



## **Gender Mainstreaming and Women Development in Bushenyi District, Uganda**

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### **Abstract**

*A lot of interventions have been implemented by the central government, NGOs and District Local Service on gender mainstreaming. The attainment of gender equality has been limited, despite remarkable progress in Bushenyi district. The paper investigates the influence of gender mainstreaming on development of women in Bushenyi district, Uganda. The descriptive survey design using comparative approaches was used. The study used Slovene's formula to obtain (251) respondents. The study used purposive sampling technique involving 87 Kyamuhunga, 61 Kakanju, 30 Kyeizoba and 73 Bitooma, using two sets of questionnaires. Quantitative analysis specifically means and student t-test was used. The study established that (2.306 = Low) revealed that gender mainstreaming approaches were low. The study established that implementation of equity, efficiency, policy, anti-poverty and empowerment approaches was low in the district. The study revealed that (2.385 = low) as the overall mean on women development was low in Bushenyi district. The study also revealed that there was significant difference in the level of Gender Mainstreaming and Development (GMD) of women in Bushenyi district, Uganda. The study concludes that female practical interests were still low as compared to their male counterparts in terms of gender mainstreaming and development in Bushenyi district, Uganda. The male had more powers in the development process in Bushenyi district. The study recommends awareness on changing institutional, structural, and organizational policies affecting gender. The ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development should prioritize increasing gender awareness by engaging on social mobilization and gender sensitization. Gender issues should be incorporated during meetings, seminars and workshops. Women should be involved at any level of developing solutions in society.*

**Keywords:** Gender Mainstreaming; Development of Women and Empowerment

### **INTRODUCTION**

Globally, Non-governmental organizations operated by women on gender mainstreaming mechanisms have spread widely (True & Mintrom 2001). The signing of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action nearly after two decades promoted gender empowering and equality in the society. Gender mainstreaming ultimate goal is to promote equity in development and achieve gender equality in both women and men. This also enables one to appreciate the cohesion in understanding the social roles played by each in promoting property rights.

Since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, one of the common subjects of deliberations and international debates has been on gender equality (Karam & Afiouni 2015; Metcalfe 2011; Faisal 2011). The purpose of gender mainstreaming is to address the issues affecting women who are marginalized worldwide. In the development of social policy and economics, women need and interests were marginalized and overlooked. There was therefore need to develop

appropriate institutional strategies that address gender equality, social development and decision making at the grassroots.

The approach for attaining gender equality is gender mainstreaming (Sinha 2013). Gender mainstreaming ensures that all the attention and perspectives towards achieving gender equality and equity are considered. Activities such as planning, advocacy, resource allocation, legislation, research, policy development, implementation and monitoring are implemented (Sinha 2013; UN Women 2015). As indicated by the country director of the United Nations Women in Egypt that when issues affecting women are considered in terms of development and progress then real empowerment is achieved (reported in Khater 2016). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, sexual activities like rape, and gender-based violence activities are clearly documented. Recently the UN peacekeepers highlighted the continued reports of atrocities in the Central Africa Republic. The violence against women must stop to promote for the deliverance of development outcomes. The absence of women in the international processes on the negotiation table was felt even after passing the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). For example, women were only signatories to a meagre two out of 61 peace agreements between August 2008 and March of 2021. In contrary, Lwambo (2013) established that there was men's dominance and resistance of high level to promoting initiatives of only single-gendered through masculinity instead of promoting gender equality as a holistic approach of empowering men and women to make non-violent choices of life in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. According to reports from a new UN study revealed that COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating effects on both girls and women in East and Southern Africa. Globally, effects of COVID-19 had affected achieving targets especially gender-related SDG3 and SDG5 (UNFPA, 2021).

Gender mainstreaming activities have been under taken at two levels by the national and local government in Uganda. Gender and equity budgeting training is conducted by the state party for relevant sectors at the national level (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development Report, 2009). In social, political and economic spheres, women empowerment and advancement of gender equality has significantly progressed in Uganda. This can be advanced by among others; polices like the Local Government Act (Cap 243), National Women's Council Act (Cap 318), Land Act (Cap 227), Land Acquisition Act Cap (2006), Laws, Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Secondary Education (USE) and Affirmative Action in public universities increased enrolment of female students. In local government and other sector, guidelines of budgets including gender and equal appropriation of resources, due to efforts of Gender mainstreaming, was implemented (Lawson, 2003). In the assessment of Local Government Development Plan gender mainstreaming was considered. The state and local government departments generated gender data in areas of education, health, employment and access to productive resources for planning in the country (Lawson, 2003).

Contextually, Bushenyi District progressively developed the intervention of gender mainstreaming at the national level. Bushenyi District was selected because of the passion of the district leadership on women peace issues and security of human and demonstrable commitment to gender equality. This initiative has enabled the development of vibrant programs in gender mainstreaming. For appropriate implementation of policies, practices and integrate cross cutting gender aspects in to the system of development processes on equal and equitable procedure is important. Men domination of community leadership positions, household property and management in households was a major cause of gender inequalities in Bushenyi district. According to the draft of District Gender Policy (2006) in education sector and literacy levels male stand at 78.5% as compared to female with 50.5%. In terms of enrolment in primary school only 3% of the girls and the rest are boys. While 60% of the boys are retained in school as compared to 40% of the girls, there are only 22% of the female teachers available. According to the Draft District Gender Policy (2006), there

is enrolment for the males at 21.5% and females at 78.5% despite the existence of functional adult literacy classes. For land ownership registration, only 16% of women had owned land in over 90% of the households (Gender Baseline Study on Land sector 2004). The majority of the women had only user rights depending on their marital status and relationship with family members as compared to men. Economically men were more than women. The mismatch in accessing developmental services, lack of proper policies on gender related issues, inadequate implementation of developed policies in the district has led the situation of undesirable outcomes like domestic violence, inequalities on acquisition of property rights and high maternal –mortality rates in Bushenyi District, Uganda.

### **Statement of the problem**

Ideally, a lot of interventions have been implemented by the Central Government, NGOs and district local services on gender mainstreaming. The attainment of gender equality has been limited, despite remarkable progress in Bushenyi District. According to the report by UBOS, (2018), it was revealed that majority of Ugandans in urban slum areas constitute more than 21% of Ugandans living in abject poverty. This has created a less economic resilience in the face of a crisis. The current population surviving below the poverty line indicates 21% impact factor (UBOS 2018). Actually, 33% of the women tend to be poorer than men at 30%, therefore gender mainstreaming is not yet achieved within many development organizations in Bushenyi District. It is on this basis that the study investigated why there was still gap in gender mainstreaming and development of women in Bushenyi district, Uganda.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study investigated the influence of gender mainstreaming on development of women in Bushenyi District, Uganda.

### **Specific Objective**

To establish the level of gender mainstreaming and development of women in Bushenyi District, Uganda.

### **Null Hypothesis**

There was no significant difference in the levels of gender mainstreaming and development of women in Bushenyi District, Uganda.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Alahira (2014) women are politically, economically, socially and culturally marginalized in Africa. As reported by African Development Bank, (2015b) women cannot access opportunities of enjoying the rights of decision making and basic services due to weaknesses in institutions. The deepening existing inequalities, trafficking and sexual violence has affected rights of women in the society. In the world, the most pervasive yet least appreciated human right violation is violence against women. It has eroded their self-esteem, compromised their physical health, and sapped on their energies (Heise et al. 2002). According to Byanyima, (2015) integration of both conflict and peace building into gender mainstreaming shall reduce on the vulnerability and threats on gender. It is unfortunate that at the grass root level women empowerment has failed due to lack of gender mainstreaming (Wendoh & Wallace 2005; Moser & Moser 2005; Rao & Kelleher 2005).

Women empowerment is fundamental in promoting gender equality. Identifying and redressing power relation and imbalances in the community will sort the issues affecting women. Identifying and redressing power related imbalances shall improve on gender equality (Wadesango 2011). For empowerment of women and gender equality experience is needed in implementation, decision-making, programming and planning. Further, Elson

(2002) also established the same assertion that for gender mainstreaming and gender equality to be achieved then a lot of the interventions must be done. Several authors like (Wendoh & Wallace 2005; Manicom 2001; Hailey 2000) have emphasized that current gender sensitive strategies have not played their role of promoting gender equality and mainstreaming. The women do not have access to ownership of land and are not able to voice their grievances freely. Most of the Women NGOs have basically promoted their foreign ideas as opposed to women issues affecting women. On the other side, literature contends that progress in terms of women's socio-economic activities have been lopsided? As Ogujiuba & Jumare, (2012) further note, most of the NGOs basically promote stereotyping, cultural norms and religious structures. The gaps identified from the several authors enabled this study to further establish more information on gender mainstreaming and the development of women in Bushenyi District, Uganda.

## METHODOLOGY

The study employed mixed methodology involving qualitative and quantitative approach. The study adopted descriptive survey design due to the nature of data obtained. The data was basically descriptive in nature (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2011). The study used specifically the descriptive comparative and descriptive correlational strategies. Questionnaires and interviews schedules were used to collect data. The study target population was carried out in the following sub-counties; Kakanju, Bitooma, Kyamuhunga and Kyeizoba comprising of 213 district officials and 432 local communities with total target population of 845. The community members mainly comprised of working groups of people either in private or the public sector. The study employed Sloven's formula to establish the minimum sample size of 271 respondents. The study adopted purposive sampling technique because majority of the respondents possessed knowledge about the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2011). The study used descriptive and inferential statistics for the analysis. The analyzed data used frequencies, means, and student t-test using (SPSS) version 28. The mean and an item analysis rank depicted the strengths and weakness of the indicators. The recommendations were arrived at, on the basis of the mean and ranking on individual indicators as in Table 1.

**Table 1: Mean Range on the Individual indicators**

Mean Range	Response Mode	Interpretation
3.26-4.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
2.51-3.25	Agree	High
1.76-2.50	Disagree	Low
1.00-1.75	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

*Source: Field Data (2022)*

The study employed independent sample t-test to establish the difference between means for hypothesis one (Ho #1) at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results in table 2 revealed that (2.306 = Low) indicates that gender mainstreaming approaches were low. The equity, efficiency, policy, anti-poverty and empowerment approaches revealed low implementation in the District. The findings indicate that for equal representation and consideration of issues for both male and female; experience integrated forum on development of polices, designs, monitoring and evaluation, and equal participation in economic, social and political programs was low.

**Table 2: Summary on level of Gender mainstreaming**

Category	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Empowerment Approach	2.451	Low	1
Anti-Poverty Approach	2.316	Low	2
Policy Approach	2.324	Low	3
Efficiency Approach	2.301	Low	4
Equity Approach	2.138	Low	5
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>2.306</b>	<b>Low</b>	

Source: Field Data (2022)

The findings also revealed that women were not fully empowered, fight poverty, benefit from the implemented policies, equal share in decision making regarding land and family in Bushenyi District. According to UNFPA (2021) the increase of gender-based violence was witnessed during the start of COVID-19 pandemic in many countries. The gender-based violence did not spare Uganda and specifically Bushenyi District. During the COVID-19 pandemic calls on gender-based violence increased to 77% in the national hotlines in Kenya (UNFPA 2021). The women-led organizations, community structures and local authorities responsible for protecting women and girls have reduced capacity and shut their doors to issues on gender-based violence as measures to contain the pandemic.

The findings were also in agreement with researchers like (Williams, 2007), who emphasized that dependence on ideas and external funding by African women's non-governmental organizations has adequately affected the grassroots strategic needs of women. It is because most of the local Women and Non-Governmental Organizations target the quick issues promoted by the sponsors or donors, yet the sensitive issues affecting the women in terms of gender inequalities in economic, social and political institutions was not solved (Porter & Sweetman 2005).

**Table 3: Summary on Level of Women Development**

Category	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Women and Healthy	2.510	Low	1
Women and Environment	2.491	Low	2
Women and Poverty	2.409	Low	3
Women and Economy	2.471	Low	4
Human Rights of Women	2.452	Low	5
Women and Media	2.223	Low	6
Violence Against Women	2.140	Low	7
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>2.385</b>	<b>Low</b>	

Source: Field Data (2022)

The findings reveal that (2.385 = low) as the overall mean suggests that women development process was still low in terms of rights of violence against women, women and media, Human Rights of women, women and economy women and poverty and women and health in Bushenyi District. The lockdown and greater care-burdens of caring for the sick and vulnerable household members, closure of schools, and confinement of women and men to their homes had greatly affected the women's economic empowerment due to COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings were in agreement with earlier researcher like Alahira, (2014) who claims that women were more affected in political, cultural, economic and social aspects in most parts of Africa. This was due to barriers created by weak institutions on promoting women rights in decision making, opportunities to access and enjoy basic services (African Development Bank, 2015b). The deepening existing inequalities, sexual violence, conflicts and trafficking has not spared women and girls. According to Byanyima (2015) there was serious need to

solve threats affecting the vulnerable gender by incorporating both conflict and peace building as gender dimensions. During this period of heightened tension, majority of girls and women are at higher risk of being abused by family members at home. In the same vein, this poses the biggest threats to the adolescent girls during the crisis (Plan International, 2018).

**Table 4: Level of Gender Mainstreaming and Development of Women**

Category	Gender	Mean	t-value	Sig.	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
Gender Mainstreaming	Male	2.28	-4.28	0.000	Significance Difference	Rejected
	Female	2.41				
Development Process	Male	2.57	5.18	0.000	Significance Difference	Rejected
	Female	2.45				

Source: Field Data (2022)

The findings in table 4 reveal the level of gender mainstreaming was high among the female (mean = 2.41) compared to male (mean = 2.28). Then the level of development of women was high among male (mean = 2.57) as compared to female with (mean = 2.45). The results in Table 4, also established that the Significance value (Sig. = 0.000) was less than 0.005, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. The findings reveal that there was significant difference in the levels of Gender Mainstreaming and Development of women in Bushenyi District, Uganda. Theory-wise, the findings reveal that practical interest of women must be considered and valued in the development of the society. Due to Covid-19 related indicators, over 80% of women have been supporting their families on informal daily labour across Uganda. With the continued lockdown, majority of the women cannot sustain and survive due to lack of resources and savings (Womankind Worldwide, 2020).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concluded that female practical interests were still low as compared to their male counterparts in terms of gender mainstreaming and development processes in Bushenyi District, Uganda. The male had more powers in the development process in the district.

The study recommends awareness on changing institutional, structural, and organizational policies affecting gender. The ministry of gender, labour and social development should prioritize increasing gender awareness by engaging on social mobilization, integrating and aligning cultural norms into gender policies and gender sensitization. Gender issues should be incorporated during meetings, seminars and workshops. Women should be involved at any level of developing solutions in society.

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