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**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND INTRA-HOUSEHOLD DECISION
MAKING DYNAMICS: IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS AND
PRACTITIONERS IN UGANDA:**

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Abstract

The study interrogates the interface between women empowerment, intra household decision making dynamics and what this implies for policy makers and practitioners with specific focus to Uganda. Mainstream economic and feminist theoretical perspectives, support the analysis. Secondary data from Uganda Demographic Survey 2011 and empirical case studies are used in the analysis. Uganda has achieved so much with respect to women empowerment in political representation and participation, education, microfinance and credit and judiciary. Further empowerment will require policy makers and practitioner to engage and sensitize men about the need for change in culture, religious practices, women asset ownership, protection of women and their property, participation in household reproductive role and health issues and above all, to recognize that women empowerment is everyone's responsibility and a benefit to all, as a just society is everyone's' wellbeing.

Key words: Women Empowerment; Intra-household decision making; Gender Based Violence; Household Economics.

Introduction

One of the most important institutions in the lives of women is the household. Women spent 2/3 of their time in the household space. The household (space and habitat) and gender relations influences women's behavior and empowerment it is a basic unit in societal sphere where individuals share and cooperate and/or compete for resources. It is a primary space where individuals interact verbally or otherwise and reproduce societal norms; transmit values, power, and privileges in a range of institutional arenas. The level of women empowerment within the household is born, reinforced and reflected in larger institutions of society. Therefore households are important primary institutional platform for analysis of women empowerment and policy development (Kabeer 1998). The nature of gender relations - how habitat in the household relates - is not easy to grasp in its full capacity. The complexity arises not least from the fact that gender relations embody both the material and ideological, but also relate in the division of labour and resource allocation between men and women, in ideas, representations, and the ascriptions to women and men of different abilities, attitudes, desires, personality traits and behavioral patterns, some of which may significantly determine policy development and implementation. Thus, the agency to interrogate the interface between women empowerment, intra household decision making dynamics and what this implies for policy makers and practitioners Based on existing economic and feminist theoretical perspectives, secondary data on women empowerment indicators drawn from empirical case studies and demographic surveys specific to Uganda is used in the analysis. It is hoped that this will provide a platform to support policy development and analysis for women empowerment in particular.

Empowerment

Sen, A.K. (1990; 1993), Mayoux (1998), Kabeer (2001), (Malhotra, Schuler and Boender (2002). UNIFEM (2000) note that the idea of power is at the root of the term empowerment. They define power in its traditional sense as a force exercised by individuals or groups; or ones' strength /worth/ authority and ones' of the skills / capacities. It can be understood as operating in a number of different ways:- *power over* - This power involves a relationship of domination/subordination, based on socially sanctioned threats of violence and intimidation,

requires constant vigilance to maintain, and invites active and/or passive resistance; Power can take the form of **power to**:- This power relates to having decision-making authority to solve challenges. This power can be creative and enabling. The third form is **power with**: This power involves people organizing with a common purpose and understanding to achieve collective goals. It could also be **power within** - This power refers to self confidence, self awareness and assertiveness. It relates to how an individual can analyze and recognize their experience of how power operates in their lives, and gain the confidence to act and influence change. Empowerment is therefore about participation in conditions that challenge individual achievement to the full potential. Investing in women's capabilities and empowering them to exercise their choices is not only valuable in itself but is also the surest way to contribute to economic growth and overall development (UN, 1995b: iii). Development must be by people, not only for them, but they must participate fully in the decisions and processes that shape their lives (UN, 1995b iii); The Human Development Report, 1995). Empowerment as a process involves challenging all forms of oppression which compel millions of people to take part in their society on terms which are inequitable, or in ways which deny their human rights (Oxfam, 1995; Williams et al, 1994). Accordingly, it is a process whereby one can freely analyze, develop and voice their needs and interests, without it being pre-defined, or imposed from above by planners or other social actors. One in a subordinate position, usually vulnerable groups gains authority to determine their destiny. Therefore empowerment is about the ability to make strategic life choices, and constitutes dimensions of not only access to resources, but also future claims to material, human and social resources, agency in decision-making and less-measurable manifestations of agency such as negotiation, deception and manipulation and achievements.

Women empowerment

Empowerment works at different levels at individual, household, community and national level. Traditional rules and practices that exclude or give preference to men, serve as a key constraint to women empowerment. As power is zero-sum, one group's empowerment necessarily involves another's loss of power. The idea of a redistribution of power is therefore seen as necessarily involving conflict and therefore at the centre of empowerment (UHDS 2011). Women's empowerment thus would by implication mean redistribution of power between men and women with women (the vulnerable) receiving more power and men losing it. Since power involves domination by some, and obedience or oppression of others, power should be a shared attribute such that although women gain more power, men would also benefit from the results of women's empowerment - (a chance to live in a more equitable society and to explore new roles). The contemporary challenge of women empowerment is how to understand and manage domination and obedience or oppression of others within a given space and the implications this imposes on the contemporary development agenda, such that the dominance of one group does not compromise the full development potential of others. Women's empowerment should lead to the liberation of men from false value systems and ideologies of oppression to a situation where each one can become a whole being regardless of gender, and to allow everybody use their fullest potential and to construct a more humane society for all (Batliwala, 1994).

It is noted in UNICEF, (1994) that women empowerment is a stepwise process, beginning with welfare, access to resources, awareness rising, participation and eventually to the control level, when equality between men and women is achieved. Welfare level addresses only the basic needs of women, without recognizing or attempting to solve the underlying structural causes

which necessitate provision of welfare services. Women are merely passive beneficiaries of welfare benefits including food, shelter, health among others; **Access** level recognizes equality of access to resources such as educational opportunities, land and credit as essential for women to make meaningful progress. Women recognize that lack of access to resources is a barrier to their growth and overall well-being and take action to redress this; at awareness raising level women recognize that gender gaps or gender inequalities stem from inherent structural and institutional discrimination and that they themselves have a role in reinforcing the system that restricts their growth. At participation level, women take decisions equally alongside men. They are considered participants in decision making if they make decisions alone or jointly with their husbands or someone else. Mobilization is essential in order to reach this level. Women will be empowered to gain increased representation, by organizing themselves and working collectively to ultimately gain greater control. Control is the ultimate level of equality and empowerment. There is a balance of power between women and men and neither has dominance. Women are able to make decisions regarding their lives, the lives of their children, play an active role in the development process and finally, their contributions are fully recognized and rewarded. They gain the ability to generate choices and exercise bargaining power thus developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes, and the right to control one's life (Mayoux (1998); Kabeer 2001),

Zoë Oxaal and Sally Baden (1997) present some of the indicators of empowerment including; Legal, Political, Economic and social indicators. Legal empowerment indicators include the enforcement of legislation related to the protection of human rights; number of cases related to women's rights heard in local courts and their results; number of cases related to the legal rights of divorced and widowed women heard in local courts and results; the effect of the enforcement of legislation in terms of treatment of offenders; increase /decrease in violence against women; rate at which the number of local justices / prosecutors / lawyers who are women/men is increasing/decreasing; rate at which the number of women/men in the local police force, by rank is increasing or decreasing; (Number of justices, Number of women in parliament). Political empowerment indicators include: percentage of seats held by women in local councils / decision-making bodies; percentage of women in decision-making positions in local government; percentage of women in the local civil service; percentage of women/men registered as voters / percentage of eligible women /men who vote; percentage of women in senior /junior decision-making positions within unions; percentage of union members who are women /men; number of women who participate in public progress and political campaigning as compared to the number of men. Economic empowerment indicators include, employment / unemployment rates of women and men; changes in time use in selected activities, particularly greater sharing by household members of unpaid housework and child-care; salary / wage differentials between women and men; changes in percentage of property owned and controlled by women and men (land, houses, livestock), across socio-economic and ethnic groups; average household expenditure of female / male households on education / health; ability to make small or large purchases independently; percentage of available credit, financial and technical support services going to women / men from government / non-government sources. Social empowerment include changes over time in: numbers of women in local institutions to protect the population; numbers of women in positions of power in local institutions; extent of training or networking among local women, as compared to men; control of women over fertility decisions (number of

children, number of abortions); mobility of women within and outside their residential locality, as compared to men.

In addition to these quantitative indicators, are a series of suggested qualitative indicators comprised of indicator questions to assess empowerment such as: - To what degree are women aware of local politics, and their legal rights? Are women more or less aware than men? Does this differ by socio-economic grouping, age or ethnicity? Is this changing over time? Do women and men perceive that they are becoming more empowered? Why? Do women perceive that they now have greater economic autonomy? Why? Are changes taking place in the way in which decisions are made in the household, and what is the perceived impact of this? Do women make decisions independently of men in their household? What sort of decisions is made independently? For women empowerment to be seen as taking root at all spaces, these indicator - Legal, political, economic and social empowerment indicators should be seen moving in a positive direction (Zoë Oxaal and Sally Baden,1997).

Intra household decision making dynamics

Intra household decision making - (the manner in which decisions are taken at household level) is important for the empowerment of women and national development. UNPD is committed to advocating and promoting the empowerment of women in political and economic decision making at all levels from the household to national government. Economic theorists in this area, suggest that intra-household decision-making is influenced by the relative bargaining power of adults members of the household. A household member's bargaining power in turn depends on the strength of that person's outside options or "fallback position," should a negotiated agreement fail. The fallback position is in turn determined by two sets of factors, which include; material factors internal to the household, and factors external to the household, that influence material well-being. Material factors include owned assets, education, kinship, wages, and employment, while external factors otherwise referred to as Gender Environmental Parameters (GEPs) include cultural belief systems, political and legal structures such as property rights and divorce laws, and gendered employment practices (Agarwal, 1995; Blumberg, 1988; Folbre,1997; Katz, 1991 a). The latter factors affect one's positions in household bargaining as they mediate the actual power that material resources will confer on him/her in the household. It follows that a relative improvement in any of these factors is likely to improve one's bargaining power and in effect the outcomes.

Scholars that have contributed to intra house-hold decision making, Kumar (1978), Agarwal, (1997) note that households / families are recognizably constituted of multiple actors, with varying often conflicting preferences, interests, and differential abilities to pursue and realize those interests. Becker, (1965, 1981) in a unitary model assumed the household as a single entity in relation to both consumption and production, Within this context, resources and incomes are pooled, and allocated by an altruistic household head who seeks to maximize household utility and whose utility function represents the household's tastes and preferences.

Agarwal, (1997). in the bargaining approach to decision making, observed that intra-household interaction is characterized as with elements of both cooperation and conflict. Household members cooperate insofar as cooperative arrangements make each of them better-off than non-cooperation. Many different cooperative outcomes are possible in relation to who does what,

who gets what goods and services, and how each member is treated. However, among the set of cooperative outcomes, some are more favorable to one party than the other – that is, one person's gain is another person's loss. The outcome depends on the relative bargaining power of the household members. Accordingly, one's bargaining power is defined by a range of factors, what Agarwal, (1995); Blumberg, (1988); Folbre, (1997); Katz, (1991 a) call the GEPs. An improvement in the person's fall-back position would lead to an improvement in the bargaining power and improvement in one's empowerment.

Other models use game theoretic approach to explain intra-household decision making dynamics, allowing for individual preferences in the budget constraints and in control over resource use. It is noted that these bargaining models do not explicitly address gender asymmetries, but an improvement to them can accommodate such asymmetries and thus provide a useful approach for analyzing gender relations. The **Femi-econ dilemma** is one of such models suggested by Bwanga and Kabonesa (2015). It also follows from Tong, (1995), Norbert Neuwirth Astrid Haider (2004), Martin J. Osborne (2002), John Scott, (2000), Moser, (1993); Ingela Lindh, Leg barnmorska (2011), Emel Kurtoglu, Haldun Arpacı (2011). It integrates the liberal, Marxist, Radical feminism theories and ideologies and economic theory. The underlying assumption is that individuals are rational and are able to make decisions subject to certain conditions, depending on the opportunities, risks and benefits associated with their choices. Keat ((2003) in his rationality choice theory asserts that conditions of perfect competition can suffice in determining social choices in pursuit of individuals arguments to maximize their utility and arriving at joint utility functions.

For simplicity, the Femi-econ dilemma assumes two entirely selfish agents simply called m(ale) and f(emale), endowed with continuous and globally concave utility functions and constrained by a quasi-convex set of private goods, the two players, *m* and *f* for simplest have two available alternative actions, which for convenience call *CC* and *CN* for cooperation and non cooperation respectively. If the players choose not to cooperate - different actions, they each get a payoff (level of satisfaction) of (0). If they both choose to cooperate-same actions they each get a payoff of (2), and if they both choose non cooperation *CN*, they each get payoff of (1). This “coordination” game may be represented as follows, where player *f* chooses a row, player *m* chooses a column, and the resulting payoffs are listed in parentheses, with the first component corresponding to player *f*'s payoff: The action profile (*CN*, *CN*) is an equilibrium, since a unilateral deviation to *f* by any one player would result in a lower payoff for the deviating player. Similarly, the action profile (*CC*, *CC*) is also equilibrium of course with greater utility for both players as shown in the figure below.

		<i>m</i>	
		<i>C C</i>	<i>C N</i>
<i>f</i>	<i>C C</i>	(2, 2)	(0, 0)
	<i>C N</i>	(0, 0)	(1, 1)

The *femi-econ dilemma* assumes that players have complete information about the preferences, they are strategic and able to negotiate for the joint equilibrium that maximizes each other's utilities. They act rationally and that each player believes that there is some possibility, perhaps very small, that his or her partner will cooperate in all periods provided that no defection will be observed. And if the players interact several times and the n is sufficiently large, it can be shown that mutual defection in all stages is inconsistent with equilibrium behavior, and that, in a well-defined sense, the players will cooperate in most periods. From the above discussion, the economic theoretical approach to explaining intra household decision making follows a range of decision models ranging from the game theoretical models, the unitary to the cooperative models, In between, there are as many variants of models as there are different households, the most optimal depends on the flexibility between the participants and their bargaining power. What is important is that there is always a final position albeit - "optimal".

Feminist, Moser, (1983), Tong, (1995) postulate that patriarchy-the rule of the father - is the fundamental cause of women dis-empowerment. Through patriarchy, men control women's reproduction power. In many societies women do not have the freedom to decide how many children they want, when they can use contraceptives or terminate a pregnancy. Apart from individual male control, male dominate institutions like the church and the state through - (religion and politics). For example, the Catholic Church lays down the rules regarding institutional control and women's reproductive capacity. The male religious hierarchy decides whether men and women can use birth control methods, which methods are permissible, whether women can abort unwanted children and so on. The continuous struggle by women to decide for the freedom to choose when, whether and how many children to have, in practically every country in the world is an indication of how strong this control is and how reluctant men are to relinquish it.

In modern times, the patriarchal state tries to control women's reproduction through its family planning programmes. The State determines the optimum size of the country's population and accordingly encourages or discourages women to have children. The ideologies and policies of the State changes according to the demand for labor by the economy. Motherhood subjugates women as the burden of mothering and nurturing is forced on them and only them by patriarchal societies. Motherhood is forced by depriving women of adequate contraceptive information. The contraceptives that it does make available are inconvenient, unavailable, expensive and often dangerous. Patriarchy limits abortions and often seeks to deny them entirely, but at the same time subjects women to intense and unremitting pressure to engage in sexual relations. It forces women to be mothers. And also determines the conditions for motherhood. The ideology of motherhood creates feminism and masculine character types which perpetuate it, It creates and strengthens the divide between private and public and restricts women's mobility and growth and it reproduces dominance.

It is argued that men's control over women's sexuality is another important area of women subordination. Women are obliged to provide sexual services to men according to their needs and desires. A whole moral and legal regime exists to restrict the oppression of women's sexuality outside marriage in every society, while customarily a blind eye is turned towards male promiscuity. At the other end of the spectrum men may force their wives, daughters and other women in their control into prostitution - trading their sexuality. Rape and the threat of rape is

another way in which women's sexuality is dominated through an invocation of "shame" and "honour". In order to control women's sexuality, their dress, behavior, and mobility are monitored in familial, social, cultural and religious codes of behavior.

It is argued that in order to control women's sexuality, production and reproduction, men control women's mobility through norms for instance the imposition of parda - (restrictions on leaving the domestic space in India, a strict separation of private and public covering women with veils, and separating sitting arrangements in public spaces), limits interaction between the sexes, and among sexes. It controls women's mobility and freedom in ways that are unique to them.

Most property and other productive resources are controlled by men, which are later passed from one man to another, usually from father to son. Even where women have the legal right to inherit such assets, a whole array of customary practices, emotional pressure, social sanctions and, sometimes plain violence, prevent them from acquiring actual control over resources. In other cases, personal laws curtail their rights, rather than enhance them. UN statistics state that women do more than 60 per cent of the hours of the work done in the world, but they get 10 per cent of the world's income and own one per cent of the world's property.

An analysis of the main institutions in society shows that they are patriarchal in nature. The family, religion, media, the law are the pillars of a patriarchal system and structure. This well-knit and deep-rooted system makes patriarchy seem invincible; *it also makes it seem natural*. The family, for example, as an institution of the family, that basic unit of society, is probably the most patriarchal. A man is considered the head of the household. Within the family he controls women's sexuality, labour or production, reproduction and mobility. There is a hierarchy in which man is superior and dominant, woman is inferior and subordinate. The family is also important for socializing the next generation in patriarchal values. It is within the family that one learns the first lessons in hierarchy, subordination, discrimination. Boys learn to assert and dominate, girls to submit, to expect unequal treatment. Again, although the extent and nature of male control may differ in different families, it is never absent. According to Gerda Lerner, the family plays an important role in creating a hierarchical system and keeping order in society. The family not merely mirrors the order in the State and educates its children to follow it, but also creates and constantly reinforces that order."

Most modern religions are patriarchal, defining male authority as supreme. They present a patriarchal order as being supernaturally ordained. All major religions have been created, interpreted and controlled by upper class and upper caste man; they have defined morality, ethics, behavior and even laws; they have laid down the duties and rights of men and women and the relationship between them. They have influenced State policy and continue to be a major force in most societies. In India, for instance, in spite it being a secular country, a person's legal identity with regard to marriage, divorce and inheritance is determined by his or her religion. Every religion considers women to be inferior, impure, sinful; they have created double standards of morality and behavior; religious laws often justify the use of violence against "deviant" women; iniquitous and demeaning relationships like polygamy, are sanctioned and legitimized by recourse to "religious" creeds and fundamental tenets.

The legal system in most countries is both patriarchal and bourgeois. It favors men and economically powerful classes. Laws pertaining to family, marriage and inheritance are very closely linked to the patriarchal control over property. Most legal system considers men to be the head of the household, the natural guardian of children and the primary inheritor of property. Systems of jurisprudence, the judiciary, judges and lawyers are, for the most part, patriarchal in their attitudes, constitution, and in their interpretation and application of the law.

Within a patriarchal economic system, men control the economic institutions, own most property, direct economic activity, and determine the value of different productive activities. Most productive work done by women is neither recognized nor paid for; their contribution to the creation of surplus through "shadow work" is completely discounted, and housework is not evaluated at all. Moreover, women's role as producers and carriers of children and labor power is not considered an economic contribution at all.

Almost all political institutions in society, at all levels, are male dominated, from village councils to parliament. There are only a handful of women in political parties or organizations which decide the fate of our countries. When some women do assume important political positions, they do so, at least initially, because of their association with some strong male political personalities, and they function within the structures and principles laid down by men.

Media are very important tools in the hands of upper class, upper caste men to propagate class and gender ideology. From films and television to magazines, newspapers, radio, the portrayal of women is stereotypical and distorted. Messages about the male superiority and female inferiority are repeated constantly; violence against women is rampant, especially in films. As with other sectors, women are highly under-represented in the media, professionally, and biases in reporting, coverage, advertising and messaging are still very sexist.

Ever since learning and education became formal and institutionalized men have assumed control over whole areas of knowledge philosophy, theology, law, literature, the arts, science. This male hegemony over the creation of knowledge marginalized women's knowledge and experiences, their expertise and aspirations and generates knowledge from a masculine perspective. In many cultures women are systematically prevented from studying the scriptures, and even today there are very few who are allowed to reinterpret religious and legal texts. This demonstrates that social norms through cultural practices, legal practices, education, religion, radio, television, traditional art forms, proverbs and stories, customs, laws, and everyday practice within and outside the family regenerate and perpetuate women subordination.

Assaad (2001) reviewed cases studies in the areas of women empowerment including (Uganda 1998; Rwanda, 1998; South Africa, 1998; Ukraine, 1996; Ecuador, 1996a; Bangladesh 1996; Nigeria, 1996; Swaziland, 1997; Georgia, 1997) and Jamaica 1997) and exposed the extent of women subordination, not only with respect to decision making but also how women circumvent around in self defense. Uganda (1998), noted that women are inferior to men. Even if a woman is given a chicken or a goat by her parents, she cannot own it. It belongs to her husband. A wife may work hard and get a chicken. If it lays eggs, they belong to the husband. The ability of men and their families to throw women out of their married homes with or without a final divorce, without even their own jewelry, reflects a social inequality of power. The threat of divorce is

perhaps an even more potent deterrent to women's self-assertion. It is noted that in Bangladesh cultures men see wife-beating as their right, and use religious and sociological arguments to legitimize this right. Some men claim that it is condoned in Islamic religious texts. Others described hitting their wives as a normal way to keep women's unruly natures in abeyance (Schuler et al 1996).

....An 18months married woman was thrown out of her house by her husband after he found that she had not cooked dinner because she was sick: Her scolded her and physically assaulted her for not preparing his meal. Her mother-in-law joined in the abuse, and that evening she was sent back to her parents without the baby, although the woman's parents' most cherished desire was that her husband would take her back again. (Bangladesh 1996).

Women

circumvent this through silence as a self-protecting strategy in the face of few social or economic options (Schuler et al., 1996). A widow from Rwanda reported being treated like a "horse" on the property of her former husband. adding that her husband's parents were like strangers, yet one day they could leave their land there and claim her fields" (Rwanda, 1998). Similarly, in Kenya, women reported being chased out of their homes by their husbands without even their utensils. In Ukraine, Latvia, and Macedonia, women said that they did not bother to report rape because of lack of action by authorities. Many women recognized their status and tried to take action, and protested.

Women reported using individual exit strategies including using indirect ways of asserting themselves by using covert and overt traditionally and culturally appropriate means to negotiate more authority in the household. In South Africa for example, women felt that they could gain more by manipulating men than by rejecting them. - the "art" of selecting the "right man" and of asserting oneself in a relationship. Being able to get your man to hand over his wages at the end of the week was viewed as a major achievement in terms of women empowerment. This enabled women to take charge and be able to decide how to spend the money (South Africa, 1998).

These social norms, are persistent in many African most cultures and religions and constitute a formidable barrier to survival of individuals, households, and communities. The labour markets are spaces where women participation allows them to earn an income on the basis of which they become empowered. However, labor markets have been identified as harsh with little room for integrating women especially those with children. Children are seen as burdens on workers and women are primarily responsible for their care. Sometimes employers are also reluctant to hire younger women in their early 20's because of the fear that they will soon have children and go on maternity leave. If she already has a child it is assumed that the child will frequently fall ill and she, as the primary if not the only caregiver, will often be absent from work (Ukraine, 1996).

Women are frequently employed in low esteem jobs - trade, migrant labor, sex trade, illegal cross border trade and smuggling, traditional occupations such as domestic worker and maids, for sexual exploitation in advertising, dishwashers, secretaries, shop attendants, cleaning, and office attendant and when their employers expect sexual favors. In Macedonia, the unemployed poor reported that the cut-off age for women to be hired was 25 years, and being attractive was an added advantage. Otherwise you were too old to be employed. Bangladesh (1996), noted that lack of employment was a major problem for poor women. Women wanted opportunities for self-employment based in their own homes as they felt they could not leave their homes and children. In Rwanda women adapted to using diverse survival strategies including increasing the rate at which they provided domestic work of childcare, gardening, and housekeeping in the homes of the average and rich; Adopting traditionally male jobs such as construction work, vending from small booths and kiosks on the roads, selling from door-to-door, participating in formal and informal rotating credit schemes; and unconventional means including vending across town to avoid the police, who patrol unauthorized areas (Rwanda, 1998). This category of work is unregulated, and women were exposed to theft and police harassment among other dangers.

Association is recognized as one of the pathways for sharing and awareness raising essential for the empowerment process. In Akeju Rabin, it was reported that within a one-hour period a woman undertook cooking, breastfeeding, picking food items, washing utensils, drying cocoa and preparing yam/cassava flour” (Nigeria, 1996). The demands of paid and unpaid labor consume most of women’s day. Women reported feeling isolated as the workload left them no space for relaxation with friends (Swaziland, 1997). In Ecuador, studies indicate that “women in the communities deliberated hard work days of 15-18 hours; culturally leisure was considered unacceptable for women, and they may work at spinning wool even as they walk and talk” (Ecuador, 1996a).

As women’s work outside the home begins to be profitable, it is no longer identified as women’s work, the men take over. In Uganda, with increasing commercialization of agriculture, the involvement of men increased and that of women decreased, such that the women performed the majority of the manual labor while men received the financial returns from the sale (Uganda, 1998). Traditionally, men allot land to women's activities but this does not mean she has full control over the products. Once the crop is ready, permission is sought on when, in what form and what quantities to sell (IRC, 2015). Men control the profits of women’s labor and restrict their access to household income (Uganda, 1998). In subsistence livestock communities, women do the cleaning of kraals, milking utensils, care for the calves, and small ruminants. They are responsible for sale of small scale products (milk and Ghee) from the cattle ie hides and skins, ghee bones and horns and small ruminants, they can keep the proceeds but men sanction the spending. Men are responsible for the strategic and bigger income generating activities associated with the livestock sector, including, when to sale the livestock, they decide when to treat livestock, management of income, where to sell and how much to spend on the spouse from the proceeds. They do not need to consult their spouses on when and how to spend. It is generally an acceptable practice.

It is noted that gender identities can be created or changed and used in strategic and pragmatic ways for one’s own benefit. Stereotypical characteristics of men have been assumed to be

competitive, acquisitive, autonomous, independent, confrontational, concerned about private goods. Parallel stereotypes of women are cooperative, nurturing, caring, connecting, group oriented, concerned about public goods. This stereotyping is compounded at marriage at which on assumption, most of the women's power is abducted by their husbands. Thus, gender identities plays a role in shaping economic outcomes as men's primary role is that of breadwinner and decision-maker, and women's primary role is that of family caretaker, even with changed priorities in contemporary times. This stereotyping allots power and special positions to men compared to their spouses including the power for final decision making, how power and work are organized in households and control of income. (Bwanga and Kabonesa, 2015). In Swaziland, most women in the rural communities need permission of their husband, or his nearest male relative proxy, to seek employment. Often, selling vegetables or crafts were the only culturally approved income-generating activities for women and as a result, the competition for these activities was very strong. Many rural women believed they were poor precisely because their husbands refused to let them work" (Swaziland, 1997).

Violence against women is a basic abuse of human rights. In addition to the physical injuries, abused women suffer from health and psychological problems. Abused women experience a range of feelings related to the violence, from confusion about what brings on the violence, to feelings of hopelessness about the possibility of stopping the violence, to feelings of isolation and depression from being under the violent control of their husbands. Sometimes, women consider suicide as an option to escape violence. In Georgia, women confessed that frequent household arguments resulted in being beaten (Georgia, 1997).

Victims of domestic violence suffer the loss of economic opportunities when violence leads to the loss of work hours and increased health care costs. Violence or the threat of violence in the home negatively affects the nature of men / women's participation in the development process. It affects their capacity to assume positions of authority, and it influences whether they benefit directly from development programs and actually increase their access to resources, or simply act as conduits that direct resources to their tormentors. In many countries, women acknowledged widespread domestic violence and sometimes as the issue became acknowledged more openly. In some areas, young women confessed that most women are beaten, conceal it. In many areas, domestic violence is linked to attitudes of men and women, women's dependency on men for employment, and frustration and hopelessness arising out of unemployment, causing a cycle of violence followed by making up. On rare occasions, this cycle was broken by the women hitting back at man and / or leaving them or getting him jailed through police involvement (Jamaica 1997). These are but some of the instances where not only women self-determination is constrained, but also national development is encumbered. Women constitute a formidable labour force which if facilitated and empowered could contribute to national development.

Status of Women Empowerment Indicators in Uganda

Uganda has gone great strides with respect to gender women empowerment. The gender policy and institutional structures to implement this policy are in place. There is a gender desk in all strategic line ministries of government to guide the process specifically in gender budgeting and budget monitoring. Women representation in parliament stands at 1/3 of the total members of parliament. There is a secretary for women at every local council in charge of women's affairs. There are, non government organization - Federation of Women Lawyers, (FIDA), Action for

Development (ACfODE), Forum for Women in Development (FOWODE) Ugandan Women Network (UWONET) to supplement government effort. This is in addition to government being a signatory to international covenants of gender mainstreaming and the Millennium development goals and Convention against Discrimination of Women. Gender disaggregated data collection is a significant step towards women empowerment. It highlights the status of women with respect to the empowerment indicators, and gives direction of the strategy in addition to providing a basis for assessment of progress towards the empowerment vision. There has been significant effort to mainstream gender in education by providing universal primary education, universal secondary education and affirmative action in higher education for girls and disadvantaged groups using targeted funding and quota system. Women have been encouraged to form small Micro credit groups "SACCOs" through which credit has been extended at low interest rates with a view to empower them economically among other interventions.

Women empowerment performance indicators are monitored during demographic surveys conducted at a five year interval. UDHS, (2011) reported on some of the women empowerment indicators and noted that owning a house was more common among women than owning land. 44% of women owned a house compared to 39% who owned land. The majority of women who owned assets own them jointly; 29% of women owned a house jointly, and 25% owned land jointly. Individual ownership of a house or land was more common in the rural than in the urban areas. 78% of urban women compared to 51% of rural women did not own a house. 72% of urban women compared to 59% of rural women did not own land. It was noted that the chances of owning neither a house nor land decreased with increasing education. The percentage of women with secondary education without a house was 72% compared to those with no education that stood at 32%. 76% of women in the highest income quintile had no house compared with 36% in the lowest quintile. Furthermore 70% of women in the highest income quintile had no land compared to 50% of women in the lowest quintile.

It was reported that 37% of men age 15-49 did not own a house compared with the 56% of women, 42% of men did not own a land compared with 61% of women. By the age of 40, 12% or less of men did not own a house or land, while comparable ownership for women of the same age was less than 43%. It was easier for men in rural areas to own a house and land than their counterparts in the urban areas; these results highlight the role of tradition values of son inheritance in land and asset ownership compared to the socio-economic status of women.

Until Government of Uganda disbanded the joint account salary arrangement, some working women would not control their bank account. Whenever the salaries were deposited on a joint account, men would withdraw all the funds before their spouses knew. This would force women into borrowing whose payment men would not be part. This sent women into perpetual debt and loss of respect from their children, who did not see reasons as to why their mothers worked if they could not afford to buy salt in the home. This created insecurity and uncertainty in women income streams, making planning very unlikely in their lives.

Uganda has for a long time been practicing gendered agriculture. The men are deeply involved in the cash crop sector - cotton production, coffee production, and livestock among others. The women are concentrated in the production of cereals, maize, sim-sim, beans and green vegetables - dubbed as feminine crops. With increasing commercialization, these feminine crops are

becoming masculine. It is now common for men own maize, sim-sim, beans gardens, although it is their wives that do manage until harvest. Besides, in most parts of Uganda, land ownership is through communal systems. These systems recognize the husband as the caretaker of the communal land at household level. Men control the rights to allocate land among family members and land uses. Through power bestowed through lineage and headship of the household, they decide which piece of land to allocate to women after his demands are met. Usually marginal lands are allocated to insignificant often feminine crops. This partly explains why most of the rural non-agricultural women business is nature based. Swamps have always been communal and therefore women source of raw materials for use in making baskets, mats, neck laces among others. These swamps are increasingly becoming privatized, sending women to poverty.

Husbands are most important decision makers on women's health care, major household purchases, and visits to family or relatives. About 2/5 married women reported that decisions on their own health care, major purchases and visits to their family or relatives are made by their husbands. 23% of the married women were the solo decision makers on their health care and visits to family or relatives, and 16% make solo decisions on major household purchases. On the contrary, men reported that only 7% of women make solo decisions on major household purchases. Overall 38% of married women participated in all household decisions, 21% participate in none. Participation increased with age, doubling from 23% of women aged 15-19 to 48% of women age 45-49. Women were more likely to participate in decision making if employed and especially if employed for cash income. This varied by region, but interestingly, nearly 1/2 (47%) of women with no education participated in all decisions compared with 34% of women with primary and 39% with secondary and higher education. A similar trend was observed between decisions making and wealth quintile, with women in the poorest households more likely to participate in all types of decisions. This trend had not changed much since the previous demographic survey in 2006 (UDHS, 2011).

On the contrary, more than 80% of men made decisions about their health care and major household purchases; only 5% did not make any decisions on either of the two issues. Making decisions about one's own health care and major household purchases increased with age. By age 15-49 the vast majority of men (96%) make decisions on major household purchases and their own health care (90%). Employed men were more likely than twice as likely as unemployed men to participate in household decisions. This explained why working women even in urban areas were less likely to take part in household decision making. Education and wealth did not strongly explain the decisions making behavior in household (UDHS, 2011)

Gender based violence - Violence that occurs as a result of the normative role expectations associated with each gender, along with the unequal power relationships between the two genders within the context of a specific society (Booim, 2008). It is a failed state of bargaining between individuals usually as result of unequal balance of power between women and men; it cuts across cultures, ethnic groups, socioeconomic statuses, and religions. It has serious consequences for women's mental and physical well-being, including their reproductive and sexual health (WHO, 1999; UDHS (2011) reported that a high proportion of women justified that wife beating. Indicating that women generally accept the right of a man to control his wife's behavior through violence. 58% believed that wife beating was justified for some reasons. This

percentage was an improvement from the 2006 UDHS which stood at 70%. 3/10 in 2011 compared with 4/10 in 2006 argued that arguing with a spouse justifies wife beating. Acceptance of wife beating was highest among the youngest age group (62%) and lowest among women age 30-34 (53%). Rural women were more accepting to wife beating than urban women (46%). Wife beating was more prevalent in women with a primary education and among women living in households with low income. A similar reporting was reported by men. It was noted that the primary cause of gender based violence was the power imbalance between women and men which was entrenched in some cultural practices and intimate relationships.

It should be noted that a woman's ability to control her fertility and the method of contraception she uses is likely to be reflected by herself image and sense of empowerment. A woman who feels she is unable to control other aspects of her life may be less likely to feel she can make decisions regarding fertility. She may also feel the need to choose methods that are easier to conceal from her husband or partner. UDHS (2011) reported that most women used injectable as a contraception method. Contraceptive use was positively associated with participation in household decisions. Use of contraceptive was low among women who do not participate in any household decision (25%) than among women who participated in at least one household decision. 31% of women who participated in at least one household decision used family planning. Use of family planning was lower among women who agreed justifying wife beating. As women became more empowered, they were more likely to have a say in the number (ideal family size) and spacing of children they desired. They had more control over their ability to access and use contraceptives, to space and limit her family size. UDHS (2011) reported that women who participated in all decisions desired the most children, compare to women who participate in one or two decisions. Women who accepted to all reasons for wife beating had the highest number of mean children at 5.3 compared to 4.7 children for women who do not justify wife beating for any reason.

UDHS, (2011), reported that 56% of women and 55% of men age 15-49 had experience physical violence since age 15 and 27% and 22% of men respectively, experienced physical violence within the 12months before the survey. Overall 7% of women and 3% of men reported that they had experienced physical violence often during the past 12 months. The experience of physical violence varies with background characteristics. The percentage of women who had experienced physical violence since 15 did not vary by age, employment status or education. Ever married women were more likely than those who never married to have experienced physical violence. 65% of women who were separated, divorced or widowed and 56 of currently married women had experienced physical violence since age 15, as compared with 51% of never married women. The percentage of women who have experienced physical violence since of age 15 ranges from 47% of women in the highest wealth quintile to 63% of those in the lowest quintile. This implied that violence perpetuated by spouses was more prevalent than violence perpetuated by individuals. On the contrary, the percentages of men who have ever experienced physical violence since age 15 was lowest among men age 40-49 (51%). The percentage increased with increasing education level from 47% of uneducated men to 58% of those with secondary and higher education. There was no clear relationship between experience of physical violence by men since age 15 and wealth.

The women who have experienced physical violence in the past 12 months also vary by background characteristics. It decreases steadily by age, from 35 % among women 15-49 to 18% among those 45-49. Physical violence was substantially higher among unemployed women (34%) than those who were employed for cash or otherwise (24%). The percentage of women who experienced physical violence in the past 12 months decreases with education and wealth. Similar patterns were observed among men except for men with no education were least likely to have experienced violence in 12 months before the survey. There was no pattern between violence in the previous 12 months and wealth among men.

Spousal violence was highest among women whose husbands had no or only primary level education (60%) and (66%) respectively; whose husbands get drunk (82%); those who were better educated than their husbands (64%), and who were one to four years younger than their husbands (62%). The survey indicated similar pattern for the ever married men. Spousal violence against men was higher for those whose wives get drunk sometimes. Men's experience of violence was slightly higher among those who participate in one to two decisions compared with those who participate in none.

Discussion and implications for policy change

It has been observed empowerment process involves a redistribution of power relations from the more powerful to the vulnerable sects within the relationship. By implication women empowerment involves reducing power from men and increasing power of women for self determination, politically, economically and socially through popular participation for development. During this process, both the men and women benefit from living in a more just and equitable society and men trying out new roles.

It has been noted that intra-household decision making models and dynamics are as varied as there are households. The mainstream economic models include the ultraistic, egoistic, and bargaining and those based of game theory. These and radical feminists analysis has been extensively expounded in pursuit of finding a suitable theoretical foundation. In all models, personal characteristics, - level of education, age, regular income, assets ownership, access to resources, urban/rural divide and GEPs were significant determinants of not only women empowerment but also intra-household decision making dynamics.

Case studies drawn specially from developing countries in Africa and Asia provided basic evidence for comparative analysis of imbalances of power relations between men and women within household spaces with men having more power over women in terms of ownership and control over productive resources, resource use, control over the women's income streams and their uses, women's health and sexuality, reproduction, production and women mobility. The cases further provide evidence of how these power relations are built, nurtured and perpetuated by the very institutions that otherwise would provide security, justice and law enforcement including, the household, The States, judiciary.. This has been perpetuated through unfair political systems, culture, the media, religion and education systems among others. Men use these institutions that are patriarchal in nature to enforce and entrench this imbalance in their favour by overt and covert means. Women have resisted these oppressive systems only to be treated to the wrath of men and sometimes fellow women. They have also learnt survival tactics and circumvented the oppression through overt and covert means. Their ultimate goal is to gain

power and freedom to participate in self determination. With little success, women sometimes have played the role of fools by keeping quiet, other have responded in similarly masculine ways and hit back at their husbands some of them to death! In Rwanda the women play hide and seek with law enforcers by hawking their items down town, or hiking rates at which they provided their services to the middle and high income homes, in Kigali, at the risk of being harassed by police.

Data has shown that these cases are more prevalent in Africa and other low income countries in the far East and are increasing by day. This has unknowingly or knowingly kept developing countries backward compared to developed countries that are more gender responsive (Norway). This has sometimes led to families dissolution, migration in search for peace, and violence at all levels (household, community and national levels), all because of unfair terms of decision making at household level.

Uganda is one of the few countries that have recognized that women empowerment is key to national development. Policy and administrative structures are in place The Uganda Constitution, The Uganda Gender Policy, Domestic Relations Bill, affirmative action in higher education, among others, Data on women empowerment progress indicators was the first step towards this initiative. This has been collected on a regular basis on gender specific issues in education at primary, secondary and from spaces that were traditionally male dominated like higher education, judiciary, police, local councils, cultures, parliament, in areas of microfinance and asset owners. In other words, there is a political will.

According to the national demographic data of 2011, Uganda, level of women empowerment although promising is still dismal, and disappointing with respect to implementation as has been presented. There is need for enhancing and strengthening the impact of these polices by enforcing laws for women empowerment through sensitizing both men and women against gender based violence, directing micro credit to focus more on poor sections of women, supporting and encouraging vocational skills training for women in business and finance and in technical areas, support and encourage women asset ownership and control specifically land, housing as all these confer economic empowerment, status and barraging power on women. Encouraging and supporting formation of women's clubs especially at local councils is another avenue for women empowerment as it provides platforms for association and sharing of information for awareness rising. There is need to increase women representation and participation in national and local councils committees, judiciary, higher education, formal employment and management positions. Men should be encouraged to support women and participate in the reproductive roles of women, The State should enhance protection of women and their property, encourage women participation in health and agriculture matters and other line ministries that directly affect women and their children.

Above all, the fact that women's income contribute more to household welfare compared to men's income and women economic empowerment increases household wellbeing. It is urgent for policy makers and practitioners to engage in policy practices that transfer income to the advantage of women, sensitize men about the need for change and to recognize that women empowerment is everyone's responsibility and a benefit to all as a just society is everyone's wellbeing.

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