

The extent of socio-economic empowerment among women in Malaba town council

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ABSTRACT: The study set to establish the magnitude of 'Programmatic functional skilling' for socio-economic empowerment among women in Malaba Town Council. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted as a multimethod approach that can be blended with qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, correlation and descriptive approaches. This study adopted the use of interview schedules (guides), questionnaire and a focus discussion guide. The researcher organized the collected data according to the themes of the study, edited, coded and classified. Using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Software version 22, data were also sorted and arranged according to the number of times that similar responses had occurred (frequencies) and percentages calculated, which formed the basis for correlation analysis that was used to establish the essential variables like the socio-economic empowerment of women and functional skilling, hence forming the basis for data interpretation, discussion, conclusions and recommendations. While in the aspect of literacy the women were doing fairly-well, things are not well in the line of leadership as well as other social engagements and contributions. This denotes a state of practically total lack of empowerment socially. Secondly, with fragile and 'un-acceptable' livelihoods for the most part (no income, no savings, no ownership of property, no access to financial services, then sex-working and drugs), the women of Malaba Town Council are economically not empowered at all. Therefore, the extent of socio-economic empowerment among women in Malaba Town Council is very low. The factors responsible for the low social and economic empowerment of women are mainly cultural and social. This is to say, the marginalization of women from a cultural point of view has led to their limitations in terms of education, ownership of property and leadership. It is clear that still not much has been done to address these two areas.

Keywords: Programmatic functional skilling, socio-economic development among women

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INTRODUCTION

Functional skills are essential for individuals to effectively solve problems in their work and personal lives. These skills encompass core English, Mathematics, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) knowledge that are necessary for learning and contributing to society. They provide individuals with the ability to communicate effectively, understand numerical data, and navigate technology (Francesca 2020). In this study, the term "functional skilling" refers to the process by the government of Uganda to initiate and sustain programmes that prepare women with skills such as tailoring, electric installation, plumbing, salon work, and hotel management as a way of closing the income inequality gap.

In this study, Functional skills provide vital knowledge people need to learn, work and contribute to society more effectively. They improve literacy and numeracy skills essential to everyday transactions in trade and services.

Article 2, Paragraph 1 of The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that "States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or status (Hawkins and Kim, 2012).

Poverty threatens girls' well-being and development and is one of the main obstacles to a family environment in which the girl is able to grow. The girl child is "sentenced" to early marriage often before puberty as a result of the inability of the family to fulfill its economic responsibility in raising her. Early child-bearing as a direct result of family poverty "continues to be an impediment to improvements in the educational economic and social status of women in all parts of the world.

Overall, early marriage and early motherhood can severely curtail educational and employment opportunities and are likely to have a long-term adverse impact on their and their children's quality of life." (Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China -September 1995: Action for Equality, Development and Peace).

According to Suchitra et al. (2020), the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda emphasises affirmative action in favour of marginalised groups, as a result of which girls have been given an extra 1.5 points for admission to public universities for decades. However, this movement has been hampered by a number of obstacles in the shape of hostility and detracting attitudes, factors that are still deeply established in our society that, undoubtedly, impede women's empowerment in general.

General objective

To determine the extent of socio-economic empowerment among women in Malaba town council.

Literature review

According to Nyen and Kunza (2017) study on rural poor empowerment through vocational skills, 80% of participants were satisfied with their training programmes after training in Nigeria, and 83.32% of participants agreed that acquiring vocational skills would greatly improve the rural poor's quality of life. However, approximately 66.6% of the trainees believed that the expense of their training was prohibitively expensive. The implication is that fewer rural people will have access to training, owing to the high expense.

Okoye (2017) conducted an exploratory research of 122 female Episcopal priests to assess the impact of three types of grassroots mentoring and empowerment sessions in reducing women's underrepresentation in senior leadership roles. A sizable proportion (97.78%) of respondents believes that learning vocational skills in addition to their primary career would significantly improve the rural poor's quality of life. According to responders, some of the Centres' facilities are in desperate need of upgrading. This will result in greater achievement of the goals of such skill acquisition centres. According to an assessment of IFAD, women see land ownership as a way to gain status and respect, not just as a means of production (Alessandra and Emilie, 2017). Land ownership has important effects, leading women to have a more active role in community affairs and greater equality in the home (Khushbu and Dipina, 2016). However, tenure rights are mostly customary, and many women require assistance to negotiate improved terms even in conventional tenure systems (Mark and Tetra, 2018). In other cases, there is a need to promote awareness that certain old practices no longer provide the social safety that they once did.

Kevin et al. (2019). According to an IFAD survey conducted in 2000, just 10% of Ugandan spouses with wills give property to their wives. The remaining 90% entrusted it to the children, with the caveat that the mother be cared for (Aravacik, 2018).

Recognizing the precarious condition of many widows and their families has resulted in their prioritization in several schemes Samiratou, Valéry, et al., (2018). Furthermore, a study of an IFAD (1998) financed initiative in Ghana emphasizes the challenges of developing and sustaining women's land rights. Despite the fact that women provide the majority of agricultural labour and food crops in the region, they have little control over resources such as water and land, or even their own labour, which is used first on the husband's land, limiting women's access to credit and freedom to make household decisions (Agwal, 2018).

Women require not just access to productive resources, but also the ability to use those resources efficiently, which necessitates well-targeted training customized to women's needs, education, access to markets and market information, and production support services such as extension (Cheryl, 2017). Rural financial services should be part of a comprehensive package that includes capacity training and is based on a thorough understanding of women's needs and demands (Hinson et al., 2019). To put it briefly, if women are to be empowered, they must have access to resources (money, knowledge, and technology), skill development, leadership on the side, democratic process, dialogue, participation in policy and decision-making, and dispute resolution methods. According to Hinson et al. (2019), empowerment should result in capacity development and personal enrichment. They should also benefit from increased exposure to the outside world, entrepreneurship, and leadership skills.

The global food and economic crises, climate change, and limited access to credit are just a few of the many obstacles that rural women face as they work to bring about the transformational economic, environmental, and social changes necessary for sustainable development (Shinbrot et al., 2019). Given that women make up a sizable portion of the global agricultural labour, empowering them is essential for the health of people, families, and rural communities as well as for overall economic production (UN Women, 2014).

The way women and men are expected to spend their time is a major source of inequality, according to Kim et al. (2018). A research on time usage was undertaken for the World Development Report 2012, using data from the Multinational usage research for 23 countries, with 12 nations added to make the data set more typical of impoverished countries (Agwal, 2018). A clear, unsurprising pattern emerges: women undertake the majority of housework and care at all income levels and, as a result, spend less time in market jobs. Women spend 30% more time than males on housework in

Cambodia, six times more in Guinea, and 70% more time on child care in Sweden, ten times more in Iraq (Abdullah and Quayes, 2016). These disparities have an impact on women's ability to participate in the labour market, be fully engaged in their careers, and so on. This is one of the reasons why women in poor nations are more inclined to engage in informal work (such as owning a small business), which may not be the most productive use of their time.

For example, instead of working productively, they may open a shop from their home in order to care for their children (Cheryl, 2017). Women's secure access to productive resources such as land, water, and financial capital has a cascading effect (Aravacik, 2018).

When women build assets and achieve better economic status, they develop higher self-esteem, are more visible in their communities, more mobile, and their children are better fed. Wider impacts can include greater respect for women's rights, better ability of women to negotiate sexual relations and a consequent reduction in HIV infection, and positive changes in gender roles (Irene, 2017). However, women accessing resources, is a function of a confrontation with those factors which prevent them from accessing those resources (Alessandra and Emilie, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

Ethical considerations

First of all, permission was obtained from the Course coordinator, Uganda Martyrs University, where an introduction letter was given to the researcher, addressed to the Town Clerk Malaba Town Council, requesting him to both allow and assist the researcher in carrying out the study. Then, the researcher made sure that the respondents participated in the study voluntarily by explaining to them that they could only be part of it if they so wished, even as they were being requested to be.

Further, explanations about the purpose, expected outcomes and benefits of the study were made clear to the respondents in order to ensure that their consent was an informed one, with the assurance that the study was being conducted purely for academic purposes. Furthermore, the respondents were also assured that whatever they said was to be kept with utmost secrecy if they so wished, which took care of confidentiality. Further still, they were assured that if they did not want their identity revealed at all, that would be adhered to, thus taking care of anonymity.

In addition, respect and dignity were put into consideration when setting the questionnaires. All respondents and participants were given equal treatment to enable each of them participating willingly without bias and unrealistic expectations. In addition, all researchers and scholars whose work was referred to in this study

were quoted/acknowledged and cited accordingly. The researcher made sure that what was found out would be reported exactly and it was done to avoid fabrication of information through presentation of fraudulent results. Then also, during the interviews the respondents were asked for permission to record what they said. This was as a way of showing them that they were both valued and protected. More to that, the research assistants were not exploited but rather handled with care, given lunch and also remunerated. The researcher made sure that she was strict on following the principles of intellectual honesty by acknowledging all the ideas of other authors and referencing them.

Right from the beginning of the data collection process, the researcher continuously sought the consent of the participants and respondents by establishing rapport with them and declaring the intentions of the research project. It was also important to seek permission of the respondents and participants to make recordings, photography or video coverage.

Research design

A cross-sectional survey design was adopted because Tashakkori and Teddlie(2010) recommend it as a multimethod approach that can be blended with qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, correlation and descriptive approaches. The qualitative approach was needed because the study looked at improving the lives of women in line with socio-economic empowerment, having an insight into the problem of lack of skilling in none numerical terms, and establishing the factors which impede such empowerment, elements that are basically qualitative (qualities).

All this was to be by obtaining opinions and views from the respondents. Moreover, people's lives, behaviors, emotions and feelings as well as organizational functions and social movements, among others, are better studied in ways that generate data which are mainly qualitative in nature. So, the data collected in qualitative form were in terms of views and feelings derived from experience of the respondents in terms of statements and not numbers. However, the quantitative paradigm was also employed in terms of quantities and measurements of data during analysis and presentation, as well as the form of diagrammatical presentation. All this enabled the researcher to describe the manifestations of lack of women's socio-economic empowerment, its magnitude, and the causes and effects thereof.

Study area

The study was carried out in Tororo District, but more specifically, Malaba Town Council. Tororo District is located in the eastern part of Uganda and up to the Uganda-Kenya border, about 210 kilometres from the capital, Kampala. It borders the following Districts:

Table 1: Study population and sample size.

No.	Category of study population	Number of respondents
1.	Local leaders	23
2.	Individual women with some source of income	85
3.	Amagoro A (Aunyu Group)	24
4.	Amagoro B Muslim	17
5.	Akalodongo Central (Nakocoda Saving (Necko)	15
6.	Akalondongo B-PWDs	17
7.	Asinge A –Upendo (Aminanara Women Group)	20
8.	Malaba A South-Police	10
9.	Malaba A North	8
10.	Malaba B East Customs	11
11.	Obore A	10
12.	Dobby woman	1
13.	School Going Girl	1
14.	Drug sellers	3
15.	Bar maids	5
16.	Akatabo 1 B Lower women entrepreneurs	6
17.	LCV and councilors	25
Total		281

Butaleja in the West, Mbale in West, Manafwa in the North-east, Busia in the South, and the Uganda-Kenya border in the East. Its inhabitants are mainly Iteso and Jopadhola. Malaba Town Council is the border town in the District, where cross-border trade is rife. This is a border town with the original inhabitants being the Iteso, but being an urban setting, there are other tribes like the Jopadhola, Samia, Gishu, Arabs, Indians and Kenyans, among others. The rural setting surrounding the town has only the Iteso and Jopadhola. The rural communities practice subsistence agriculture.

Study population

This is an aggregate or totality of objects, or individuals, having one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher and where inferences are to be made. The population of study is particularly the group of interest, the target group, whose situation has aroused the concern of the researcher. For this study, these were the women, whose socio-economic state of empowerment was the issue of concern. According to the 2014 Population and Housing Census, Malaba has 24,675 women, representing 52.8% of the population. These women are of many different tribes as already enumerated above, different ages and occupations. Since the main issue is socio-economic empowerment, it is better that the details of the socio-economic activities un-fold at the presentation of data on the objectives, especially the first objective. The study population was categorized as indicated in the (Table 1).The Table 1 indicates the different categories of respondents that were considered in the study. From (Table 1), it is clear that the different groups of respondents have different numbers. Majority of the respondents were in the

category of individual women (85) with businesses, followed by LCV and councilors at different levels, then Aunyu group, local leaders and others. Altogether, there were 281 respondents in the study.

Sample size

Since the study population belonged to various categories and yet almost all responses for the members in each category were important and called for, the researcher created time and obtained responses from each member in each group. Therefore, results from all the 281 respondents were obtained and used in compiling the thesis.

Sampling techniques

Both Probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used in determining the sample size.

Convenience sampling procedure

On the non-probability sampling side, convenience sampling procedure was used. According to Kempro (2012), convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling procedure sometimes known as opportunity, accidental or haphazard sampling, which involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population which is close to hand, that is, a population which is readily available and convenient. Using this procedure of sampling, the sample size was obtained in such a way that whoever was readily available for the study was involved and responses obtained. This technique was basically used to select women groups and individual women with businesses. The researcher moved with

more than 200 questionnaires and distributed to whoever was readily available to participate.

Purposive sampling procedure

On the side of probability sampling, purposive sampling technique was adopted to select the Local Councilors at District, parish and village levels. Purposive sampling is a strategy whereby researchers select individuals to include in the study based on personal judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in the study (Foley, 2018). This technique was used basing on a judgment that local councilors represent that government and thus are focal to making sure women receive functional skills.

Data collection methods and instruments

This section presents the methods and the corresponding instruments employed to collect data as per the specifications of Uganda Martyrs University.

Methods

Data were from primary sources where the researcher obtained facts as reported by the respondents and observed by the researcher using survey method, Observation, interview and discussion methods.

Interview guide

This consisted of a list of questions which the researcher and the research assistants followed to interface with the respondents. The latter were mostly the women, from whom detailed information was required regarding their state of socio-economic empowerment. The interview guide had brief questions designed to elicit information from the respondents so as to supplement the data collected using questionnaires. There was probing, in which case the researcher would follow up on some of the responses which the respondents would give. This helped to get details which would have remained hidden. a total of 66 participants were interviewed namely; 23 local leaders, 8 women form Malaba A, North, one (1) woman who does doobby work, one school going girl who was serving in the bar to probe into what prompted her to participate in such a business, 5 bar maids among who were married women, whose responses would help to find out what happens at home and how they catch up with life outside home, and the 25 councilors including the LCV were also interviewed.

Questionnaire

Kothari (2005) argues that a questionnaire is advantageous

because it is free from bias of the interviewer since answers are in the respondent's own words and large samples can be used and thus the results can be more valid and Reliable. Here the researcher distributed self-administered questions for selected respondents to answer in writing at their own convenience and to substantiate their opinions. Naturally, this instrument was applied on only those respondents who could read and write, as well as those in the latter category but who were unavailable for interviews. The questionnaire consisted of both close-ended and open-ended questions, with the former limited to a basic minimum since this was a basically qualitative study. The questionnaires were administered to **178 respondents including** 85 individual women randomly found with business, 24 members of Amagoro A (Aunyu Group) of women, 17 members of Amagoro B Muslim group of women, 15 members of Akalondongo central (Necko) saving group of women and girls, 17 members of Akalondongo B-people with Disabilities group, and 20 members of Asinge A-Upendo (Aminanara Women Group).

Direct observation

The researcher deemed it mandatory to collect data from the field by the use of naked eyes. This helped in giving proof or evidence on the socio-economic empowerment of the women. The state of affairs as well as the different activities undertaken by the respondents were observed and written down in a notebook. The main areas observed included housing, dressing, the commercial activities engaged in, and the social activities, among others. So, a list of observables was accordingly made and, wherever the researcher went to collect data, she observed those as well. What was observed became data to complement what came from the interviews and from the survey.

Interview

The researcher used semi-structured interviews, which are essentially and verbally administered questionnaires in which a list of predetermined questions is asked with no variation but with some scope for follow-up questions to responses that warrant further elaboration, implying that there was an interview guide designed to elicit data, but with room for probe questions following up on the striking responses of the respondents. Interviews also gave the researcher an opportunity to revisit some of the issues that had been over-looked in other methods and yet they were deemed vital for the study.

Survey

This is a method whereby respondents are contacted to give information using a questionnaire.

It is basically meant to collect data to a wide extent by getting both facts and opinions. Survey is good for gathering descriptive data of the study. In a basically qualitative study, it is always preferable to have detailed responses, with the feelings and sentiments brought out as well. For that matter, observation and interview took precedence. However, not everybody can be available for interview. This method, therefore, was reserved for the latter category; these were the political leaders.

Interview

Interviews are discussions, usually one-on-one, between an interviewer and an individual meant to gather information on a specific set of topics. An interview involves the oral or vocal questioning technique or discussion. The researcher used semi-structured interviews, which are essentially and verbally administered questionnaires in which a list of predetermined questions is asked with no variation but with some scope for follow-up questions to responses that warrant further elaboration, implying that there was an interview guide designed to elicit data, but with room for probe questions following up on the striking responses of the respondents. Interviews also gave the researcher an opportunity to revisit some of the issues that had been over-looked in other methods and yet they were deemed vital for the study.

Instruments

This study adopted the use of interview schedules (guides), questionnaire and a focus discussion guide.

Focus group discussion guide

A focus Group Discussion Guide is a set of questions that guide an interaction between the researcher/investigator and a group of people whose responses can be easily obtained through oral sharing other than consulting one person at a time. In this study, focus group discussions were held with 37 women including 10 women from Malaba A South Police, 11 women from Malaba B East working with customs and clearance, 10 women from a group in Obore A, and 6 women from Akabo 1 B Lower Women Entrepreneurship group, also in Malaba.

Data management and processing

Data recorded during interviews were transcribed at the end of each field day in order to have all the data in a standard format. The transcriptions were compared with the original source in order to keep transcription errors to a minimum. The databases were created and edited and data files created, then the data were organized and summarized. The processing was done manually.

For the survey data, a data summary sheet was created whereby a series of columns were created, one for numbering the respondents, one for each question asked, and one for each demographic item. But in order for this to be possible, the elements had first to be coded by assigning them representative numerals. The data were frequently stored on the hard disc, storage disc, printed out as hard copy, with a back-up copy on another disk.

Data analysis

Regarding the data for this study, there was both quantitative and qualitative analysis independently.

Quantitative data

To ensure completeness, uniformity and accuracy, the collected data were edited. This was aimed at avoiding the omitting of very important data required for the study. This facilitated in the interpretation and establishing of the value attached to numerical variables. The researcher organized the collected data according to the themes of the study, edited, coded and classified. Using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Software version 22, data were also sorted and arranged according to the number of times that similar responses had occurred (frequencies) and percentages calculated, which formed the basis for correlation analysis that was used to establish the essential variables like the socio-economic empowerment of women and functional skilling, hence forming the basis for data interpretation, discussion, conclusions and recommendations. The data were then summarized in tables, charts and graphs.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data were analyzed using content and thematic analysis as systematic and well-structured methods. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), qualitative content analysis is a process designed to condense raw data into categories or themes based on valid inference and interpretation. Specifically, the analysis was guided by Miles and Huberman (1994) concurrent flow of activity of data reduction, display, generation of meaning and drawing conclusions right from the start and throughout the process of conducting the research as outlined in the procedure below:

The researcher took time to read through the responses from the interviews. Data reduction involved developing codes to help catalogue key concepts while preserving the context in which these concepts occurred. During the reading of the interview notes, the researcher identified words and phrases which were prominent to develop open codes, that is to say that the researcher read through the data several times and developed tentative

labels for chunks of data that summarized the key emerging issues. Then the researcher looked for concepts and categories in the data that formed the basic units in the data analysis. These were later amalgamated into the larger codes called axial or categories codes. These were constructed by identifying relationships among the open codes. It was then easy to appreciate the emerging themes from the data at this stage.

During axial coding, the researcher used concepts and categories while re-reading the texts to confirm that the concepts and categories accurately represented interview responses and to explore how the concepts and categories were related. The axial codes were then merged to a small group of major codes to form themes. Sub-themes were also generated, all relating to the extent of women's socio-economic empowerment, the reality of functional skilling and the other factors which determine women's socio-economic empowerment. In that way, all themes were developed basing on the concepts of the research objectives. Thematic analysis was then applied. Thematic analysis is a form of pattern-recognition within the data, with emerging themes becoming the categories for analysis (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006) and providing insights about the opinions and perceptions of the respondents. The process involved a careful, more focused re-reading and review of the data. The goal was to develop a story from the texts of interest. The end-result of the thematic analysis highlighted the salient 'constellations' of meanings present in the text (Joffe, 2012, in Neuendorf, 2019, p. 21).

Thus, the emerging themes/patterns were identified because they appeared to illuminate the research questions and the literature reviewed. Then, as the analysis went on, these patterns began to be developed into a number of thematic categories of description. Lastly, some explanations were added that included information from key informants such as the leaders. All the responses raised by the respondents during the interviews in response to the questions asked were noted down, key explanations were also cited and summarized in narratives, tables and figures by way of presentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Extent of Socio-economic empowerment among women in Malaba town council

This objective was about establishing the level of women's socio-economic empowerment because the argument in the topic implies that women in Malaba Town Council are not doing well. If that would not be shown to be true, it would remain but an allegation. The level of socio-economic empowerment is presented in terms of the various aspects which make up 'socio-economic', that is, 'social' and 'economic'. Naturally, this presentation is based on the responses of the women respondents alone

because only they really knew how they stood. This objective specifically tested eight (8) items namely; what women did for a living, belongingness to a credit group, possession of regular source of income, making any savings, having or making investments, application for loans, economic survival, and testing the resilience of women towards some nature of work.

Availability of things that help women earn a living

This was investigated to establish whether women can be self-reliant. It is the main base of economic empowerment since it determines the survival and thriving of a person in terms of the acquisition of at least the basic needs. The respondents were asked whether they had anything from which they earned a living. Table 2 indicates that out of the 85 individual women in Malaba TC, 29.2% have where they earn a living. However, 18.5% of the individual women do not have source of livelihood. Reasons given for not being in position to secure income is that they do not have money to save in groups so as to start borrowing, the percentage of women without a source of living is considerably high that socio-economic empowerment cannot be at its extreme in such an environment. In Amagoro, A, specifically the Aunyu group, there were 24(13.5%) participants, and according to (Table 2), more than half 16(9%) have a source of income to earn a living. However, there is the 4.5% that still lacks source of income to earn a living. This is an indicator of the continuous gap existing in socio-economic empowerment of women. Asked about the nature of work these women of Agoro do to earn a living, many of them stated that they have to go and dig or cultivate on farms of other people and at the end of the day or week, they are given some money. Results indicated that amount obtained was dependent upon negotiations. However, about four of the women claimed being cheated and as a result, they multitask to survive. The Necko saving group is fully fledged with opportunities for income generation because this group specifically involved in commercial sex.

Amagoro B Muslim and Akalondongo B-PWDs have the highest percentage of participants who lack livelihoods. Generally, 59% of women have sources of livelihood and the 41% do not. Lack of source of livelihood was due to lack of capacity to establish anything that can support life economically, be it a business, a project or skills for which one can be employed to earn a living. This result is similar to the results got by Mumunii, Inisah, and Bowana (2013) that most women are mostly engaged in activities that are in the informal low-growth, low-return areas. On the other hand, the sources of livelihood are; Selling clothes, cleaning empty trucks, saloon, commercial sex, farming where many sell vegetables, digging, hawking, business, bar waitress, selling sweet bananas (Bogoya), preparing chips, Petty trade, shop,

Table 2: Availability of sources of livelihood.

Category		Total		
		No	Yes	
Individual Women	Count	33	52	85
	% of Total	18.5%	29.2%	47.8%
Amagoro A (Aunyu Group)	Count	8	16	24
	% of Total	4.5%	9.0%	13.5%
Amagoro B Muslim	Count	12	5	17
	% of Total	6.7%	2.8%	9.6%
Akalongongo central (Necko) saving	Count	0	15	15
	% of Total	0.0%	8.4%	8.4%
Akalongongo B-PWDs	Count	11	6	17
	% of Total	6.2%	3.4%	9.6%
Asinge A-Upendo (Aminanara Women Group)	Count	9	11	20
	% of Total	5.1%	6.2%	11.2%
Total	Count	73	105	178
	% of Total	41.0%	59.0%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data, September, 2019

Table 3: Belonging to a savings and credit group

Category		Total		
		No	Yes	
Individual Women	Count	48	37	85
	% of Total	27.0%	20.8%	47.8%
Amagoro A (Aunyu Group)	Count	5	19	24
	% of Total	2.8%	10.7%	13.5%
Amagoro B Muslim	Count	12	5	17
	% of Total	6.7%	2.8%	9.6%
Akalongongo central (Necko) saving	Count	12	3	15
	% of Total	6.7%	1.7%	8.4%
Akalongongo B-PWDs	Count	10	7	17
	% of Total	5.6%	3.9%	9.6%
Asinge A-Upendo (Aminanara Women Group)	Count	12	8	20
	% of Total	6.7%	4.5%	11.2%
Total	Count	99	79	178
	% of Total	55.6%	44.4%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data, September, 2019

selling fish, self-employed, selling tomatoes, casual work, tailoring, selling vegetables, and civil service. These livelihoods can safely be categorized into sex-working, farming (meaning 'cultivating') and petty business. This implies that some women said that they had some means of livelihood not because they were grounded in any sustainable source but because they had something they were gambling around with. In particular, we see sex-working being an outstanding economic activity. All this shows that on the whole women are not empowered in any meaningful way. This finding concurs with Obwana (2008) who observed that in Uganda about 60% of women live in absolute poverty. Below is a set of pictures indicating how women struggle to have livelihood.

Belonging to a savings group courtesy of socio-economic empowerment

The women were asked if they belonged to any savings

and credit group. This was in order to examine whether they were able to get some financial support so as to invest or solve their crucial problems. The results are summarized in (Table 3). Generally, 55.6% of the women did not belong to any savings group. This means that only 44.4% of the women in Malaba Town Council saved their money.

Economics has it that until savings accumulate, investment is still difficult. Except Amagoro A (Aunyu Group) with highest rate of savings, the level of saving for Akalongongo central (Necko) is very low at individual levels (Table 3).

The most common reason given for not belonging to any saving group was lack of money, but there were also such reasons as lack of knowledge of the existence of such groups and lack of trust of the leaders. It remains a fact that many women were not able to benefit from what such groups had to offer because some deposit of money was required as well as frequent savings.

Table 4: Regular income

			No	Yes	Total
Category	Individual Women	Count	60	25	85
		% of Total	33.7%	14.0%	47.8%
	Amagoro A (Aunyu Group)	Count	15	9	24
		% of Total	8.4%	5.1%	13.5%
	Amagoro B Muslim	Count	14	3	17
		% of Total	7.9%	1.7%	9.6%
	Akalondongo central (Necko) saving	Count	14	1	15
		% of Total	7.9%	0.6%	8.4%
	Akalondongo B-PWDs	Count	14	3	17
		% of Total	7.9%	1.7%	9.6%
	Asinge A-Upendo (Aminanara Women Group)	Count	5	15	20
		% of Total	2.8%	8.4%	11.2%
Total		Count	122	56	178
		% of Total	68.5%	31.5%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data, September, 2019

Once again, poverty was at play here.

Regular income as a woman courtesy of socio-economic empowerment

Income is another central aspect of the possibility to well-being; where there is no income there will hardly be any well-being. It is also the most immediate expression of ability to maintain oneself since we live in a money economy. The respondents were asked if they had any regular income (Table 4).

From (Table 4), responses varied by category of groups. Generally, there were 178 respondents, out of which only 31.5% have regular sources of income. Asinge A-Upendo (Aminanara Women Group) has the highest percentage of women with regular sources of income and Akalondongo central (Necko) saving group had the least percentage of respondents with regular sources of income. As we see from the table, a vast majority of the women (67%) said they did not have any income, something that points to helplessness as far as economic empowerment is concerned. The affected women had neither employment of any sort nor property or petty businesses because all that requires capital, and that is where 'poverty breeds poverty'. The amounts earned per month are summarized in the table below; two respondents did not specify the amounts.

Among respondents with regular source of income, those who earned shs 200,000 and 300,000 were civil servants, that is, a nurse and two teachers. For the rest, 66.6% earn up to a maximum of shs 50,000, which is pea-nut and cannot suffice to meet just the personal needs of a person in a month. This is because of the petty and casual jobs and businesses engaged in. This finding indicates a skewed distribution of benefits within the household in favour of men as analyzed by Watkins et al (1995), again in support of Bigo (1977, p. 214) much earlier categorization between 'the productive' and 'the

non-productive', especially identified with children, the old and the housewives, who are not part of the 'economic society'.

Making savings as a woman courtesy of socio-economic empowerment

This examination sought to ascertain the reality of Savings and Belonging to a Savings and Credit Group among the women. A measure of financial growth is the ability to spend on the current needs while also ensuring a sustainable future. That is the rationale behind saving. The respondents were asked whether they had any savings. The results are summarized in (Table 5). Table 5 shows that out of the 178 respondents, only 32.6% do not make savings. The remaining percentage of 67.4% is such big that socio-economic empowerment cannot freely be determined in such an environment. Akalondongo B-PWDs barely has any savings. The reason to justify this is that as much as the people with disabilities are concerned, they are denied chances of accessing many of the services including accessibility to loan schemes. The majority of those who said they saved belonged to women's groups whereby the nature of the groups obliged them to save. Almost all who said they did not save did not give reasons, except that most of them are the same people who had said that they did not have any means of income, as well as the sex-workers who could not easily boast of a regular income – surely not monthly. These results justify findings in (Table 5) which clearly indicate that most of the women do not have regular source of income. The justification is in such a way that a long as one is not earning just enough to use for regular day to day needs and also save something, they cannot go and have savings. In fact, this is the reason why many of the women keep hunting for money day after day using unacceptable and acceptable means of getting the money to make their families survive.

Table 5: Making savings.

			No	Yes	Total
Category	Individual Women	Count	57	28	85
		% of Total	32.0%	15.7%	47.8%
	Amagoro A (Aunyu Group)	Count	8	16	24
		% of Total	4.5%	9.0%	13.5%
	Amagoro B Muslim	Count	12	5	17
		% of Total	6.7%	2.8%	9.6%
	Akalondongo central (Necko) saving	Count	13	2	15
		% of Total	7.3%	1.1%	8.4%
	Akalondongo B-PWDs	Count	17	0	17
		% of Total	9.6%	0.0%	9.6%
	Asinge A-Upendo (Aminanara Women Group)	Count	13	7	20
		% of Total	7.3%	3.9%	11.2%
Total		Count	120	58	178
		% of Total	67.4%	32.6%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data, September, 2019

Table 6: Having investments.

			No	Yes	Total
Category	Individual Women	Count	66	19	85
		% of Total	37.1%	10.7%	47.8%
	Amagoro A (Aunyu Group)	Count	17	7	24
		% of Total	9.6%	3.9%	13.5%
	Amagoro B Muslim	Count	15	2	17
		% of Total	8.4%	1.1%	9.6%
	Akalondongo central (Necko) saving	Count	15	0	15
		% of Total	8.4%	0.0%	8.4%
	Akalondongo B-PWDs	Count	17	0	17
		% of Total	9.6%	0.0%	9.6%
	Asinge A-Upendo (Aminanara Women Group)	Count	11	9	20
		% of Total	6.2%	5.1%	11.2%
Total		Count	141	37	178
		% of Total	79.2%	20.8%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data, September, 2019

Having investments as a woman courtesy of socio-economic empowerment

Investments are even heavier and more meaningful than savings in ensuring a sustainable life; some people save with the aim of investing. In a bid to thoroughly establish the economic status of the women, the study deemed it important to also look at the investment status of the women by asking them if they had any investments. The results are summarized in the (Table 6). By now it cannot surprise that such a big percentage (79.2%) were not capable of investing. Already 68.5% did not have any regular income (see table 4.4) and 67.4% could not make any savings (see table 4.5). Even those who had an income did not have enough to save, not to talk of investing. That is why it is not a surprise that 79.2% could not invest. These results on savings, belongingness to a savings and credit group, and investment, relate to and confirm the poverty of the women. That is in line with the findings that African women as well as women in other

parts of the world do not participate in the labor force to the same extent as men and, when they do, they earn 18% less than men (Stevens, 2017) and that of them find themselves in the informal sector (IS), which plays a significant role in the so-called developing countries, including Uganda, although working and employment conditions within the sector are still poor (Kappel and Ishengoma, 2016).

Owning property as a woman courtesy of socio-economic empowerment

When women build assets and achieve better economic status, they develop higher self-esteem, are more visible in their communities, more mobile, and their children are better fed. Wider impacts can include greater respect for women's rights, better ability of women to negotiate sexual relations and a consequent reduction in HIV infection, and positive changes in gender roles (Irene, 2017). However, women accessing resources, is a

Table 7: Ownership of property.

Category		Total		
		No	Yes	
Individual Women	Count	69	16	85
	% of Total	38.8%	9.0%	47.8%
Amagoro A (Aunyu Group)	Count	18	6	24
	% of Total	10.1%	3.4%	13.5%
Amagoro B Muslim	Count	13	4	17
	% of Total	7.3%	2.2%	9.6%
Akalondongo central (Necko) saving	Count	15	0	15
	% of Total	8.4%	0.0%	8.4%
Akalondongo B-PWDs	Count	13	4	17
	% of Total	7.3%	2.2%	9.6%
Asinge A-Upendo (Aminanara Women Group)	Count	6	14	20
	% of Total	3.4%	7.9%	11.2%
Total	Count	134	44	178
	% of Total	75.3%	24.7%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data, September, 2019

function of a confrontation with those factors which prevent them from accessing those resources. It is very risky to think that one can survive and even thrive on just livelihood and income, for they are fluid and can vanish any time. Property (economic) assures confidence for one to survive in the future. The respondents were asked as to whether they owned any property and the results are summarized (Table 7).

In terms of ownership of property, socio-economic empowerment of women is not well defined just like it is in the saving and availability of regular sources of income, and so is investment too. According to the results in (Table 7), there is no need to deny the fact that the economic empowerment of women in Malaba is so demanding. Just imagine on 24.7% of all the women can own property courtesy of socio-economic empowerment. The percentage (75.3%) is really high and unbearable. Moreover, Akalondongo central (Necko) saving group for the commercial sex workers still remains underprivileged. As a point to note, besides not being in position to own property, there is another issue of these Neckos not being self-reliant. They are categorized into those who go on streets and directly relate to customers, those who stay in houses and brokers come to connect customers to them and then those with managers, who get paid through their managers. The reasons rotated around lack of money or employment or skill. The few who indicated the property they had talked of plot of land, rental houses, a hen, a cow and land among others. Available literature shows that ownership of property such as land is agitated for, for wrong reasons. According to an assessment of IFAD, women see land ownership as a way to gain status and respect, not just as a means of production (Alessandra and Emilie, 2017). Land ownership has important effects, leading women to have a more active role in community affairs and greater equality in the home (Khushbu and Dipina, 2016). However, tenure rights are largely customary and many women need support to

negotiate better conditions, even under traditional tenure systems (Mark and Tetra, 2018). In other circumstances, there is a need to raise awareness that certain traditional practices no longer provide the social protection that may have justified them originally.

Rural Women in particular, are not informed about their legal rights concerning land ownership and inheritance; they engage in farming haphazardly because they have no access to professional help and information (Uchendu, 2019). They are un-able to protect their families from preventable diseases and death because they lack knowledge of the simple modern techniques that are now so readily available. All this is due to illiteracy, lack of a radio (poverty), and the state in which they live because of their heavy workloads and the distances involved in visiting neighbours or attending community meetings Naomi *et al.*, (2019).

Accessibility to loans as a woman courtesy of socio-economic empowerment

It is very difficult to build up financial security or even to establish simple projects without capital. And because capital breeds capital, those who lack it in the first place may live in a circle of disempowerment. One of the ways to break through is to access finances in terms of loans. The study sought to establish if the respondents had ever accessed loans and the results are summarized (Table 8). Loan accessibility is a great challenge to socio-economic empowerment among women in Malaba Town Council. According to the data in (Table 8), most women (61.8%) had not any access to loans and the reasons given revolved around not knowing the process and not having plans (business ideas) for which they would need the money. Below we present the reasons for the 40.4% who had accessed the loans. The 38.2% who had access to loans used the money for boosting business, buying seeds, starting business, paying school fees, buying

Table 8: Accessing Loans

Category		No		Yes		Total
		Count	% of Total	Count	% of Total	
Individual Women	Count	56		29		85
	% of Total	31.5%		16.3%		47.8%
Amagoro A (Aunyu Group)	Count	7		17		24
	% of Total	3.9%		9.6%		13.5%
Amagoro B Muslim	Count	13		4		17
	% of Total	7.3%		2.2%		9.6%
Akalondongo central (Necko) saving	Count	13		2		15
	% of Total	7.3%		1.1%		8.4%
Akalondongo B-PWDs	Count	10		7		17
	% of Total	5.6%		3.9%		9.6%
Asinge A-Upendo (Aminanara Women Group)	Count	11		9		20
	% of Total	6.2%		5.1%		11.2%
Total	Count	110		68		178
	% of Total	61.8%		38.2%		100.0%

Source: Primary Data, September, 2019

food, medical treatment, funeral, farming, buying plates and sauce pans, buying things and building. It's just amazing that women in Malaba also need to be trained about how best to use the loans they obtain. Getting a loan to purchase plates, and to buy food may not be equated to a journey that takes one to socio-economic empowerment, rather, it is a journey to chronic disempowerment and self-exploitation. Shinbrot, et al., (2019) states that rural women are key agents for achieving the transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development, though limited access to credit, health care and education are among the many challenges they face, which are further aggravated by the global food and economic crises and climate change. Un women (2014) report also states that empowering them is key not only to the well-being of individuals, families and rural communities, but also to overall economic productivity, given women a large presence in the agricultural workforce worldwide.

Availability of work women do in Malaba

In this sub section women respond whether they have anything they do for economic benefits bearing in mind that such is done by women. The intention was to clearly establish the legal and illegal ways which women apply to survive. Table 9 illustrates responses on whether women have what they do for economic survival just because they are women. According to (Table 9), 62.9% of the women reported having no work they could do as women. This means Malaba Town Council has no or has limited opportunities of employing only women as most of the work is handled by anyone who is capable regardless of the gender construct. The district leaders were asked whether most women in Malaba were involved in what they would call 'acceptable' means of livelihood, and the

following were their responses. The District leaders reported that women in the Town Council were mostly involved in un-acceptable means of livelihood. Of those who said 'yes' only one gave a reason, which was that most of them hold small-scale businesses. Most of those who said 'no' referred to prostitution. In other words, prostitution is a major source of livelihood for many women, again pointing to their helplessness as far as empowerment is concerned.

As a way of examining the same issue from a different angle, the local leaders were asked which economic activities women were engaged in that they considered un-acceptable. This was a multi-response question and findings indicated that most of the unacceptable economic activities are; prostitution, smuggling, child-labour, child-trafficking, exploitative labour, e.g., house maids, informal sector, and dealing in drugs. Quite obviously, the rest of the 'evils' are engaged in by the men as well. This result of women's poverty and prostitution is related to Haley (2015) argument that most property in Africa is owned by men, women lack sufficient access to capital, markets, and collateral, all of which are necessary in helping them grow their businesses.

Attention was directed to prostitution as unacceptable activity. Commercial sex is the most predominant unacceptable activity done by women due to lack of socio-economic empowerment in Malaba town Council. The local leaders were asked about the phenomenon of prostitution, that is, if it is a problem in the Town Council. The one who said that it was not a problem reasoned that there are women who have a purpose for it, so it was not a problem. The rest gave no reasons.

Local leaders and district councilors highlighted the most common causes of prostitution as; lack of means of earning a living, weak government laws, availability of sex buyers especially the truck drivers who enter Uganda from Kenya and others who leave Uganda to go to

Table 9: Availability of work that women do in Malaba.

Category		No		Yes		Total
		Count	% of Total	Count	% of Total	
Individual Women	Count	47		38		85
	% of Total	26.4%		21.3%		47.8%
Amagoro A (Aunyu Group)	Count	8		16		24
	% of Total	4.5%		9.0%		13.5%
Amagoro B Muslim	Count	13		4		17
	% of Total	7.3%		2.2%		9.6%
Akalongongo central (Necko) saving	Count	15		0		15
	% of Total	8.4%		0.0%		8.4%
Akalongongo B-PWDs	Count	16		1		17
	% of Total	9.0%		0.6%		9.6%
Asinge A-Upendo (Aminanara Women Group)	Count	13		7		20
	% of Total	7.3%		3.9%		11.2%
Total	Count	112		66		178
	% of Total	62.9%		37.1%		100.0%

Source: Primary Data, September, 2019

Kenya, peer pressure, cross-border trade, poverty, drunkenness, low level of social empowerment, unemployment, group influence, ignorance, early school drop-out, inadequate productive skills, lack of better alternatives to livelihood, and high libido.

Conclusion

While women were doing reasonably well in terms of literacy, things were not doing so well in terms of leadership and other social interactions and contributions. This indicates a nearly absolute lack of social empowerment. Second, with mostly precarious and 'unacceptable' livelihoods (no income, no savings, no ownership of property, no access to financial institutions, then sex-work and drugs), the women of Malaba Town Council are economically powerless. As a result, women in Malaba Town Council have relatively little socioeconomic empowerment. The factors responsible for the low social and economic empowerment of women are mainly cultural and social. This is to say, the marginalization of women from a cultural point of view has led to their limitations in terms of education, ownership of property and leadership. It is clear that still not much has been done to address these two areas.

Recommendations

On the basis of the above conclusions, the study recommends that while cultural factors which marginalize women are implicitly being addressed by the education drive and by the impending marriage and divorce bill, among other indirect forces, there is need to engage in aggressive sensitization of our society regarding women. Therefore, in line with the significance of study, the study recommends that the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development intensify sensitization of our society

regarding women. This can be done through mass media as well as through women's forums themselves. Again, in line with the significance of study, in order that the socio-economic situation of the women country-wide improves, the study recommends that the same Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development influences policy intervention to streamline functional skilling as an economic affirmative action in favour of women. From the recommendations of the leaders in Tororo District, tailoring and hair-dressing were found easiest to handle.

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