Scope

**1.7.1 Geographical Scope**

The study will be conducted in Kabale district in western region of Uganda. It is approximately 450km from Kampala Capital City Authority. The district borders Rubanda on the East, Rukiga on the West, Rwanda in the North and Rukungiri in the South.

**1.7.2 Content Scope**

The study will examine the contribution of women empowerment on the economic prosperity of women. It will investigate the contribution of women in economic empowerment programmes, the determinants of economic prosperity and the relationship between women empowerment and economic prosperity

**1.7.3 Time scope**

The study will concentrate on the period between 2015-2020. This period is chosen because it is assumed it would be easy to track the necessary records on the subject and people would be able to recall events on the subject. The choice of five years can allow me to ascertain the trends of empowerment of women and economic prosperity

**1.8 Significance**

Policy makers and planners: The findings will inform policy and decisions on how to influence interventions to enhance women empowerment in Uganda. This can be through training modules and policies on empowerment procedures

Donor Community: The findings will inform the donor community with the necessary data to guide the formulation of appropriate strategies of effective support of empowerment interventions

Women activists: The study findings will also be used to create a good understanding and appreciation of the dynamics involved in women movements of Uganda. It is hoped that this will in the long run broaden strategies aimed at regulating strategies employed to strengthen women empowerment programs

World of academia: the findings will provide additional literature on the subject matter and also contribute to the body of knowledge in this country.

Further research: the findings may stimulate further research on the topic in other areas in the world to provide a comparative analysis on the findings.

To the researcher: It will lead to the award of the Masters in Project Planning and Management.

**Chapter two**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

# 2.1 Introduction

# This chapter elaborates on the literature related to women empowerment and economic prosperity. The chapter is structured into two sections. The first section deliberates on the theoretical review. The second section expounds on the real literature review. The discourse of the literature review is offered along the research objectives.

# 2.2Theoretical Review

This study on women empowerment and economic prosperity will be underpinned by stakeholders’ theory and the social role theory. Drawing from the stakeholders’ theory, (Leisyte and Westerheijden, 2014) illustrates how stakeholder analysis is paramount to examine societal, organizational, and individual dilemmas. Besides, it’s an adequate tool used to promote sustainable development activities that generate value for all stakeholders (Porter &Kramer, 2019). In this case, the prognosis of why women should be empowered from the perspective of the social role theory raises an informed platform for interventions. For example, women can challenge and reshape discriminatory structures and institutions only through acting together and attaining involvement as stakeholders in programs intended to uplift the status of women.

The value of stakeholder theory is observed in the incorporation of stakeholder's views in the main structure of interventions (Davis, 2014). This represents certainty of impact on the success of the empowerment efforts by integrating stakeholders (Muriana, & Vizzini 2014). This helps to counteract the inherent complexity as well as the uncertainty of relationships with stakeholders, and to face the demands of the dynamism of context (Muriana, &Vizzini, 2014). Critics argue that there has been a neglect in mainstream development of the need to reflect on and address the structural causes of women’s lack of power, and that this limits the effectiveness of interventions and women’s empowerment (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014). It is under this backdrop that women movements and women activists have been vigilant in women emancipation. In their quest for emancipation, the social role theory is imperative to earmark the previous injustices and yet more it espouses the inherent weakness of women like gestation, lactation and other sex differences that necessitate women to be empowered.

The social role theory on sex differences can explain the important reasons to support women’s empowerment, and the progress toward gender equality in areas such as health and education. There continues to be a significant economic gap between women and men in most parts of the world. Though the proportion of women in the workforce has increased steadily over the past decades, there remains significant differences in workforce participation rates. Women are concentrated in low-productivity, low-paying employment and businesses. Women receive less income for their labor than do men, and are more likely to be found in irregular, informal, and vulnerable forms of employment (Ampaire, 2020) The growth rates and profitability levels of businesses led by women also lag behind those of businesses led by men, and fewer women are found in positions of economic leadership. Yet this in most cases is not based on self-efficacy, abilities and intellectual strengths but rather stereotypes. To this end, this compels empowerment-based interventions where women need to be a wake and take part in the struggle.

**2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW**

**2.3.1 Contribution of Women in Economic Empowerment Programmes**

Economic empowerment combines the concepts of empowerment and economic advancement (Brody et al 2015). Approaches to economic empowerment concentrate on factors that help women succeed and advance in the marketplace and social economic wellbeing (World Bank 2016). This includes increasing skills and access to productive resources, improving the enabling and institutional environments, and assisting women in their ability to make and act upon decisions in order to benefit from economic growth and development. How this has been attained has not been ascertained which forms the basis of this study.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (2017) it postulates for instance that, if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20–30 percent, raising the total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5–4 percent. Such an increase in food production could lift 150 million people out of hunger. The World Bank (2018) also finds that if discrimination against women workers and managers was eliminated, productivity per worker would increase by between 25–40 percent. Increasing women’s economic opportunity and gender equality has been linked to higher gross domestic product growth, higher income per capita, and greater competitiveness. Whether empowerment efforts have accessed women resources and this has contributed to economic property in not clear which form the gist of this study. (Kumar, N. and Quisumbing, A.R. 2015) ‘Policy reform toward gender equality in Ethiopia: Little by little the egg begins to walk’, World Development 67: 406–23.

The development effects of putting more money in the hands of women are also significant because women tend to spend a greater portion of their incomes on their families (Ali, et al 2014). Increasing women’s income and their control over family spending can lead to improvements in child nutrition, health, and education, and work to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty (Nicolai, et al 2015). As women are a majority of the poor, improving their economic circumstances can also directly reduce female poverty and improve women’s wellbeing. Higher levels of gender equality are also associated with lower rates of poverty and food insecurity in the general population, higher standing in the Human Development Index, (Fink, & Fawzi, 2015). The authors show the achievements of women economic empowerment in general but do not succinctly bring out economic prosperity as issue that this study elaborately tackle.

Economic empowerment is a potent means to strengthen women’s rights and achieve gender equality. Growth and development themselves can support gender equality (Lybbert, & Wydick. 2016). As incomes grow, people are more likely to send both sons and daughters to school and less likely to have their daughters marry at an early age. Manufacturing and service sectors tend to expand in a growing economy, attracting more women into the formal labor force (Shankar, et al 2015). Service delivery can also improve, leading to better health and education outcomes for women and men. However, this relationship is not direct or automatic. Women’s economic empowerment therefore means working to address the constraints that women face to participating in and benefiting from growth and development, and working to secure their rights.

Brau and Waller, (2014) in agreement with Armendarizde et al (2015) note that, enabling the poor to gain access to resources is paramount to improving their incomes and consequently autonomy in financial decisions and investments. Economic autonomy is certainly an important contribution to family wellbeing and in this case the well-being of women as they are able to make independent decisions. In the same thinking, Schuler et al. (2015) suggests that the level of women’s economic position through saving enables them to undertake various business ventures and economic choices. This opens their economic potentials and wide economic decisions.

Economic empowerment propels the ability to make and act on decisions that involve the control over and allocation of financial resources (Buvinic, & Furst-Nichols, 2014). The economic enablement breaks the, legal restrictions remain that constrain women’s ability to engage in economic activities. For example, in 100 out of 173 surveyed countries restrict women from pursuing the same economic activities as men or directly prohibit women from holding particular jobs (World Bank, 2015a). However, with economic empowerment, women become viable and their involvement in economic ventures become spontaneous (Lybbert, & Wydick. 2016).

A randomized control study of women economic empowerment in Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda

found little evidence to suggest that participation in economic activities improves participants’

involvement in community activities even though intra-household decision-making power might improve (Karlan et al., 2012). While economic empowerment programs have been praised as a ‘catalyst for enhanced social capital, improved gender relations, women’s leadership, and community social and economic development’ (Allen and Panetta, 2017), few analyses document how members actually use the social capital to challenge existing structural and cultural barriers and expand their social networks. Social networks as social resources, which include intangible aspects of everyday interactions, whether symbolic or concrete broaden women skills in social aspects and choices (Hauberer, 2014). Interpersonal bonds and relationships constitute critical resources that offer the possibility of strong cooperation and collective action for individuals (Ibarguen-Tinley, 2014). How such social resources and social capital translate into economic prosperity deserves extensive investigation which this study will elucidate.

Despite the diverse opinion on what constitutes empowerment, there is a consensus among scholars that access to land, farming technologies, agricultural extension services and microcredit are fundamental to the empowerment of rural women farmers in boosting food production and ensuring global food security (Tarozzi, Desai, & Johnson, 2015). The aim of women economic empowerment is equal distribution of power between the sexes. Both men and women should be provided equal economic, social, legal, and political opportunities for their development. However, the authors stop at mentioning that economic empowerment is equal in resources but do not go ahead to show how this will lead to economic prosperity which forms the gist of this study.

Economic empowerment increase self-esteem, self-confidence, and understanding of their own potential, appreciate themselves and value their knowledge and skills (Buvinic, & Furst-Nichols, 2014). Women obtain equal distribution of power and involvement in decision making at home, in society, economy, and politics through women empowerment (Panigraphy, & Bhuyan, 2016). Desai, (2010) highlights the issues of women empowerment and improvement in education, health, and economic and political participation as key to empowerment as these form the core of basic human rights.

Women empowerment helps to achieve women rights and development goals such as economic growth, poverty reduction, health, education and welfare. National economies suffer when they discriminate against women. Women having skills and opportunities help businesses. Economically empowered women have more contribution to their families, societies and national economies. Women provided with skills, resources and equal access to economic institutions are a bed rock to prosperity for themselves society and this contributes to national development. Involvement in economic activities leverage women to have the power to make and act on economic decisions (Golla, Malhotra, Nanda, & Mehra, 2017).

The evidence that gender equality, especially in education and employment, leads to economic growth is more logical and vital than that economic growth that leads to gender equality in terms of health, prosperity and rights. From a growth context, the progress in certain elements of gender equality will present a win-win situation but from a gender equity view, there is uncertainty that growth will present critical elements of gender equality (Kabeer, & Natali, 2013). Investing in women is one of the most effective means of increasing empowerment and equality.

**2.3.2 Determinants of Economic Prosperity**

Ultimately, a country’s success in empowering women will depend on a multi-faceted and responsive approach to its public policy management and implementation, including its macro-economic, financial and trade policies (Kumar & Quisumbing, 2015). Past experience suggests that change is possible in the short term when it is well mandated and supported. A good example is legislative change which is quickly implemented. In rural Ethiopia, revisions to the Family Code (in 2000) and to community-based land registration (since 2003) were shown in a 2009 survey to have mutually enforcing effects on women’s rights and welfare (Kumar and Quisumbing, 2014). In Nepal, gender norms meant that 12- or 13-year-old girls were traditionally forced to drop out of school and marry shortly afterwards. However, women’s participation in a literacy and legal education program in one village led them to recognize this as an injustice and to organize collectively to break the cycle of discriminatory gender norms. Five years later girls in the village continue their education and do not marry before 16 (Mayoux, 2014).

The legal and constitutional protection of women’s rights remains an important political resource in women’s empowerment. The redefinition of the *de jure* terms of the political settlement provides new openings for women and their allies to win incremental gains that can, over time, give substance to formal access to resources and bring about *de facto* changes in power relations over the longer term (UN Women, 2017). Women’s improved access to education, health care and employment or livelihoods are frequently found to facilitate women’s empowerment (Pathways, 2011). For instance, there is evidence to support the claim that education facilitates changes in cognitive ability and that this, in turn, supports women and girls’ critical awareness and their ability to question and reflect on their lives (Kabeer, 2014). Compared with their less educated peers, educated women are likely to participate in a wider range of decision-making processes, at the household level and in the community, and to deal more with the outside world, including engaging with public officials and service providers (World Bank 2017).

Access to assets, livelihoods and employment covers a broad range of women’s empowerment. Women’s capacity to engage in, and benefit from, economic activities can spur change. This can be empowering, for instance, by providing women with resources under their direct control and/or with a legitimate reason to interact with others outside the family. It can also enable women to renegotiate the balance of power within their family including the conjugal contract and to change their self-worth and capabilities. Some studies have established a correlation between the long-term reduction in domestic violence and an increase in women’s assets (Marcus, & Harper, , 2014; UN Women, 2017).

Empirical studies also show that microcredit programs empower women. Loans appear to have been especially effective when they have helped women to consolidate existing income-generating activities. Moreover, long-term membership of microfinance organizations seems to result in improved access to other resources and greater likelihood of political participation (Schuher et al., 2016; Natali 2016). Evidence also shows that access to the labor market can increase women’s capacity to take autonomous decisions in the household, and also to have wider social and political engagement and be involved in collective action. Access to land and property ownership correlates with the capacity for autonomy in decision-making and improved wellbeing (Batliwala, 2014). In addition, changes in the law and normative frameworks to enable women to inherit assets can be an important means to enhance women’s access to property (Cooper and Bird, 2012).

Education and training are key determinants to empowerment. Educating girls is one of the most powerful tools for women’s empowerment. Education provides women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence they need to seek out economic opportunities. Well-designed vocational training leads to better paid work, and does not concentrate women in low-wage and low-skill work or reinforce occupational segregation between women and men (Nicolai, Hine & Wales, 2015). Peet, Fink, and Fawzi (2015) affirms that returns to education in developing countries in terms of women empowerment is enormous.

Access to and control over assets such as physical and financial and property are crucial for women’s financial security and underpin individual and household economic development. A wealth of evidence confirms the importance of control of household resources, including land and housing, for women’s ‘greater self-esteem, respect from other family members, economic opportunities, mobility outside of the home, and decision-making power’ (Klugman et al., 2014:

Making markets work better for women is central in determining empowerment. Many women entrepreneurs in developing countries face disproportionate obstacles in accessing and competing in markets. These include women’s relative lack of mobility, capacity and technical skills in relation to men (World Bank, FAO and IFAD, 2009). The World Bank (2016) argues that economic empowerment is about making markets work for women and empowering women to compete in markets. Because markets come in many forms, key markets include land, labor, financial and product. Women’s financial inclusion, including access to banking and other financial services, is also vital to increase women’s economic control and opportunities. Although overall access to financial services has increased worldwide, the gender divide actually increased between 2011 and 2014 in MENA, South Asia and SSA (Gonzales et al., 2015). In the Middle East women are half as likely as men to have a bank account, while the largest absolute gender gap is in South Asia, at 18 percentage points (Demirguc-Kunt et al., 2015). Women are less likely to access financial services via mobile technology too. In in 2010, across 19 LAC countries, an average of 79% of women ‘never’ used the internet for ‘working/trading/making money’ compared with 72.5% of men.

Participation in politics is imperative (Jackson and Wallace, 2015). This facilitates broad-based collective action and women’s leadership which is fundamental to wider progressive reform. Alliances and coalitions, including between women’s movements, aligned causes and political leaders, can be effective in developing a supportive enabling environment for women’s empowerment (O’Neil, 2016). For example, Htun and Weldon (2014: find a ‘surprisingly strong’ relationship between women’s organizing and childcare policy, which is complemented by the efforts of labor unions to protect domestic workers’ rights and promote the provision of childcare services (Samman et al., 2016). Effective collective action and leadership on gender equality challenges the existing male-dominated power base and the structures of gendered institutions. (Klugman et al., 2014). As O’Neil (2016) posits feminist action and gender reform that is genuinely locally-led is imperative. All this can be realized through political participation.

Mandatory legal quotas have been introduced in some countries. Thus far, the issue has received most attention in Europe, where gender board quotas for publicly listed companies have been established in Belgium, France, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain. Even the expectation of quota enforcement can be a compelling incentive to change. Prior to final enactment of the law in France, percentages of women on boards rose from 8.4% in March 2009 to 12.7% in March 2011, to 16.0% by January 2012 and 30% in October 2013 (European Commission, 2014a). Noting the slow pace of change in most EU-countries, the European Commission put forward a proposal for a directive including the objective of 40% of each sex amongst non-executive directors by 2002 (European Commission, 2014a).

**2.3.3 Relationship Between Women Empowerment and Economic Prosperity**

Buvinic and Furst-Nichols (2014) found that empowerment explicitly spurs women’s productivity and earnings. The World Bank (2016) found positive linkage with women’s income arising from emancipation of women. Pereznieto and Taylor (2014) specify that economic empowerment is a process which leads to women’s control over other areas of their lives. There is no doubt that poverty is disempowering as is individual lack of access to resources, as Duflo (2012) notes in her review of the evidence on economic development and empowerment. She finds substantial evidence that increased income earnings opportunities for women encourage parents to send their daughters to school, she also finds that these opportunities do not necessarily lead to broader empowerment as reflected in women’s status in society, the value of daughters relative to sons, political participation and employment all lead to economic prosperity.

Autonomy in decisions about household, own agricultural production and decision-making power over agricultural productive assets is enlisted ( Malapit and Quisumbing 2015, ; Alkire et al. 2013). This ultimately infers that women take on personal investment decisions. Reproductive health views and behaviors improve (Bandiera et al. 2014). Those who belong to women’s groups/speak up in public and influence resources in their favor. However, Donald et al. (2016) showed that the degree of correlation between husband’s and wife’s responses on decision making power is less than perfect, and varies substantially across countries. The author however, did not link how this affects economic prosperity which forms a gap that this study intends to bridge.

Lybbert and Wydick (2016) in survey literature in a paper on the economics of hope cite a number of cases where low aspirations produce poor economic outcomes. This could be attributed to disempowerment. Kosec et al. (2014) describe the results of a number of research projects that demonstrate that forward looking goals are critical for rural poverty reduction. They note that aspirations interact with constraints, so that if an individual has not experienced the ability to change their well-being, they will not explore alternatives.

Blattman et al 2016 finds no link between a highly effective program to help women in post-conflict Uganda start a self-employment trading business and improvements in women’s self-reported empowerment, as measured by women’s status in society, self-reported physical or emotional abuse by their partner, or self-reported independence (Blattman et al. 2016). Using self-reported participation in household decision-making on expenditures as a measure of economic empowerment, Banerjee et al. (2015) found no effect of a program which raised poor women’s earnings, assets, and household consumption in six countries on broader economic empowerment. They do find qualitative evidence the program increased women’s self-esteem, which the participants linked to the positive outcomes. This provides some evidence for the link between a positive mindset – hope, self-esteem, etc. - and better economic outcomes.

In a project to teach Kenyan women to market energy efficient cookstoves, evaluators found that a component designed to increase the women’s self-efficacy and self-confidence produced higher sales compared with a control group that did not receive this component as part of their training (Shankar, Onyura, and Alderman 2015). In the WORTH project in Nepal, project components addressed both women’s agency and savings/business operations outcomes, and progress on both were evaluated. A quasi-experimental evaluation found increases in self-reported self-confidence, civic participation, and intra-household decision making power; a decrease in reported gender-based violence, as well as improvements in economic outcomes (Mayoux 2014).

In India, researchers found that rural women participants in the *Mahila Samakhya* program, which combined adult education and vocational training with support groups and life skills training, reported an increase in mobility and civic participation, as well as higher labor force participation (Kandpal, Baylis, and Arends-Kuenning 2012). Similar results were found for participants in several World Bank sponsored Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI) programs (World Bank, 2015). Another piece of evidence for linkage is the finding that increased wage-earning opportunities for women lead to more girls in education and less early marriage (Hunt and Samman 2016). However, it has been noted that increased women’s empowerment in one domain say economic or political could lead to reduction in empowerment in another domain, as men try to reassert control and privilege (Hunt and Samman 2016).

Women’s ability to organize with others to enhance economic activity and rights is key to women’s economic empowerment. Collective action takes myriad forms and is strongly associated with improved productivity, income and working conditions, through changes to workers’ rights, wages, social protection and benefits. Furthermore, where group objectives focus specifically on changing social norms, such as restrictive attitudes towards women’s work and property ownership, collectives can contribute towards boosting women’s self-esteem and their identity as citizens. This in turn can lead to transformational gains for gender equality in the community and within broader political structures (Domingo et al., 2015).

Women’s participation in informal groups provide an important opportunity to develop confidence and self-belief, and effective leadership skills. This paves the way for women to hone their skills by taking leadership positions and to build the necessary constituency to move into positions in other informal or formal structures, including public or political office (Domingo et al., 2015). Across Nepal, Dalit women who have formed groups to establish savings and credit schemes have used these spaces to develop leadership skills and engage in collective advocacy to public bodies.

**2.4 Research Gap**

**2.5 Summary of Review**

The reviewed and discussed indicate that women empowerment contributes enormously to economic empowerment. Economic empowerment spurs women to gain access to resources which advances decision making in various aspects (Buvinic and Furst-Nichols 2014). Empowerment leverages social capital and women attain a stake in the social roles. They attain the niche to challenges social structures that present impediments to the attainment of their rights. Empowerment is a gate pass and panacea to economic prosperity (World Bank, 2015). However much of the literature was done in parts of the world which present different contexts. Some of the studies do not give a direct link of empowerment to economic prosperity but require inferences. The studies do not offer analogies for the Uganda situation. This situation presents a gap that this study will bridge.

**Conclusion**

**REFERENCES**

Razavi, S. (20116 *Engendering social security and protection: Challenges for making social security and protection gender equitable.* Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Baden, S. (2013) *Women’s collective action: Unlocking the potential of agricultural markets.* Oxford: Oxfam International.

Domingo, P., Holmes, R., O’Neil, T., Jones, N., Bird, K., Larson, A., Presler-Marshal, E. and Valters, C. (2015) *Women’s voice and leadership in decision-making: Assessing the evidence.* London: ODI.

Bosma, N. (2014), “The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) and its impact on entrepreneurship research.” *Foundations and Trends in Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 9(2), pp. 143-248.

Batliwala, S. (2014) ‘Are women’s movements a force for change’. Guardian Global Development podcast (http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/audio/ 2014/feb/20/women-movements-force-for-change-podcast).

Cornwall, A. (2014) ‘Reclaiming feminist visions of empowerment’, *Open Democracy*, 7 April (http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/andrea-cornwall/reclaiming-feminist-visions-of-empowerment, downloaded 23 April 2014).

Kumar, N. and Quisumbing, A.R. (2015) ‘Policy reform toward gender equality in Ethiopia: Little by little the egg begins to walk’, World Development 67: 406–23.

Ali, D.A., Collin, M., Deininger, K., Dercon, S., Sandefur, J. and Zeitlin, A. (2014) *The price of empowerment: Experimental evidence on land titling in Tanzania.* Policy Research Working Paper 6908. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Nicolai, S., Hine, S. and Wales, J. (2015) *Education in emergencies and protracted crises: Toward a strengthened response*. London: ODI. Peet, E.D.,

Fink, G. and Fawzi, W. (2015) ‘Returns to education in developing countries: Evidence from the living standards and measurement study surveys’, Economics of Education Review 49: 69–90.

Bosma, N., J. Hessels, V. Schutjens, M. Van Praag and I. Verheul (2012), “Entrepreneurship and role models”, *Journal of Economic Psychology*, Vol. 33 (2), pp. 410–424.

European Institute for Gender Equality (eige) (2015), “Gender equality and economic independence: part-time work and self-employment: Main findings”, available at http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/MH0214669ENC\_Web.pdf.

Bijedić, T., F. Maaß, C. Schröder and A. Werner (2014), “*Der Einfluss institutioneller Rahmenbedingungen auf die Gründungsneigung von Wissenschaftlern an deutschen Hochschulen*”, IfM-Materialien No 233, Bonn.

Brody, Carinne, Thomas De Hoop, Martina Vojtkova, Ruby Warnock, Megan Dunbar, Padmini Murthy,Shari L. Dworkin, and Carinne Brody. 2015. “Economic Self-Help Group Programs for Improving Women’s.” *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 19.

Lybbert, T., and Bruce Wydick. 2016. “Poverty, Aspirations, and the Economics of Hope.” *University of California, Davis Working Paper*.

Shankar, Anita V., MaryAlice Onyura, and Jessica Alderman. 2015. “Agency-Based Empowerment Training Enhances Sales Capacity of Female Energy Entrepreneurs in Kenya.” *Journal of Health Communication* 20 (sup1): 67–75.

Hunt, Abigail, and Emma Samman. 2016. “Women’s Economic Empowerment.”http://www.developmentprogress.org/sites/developmentprogress.org/files/case-studyreport/ hunt\_and\_samman.\_2016.\_womens\_economic\_empowerment\_-

World Bank. 2014. *World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society, and Behavior*. The World Bank.

World Bank 2016b. *World Development Indicators 2016*. 2016 ed. edition. World Bank Publications.

Alkire, Sabina, Ruth Meinzen-Dick, Amber Peterman, Agnes Quisumbing, Greg Seymour, and Ana Vaz. 2013. “The Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index.” *World Development* 52: 71–91.

John, N., Tsui, A.O., and Roro, M. 2019. Quality of Contraceptive Use and Women’s Paid Work and Earnings in Peri- Urban Ethiopia. Feminst Economics, Vol. 26, No. 1: pp. 23-43.

Finlay, J.E. (2020) Reproductive Health and Women’s Economic Activity, under review World Development.

Koenig, A. M., and Eagly, A. H. (2014). Evidence for the social role theory of stereotype content: observations of groups’ roles shape stereotypes. J. Personal. Soc. Psychol. 107:371.

Eagly, A. H., andWood,W. (2012). “Social role theory,” in Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology, eds P. van Lange, A. Kruglanski, and E. T. Higgins (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage), 458–476.

Alkire, S., Meinzen-Dick, R., Peterman, A., Quisuimbing, A. R., Seymour, G., & Vaz, A. (2013). The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index. *World Development, 52*, 71-91

O’Neil, T. (2016) *Using adaptive development to support feminist action.* London: ODI.

O’Neil, T., Domingo, P. and Valters, C. (2014) *Progress on women’s empowerment: From technical fixes to political action.* London: ODI.

Taylor, G. and Pereznieto, P. (2014) *Review of evaluation approaches and methods used by interventions on women and girls’ economic empowerment.* London: ODI.

Ha¨uberer, J. (2014) Social capital in voluntary associations, European Societies, 16 (4), 570–593.