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**UNIVERSITY OF LUSAKA**

**SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT  
PROGRAMS ON MEN: A CASE STUDY OF NEW KASEBA, KAFUE DISTRICT**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

I, **Elina Mulenga Malambo**, hereby declare that this research report entitled “*An Investigation of the Effects of Women’s Empowerment Programs on Men: A Case Study of New Kaseba, Kafue District*” is my own original work and has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for any academic award at this or any other institution. All sources of information used in this report have been duly acknowledged through appropriate citations and references.

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_04.01.2026\_\_\_\_\_

## **DEDICATION**

This research is dedicated to my mother, Mrs. Jane Chikalipa Malambo, and my sister, Nkazana Malambo, whose unwavering love, prayers, encouragement, and sacrifices have been my constant source of strength throughout my academic journey. Their belief in me, patience, and moral support inspired perseverance during challenging moments and made the completion of this study possible.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>AGEP</b>	Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program
<b>DHS</b>	Demographic and Health Survey
<b>GEWEL</b>	Girls' Empowerment and Women's Economic Livelihoods
<b>LESS</b>	Livelihood and Empowerment Support Scheme
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>VSLAs</b>	Village Savings and Loan Associations

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**APPROVAL**

The research report was approved as a fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies of Lusaka University.

Supervisor signature: 

Supervisor's Name: Dr Audrey Mwansa

Signed: Date: 04.01.2026

Examiners

Signed: ..... Date: .....

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## **ABSTRACT**

Women's empowerment programmes have become a central strategy for promoting gender equality, poverty reduction, and inclusive development in Zambia. While considerable attention has been given to the positive outcomes of these programmes for women, limited empirical research has examined their effects on men, particularly within peri-urban communities. This study investigated the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men in New Kaseba Township, Kafue District. Specifically, the study sought to identify women's economic empowerment programmes operating in the area, examine their effects on men's socio-economic wellbeing and household roles, and identify strategies used to mitigate any negative effects associated with these programmes.

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected from adult men, women participants in empowerment programmes, and key community stakeholders using questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), while qualitative data were analysed narratively.

The findings revealed that several women's economic empowerment programmes were operating in New Kaseba Township, including savings groups, livelihood support initiatives, and small-scale entrepreneurship programmes. While these programmes contributed to improved household income and welfare, they also influenced men's socio-economic roles and perceptions. Some men reported reduced economic responsibility, shifts in household authority, and feelings of marginalisation, while others acknowledged positive outcomes such as reduced financial pressure and improved household cooperation. The study further found that limited male involvement in programme design and implementation contributed to misunderstandings and tension. Strategies such as community sensitisation, inclusive dialogue, and male engagement were identified as important in mitigating negative effects.

The study concludes that women's empowerment programmes can generate both positive and unintended effects on men and gender relations. It recommends the adoption of inclusive and

gender-responsive approaches that engage both women and men to promote equitable and socially sustainable development outcomes.

## **CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Chapter Overview**

This chapter provided an introduction to the study by outlining the background to the research, the statement of the problem, and the purpose of the study. It also presented the research objectives and research questions that guided the investigation. Further, the chapter highlighted the significance of the study, the scope of the research, and the limitations encountered during the study. The chapter concluded by defining key terms used in the study to ensure clarity and consistency in interpretation.

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Women's empowerment has become a central pillar of global development discourse, driven by recognition that gender equality is fundamental to sustainable social and economic progress. International frameworks such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 5, emphasize women's access to education, economic resources, political participation, and decision-making as critical pathways to development (Nations, 1995; United Nations, 2015). Consequently, governments, international organizations, and non-governmental actors worldwide have implemented empowerment programmes aimed at improving women's livelihoods, autonomy, and social status (Volunteers Initiative, 2024). While evidence highlights positive outcomes for women and households, emerging scholarship suggests that empowerment processes may also reshape gender relations in complex and sometimes contested ways, particularly in contexts where traditional gender norms remain deeply entrenched (Pierotti, Delavallade and Brar, 2023; Diyammi, 2025).

Across sub-Saharan Africa, women's empowerment initiatives have expanded rapidly in response to persistent gender inequalities in education, employment, land ownership, and political representation. Programmes focusing on economic empowerment, such as microfinance schemes, livelihood support, and savings groups, have been widely adopted to enhance women's income-generating capacity and reduce household poverty (Abebe and Kegne, 2023; Osuma et al., 2025). However, African societies are often characterized by strong patriarchal structures in which men are traditionally viewed as primary breadwinners and household decision-makers.

Studies from the region indicate that shifts in women's economic power may challenge established gender roles, sometimes generating tension, resistance, or role strain among men, especially where economic opportunities for males are limited (Silberschmidt, 2001; Khosa-Nkatini et al., 2023; Watugulu, 2024). These dynamics are particularly pronounced in peri-urban and informal settlements, where unemployment, poverty, and social change intersect.

In Zambia, women's empowerment has increasingly been institutionalized through policy reforms and development programmes aligned with international commitments. The government has ratified key global and regional gender instruments and established structures such as the Gender Division under the Cabinet Office to coordinate gender mainstreaming across sectors. National initiatives, including programmes focused on economic inclusion, social protection, and livelihood support, have sought to enhance women's access to financial resources, skills, and productive assets (Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2023). Programmes such as the Girls' Empowerment and Women's Economic Livelihoods (GEWEL) initiative reflect sustained efforts to address structural barriers faced by women, particularly those in low-income communities (World Bank, 2015).

Despite these advances, Zambia continues to grapple with high levels of unemployment, especially among men in urban and peri-urban areas. In settlements such as New Kaseba Township in Kafue District, economic hardship, limited formal employment, and rapid social change have altered traditional household and community arrangements. As women gain increased access to income, social networks, and decision-making spaces through empowerment programmes, existing literature suggests that men may experience shifts in their perceived social roles and economic relevance, with implications for household relations and community cohesion (Chant, 2013).

However, empirical research in Zambia has largely concentrated on measuring the positive outcomes of empowerment interventions for women, with limited attention given to how such programmes affect men and broader gender relations within communities especially in rural and peri-urban communities.

Against this background, this study is situated within the broader discourse on gender, power, and social change. By focusing on the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men in

New Kaseba Township, the study responds to a notable gap in the Zambian literature. The study examined how shifts in access to resources and power associated with empowerment initiatives interacted with existing socio-economic conditions, potentially producing both positive and disruptive outcomes at the household and community levels.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Women's empowerment programmes have been widely promoted in Zambia as a strategy for addressing gender inequality, poverty reduction, and inclusive development, particularly in peri-urban and low-income communities. Existing studies indicate that such programmes have contributed to improved access to income, enhanced decision-making power, and increased participation of women in economic and community activities (World Bank, 2015). In Zambia, initiatives such as livelihood support schemes and women-focused economic programmes have been implemented with the intention of strengthening women's socio-economic position and household welfare (Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2023).

However, emerging literature from sub-Saharan Africa suggests that empowerment processes may also generate complex gendered outcomes, particularly in contexts characterized by high male unemployment and entrenched patriarchal norms (Silberschmidt, 2001; Chant, 2013). Studies have shown that shifts in women's economic roles and authority can alter traditional power relations within households and communities, sometimes resulting in role strain, reduced social status among men, and tensions within families (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Cornwall, 2016). Despite these insights, programme evaluations in Zambia have largely concentrated on measuring the intended benefits for women, with limited attention given to how men experience and respond to these changes.

In peri-urban settlements such as New Kaseba Township in Kafue District, persistent unemployment, informal livelihoods, and socio-economic vulnerability have continued to shape gender relations. While women's empowerment initiatives have expanded in such settings, there is limited empirical evidence examining how these programmes have affected men's socio-economic wellbeing, household roles, and community interactions. The absence of context-specific studies has constrained understanding of whether empowerment interventions may

inadvertently contribute to social tensions, behavioural changes, or shifts in household authority among men within these communities.

The lack of empirical research focusing on men's experiences within women's empowerment frameworks in New Kaseba represents a significant knowledge gap. Without such evidence, policymakers and development practitioners risk designing gender interventions that address women's disadvantages without adequately accounting for their broader social implications. This study therefore addressed this gap by examining the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men in New Kaseba Township, with the aim of generating evidence that could inform more inclusive and socially responsive gender programming.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The general objective of the study is to investigate the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men in New Kaseba Township, Kafue District.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify women's economic empowerment programmes operating in New Kaseba Township;
2. To examine the effects of women's economic empowerment programmes on men in New Kaseba Township; and
3. To identify strategies put in place to mitigate negative effects associated with women's empowerment programmes in New Kaseba Township.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

Based on the objectives of the study, the research sought to answer the following questions:

1. What women's economic empowerment programmes are operating in New Kaseba Township?
2. What effects do women's economic empowerment programmes have on men in New Kaseba Township?

3. What strategies are in place to mitigate negative effects associated with women's empowerment programmes in New Kaseba Township?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study generates information on implementation of women's empowerment programmes, their effects on men's roles and livelihoods, and the broader social implications of empowerment interventions within peri-urban communities. By examining these themes, the study provides evidence on how empowerment initiatives interact with existing gender relations and socio-economic conditions. The following may find the findings useful:

**Policy Makers and Policy Influencers:** For policy makers and policy influencers, the findings of this study offer context-specific evidence to inform the formulation and review of gender and development policies. The insights generated highlights the importance of adopting inclusive approaches that consider the experiences of both women and men, thereby supporting the development of balanced policies that promote gender equity while maintaining social cohesion within communities.

**Development Practitioners and Agencies:** For development practitioners and development agencies, the study provides practical information that could be used to improve the design, implementation, and monitoring of women's empowerment programmes. By identifying effects experienced by men alongside intended outcomes for women, the findings may assist practitioners in strengthening programme responsiveness, minimizing potential negative effects, and enhancing the overall effectiveness of gender-focused interventions.

**Academic and Non-Academic Researchers:** The study produces empirical evidence to an area that remains under-explored within the Zambian context. Academic and non-academic researchers may thus find the findings useful in expanding scholarly and applied understanding of women's empowerment programmes and their effects on men within peri-urban communities. The study provided a reference point for future research on gender relations, empowerment interventions, and community-level outcomes, and may inform comparative studies in similar socio-economic settings.

**Local Communities:** For local communities, particularly those in New Kaseba Township, the study created awareness on how women's empowerment programmes influence household and community dynamics. This awareness supported community dialogue and encouraged more informed participation in development initiatives, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation among community members.

**Knowledge Generation:** In terms of knowledge generation, the study contributed to the broader body of knowledge in the field of gender and development by expanding understanding of how empowerment programmes affect social relations beyond their primary beneficiaries. The study enriched scholarly discourse by highlighting the importance of examining empowerment interventions through a holistic and context-sensitive lens.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study was confined to New Kaseba Township in Kafue District, Zambia, and focused on examining the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men within this peri-urban community. The research concentrated on women's economic empowerment initiatives operating in the area and their influence on men's roles, livelihoods, and experiences at the household and community levels. The target population comprised adult men residing in New Kaseba Township, alongside relevant community stakeholders involved in the implementation or oversight of empowerment programmes. The scope of the study was limited to the social and economic effects observed during the period of data collection and did not extend to evaluating the long-term impacts of the programmes or similar initiatives outside the study area.

### **1.7 Delimitation of the Study**

The research investigated New Kaseba Township in Kafue District, with a focus on examining the effects of women's empowerment programmes within the community. The study concentrated on how these programmes were associated with social and economic changes among community members, particularly men.

The respondents included women who had participated in or were actively engaged in women's empowerment programmes, such as economic, educational, and health-related initiatives in New Kaseba Township. The study also involved men from the community, including husbands, partners, and other male residents, as well as local leaders, elders, and relevant officials who possessed knowledge of the empowerment programmes and community dynamics.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

The study encountered several limitations during the research process. First, the research was geographically limited to New Kaseba Township, which restricted the generalizability of the findings to other peri-urban or rural settings. This limitation was addressed by clearly defining

the scope of the study and interpreting the findings strictly within the context of the study area. Second, cultural and gender norms influenced participants' willingness to openly discuss sensitive issues related to empowerment and gender roles. To address this challenge, the researcher assured participants of confidentiality and anonymity, and interviews were conducted in a respectful and culturally sensitive manner to encourage honest responses.

Third, the study relied on self-reported data collected through questionnaires and interviews, which introduced the risk of social desirability bias, particularly on issues affecting masculinity and household authority. This limitation was mitigated by triangulating data from multiple sources and using both quantitative and qualitative methods to validate responses. Fourth, time and resource constraints limited the depth of engagement with participants and the scale of data collection. This challenge was managed by employing a structured data collection schedule and prioritizing key variables that aligned with the study objectives. Finally, the use of a mixed-methods approach posed challenges in integrating quantitative and qualitative findings. To address this, data were analysed separately and later integrated during the interpretation stage to ensure consistency and coherence in the presentation of results.

## **1.10 Chapter Organization of the Study**

This dissertation is structured into six chapters, each building on the preceding one to examine the gendered dimensions of social change in New Kaseba Township, Zambia.

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

This chapter establishes the foundation of the study by presenting the background and contextual relevance of the research. It outlines the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, and the research questions that guide the investigation. The chapter further explains the significance, scope, and limitations of the study and provides definitions of key terms used throughout the dissertation.

### **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This chapter critically reviews both international and local literature related to women's empowerment, gender relations, social cohesion, and development initiatives. It examines relevant theoretical perspectives and empirical studies, culminating in the development of a conceptual framework for the study. Particular attention is given to literature that discusses the broader social effects of empowerment programmes at the community level.

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

This chapter describes the mixed-methods approach adopted in the study. It details the research design, study population, sampling procedures, and data collection instruments, including questionnaires and interviews. The chapter also explains the methods used for data analysis and addresses ethical considerations guiding the research process.

### **Chapter Four: Presentation and Interpretation of Findings**

This chapter presents and interprets the findings derived from both qualitative and quantitative data. The results are organized according to the research objectives and are discussed in relation to the conceptual framework and relevant literature, with emphasis on community-level experiences and perceptions of women's empowerment programmes.

### **Chapter Five: Discussion**

This chapter discusses the findings presented in Chapter Four by relating them to the research objectives, conceptual framework, and existing literature. The discussion highlights emerging patterns, interpretations, and implications of the findings in relation to women's empowerment programmes and their effects within the study context.

### **Chapter Six: Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations**

The final chapter summarizes the key findings of the study and draws conclusions based on the results presented. It offers practical recommendations aimed at policymakers, development practitioners, and community stakeholders, and identifies areas for future research to further enhance understanding of gender-related dynamics within empowerment interventions.

## **CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Chapter Overview**

This chapter reviews literature relevant to women's empowerment programmes and their effects on gender relations and community outcomes. It commences with a discussion of conceptual literature to clarify key concepts guiding the study, followed by a review of literature on the historical development of women's empowerment. The chapter then examines empirical literature drawn from both international and local studies to highlight existing evidence and contextual insights. Thereafter, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning the study are presented and discussed to demonstrate how they inform the analysis and interpretation of findings. The chapter concludes by identifying research gaps that justify the need for the current study.

### **2.1 Conceptual Literature**

#### **2.1.1 Women's Empowerment**

Women's empowerment is defined as the process through which women gain the ability to make strategic life choices in contexts where such ability was previously denied to them (Kabeer, 1999). It involves expanding women's access to resources, agency, and achievements, enabling them to exercise control over economic, social, and political aspects of their lives. According to Huis et al. (Huis et al., 2017), women's empowerment is the process of having and using resources in an agentic manner to reach certain achievements. Scholars further conceptualize women's empowerment as a multidimensional construct encompassing economic independence, participation in decision-making, and enhanced self-efficacy within households and communities (Kabeer, 1999; Alkire et al., 2013; Banerjee et al., 2015; Abdullah and Quayes, 2016; Bonilla et al., 2017a).

#### **2.1.2 Economic Empowerment**

Economic empowerment is the process of increasing an individual's or group's capacity to access, manage, and control economic resources, leading to improved financial independence, stability, and decision-making power (Banerjee et al., 2015; May, 2024). It enables people to secure better livelihoods, reduce vulnerability to poverty, and participate fully in economic development.

Kabeer (Kabeer, 2009) defines economic empowerment as the capacity of individuals to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from economic activities in ways that recognize the value of their contributions and support equitable access to resources. In the context of women's empowerment, economic empowerment involves improving women's access to income-generating opportunities, financial services, skills, and productive assets. It is also understood as a means through which women strengthen their bargaining power within households and communities, thereby influencing broader social relations.

### **2.1.3 Gender Relations**

The European Institute for Gender Equality (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2025) defines gender relations as a specific subset of social relations that brings women and men together as social groups within a particular community, shaping how power and access to or control over resources are distributed between the sexes. It refers to social, cultural, and economic interactions and power dynamics between women and men, defining how resources, opportunities, and responsibilities are distributed within a society. Gender relations describe the socially constructed interactions, roles, and power relations between women and men within a given society (Cislaghi and Heise, 2019). These relations shape access to resources, authority, and responsibilities, and are embedded within cultural, economic, and institutional structures (Oakley, 1972).

## **2.2 History of Women's Empowerment**

The history of women's empowerment on a global scale is deeply intertwined with the evolution of the international human rights movement and women's rights activism. Beginning in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, women across the world mobilized to secure basic civil and political rights, including suffrage and legal recognition (Fraser, 1999). Landmark milestones such as the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995 and the integration of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) on gender equality into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have anchored women's empowerment as a central element of global development policy and practice (International Trade Union Confederation, 2025). These frameworks emphasized access to education, economic opportunity, political participation, and protection from discrimination and violence as essential components for achieving gender equality and empowering women worldwide.

In the African context, women's empowerment has evolved through both grassroots movements and regional policy commitments aimed at reducing structural inequalities that limit women's participation in economic, political, and social life. Across the continent, women's organizations emerged in the mid-20th century, often linked with anti-colonial struggles and campaigns for democratic rights, advocating not only for women's access to resources but also for inclusive governance and social justice (Denzer, 1987; Osman, 2014). Over time, African regional bodies such as the African Union incorporated gender equality into long-term development frameworks like Agenda 2063, reinforcing commitments to women's leadership, economic inclusion, and legal reform across member states. Initiatives like the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) further reflect the increasing emphasis on empowering women leaders across political, economic, and social spheres throughout Africa.

In Zambia, women's empowerment has been shaped by national policies, civil society activism, and partnerships with international development agencies. Since independence, Zambian women's movements and organizations have played crucial roles in promoting gender equality and advocating for women's political representation, economic participation, and legal rights. Organizations such as the Zambia Alliance of Women, founded in 1978 to promote gender equity and development, and the Zambian National Women's Lobby, established in 1991 to increase women's political participation, have been key actors in advancing women's empowerment (Lubinda, 2021). More recently, government collaborations with international partners, such as the Girls' Education and Women's Empowerment and Livelihood (GEWEL) programme, have sought to expand access to education, livelihoods, and resilience-building opportunities for women across the country, reflecting Zambia's ongoing commitment to strengthening women's roles in national development (World Bank, 2025a).

### **2.3 Types of Women's Economic Empowerment Programmes**

Globally, women's economic empowerment programmes have taken diverse forms, largely shaped by development priorities and socio-economic contexts. One common type includes microfinance and financial inclusion programmes, which aim to improve women's access to credit, savings, and financial services (Consultative Group to Assist the Poor, 2024). These initiatives seek to enhance women's income-generating capacity and financial autonomy, particularly among low-income populations. Another widely implemented approach involves

skills development and entrepreneurship training programmes, which equip women with vocational, business, and managerial skills to improve employability and enterprise sustainability (Pandit, 2025). Additionally, cash transfer and social protection programmes have been adopted in many countries to support women's economic resilience by providing direct financial assistance, often linked to education, health, or livelihood outcomes. Collectively, these programmes emphasize income generation, financial independence, and women's participation in economic decision-making.

In Africa, women's economic empowerment programmes have evolved in response to persistent gender disparities in access to land, capital, education, and employment. A prominent type includes agricultural empowerment programmes, which support women farmers through access to inputs, extension services, and market linkages (Adebayo and Worth, 2024). Given that women constitute a significant proportion of the agricultural labour force in Africa, such programmes aim to improve productivity and household food security. Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and cooperative-based initiatives are also widely used across the continent, enabling women to pool resources, access small loans, and strengthen collective economic agency (Dagunga et al., 2020). In addition, livelihood diversification programmes focus on small-scale trade, crafts, and informal sector activities, reflecting the economic realities of many African women. These initiatives often integrate training, savings, and social support components to address both economic and social barriers to empowerment.

In Zambia, women's economic empowerment programmes are largely implemented through government initiatives, non-governmental organizations, and development partners. Key programme types include livelihood support and entrepreneurship schemes, which provide women with capital, skills training, and business development services. Programmes such as the Girls' Empowerment and Women's Economic Livelihoods (GEWEL) initiative exemplify integrated approaches that combine financial support, mentorship, and access to markets (Sellim and Co, 2025; World Bank, 2025b). Social protection programmes, including cash transfers targeted at women-headed households, also play a role in enhancing economic security and reducing vulnerability. Furthermore, community-based initiatives such as women's cooperatives and savings groups remain central to empowering women at the grassroots level, particularly in low-income and peri-urban communities (Katowa, 2024).

Generally, women's economic empowerment programmes share common objectives of improving income, enhancing access to resources, and strengthening women's decision-making power. However, the form and impact of these programmes vary depending on context. In peri-urban areas, empowerment initiatives often focus on informal economic activities such as petty trading, home-based enterprises, and service provision, reflecting limited formal employment opportunities. These programmes tend to blend economic support with social networking and capacity-building components, making them particularly influential in reshaping household roles and community relations. While such initiatives have expanded women's economic participation, they also interact with existing gender norms and labour market constraints, underscoring the importance of examining their broader social implications within peri-urban settings.

## **2.4 Empirical Literature**

### **2.4.1 Women's Empowerment Programs and Their Effects on Male Socio-Economic Status**

Kabeer (2012) conducted a study titled "Women's Economic Empowerment and Inclusive Growth: Labour Markets and Enterprise Development". The study aimed to examine how women's increased participation in labour markets and enterprise development programmes influences household economic arrangements and gender relations in developing economies, with evidence drawn largely from South Asia and Latin America. The study found that women's access to income through empowerment programmes contributed to improved household welfare but also altered traditional male breadwinner roles (Kabeer, 2012). In some contexts, men experienced reduced economic authority and psychological stress where masculinity was closely associated with being the primary provider.

This study is relevant to the current research because it demonstrates that women's economic empowerment can have direct implications for men's socio-economic positioning. However, the study did not empirically measure changes in men's employment status or income levels, creating a gap that the present study seeks to address.

Karim et al. (2018) conducted a study titled "Men's Perceptions of Women's Participation in Development Initiatives in Rural Bangladesh". The aim of the study was to explore how men perceive and respond to women's participation in economic empowerment programmes. Using qualitative interviews, the study found that while some men acknowledged improvements in

household income, others reported feelings of marginalisation, loss of authority, and reduced motivation to engage in economic activities (Karim et al., 2018). These perceptions were particularly strong in households where women became the main income earners. The relevance of this study lies in its focus on male socio-economic and psychological responses to women's empowerment. However, the study did not quantitatively assess men's socio-economic outcomes, leaving room for further empirical investigation.

Vyas and Watts (2009) conducted a study titled *How Does Economic Empowerment Affect Men? Evidence from Microfinance Programs in India*. The study aimed to assess how women's participation in microfinance programmes affected men's economic behaviour and household roles. The findings revealed that in some households, men reduced their financial contributions or withdrew from income-generating activities following women's access to credit (Vyas and Watts, 2009). This study is significant to the current research as it provides empirical evidence that women-focused empowerment programmes can influence men's economic engagement. However, the study did not explore broader community-level implications, which the present study addresses.

Chant (2012) conducted a study titled "Exploring The 'Feminisation of Poverty' in Relation to Women's Work and Home-Based Enterprise in Slums of the Global South". The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between women's work, home-based enterprise, and poverty in urban slums, while critically reassessing conventional interpretations of the feminisation of poverty. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in The Gambia, the Philippines, and Costa Rica, the study proposed a revisionist perspective referred to as the "feminisation of responsibility and obligation." The findings revealed that women in low-income urban settings increasingly shoulder disproportionate responsibility for household survival through income generation, unpaid labour, and caregiving, often within male-headed households (Chant, 2012). Chant argued that poverty and responsibility are not simply feminised through female-headed households, but through unequal gendered contributions to household livelihoods, where men may contribute less labour, time, or resources. Importantly, the study noted that many poverty-reduction and women's empowerment initiatives, such as microfinance and conditional cash transfer programmes, have reinforced this trend by placing economic responsibility primarily on women.

Chant's (2012) study is highly relevant because it highlights how women-focused empowerment and anti-poverty initiatives can implicitly reduce men's economic responsibility within households, thereby reshaping gendered economic roles. This provides a conceptual basis for examining whether women's empowerment programmes may indirectly affect men's socio-economic participation. However, the study does not assess men's employment status, income levels, or economic behaviour following women's empowerment interventions. This gap underscores the need for context-specific empirical research, such as the present study, to investigate how women's empowerment programmes influence men's socio-economic status in peri-urban communities.

Crookston et al. (Crookston et al., 2021) conducted a study titled "Understanding female and male empowerment in Burkina Faso using the project-level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (pro-WEAI): A longitudinal study". The study's objective was to assess empowerment outcomes for both women and men participating in agricultural development programmes using pro-WEAI indicators.

Findings showed that while women's empowerment increased in treatment groups, men in the comparison group experienced declines in empowerment, especially in economic domains such as food security and access to resources (Crookston et al., 2021). This study is directly relevant as it empirically shows gender differences in empowerment outcomes and indicates that men's socio-economic power may change when women are empowered. The gap is that the context is agricultural development rather than formal economic empowerment programmes, and it does not specifically measure male income.

Bapolisi et al. (2024) conducted a study titled "Engaging men in women's empowerment: impact of a complex gender transformative intervention on household socio-economic and health outcomes in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo using a longitudinal survey". The objective of the study was to assess how involving men in gender equity initiatives alongside women's economic empowerment through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) affected women's health outcomes and household socio-economic conditions, including food security, in peri-urban settings of North and South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The study employed a longitudinal cohort design involving 1,812 women at baseline, with 1,055 participants followed up between 2017 and 2019. Quantitative data were analysed using linear and logistic regression models to identify changes in socio-economic conditions and gender relations over time. The findings showed that household income significantly improved following the intervention (Bapolisi et al., 2024a). However, the capacity to meet large financial obligations without incurring debt declined, and no statistically significant changes were observed in women's participation in decision-making, couple cohesion, family planning use, or skilled birth attendance. Food insecurity declined over time in both intervention and control groups.

Bapolisi et al. study is relevant to this current study as it demonstrates that women's economic empowerment programmes combined with male engagement can influence household-level socio-economic outcomes in African peri-urban contexts. Importantly, the findings suggest that improved household income does not automatically translate into improved gender relations or household cohesion, underscoring the complexity of empowerment interventions. However, although the intervention explicitly involved men, the study did not directly measure men's socio-economic status, such as men's employment, income levels, or economic participation. Instead, outcomes were assessed largely at the household level and from women's perspectives. This gap highlights the need for focused empirical research, such as the present study, to examine how women's empowerment programmes affect men's socio-economic status and community dynamics in peri-urban settings.

Pepple et al. (Pepple et al., 2024) conducted a study titled "Effect of Women's Involvement in Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises on their Economic Empowerment in Calabar, Cross River State". The study aimed to examine the effect of women's participation in small and medium-scale enterprises on key dimensions of women's economic empowerment, including financial independence, skills development, and business networking opportunities.

The findings revealed that women's involvement in SME operations had a statistically significant positive effect on their financial independence, skills acquisition, and access to business networks (Pepple et al., 2024). The study concluded that women's entrepreneurship

plays a critical role in enhancing women's economic empowerment and recommended increased financial, technical, and institutional support for female entrepreneurs.

Pepple et al. study is relevant because it provides empirical evidence that women's economic empowerment programmes, particularly through entrepreneurship and SME participation, are effective in improving women's socio-economic outcomes in African urban contexts. It demonstrates the growing economic capacity of women as a result of targeted empowerment interventions. However, while the study robustly documents positive outcomes for women, it does not examine how women's economic empowerment through SMEs affects men's socio-economic status, household power relations, or community dynamics. The absence of male-focused analysis highlights a critical gap in African empowerment literature, which the present study seeks to address by examining the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men in peri-urban communities.

Morrell et al., (2012) conducted a study titled *Hegemonic Masculinity/Masculinities in South Africa: Culture, Power, and Gender Politics*. The study aimed to critically examine the concept of hegemonic masculinity and its application in gender activism, research, and interventions involving men in South Africa. Drawing on extensive scholarly literature and empirical insights from gender and health interventions, the authors analysed how dominant constructions of masculinity shape men's power, identity, and social behaviour within specific racial, cultural, and class contexts.

The study found that hegemonic masculinity in South Africa is neither singular nor universal but exists in multiple forms shaped by historical, racial, and socio-economic realities (Morrell et al., 2012a). The authors observed that many gender interventions focusing on women's empowerment or male behavioural change often fail to account for how economic marginalisation, unemployment, and loss of traditional provider roles affect men's identities. This disconnect, they argued, can provoke resistance, backlash, or attempts to reassert male dominance through cultural or political narratives.

Morrell et al., study is relevant because it provides a theoretical and empirical lens for understanding how changes in gender power relations, such as those introduced by women's empowerment programmes, may affect men's socio-economic identity and behaviour. It supports

the argument that when men experience economic displacement or loss of authority, social tension and resistance may emerge. However the study does not empirically assess how women's economic empowerment programmes affect men's socio-economic status in specific community settings. This gap reinforces the need for localized empirical research, such as the present study, focusing on peri-urban contexts.

Chulu (2024) conducted a study titled "Exploring Women's Economic Empowerment Programme and its Sustainability Issues: A Case of Chadiza District, Eastern Province, Zambia". The study aimed to identify existing women's economic empowerment programmes, assess their impact on women's livelihoods, and examine sustainability challenges affecting these programmes in Chadiza District.

The findings revealed that women's economic empowerment programmes existed and positively influenced women's livelihoods during the implementation phase (Chulu, 2024). However, the sustainability of these programmes was found to be a major challenge once external support ended. Factors affecting sustainability included limited access to funding, weak monitoring mechanisms, and inadequate training. The study recommended streamlined access to Constituency Development Funds (CDF), improved monitoring, depoliticisation of empowerment programmes, and enhanced training to ensure long-term sustainability.

This study is relevant because it provides context-specific evidence from Zambia on the existence, implementation, and challenges of women's economic empowerment programmes. It demonstrates that such programmes are active and impactful at the community level, thereby setting an important backdrop for examining their wider social implications. However, the study does not explore how women's economic empowerment programmes affect men's socio-economic status, household power relations, or community dynamics. This omission highlights a critical gap in Zambian literature, which the present study seeks to address by focusing on men's socio-economic experiences in peri-urban settings.

Bonilla et al. (2017b) conducted a study titled "Cash for Women's Empowerment? A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of the Government of Zambia's Child Grant Program". The study aimed to examine whether unconditional social cash transfers targeted at women contributed to women's empowerment, particularly in relation to intrahousehold decision-making and financial

autonomy. Quantitative findings revealed that women in beneficiary households experienced modest increases in sole or joint decision-making across several household domains (Bonilla et al., 2017b). On average, women's participation in decision-making increased by 6 percent compared to baseline levels. Qualitative findings showed that women were able to retain control over cash transfers, invest in household needs, and save for emergencies, indicating improved financial empowerment. However, the study also found that changes in household power relations were constrained by entrenched gender norms that continued to position men as household heads and primary decision-makers.

The study by and his colleagues is highly relevant because it provides empirical evidence from Zambia that women-focused empowerment interventions can alter financial roles and decision-making dynamics within households. It also highlights how empowerment gains for women occur alongside persistent male authority structures, creating conditions in which gender relations may become strained or contested. However, while the study captures women's empowerment outcomes and touches on household dynamics, it does not explicitly assess how women's empowerment interventions affect men's socio-economic status, such as employment, income stability, or perceptions of economic displacement. Furthermore, the study is limited to rural settings, leaving peri-urban communities like New Kaseba under-examined.

#### **2.4.2 Strategies to Mitigate Negative Effects Associated with Women's Empowerment Programmes**

Globally, development scholars and practitioners increasingly recognize that women's empowerment programmes, while essential for advancing gender equality, may generate social and economic consequences if not carefully designed. These consequences include heightened household conflict, erosion of traditional support systems, and the marginalization of men within domestic and community spaces (Désilets et al., 2019). As a response, several mitigation strategies have been proposed and empirically supported.

One widely endorsed strategy is inclusive programme design, which actively involves men alongside women throughout the planning and implementation phases of empowerment initiatives (World Bank, 2020). Evidence from programmes supported by the Grameen Foundation demonstrates that engaging men reduces resistance to women's economic

advancement, promotes joint decision-making, and contributes to more equitable distribution of household responsibilities. A study by Delavallade Brar (2023) titled “Publication: Engaging Men for Women’s Economic Empowerment: Overview of the Evidence, also examined global evidence on the effectiveness of engaging men as a strategy for mitigating backlash and relational tension associated with women’s economic empowerment.

The study reviewed three intervention models: programmes that add male-engagement components to women-focused economic initiatives; interventions that promote cooperative household production and joint planning; and initiatives that encourage men to recognize women’s ownership rights over assets (Pierotti, Delavallade and Kaur, 2023). The findings revealed mixed outcomes, with some interventions improving cooperation and joint decision-making, while others risked reducing women’s autonomy when male engagement was poorly designed. The study is significant to the present research as it demonstrates that engaging men can mitigate negative household dynamics, but only when such engagement is carefully structured. However, the study does not sufficiently examine how these strategies affect men’s own socio-economic wellbeing, leaving a gap that the current study seeks to address.

Another important global strategy involves anticipatory assessment of unintended consequences. The Stockholm Environment Institute (Lomax et al., 2023a) introduced the LUCI (Locating the Unintended Consequences of Interventions) tool, which provides a structured framework for identifying how development programmes interact with existing inequalities, incentives, and social norms. The LUCI tool enables practitioners to identify risks such as exclusion, conflict escalation, or reinforcement of power asymmetries before programme implementation (Lomax et al., 2023b).

Its application in diverse development contexts demonstrates that empowerment initiatives can deepen social divisions if group-based inequalities are not adequately considered. The tool therefore emphasizes the importance of conflict-sensitive and inequality-aware programme design. Furthermore, social safeguard mechanisms have been emphasized as essential components of large-scale empowerment initiatives. Tello (2022) highlights the role of participatory planning, grievance redress systems, and gender-sensitive monitoring in preventing

harm and ensuring equitable benefits. Such safeguards allow communities to voice concerns and enable implementers to respond to emerging tensions in a timely manner.

Across Africa, mitigation strategies are increasingly embedded within gender-transformative and community-based approaches aimed at addressing resistance and unintended household consequences arising from women's empowerment programmes. African studies consistently emphasize the importance of contextual sensitivity, given the persistence of deeply rooted gender norms and economic vulnerabilities.

Bapolisi et al. (2024b), in their study titled *Engaging Men in Women's Empowerment: Impact of a Complex Gender Transformative Intervention on Household Socio-economic and Health Outcomes in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo*, assessed a programme combining women's economic empowerment through village savings and loan associations with male sensitization on gender equity. Using a longitudinal cohort design, the study found improvements in household income and food security, although changes in decision-making dynamics and couple cohesion were limited (Bapolisi et al., 2024b). Importantly, the inclusion of men reduced resistance and facilitated cooperation, suggesting that male sensitization and dialogue-based interventions can mitigate backlash and stabilize household relations.

Complementary insights are drawn from gender studies on masculinities in Africa. Morrell, Morrell et al., (Morrell et al., 2012b), in their analysis of hegemonic masculinities in South Africa, argue that empowerment initiatives that overlook male identity and socio-economic pressures risk provoking backlash. Their work highlights the need for community dialogue and norm transformation strategies that address masculinity, power, and economic marginalization simultaneously. Such approaches help reduce defensive reactions among men and foster acceptance of changing gender roles.

Across several African countries, non-governmental organizations have also adopted community mediation and dialogue platforms to manage tensions associated with women's economic advancement (Jaysawal, 2024). These structures provide forums for resolving disputes, negotiating household responsibilities, and reinforcing inclusive norms.

Within Zambia, empirical evidence on strategies to mitigate unintended effects of women's empowerment programmes remains limited, particularly regarding men's socio-economic experiences. However, available studies and programme evaluations provide valuable insights into emerging mitigation approaches.

Chulu (2024) in the study *Exploring Women's Economic Empowerment Programme and its Sustainability Issues: A Case of Chadiza District, Eastern Province, Zambia*, examined women's empowerment initiatives and their long-term viability. While the study primarily focused on women, it identified the absence of inclusive planning and weak community ownership as factors undermining programme sustainability. The author recommended enhanced monitoring, community involvement, and capacity-building to ensure that empowerment programmes do not generate dependency or social tension.

Further evidence is drawn from evaluations of Zambia's Child Grant Programme, analyzed by Bonilla et al. (Bonilla et al., 2017b) in *Cash for Women's Empowerment? A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of the Government of Zambia's Child Grant Program*. The study found that cash transfers increased women's participation in household decision-making but noted that entrenched gender norms limited broader relational change. Qualitative findings revealed that without complementary male engagement strategies, shifts in women's economic power did not substantially alter household authority structures. This underscores the importance of integrated programme designs that address both women's empowerment and men's adaptive responses.

Although Zambia has implemented large-scale programmes such as GEWEL, documented academic literature explicitly examining mitigation strategies for unintended effects on men remains scarce. This gap is particularly evident in peri-urban communities such as New Kaseba, where economic pressures, unemployment, and shifting gender roles intersect.

## **2.5 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

This section presents the theoretical and conceptual foundations that guided the study. The theoretical framework explains the lens through which the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men and community relations were understood, while the conceptual framework illustrates the relationships between key variables examined in the study. Grounding the study in theory was essential for interpreting how shifts in women's access to resources, decision-making

power, and economic opportunities may influence male socio-economic status and social cohesion within peri-urban communities such as New Kaseba.

### **2.5.1 Theoretical Framework**

This study is guided by Conflict Theory and Social Disorganization Theory, which together provides a robust analytical lens for examining how women's empowerment programmes may alter power relations, economic roles, and social order within peri-urban communities.

#### **Conflict Theory**

Conflict Theory, rooted in the work of Karl Marx, views society as characterized by continuous struggles over power and resources among competing groups. The theory views society as a continuous struggle among groups competing for power and resources, emphasizing how inequalities in wealth, status, and power generate conflicts that drive social change (Collins, 1971). It assumes that social change often generates tension when existing hierarchies are challenged, particularly where access to economic resources and authority is unevenly distributed (Main, 2025). Within the context of gender relations, Conflict Theory explains how empowerment initiatives that increase women's access to income, assets, and decision-making authority may disrupt established gendered power structures.

In this study, Conflict Theory was applied to examine how women's empowerment programmes reconfigured household and community power relations in New Kaseba. As women gained economic autonomy and leadership roles, some men experienced a perceived loss of authority traditionally associated with masculinity and breadwinning. This shift had the potential to generate frustration, resistance, and conflict within households, particularly in settings where gender norms strongly prescribe male dominance. Furthermore, the theory helped interpret how economic advancement among women could intensify socio-economic tensions when men faced unemployment or limited livelihood opportunities. Rather than empowerment producing harmony automatically, Conflict Theory suggested that unequal adaptation to change may result in contestation, strained relationships, and altered social roles. Thus, the theory was critical in explaining how empowerment programmes, though progressive in intent, could contribute to male marginalization and household tensions if broader structural inequalities were not addressed.

## **Social Disorganization Theory**

Social Disorganization Theory (SDT), developed by Shaw and McKay (Shaw and McKay, 2002), explains how weakened social structures and economic instability contribute to declining social control and increased disorder within communities. It posits that a neighborhood's structural characteristics, specifically high poverty, residential instability, and racial/ethnic heterogeneity, impede resident organization, leading to higher crime rates. The theory assumes that communities characterized by poverty, unemployment, residential instability, and weak institutions often experience reduced collective efficacy, leading to higher levels of deviant behaviour and social fragmentation (Harbeck, 2023).

In relation to this study, Social Disorganization Theory provided a framework for understanding how male unemployment and social exclusion in New Kaseba influenced broader community stability. As women's empowerment programmes expanded economic opportunities for women, men who remained economically excluded were more vulnerable to stress, loss of identity, and disengagement from productive social roles. These conditions contributed to behaviours such as substance abuse, withdrawal from family responsibilities, and reduced participation in community affairs.

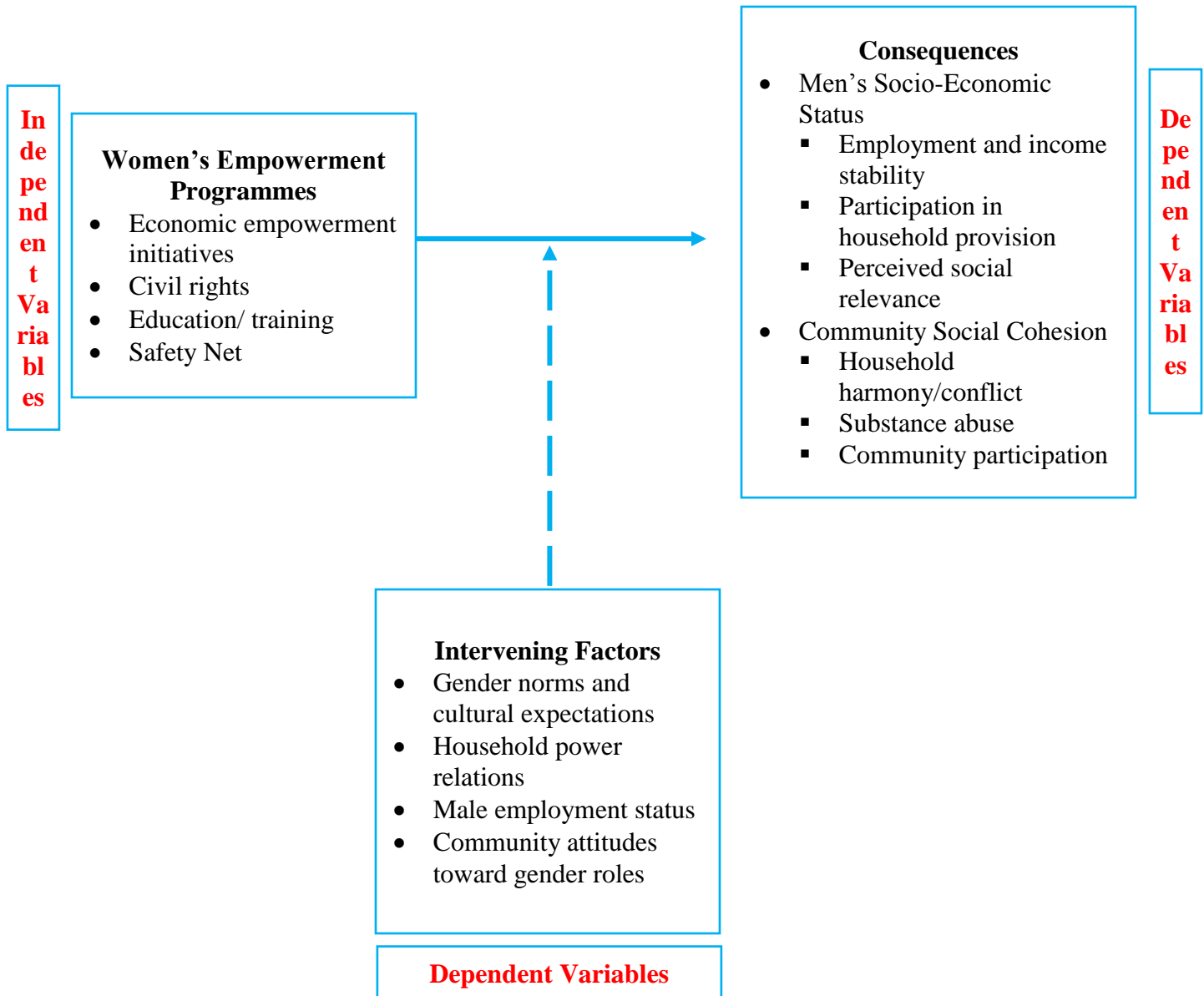
The theory was particularly useful in linking individual-level outcomes to community-level consequences. It explained how economic strain and weakened male roles could undermine informal social controls, erode trust, and diminish cohesion within peri-urban neighbourhoods. By applying Social Disorganization Theory, the study was able to contextualize men's socio-economic challenges within the broader structural conditions shaping social order in New Kaseba.

Together, Conflict Theory and Social Disorganization Theory enabled the study to analyze women's empowerment programmes as social interventions with both redistributive and disruptive potential. Conflict Theory illuminated the power struggles emerging from changing gender relations, while Social Disorganization Theory explained how these struggles translated into social instability when economic exclusion persisted. The integration of these theories strengthened the study's ability to explain the unintended effects of women's empowerment on

men and community cohesion, thereby grounding the findings in established sociological perspectives.

## 2.5.2 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Model



Source: Author

Figure 2.1 above illustrates the relationships between women's empowerment programmes and their effects on men's socio-economic status and community social cohesion in New Kaseba Township. Women's empowerment programmes, serving as the independent variables, encompassed economic empowerment initiatives economic empowerment initiatives, civil rights, education/ training and safety net programmes. These programmes were intended to enhance

women's economic independence and decision-making power within households and communities. The framework identifies several intervening variables that influenced how the empowerment programmes impacted the outcomes. These intervening factors included prevailing gender norms and cultural expectations regarding masculinity, household power relations that dictated decision-making dynamics, the employment status of men, and community attitudes towards gender roles. These factors shaped the extent to which men experienced shifts in socio-economic status and social identity in response to women's increased empowerment.

The dependent variables in the framework were programme effects on men including their effects on men's socio-economic status and community social cohesion. Men's socio-economic status was assessed through indicators such as employment opportunities, income stability, and participation in household provisioning. Community social cohesion was reflected in measures such as household harmony, the prevalence of conflict, substance abuse, and levels of community engagement. The framework demonstrated that the interplay of independent and intervening variables determined whether empowerment programmes led to positive outcomes, such as improved cooperation, or unintended consequences, like increased tension and marginalization of men.

Overall, the conceptual framework provided a structured approach to understand how women's empowerment programmes influenced men's socio-economic experiences and community dynamics. It emphasized that the effects of these programmes were mediated by social, cultural, and economic factors, highlighting the complex and multifaceted nature of gender dynamics in peri-urban settings.

## **2.6 Research Gaps**

Despite extensive global and regional literature on women's economic empowerment programmes, a significant gap remains in how these interventions affect men's socio-economic status. Most existing studies primarily focus on outcomes for women, such as income generation, decision-making power, and livelihood improvement, while treating men's experiences as secondary or indirect. Where men are mentioned, the emphasis is often on perceptions, attitudes, or household tensions rather than measurable socio-economic outcomes such as employment status, income stability, and participation in household provisioning. This limits a holistic

understanding of empowerment as a relational and gendered process, creating a knowledge gap regarding how shifts in women's economic power may reconfigure men's economic roles and social identities.

At the regional and African level, empirical evidence increasingly acknowledges that women's empowerment programmes can influence gender relations and household dynamics; however, few studies systematically examine men as direct units of analysis. Many studies assess outcomes at the household level or rely on women's reports, thereby obscuring men's lived socio-economic experiences. Furthermore, existing African studies are largely situated in rural or agricultural contexts, leaving peri-urban settings underexplored. Peri-urban communities face distinct challenges, including high unemployment, informal livelihoods, and social instability, which may intensify the unintended effects of empowerment programmes. The lack of context-specific evidence limits the applicability of existing findings to rapidly growing peri-urban settlements.

In Zambia, the research gap is even more pronounced. While studies document the presence, effectiveness, and sustainability challenges of women's empowerment programmes, there is minimal empirical research examining how these initiatives affect men's socio-economic status, household power relations, and community social cohesion. Existing studies largely concentrate on women's outcomes or programme implementation issues, with little attention to men's economic participation, perceived relevance, or adaptive responses. Moreover, peri-urban communities such as New Kaseba remain largely absent from academic inquiry, despite their vulnerability to economic exclusion and social disorganization. This study therefore addresses a critical gap by empirically examining the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men's socio-economic status and community dynamics in a peri-urban Zambian context.

## **CHAPTER 3 : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Chapter overview**

This chapter presents the research methodology that was employed in the study to investigate the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men in New Kaseba Township, Kafue District. It outlines the philosophical orientation that guided the study, the research design and approach adopted, and the procedures used to select respondents and generate data relevant to the study objectives. Specifically, the chapter is structured into sections covering the research philosophy, research design, and research approach. It further describes the study population, sample size, and sampling procedures used to select respondents. The chapter also details the data collection instruments employed, the methods of data analysis, and the measures taken to ensure reliability and validity of the findings. Finally, ethical considerations observed during the research process are discussed to demonstrate compliance with accepted research standards.

### **3.1 Research Design**

The study employed a descriptive case study research design, which was appropriate for examining the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men within a specific geographical and social context. The case study design enabled an in-depth investigation of men's experiences, perceptions, and socio-economic outcomes in New Kaseba Township, Kafue District. This design was suitable because the study focused on understanding a real-life phenomenon within its natural setting, where contextual factors such as gender norms and household power relations influenced outcomes. By concentrating on a single case, the design allowed for a detailed and contextualized analysis of the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men, rather than broad generalizations.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

The study adopted a mixed methods research approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques in data collection and analysis. The quantitative approach enabled the study to measure observable effects of women's empowerment programmes on men, such as employment status, income-related changes, and participation in household economic activities. The qualitative approach complemented this by capturing men's personal experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of changes resulting from women's empowerment initiatives.

The combination of these approaches enhanced the depth and credibility of the findings, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men in New Kaseba Township.

### **3.3 Study Population**

The study population comprised men residing in New Kaseba Township, Kafue District, whose socio-economic experiences were potentially influenced by women's empowerment programmes operating in the area. Specifically, the population included adult men aged 18 years and above who had lived in New Kaseba Township for a minimum period of six months, ensuring adequate exposure to the social and economic changes associated with women's empowerment initiatives. The population also included men who were unemployed or engaged in informal economic activities, as these groups were more likely to experience shifts in household roles and economic responsibilities. In addition, a limited number of key informants involved in women's empowerment programmes were included to provide contextual information relevant to men's experiences.

### **3.4 Study Sample and Sample Size**

The study sample consisted of 120 respondents drawn from New Kaseba Township, Kafue District. The sample was composed primarily of men, who formed the main unit of analysis for the study, as the research focused on examining the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men. The selected sample size was considered adequate to generate meaningful quantitative patterns while also allowing for in-depth qualitative inquiry. A combination of structured questionnaires administered to male respondents and key informant interviews with selected stakeholders involved in women's empowerment initiatives was used. The sample size was determined based on the study objectives, time constraints, and resource availability, while ensuring sufficient representation of men who had been exposed to women's empowerment programmes within the township.

### **3.5 Sampling Procedure**

The study employed a mixed-methods sampling strategy that integrated stratified random sampling for the quantitative component and purposive sampling for the qualitative component. For the quantitative aspect, stratified random sampling was used to select male respondents by

categorizing them into relevant strata based on employment status, such as employed, unemployed, and informally employed men. This ensured that variations in men's socio-economic experiences were adequately represented in the sample. Within each stratum, respondents were randomly selected to minimize selection bias and enhance representativeness.

For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was used to select participants who possessed relevant knowledge and experiences related to women's empowerment programmes, including men directly affected by these programmes and key informants involved in their implementation. This approach enabled the study to obtain both generalizable quantitative data and rich, in-depth qualitative insights.

### **3.6 Data Collection Instruments**

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments in order to generate comprehensive data relevant to the study objectives. A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from male respondents, focusing on demographic characteristics, employment status, income-related changes, and perceptions of the effects of women's empowerment programmes. The questionnaire consisted mainly of closed-ended questions to facilitate systematic analysis. In addition, semi-structured interview guides were used to collect qualitative data from selected men and key informants involved in women's empowerment initiatives. The interview guides allowed respondents to express their experiences and views in detail, thereby providing deeper insights into how women's empowerment programmes affected men. The use of multiple instruments enhanced data triangulation and strengthened the credibility of the study findings.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative techniques in line with the mixed-methods research approach. Quantitative data obtained through structured questionnaires were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and tables were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and examine patterns related to men's employment status and economic experiences.

Qualitative data generated from semi-structured interviews were analyzed thematically through content analysis. Interview responses were transcribed, coded, and organized into themes aligned with the study objectives. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings enabled a comprehensive interpretation of the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men in New Kaseba Township.

### **3.8 Reliability and Validity**

Reliability refers to the consistency and dependability of the research instruments in producing stable and repeatable results (Abowitz and Toole, 2010; Mohajan, 2018). In this study, reliability was enhanced through the use of standardized data collection instruments, particularly the structured questionnaire, which was administered uniformly to all respondents. The questionnaire items were carefully designed to align with the study objectives and were reviewed to ensure clarity and consistency. A pilot test was conducted with a small group of respondents from a nearby community with similar characteristics to New Kaseba Township. Feedback from the pilot study was used to refine ambiguous questions and improve the overall reliability of the instrument.

Validity refers to the extent to which the research instruments accurately measured what they were intended to measure (Abowitz and Toole, 2010). Content validity was ensured by developing the questionnaire and interview guides based on existing literature on women's empowerment and men's socio-economic outcomes. In addition, expert guidance from the research supervisor was incorporated to confirm the relevance and adequacy of the instruments. Construct validity was strengthened through the use of multiple data sources, including questionnaires and interviews, allowing for triangulation of findings. The mixed-methods approach further enhanced validity by integrating quantitative results with qualitative insights, thereby providing a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

The study observed strict ethical standards throughout the research process to protect participants and ensure integrity. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to participation, and they were provided with detailed information about the purpose of the study, their role, and

the voluntary nature of their participation. Respondents were assured that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by assigning codes to all respondents instead of using personal identifiers. Data collected through questionnaires and interviews were securely stored and only accessed by the research team. All reports and publications presented aggregate findings, ensuring that no individual could be identified, thereby protecting participants' privacy and maintaining trust.

The study also considered potential social and cultural sensitivities. Questions were framed carefully to avoid causing distress or discomfort, particularly around sensitive topics such as unemployment and household roles. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Lusaka, and the research adhered to institutional guidelines, including respect for local norms and obtaining permissions from community leaders in New Kaseba Township prior to data collection.

## CHAPTER 4 : PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 4.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study on the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men in New Kaseba Township, Kafue District. The chapter is structured into two main sections. Section 4.1 presents the study findings, beginning with the demographic characteristics of the respondents, followed by an examination of women's empowerment programmes operating in New Kaseba Township, the effects of women's economic empowerment programmes on men, and the strategies put in place to mitigate negative effects associated with these programmes. Section 4.2 discusses the findings in relation to the study objectives, relevant literature, and the theoretical framework.

### 4.1 Findings

#### 4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study. The demographic variables presented include age, marital status, level of education, and employment status, all of which have implications for men's socio-economic experiences and responses to women's empowerment initiatives.

##### 4.1.1.1 Gender of Respondents

The first demographic aspect considered in the study was the gender distribution of respondents who took part in the study. Although the study primarily focused on men, establishing the gender composition of respondents was necessary to provide clarity on the overall sample structure.

**Table 4.1:** *Gender Distribution of respondents*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	120	100
Female	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

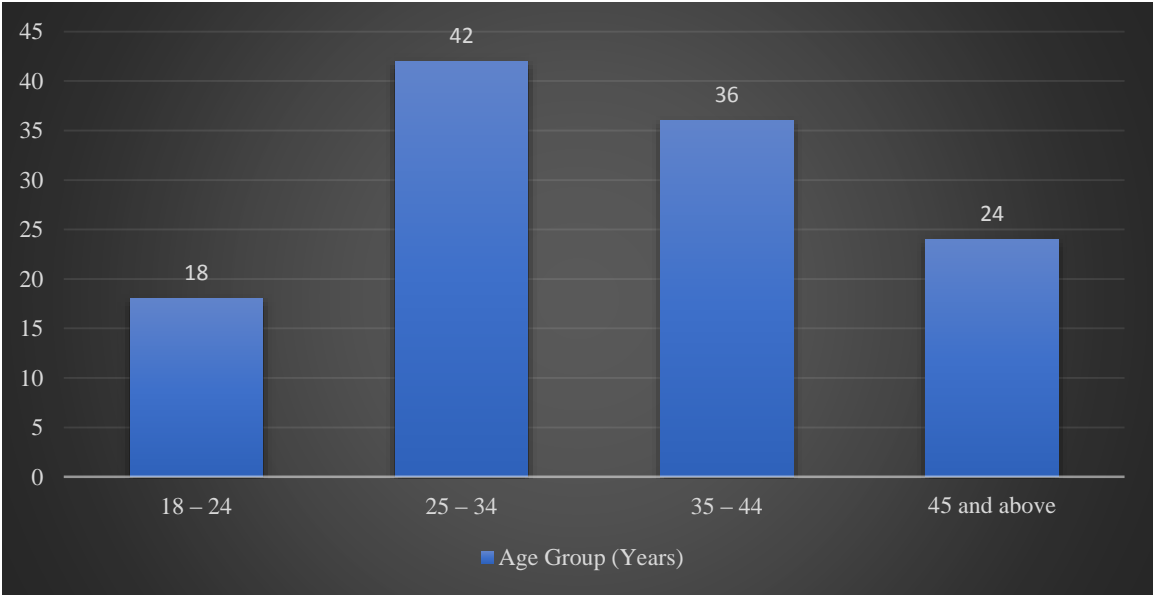
**Source:** *Field Data*

Table 4.1 presents the gender distribution of respondents who participated in the study. The findings show that all 120 respondents were male, representing 100 percent of the sample, while no female respondents were included. This distribution reflects the deliberate methodological decision taken in the study to focus exclusively on men as the main unit of analysis. As outlined in Chapter Three, the study investigated the effects of women’s empowerment programmes on men in New Kaseba Township. Consequently, male respondents were considered the most appropriate source of information regarding changes in household dynamics, economic roles, and social experiences arising from women’s participation in empowerment initiatives. Although women are the direct beneficiaries of empowerment programmes, understanding men’s perceptions, responses, and experiences required a male-only sample.

**4.1.1.2 Age**

Another demographic aspect the researcher considered significant in understanding the characteristics of the respondents was age distribution. Age was considered important because it provides insight into the life stage, economic activity, and social responsibilities of the respondents, which may influence how men experience and respond to women’s empowerment programmes within the household and community.

*Figure 4.1: The Distribution of Participants based on their Age*



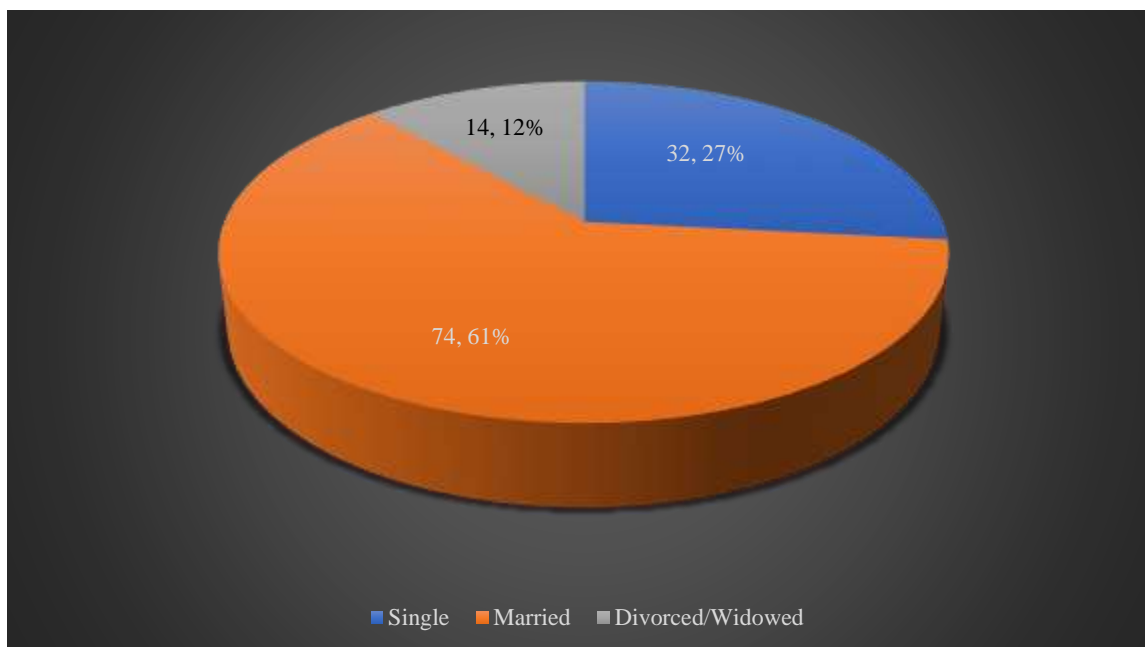
**Source:** *Field Data*

The findings in Figure 4.1 on the previous page indicate that the majority of respondents (78) were within the age range of 25 to 44 years. This age group represents the most economically active segment of the population and is typically associated with greater household responsibilities, including income generation and decision-making. A smaller proportion of respondents (18) fell within the 18–24 years age group, suggesting limited exposure to long-term household responsibilities and empowerment programme impacts. Meanwhile, 24 of the respondents were aged 45 years and above, a group often characterized by more entrenched gender norms and traditional perceptions of male authority. The presence of respondents across diverse age categories enhanced the study’s ability to capture varying experiences and perceptions of men regarding women’s empowerment programmes in New Kaseba Township.

#### 4.1.1.3 Marital Status

Another demographic aspect the researcher considered significant in understanding the demographic characteristics of the respondents was marital status. Marital status was considered important because the effects of women’s empowerment programmes on men are often mediated through household relations, particularly within marital or intimate partnerships. Figure 4.2 depict the findings in this regard.

**Figure 4.2:** *Distribution of Respondents based on their Marital Status*



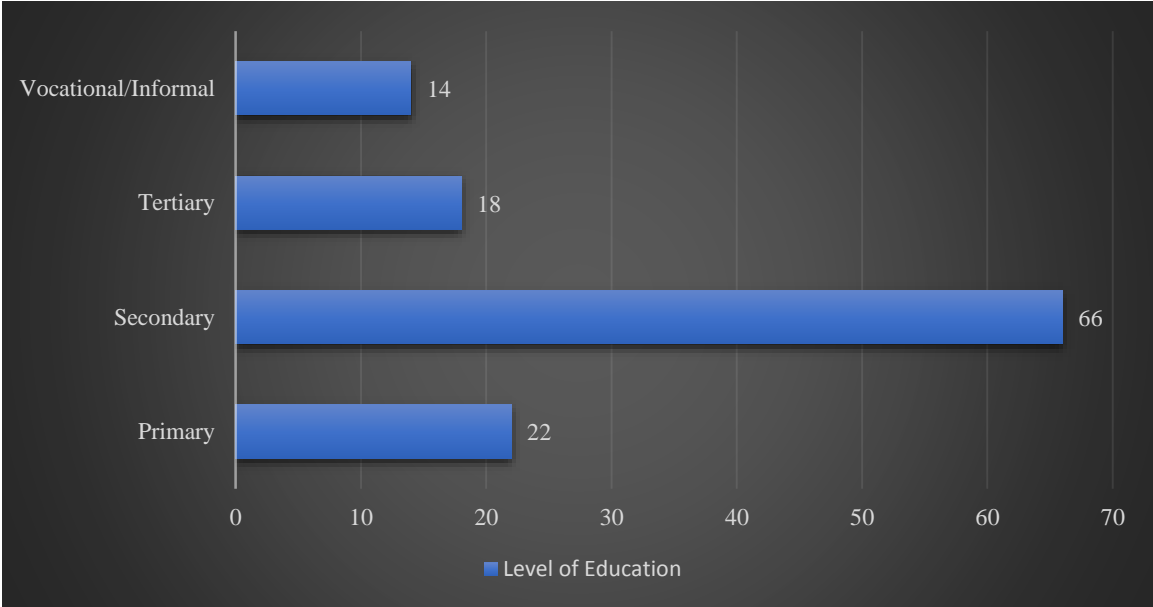
**Source:** *Field Data*

Figure 4.2 shows that the majority of respondents were married, accounting for 74 respondents (61%) of the total sample. Single respondents constituted 32 respondents (27%), while divorced or widowed respondents accounted for 14 respondents (12%). The dominance of married respondents suggests that most participants were engaged in household settings where women’s empowerment programmes are likely to have direct implications for gender roles, resource control, and economic responsibilities. This is particularly relevant to the study, as changes in women’s economic status may influence men’s socio-economic positioning, especially in households where men traditionally assume the role of primary providers. The presence of single, divorced, and widowed respondents also provides important perspectives on how empowerment programmes affect men outside formal marital arrangements, where social expectations and economic pressures may differ.

**4.1.1.4 Level of Education**

In understanding the background characteristics of the respondents, another demographic aspect the researcher considered significant was their level of education. Educational attainment is an important variable because it provides insight into how men interpret and respond to shifts in economic roles and responsibilities within households. Figure 4.3 below depicts the findings in this regard.

**Figure 4.3:** *Distribution of Participants Based on Level of Education*



**Source:** *Field Data*

#### 4.1.1.5 Employment Status

The last demographic aspect the researcher considered significant was the employment status of the respondents. Employment status was considered important because it directly influences men's economic security, household responsibilities, and social identity, all of which shape how men experience and respond to women's empowerment programmes. Variations in employment status may determine whether women's increased economic participation is perceived as supportive, neutral, or threatening within the household. Table 4.2 presents the distribution of respondents based on their employment status.

**Table 4.2:** *Distribution of respondents based on Employment Status*

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Informal/Self-employed	54	45.0
Formal Employment	28	23.3
Unemployed	38	31.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** *Field Data*

The findings in Table 4.2 show that the majority of respondents, 54 (45.0%), were engaged in informal or self-employment. This indicates that a large proportion of men in New Kaseba Township rely on unstable and irregular sources of income, which may increase economic insecurity within households. In such contexts, women's participation in economic empowerment programmes may alter traditional provider roles, potentially affecting men's perceptions of their economic relevance.

Further, 28 respondents (23.3%) were in formal employment, representing men with relatively stable income sources. For this group, women's economic empowerment may be viewed as complementary to household income rather than a direct challenge to male authority or responsibility. Additionally, 38 respondents (31.7%) were unemployed, forming a considerable proportion of the sample. Unemployment among men is particularly significant in relation to women's empowerment programmes, as it may intensify feelings of loss of status and control

traditionally associated with male breadwinning. Consequently, women's access to income-generating opportunities may necessitate a renegotiation of gender roles and power relations within households.

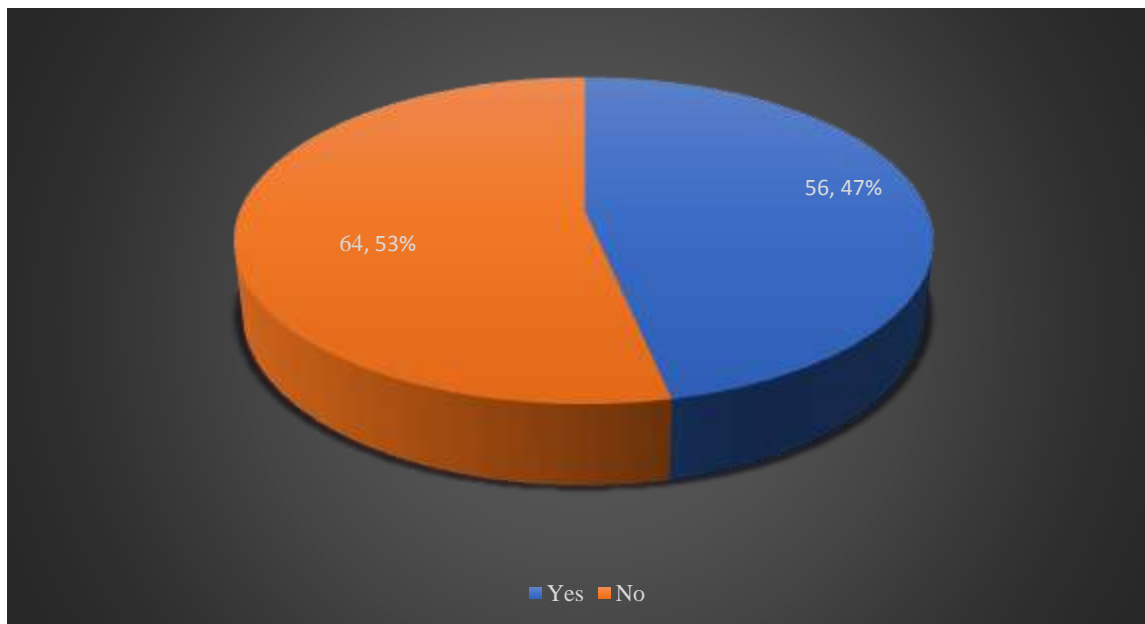
#### 4.1.2 Women's Empowerment Programmes Operating in New Kaseba Township

This section presents the findings related to the first specific objective of the study: **to identify women's economic empowerment programmes operating in New Kaseba Township.** Although women are the direct beneficiaries of these initiatives, the study focused on men as respondents, examining their awareness, perceptions, and indirect interactions with these programmes. The section is organized under three subsections: awareness of programmes, types of empowerment initiatives and implementing organizations, and forms and duration of support.

##### 4.1.2.1 Awareness of Women's Empowerment Programmes

The first aspect considered was men's awareness of women's economic empowerment programmes operating in New Kaseba Township. Awareness was considered important because men's knowledge of these programmes may influence their perceptions, attitudes, and responses to women's participation in economic empowerment initiatives.

**Figure 4.4:** *Awareness of Women's Empowerment Programmes*



Source: *Field Data*

As shown in Table 4.4, less than half of the male respondents (46.7%) reported being aware of women's empowerment programmes, while the majority (53.3%) were unaware. This finding suggests that communication and outreach efforts for these programmes primarily target women and that men are often informed indirectly, such as through spouses or community meetings. Limited awareness among men is significant because men's perceptions and household roles influence how women's empowerment translates into changes in family economic dynamics. One participant explained:

*"We hear about the programmes from our wives or at community meetings. Most of us are not directly involved, so we know only what is shared."*

This narrative indicates that men's knowledge of empowerment initiatives is primarily mediated through women or communal information-sharing platforms rather than through direct engagement with programme activities. Such indirect awareness may limit men's understanding of the objectives and long-term implications of the programmes. Similarly, another respondent noted:

*"Sometimes we only realise these programmes exist when our wives start attending meetings or receiving support. Information about them does not usually target men."*

This account suggests that communication surrounding women's empowerment programmes tends to prioritise women as beneficiaries, with limited deliberate inclusion of men. As a result, men's awareness remains partial, which may contribute to misconceptions or uncertainty regarding the purpose and outcomes of these initiatives within households and the wider community.

#### **4.1.2.2 Types of Empowerment Programmes and Implementing Organizations**

The study next examined the types of women's economic empowerment programmes and the organizations responsible for their implementation. Table 4.5 summarizes the types of programmes reported by respondents.

**Table 4.3: Types of Empowerment Programmes (n = 56)**

<b>Programme Type</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Village banking	15	26.8
Poultry farming	12	21.4
Agricultural input support	11	19.6
Skills training (tailoring, crafts)	8	14.3
Loans/grants	10	17.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Data**

Among the men aware of women’s empowerment programmes, the findings in Table 4.3 indicate that village banking initiatives were the most common, accounting for 26.8% (15 participants) of the total. This was followed by poultry farming programmes, which engaged 21.4% (12 participants), and agricultural input support programmes, with 19.6% (11 participants) of respondents. Loans and grants were accessed by 17.9% (10 participants), while skills training programmes, such as tailoring and crafts, had the lowest participation at 14.3% (8 participants). Overall, the data suggests that financial and agricultural support programmes were more widely accessed compared to skills-based training programmes, indicating a stronger focus on economic empowerment and immediate income-generating activities among participants.

### **Implementing Organizations**

Respondents identified the main implementers of these programmes. Community-based groups were the most frequently cited, followed by government institutions, NGOs, and religious organizations. A participant remarked:

*“Most empowerment programmes are primarily organized by women’s groups or local churches. While NGOs occasionally provide training sessions, these initiatives rarely engage men, highlighting a gendered focus in programme implementation.”*

Another participant narrated:

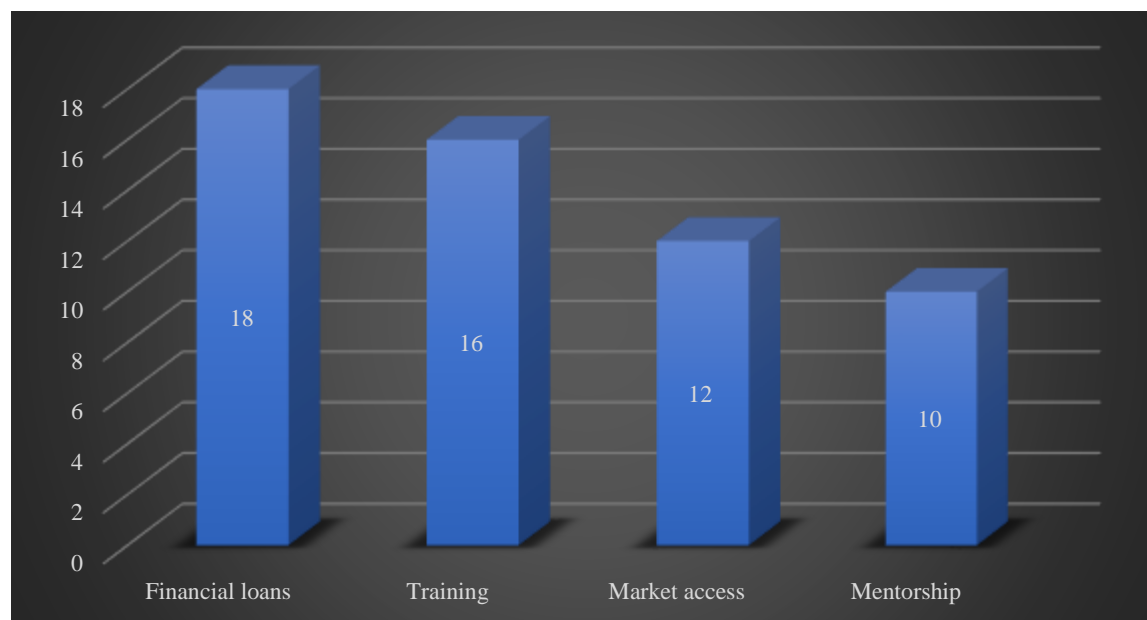
*“Empowerment initiatives are largely driven by women’s groups and church networks. Although NGOs sometimes offer technical support and training, these programmes seldom include men as active participants.”*

This underscores the gendered focus of programme delivery, with men largely observing from the periphery.

#### **4.1.2.3 Forms and Duration of Support**

In trying to identify women’s economic empowerment programmes operating in New Kaseba Township, the final aspect the researcher considered was the form of support provided to participants, as well as the duration of men’s awareness or indirect exposure to empowerment initiatives. Figure 4.5 presents a summary of the various forms of support reported by respondents, highlighting the types of assistance received and how long men were indirectly involved or aware of the programmes.

**Figure 4.5: Forms of Support Provided (n = 56)**



**Source:** *Field Data*

The study examined the different forms of support accessed by participants in empowerment programmes. Financial loans emerged as the most frequently provided support, with 18 respondents receiving this form of assistance. Training programmes followed closely, reaching

16 participants, while market access support was reported by 12 respondents. Mentorship was the least common form of support, accessed by 10 participants. Overall, the findings indicate that financial and skill-based support (loans and training) dominate empowerment programmes, reflecting a focus on improving participants' economic capacity and practical knowledge. In contrast, mentorship and market facilitation are less frequently provided, suggesting areas where programme support could be expanded to enhance long-term sustainability.

In regard to the duration of the programmes, most respondents indicated that the women they knew had joined programmes within the last year, while fewer reported engagement exceeding five years. This suggests that many programmes are relatively recent or that sustained participation is challenging. One male participant noted:

*"I see most of the women in my community joining village savings groups and learning skills, but many only recently started. It is still new, and some of us are unsure how it affects our households."*

Another stated:

*"I notice that many women are now involved in village banking and learning different skills, but this has mostly happened within the last year."*

#### **4.1.3 Effects of Women's Economic Empowerment Programmes on Men in New Kaseba**

This section presents findings related to the second objective of the study, which sought to examine the effects of women's economic empowerment programmes on men in New Kaseba Township. Analysis in this section is based on 56 male respondents who indicated awareness of women's empowerment programmes, as only respondents with such awareness were in a position to meaningfully assess their effects. The findings are organized under key thematic areas capturing changes in men's economic roles, behavioural responses, perceived opportunities and challenges, and household relations.

##### **4.1.3.1 Perceived Changes in Men's Economic Roles**

The study first examined whether men perceived any changes in their economic roles arising from women's participation in economic empowerment programmes. Respondents were asked to reflect on shifts in income contribution, financial responsibility, and decision-making roles within the household following women's involvement in these initiatives.

**Table 4.4:** *Perceived Changes in Men's Economic Roles (n = 56)*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	24	43%
No	18	32%
Not sure	14	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>

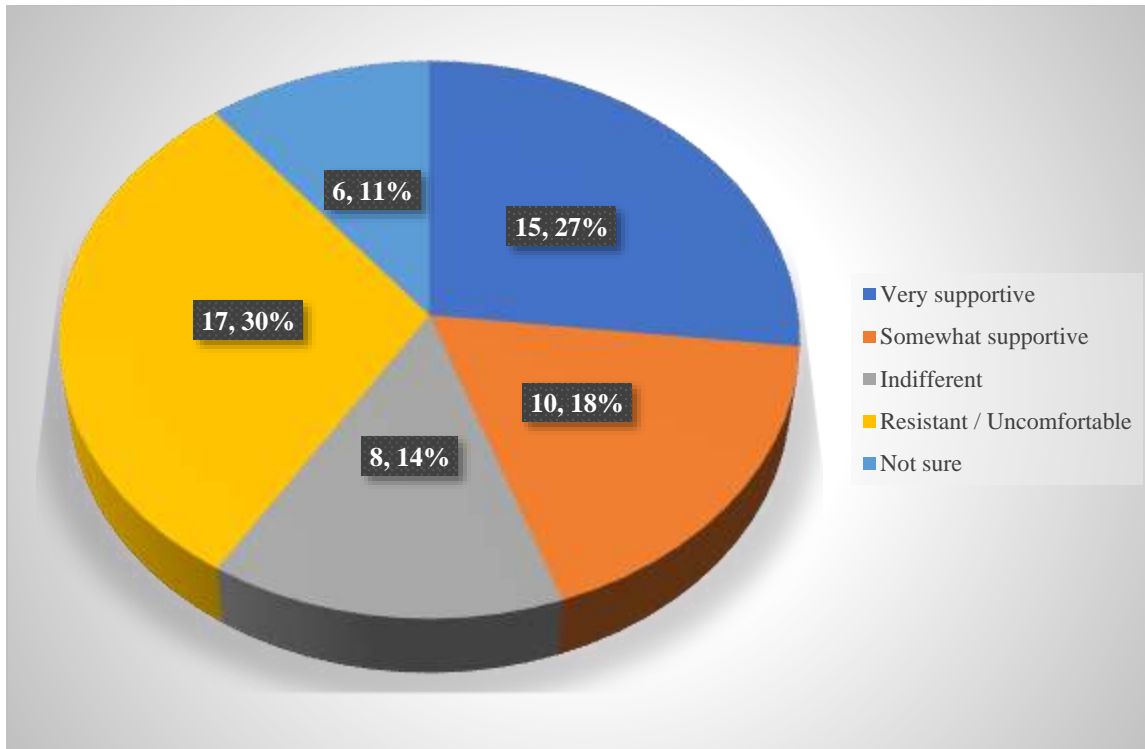
**Source:** *Field Data*

The findings in Table 4.4 above show that 43% of respondents acknowledged changes in men's economic roles following women's engagement in empowerment programmes. About 32% reported no noticeable change, while 25% were uncertain. This suggests that although women's economic participation has altered household economic arrangements in some cases, such changes are not uniformly experienced across households. The relatively high proportion of uncertainty indicates that shifts in men's roles may be gradual, indirect, or context-specific rather than overt.

#### **4.1.3.2 Men's Responses to Women's Participation in Empowerment Programmes**

The study further assessed men's attitudinal responses toward women's involvement in empowerment initiatives.

**Figure 4.6:** *Men's Responses to Women's Participation in Empowerment Programmes (n = 56)*



**Source:** *Field Data*

The findings show mixed attitudinal responses among men toward women’s participation in empowerment programmes. Overall, supportive attitudes dominated, with 45% of respondents indicating that men were either very supportive (26.8%) or somewhat supportive (17.9%). Support was often linked to situations where women’s economic activities contributed positively to household income and welfare. However, a notable proportion of respondents (30.4%) reported resistance or discomfort, suggesting unease with changing gender roles and shifts in traditional economic responsibilities. Meanwhile, 25% of respondents were either indifferent (14.3%) or unsure (10.6%), indicating limited engagement or uncertainty about the implications of women’s economic empowerment.

One male respondent noted:

*“I support my wife’s involvement in these programmes because the money she makes helps the household and reduces the pressure on me as the sole provider.”*

Another narrated:

*“I feel uncomfortable sometimes because things are changing. Women are now making money and decisions, and it takes time for some of us to adjust to these new roles.”*

Yet another respondent commented:

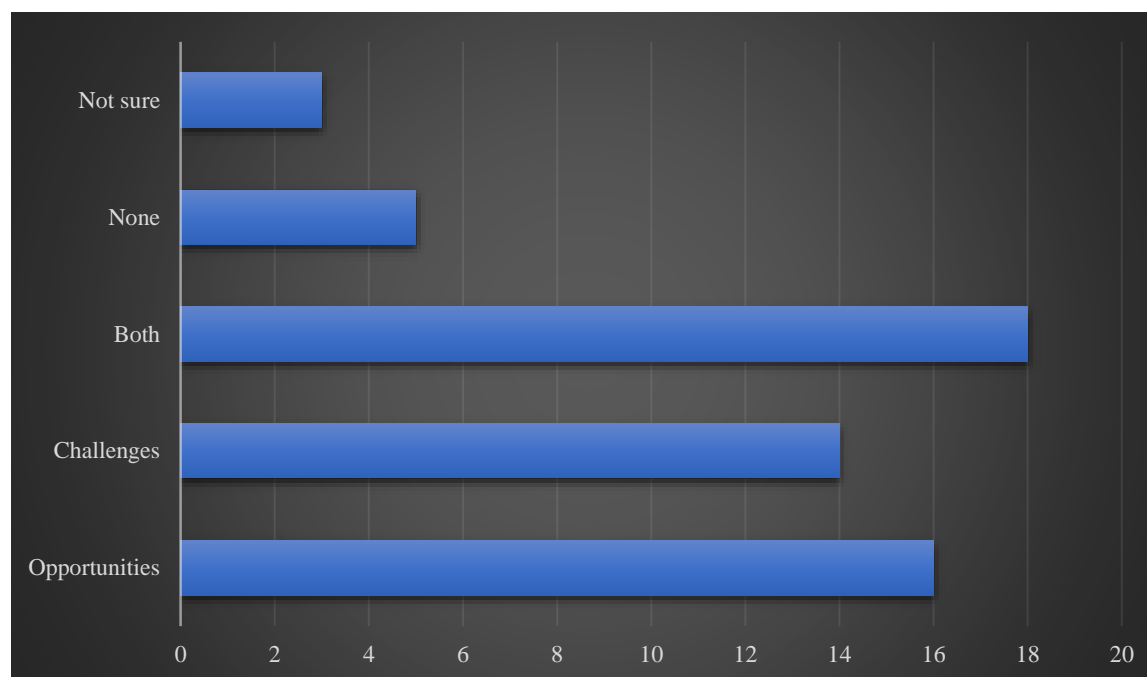
*“When my wife started making money, things improved at home, but sometimes I feel like my role as the provider is no longer clear.”*

Overall, the results reveal a divided response among men, reflecting both appreciation of the economic benefits brought by women’s participation and tension arising from perceived challenges to established gender norms.

#### **4.1.3.3 Opportunities and Challenges Experienced by Men**

Respondents were also asked to identify whether women’s economic empowerment programmes had created opportunities or challenges for them within their households or other men within the wider community. This was done in order to capture the diverse and potentially contrasting ways in which these programmes affect men’s economic roles, household responsibilities, and social relations. Figure 4.7 on the next page depict the findings in this regard.

**Figure 4.7:** *Opportunities and Challenges for Men Resulting from Women’s Empowerment (n = 56)*



**Source:** *Field Data*

The findings indicate that men experienced mixed effects from women’s empowerment programmes. The largest proportion of respondents (32%) reported experiencing both opportunities and challenges, suggesting that empowerment initiatives have complex and multifaceted impacts. Additionally, 29% identified opportunities only, while 25% reported challenges, reflecting varied individual experiences. A smaller proportion (9%) indicated no noticeable effects, and 5% were unsure. Overall, the results highlight that women’s economic empowerment generates both positive and challenging outcomes for men, rather than uniformly benefiting or disadvantaging them.

One participant narrated:

*“I see opportunities because my wife’s poultry farming and savings group earnings help pay school fees and buy household necessities, which makes life easier for all of us.”*

Another participant said:

*“I benefit when women participate in skills training and sell their crafts; the extra income allows us to save and invest in small family projects.”*

Yet another participant stated:

*“I see both sides because while her income from village banking and selling vegetables helps with groceries and bills, it sometimes leads to disagreements about who decides how money is spent.”*

These narrations show that men recognize tangible benefits from women’s empowerment, such as contributions to household expenses, school fees, and savings. At the same time, some men experience challenges, particularly around decision-making and the redistribution of financial responsibilities, highlighting that empowerment creates both practical opportunities and adjustments in household dynamics.

#### **4.1.3.4 Behavioural and Household-Level Effects**

The study also examined whether women’s economic empowerment contributed to household disagreements or behavioural changes among men.

**Table 4.5:** *Whether Men’s Experiences of Household Disagreements Related to Women’s Empowerment*

<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Experienced disagreements	21	38
No disagreements	19	34
Not sure	16	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** *Field Data*

The findings show that over one-third of men (38%) experienced disagreements linked to women’s participation in empowerment programmes, mainly concerning financial decision-making and household authority. A slightly smaller proportion (34%) reported no disagreements, while 28% were unsure. These results suggest that while empowerment initiatives increase women’s economic agency, they may also generate household tension in contexts where traditional gender roles are still strongly expected.

Interview narratives further illustrated the complex and sometimes contradictory effects of women's economic empowerment programmes on men's socio-economic roles within households. Several male respondents expressed a perceived loss of authority over financial decision-making, particularly where programme benefits such as loans and grants were registered solely in women's names. One respondent remarked:

*"Before, decisions were mine. Now my wife decides on money matters because the loans are in her name."*

This statement reflects a sense of displacement and diminished control, suggesting that economic empowerment initiatives may unintentionally alter traditional household power structures in ways that some men find challenging to navigate. For these men, economic authority remained closely tied to notions of masculinity and household leadership.

However, contrasting narratives revealed that not all men interpreted these changes negatively. Some respondents acknowledged that women's increased income had led to tangible improvements in household welfare and stability. As one participant explained:

*"It is better now. Children eat well and school fees are paid. I support my wife even if she earns more."*

This perspective highlights a pragmatic acceptance of shifting economic roles, where improved family outcomes outweighed concerns over traditional gender hierarchies. Such responses indicate that men's reactions to women's empowerment are not uniform but shaped by perceived household benefits and personal adaptability.

Additional narratives further underscored this diversity of experiences. One respondent noted:

*"When my wife joined the programme, I felt left out at first, but later I saw that our home was improving. We now plan together, even if the money comes through her."*

This illustrates a gradual adjustment process in which initial resistance gave way to cooperation and shared decision-making. Conversely, another participant stated:

*"Sometimes I feel useless because I am not the one providing anymore, and people in the community talk."*

This response reveals the social pressures men face beyond the household, where community expectations and norms continue to associate masculinity with sole economic provision men in New Kaseba Township.

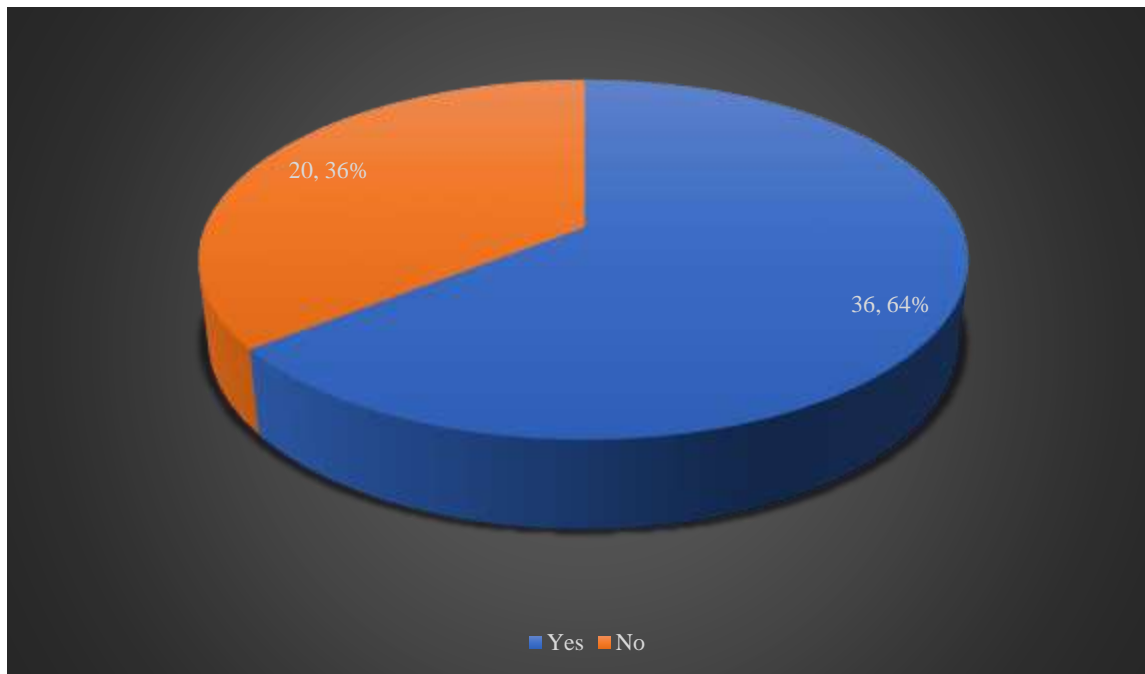
#### **4.1.3 Strategies Put in Place to Mitigate Negative Effects Associated with Women’s Empowerment Programmes in New Kaseba Township**

This section presents findings related to the third objective of the study, which sought to identify strategies put in place to mitigate negative effects associated with women’s empowerment programmes in New Kaseba Township. The analysis focuses on men’s awareness and perceptions of these strategies, drawing only from respondents who were aware of women’s empowerment programmes (n = 56). The section examines the existence of mitigation strategies, their perceived effectiveness, and men’s views on future programme design.

##### **4.1.4.1 Existence of Strategies to Mitigate Negative Effects**

The first aspect examined was whether men were aware of any strategies aimed at reducing tensions or negative outcomes associated with women’s empowerment initiatives.

**Figure 4.8:** *Awareness of Mitigation Strategies (n = 56)*



**Source:** *Field Data*

As shown in Table 4.8, nearly two-thirds of respondents (64.3%) acknowledged the existence of local strategies designed to harmonize household and community relations following women's participation in empowerment programmes. Reported strategies included community dialogues, church meetings, family counselling sessions, and NGO-led sensitization forums. However, over one-third of respondents (35.7%) were unaware of any such initiatives, suggesting that mitigation efforts are unevenly implemented or poorly communicated, particularly to men, who may not always be actively included in these awareness efforts.

One respondent noted:

*"I know that our community holds meetings and church forums where men and women discuss how to manage household responsibilities after women start earning, and this helps reduce disagreements."*

Another respondent noted:

*"There are meetings organized by the church and sometimes NGOs, but not all men are informed. Mostly women attend."*

Another participant added:

*"I am not sure if there are any programmes to guide men on how to adjust when women begin participating in these economic activities; I have never been informed about such initiatives."*

The narrations highlight that while some men are aware of community and church-based forums aimed at reducing household tensions, awareness is unevenly distributed. Certain initiatives, such as meetings organized by NGOs or the church, primarily reach women, leaving many men uninformed about strategies to adjust to shifting household roles. This underscores the need for more inclusive communication and engagement of men in mitigation efforts to ensure that empowerment programmes have positive and harmonious effects at the household level.

#### **4.1.4.2 Perceived Effectiveness of Mitigation Strategies**

Respondents who were aware of mitigation strategies were further asked to assess their effectiveness. The Findings in this regard are depicted in Table 4.6 on the next page.

**Table 4.6: Perceived Effectiveness of Mitigation Strategies (n = 56)**

<b>Effectiveness Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very effective	21	37.5
Fairly effective	12	21.4
Not effective	13	23.2
Not sure	10	17.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** *Field Data*

Table 4.13 indicates mixed perceptions regarding the effectiveness of mitigation strategies. While 37.5% of respondents viewed the strategies as very effective, nearly a quarter (23.2%) considered them ineffective, and a notable proportion remained uncertain. These findings suggest that although mitigation mechanisms exist, their impact is inconsistent, often depending on the level of male participation and regularity of implementation. A participant explained:

*“When men attend these meetings, misunderstandings reduce at home. But many times, only women are involved, so the message does not reach us.”*

#### **4.1.4.3 Men’s Views on Inclusion in Future Empowerment Programmes**

The study also examined men’s opinions on whether future women’s empowerment programmes should deliberately include men.

**Table 4.7: Should Men Be Included in Future Empowerment Programmes? (n = 56)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	40	71.4
No	9	16.1
Not sure	7	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** *Field Data*

A strong majority of respondents (71.4%) supported the inclusion of men in future empowerment initiatives. This reflects recognition among men that male exclusion contributes to misunderstandings, resistance, and household conflict. Those opposing inclusion expressed concern that male participation might dilute women's gains, while undecided respondents cited uncertainty about programme intentions.

One participant who happens to be a community elder emphasized:

*“Empowerment should strengthen families, not divide them. If men and women plan together, there will be less conflict.”*

Another respondent narrated:

*“I believe men should be involved in empowerment programmes because when we understand how the initiatives work, we can support our wives effectively and avoid misunderstandings. Excluding men often leads to suspicion and resistance at home, which can undermine the benefits of these programmes.”*

Yet another respondent said:

*“Including men would help families plan together and share responsibilities. When both men and women are informed, it reduces conflicts over money, decision-making, and household priorities, making the programmes more successful for everyone.”*

Overall, the findings indicate that mitigation strategies do exist in New Kaseba Township but are limited in reach and effectiveness, particularly due to low male involvement. Men overwhelmingly expressed support for gender-inclusive programme designs, highlighting the need for empowerment interventions that recognize household interdependence rather than focusing exclusively on women. These findings reinforce broader evidence that inclusive sensitization and dialogue reduce resistance and enhance cooperation within households.

## **4.2 Discussion**

The preceding section presented the empirical findings of the study, focusing on the demographic characteristics of respondents, the women's economic empowerment programmes operating in New Kaseba Township, the effects of these programmes on men, and the strategies put in place to mitigate any associated negative effects. Building on these results, this section

discusses the findings in relation to the study objectives and situates them within existing empirical and theoretical literature. The discussion critically examines how women's economic empowerment programmes have influenced men's socio-economic experiences in New Kaseba Township, highlighting areas of convergence and divergence with previous studies while drawing out implications for gender-inclusive programme design.

#### **4.2.1 Women's Empowerment Programmes Operating in New Kaseba Township**

The study revealed that men's awareness of women's economic empowerment programmes in New Kaseba Township was limited, with less than half of male respondents (46.7%) indicating direct knowledge of these initiatives. This finding aligns with prior literature emphasizing that empowerment programmes, particularly microfinance and livelihood interventions, are often designed with women as primary beneficiaries, and men's engagement is incidental or indirect (Consultative Group to Assist the Poor, 2024; Pandit, 2025). The narratives provided by respondents underscore this phenomenon, as men largely learn about these programmes through spouses or community meetings rather than direct participation. Such mediated awareness has important implications, as men's understanding, or lack thereof, can influence household dynamics, the reception of women's economic activities, and broader perceptions of programme legitimacy. This is consistent with studies in peri-urban African contexts, where limited male inclusion in women-focused initiatives can contribute to misconceptions, resistance, or ambivalence toward programme outcomes (Katowa, 2024; Dagunga et al., 2020).

The types of empowerment programmes identified in the township further reflect global and regional patterns. Village banking, poultry farming, and agricultural input support were the most prominent initiatives, followed by loans/grants and skills training such as tailoring and crafts. This hierarchy mirrors the structure of women's economic empowerment programmes in Africa, which often prioritize income-generating and financial inclusion interventions to enhance immediate household welfare (Adebayo & Worth, 2024; Dagunga et al., 2020). Financial support through loans and savings groups aligns with microfinance literature, emphasizing its role in fostering collective economic agency and expanding women's financial autonomy. Skills development and mentorship, while less frequent in the township, remain crucial for long-term economic resilience and enterprise sustainability, reflecting broader global evidence that combines training with financial support to achieve sustainable empowerment outcomes (Pandit,

2025; Sellim & Co, 2025). The lower participation in skills-based initiatives in New Kaseba may reflect resource constraints, cultural preferences for immediate income, or limited programme availability, consistent with findings from peri-urban Zambian communities where informal economic activities dominate women's livelihoods (World Bank, 2025b).

The study also highlighted the implementing organizations, with community-based groups and women's associations playing a central role, followed by churches, government institutions, and NGOs. This is in line with Zambian empirical studies emphasizing the pivotal role of grassroots and faith-based organizations in delivering empowerment interventions, particularly in low-income peri-urban contexts (Katowa, 2024). Respondent narratives reinforced the gendered focus of programme delivery, where men are rarely engaged directly. Conflict Theory provides a useful lens here, as these dynamics illustrate how increasing women's economic agency without parallel male inclusion may inadvertently challenge traditional gendered hierarchies, generating tension or resistance within households. Men's peripheral involvement can thus contribute to perceptions of marginalization, particularly where economic resources and decision-making were historically male-dominated.

Regarding forms and duration of support, the findings show that financial loans and training were the dominant forms of assistance, with market access and mentorship less frequent. This prioritization of financial and skill-based support reflects the practical orientation of empowerment programmes in peri-urban contexts, where immediate income-generating opportunities are critical to household survival (Adebayo & Worth, 2024). However, mentorship and market linkages, though less common, are essential for long-term sustainability and social capital development. The relative novelty of most programmes, where men reported that women joined within the last year, suggests both opportunities and challenges.

On one hand, recent programme uptake indicates growing engagement and economic activation among women. On the other hand, short programme durations may limit sustained behavioural and attitudinal changes within households, supporting Social Disorganization Theory's assertion that rapid shifts in economic roles, without commensurate social support or adaptation, can weaken informal social controls and create tension (Shaw & McKay, 2002; Harbeck, 2023).

Overall, the findings illustrate a pattern of economic empowerment initiatives that are largely women-centered, financially focused, and community-driven, consistent with both global and Zambian empirical literature. The interplay of Conflict Theory and Social Disorganization Theory helps contextualize these observations: while women's participation in village banking, agricultural support, and skills training strengthens their economic autonomy, it simultaneously challenges established male authority and social roles, potentially contributing to household tensions and uneven male engagement. This duality highlights the redistributive and disruptive potential of empowerment programmes—redistributive in terms of expanding women's financial and decision-making power, yet disruptive in contexts where men are economically or socially excluded (Collins, 1971; Main, 2025).

In conclusion, women's empowerment programmes in New Kaseba Township reflect broader trends in Africa and Zambia, emphasizing financial inclusion, livelihood diversification, and community-based implementation. While these initiatives have clear potential to enhance women's economic agency, the findings underscore the need for deliberate strategies to include men and address household-level implications, thereby fostering harmonious adaptation to changing gendered economic roles. Integrating men into awareness campaigns, training, and dialogue forums could mitigate misunderstandings and resistance, supporting both household stability and programme sustainability. The discussion situates these findings within the theoretical and empirical literature, confirming that empowerment is not merely an individual or female-focused process but a socially embedded phenomenon with wider household and community repercussions.

#### **4.2.2: Effects of Women's Economic Empowerment Programmes on Men**

The findings of this study demonstrate that women's economic empowerment programmes in New Kaseba Township have complex, mixed, and context-dependent effects on men's economic roles, attitudes, and household relations. While some men experienced positive outcomes linked to improved household welfare, others encountered discomfort, role ambiguity, and tension associated with shifting gendered economic responsibilities. These findings are consistent with existing empirical literature, which emphasizes that women's empowerment interventions do not operate in a social vacuum but interact with entrenched gender norms and economic constraints.

Regarding perceived changes in men's economic roles, 43% of respondents acknowledged shifts in income contribution and financial decision-making following women's participation in empowerment programmes. This finding aligns with Kabeer's (2012) argument that women's increased access to income can alter traditional male breadwinner roles, leading to renegotiation of household responsibilities. The presence of uncertainty among a quarter of respondents further suggests that such changes are often gradual, indirect, and uneven, rather than immediate or uniform. Similar patterns were reported by Bonilla et al. (2017b) in Zambia, where women's enhanced financial autonomy coexisted with persistent male authority, creating ambiguous and negotiated power arrangements within households.

Men's attitudinal responses to women's participation further reflect this ambivalence. While supportive attitudes were dominant, a substantial proportion of men expressed discomfort or resistance. Supportive responses were largely pragmatic, rooted in tangible household benefits such as shared financial burdens and improved welfare. This mirrors findings by Karim et al. (2018), who observed that men tend to support women's economic activities when they contribute directly to household stability. However, discomfort expressed by some respondents reflects concerns over identity and authority, echoing Morrell et al.'s (2012) analysis of hegemonic masculinity, which links male self-worth to economic provision and control. When empowerment disrupts these expectations, men may experience psychological strain and uncertainty about their roles.

The study's findings on opportunities and challenges further underscore the dual effects of women's empowerment. While 29% of respondents identified opportunities such as improved household income, savings, and investment capacity, 32% experienced both benefits and challenges simultaneously. This aligns with Chant's (2012) concept of the "feminisation of responsibility," where women's increasing economic contributions may unintentionally reduce men's economic engagement while increasing women's burdens. Similarly, Vyas and Watts (2009) found that men in some households reduced their economic participation following women's access to credit, reinforcing concerns that empowerment programmes can indirectly reshape men's economic behaviour. The New Kaseba findings suggest that empowerment generates economic relief alongside relational tension, particularly around decision-making authority.

Household-level effects were particularly pronounced, with 38% of men reporting disagreements related to women's empowerment activities. These conflicts often centred on financial control and authority, especially where loans or grants were registered solely in women's names. This finding strongly resonates with Conflict Theory, which predicts that redistributive interventions altering access to resources are likely to provoke tension when existing power hierarchies are challenged (Collins, 1971). As women gained greater economic autonomy, some men perceived a loss of authority, leading to resistance or withdrawal. However, contrasting narratives in the study demonstrate that not all men experienced these changes negatively. Some men adopted cooperative strategies and embraced joint planning, suggesting that outcomes depend on individual adaptability, communication, and perceived household benefits.

Social Disorganization Theory further contextualizes these findings by linking men's reactions to broader structural vulnerabilities. In a peri-urban context marked by unemployment and economic insecurity, men who experience diminished economic relevance may face stress, social stigma, and withdrawal from productive roles (Harbeck, 2023). Narratives expressing feelings of uselessness and community judgment illustrate how empowerment interventions can interact with existing socio-economic instability to undermine male identity and cohesion. Similar patterns were observed by Crookston et al. (2021), who found declines in men's empowerment indicators in contexts where women's empowerment increased, highlighting the relational nature of empowerment outcomes.

Overall, the findings confirm that women's economic empowerment programmes in New Kaseba Township produce both enabling and destabilizing effects on men. Consistent with studies by Kabeer (2012), Karim et al. (2018), and Chant (2012), empowerment improves household welfare while simultaneously challenging traditional gender roles. The integration of Conflict Theory and Social Disorganization Theory allows for a nuanced interpretation, showing that empowerment can be simultaneously progressive and disruptive when men are economically excluded or socially unprepared for changing roles. These findings underscore the importance of inclusive, gender-transformative approaches that engage men alongside women to foster cooperation, reduce conflict, and promote sustainable household and community outcomes.

### **4.2.3 Strategies Put in Place to Mitigate Negative Effects Associated with Women's Empowerment Programmes**

The findings of this study reveal that mitigation strategies aimed at addressing negative effects associated with women's empowerment programmes do exist in New Kaseba Township; however, their reach, visibility, and effectiveness remain uneven. While a majority of men (64.3%) acknowledged the presence of mechanisms such as community dialogues, church meetings, family counselling, and NGO-led sensitization forums, a substantial proportion (35.7%) were unaware of any such initiatives. This uneven awareness suggests that mitigation strategies are not systematically embedded within programme design and are often communicated in a gender-skewed manner that prioritizes women over men.

These findings align with global literature emphasizing that women's empowerment programmes can unintentionally generate household tension and resistance when mitigation mechanisms are weak or poorly communicated (Désilets et al., 2019). The limited awareness among men in New Kaseba reflects what Delavallade and Brar (2023) describe as a common gap in empowerment interventions: mitigation strategies exist in principle but are inadequately institutionalized, resulting in partial engagement and inconsistent outcomes. Men's narratives indicating that meetings are "mostly attended by women" further underscore how male exclusion undermines the effectiveness of these strategies.

Perceptions of effectiveness were similarly mixed. While 37.5% of respondents regarded mitigation strategies as very effective, nearly a quarter perceived them as ineffective, and others remained uncertain. These divergent views suggest that effectiveness is contingent on male participation, frequency of implementation, and the quality of dialogue facilitated. Empirical evidence supports this observation. World Bank (2020) studies show that mitigation strategies reduce backlash only when men are actively and consistently involved, rather than being passive recipients of second-hand information. Where men are excluded, empowerment initiatives risk reinforcing suspicion, misunderstanding, and resistance.

From a theoretical perspective, Conflict Theory provides a useful lens for interpreting these findings. As women gain increased access to economic resources and decision-making power, existing gendered power relations are disrupted, potentially triggering conflict if no deliberate

mechanisms exist to renegotiate roles (Collins, 1971). The mixed effectiveness of mitigation strategies in New Kaseba suggests that current interventions are insufficient in addressing these power renegotiations. Without inclusive dialogue, men may perceive empowerment as a zero-sum process that threatens their authority, thereby intensifying household tension rather than reducing it.

Social Disorganization Theory further contextualizes these findings by highlighting how weak institutional engagement and economic exclusion can undermine social cohesion (Shaw & McKay, 2002). In a peri-urban context marked by unemployment and economic strain, men who are excluded from empowerment-related sensitization may experience stress, withdrawal, and disengagement. The lack of structured, inclusive mitigation strategies therefore risks weakening informal social controls and collective efficacy within the community, consistent with Harbeck's (2023) assertions on community instability under conditions of social exclusion.

The strong support expressed by men (71.4%) for inclusion in future empowerment programmes is particularly significant. This finding resonates with African studies such as Bapolisi et al. (2024), which demonstrate that male engagement and gender-transformative dialogue reduce resistance and foster cooperation at the household level. Men's narratives in this study emphasize planning together, shared responsibility, and improved communication, reinforcing the argument that empowerment should be approached as a household and community process rather than a women-only intervention.

Overall, the findings suggest that while mitigation strategies exist in New Kaseba Township, they are limited by inconsistent implementation and low male engagement. Integrating inclusive sensitization, structured dialogue platforms, and conflict-sensitive programme design—consistent with recommendations by Lomax et al. (2023) and Tello (2022)—would enhance the effectiveness of these strategies. The study therefore reinforces broader empirical and theoretical evidence that sustainable women's empowerment requires deliberate engagement of men to mitigate unintended negative effects and promote household and community cohesion.

## **CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.0 Chapter Overview**

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study, drawing together the key findings from the preceding chapters and reflecting on how they address the study's objectives. It synthesizes the major insights on men's perceptions and experiences of women's empowerment programmes in New Kaseba Township, highlighting the broader implications for households, gender relations, and community cohesion. The chapter is structured into two main sections: a conclusion that summarizes the core findings of the study, and recommendations aimed at policymakers, programme implementers, community stakeholders, as well as suggestions for areas of future research to build on the current study's limitations and findings.

### **5.1 Conclusion**

This study set out to examine the effects of women's economic empowerment programmes on men in New Kaseba Township, with particular attention to empowerment programmes operating in New Kaseba Township, their effects on men, and strategies put in place to mitigate negative effects associated with women's empowerment programmes. The findings of the study demonstrate that women's economic empowerment initiatives are active within the township and have contributed to notable shifts in household and community dynamics. These programmes, largely centred on income generation, savings groups, agricultural support, and small-scale enterprise development, have enhanced women's economic participation and autonomy, thereby altering traditional gendered arrangements within households.

The study established that the effects of women's empowerment programmes on men are multidimensional, encompassing both positive and challenging outcomes. On the positive side, some men reported improved household welfare as a result of increased household income, reduced financial pressure, and greater cooperation between spouses. In households where men remained economically active or where gender relations were relatively flexible, women's economic empowerment was perceived as complementary rather than threatening. Such contexts enabled shared responsibility in household provision and fostered more collaborative decision-making.

However, the study also revealed that women's empowerment programmes generated unintended negative effects for some men, particularly those who were unemployed or engaged in unstable informal livelihoods. In these cases, women's increased access to income and resources was associated with feelings of loss of status, reduced economic relevance, and diminished authority within the household. These experiences occasionally manifested in household tension, withdrawal from family responsibilities, and negative coping behaviours. The findings therefore underscore that empowerment processes are relational and can intensify existing socio-economic vulnerabilities when men's economic exclusion persists.

Furthermore, the study found that strategies to mitigate negative effects associated with women's empowerment programmes were limited and unevenly implemented. While some programmes incorporated community sensitisation and informal dialogue through churches, women's groups, or local leaders, men were largely excluded from structured programme engagement. The limited involvement of men in programme design, communication, and implementation constrained opportunities for shared understanding and adaptation to changing gender roles. This gap contributed to misconceptions and resistance among some men regarding the objectives and implications of women's empowerment initiatives.

Overall, the study concludes that women's economic empowerment programmes in New Kaseba Township have significant social implications that extend beyond their intended female beneficiaries. While these programmes are essential for advancing gender equality and improving household livelihoods, their effectiveness and sustainability are influenced by how well they account for men's socio-economic realities and gendered identities. The findings highlight the importance of inclusive, context-sensitive empowerment approaches that recognise empowerment as a collective social process rather than a women-only intervention. Addressing male economic exclusion and promoting constructive engagement with men are therefore critical for fostering balanced gender relations and social cohesion within peri-urban communities such as New Kaseba.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed. The recommendations are structured to address key stakeholders policymakers, programme implementers, community stakeholders, and researchers:

### 5.2.1 Recommendations for Policymakers

- **Adopt Inclusive and Relational Approach to Gender and Development Policy Formulation:** Policymakers should adopt a more inclusive and relational approach to gender and development policy formulation. While women's economic empowerment remains a critical development priority, policies should explicitly recognize that empowerment interventions operate within existing gender relations and socio-economic structures. National and local gender policies should therefore integrate provisions that acknowledge men as key stakeholders in empowerment processes, particularly in peri-urban contexts characterized by high male unemployment and economic vulnerability.
- **Promote Integrated Livelihood Strategies that Address Economic Exclusion:** There is a need for policymakers to promote integrated livelihood strategies that address economic exclusion among both women and men. Women's empowerment programmes should be complemented by parallel or linked initiatives aimed at enhancing men's access to skills development, employment opportunities, and income-generating activities. Addressing male economic marginalization alongside women's empowerment can reduce feelings of displacement and mitigate household and community-level tensions associated with shifting gender roles.
- **Strengthen Guidelines on Gender-Transformative Programming:** Policymakers should also strengthen guidelines on gender-transformative programming. This includes encouraging interventions that go beyond women-only support to address underlying gender norms, power relations, and expectations surrounding masculinity and breadwinning. Clear policy directives should guide implementing agencies to incorporate male engagement, household dialogue, and community sensitization components into women's empowerment programmes without undermining women's autonomy.
- **Policymakers Should Support Enhanced Coordination and Monitoring of Empowerment Programmes:** At the local government level, policymakers should support

enhanced coordination and monitoring of empowerment programmes operating in peri-urban settlements such as New Kaseba Township. Improved oversight can help ensure that empowerment initiatives are responsive to local socio-economic conditions and that unintended social effects are identified and addressed early.

- **Encourage The Collection of Sex-Disaggregated and Gender-Relational Data:** Additionally, policy frameworks should encourage the collection of sex-disaggregated and gender-relational data, including indicators that capture men’s socio-economic experiences alongside women’s outcomes.

### 5.2.2 Recommendations for Programme Implementers

- **Deliberately Incorporate Men into Selected Stages of Women’s Empowerment Programmes:** Programme implementers, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community-based organizations, should deliberately incorporate men into selected stages of women’s empowerment programmes. This does not imply diluting the focus on women, but rather ensuring that men are adequately informed about programme objectives, processes, and expected outcomes. Structured information sessions, couple-based discussions, or community forums can help foster shared understanding and reduce misconceptions that may fuel resistance or tension.
- **Integrate Gender Dialogue and Household Communication Components into Empowerment Interventions:** Implementers should integrate gender dialogue and household communication components into empowerment interventions. Facilitated discussions on shared responsibilities, joint financial planning, and adaptive gender roles can support households in negotiating change constructively. Such approaches are particularly important in households where men face unemployment or unstable livelihoods, as economic stress may heighten sensitivity to shifts in power and responsibility.
- **Capacity-Building:** Capacity-building initiatives should be designed to enhance cooperation rather than competition between women and men. For example, programmes can promote complementary livelihood activities, joint savings schemes, or cooperative enterprises where appropriate. This approach can reinforce the perception of women’s economic advancement as a collective household benefit rather than a zero-sum shift in power.

- **Strengthen Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms:** Programme implementers should also strengthen monitoring and feedback mechanisms to capture unintended social effects. Regular community consultations, grievance redress systems, and participatory monitoring tools can provide early warning signs of household conflict, male disengagement, or social strain.

**Invest In Community-Level Sensitization on Gender Equality:** Finally, implementers should invest in community-level sensitization on gender equality that addresses both women’s rights and men’s changing roles. Engaging local leaders, faith-based institutions, and respected community figures can enhance legitimacy and acceptance of empowerment initiatives, particularly in settings where traditional gender norms remain influential.

### 5.2.3 Recommendations for Community Stakeholders

- **Community Leaders Should Actively Promote Inclusive Dialogue on Gender Relations and Development:** Community stakeholders, including traditional leaders, religious leaders, local committees, and households, play a critical role in shaping how empowerment programmes are received and sustained. Community leaders should actively promote inclusive dialogue on gender relations and development, emphasizing cooperation, mutual respect, and shared responsibility within households and the wider community.
- **Facilitate Platforms Dialogue:** Local leaders and community-based organizations should facilitate platforms where men and women can openly discuss the changes brought about by women’s empowerment programmes. Such forums can help normalize shifting gender roles, reduce stigma associated with men’s economic vulnerability, and promote constructive problem-solving at the household and community levels.
- **Households Should Adopt Joint Decision-Making Practices:** Households are encouraged to adopt joint decision-making practices regarding income use, savings, and household responsibilities. Open communication between partners can reduce misunderstandings and foster trust as women’s economic participation increases. Community stakeholders should also support men who experience economic challenges by encouraging positive coping strategies, peer support, and participation in community activities rather than withdrawal or negative behaviours.

- **Community Women Groups Should Be Leveraged as Spaces for Inclusive Empowerment:** Furthermore, community institutions such as churches, cooperatives, and savings groups should be leveraged as spaces for inclusive empowerment. These institutions can integrate messages on shared economic responsibility, healthy masculinities, and cooperative household relations into their activities, thereby reinforcing positive social norms that support both women's empowerment and men's well-being.

#### **5.2.4 Recommendations for Researchers and Future Research**

Future research should build on the findings and limitations of this study by adopting longitudinal designs that examine the long-term effects of women's empowerment programmes on men's socio-economic status and gender relations. Longitudinal studies would provide deeper insight into whether observed effects persist, intensify, or diminish over time as households and communities adapt to change. Further studies should expand the geographical scope beyond New Kaseba Township to include comparative analyses across peri-urban, urban, and rural settings in Zambia. Such comparative research would enhance understanding of how context influences the interaction between women's empowerment initiatives and men's socio-economic experiences.

Researchers are encouraged to incorporate mixed-gender and couple-level analyses to capture relational dynamics more comprehensively. Including both women's and men's perspectives within the same households can provide richer insights into negotiation processes, conflict resolution strategies, and shared outcomes associated with empowerment programmes. Additionally, future research should explore specific dimensions of men's well-being, such as mental health, identity, and coping mechanisms, in relation to women's economic empowerment. These aspects remain under-explored yet are critical for understanding the broader social implications of empowerment interventions.

Finally, researchers should examine the effectiveness of different mitigation strategies, including male engagement models, community dialogue approaches, and integrated livelihood programmes, to generate evidence on best practices for inclusive and socially responsive empowerment programming. Such research would provide valuable guidance for policymakers and practitioners seeking to design gender interventions that promote equity, cohesion, and sustainable development.

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