

THE EXTENT OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN UGANDA: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH



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by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite the extensive efforts made by the Government of Uganda to promote gender equality and empower all women and girls through enacting legal frameworks, women and girls continue to face barriers in realizing their rights in the economic, political, and social spheres. Quite often, women and girls are discriminated against in education, political participation and representation, in the labour market etc. – with negative consequences for development of their capabilities and their freedom of choice.

Using the 2017 National Governance, Peace and Security Survey data, this study estimates an empowerment index for women in Uganda. The index shows the extent of disempowerment headcount among women and the simultaneous gaps or inadequacies experienced by the disempowered women at individual level. The index results show that more than 60% of the women are disempowered. The extent of disempowerment is higher among women in rural areas and those resident in Northern and Eastern regions. The economic empowerment dimension contributes the highest percentage to the observed levels of disempowerment.

Some of the proposed recommendations include: Expanding interventions that support women's entry into better, more profitable and empowering work; improving access to education and adult literacy programs; debunking and demystifying perceptions on women's participation in politics; bolstering community sensitization campaigns on legal frameworks on violence against women and implementation of targeted programs for special groups (the youth, elderly, disabled, widows).

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality and women's empowerment is essential for inclusive and equitable economic growth (UN WOMEN 2014). Fittingly, a number of global and regional conventions and declarations such as the convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women, Beijing Platform of Action and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been formulated to promote gender equality and foster women empowerment. In addition to having a stand-alone goal, the SDGs have gender-sensitive targets across and within other goals. These are not only goals in themselves but are also enablers and pre-conditions to achieving other SDGs. For instance the 2012 World Development Report 2012 on Gender equality and development reinforces this message and identifies the significant effects of women's empowerment on the efficiency and welfare outcomes of project or policy interventions (World Bank 2012).

Despite extensive efforts made by the Government of Uganda to promote gender equality and empower all women and girls through enacting legal frameworks (e.g. the National Gender Policy (NGP) (as amended in 2007), and the 2007 National Action Plan on Women 2007), women and girls continue to face barriers in realizing their rights in the economic, political, and social spheres. Quite often, women and girls are discriminated against in education, political participation and representation, in the labour market etc. – with negative consequences for development of their capabilities and their freedom of choice¹.

Unlike gender equality that is pretty straight forward, the concept of empowerment is rather broad and has been defined and conceptualized in various ways by different writers depending on the context and circumstance. Basing herself on the concept of human development, with its focus on choices and capabilities, Naila Kabeer (2001) defines empowerment as “a process of change during which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such

an ability”. Other scholars have defined empowerment as a multidimensional process of civil, political, social, economic, cultural participation and rights (Moghadam and Senftova, 2005). Similarly, according to Malhotra and others, women empowerment is multidimensional phenomenon and covers many dimensions including social, economic, cultural, political, legal and psychological (Malhotra et al. 2002). Based on the later definition, this report conceptualizes empowerment in terms of the achievement of basic capabilities, knowledge of legal rights, and of participation in key social, economic and political spheres of life.

The paper contextualizes and measures women's empowerment using three interrelated dimensions: economic empowerment, social and political participation, and legal empowerment. Each dimension is measured with several indicators.

Although a number of gender equality and empowerment indices² already exist, they typically measure women's empowerment and gender inequality at the aggregate country level, which does not allow for heterogeneities between regions, socioeconomic status, marital status, age, disability status or ethnicities. The computed index in this paper (based on the Alkire Foster methodology³) shows the extent of disempowerment headcount among women and the simultaneous gaps or inadequacies experienced by the disempowered women at individual level. This information can enable decision makers to focus on improving the situation of the most disempowered women.

The index offers simplicity and visibility, and can be used as a powerful planning and monitoring tool by drawing attention to emerging critical issues. Specifically, the objectives of the index are:

- I. To identify categories of women who are disempowered and also show the domains and indica-

¹ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>

² Examples include the Gender inequality index

³ Refer to subsection 2 for detailed description of AF methodology

- tors in which women have insufficient/inadequate achievements
- II. Profile the extent of women's empowerment across various characteristics such as residence, region, agegroup, marital status, among others
- III. Provide a baseline with which future progress can be measured

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 describes the conceptualisation and the development of the index. Section 3 presents the extent of disempowerment at national and subnational levels and elaborates the contribution of different indicators to disempowerment. Section 4 discusses outstanding issues and policy gaps while section 5 concludes and provides some insights on the way forward.

2. DEVELOPING THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT INDEX

Unit of identification, domains, indicators and disempowerment cut-offs

The index uses an individual or person" as the unit of identification – the unit of identification refers to the entity that is identified as empowered or disempowered. Although there are two equivalent notions under which the index can be computed i.e. either by focusing on empowerment or on disempowerment, for this paper, we use the second notation that focuses on the percentage of disempowered women and the percentage of domains or indicators in which they lack adequate achievements. The advantage of this construction is that it allows us to identify the critical indicators that must be addressed to increase empowerment.

Domains and indicators and justification for their inclusion in the index

The indicators were carefully chosen to represent economic, social, political and legal empowerment aspects of empowerment. The availability of data is yet another factor that was considered in zeroing down to the nine indicators that were finally included in the index. Worth noting is the fact that the AF methodology requires that

all indicators used in the index come from the same survey. Each domain is measured with several empowerment indicators, because a single empowerment indicator is usually not sufficient to measure a given dimension. Below, we detail the justification for the inclusion of the nine indicators.

a) Economic empowerment

Economic empowerment may be defined as the ability to participate fully in economic life across all sectors. This domain was measured using 3 indicators: Literacy, employment and ownership or use of mobile phone.

Employment: Productive work is central to economic empowerment, given its inherent importance to women's well-being and ability to advance one's income and assets. Moreover, one of the SDG 8 targets aims at achieving full and productive employment for men and women by 2030. Access to a regular source of income contributes to the wellbeing of an individual as well as that of the household. Among other things, paid employment lessens a woman's economic dependence on male kin and the spouse, and it offers her an exit option in, for example, violent domestic circumstances. As per the 2013 ILO definition of employment, we categorize those in subsistence agriculture as not employed.

Literacy: Literacy and educational attainment rates are considered a necessary condition for, respectively, economic development and growth, citizen rights, and women's life-options. While educational attainment would have been a better indicator, setting a minimum of let say 7 years of schooling would be too high a threshold given that the average years of schooling for Uganda is about 5.4. Also, the data could not lend itself to thresholds below primary seven since it was collected in schooling levels as opposed to completed years (for those out of school).

Mobile phone: One of the targets of SDG Goal 5 relates to improving the use of enabling technology (in particular information and communications technology) to promote the empowerment of women. One of the indicators to track this particular target is the "proportion of individuals who own a mobile phone by sex". Since the survey did not collect other data on enablers

of economic empowerment such as ownership and use of land among women, we opted to use this indicator in the economic empowerment domain.

b) Political and social empowerment

Political participation refers the active involvement and engagement by individuals (both men and women) in political process that affect their lives. The act of active engagements includes voting, standing for office, protesting and signing petitions, joining of political party or to taking part in political campaigns of political parties. It also includes exerting influence in the decision making process through public debate, and dialogue with the leaders. For this dimension of women's empowerment, three indicators were selected: whether one exercised her right to vote, whether one is a member of any political, social or economic group or whether one is either member of any political party (not necessarily by registration).

Voting: One of the most fundamental forms of political participation is voting in regular elections, which for many people, is the primary means of participating in politics. Article 59 of the 1995 Constitution guarantees the right of every adult citizen to vote. Voting affirms the right as a free citizen to elect a government and it is the fundamental tool through which citizens can

express their political preferences and developmental wishes. Although participation in public protest and signing of petitions are important indicators of women's political empowerment, this indicator was not considered in the computation of the index since more than 95 percent of respondents had never participated in any form of protest or demonstration, implying there wasn't enough variance to warrant inclusion of the indicator in the index.

Political party membership: Since Uganda in implementing multiparty system of political dispensation, one of the institutionalized forms of political participation relates to being a member of a political party. We included this indicator to capture the extent to which women are engaged in multiparty politics.

Membership in social, economic and political groups: Recognizing the value of social capital as a resource, the group member indicator shows whether the person is a member of at least one group, encompassing a wide range of social and economic groups. It is possible that a person may not want to join a group because of social and cultural norms that discourage participation in activities outside the household. A vital form of participation is exhibited through active membership in independent groups or associations. The extent to which people participate in formal and informal organizations

Table 1: The domains, indicators and indicators in the index

Domain (weight)	Indicators (weight)	Inadequate if person...
1. Economic Empowerment (1/3)	Literacy (1/9)	Is illiterate
	Employment (1/9)	Is not working or is mainly engaged in subsistence agriculture
	Mobile phone ownership (1/9)	Does not own or use mobile phone
2. Political and social empowerment (1/3)	Voted in last election (1/9)	Didn't vote in the last election
	Political party membership (1/9)	Is not a member of a political party
	Membership/Leadership in groups (economic/political/social) (1/9)	Is not a member or leader in any group
3. Legal empowerment (1/3)	Awareness of law that provides protection against domestic violence (1/9)	Is not aware of a law against domestic violence
	Awareness of law that protects women and girls against rape and defilement (1/9)	Is not aware of a law that protects women and girls against rape and defilement
	Awareness of law that criminalizes trafficking in persons (1/9)	Is not aware of a law that criminalizes trafficking in persons

is an indicator of their societal participation.

c) Legal empowerment domain

One's awareness about the law empowers them to fight for their rights in the event that they are abused. The legal empowerment dimension, which comprises women's awareness of existing laws and legal rights, is also an important indicator of empowerment (Hashemi et al., 1996). We included four indicators regarding women's knowledge of laws related to violence against women. These include awareness of a law that provides protection against domestic violence, law that protects women and girls against rape and defilement, law that criminalizes female genital mutilation and law that criminalizes trafficking in persons.

Weights are assigned to indicators to show the relative importance of the different indicators. The index uses nested weights; assigning 1/3 to each of the three domains of women empowerment (Table 1). All indicators are equally weighted inside each dimension. It is postulated that each dimension has the same relevance as a constitutive element of the index and for public policy.

Identification of the disempowered

The study uses the Alkire Foster (AF) methodology to estimate the level of disempowerment in the 3 domains of empowerment at national, rural/urban and regional levels. It builds on the 2013 Women in Agriculture Index developed by Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). The AF methodology employs the dual-cut off approach to identify the disempowered. The first cut off is used to identify individuals with inadequate achievements per indicator. An inadequacy score is then computed for each person, according to his or her inadequacies across all indicators. The second cut-off or threshold is used to identify the disempowered. The disempowerment cut-off is the share of (weighted) inadequacies a woman must have to be considered disempowered. For this index, the disempowerment cut-off was set at 33 %. Simply put, a woman is defined as disempowered in 3 dimensions of empowerment (3DE) if she has inadequate achievements in one or more than one of the three domains or is inadequate in some

combination of the weighted indicators that reflect 33 percent total adequacy.

Following the structure of the Adjusted headcount measure of Alkire and Foster (2011), the index (M_0) combines two key pieces of information to measure disempowerment: the disempowered headcount ratio (H), or the proportion of people (within a given population) whose share of weighted inadequacies is more than k (the disempowerment cut off) and the intensity (A) of their inadequacies—the average inadequacy score of disempowered individuals (Akire *et al.*; 2013). M_0 is calculated by multiplying the disempowered headcount ratio (H) by the intensity (A).

$$M_0 = H \times A$$

where

$$H = \frac{q}{n}$$

n is the total population and q is number of the number of individuals who are disempowered using the dual-cut off approach.

By utilizing the subgroup decomposability property of the M_0 measure, the index is disaggregated at rural/urban and regional levels. The index is further disaggregated to show how much each indicator and corresponding dimension contributes to overall disempowerment.

Data: The index was computed using the 2017 National Governance, Peace and Security Survey (NGPSS). The 2017 NGPSS collected information on broad themes such as Human Rights, Democracy and Decentralization, Access to Justice, Transparency and Accountability and Political Participation. Specifically, it collected information on gender related issues of gender-based violence, women's economic empowerment and political participation. The 2017 NGPSS survey is a representative survey that covered 3,369 households⁴ and 4,909 individuals aged 18 years and above (2,128 males and 2,781 females). The NGPSS estimates are also representative at regional level. At household level, a maximum of two adults (one male, one female) were selected for the interviews and the respondents were selected randomly from the eligible household

4 This represents the number of household with fully completed interviews

members with equal probability for either male or female.

3. THE EXTENT OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

In this section, we present the women disempowerment headcount (H), average inadequacy score (A) and the disempowerment index (Mo). To identify the areas that contribute most to women's empowerment or disempowerment, we decompose the women's disempowerment index (Mo) by domain and indicator. For comparison purposes, we present disempowerment index and its decomposition for a sample of men.

Compared to men, women are more likely to have inadequate achievements for all the 9 indicators

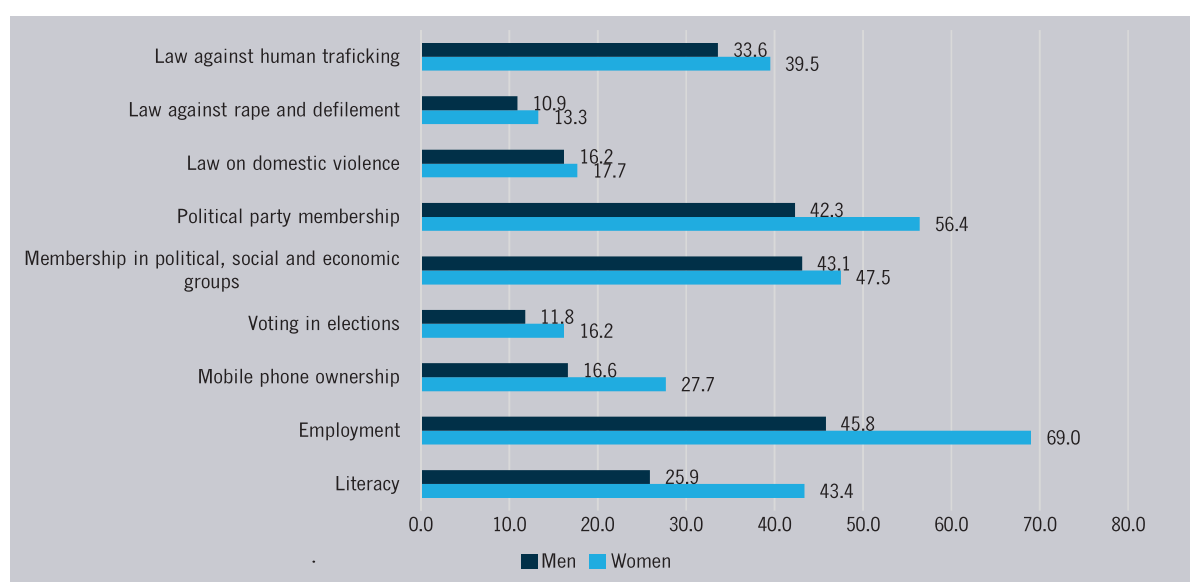
For all the nine indicators, women registered higher levels of inadequacies (Figure 1). Major differences between men and women were noted in employment (23.2%), literacy (17.5%) and membership in political participation (14.1%). Irrespective of gender, the highest inadequacies were registered in employment, political party membership and membership in political, social and economic groups. Sixty nine percent (69%) of women are deprived in employment, 56.4 percent in political party membership, and 47.4 percent in

membership in political, social and economic groups. Similarly, for men, the highest inadequacies were in employment, membership in groups and political party membership at 45.8%, 42.3% and 43.1% respectively (Figure 1).

About 63 percent of Ugandan women are disempowered

The disempowerment headcount (H) for women is estimated at 63 percent; implying that at least every 6 in 10 women is disempowered. The average inadequacy score (A), which reflects the average share of inadequacies each disempowered woman experiences, is 49.1 percent. That is, each disempowered woman is, on average deprived in approximately half of the weighted indicators. The index (which is a product of H and A) stands at 0.31; this means that the multidimensionally disempowered women experience 31 percent of the total inadequacies that would be experienced if all people were inadequate in all indicators (Table 2). Compared to their female counterparts, the males are less likely to be disempowered with a disempowerment headcount of 43 percent. Their average inadequacy score (A), which reflects the average share of inadequacies each disempowered man experiences, is 45.7 percent. That is, each disempowered male is, on average deprived in more than half of the weighted indicators. The DEI was estimated at 0.20.

Figure 1: Percentage of persons with inadequate achievements of per indicator (%)



Source: Author's computations based on 2017 NGPSS

Table 2: Disempowerment headcount (H), average inadequacy score (A) and disempowerment index (Mo)

Women					Men		
	H (%)	A (%)	Mo		H (%)	A (%)	Mo
National	63.0	49.1	0.31		43.0	45.7	0.20
Urban	56.8	47.9	0.27		37.5	45.3	0.17
Rural	65.3	49.5	0.32		45.6	45.8	0.21
Kampala	57.9	47.7	0.28		45.8	42.1	0.19
Central	62.8	50.6	0.32		42.4	48.7	0.21
Eastern	63.4	48.5	0.31		46.4	43.7	0.20
Northern	76.3	52.2	0.40		54.9	47.4	0.26
Western	53.1	44.9	0.24		32.6	43.8	0.14

Source: Author's computations based on 2017 NGPSS

The extent of disempowerment differs by geographical location

Using the sub group decomposability property, the disempowerment index is disaggregated by rural/urban areas and by region. At regional level, the Northern region has the highest levels of women disempowerment headcount, inadequacy intensity and disempowerment index at 76.3 percent, 52.2 percent and 0.40 respectively. The other regions with high women disempowerment headcount ratios are Eastern (63.4%), Central (62.8%). The least disempowerment headcount was reported in the western region (53.1 %), and Kampala (57.9%) (Table 2). Based on the rural/urban disaggre-

gation, women in rural areas (65.3%) are more likely to be disempowered compared to their urban counterparts (56.8%). Although women are more likely to be disempowered in comparison to their male counterparts, the regional trend mirrors that of women with Northern and Eastern regions registering the highest levels of disempowerment.

The young people and the elderly have high levels of disempowerment

The analysis shows that the young people (18-25 years) and elderly (56 years plus) are more likely to be disempowered irrespective of sex (Table 3). About 79.7

Table 3: Disempowerment profiling

	Women			Men		
	H	A	Mo	H	A	Mo
Age group (years)						
18-25	68.9	48.7	0.34	50.8	45.3	0.23
26-35	55.4	47.2	0.26	38.6	43.8	0.17
36-45	55.1	48.2	0.27	35.9	46.9	0.17
46-55	57.6	47.0	0.27	39.8	47.4	0.19
56 plus	79.7	54.8	0.44	54.8	47.2	0.26
Disability status						
Disabled	66.7	54.3	0.36	61.1	51.7	0.32
Not disabled	62.4	48.5	0.30	41.9	45.0	0.19
Marital status						
Never married	65.2	49.6	0.32	54.1	46.2	0.25
Married/cohabiting	60.1	47.4	0.29	39.6	45.0	0.18
Divorced/widowed/separated	68.6	52.9	0.36	52.8	49.4	0.26

Source: Author's computations based on 2017 NGPSS

percent of elderly women are disempowered compared to the prime aged population whose disempowerment rates range between 55 and 57 percent. The young women equally have high disempowerment rates at 68.9 percent. The average inadequacy score among the disempowered elderly women is close to 55 percent; this implies that, on average, the disempowered elderly women experience inadequacies in about 55 percent of indicators.

Disability is associated with higher levels of disempowerment

Compared with their able-bodied counterparts, the disabled are more likely to be disempowered in the three domains of empowerment under consideration. The disparity among the disabled and able-bodied persons is highest among the males. The incidence of disempowerment among disabled men is 61.1 percent compared to 41.9 percent among the able-bodied men.

Disempowerment levels vary by marital status

Marital status is correlated with disempowerment. Compared with the never married and the marrieds/cohabiting, the divorced/separated women are likely to be disempowered. The disempowerment rate is estimated

at 68.6 percent among the divorced/separated/widowed, 65.2 percent and 60.1 percent among the never married and marrieds respectively.

Contribution of domains and indicators to women disempowerment

This subsection delves further and presents results from the disaggregated index. It shows the domains that contribute most to women's disempowerment and the indicators in which the disempowered are likely to be deprived in.

The disempowered women are likely to have inadequate achievements in employment, political party and group membership and knowledge of law against human trafficking

Table 4 further shows the percentage of women who are disempowered and have inadequate achievements in each of the nine indicators. It excludes the inadequacies of the non-disempowered people. At national level, 41.2 percent of women who are not empowered are also unemployed, 35.1 percent do not subscribe to any political party, 34.8 percent do not belong to any

Table 4: Disempowered and has inadequate achievements in a particular indicator (%)

	Kampala	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western	National
Literacy	15.2	26.2	46.7	54.6	28.9	28.7
Employment	33.3	45.6	54.4	63.3	48.3	41.2
Mobile phone ownership	4.7	17.0	29.7	37.7	26.7	20.6
Voted in last election	26.0	23.9	11.1	9.3	9.6	12.3
Leadership/membership in groups	42.1	41.2	42.1	48.0	31.3	34.8
Political party membership	42.9	47.3	37.2	57.4	34.7	35.1
Awareness of law on domestic violence	28.1	25.2	13.3	22.7	6.4	16.2
Awareness of law against rape and defilement	23.0	18.7	8.6	19.5	5.7	12.0
Awareness of law against human trafficking	32.9	40.6	33.6	45.9	23.4	31.1

Note: Dark green implies very high disempowerment, light green medium disempowerment levels, deep red relates to low disempowerment rates

Source: Author's computations based on 2017 NGPSS

social, political or economic groups and 31.1 percent are not knowledgeable about laws related to human trafficking. The configuration of men's inadequacies in empowerment (not shown in table) is similar to the women's with economic disempowerment being the leading contributor to the observed levels of disempowerment although the extent of inadequacies in different indicators and the general level of disempowerment is generally lower.

Unlike other regions where the highest proportion of disempowered women also possesses inadequate achievements in employment, in Kampala, the highest proportion of disempowered women is likely to have insufficient achievements in the 2 indicators of membership to a political party and membership to any social and economic and political groups. In the north and eastern regions, employment, political party membership, membership in groups, literacy and awareness of law against human trafficking stand out as major

inadequacies among the disempowered. In the western region, the disempowered women have inadequate achievements in employment and membership in political party and social economic groups. For the central region, employment, political party membership, membership in groups and inadequate knowledge of the law against human trafficking, and are common among the disempowered (refer to Table 4).

At national level, economic disempowerment contributes the most to the women disempowerment index
As per the index computations, the domain that contributes most to women's disempowerment is economic empowerment. Inadequate economic empowerment contributes 39 percent of the observed disempowerment among women (Table 5B). In terms of the nine indicators, unemployment, political party membership, leadership/membership in groups, awareness of law against human trafficking and literacy registered the highest contributions at 17.8%, 15.1%, 15.0%, 13.4%,

Table 5: Contribution of indicators to women's disempowerment index

	Contribution of indicator to index (Mo)(%)					
Table 5A	Kampala	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western	National
Literacy	6.1	9.2	16.9	15.2	13.4	12.3
Employment	13.4	16.0	19.7	17.7	22.5	17.8
Mobile phone ownership	1.9	5.9	10.7	10.5	12.4	8.9
Voted in last election	10.5	8.4	4.0	2.6	4.5	5.3
Leadership/membership in groups	16.9	14.4	15.2	13.4	14.6	15.0
Political party membership	17.3	16.6	13.4	16.0	16.1	15.1
Awareness of law on domestic violence	11.3	8.8	4.8	6.3	3.0	7.0
Awareness of law against rape and defilement	9.3	6.5	3.1	5.4	2.7	5.2
Awareness of law against human trafficking	13.2	14.2	12.1	12.8	10.9	13.4

Note: Dark green implies very high disempowerment, light green medium disempowerment levels, deep red relates to low disempowerment rates

Table 5B	Contribution of dimension to index (Mo)(%)					
	Kampala	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western	National
Economic Empowerment	21.5	31.1	47.3	43.4	48.3	39.0
Social and political participation	44.7	39.3	32.7	32.0	35.2	32.0
Legal empowerment	33.8	29.6	20.0	24.6	16.5	29.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Author's computations based on 2017 NGPSS

and 12.3% respectively (Table 5A).

Geographically, Kampala and the central region have different configurations from the national level. The highest contribution to disempowerment in Kampala and the central regions is the social and political participation dimension. For the rest of the regions, the economic empowerment dimension has the highest contribution to the disempowerment index (see figure 5B).

4. WHAT EXPLAINS THE OBSERVED GAPS IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT?

Although Uganda has enacted the relevant policies and legal frameworks to empower women to effectively participate in the political, economic and social spheres of life, challenges remain. Based on the major contributors as per the index, this subsection elaborates on how the identified gaps emerge.

Economic Empowerment

Despite extensive efforts made by the Government of Uganda to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls through enacting legal frameworks, women and girls continue to face barriers in realizing their economic rights. This is in part explained by entrenched gender stereotypes and negative social norms that limit women's equal access to land, property and financial services, and which in turn shape outcomes for women related to labour markets, entrepreneurship and innovation.

In comparison with their male counterparts, the level of women's economic empowerment (WEE), although steadily improving, is still low. Women are less likely to own productive assets such as land, engage in productive paid employment and their earnings are below that of their male counterparts (UBoS 2017). Yet, investing in WEE sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth (UN WOMEN 2014). As earlier pointed out, the index shows

inadequacies in decent employment and literacy rates as the leading contributors of disempowerment in the economic empowerment domain.

Females continue to be disadvantaged in the labour market; female unemployment is more than double that of their male counterparts (13.1 percent against 5.8 percent for males). A high proportion of the female population is likely to be in vulnerable employment as own account workers or contributing family workers (71 percent against 54 percent for men), characterized by inadequate earnings. The median earnings among women in paid employment half that of their male counterparts – UGX 110,000 among women and UGX 220,000 for males. The situation is worse for rural women whose median earnings are UGX 88,000 (UBoS 2018). Some of the factors constraining women's effective participation in the labour market include but are not limited to low education attainment, limited access to productive resources such as land and credit and care giving responsibilities.

As the requirements for many jobs and the attendant expectations of employers are rising, education that provides the necessary skills and knowledge has become essential for full participation in society and for a productive workforce. However, compared with their male counterparts, the females are less likely to have the requisite education to be able to compete in the formal labour market. About 55.6 percent of females either have no formal education or did not complete primary school level. Only 6.9 percent of females have completed post secondary education (UBoS 2018). Most studies indicate that higher levels of education are associated with successful transitions or better chances of securing stable employment, which confirms the positive effects of accumulated human capital in making the transition to a decent job. Elder and Kone (2014) found that compared with those who had achieved higher levels of schooling, young people who had not attended school or had only completed primary-level education were more likely to fall in the more insecure categories of self or temporary employment. These results are congruent with the 2013 SWTS descriptive results for Uganda, which showed a strong correlation between levels of education and a young person's labour market transition. Thus, the higher the

level of educational attainment, the higher the likelihood of a young person completing his or her labour market transition to stable and/or satisfactory employment (Byamugisha et al. 2014).

A high fertility rate could have a bearing on a woman's ability to work because the presence of young children in a household, their number, and age are some of the variables that can be used to explain women's limited engagement in work (especially formal work) in some developing countries. This view is attributed to the fact that women are more often regarded as the primary providers of household care needs, which obviously increase with the presence of children (Longwe *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, in a modelling study to determine the labour market outcomes in Uganda, Bridges and Lawson (2008) found that for females, both the number and age of children had an effect on the likelihood of their being in wage employment. Specifically, the number of children in the household had an increasingly negative effect on the likelihood of a woman being in wage employment (relative to self-employment).

Other gender inequalities in the labour market may arise from deep-rooted social norms that limit women's choices and access to economic opportunities, which in effect prevent women from enhancing their economic wellbeing (Kabeer, 2012). Women's limited ability to own land coupled with insecure user rights affects their ability to invest and contribute to Uganda's economic growth. Because of their lack of security of tenure and lack of control over economic activities, they have limited incentive to develop the land they occupy. Women's lack of land title, required for collateral for business loans, means that they have limited access to finance (UBoS 2018b). To improve access to credit and thereby promote self-employment, the government of Uganda has implemented a range of livelihood programs aimed at addressing the challenges of employment, underemployment and poverty. The Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) was introduced in 2013/14 with an objective of empowering the youth to harness their socio-economic potential and increase self-employment opportunities and income levels (MoGLSD 2013). Similarly, the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) was introduced in 2015/16 to address challenges that women face in undertaking economically viable enterprises.

The overall objective of UWEP is to empower Uganda women to improve their income levels and their contribution to economic development. However a recent evaluation of the YLP shows that the YLP had no significant effect on socio-economic outcomes compared to non-beneficiaries (Bukenya et al., 2019).

The other low performing indicator under this domain was high illiteracy levels, specifically in the Northern and Eastern regions and among the prime age and elderly categories. To cater for this category of people, Uganda is implementing a Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) Programme targeting persons (aged 15 years and above) who missed out on the opportunity of formal education during their childhood. The programme was designed to be a literacy programme that would focus on linking literacy to people's livelihoods and needs. The programme is meant to integrate skill-specific training, in addition to literacy and numeracy, and link the two to show learners how literacy is important and can be used for personal development in their everyday lives. Although this programme has somewhat improved literacy levels, it continues to be marred by challenges relating to underfunding at both central and local government and by donors. Furthermore, instructors are not adequately trained and are not remunerated leading to high turnover (MoGLSD, 2011).

Leadership and political participation

Good governance and the effective participation of citizens in politics increase ownership of government policies and programmes. Despite women's proven abilities as leaders and agents of change, and their right to participate equally in democratic governance, women's leadership and political participation remains limited. Women are underrepresented in top positions, whether in elected offices, civil services, the private sector or academia (UN WOMEN 2014). In response to this anomaly, the Government of Uganda has a policy on affirmative action that is aimed at enhancing women's representation from local council to parliamentary level.

Despite the good intentions of the various legal frameworks and interventions aimed at increasing women participation in leadership and politics, women are still largely underrepresented in decision-making positions

at all levels. For instance women constitute only 35 percent⁵ of the tenth parliament and number of directly elected women MPs is only 19 out of the 452 members of parliament as at 12th April 2018. Similarly, the number of women leaders and decision makers at the various level of the decentralized government structure is still very low. There are a myriad of factors that could explain this lackluster performance; the next paragraphs elaborate the factors that hinder women's political participation.

Economic factors: Socio-economic status of women to a greater extent plays a significant role in enhancing their participation and representation in political decision-making bodies. Yet, women's historical experience of discrimination puts them at a disadvantaged position economically. They are less likely to be in employment, and if they are, they tend to be in low paying informal sector jobs. Without the financial support required to mobilize and run the campaigns, women may often be discouraged from participating in politics. Indeed perception results from the 2017 NGPPS supports this as-

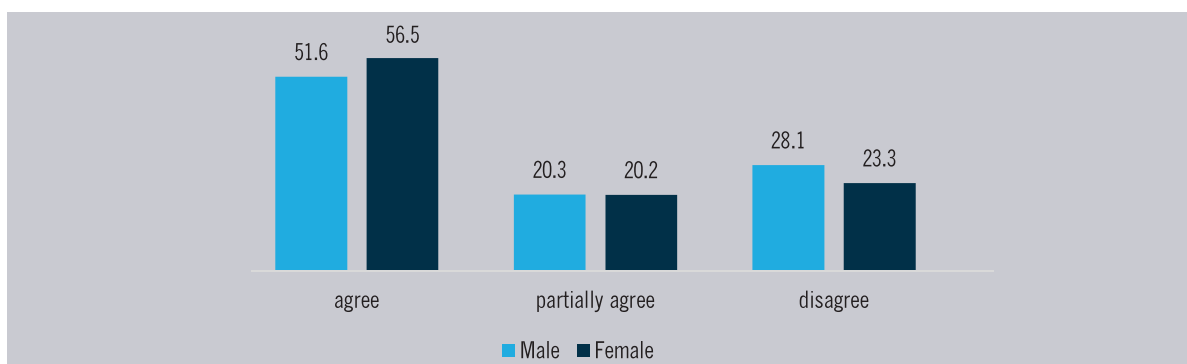
⁵ <https://www.parliament.go.ug/sites/default/files/COMPOSITION%20OF%20THE%2010TH%20PARLIAMENT%20AS%20AT%2012%20APRIL%202018.pdf>

section, 71.9 percent of men agree/partially agree while 76.7 percent of women agree or partially agree to this statement (Figure 2).

Social cultural factors: A strong traditional and patriarchal value system that favors sexually segregated roles affects the advancement, progress and participation of women in any political process. Social cultural factors affect women's levels of representation throughout the political process, from an individual woman's decision to enter politics, to party selection of candidates, to the decisions made by voters on election day. Undeniably, a high percentage of both men and women believe that women don't have support and encouragement from their communities (66.5% of men and 69.5% of women). Similarly cultural factors are singled out as some of the barriers to women's participation in politics (See Table 6).

Family, work and time constraints: Continuing uneven distribution of family care responsibilities means that women spend far more time than men in home- and child-care. The burden of household chores limits women's ability to enjoy the opportunities and benefits

Figure 2: Women don't have the financial support to stand for elections (%)

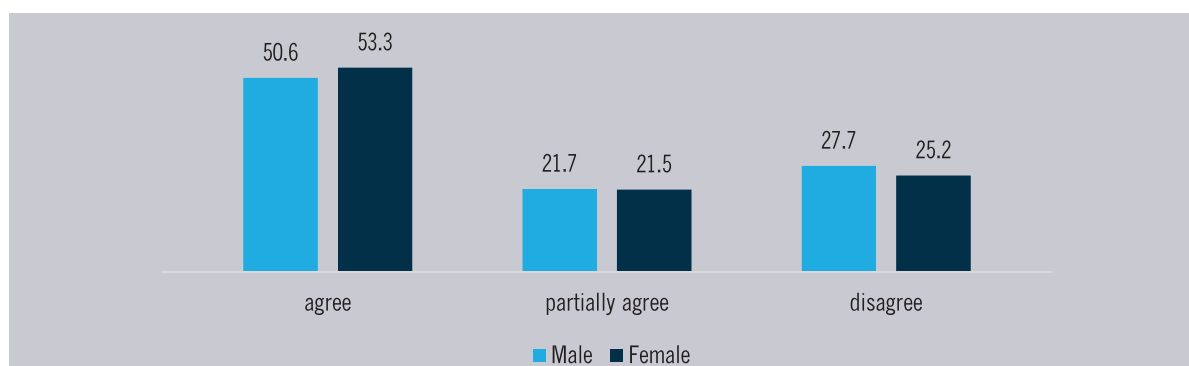


Source: Author's computations based on 2017 NGPPS

Table 6: Social cultural perceptions hindering women's political participation (%)

Statement	Percentage agreeing to statement (%)	
	Males	Females
1. Women don't have support and encouragement from their communities	66.5	69.5
2. Women face cultural barriers to participating in politics	62.5	62.1

Source: Author's computations based on 2017 NGPPS

Figure 3: Women's responsibilities in the home don't leave them with time for politics (%)

Source: Author's computations based on 2017 NGPSS

of citizenship as men on an equal footing in the political sphere. Results from the perception survey show that 74.8 percent of the women agree/partially agree that women's responsibilities do not leave them with time to participate in politics; an equally high percentage of men (72.3%) believe the same (Figure 3).

Other factors explaining the low political representation of women include low educational attainment in comparison to their male counterparts, inferiority complex (low confidence levels among women, lack of the requisite experience among others (NGPSS 2017).

Legal empowerment on violence against women related laws

As earlier mentioned, one's awareness and knowledge of the law empowers them to fight for their rights in the event that they are abused. Legal empowerment occurs when poor or marginalised people use the law, legal systems and justice mechanisms to improve or transform their social, political or economic situations (ODI 2014).

Correspondingly, Uganda has formulated a number of laws aimed at eliminating violence against women, girls and men alike. They include the 2007 Penal Code Act, cap 120; the 2009 Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act; the 2010 Domestic Violence Act; the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2010).

According to the Penal Code Act, a person convicted of rape is liable to suffer death, while one who attempts

to rape is liable to imprisonment for life. On the other hand the Penal Code stipulates that having unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under the age of eighteen years is a felony known as defilement and is on conviction liable to life imprisonment, according to the Penal Code (Amendment) Act, 2007. Attempting to commit this same offence is punishable by imprisonment not exceeding eighteen years. The 2010 Domestic Violence Act provides for the protection and relief of victims of domestic violence; to provide for the punishment of perpetrators of domestic violence; to provide for the procedures and guidelines to be followed by the court in relation to the protection and compensation of victims of domestic violence; to provide for the jurisdiction of court; to provide for the enforcement of orders made by the court; to empower the family and children court to handle cases of domestic violence and for related matters. Similarly, the 2010 FGM act provides for the prohibition of FGM, the offences, persecution and punishment of offenders and the protection of victims as well as girls and women under threat of FGM and to provide for other related matters.

Despite the existence of these laws, violence against women remains a reality. Women continue to be victims of gender-based violence (GBV). For instance, every one in every two women (51%) of women aged 15-49 years reported to have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence since age 15 (UBOS and ICF 2018). The 2017 police reported a 16.7 percent increase in the prevalence of domestic violence (reported cases increased from 13,132 in 2016 to 15,325). Although cases of rape and defilement decreased between 2016

and 2017, they remain unacceptably high (1,335 rape cases in 2017 and 14,985 defilement cases in 2017). Trafficking in human persons is equally high; a total of 355 cases were reported in 2017 including 106 internal trafficking victims and 249 transnational trafficking victims.

However, the aforementioned statistics could be biased downwards due to underreporting. The 2017 NG-PSS shows that only about 5 percent of women who experienced some form of violence in the 12 months preceding the survey reported the matter to relevant authorities. This could in part be attributed to ignorance of existing laws that criminalize these acts of violence. A further inquiry into the low levels of reporting reveals that more than 88 percent of both men and women believe that lack of awareness of available services is the reason for low reporting of VAW cases (Figure 4). When perpetrators of violence are left unpunished, they are likely to continue inflicting violence on women, girls and men.

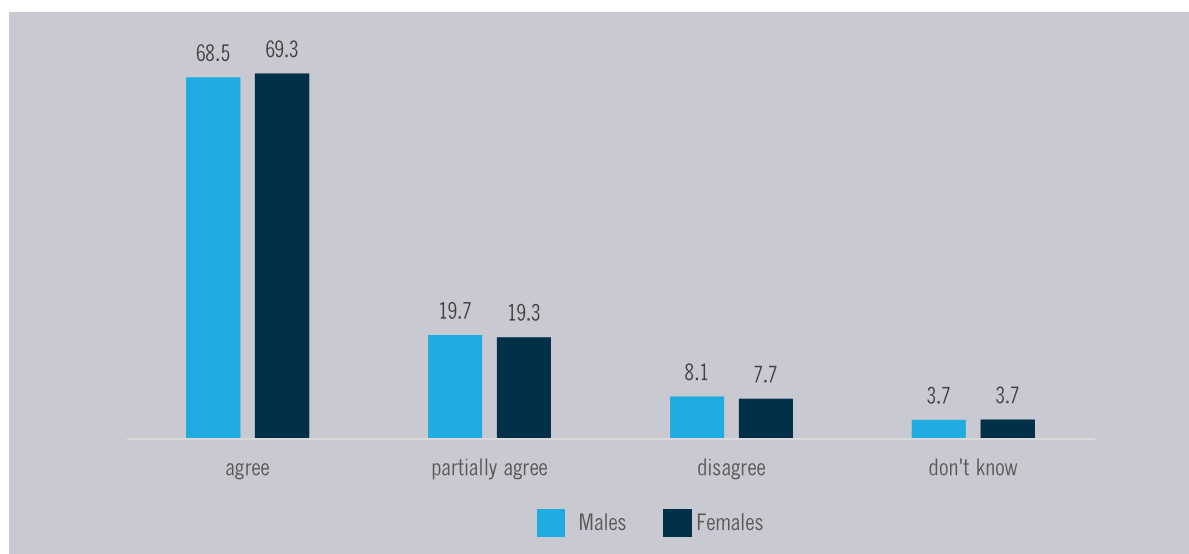
5. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusions

The paper utilises the AF methodology to estimate the extent of women disempowerment at national and regional levels. It further analyses the extent contributions of dimensions and indicators to the disempowerment index. The main findings of the paper are:

Six in every ten women are not empowered in the three dimensions of empowerment: The disempowerment headcount (H) for women is estimated at 63 percent; implying that at least every 6 in 10 women are disempowered. The average inadequacy score (A), which reflects the average share of inadequacies each disempowered woman experiences, is 49.1 percent. That is, each disempowered woman is, on average deprived in

Figure 4: Lack of awareness of available services is the reason for low reporting of VAW cases (%)



Source: Author's computations based on 2017 NGPSS

approximately half of the weighted indicators. The disempowerment headcount for males is lower by lower by 20 percentage points and is estimated at 43 percent.

Compared with men, women are more likely to have inadequate achievements in all the nine indicators: For all the nine indicators, women registered higher levels of inadequacies. Major differences between men and women were noted in the employment (23.2%), literacy (17.4%), political party membership (14.1%) and mobile phone ownership (11.1%).

Women's disempowerment index is largely driven by the economic empowerment dimension, which accounts for 39 percent: At indicator level, the main contributions to disempowerment come from inadequacies in employment (17.8%), political party membership (15.1%), membership in social, economic and political groups (15%), awareness of law against human trafficking (13.4%) and literacy (12.3%). The least contribution was from awareness of law on rape and defilement (5.2%) and participation in voting (5.3%).

There is geographical imbalance in the disempowerment headcount ratio: Being resident in the rural area, northern or eastern region is associated with high disempowerment headcount rates. The least disempowerment headcount was reported in the western region and Kampala. Based on the rural/urban disaggregation, women in rural areas are more likely to be disempowered compared to their urban counterparts. The disempowered women in these regions are also likely to have inadequate achievements in employment, political party membership, membership in groups (social, economic can political), literacy and awareness of law against human trafficking.

Disempowerment is correlated with age cohort, disability status, and marital status: The analysis shows that the young people (18-25 years) and elderly (56 years plus) are more likely to be disempowered irrespective of sex. Compared with their able bodied counterparts, the disabled are more likely to be disempowered in the three domains of empowerment under consideration. Compared with the never married and the married/cohabiting, the divorced/separated women are likely to be disempowered.

5.2. Recommendations

Expand interventions that support women's entry into the labour market and support women to enter better, more profitable and empowering work: To empower women economically, there is a need to expand access to existing programs and interventions aimed at supports women into productive employment. A mix of financial and non-financial support has proven to be a key factor influencing the success and sustainability of targeted funds such as the Uganda Women's Entrepreneurship fund. Women who have access to a comprehensive entrepreneurship package are likely to acquire the requisite skills, attitude, knowledge, support services that increases their chances of starting/sustaining businesses and being employable.

Improve access to education and adult literacy programs: Improving access to education and adult literacy programmes are some of the key strategies that could increase women's economic empowerment. Although Government is implementing universal primary and secondary education policies, the effects of previous gender gaps in schooling persist. Investments in literacy and adult learning for females in agriculture farmers may yield tangible benefits for their productivity and movement to higher nodes of the agricultural value chain. Similarly, it may also enhance profits for those engaged in small business in the informal sector.

Debunk and demystify perceptions on women's participation in politics: A myriad of social cultural factors and a patriarchal value system favors sexually segregated roles, and traditional cultural values tend to affect the advancement, progress and participation of women in political processes. Sensitization and encouragement of women to go beyond their traditional roles will be a step in the right direction.

Bolster community sensitization campaigns on legal frameworks on violence against women: Given the active role that civil society organizations (CSOs) play in community sensitization, it is important that Development Partners especially those geared towards enhancing gender equality and women empowerment partner with CSOs to undertake mass sensitization of communities on the legal frameworks –specifically the

one on trafficking of persons.

Targeted programs for special groups (the youth, elderly, disabled, widows): In comparison to other groups, the youth, elderly and widows/divorced are more likely to be disempowered. There is a need to design and implement targeted programs and interventions aimed at empowering these groups in the various domains of empowerment.

Utilize the index to guide advocacy and regional interventions: The index results have shown the extent of inadequacy by indicator, domain and region. Since targeted interventions can directly impact/improve the poorly performing indicators, the design of interventions could be informed by the findings of the disempowerment index.

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