FR1.2: Understanding Community Perceptions of Women Empowerment for Agricultural and Rural development
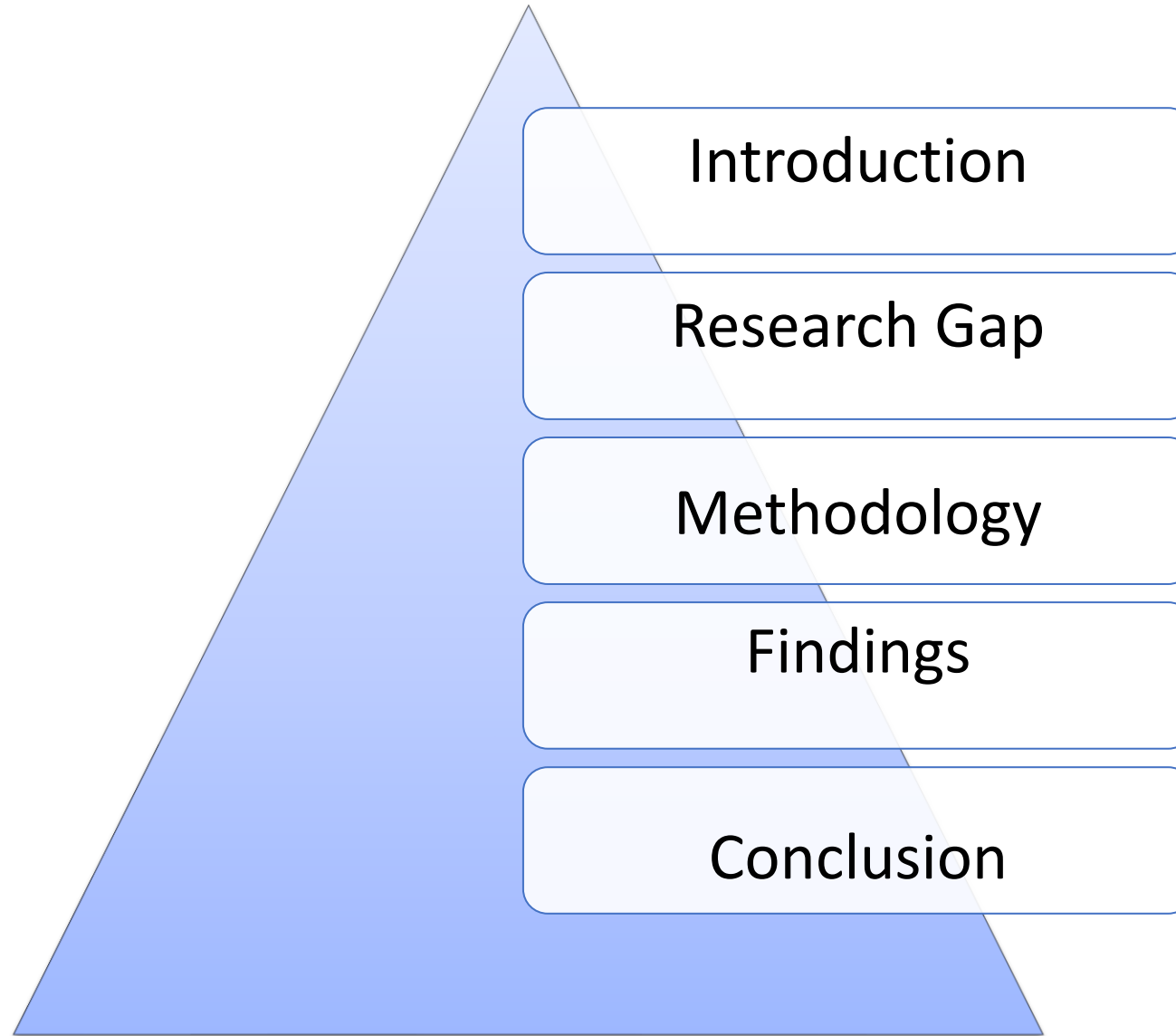
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Presentation Outline

Introduction

Research Gap

Methodology

Findings

Conclusion

Introduction

- Discussions on Women's empowerment have gained traction as part of the global interventions to address the underlying social norms, attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate gender inequalities (Ambler et al., 2021; Casey et al., 2016).

- Most agricultural research studies clearly define, illustrate, conceptually anchored in Kabeer's theoretical ideas –voice, choice, agency, access to resources. (Santoso et al (2019); Lecoutere & Wuyts (2021); Ambler et al (2021).

- This notion has gained cumulative attention from many development actors leading to an increase in implementation of programs designed to boost women's empowerment (Belete & Melak, 2020).

- Albeit, women empowerment becoming a desired outcome, limited success has been achieved (Ghosal, 2018; Rahman, Hoque & Makinoda, 2022).

Research Gap

- While a growing literature seeks to understand the impact of these interventions, less research has been focused on how the intended program beneficiaries actually perceive the concept.

- Empowerment begins from within (self consciousness) hence the importance of understanding how women and men perceive empowerment (Kabeer, 2005).

- Local community perceptions often mirror reality and behavior of communities may rightly be framed around those perceptions (Nzeadibe and Ajaero, 2010).

- This study therefore aimed at situating perceptions of women empowerment by local communities in rural farming villages of Kiboga district in central Uganda.

- This could help in guiding actors design context specific approaches suited to prevailing social cultural norms and perceptions of men and women.

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Research question

How do communities perceive women empowerment?

What is men and women definition of an empowered woman?

How do men and women perceive an empowered woman?

Methodology

Design

Qualitative methods bringing a deeper understanding of a phenomenon in a given context (Ridder, 2017).

Study area

The study was conducted in Kiboga district in central Uganda working within a diverse multicultural context & intense project activities.

Participants

A total of 12 FGDs of 6 to 8 participants were conducted 2 (men only) 2(women only) 2 (youth women) 2(youth men), 2(old women) and 2(old men).

Analysis

Data was translated, transcribed and uploaded into ATLAS TI, where a code sheet was developed through thorough read and re read process, transcripts code, relevant codes were merged to form categories with underlying assumptions from the data set inline with subject matter.

Findings

Facets of an empowered woman

Youth Women

- Independent decision making
- Voice
- Mobility
- Financial independence

Youth Men

- Owns resources
- Independent decision making
- Mobility
- Voice
- Productive role

Older Women

- Aspirations and sense of direction
- Owns resources
- Voice
- Joint decision making
- Work balance
- Stable marriage

Older Men

- Belong to a group
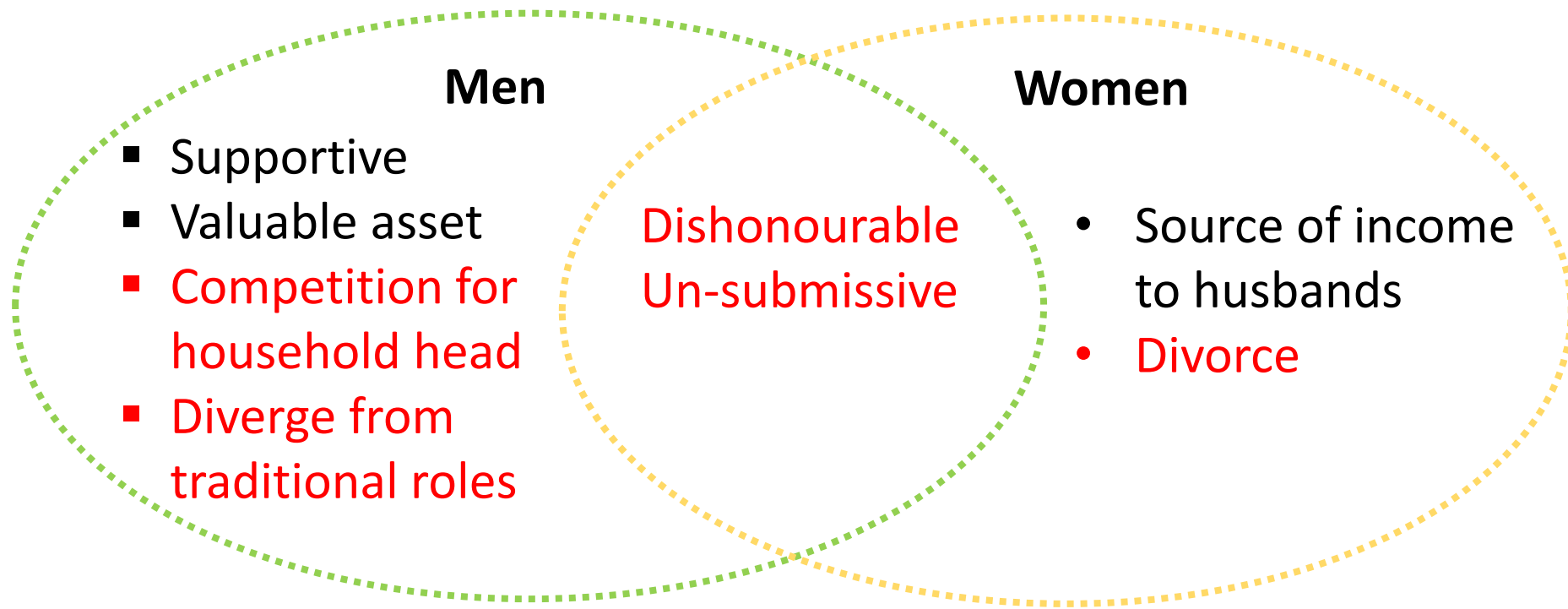- Voice
- Joint decision making
- Marriage

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Relating local understanding of women empowerment to literature

	Youth men	Older men	Youth women	Older women	Literature
Decision making	Makes independent decisions about reproduction roles	Involves in joint decision making – Informs wife but do not give room for opinions	Makes Independent productive decisions	Contribute to household decisions	Agency
Voice	Women speak back to their husbands	Women speak back to their husbands	Ability to speak and command an audience	Ability to speak and command an audience	Agency

"She has a voice and she can speak in the meeting and people listen. She can take a leadership position in the community" (Youth women FGD)

Community perceptions of an empowered woman

Men

- Supportive
- Valuable asset
- Competition for household head
- Diverge from traditional roles

Dishonourable
Un-submissive

Women

- Source of income to husbands
- Divorce

"…………. empowerment *has caused a lot of trouble and problems to the women.* They cannot be guided, disciplined, they do what they want, the moment you try to guide and direct, they will just go to the police and report you and the police will discipline the man" – Older men FGD

Conclusion

There are divergences and convergences in men and women perceptions and in literature

Men and women's perceptions should have a bearing on the way women empowerment interventions are designed and implemented.

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Key References

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- Ghosal, J. (2018). Gender Equality, Women Empowerment and Role of Men in India. *Women Empowerment and Role of Men in India (September 30, 2018)*.

- Kabeer, N. (2005). Gender equality and women's empowerment: A critical analysis of the third millennium development goal 1. *Gender & development*, *13*(1), 13-24.

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Acknowledgment

Study Participants

Thank You