

**WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PARISH DEVELOPMENT MODEL (PDM)
IMPLEMENTATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN KYABAKADDE
PARISH, MUKONO DISTRICT**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
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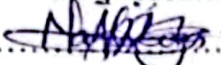


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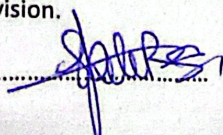
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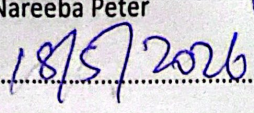
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APPROVAL

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDO	Community Development Officer
EPRC	Economic Policy Research Centre
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GAD	Gender and Development
LC	Local Council
MoGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
NDP III	Third National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PDM	Parish Development Model
PRF	Parish Revolving Fund
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCU	Uganda Christian University
UN	United Nations
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations

ABSTRACT

The Parish Development Model (PDM) is one of the key government programs introduced in Uganda in 2021. It aims at facilitating the transition of 39% of Ugandan households depending on subsistence farming into the money economy via entrepreneurship development, financial inclusion, and community planning. The government allocated 30% of the Parish Revolving Fund (PRF) to women, indicating the formal recognition of their role within the program. Nonetheless, this study demonstrates that in Kyabakadde Parish in Kyampisi Sub-county, Mukono District, women's participation in the PDM lags behind its intended impact.

Based on the qualitative descriptive cross-sectional approach, the data collection involved 17 participants, among which there were women who benefited from the program, local council leaders, and a Community Development Officer. Data were collected using individual in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions in the period between March and early March 2026. The collected data were subjected to analysis based on thematic coding relative to the research objectives.

The study findings indicate that a significant number of women in Kyabakadde parish have not benefited from the PDM funds despite completing the registration process, while those who have received funds have received an amount ranging from UGX 700,000 to 800,000 instead of the intended UGX 1,000,000 for each group of beneficiaries. The level of awareness of the PDM among women is relatively low, as most only had an understanding of the financial aspect of the programme, having no idea about planning and enterprise development processes. Though women participated in PDM meetings, their role was confined to being mere spectators, as their participation in decision-making was hindered by several factors, including lack of confidence, cultural constraints, and the process of organizing the meetings, which favoured men's voices.

Conclusions drawn from the research indicate that although the PDM has provided platforms that support economic empowerment among women, there seems to be little understanding of the processes due to systemic problems and continued social injustices. Recommendations target the Government of Uganda, local leaders, NGOs, communities, and researchers in the future. The areas of concern include increased sensitisation of the

community, increased transparency in the allocation of funds, increased self-confidence among women, financial literacy, and good governance within the PDM.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

0.1 Introduction

The Parish Development Model (PDM) was formally launched by the Government of Uganda in July 2021 as a key strategy for grassroots economic change. It is part of the Third National Development Plan (NDP III) and aims to help 39% of subsistence households move into the money economy through enterprise development, financial inclusion, and community-driven planning at the parish level. The government reserved 30% of the Parish Revolving Fund (PRF) specifically for women, showing that women's role in rural economic development is officially recognised. In Kyabakadde Parish, Kyampisi Sub-County, Mukono District, the PDM has been introduced through community meetings and local programme channels. However, the fieldwork I conducted for this study between March and early March 2026 showed a gap between what the programme promises on paper and what women in the parish are actually experiencing. Many women had never received PDM money. Others had heard about the programme but could not explain how it worked or what they needed to do to benefit from it. Those who had received funds reported getting less than the expected amount between UGX 700,000 and UGX 800,000 instead of the promised UGX 1,000,000 per beneficiary group member or Individual. This chapter places that reality within its wider context.

1.1 Background of the Study

Across Sub-Saharan Africa and the surrounding areas, rural women have long been left out of formal economic development programmes, and this has been identified as a major barrier to reducing poverty and improving household (UN Women, 2020; World Bank, 2022). Uganda is not an exception. Despite years of decentralisation and many official commitments to gender-inclusive development, women in rural Uganda continue to face real barriers when it comes to financial inclusion, having a say in decisions, and accessing public resources fairly (Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRCs), 2023; UN Women, 2020).

The Parish Development Model was introduced specifically to change this. Launched under the NDP III, the programme makes the parish Uganda's lowest administrative unit the central point for economic planning and resource allocation (Government of Uganda, 2022).

Each parish receives funds through the Parish Revolving Fund, which is managed by local government structures and coordinated by community leaders. A key gender commitment within the PDM is that 30% of the PRF is set aside for women, as part of a broader 60% allocation for women and youth combined (Ministry of Local Government, 2022). This is based on the recognition that women make up the majority of subsistence farmers in Uganda, that they carry most of the responsibility for household food, and that empowering women economically produces wider benefits for children, families, and communities (UN Women, 2020; UNICEF, 2022).

However, even from almost the onset of the programme, evidence has been emerging indicating that the allocation of 30% is not significantly ensuring any form of active participation, equal access to finances, and participation in the planning and decision-making processes among women. In its rapid assessment of the implementation of the programme in different districts in Uganda, the Economic Policy Research Centre revealed that the effective participation of women in the programme has been hampered due to lack of knowledge, administrative challenges, societal norms, and the long-standing structure that has been determining the status of women in Ugandan rural communities (Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRCs), 2023).

In Kyabakadde Parish, such patterns were evident through my field research. It is a largely rural area in Kyampisi Sub-County, where people rely on small-scale farming and petty trading or other types of small enterprises. Women in particular had genuinely believed that the introduction of PDM would give them the means to open and operate their own enterprises. In fact, a few of them had already created groups and registered themselves, hoping that the programme would come along. However, when I joined the fieldwork in March 2026, quite a few women had been waiting for over a year with no tangible results so far. They have been experiencing frustration, and the discrepancy between their expectations and their actual experience became apparent at every single interview I conducted.

The programme had failed to create conditions where women could become an integral part of the information flow and active participants in discussions. Such a state of affairs needed investigation and explanation, which was the purpose of this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

PDM was adopted as an approach for inclusive economic transformation and officially adopted the role of women through the 30% PRF allocation. However, the reality that women live under in the case of Kyabakadde Parish has a different story altogether, as illustrated by my fieldwork in the area from March to early April 2026.

Firstly, and foremost, many women within the parish have never received any funds from the PDM scheme. Despite registering their groups and individuals, completing necessary documentation and waiting to be promised the funds by local leaders, most had not received any funds when the research was carried out. Secondly, in the case of those women that had received a disbursement, the total amount they had received was less than expected. While they were supposed to receive UGX 1,000,000, some received as little as UGX 700,000 to 800,000. There was no explanation offered to them for this discrepancy. Thirdly, the level of awareness regarding what the PDM was, how it worked and the benefits associated with it was quite low.

In contrast to the problems related to finances, women's involvement in PDM-related decision-making processes was largely passive. Women attended meetings but perceived themselves as passive listeners rather than active participants in the discussion process. In addition to cultural norms, low self-esteem, and poor meeting management, women's voices had little impact on the decisions made during the discussions due to other factors, such as excessive household duties, illiteracy, and logistical issues associated with attending programme-related events.

The goals of poverty alleviation, household income increase, women's economic empowerment, and overall financial inclusion, which should have been achieved through the implementation of the PDM, have not been achieved by the majority of women in Kyabakadde Parish. It is crucial to understand the reasons behind this problem and potential solutions to make the program more gender-sensitive and ensure proper spending of public funds. The current study aims at investigating the level of participation of women in the PDM, the obstacles they encounter, and the opportunities for their greater engagement.

1.3 Research Purpose

The main aim of this study was to determine how far the women of Kyabakadde parish participated in and benefited from the PDM from the year 2022 until early 2026. I was especially interested in determining the obstacles they faced when it came to accessing money, participating in the planning process, and taking part in decisions making concerning the programme.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives that steered this research were as follows:

1. To assess the level of involvement of women in planning in the implementation of the Parish Development Model in Kyabakadde Parish.
2. To determine the involvement of women in the decision-making process in the implementation of the Parish Development Model in Kyabakadde Parish.
3. To determine the challenges and opportunities for the involvement of women in PDM activities in Kyabakadde Parish, Mukono district.

1.5 Research Questions

The research study was formulated based on the following research questions:

1. To what extent are women involved in planning activities in the implementation of the Parish Development Model in Kyabakadde Parish in the district of Mukono?
2. What is the position of women in the decision-making activities of PDM in Kyabakadde Parish?
3. How are women engaged in the process of the Parish Development Model and their disbursements from Parish Revolving Fund in Kyabakadde Parish?
4. How can strategies be employed to promote the involvement of women in the process of PDM implementation in Kyabakadde Parish?

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Subject Scope

For this study, the emphasis was placed on the real involvement of women in the PDM rather than the expected outcomes as stated in the programme documentation. The study was concerned about such questions as whether the women knew enough about the programme and had a say in its implementation, whether they had any access to PDM

finance, and what social and cultural factors facilitated or obstructed their involvement. All the time during this research, the field evidence was favoured over the written material.

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in Kyabakadde Parish, a predominantly rural area within Kyampisi Sub-County, Mukono County, Mukono District, located in the Central Region of Uganda. The parish includes several villages such as Kyabakadde, Nabaale, Namuyumba, and the surrounding communities.

1.6.3 Time Scope

The fieldwork for this study was conducted between March and the first two weeks of April 2026. The study covered the period from 2022, when the PDM began to be implemented in the parish, up to the time of data collection.

1.7 Significance of the Study

For national and local policymakers, especially within the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and the Ministry of Local Government supported by Economic Policy Research Centre, this study provides field evidence of the gap between PDM policy and what is actually happening on the ground including the consistent shortfall in fund disbursements to women (Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRCs), 2023). Such evidence will facilitate revisions of the PDM guidelines such that gender inclusion is achieved in practice and not merely on paper.

For practitioners of the PDM in district and sub-county areas, the research highlights the communication breakdowns, process flaws, and institutional inadequacies, all while providing tangible recommendations which do not involve an entire restructuring of the program.

From the standpoint of gender and development, social work, and community development, the research contributes a localized and qualitative angle to the study of interactions between community dynamics and national policy, interactions that could potentially result in a failure of transformation.

From the perspective of civil society organizations working in Kyampisi Sub-County and other similar regions, this research provides the foundation for focused interventions in terms of financial literacy, confidence, and access for marginalized women.

Lastly, from the perspective of Uganda's national goals, the research helps contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 5 in terms of gender equality.

1.8 Definition of Operational Terms

Women: In this research, women are defined as adult female persons aged 18 years and above residing in Kyabakadde Parish and who are beneficiaries of the PDM programme or are members of the various community structures associated with the PDM.

Real Participation: Real participation, as used in this study, is defined as the extent to which women are actively involved in the PDM in terms of attending meetings, having voices in decisions, getting listened to, accessing funds, and making business-related decisions.

Parish Development Model (PDM): This is a Government of Uganda programme that was rolled out in July 2021 based on the NDP III policy framework that aims to drive household-level economic transformation through financial inclusion and enterprise development.

Parish Revolving Fund (PRF): Financial conduit that channels resources from PDM to communities. Thirty percent (30%) of the PRF allocation is earmarked for women in every parish.

Barriers: These include social, cultural, economic, or institutional barriers that restrict women's participation in PDM programme activities or access to its resources.

Opportunities: These include structures, resources, or circumstances that could facilitate women's participation in PDM programme activities.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study delineates how the independent variables, moderating variables, and the dependent variable interrelate. This framework served as the basis for the research design and data analysis.

There are three categories of independent variables. First, there is socio-economic determinants, which include education, income level, literacy, and productivity resources. Second, there is institutional support, which refers to the quality of PDM information dissemination to the community, the fair distribution of PRF resources, the provision of entrepreneurship training, and the response of the programme leadership to the demands of women (Razavi & Miller, 1995). Third, there are barriers to participation, which include cultural constraints on women's participation in public affairs, household chores, poor

financial literacy skills, and difficulties associated with registering under PDM and applying for funding.

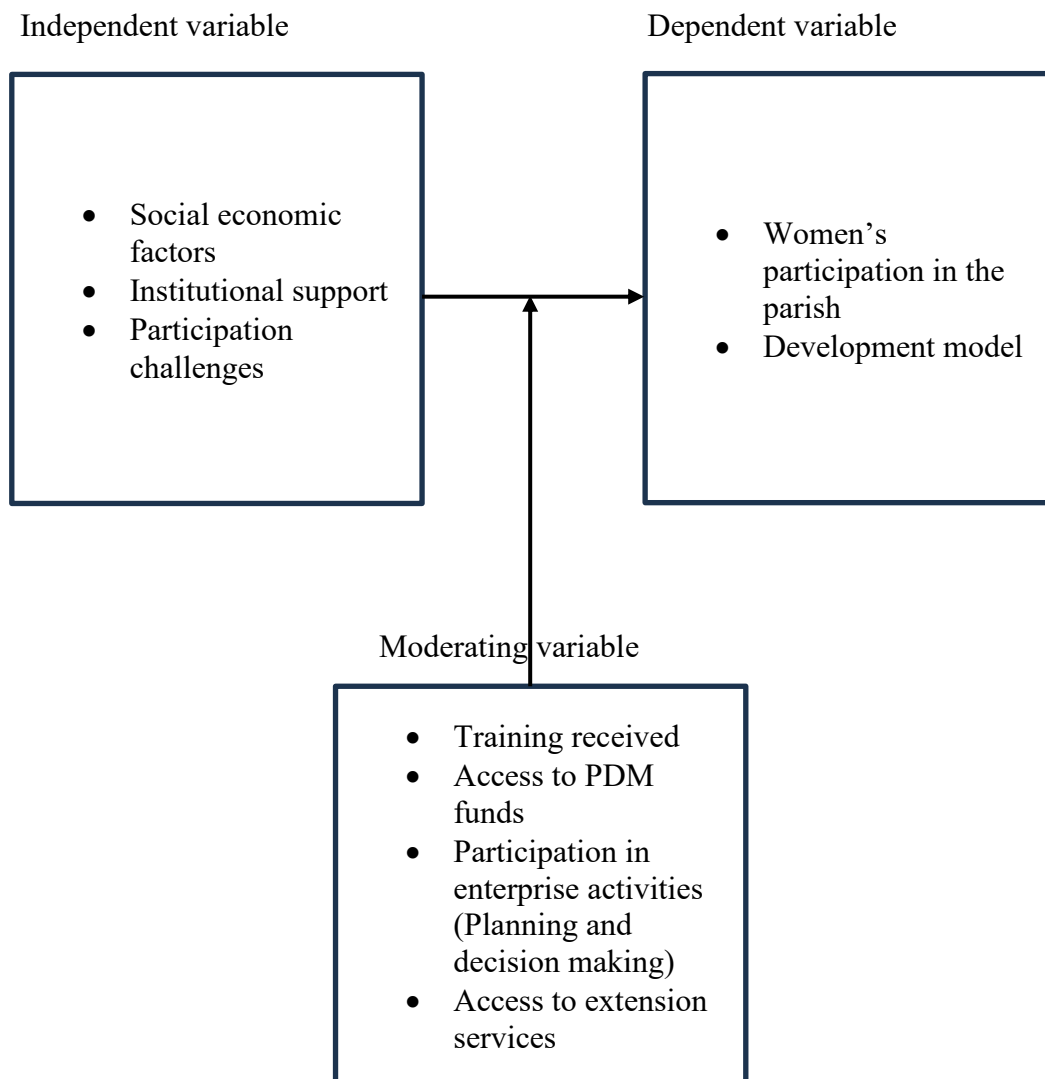
The moderating variables are training, actual access to PRF funds, informal savings group participation, and community organisations.

In this study, the dependent variable is women's real participation in the Parish Development Model where women's participation does not merely involve attendance or registration in the program but rather their active involvement and contribution towards its planning, decision making and financial aspects.

The theoretical framework adopted herein involves the use of two theories namely; Gender and Development (GAD) theory by Moser (1993) and Empowerment theory by Kabeer (1999). The first theory argues that participation of women in decision making process is vital for achieving sustainable development and hence the need for gender issues to be considered in any development programs because such programs are bound to fail otherwise. The second one on the other hand suggests that true participation entails both access to means and agency. In simple terms, it refers to individuals having the freedom to make independent decisions and having the capacity to exercise power safely without fear or doubt.

This framework posits that in situations where there are high socio-economic barriers, low institutional support, and unaddressed participation constraints, women's participation will be passive and mainly symbolic. On the contrary, in cases where there are moderating variables, women's participation becomes more substantive. The results in Chapters Four and Five are thus analyzed from this perspective.

Conceptual framework diagram.



Source: Adapted and modified from UN Women (2021) and World Bank (2022)

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter highlights and presents the theories, concepts, and empirical data in the literature that is pertinent to women's involvement in community development initiatives. This includes specifically the Parish Development Model, along with the barriers and opportunities for enhancing the involvement of women in rural Uganda. The literature review will be presented along four focal points: women's levels of participation in developmental projects, barriers inhibiting their participation, existing opportunities to enhance women's involvement in developmental projects, and effective strategies that can be used to encourage women's involvement in development programs. The chapter concludes with an identification of the specific research gap that necessitated this study.

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Gender and Development Theory

GAD Theory, first articulated by (Moser, 1993) and subsequently refined by other theorists, among them (Kabeer, 1994), (Razavi & Miller, 1995), and (Cornwall, 2003), provides the essential theoretical foundation for understanding women's involvement in development programs. This theory originated in the 1980s as an alternative to the "Women in Development" approach that tried to make sure that women were included in existing development schemes without challenging the latter. Furthermore, it differed from previous theories that tended to treat women as passive recipients of help rather than as active agents of change.

The fundamental assumption made by proponents of GAD is that gender relations that include social definitions of who the men and women are and how they are supposed to act play a crucial role in any development process. According to (Moser, 1993), one can distinguish between two types of gender-related issues: practical gender needs associated with the most basic aspects of life such as obtaining food, water, credit, or income, and strategic gender interests relating to people's status within society, including their access to decision-making processes, resource allocation, and absence of gender-based discrimination.

Applied to the Parish Development Model, GAD theory raises an important question: does the programme's design genuinely include women, or does it only appear to do so while leaving the structural conditions that marginalise women fully intact? The 30% PRF allocation addresses, in principle, a practical gender need access to capital. But GAD theory would predict that unless the programme also deals with the structural factors male-dominated governance, inadequate information reaching women, cultural norms that limit women's public roles, and literacy gaps this financial allocation will not translate into genuine empowerment.

(Cornwall, 2008) adds further depth to the participation discussion by distinguishing between invited spaces created by external authorities like government programmes that formally include community members and claimed or created spaces that marginalised groups generate for themselves. She argues that invited spaces often end up reproducing existing power hierarchies rather than challenging them, especially when the rules of engagement within those spaces are still controlled by those who created them. This is particularly pertinent to the situation in Kyabakadde Parish since the presence of women in community meetings and structures has failed to bring about the kind of impact that participation would have achieved.

The work of Razavi and (Razavi & Miller, 1995) brings to light a very relevant institutional issue, which is that bureaucracies involved in development tend to depoliticise the issue of gender by focusing on the mere inclusion of women in quantitative terms, rather than the political aspect of gender issues. This is particularly relevant to the case study of PDM, which aims to include 30% of women into the programme.

2.1.2 Empowerment Theory

The empowerment theory, proposed by (Kabeer, 1999), provides an alternate perspective that centers around the enabling environment required for women to have agency in socio-economic contexts. Kabeer identifies three closely related dimensions of empowerment: resources, which include access to human, social, and material assets; agency, which refers to the ability to make meaningful choices and act on them; and achievements, which are the outcomes that follow when resources and agency are used in pursuit of women's own goals. The relationship between these dimensions is not straightforward. Kabeer argues that access to resources does not automatically produce agency, and that agency without resources is

not sustainable. What matters is the quality of the conditions under which women access resources and make decisions whether they are doing so from a position of genuine choice or under pressure, and whether their choices can influence outcomes that actually matter to them. She uses the concept of 'power to' the capacity to define and pursue one's own goals and distinguishes it from 'power over' (domination) and 'power with' (collective capacity), arguing that real empowerment requires all three dimensions to work together.

Ibrahim and (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007) extend this framework using (Sen, 1999) capabilities approach, arguing that empowerment should be understood as the expansion of what women are actually able to do and be not merely as access to formal opportunities. Applied to the PDM, this means the programme's contribution to women's empowerment should be measured not only by the existence of the 30% allocation, but by whether women in practice develop the capabilities confidence, knowledge, social support, practical skills needed to use that allocation in a way that is meaningful to them.

Apriloux (2001) raises important critiques of microfinance and credit-based empowerment programmes that apply directly to the PDM. Reviewing evidence from multiple savings and credit schemes in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, she finds that access to credit does not automatically empower women. The success of such interventions hinges on design, governance structure, and the social and institutional factors that will allow women to transform access to finance into economic empowerment. Microfinance programs that offer finance via groups without creating the necessary capacity within these groups in terms of governance, financial education, and women's leadership skills have a poor record of empowering women.

(Longwe, 1995) has formulated a framework for Women's Empowerment that contributes to analysis by categorizing empowerment into five stages: welfare, access, conscientization, participation, and control. This framework will be useful in putting the PDM in context. The programme is geared towards empowering women at the welfare and access stages with the help of PRF distribution. However, the higher stages – where women gain awareness about gender disparity, engage in governance, and have control over resources – need much more than an allocation. As indicated in Chapter Four on the findings at Kyabakadde Parish, the PDM has not yet taken the women away from the welfare stage at this location.

2.2 Conceptual Review

Involvement of women in development programmes implies the inclusion of women in activities such as planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating of such projects in their capacity as decision-makers and participants not simply being present as beneficiaries of the programme (Cleaver, 1999; UN Women, 2020). The literature review clearly indicates that there is always a distinction made between mere attendance and being included in a group, and real influence over decisions, resource allocations, and the direction of development projects. Such a distinction is crucial for the analysis performed in this study.

Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation, originally developed in the context of urban planning in America, can be utilised as a good tool in analysing the depth of community participation in development programmes. The ladder ranges from manipulation and therapy as the lowest form of participation involving people who pretend to be involved when, in fact, they are not through such forms as tokenism (informed, consulted, and placated), to citizen power at the top of the ladder (power-sharing, delegated power, and citizen control). In applying Arnstein's ladder to women's participation in the PDM, one should bear in mind that their attendance or participation on committees may fall under informing and consulting.

(Cleaver, 1999) challenges the use of the term "participation" itself, as it may be used in development programmes and considers that "compulsory participation" meaning that people are supposed to attend meetings and participate in the process of development programmes' functioning can become another burden for those involved, especially women, because they have to struggle not only at their jobs but in household as well. It seems quite obvious that this approach is particularly relevant for the case of PDM when women's unwillingness to come to meetings is explained just by their lack of interest in participating, although it may be due to other reasons.

"(Cornwall, 2003)" takes this point one step further claiming that the term 'participation' has been monopolized by development agencies so far and has lost any possibility of bringing transformation into practice. Participation can be seen either as means of achieving certain

goals and thus it is called instrumental participation or as end participation for its own sake. The participation process in the programme described seems to be instrumental participation since participation of women in particular is aimed at meeting needs of PDM. Considering the PDM specifically, the role of women in the process is supposed to operate via community planning meetings, community-based financial coordination, and savings/enterprise groups. Thus, the analysis of women's participation has to be done on all of these levels, and the findings from this research show that different barriers and opportunities arise in each of them.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

2.3.1 Extent of Women's Participation in Development Programmes in Uganda and Sub-Saharan Africa

Worldwide, women provide between 60% and 80% of agricultural production in Sub-Saharan Africa and play the leading role in ensuring proper nutrition and well-being within households, but they do not adequately participate in the governance of rural development programs (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2011; World Bank, 2022). This is not merely a matter of justice. There is ample evidence from different settings that programs where women take part in governance have more success – they ensure more sustainable enterprises, better nutrition among children, and greater incomes (Duflo, 2012; UN Women, 2021).

In Uganda, the decentralisation policies introduced through the 1995 Constitution provided formal spaces for community participation in development processes by allocating one-third of the local council seats to women (Ahikire, 2014). However, even with increased formal participation of women in the government structure, several studies have shown that formal representation of women has not brought any significant power over resource distribution or programme design. According to (Ahikire, 2014), many of the women who have been formally represented in local council positions have been faced with feelings of isolation, lack of information, peers' disapproval of raising women's issues, among others.

The (Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRCs), 2023) nationwide assessment of the effectiveness of the PDM process in various Ugandan districts has shown that whereas many women registered in higher numbers in many parish areas, their participation in planning meetings, enterprise training, and fund governance processes is relatively low.

Indeed, women in the study were found to be more likely to define their participation in PDMs in terms of waiting to receive information, waiting to attend meetings, and waiting to access funds rather than active participation.

According to (Kinyondo & Pelizzo, 2018), community-driven development programs in Tanzania are consistently characterized by high female participation rates where activities are near homes, among groups where there exist pre-existing social networks, and where facilitation of women's participation occurs. The authors' findings concerning the hindrances to women's governance participation appear similar to those in the Ugandan context, indicating that what is occurring in Kyabakadde Parish is not unique, but is reflective of the region's more general scenario.

Findings from research conducted on women's participation in microfinance and savings initiatives in East Africa may also help with comparisons. In their study of women's participation in village savings and loans association in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, (Johnson et al., 2020) discover that membership in VSLAs boosts women's sense of financial empowerment and social capital but does not necessarily translate to empowerment in formal financial institutions or governance systems. The step up from being members of informal savings groups to becoming members of formal institutions needs extra facilitation, knowing, and assistance that most rural women lack.

2.3.2 Challenges Hindering Women's Participation

Several interconnected factors, which work together and reinforce each other, have been identified by researchers as hindrances to women's involvement in development programs. Individually, literacy problems and lack of financial education are common factors mentioned as the most important obstacles for women (Doss et al., 2018; World Bank, 2020). Illiterate women cannot easily cope with the paperwork involved in obtaining funds from any development program. For the case of PDM, having a group constitution and maintaining savings accounts are some factors that serve as hurdles for most women who would want to access money through the program.

The allocation of domestic work among the members of a family poses a structural challenge that inhibits women from participating in public affairs. According to (UN Women, 2020), the rural women in Uganda engage in unpaid domestic and caring duties ranging from four to six hours a day, besides engaging in subsistence farming. This "time

poverty" limits their participation in meetings and the time they allocate in understanding the process of applying. When the PDM meets in the morning of a weekday, it conflicts with the trading times for women.

At the community level, gender norms that provide public authority for men become informal constraints for women to participate in development initiatives. (Bandiera et al., 2020; Goetz & Gupta, 1996), in their pioneering work on women and microfinance in Bangladesh, show how development programs that are ostensibly targeting women become controlled by male family members in reality. A similar trend has been found in Uganda; (Kwesiga et al., 2019) argue that in some families, the husband discourages the wife from joining development organizations because it is an encroachment on his ability to control finances within the family.

It constitutes a more significant critique of development programs based on groups, which argues that the notion of 'conditional empowerment' in which access to funds is made conditional on being part of a group actually imposes greater constraints on women without tackling the underlying structural causes of their marginalization. It is relevant for the PDM, as women have to create enterprise groups, coordinate, register and record their activities while fulfilling other domestic and productive activities.

From the institutional point of view, lack of sensitization, administrative processes and effective communication between the implementers of the program and the participants constitute major barriers. Communication gaps have been noted by EPRCs as among the most consistent issues faced in implementing PDM throughout the country in 2023. Lack of proper and timely communication on how to implement the program, what are the requirements and what the women can get out of it makes it difficult for them to decide on whether or not to join the program.

According to the analysis done by the (World Bank, 2020) on community-driven development programs in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is yet another issue that needs to be taken into account when it comes to institutions. This is because the management of the program tends to replicate the existing power dynamics within the community instead of questioning them.

2.3.3 The Specific Problem of Fund Disbursement Gaps

Another area where women have been lacking in relation to access to PDM resources, but which this research is focusing upon, has attracted scant attention within academia. No research carried out by researchers in an academic setting has analyzed the issue of the shortage of the amounts that should reach the PRF beneficiaries in Uganda, yet relevant work exists in the public financial management of developing countries.

Reinikka & Svensson conducted pioneering research on fund leakage in the education sector in Uganda, in which they found out that on average, about 13% of education grants (excluding salaries) ever made it to the schools in the early years of the 2000s. Though improvements were subsequently introduced, one significant point came through; namely, that actual evidence from community beneficiaries is required.

Their approach asking recipients directly what they received is the approach I used in this study (Reinikka & Svensson, 2004).

Bardhan and Mookherjee analysed the conditions under which decentralised development programmes become susceptible to elite capture and resource diversion. They argue that low administrative capacity, weak accountability mechanisms, and high information gaps between central and local levels create conditions that are conducive to fund leakage. Many rural parish settings in Uganda share these characteristics (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006).

Ferraz and Finan, found out through Brazil's municipal development funds, find that transparency and accountability mechanisms particularly the publication of disbursement records and independent audit processes significantly reduce the gap between allocated and actually delivered resources (Ferraz & Finan, 2008). The absence of such mechanisms at the parish level in the PDM April be contributing to the disbursement gaps that respondents in this study reported.

While this study cannot make causal claims from qualitative data alone about why the observed gap exists, the theoretical and comparative literature clearly establishes that such gaps are not unusual in decentralised programmes with weak accountability structures, and that investigating them through direct community engagement is both methodologically appropriate and important for programme accountability.

2.3.4 Opportunities for Enhancing Women's Participation

Despite the many challenges documented in the literature, evidence from Uganda and comparable contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa identifies a number of conditions and structures that meaningfully improve women's participation in development programmes.

Village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) and other informal savings groups consistently emerge as important enablers. (Karlan & Zinman, 2008) provide experimental evidence that participation in rotating savings and credit associations improves women's financial confidence, their knowing of credit mechanisms, and their social capital – all of which make it easier to engage with formal financial structures. In Uganda, (Kwesiga et al., 2019) find that women with prior experience in savings groups were significantly more likely to engage actively with programme governance and to access credit programmes than those without such experience.

Financial literacy training is identified as a critical complement to financial access. (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014), in a major cross-national review of financial literacy interventions, find that programmes combining financial education with access to financial products produce substantially better outcomes than access alone. In the East African context, (Karlan et al., 2014) find that basic financial literacy training improves women's savings behaviour, reduces over-indebtedness, and increases the likelihood that they will seek formal financial products. For the PDM, this suggests that enterprise training and financial literacy support should be prioritised alongside – or even before – the provision of loans.

The role of peer mentorship and role modelling has also been documented in several studies. (Bandiera et al., 2020), in a large-scale evaluation of a women's economic empowerment programme in Uganda, find that seeing female peers successfully navigate economic opportunities significantly increases women's willingness to participate in similar opportunities. In Kyabakadde Parish, several respondents described a neighbour's successful experience with the PDM as the thing that finally motivated them to register which shows this dynamic at work.

Community-based organisations with existing trust and relationships in local communities emerge in the literature as important bridges between rural women and formal development programme structures (Desai & Joshi, 2014). In the specific context of Kyampisi Sub-

County, organisations such as Kyampisi ChildCare Ministries, which has existing relationships with community groups and a track record of supporting livelihoods, are well positioned to play this bridging role.

2.3.5 Strategies for Improving Women's Participation

The literature on improving women's participation in development programmes points to several consistent strategies. First, gender-responsive programme design building women's participation concerns into the programme from the very beginning rather than adding them on afterwards consistently produces better outcomes than trying to fix gender problems after the fact (Moser, 1993; UN Women, 2021). This requires implementing organisations to understand the specific time, literacy, mobility, and social constraints facing women before setting administrative requirements and meeting schedules.

Secondly, sensitization which actually involves women who are not part of community networks using interpersonal contact, credible intermediaries, and appropriate formats has been seen to be an indispensable starting point (Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRCs), 2023; World Bank, 2020). There is clear evidence that use of formal public communication systems has invariably failed to reach out to marginalized women.

Third, leadership capacity building for women within programme governance structures produces documented improvements in the quality of women's participation. Rao and Kelleher (2005), in a comparative analysis of gender mainstreaming in development organisations, find that women's effective participation in governance requires not just formal representation but also mentorship, institutional support, and a critical mass of women in leadership positions sufficient to shift group dynamics.

Fourth, accountability mechanisms that track and publicly report on gender participation indicators including women's share of fund disbursements, their representation in governance decisions, and the quality of their engagement in planning processes create incentives for more inclusive implementation at the ground level (UN Women, 2021; World Bank, 2022).

2.4 Research Gap

The literature reviewed in this chapter establishes a solid global and regional evidence base on women's participation challenges in community-driven development programmes. However, there are several specific gaps that justify this study.

First, the PDM is a relatively new programme, having been launched in 2021, and peer-reviewed empirical research specifically examining women's participation experiences within its framework at the parish level is limited. The most authoritative existing assessment – the (Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRCs), 2023) rapid evaluation provides valuable national evidence but does not break down findings at the parish level or capture the qualitative dimensions of women's lived experience in specific communities.

Second, no published study has directly examined the gap between the PRF's stated 30% allocation to women and the amounts that beneficiaries actually receive, particularly at the individual group level. The findings from Kyabakadde Parish presented in this study address this gap directly, with the knowing that it is a qualitative, single-parish study with the corresponding limitations.

Third, the existing literature on Ugandan rural women's development participation does not specifically address the dynamics of how PDM implementation structures at the parish level influence women's participation – particularly how male-dominated local governance can work against the programme's gender equity goals even when formal provisions for inclusion are in place.

This study contributes to the literature by generating locally grounded, qualitative evidence on these aspects of women's participation in the PDM, drawing on direct fieldwork with women beneficiaries and community stakeholders in Kyabakadde Parish.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed theoretical and empirical literature on women's participation in development programmes, with particular attention to the PDM and similar community-driven initiatives in Uganda and Sub-Saharan Africa. GAD theory and Empowerment Theory provided the theoretical foundation, establishing that meaningful participation requires not only structural inclusion but also the social, institutional, and psychological conditions that enable women to exercise real agency. The conceptual review drew the

critical distinction between shallow and deep participation and explored how formal inclusion frequently fails to produce substantive influence. The empirical review mapped out the multi-dimensional nature of participation barriers, the evidence on enabling structures, and the strategies that have been shown to work. The research gaps identified in this chapter justify the present parish-level study and its focus on the real experience of women rather than the formal provisions of the programme.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological framework that guided my investigation of women's actual participation in the Parish Development Model in Kyabakadde Parish, Mukono District. This includes aspects such as research design, area of research, source of data, population, sample size, variables involved in the study, their definitions and measurement, methods for data collection, data collection tools, quality control measures, data analysis, ethics, and methodological limitations. The research methodology I chose was closely linked with the aim of the study, that is, gathering evidence from the field regarding how women in Kyabakadde Parish perceive the PDM.

3.1 Research Design

The study used the descriptive cross-sectional research design approach with the use of qualitative methodology. Descriptive design was considered the right one since it helped in the description of the existing state of affairs concerning women participation in the PDM in terms of their awareness, participation in meetings, access to money, and the barriers as well as enabling factors experienced at that moment in time (Creswell, 2014).

Qualitative methodological approach was selected due to the fact that the main interest of the research concerned not in the quantitative measurement of participation rates but rather in the women experiences, perceptions and context influencing the processes of their involvement in the PDM activities. Qualitative research design provides access to understanding meaning, complexities, and contradictions that can hardly be discovered through quantitatively oriented approaches (Bryman, 2016). Particularly, I needed to know the reasons for non-provision of women registered in PDM with money and their feelings about such situation.

3.2 Area of Study

Kyabakadde Parish is situated in Kyampisi Sub-County, Mukono County, Mukono District in the Central Region of Uganda. Kyabakadde parish is primarily a rural area where people earn their living from subsistence farming, petty business, and informal economic activities. Crops such as matooke, cassava, beans, groundnuts, and maize are grown by the farmers. Additionally, some families keep poultry and pork for their survival.

The terrain is typical of rural central Uganda where murrum roads link the villages. Villages can also be accessed via narrow footpaths. Most homesteads are small in size with kitchen gardens. The trading center is a small group of shops, offices, and many food kiosks. Some of the women I met were doing business at the roadside, others at their kitchen gardens, and yet others at their respective houses.

Administratively, the parish is administered under the local council system where the LC I Chairperson together with other community leaders coordinate the PDM activities. There are various women savings and loan groups that work in the parish and surrounding areas where they provide a platform for some women to mobilize funds and use them in implementing their PDM activities (Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), 2022).

There are several factors that informed the choice of the parish for this study. Firstly, it is an exemplary parish where the application of PDM is underway. Secondly, it falls within the coverage area of Kyampisi Child Care Ministries, which assisted me in accessing community linkages during data collection. Finally, it was chosen because there had been no community assessments made about the involvement of women in the PDM framework.

3.3 Sources of Information

The primary data were collected directly from women beneficiaries of the PDM, leaders from the local councils, and the Community Development Officer. This is because the above respondents are either beneficiaries or stakeholders in the implementation of the program in the parish; thus, they were well-placed to give first-hand information about the extent of their participation, the availability of funds, any communication barriers, and the difficulties that the women faced.

The secondary data were collected from the PDM operational manual, various government policies, publications from UBOS, peer-reviewed journals, research reports from EPRC, and reports from World Bank and UN Women.

3.4 Population and Sampling Techniques

3.4.1 Target Population

Women beneficiaries of PDM, local council chairpersons, and the Community Development Officer in charge of Kyampisi Sub-County were among the target populations. They were chosen due to their different viewpoints on women's mobilization

in the PDM program, which could lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the reasons behind women's low participation rates.

3.4.2 Accessible Population

This sample included all women beneficiaries of PDM who were registered and available for participation during the period of collecting information from March to early April 2026. Accessibility was defined as presence in the parish during the field visit, willingness to be part of the study and living within the geographical range of the study.

3.4.3 Sample Size

The participants in the study were purposefully selected, and their number was seventeen, comprising fourteen women beneficiaries, two community council leaders, and one community development officer. The number of respondents chosen was sufficient for conducting a qualitative research investigation, giving ample opportunity for interaction with the participants without neglecting data collection for pattern recognition (Creswell, 2014). Out of the fourteen women beneficiaries, the sample purposely contained beneficiaries who had been assisted by PDM funds, beneficiaries who had registered but not yet accessed any help, and those who had not yet registered.

3.4.4 Sampling Techniques

A simple random sample was taken for the selection of women beneficiaries within the community to ensure that all eligible women had an equal probability of being included in the study. Purposive sampling was employed for the selection of local council leaders and the CDO because of their special functions in the implementation of PDM. The choice of these two sampling methods was consistent with the framework guiding the research study.

3.5 Variables Definition and Measurement

Independent variables: socio-economic considerations, institutional consideration, and participation barriers were determined using qualitative measures obtained from the interviews. Socio-economic considerations were determined based on the education level of the respondents, source of income and production materials. Institutional considerations were based on the quality of sensitization, funding, and training. Participation barriers were based on the barriers reported by the participants while participating in the program.

Dependent variable: the real participation of women in the PDM was determined using the following measures: regularity and quality of meeting attendance (presence vs active

participation); obtaining of PRF funding and its magnitude as well as the duration of time taken to obtain the same; planning for enterprise projects; and confidence levels within the program structure.

3.6 Procedure for Data Collection

Prior to commencing the fieldwork, I got an introductory letter from the Research and Fieldwork Coordinator of Uganda Christian University and permission from all concerned local government officials of the Mukono District, including the Sub-County Chief and the Chairperson of Kyabakadde Parish.

In the process of collecting data, I made several trips to Kyabakadde Parish, from March to early April 2026. At times, I would go to the village early in the morning, before the women started going to their farms or the market; at other times, I visited the respondents individually when they were in their houses in the evening. The challenge in locating women at home at productive hours was indeed an informative piece of information in itself: the women of Kyabakadde Parish were perpetually engaged in activities associated with survival: farming, selling, cooking, and taking care of their children; and conducting interviews with them required much patience and an understanding of their day-to-day routine. Interviews took place in places convenient to the respondents in their houses, in their business premises, at community meeting centers, and even once on the roadside.

Prior to each interview, the aim of the research project and the voluntary nature of participation were conveyed along with assurances regarding the confidentiality of any data provided. This verbal informed consent, supplemented with written informed consent for literate respondents, was followed by an interview either in Luganda or English depending upon the preference of the individual.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

The major research tool used was an interview guide that comprised open-ended questions, probing questions, and prompts that would help address the goals of the research. These included the extent to which the respondent knew about the PDM program, their involvement in meetings and planning, involvement in decision-making, access to PDM resources, the amount accessed, waiting period, difficulties faced, and existing opportunities for success.

The document review checklist served as an outline for reviewing the secondary sources systematically. Focus group discussions involving small numbers of respondents three to five women per discussion helped complement data collected from individual interviews. Key informants, such as the local council leadership and the CDO, were interviewed using a different guide. Appendix II includes the entire interview guide.

3.8 Quality Control Measures

The interview guide was examined by my research advisor, Dr. Peter Nareeba, to establish its conceptual validity and ensure consistency with the research aims. A pilot test was carried out in a village adjacent to Kyampisi Sub-county prior to data collection, and the interview guide was modified accordingly. Triangulation of data sources combining individual interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and document review was used to cross-validate findings. Member checking was employed informally, where I summarised emerging themes with selected respondents during follow-up visits to confirm the accuracy of my interpretation (Creswell, 2014).

3.9 Data Processing and Analysis

Transcripts and field notes were organised and reviewed after each field session. Thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring patterns, themes, and significant variations across respondents' accounts. I read through all transcribed responses multiple times, coding data according to recurring ideas, and grouping related codes into broader themes corresponding to the study's objectives. Themes were then interpreted in relation to the conceptual framework and the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Direct quotations from respondents were selected to illustrate key themes and to provide authentic, field-based evidence.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

This investigation followed accepted ethics protocols in conducting research within the social sciences. Consent forms were secured from all participants prior to interviewing them. Participants were made aware that participation was on a purely voluntary basis and that they could leave the interview process at any point in time without penalty, nor would any negative repercussions result should they choose to do so. The anonymity of the participant was guaranteed, and no names or other personal identifiers appear within this dissertation. All data were maintained in a secure manner by myself. Interviews took place

in a confidential environment selected by the respondent to ensure honesty and openness during the process.

3.11 Methodological Constraints

There were a number of practical issues that arose within the context of this study. The time limit, of only five weeks, constrained the ability to perform an in-depth follow-up analysis for each of the respondents interviewed. The problem of reaching the female interviewees during working hours was one such issue. Additionally, some interviewees had reservations about talking about finances; this problem was overcome with the help of building trust and providing reassurance of privacy.

The study took place in just one parish. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to other parishes or districts; however, they do offer an interesting point of comparison. This is because the research design involved qualitative methods, which do not aim at statistical generalization but, rather, focus on analytic transferability, i.e., the applicability of the dynamics, patterns, and mechanisms uncovered here to other women's PDM participation struggles.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methodological choices that guided the study, from the qualitative descriptive design to the sampling approach, data collection instruments, ethical safeguards, and analytical strategy. The methodology was designed to centre women's lived experiences of the PDM rather than institutional accounts of its implementation, and to generate evidence grounded in the realities of fieldwork in a rural Ugandan parish. The following chapter presents the findings from that fieldwork.

CHAPTER FOUR:

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses findings from fieldwork I conducted in Kyabakadde Parish between March and early April 2026. The data were gathered through individual in-depth interviews with fourteen women PDM beneficiaries, two focus group discussions, and key informant interviews with two local council leaders and the Community Development Officer serving the area.

Finding women to interview was not a straightforward process. Most were deep in their gardens before eight in the morning, bent over matooke plants or turning soil for cassava. Others had already set off for the roadside market, balancing baskets of produce on their heads. One of the focus group discussions was held at a tiny restaurant three plastic chairs and a charcoal stove where four women agreed to talk to me during a brief late-morning lull before the lunch crowd arrived. The physical reality of women's daily lives in Kyabakadde Parish was not incidental to the research; it was the research. Every hour spent locating respondents, rescheduling interrupted interviews, and waiting outside a kiosk while a woman finished with a customer was an hour spent knowing why PDM meetings, sensitisation programmes, and fund-access processes were so difficult for these women to accommodate.

The chapter is organised around the study's research objectives and covers seven thematic areas: background characteristics of respondents; women's knowing of the PDM; women's participation in planning activities; women's involvement in decision-making; access to PDM financial resources; challenges hindering women's participation; and opportunities that support women's engagement.

4.1 Background Characteristics of Respondents

Among the fourteen women interviewed as beneficiaries, ages ranged from 22 to 61 years. The majority were mothers with between two and six children. Their main occupations included subsistence farming (seven respondents), petty trade at the local market (three), small restaurant or kiosk operation (two), and a combination of farming and trade (two). Two of the fourteen had completed secondary education; the majority had attended primary school, and three had no formal education at all. None was formally employed.

Regarding their registration status with the PDM, seven of the fourteen had registered their enterprise groups with the programme. Of these seven, only three had actually received a PDM disbursement by the time of my fieldwork. However, the other four were waiting between five months and more than one year without getting anything. In addition, seven out of the fourteen women had never registered because they lacked information on how to go about the registration process.

The spread of the responses across both registration and funds categories was done intentionally. I thought it was important for me to get responses that would range from a complete lack of awareness about the program to responses from people who had registered but were not able to receive their funds.

4.2 Women's Knowing of the PDM

Another objective of the study was to determine the degree of awareness of women in Kyabakadde Parish of the Parish Development Model (PDM). From the findings obtained during interviews, it became clear that the pattern was partial, fragmented, and sometimes completely non-existent.

Women who have even some degree of understanding of the programme are only able to describe its surface characteristics, namely government finances provided to people through groups. An example is a woman who is engaged in the operation of a kiosk located near the trade center of the parish. She gave an extremely straightforward definition of the programme:

"The PDM is the government finances that are available for helping people start doing something. To get the funds you need to be a member of a group of women associated with the local leaders. And that is all that I know about the programme."

This example shows another pattern that can be traced during the analysis of almost all interviews: the knowledge of the existence of money and the need to work within a group. However, there was hardly any information on the planning process of PDM, its aim and objectives, and how to participate in the programme.

In villages located a couple of kilometres away from the trading centre, awareness became even lower. One such woman was a 47-year-old lady growing groundnuts and cassava crops on a small plot adjacent to her homestead. She had never seen any meeting notices of the

PDM and had not been provided with information by any of the community members or leaders:

"I have heard about PDM before but I cannot understand what PDM is all about or what it does because no one has ever told me enough about it. maybe it is for people closer to the trading centre."

The last comment "maybe it is for people closer to the trading centre" seemed to make sense after all. Distribution of the information throughout the parish tended to depend on one's proximity to the trading centre: the closer the distance to the trading centre, the greater the amount of information available.

The following account of difficulties in obtaining information was made by participants in a focus group discussion consisting of five women in a village located some distance away from the trading center:

"We receive information when there are announcements at the LC meetings; however, the speakers talk too fast, using jargon that not everyone understands. PDM, enterprise they keep saying such words but they do not elaborate on what they mean. We can't ask them questions as we would feel shy."

In the same discussion, another woman explained, "In order to learn more about such topics, you must visit the program office; however, most of us don't know the right office nor its location." The location of this office was not known to some of the respondents who live more than two kilometers away from the trading center.

However, the LC II chairperson, in the KII, admitted that sensitisation had not been consistent: "Yes, we've had meetings, but not everywhere. We rely on the message getting passed through village LC chairpersons, and some of them are better than others at passing on the message." The CDO also admitted that there had been no outreach activities aimed at reaching women specifically no door-to-door sensitisation, no sessions targeting only women and the main strategy of outreach had been to reach women via individuals who belonged to community groups.

This has a critical implication for the PDM process: it means that the very women who needed the PDM process more women who did not belong to community groups, those who came from peripheral villages, women who lacked literacy skills were precisely the ones who had not been reached consistently with information. The information flow system

was reproducing, instead of changing, the processes of social exclusion and inclusion. This conforms to the (Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRCs), 2023) and (UN Women, 2021) national findings on communication practices.

4.3 Women's Participation in Planning Activities

Second, it was found out how women were involved in the process of planning PDM-related events. It turned out that even though women did attend planning meetings organized by program leaders at the local level, they never really engaged in planning.

In particular, several women provided almost identical descriptions of their participation in meetings. A 39-year-old woman selling second-hand clothes at the weekly market who had visited two community PDM meetings during the last year stated:

"We participate in the meetings indeed. We come, we seat, and we listen. After all, at the end of the day, we are told what has been decided already. The decision-making takes place prior to the meeting among the leaders. We just come to listen to it and not to make any decisions ourselves."

Another woman with three children who produced matooke and beans and sometimes worked for money on her neighbor's farm described one of her visits to a meeting, which took place three months ago:

"Sure, I went through the whole meeting. Probably two hours. However, I did not speak at all, nor did anyone else ask me. There were some men who spoke quite a bit, and I could hardly understand what they said. Towards the end, there was a remark regarding the groups that would be eligible for the fund, although I have no idea as to how the decision was reached."

In the course of my field work, I attended a community meeting in the parish centre and witnessed firsthand the process the respondents have talked about. The meeting was chaired by the LC I Chairperson. There were about twenty-two people at the meeting; half of them being women. While the women remained seated mostly in rows at the back and sides of the meeting participants, the speaking men occupied the front part of the room. Out of the total of seven speakers, six were men. One lady managed to make her point only briefly.

When asked if women feel comfortable raising points during the discussions, some answered from both the positive and negative perspectives:

"If you have an opinion, then you can speak. However, most of us don't even bother because our opinions are never going to matter anyway. You say something, they acknowledge you nicely, but everything remains the same. They had already made up their mind."

The third woman added a more sociological perspective as follows:

"It's not that women lack intelligence; they think these thoughts in their houses. But once in the discussion room where everyone is watching, particularly the older men it's just not the same. You feel insignificant."

One leader of the local council recognized the challenge from within the governance structure: "I do try to talk about women's issues in meetings. However, if there is any idea that we do not like, I find it difficult to press on with it. I will tend to moderate my own ideas." This description reflects the concept discussed in literature about the phenomenon of isolation within governance structures the feeling of being the only voice advocating for one's community (Ahikire, 2014).

The Moser (1993) differentiation between participatory presence and participatory engagement is confirmed in these observations. In the case of Kyabakadde Parish, women were not absent from discussions concerning the creation of PDM plans. Instead, they were simply silent participants, not engaging in discussion despite their physical presence. The lack of engagement was a result of factors beyond individuals' control: the way meetings were held, gender stereotypes associated with public speaking, and facilitators' unwillingness to create an atmosphere where women could express their opinions.

4.4 Women's Involvement in Decision-Making

However, besides studying women's participation in planning, the research considered whether there were any differences between women's participation in decision-making in the community structures of PDM. The conclusions were very similar to those for planning participation – formality was not followed by substance.

LC II chairperson explained, in his interview for the key informants, what kind of participation was exhibited by women in terms of making decisions at the community level: "Women participate. We encourage them to make suggestions. However, to be honest, it happens that they do not actively participate in decision-making, even though we want them to do so. They are more passive. They listen, nod sometimes, but it does not happen often that they say something. But decisions are made by men."

From the perspective of the women, the situation looked somewhat differently but led to the same result. Many of the participants explained the following problem:

"However, if you happen to disagree with what he says in the meetings, everyone stares at you like you are trying to make trouble even though you may very well be right. You've created yourself an enemy already. Consequently, you wait until after the meeting before discussing with other women. However, nothing changes as a result of that."

One of the women who were involved in governance in the community structure provided her account of one specific occurrence which demonstrates how the process of decision-making worked in practice. "There was a point where I proposed that we give funding priority to two particular women's groups because they had been waiting the longest. They had been noted. However, at the end of the day, another group got the money a particular group which had connections. I brought it up again later on but it wasn't pursued."

According to the CDO, whenever there was any decision-making process concerning the funds, the opinions of the women were the last to be considered, and the dynamics ensured that the issues that had already been settled on an informal basis among other more vociferous people determined the outcome, even before the women spoke their minds.

These observations corroborate the (Longwe, 1995) empowerment model where the participation of the women in the Kyabakadde Parish can only be said to be at the welfare and access stages; while the two higher stages of governance and control have eluded the majority. The observations also echo the (World Bank, 2020) study that finds that participation mechanisms within community-driven development programmes tend to reinforce existing hierarchies.

4.5 Access to PDM Financial Resources

It is access to funding from the PDM that has proven to yield the most passionate reactions during the interviews, reflecting the most vivid discrepancy between what was promised and what women were actually able to enjoy.

Access to the funds was distributed in the following way amongst the fourteen interviewees: three got disbursed money; four registered yet didn't get their share of money as they were still waiting for an opportunity; seven did not register because of a lack of information on

how to do that. Amongst the three who have obtained their money, none of them received the total amount of UGX 1,000,000 that was stated as the provision of the programme. They all received from UGX 700,000 to UGX 800,000.

One of those interviewed, a 41-year-old woman engaged in a maize and bean farm and having registered herself among the first ones in the beginning of 2023, waited for twenty-two months without getting anything:

"We did everything. We got organized, we wrote our constitution, we made trips to the programme offices many times, we submitted our documents. This happened when many other groups did not even know about the existence of PDM. We are still waiting. Every time we make trips there, they tell us that it will happen soon, but it never does. And now, some of our group members have lost hope and are not even coming anymore."

The story above clearly illustrates a pattern that kept recurring throughout my work: uncertainty about the process, lack of end dates for the waiting, as well as the absence of any response from programme representatives had caused the erosion of trust between the group members themselves. The social implications of disappointment had manifested in the form of individuals withdrawing their commitment to the process altogether which meant that the programme suffered real losses, as proven by the data collected within the parish.

A woman who received the money shared her experience like this:

"Of course, we received the money, but we expected to receive one million shillings. They gave us only seven hundred and fifty thousand shillings. We asked why, and they told us about deductions. What deductions? There wasn't any explanation at all. Yes, we appreciated the amount, but we felt some sort of cheating. As though somebody has taken something before us."

Another recipient of the disbursement mentioned the same sum of money UGX 700,000 and the same feeling of being deceived: "We were supposed to receive one million. In fact, we received seven hundred thousand. The one dealing with the money says it is administration. But we were told we would receive one million." The repetition of this finding among several independent interviewees, whose

amounts of disbursement fell into the range from UGX 700,000 to UGX 800,000, while they all received only one million, is noteworthy.

However, when I discussed this point with the CDO, he was quite cautious in his response: "I can't comment on specific amounts because I don't manage these resources myself. There are often processing fees and other obligations that result in less money than one expects. Whether this is communicated to the beneficiary or not, I am unable to comment." The CDO's reluctance to determine whether the deductions were valid and whether they were informed adequately of their existence suggested that there was no accountability system for allocating these funds.

On the part of women who were yet to register, some felt that the opportunity had passed because they were unaware of it, and they were unsure whether they would be successful if they tried now:

"I didn't even know that you needed to make a group and register until later when other people had already formed groups. I didn't know about the deadline either. I now realize that even if we get together, the money is not going to come to us anyway, so why bother?"

The existence of informal saving practices in the parish's landscape emerged as an important enabling factor. The Tukwatirewamu Women's Group, which consisted of about 18 women from Kyabakadde and Nabaale villages who met on a monthly basis to save and lend out small amounts of money, had collectively saved about 1.8 million Uganda shillings within eight months. Several members of this group subsequently joined the PDM project as a group, finding it easier to register in the project because of their experience in saving and accounting for their transactions compared to other women who were not involved in informal savings practices.

This study's results reflect the findings of the (Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRCs), 2023) national evaluation where administrative inefficiency and poor communication are mentioned as the major obstacles in implementing PDM. Moreover, the results can be associated with the (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006) resource leakage problem identified in decentralised programmes. Indeed, the authors reveal that poorly developed accountability system creates favourable conditions for resource diversion. The problem with disbursement identified by the study participants deserves special attention as it poses both

practical and reputational risks. Without clarifying the reason behind this phenomenon, PDM will fail to prove its credibility.

4.6 Challenges Hindering Women's Participation

The challenges faced by women to engage actively in the program were interlinked and reinforcing each other in nature, thereby creating a barrier for women's participation in the PDM program along all dimensions considered. In addition, the impact of these challenges occurred concurrently at four levels - individual, household, community, and institutional level – leading to an environment where a woman confronted with just two or three out of these challenges would find participation very difficult indeed.

Limited information was the most widespread challenge. As seen in section 4.2, the information campaign adopted for disseminating messages regarding the program within the parish was largely through mechanisms which were not accessible to many women. Consequently, whereas women eligible for the program remained trapped right at the beginning stage information other women received (reduced) payments. One woman during one of the focus group discussions expressed spatially:

"If you live deep in, the information will never reach you. It is heard after. Once you know that there was a meeting, it has been done already. Once you know that you should have registered, it's over. The list is full."

The second important barrier mentioned by the interviewees was the domestic burden that women bear in their homes. A 33-year-old vegetable vendor in the Trading Centre made the following comments:

"The meetings in this area normally take place in the mornings, Wednesday morning, Thursday morning. It happens exactly on the time when I sell my stuff. If I do not sell at the market, I do not earn anything on that day. I have to feed my kids. Which one is more important for me - the meeting or food?"

A 44-year-old woman, living alone with her five children since her husband moved to Kampala, provided the following example:

"I get up at five o'clock. I prepare breakfast for them, send the little ones to school, go to my garden, then return home to make lunch. Perhaps at seven o'clock in the evening, I find time to relax. In the morning? No way. Not every day. Not without assistance."

The meeting schedule of PDMs, which was presumably made to make things easier administratively, had not taken into account the timings of the day-to-day life of women. Low literacy levels and lack of financial understanding were cited by both women and the officials I met with as constraints to participation. Women expressed being confronted with paperwork and terminology that they did not understand due to the assumption of minimum financial understanding on the part of the people filling out the paperwork.

"They give you a paper and tell you to fill it. And you look at it and you do not understand some of the words used. You are too ashamed to admit it. So, you take the paper back home, but your family members do not know about these things either."

The fourth major barrier was cultural and gender norms. Several interviewees reported cases where husbands and/or male members of the family actively discouraged involvement in PDMs:

"My husband said why do you want to go and join that group with women and discuss money matters with them? He does not appreciate it. He thinks that the money must remain within the house under his control. I tried explaining him about PDM but he did not show any interest in listening to me."

The second kind of discouragement was a milder variant of the same problem, and occurred during interactions at public places:

"I used to moderate my behavior at meetings and discussions as I knew that my assertiveness would invite adverse reactions from others."

In addition to being a barrier of a physical nature, the problem with late and unpredictable payment of funds mentioned in section 4.5 was an actual fifth issue that affected women participants. For women who have expended their efforts in vain on registration, it was hard to persist in their activities, recommend this practice to others, or act as role models, which is described by the research as a major influence (Bandiera et al., 2020). Trust loss is a tangible effect of such failures, and it only increases the impact of any other barrier since people can see no benefit in overcoming difficulties.

Moreover, there existed physical obstacles, which the programme did not take into account. Some of the women lived far enough from the programme facilities, so their trips took half of their day, especially in the rainy season due to bad roads. Women lacking transportation

on motorcycles could be considered facing geographical barriers in their administrative activities in accordance with the programme.

4.7 Opportunities Supporting Women's Participation

Despite the weight of the challenges documented above, the study identified a number of enabling factors and existing structures that created genuine opportunities for improving women's participation in the PDM – some of which were already producing visible results and could, with appropriate support, be significantly expanded.

Community savings groups were the most consistently cited enabling structure. Women who belonged to savings groups – whether village savings and loan associations, church-based savings circles, or informal 'merry-go-round' groups – consistently reported higher levels of confidence, better knowledge of financial processes, and more success in navigating the PDM registration process than those who had no such experience:

"In our savings group, we keep records, we manage money, we loan to each other. So when the programme asked for a group constitution and savings records, I already knew what that meant. The others in my group were confused, but I could help them. Without that experience I would also have been confused."

The Tukwatirewamu Women's Group, mentioned in section 4.5, gave the best example of how the informal savings practice could be translated to formal participation in the PDMs. With their eight months' worth of documented savings and their savings of 1.8 million shillings, this women's group perfectly met the requirements for establishing the PDMs. This group had already registered and submitted all their documents to the PDMs, and at the time of conducting the study, it was one of the groups waiting for their disbursements – an indication that while a good savings base is important, there should also be some changes in the disbursement process.

Another facilitating factor was the presence of the Kyampisi ChildCare Ministries in the sub-county. The women who had received livelihood training from the organization had nothing but praises for the training programs:

"The three sessions at Kyampisi Child Care included lessons on savings, record keeping, and thinking like a business person. After that, I realized that there was something in my mind that wasn't there before".

Role models of women who had already passed through the PDM experience, even partly, were also identified as an important factor. Many interviewees mentioned witnessing their neighbours or fellow members receiving PDM money and starting their income-generating activity as what encouraged them to apply:

"After I saw my neighbour receiving the money and buying pigs, I followed suit. If she can do it, why not me? "

While the programme itself, despite the frustration with its implementation, remained a genuine enabler of women's participation. The community positive attitude towards the goals of the programme – the understanding that if everything works out according to the plans, PDM could change their life for better – was considered social capital which hadn't been fully consumed yet. In other words, women were not disillusioned with PDM as an idea; they only were frustrated with the way it was implemented. That's very important for programme authorities: the base for improvement remains there, but an appropriate reaction to previous errors is needed.

Thirdly, the financial structure of the programme – the PRF structure and channels for community coordination – constitutes an institutional infrastructure, which, with some changes in terms of accountability and communication, may prove to be an even more efficient platform for women's financial inclusion. This infrastructure has substance; there is membership in several parishes and a functional relationship with the communities. This is not a trivial thing. This is the base for better performance.

4.8 Chapter Summary

The fieldwork conducted in Kyabakadde parish from March until early April 2026 yielded a set of data that highlighted a persistent discrepancy between what the programme stands for in terms of gender equality and how women perceive and participate in PDM activities. First, many participants reported having never accessed the PDM grant. Second, many respondents claimed to be unaware of sufficient information about the programme to meet its criteria. Third, those who participated in meetings kept quiet most of the time. Fourth, those who managed to get money were paid a smaller amount than expected. However, in doing so, I gained an appreciation of their resilience despite the challenges.

The enabling structures outlined above – including savings groups, community organising training, role models, and PDM’s financial mechanisms – indicate possible directions of change. However, before making a step towards improvement, it is important to identify precisely what aspects of the programme should be changed and why. This will be addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The interpretations of the results that have been provided in Chapter Four will be done by examining the findings within the context of the study's conceptual framework, theoretical underpinning, and literature that has been reviewed in Chapter Two. The findings that have been generated as a result of fieldwork conducted in Kyabakadde Parish will be used to answer the research questions and objectives posed by the study.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

5.1.1 Women's Knowing of the PDM: Information as the First Barrier

In the findings, the level of awareness of the PDM in Kyabakadde Parish was generally low, fragmented, and inconsistently distributed within the parish. Most of the women I spoke to had learned what little they knew from informal interactions with their peers and neighbors as opposed to organized sensitization programmes. They seemed to know about the financial side only the concept of money coming from the government to the group without any information regarding planning, enterprise development, or applications.

This supports the findings in the (Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRCs), 2023) national survey, where the lack of awareness is noted as one of the major obstacles to participation in the programme. This finding also relates to (Cleaver, 1999)'s argument against programme participation models that assume that participants have all the necessary information for engagement, while not providing enough resources for the dissemination of such information. In the case of Kyabakadde Parish, this assumption was evident: while there was an organizational structure for the programme, there was no information flow linking this structure to women in the parish.

The spatial distribution of information access women nearer the trade center have greater access to information, while women from peripheral villages have none at all is a special form of information disparity that does not get addressed when designing a program. This calls for targeted information campaigns and not a one-size-fits-all communication strategy. This is in line with the World Bank (2020) recommendation that there should be community-level outreach agents who can communicate with women in their own spaces.

The theoretical framework's assertion that information access forms the basis of the success of participation outcomes is well corroborated by these results. There would be no way for the women to register without information. Registration is the first step to accessing funds. Funds would not reach anyone if there was no way of registering. In turn, there would be no benefits from the project and no role models to motivate other women.

5.1.2 Passive Planning Participation: The Distinction That Matters

This study proved that the involvement of women in the planning process of PDM within the parish was one of mere presence and not participation. Women were present in meetings but did not play any substantial role in determining what issues needed to be addressed. This supports the distinction made within GAD theory (Moser, 1993) and participatory development literature (Arnstein, 1969; Cornwall, 2008).

Two distinct reasons for the restriction of substantive participation were noted from the responses. These were, firstly, an institutional one, where there was no form of facilitating the meeting process in such a way that provided women a space for making their voices heard other than formal speeches from the leadership without room for further deliberation. Secondly, it was a social reason, wherein the socially constructed norms regarding the behavior of women in public prevented them from freely engaging in discussion due to fear of being ridiculed.

The (Ahikire, 2014) study that documents similar dynamics in Ugandan decentralized governance institutions implies that it is a systematic occurrence in the field of development governance within rural Uganda. This fact makes the findings even more alarming since it implies that even though women have been included formally in the planning processes of the PDMs, their inclusion will be fruitless unless there are certain changes made concerning meeting facilitation.

This is especially pertinent to the findings of Rao & Kelleher (2005), who suggest that women must make up a 'critical mass' within the leadership roles in order for their participation in effective governance to be ensured. The case study of the woman who was the only woman in her governance structure exemplifies all three points raised by them: alienation, lack of solidarity among peers, and self-moderation due to group pressure.

5.1.3 Decision-Making: Formal Inclusion, Substantive Exclusion

The results regarding women's engagement in the decision-making process have confirmed and elaborated upon the discussion of planning participation. Women had formal representation within PDM-related community institutions but wielded little actual power in the decisions that these institutions made. The specific finding that fund-related decisions were predominantly shaped by male voices, with women's views given limited weight, is particularly consequential because it means the gender equity provision in the 30% PRF allocation can be undermined at the precise point of implementation even when the formal commitment is in place.

(Kabeer, 1999) empowerment framework provides the theoretical language for knowing this pattern: women possess formal resources representation, a designated allocation of funds without the agency conditions confidence, institutional support, peer solidarity needed to exercise those resources meaningfully. (Longwe, 1995) levels framework similarly suggests that the PDM has, at best, moved some women from the welfare level to the access level, but has not created the conditions for conscientisation, participation, or control.

(Goetz & Gupta, 1996) concept of 'control by proxy' is also relevant here: in households where husbands discourage wives' participation, and in community settings where male members dominate deliberations, the formal provisions for women's inclusion become proxies for continued male control of resources. This would involve moving away from formal representation to also incorporate transparency in the decision-making process, accountability in the application of the 30% allocation, and reform in governance to guarantee equity in deliberation among the PDM communities.

5.1.4 The Fund Disbursement Gap: A Central Finding Requiring Accountability

The fact that women who benefited from PDM payouts continually got between UGX 700,000 and UGX 800,000 against the claimed UGX 1,000,000 payout per beneficiary cohort is one of the most important findings from this study. This finding is not only important due to the direct implications it has on women who had pinned their hopes and efforts on the benefits of the programme, but also due to its implications concerning the accountability structure involved in PDM payouts at the parish level.

There are various reasons why there was a reduction in the amount that was supposed to be paid out. Some of the reasons like administrative charges, membership charges, insurance costs, and processing charges are valid and acceptable, and thus should have been explained to the beneficiaries before registration. The fact that women got lower payments without any proper communication and the fact that the CDO could not ascertain if deductions were legitimate or were adequately communicated raises questions of transparency than anything else.

The existing research on public fund management in Uganda (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006; Reinikka & Svensson, 2004) offers a coherent theoretical framework in the sense that wherever there are weak accountabilities, disbursement gaps are inevitable. There is no indication in the operational framework of the PDMs in Kyabakadde Parish that reports any monitoring mechanisms of fund distribution, such as transparency in the amount of disbursements, independent verification of disbursement process, or beneficiary complaints mechanism. In its turn, this lack of accountability constitutes an inherent program vulnerability.

The policy implication from this finding is straightforward and presented in the recommendations section. Whatever the reasons behind the disbursement gap in Kyabakadde Parish, the actions needed to address this issue remain the same – transparency, accountability, and informing beneficiaries of their rights under the scheme. Otherwise, integrity of the programme in question will be continuously undermined by the experiences of the women in Kyabakadde Parish who, indeed, have reasons for thinking that they have received fewer resources than they deserved.

5.1.5 Multi-Dimensional Barriers: The Cumulative Disadvantage Argument

The multi-layered nature of the challenges documented in section 4.6 confirms a central argument in the scholarly literature: that women's participation barriers in development programmes cannot be understood or addressed one at a time they must be approached as a system of compounding disadvantages (Doss et al., 2018; UN Women, 2021; World Bank, 2022).

In Kyabakadde Parish, a woman who lacked information about the PDM was also likely to be a woman with lower literacy, living in a more peripheral village, with less access to community networks, managing a heavier domestic workload, and with less household

support for programme participation. These characteristics clustered together, producing a group of women who were simultaneously the most disadvantaged and the least reached by the programme. Interventions that treat each barrier in isolation will fail to reach women whose disadvantage is multiply determined.

(Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRCs), 2023; Molyneux, 2006) critique of conditional empowerment programmes is directly applicable here: the PDM places significant demands on women group formation, documentation, registration, meeting attendance, enterprise development that operate as conditions of access to programme benefits. In the case of women who are already burdened by domestic and productive activities, these factors are additional responsibilities and not empowerment tools. The design of the programme does not take into consideration the total costs associated with participation for women in such socio-economic settings.

5.1.6 Opportunities: The Foundation for What Better Looks Like

The enabling factors pointed out in Section 4.7 community savings schemes, training in organisations such as Kyampisi Childcare Ministries, role model peers, and the financial architecture within the programme form a realistic base for enhanced PDM participation, which should be duly acknowledged along with failure cases. The case of the Tukwatirewamu Women's Group serves as a real-life example of what capacity-building can achieve; a group with financial expertise and an organizational base to successfully register itself. They are now only waiting for the disbursement accountability that the formal programme still owes them.

(Kwesiga et al., 2019) documentation of the positive role of savings and credit groups in building women's financial independence and governance participation in Uganda is strongly validated by these findings. The implication is not only that savings groups are valuable in themselves, but that they can serve as a pipeline into formal PDM engagement when the two are explicitly linked through facilitated outreach, joint training, and registration support.

The persistence of community goodwill toward the PDM's objectives women's continued belief in what the programme could achieve for them, even after significant personal frustrations is a programmatic asset that should not be taken for granted. Trust, once lost,

is hard to rebuild. The window for credible programme improvement April be narrower than programme authorities realise.

5.1.7 Relationship Between Findings and the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework developed for this study predicted that women's real participation in the PDM is shaped by three independent variable clusters socio-economic factors, institutional support, and participation challenges moderated by training, fund access, savings group experience, and organisational support, and expressed as the dependent variable: actual, informed, and meaningful engagement with the programme.

Results from Kyabakadde Parish clearly demonstrate applicability of this framework. All three clusters of independent variables proved to be significant barriers for women's participation, whereby socio-economic conditions including low levels of literacy and uncertainty of livelihood restricted their ability; institutions did not address individual restrictions adequately through sensitisation and transparency of funds management; and participation issues including culture, lack of confidence and schedule difficulties further intensified both factors. Moderating variables such as training, access to funds, and saving group memberships proved to be highly significant facilitators of participation in case they were present, and highly significant absence barriers in case they were absent.

5.2 Conclusions

The aim of this research was to evaluate the degree of women's involvement in the Parish Development Model in Kyabakadde Parish, Kyampisi Sub-County, Mukono District focusing on their lived experience, as opposed to the policies that the program espouses. These findings have been stated without beating around the bush, because the women who provided me with their views need to know the truth about my observations.

In the first place, the gender equity policies of the PDM have not been achieved in Kyabakadde Parish, especially the provision that 30% of the PRF should go to women. Quite a number of the women in this parish have never benefited from PDM finances despite the fact that the program has been operating for quite some time now. Those women who benefited had always received disbursements that did not meet the provision.

The second issue related to women being involved in the PDM process was the lack of their active participation in decision-making processes. Indeed, while women had meetings, there were no real decisions made by the women attending them. While women had access to

community structures, they had no real influence in their governance. The framework of inclusive participation existed, but its real practice was absent.

Another aspect related to the programme's approach to the dissemination of information about it. In particular, the majority of women, especially living in less central villages, and women who had no links with the community, could hardly receive necessary information about the programme. It is important to admit that such an outcome is the result of a poor programme's design rather than the women's fault.

The fourth issue concerns the fact that various barriers related to women being involved in the programme have not been taken into account. In particular, the programme presupposes meeting some requirements from the women, but does not provide any help in fulfilling them.

Importantly fifth, the research uncovered legitimate reasons for hope. Savings groups in the communities such as the Tukwatirewamu Women's Group showed financial literacy and organizational competence necessary for successful involvement in PDMs. Having supporting community organizations in Kyampisi Sub-county provided enabling environments that could have helped the PDM achieve greater results. Moreover, women's trust in the effectiveness of this programme – that is, their desire for success – constitutes social capital that can be harnessed for successful development through the process of programme improvements.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the present research has proven that the PDM program is not successfully performing its duties at Kyabakadde Parish. However, there are clear conditions for the development of the program, which should be taken into account when developing further strategies. Instead of redesigning the programme completely, what is needed is to implement real program accountability and take care of necessary enabling environments for sustainable economic development (UN Women, 2021).

5.3 Recommendations

These recommendations are based on the results obtained through this study. They are presented for particular audiences and should prove realistic and proportional to the issues identified.

5.3.1 Recommendations to the Government of Uganda

The Ministry of Local Government, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, should carry out an audit of the amounts disbursed to women's beneficiary groups in each parish in Mukono District. This audit should focus on comparing the amount disbursed to the actual budget allocated per group in the PRF programme. Should this gap in the amount disbursed be found consistent with Kyabakadde Parish findings, the Government should publish a public announcement of the reason for deduction. Transparency regarding the deductions should also be communicated to the beneficiaries prior to their registering for the programme. Accountability for the entire process of PRF allocation to women is non-negotiable in achieving the purpose of the programme.

It is recommended that the Government launch a women sensitisation campaign about the PDM that would take place Away from press statements or announcements on notice boards at the trading centre. The government should employ trained female community mobilisers to visit villages where sensitisation should take place using both oral and visual formats of communication in local languages. EPRC's findings show how effective these methods have proven in sensitising women in similar communities in Uganda.

The Government must incorporate gender-sensitive indicators of accountability into the national monitoring and evaluation process of the PDM. Such indicators include: the percentage of women receiving grants among those registered; the mean period between registration and grant disbursements to women; the number of women in decision-making positions within the program; and the quality of participation of women in planning meetings. The indicators must be reported in the districts, which will promote accountability and enhance the possibility of equitable administration of the program.

PDM administrative documents group constitutions, application forms for funding, registration papers must be amended to include translations of the documents in simple Luganda and other local languages, and in simplified form understandable by illiterate applicants. It is an inexpensive yet powerful way of enhancing access for many of the nonparticipants currently.

5.3.2 Recommendations to Local Leaders

Chairpersons of local councils and programme coordinators in Kyabakadde Parish must implement a systematic method of meeting facilitation that will provide a conducive platform for the participation of women. Such practices should entail: rotation of the order of speaking; consultations with women's group leaders prior to meetings so as to incorporate relevant issues into the agenda; provision of time during each session for reporting from women's groups; and the use of agenda visual guides to facilitate participation irrespective of the attendees' levels of literacy. All of these measures are simple and cost-effective, and would instantly result in improved participation by women (Kwesiga et al., 2019).

Community leaders should develop a system of managing funds that will clearly demonstrate what steps are being taken to ensure that the 30% PRF funding provided to women is actually put into practice, such as the identification of beneficiaries of this support, amount of money released, and reasons for any delay. This information should be published in the public domain within the parish. This is the only way in which this problem can be addressed effectively at this moment.

There needs to be a simple system put in place by local officials where the women can be updated on their registration without having to keep returning to the programme offices, perhaps through means such as a weekly office hours session, a mobile number that is accessible to answer PDM questions, or even a monthly meeting for women about the PDM. One of the biggest issues mentioned by many of the participants was the lack of any form of communication from the programme, and implementing such a policy would cost very little while yielding great benefits.

The Community Development Officer must create a system to go around and find women who need to register for the PDM, with the help of the village chairperson. They must focus on women from villages that do not have any connection within the community networks. It is clear that such action has not been undertaken in this parish.

5.3.3 Recommendations to Non-Governmental Organisations

Kyampisi ChildCare Ministries and other non-governmental organizations operating in Kyampisi Sub-County must ensure that PDM-oriented capacity building is incorporated into their current women's empowerment activities. This capacity building must cover the following topics: an introduction to the PDM and its operational mechanisms; ways of forming a qualifying enterprise group; ways of completing program registration forms; ways of understanding a fund agreement; and ways of exercising women's rights of governance in PDM-community based organizations. Women who go through this process of training will find it easier to operate under the PDM, as the example of Tukwatirewamu Women's Group illustrates.

Non-Governmental Organizations must take the initiative of formally registering existing informal savings groups as qualifying enterprise groups within the PDM.

The evidence from this study suggests that informal savings experience is one of the most reliable predictors of successful PDM engagement; NGO support that formalises and links this experience to the PDM structure would multiply its impact significantly.

NGOs should also develop and support a peer mentor network in Kyabakadde Parish and similar communities, through which women who have successfully navigated the PDM registration and fund access process can support others through the same journey. The role of peer role models in motivating PDM engagement was documented repeatedly in this study, and formalising this dynamic through a structured mentorship programme would extend its reach considerably (Ministry of Local Government, 2022; Reinikka & Svensson, 2004).

5.3.4 Recommendations to Communities and Families

Community leaders, religious institutions, and opinion leaders in Kyabakadde Parish should actively promote positive attitudes towards women's economic participation and their engagement with the PDM. Men's engagement programmes that specifically address the household-level cultural dynamics identified in this study – including resistance to wives' participation in savings groups, discouragement of women's attendance at meetings, and male control of household financial decisions – would address a significant source of participation constraint at its root. Evidence from the region confirms that when male

household members actively support women's economic programmes, participation rates improve significantly and outcomes are more sustainable (UN Women, 2020)

Where the practical logistics of PDM participation – attending meetings, engaging with programme activities – create genuine barriers for women with young children, community-level childcare arrangements should be considered. Simple, informal solutions – a shared crèche at the meeting venue, a roster of community members to provide brief childcare cover – can significantly reduce the time-cost barrier for mothers of young children and make participation feasible rather than impossible.

5.3.5 Recommendations for Future Researchers

Future researchers should conduct comparative studies across multiple parishes in Mukono District and other districts to assess whether the disbursement gaps, participation patterns, and enabling structures documented in Kyabakadde Parish are representative of broader PDM implementation realities or specific to this context. Such comparisons would generate more generalisable evidence for national policy development.

A quantitative study measuring the actual amounts received by PDM beneficiary groups across a large sample of parishes, compared against the programme's stated per-group allocation, would provide the systematic national-level evidence needed to hold the government accountable for the full implementation of the PRF's gender equity provisions. Longitudinal research tracking the same cohort of women over two to three PDM implementation cycles would provide valuable evidence on whether the challenges documented here – awareness gaps, administrative delays, passive participation – improve over time and which interventions are most effective in accelerating positive change.

Finally, action research approaches – in which researchers work directly with community groups and local implementing officials to test and evaluate specific improvements in PDM delivery – would provide both practical solutions and the rigorous evidence base needed to scale effective approaches to other parishes.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

This study has generated important insights into women's participation in the PDM in Kyabakadde Parish, but several areas requiring further investigation are evident. The long-term livelihood outcomes for women who have successfully accessed PDM funds – including changes in household income, enterprise sustainability, and women's decision-

making power within their households warrant a follow-up study, as this would provide evidence of the programme's transformative potential when it functions as intended.

The financial management practices of PDM implementation across Uganda specifically how fund approval decisions are made, whether women's applications are equitably processed, and what the actual disbursement gap is between allocated and received amounts nationally require systematic investigation. This study's findings suggest that such research would reveal important accountability issues at the national level.

Research on the effectiveness of different sensitisation and capacity-building approaches in rural parishes comparing, for example, participation outcomes in parishes with NGO-supported women's group linkages versus those without would help identify the most cost-effective strategies for improving women's PDM engagement at scale.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the findings from Kyabakadde Parish in relation to the study's conceptual framework, theoretical foundations, and the broader scholarly literature on women's participation in development programmes. The discussion confirmed that women's participation in the PDM in this parish was constrained by a compounding system of information deficits, social and cultural barriers, institutional design failures, and fund disbursement gaps that collectively prevented the programme's stated gender equity provisions from being realised. The conceptual framework's predictions were strongly validated. Conclusions characterised women's current participation as largely passive and below the programme's objectives, while identifying the enabling conditions that could support meaningful improvement. Recommendations have been made for the government, local authorities, NGOs, communities, and further research, based on findings from Kyabakadde Parish that are consistent with the existing literature. The implementation of these recommendations would result in more balanced, transparent, and transformative results of PDM for women in Kyabakadde Parish and other rural areas in Uganda.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR WOMEN PDM BENEFICIARIES

Study Title: Women's Participation in the Parish Development Model (PDM)

Implementation: Challenges and Opportunities in Kyabakadde Parish, Mukono District

Researcher: Nansubuga Alice, Uganda Christian University

Supervisor: Dr. Peter Nareeba

INTRODUCTION TO RESPONDENT:

Thank you for accepting to conduct this interview with me. I am Nansubuga Alice, currently pursuing my education at Uganda Christian University. I am undertaking some research work on how the women within this particular parish have interacted with the Parish Development Model in terms of their understanding, participation in and constraints towards this model. Your insights would be of great importance for this research work. The interview is not meant to evaluate your individual performance. The interview is strictly confidential, your name shall not be mentioned in any report or document.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. How old are you?
2. What is your primary occupation?
3. What level of education have you completed?
4. Are you a registered PDM beneficiary?
5. If yes, when did you register? If no, why not?

SECTION B: KNOWING OF THE PDM

6. In your own words, what is the Parish Development Model?
7. How did you first hear about PDM?
8. Can you explain how PDM works how someone accesses the money?
9. Have you ever attended any PDM sensitisation session? What did you learn?

SECTION C: PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING

10. Have you attended any PDM-related meetings? How many?
11. What happens in those meetings? Who does most of the talking?
12. Have you ever contributed an idea or raised a concern in a PDM meeting? What happened?
13. Do you feel your views are taken seriously in PDM meetings? Please explain.

SECTION D: DECISION-MAKING

14. Do you have any role in programme-related community structures or meetings?
15. In your experience, who makes the decisions about which groups receive PDM funds?
16. Do you feel women's voices have enough influence in these decisions? Why or why not?

SECTION E: ACCESS TO PDM FUNDS

17. Have you received PDM money? If yes, how much did you receive?
18. How long did you wait from registration to receiving funds?
19. Were there any differences between what you expected to receive and what you actually received? Please explain.
20. If you have not received funds, what reason were you given? How long have you been waiting?
21. How has the process of accessing PDM funds been for you easy, difficult, confusing?

SECTION F: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

22. What are the biggest difficulties you have faced in trying to participate in PDM?
23. Have any family members or community members discouraged your participation? How?
24. Are you part of any savings group or women's group? How has that helped or not helped with PDM?
25. What do you think would help more women in this parish to benefit from PDM?
26. Is there anything else about your experience with PDM that you would like to share?

Thank you very much for your time and your honesty. Your contribution will help improve how this programme works for women.



UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

March 31, 2026

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR RESEARCH

This is to introduce to you Nansubunga Alice Registration number **M23B15/070**, a student of Uganda Christian University, pursuing Bachelor's degree in Social Work and Administration. She is expected to carry out research in the final year under the guidance of a university supervisor in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the above-mentioned award.

Topic: "Women's participation in the parish development model (PDM) implementation: challenges and opportunities in Kyabakadde Parish, Mukono District."

The purpose of this communication is to request your office to allow her collect data from your organization. Any assistance rendered to him will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Mbaba
31 MAR 2026
Doreen Kukugiza

Coordinator, Research & Fieldwork Programmes

Tel: 0773395349

Email: dkukugiza@ucu.ac.ug

