

**THE IMPACT OF THE CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUND IN EMPOWERING  
WOMEN IN MBITA CONSTITUENCY, HOMA BAY COUNTY, KENYA**

**BY**

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**DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that this project is my original work and that it has not been presented to any other university or institution for academic examination.

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This project work has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university supervisor.

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Signature .....Date.....

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my beloved mother, the late mama Hannah Nyandie Orengo. You inspire me to be a better daughter and a better person in the society.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am grateful to God Almighty for his continued blessings, guidance and encouragement throughout my life. Special thanks to my father Mr. Gilbert Orengo who prepared me to be adoptive to all sorts of challenges and hard work which prevails before me after the demise of my loving mother mama Hannah Nyandie Orengo while undertaking this study. Special thanks is also extended to my sister Roselyne, my brothers Vincent and Ibrahim who continued to encourage me and gave a lot of support. I also extend my appreciation to my family members my husband Maurice Juma, my children Maureen, Linus, Zinsi, Michelle and my nephew Paul who behind the background gave me a lot of support and encouragement to persevere.

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## ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken to investigate the impact of the constituency development fund in empowering women in Mbita Constituency, Homa Bay County. It sought to address the following specific objectives: to establish the level of the participation of women in the projects initiated by the constituency development fund in Mbita Constituency, to determine the changes in the status of women as a result of the constituency development fund and to ascertain the barriers that women face in accessing the constituency development funds in Mbita Constituency.

The study was guided by the women's empowerment framework. The study adopted a research design that was cross-sectional and descriptive in nature both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were used. Quantitative data were collected through the survey questionnaire while qualitative information was collected through focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Conversely, simple random sampling was used to select the respondents. Data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Descriptive statistics were used and the information acquired was presented in the form of tables, charts, percentages and frequencies.

The study concludes that women in Mbita Constituency were in favour of the constituency development fund since it has a positive impact in empowering them. From the study the following recommendations were made: there is a need to increase women's participation in identification and prioritization of projects in order to actually address the real issues affecting them and to create ownership of the projects among the women. Civic education is needed to empower women to understand the management of the constituency development fund and their roles in making the committees more accountable. There is also a need to enhance transparency and accountability in the management of the entire constituency development fund and the government should enhance efficiency in releasing bursary funds. The study recommends that studies about other devolved funds should be carried out so as to fully understand how such funds contribute to the empowerment of women.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

CDFB	Constituency Development Fund Board
CDFC	Constituency Development Fund Committee
CDD	Community Driven Development
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CFC	Constituency Fund Committee
CPC	County Project Committee
LATF	Local Authorities Transfer Fund
LDC	Location Development Committee
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
ILO	International Labour Organization
MPs	Members of Parliament
NTA	National Taxpayers Association
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WDC	Ward Development Committee
WEDF	Women Enterprise Development Fund
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations

# CHAPTER ONE

## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

Efforts to anchor the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) on a legal foundation commenced in 1999 when the first motion was moved in parliament. The motion required the government to devote 5% of the government revenue to community-based projects. However, although the motion was passed, it was not implemented. In 2002, a caucus of MPs was formed to lobby the minister for finance to allocate 5% to community-based projects. Parliament amended the initial motion and reduced the percentage from 5% to 2.5 %, (Kituo Cha Sheria, 2008). In October 2002, the Constituency Development Fund Bill was drafted and presented to parliament in April 2003. The bill was passed in November 2003, thus, establishing the constituency development fund through an Act of parliament. The Act has since been replaced by the Constituency Development Fund Amendment Act of 2007, the legislation of constituency development fund regulation of 2004 and repealed and replaced in Act of 2013 (Republic of Kenya, 2004, 2007, and 2013). Section two of the act that established the fund states that it is a: “National fund consisting of money of not less than 2.5% of all the national government ordinary revenue collected in each financial year” (Republic of Kenya, 2007). Thus, the constituency development fund is an annual budgetary allocation by the central government to each of the country’s parliamentary constituencies. It was introduced as a home-grown initiative to address all the inequalities in development in Kenya (OSIEA, 2008). The key objectives are to fund projects with immediate social and economic impacts with a view to improving lives, alleviating poverty and helping general development at the grass roots level. To achieve these objectives, all the 290 constituencies receive 2.5% of the government annual ordinary revenue besides monies received from other sources (Republic of Kenya 2003).

While there are several rules that govern the utilization of the fund to ensure transparency and accountability, decisions over the use of the funds are supposed to be mainly made by the constituents. Similarly, the funds under this program go directly to the local levels where they are allocated to community projects to ensure that many people benefit. The projects to be funded are identified at a location level through community meetings according to section

23(3) of the Constituency Development Fund Act. The identification of the projects at the grassroots is aimed at promoting project ownership and enhancing sustainability of projects by using local information (Republic of Kenya, 2005). In essence, the constituency development fund is intended to provide individuals at the grassroots with an opportunity to make expenditure choices that maximize their welfare in line with their needs and preferences. To the extent that the local population is better informed about their priorities, the choices made can be expected to be more aligned to their problems and circumstances. This fund is, therefore, a decentralization scheme that provides communities with an opportunity to make spending decisions that maximize social welfare (Mapesa and Kibua, 2006). In particular, it is an example of what is generally referred to as community-driven development (CDD) initiatives that empower local communities by providing funds often from the central government but sometimes from donor sources (Mapesa and Kibua, 2006).

Specifically, the constituency development fund aims at redistributing national resources to the community in order to improve rural economies, alleviate poverty, create employment and raise the standards of living of Kenyans. Similarly, it seeks to bring services and facilities closer to the people so as to reduce poverty (CBS and MPND, 2005). The fund was intended to compliment other existing funds being directed at the community level. These other funds include the Local Authorities Transfer Fund, Bursary Fund, Fuel Levy Funds, Roads Maintenance Fund, Youth Enterprise Development Fund, Free Primary Education, Free Secondary Education and Women Enterprise Development Fund. All these funds are meant to empower members of the society and especially special interest groups such as women (National Taxpayers Association, 2012).

The constituency development fund has four management organs, namely, the constituency fund committee (CFC), the constituency development fund board (CDFB), the constituency development fund committee (CDFC) and the county project committee (CPC). Specifically, the constituency fund committee (CFC) is a select committee of the National Assembly that draws its membership from sitting members of parliament (MPs) and the clerk of the National Assembly. It is charged with the responsibilities of: considering and recommending to parliament any matter requiring action by the National Assembly. It also considers referenced project proposals submitted from various constituencies through the constituency development

fund board as well as reports to parliament the names of persons required to be approved under the constituency development fund Act. The committee is also a link between the constituency development fund board and National Assembly. Similarly, it oversees the implementation of the Constituency Development Fund Act, 2003 and its subsequent amendments, namely, the Constituency Development Fund Amendment Act 2007. It was also repealed and replaced the Constituencies Development Fund Act, 2007, and Constituency Development Fund Act (No 30 of 2013) (Republic of Kenya, 2013).The committee also oversees the policy framework and legislative matters that may arise in relation to the fund and continuously reviews the framework set out for the efficient delivery of development programmes financed through the fund.

On the other hand, the constituency development fund board is a national organ that oversees the implementation of the constituency development fund. Specifically, the board is mandated to ensure: allocation and disbursement of funds to every constituency, prudent management of the fund, the compilation of proper records, returns and reports from the constituencies, timely submission to parliament of various returns, reports and information as required, receives and discuss as annual reports and returns from the constituency. It also receives and addresses complaints and disputes and takes any appropriate action, review, scrutinize and approve project proposals from the constituencies that are consistent with the Act. Lastly, it refers disapproved project proposals or any other policy issues from the constituencies with adequate reasons to the constituency fund committee for direction and consideration (Republic of Kenya, 2003, 2007, 2013).

The county project committee (CPCs) coordinates the implementation of the constituency development fund projects. It prepares accurate information and data on other government expenditures and allocations for various projects. The committee also ensures that no duplication of projects occur particularly where it is prudent to combine efforts on projects designed to benefit a large section or sector of a community traversing several constituencies in a county (Republic of Kenya, 2007). Lastly, the constituency development fund committees (CDFCs) consist of at least 12 people but these should be a maximum of 15. These committees are also charged with the management and implementation of the constituency development fund projects at the constituency level (Republic Kenya, 2003, 2007, 2013).

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Several concerns have been raised since the constituency development fund was established. For instance, the committees involved in the management of the fund and the local leaders who provide leadership to these committees continue to face criticism over corruption and misuse of the resources under their custody. Similarly, many studies have demonstrated a low level of trust among members of the public with the managers of the funds (Odhiambo and Taifa, 2009). Further more, Ng'ang'a (2011) states that there is more male than female representation in the constituency development fund. For instance, the average proportion of the representation of women in the constituency development committees (CDCs) is around 20 per cent. This implies that women cannot influence project identification, location, implementation and monitoring. It was also discovered that men who work in the constituency development fund projects are paid while in most cases women are not paid and those who are paid earn less than their male counterparts (Ng'ang'a, 2011).

According to the National Taxpayers Association (2012), 85% of the informants from Mbita Constituency acknowledged that the participation of women in the constituency development fund was in project identification. However, the level of the participation of women remains unknown. In addition, the general ownership of the projects is 34%, which raises questions on the level and rate of the involvement of women in the constituency development fund (National Taxpayers Association 2012). As ascribed in Vision 2030, the empowerment of women is a key to the socio-economic development of a community because it brings women into the mainstream of national development. The question on whether women are involved in and empowered by the constituency development fund is of major importance if development has to be achieved in the rural set-ups of, for instance, Mbita constituency. This project was, therefore, guided by the following questions:

1. What is the level of the participation of women in the projects initiated by the constituency development fund in Mbita Constituency?
2. What are the changes in the status of women as a result of the constituency development fund in the study region?

3. Which are the barriers that women face in accessing constituency development funds in Mbita Constituency?

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

#### **1.3.1 General objective**

The main objective of this study was to investigate the impact of the constituency development fund on empowering women in Mbita Constituency.

#### **1.3.2 Specific objectives**

1. To establish the level of the participation of women in the projects initiated by the constituency development fund in Mbita Constituency.
2. To determine the changes in the status of women as a result of the constituency development fund in Mbita Constituency.
3. To ascertain the barriers that women face in accessing the constituency development funds in Mbita Constituency.

### **1.4 Justification of the study**

The study investigated the impact of the constituency development fund in the empowerment of women in Mbita constituency. It has academic, policy and practical implications. Thus, the study was expected to benefit women in Mbita Constituency. This is because the study attempts to help women in Mbita Constituency to understand the importance of constituency development fund on the empowerment of women and to ascertain barriers that women face in accessing constituency development funds in the study region.

The study also attempts to contribute new knowledge to the existing body of knowledge about constituency development fund in empowering women in Mbita Constituency. The research can act also as a basis for further study on constituency development funds in Kenya. Scholars will have an opportunity to confirm or build on the findings of this research. The study will similarly have necessary information to enable the government in planning of various national developments. Policy makers in government departments will gain insights from the

study and make policies that are geared towards addressing the impacts of the constituency development fund and other devolved funds on women in rural areas. The study will also enable a formulation and design of policies and strategies that can boost the empowerment of women through access to the constituency development fund in the country in general and Mbita constituency in particular.

### **1.5 Scope of the study**

The study concentrated on the impact of the constituency development fund in the empowerment of women in Mbita Constituency, Homa Bay County. All information was, therefore, focused on women. The information and data gathered also focused on a specific geographical location namely, Rusinga Island, Kasungu and Gembe wards. The study could have widened its scope to analyze the impact of the constituency development fund in the empowerment of women in the entire Homa Bay County, with samples drawn from all the 8 constituencies. However, because of limited time and funds this was not accomplished. The findings of the study do not necessarily represent the general pattern of the impacts of the constituency development fund in the empowerment of women in other constituencies. Also, whether the level of participation in the constituency development fund leads to the empowerment of women in Mbita Constituency is not automatically generalized for the whole county.

### **Limitations of the study**

Some respondents may not have provided accurate and truthful information needed for the study. To reduce the effects of this, anonymity and secrecy were promised to all participants to encourage honesty. Some of the information required might have been sensitive to respondents who might have been afraid to provide it.

The study was limited to women in Mbita Constituency, constituency development fund implementers and other stakeholders. This group of participants was involved in the study since it was expected to provide reliable data to answer the main research questions.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews related literature on areas such as the concept of empowerment, women's empowerment, Projects initiated and funded by CDF, Participation of women in the CDF initiated projects, Changes in the socio-economic status of women as a result of CDF, Barriers to the access of women to constituency CDF. The chapter also presents the theoretical approach that guided the study.

#### **2.2 An overview of women's empowerment**

The concept of empowerment has different definitions from people and organizations. For instance, Longwe (1990) defines empowerment as enabling women to take an equal place with men and to participate equally in the development process in order to achieve control over the factors of production. Conversely, Moser (1993) sees empowerment as the capacity of people to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength. These are identified as the rights to determine choices in life and to influence the directions of change through the abilities to gain control over material and non-material resources.

According to Bhasin (1995), women's empowerment is an ongoing and dynamic process that enhances ability of women to change the structures and ideologies subordinate them. This process enables women to gain more access to resources and decision-making, more control over their own lives and more autonomy. Therefore, it is a process which enables women to gain self-respect and dignity, and which also improves their social images. Chambers (1997) sees empowerment in the micro-credit sphere, for example, as the act of enabling and empowering poor clients. He discusses the need for service organizations to see their clients know their rights and have the power to demand for quality of service and access. Kabeer (2004), on the other hand, argues that the empowerment of women is a process that involves acquiring the ability to make strategic life choices. This ability incorporates three interrelated dimensions, namely, resources, agency and achievements. According to UNIFEM (2000), generating choices, gaining ability and exercising bargaining power, developing a sense of self-worth, securing desired

changes, as well as a belief in one's ability and the right to control one's life, are important elements in the empowerment of women. In particular, women will be empowered when they will have full control over their own lives.

Studies on the impact of the Grameen Bank on the situation of poor rural women in Bangladesh by Rehman (1986) had identified a comparative component between women loanees, women from male loaned households and women from economically equivalent households who had not received any credit. Rehman (1986) arrived at the following: First, loanee households in general had higher incomes and consumption standards than equivalent non-loanee households. Second, active female loanees were more likely than passive female loanees to take decisions on their own or jointly with their husbands. However, both active and passive loanee households were more likely to participate in decision-making than wives of male loanees.

Rehman and Khan (2007) assert that the provisions of collateral loans to poor people especially in rural areas that are repayable in frequent and easy installments are effective mechanisms for poverty reduction. This is because they improve health, education, legal rights, sanitation and other living standards. For instance, micro-finance programs that target women have become increasingly important components of strategies to reduce poverty. These programs have significantly improved the security, autonomy, self-confidence and status of women within their households, which in turn improves their empowerment. Mayoux (2001), while working on a conceptualisation and operationalization of the term empowerment rather than reviewing its indicators, highlights economic, social, familial and interpersonal, legal, political as well as psychological dimensions. Mayoux (2001) concludes that empowering themselves is not only a responsibility of individual women but rather governments and other institutions should promote policies that ensure gender equity through political and legal reforms.

### **2.2.1 Projects initiated and funded by the constituency development fund**

According to the Constituency Development Fund Act (2003), the fund is supposed to finance projects that benefit the community at large such as a construction of schools, health facilities, water projects, and roads, offices of chiefs and police posts. Also, a maximum fifteen percent of the annual allocation to each constituency may be used for an education bursary

scheme and it can similarly fund school fees, examination fees and even continuous assessment and mock examination fees. The expenses for running constituency offices, which may include rent and utilities, staff salaries and the allowances of the members of various committees, should not exceed three percent of the annual constituency allocations. Conversely, running and maintenance of motor vehicles and equipment must not take more than three percent. However, after the 2007 amendments, the Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC) can now acquire land for buildings, although assets remain the property of the Constituency Development Fund Board (CDF Act, 2007).

The 2007 Act also stipulates that each constituency is required to keep aside five percent as an emergency reserve, which may be allocated to other projects at the end of a financial year. Each constituency may moreover use two percent for sporting activities, but which must not include cash awards while up to another two percent may be spent on environmental protection. Lastly, a further two percent may be utilized on capacity building. On the other hand, each constituency may fund a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 25 projects from the constituency development fund in each financial year, while uncompleted projects from a previous year are allowed to remain on the project list on condition that they are lumped together as one project in the project list. Nevertheless, one project must not take more than 50% of the total annual allocation of a constituency.

Finally, the constituency development fund is not supposed to support political organizations and activities or give personal awards apart from the amount allocated to bursaries. In the case of Mbita Constituency, some of the projects initiated and funded by the constituency development fund include constituency development offices, school buildings, health facilities, provincial administration offices, administration police lines, village polytechnics, boreholes, water dams and stone crush pens.

### **2.3 Participation of women in projects initiated by the constituency development fund**

Guijt and Shah (1998) as well as Nelson and Wright (1995) have noted that the participation of people in rural development is a process of enhancing their capacities by strengthening their knowledge and skills. Kumar (2002) and Oakley (1991) have also argued that a genuine participation of people in development increases the efficiency, effectiveness, self-

reliance, coverage and sustainability of development projects and programmes. They further argue that rural development projects would benefit from more direct participation by the local people. However, it is also important to ensure that participation is not merely a way of facilitating the attainment of the objectives of a project. As a process of empowerment, participation is concerned with the development of skills and abilities to enable rural people manage better, have a say in or negotiate with, existing development systems (Oakley, 1991).

Oakley's (1991) analysis of a Danish-funded rural water supply project in Tanzania indicated that participation had ranged from non-participation and manipulation over information and consultation to some degree of partnership and delegation of power. For example, it showed that despite efforts to mobilize women to take an active part in all project activities, this was only successful with respect to self-help labour contributions as most women in the village water committees kept a low profile. According to World Bank (2002), gender biases in participatory development projects may exist in the form of beliefs and attitudes that confine women mostly to the domestic sphere, as well as laws and customs that impede access to credit, productive inputs, employment, education, information and medical care. Since women comprise a majority of rural inhabitants and they are the major contributors to rural development, there is an urgent need to encourage their involvement in development activities.

Writers such as the DFID (1995) argue that participation in one form or another is an objective of development projects and programmes and, therefore, it must be evaluated. Guijt and Shah, (1998) have identified three main aspects of participation in rural development projects and programmes that need to be evaluated, namely, the extent and quality of participation, costs and benefits of participation to different stakeholders and the impact of participation on outcomes, performance and sustainability. Guijt and Shah (1998) also argue that communities can be trusted to shape their own future by participating in development projects. Therefore, unless development projects are informed by realities of those who benefit from them, they will rarely succeed. Thus, participation is an empowering process in which people in partnership with each other and those able to assist them, identify problems and needs, mobilize resources, and assume responsibility to plan, manage, control and assess the individual and collective actions that they themselves decide upon (Guijt. and Shah, 1998).

DFID (1995) suggests that in evaluating participation; it is important to consider its quantitative, qualitative and time dimensions. This is because participation is a qualitative process that cannot be measured using only quantifiable indicators. While quantification in relation to project outputs may be sufficient, the qualitative dimensions should also be evaluated because a success of a project depends on empowering participants to take on greater responsibilities and control (DFID 1995). According to Mapesa and Kibua (2006), there is a low level of participation which has led to a high level of dissatisfaction with the projects. There is also poor project ownership by the constituents because they have not been completely involved in decision-making, identification, selection and prioritisation. In fact, most of the projects are regarded as belonging to the area Members of Parliament. Similarly, there has been little awareness about the implementation of the constituency development fund projects. Mapesa and Kibua (2006) also argue that the implementation of projects under the constituency development fund has the potential of introducing the policies of reward and punishment at the local level.

Ng'ang'a (2011), reports that women are not able to influence the location, implementation and monitoring of the constituency development fund projects. In particular, women would prefer those projects that lead to increased output from their farms through activities such as more visits from agricultural extension officers. They also wanted a policy that would ensure that employment of their daughters was entrenched in the constituency development fund projects. Furthermore, women wanted health projects to concentrate more on the provision of drugs and increasing the number of doctors, nurse as well as maternity wards and wings. The women moreover desired health facilities to be equipped with drugs and other necessities, free medical camps and clinics (Ng'ang'a 2011). In addition, women wanted increased bursaries to enable access to tertiary level education by their children. They also pointed out that the Cooperative Bank and other non-bank financial institutions should offer business loans and financial assistance to women's self-help groups at subsidized rates (Ng'ang'a 2011).

Ng'ang'a (2011) adds that women also wanted more representation in the constituency development committees. However, the women do not campaign and lobby for these positions because they face a lot of intimidation from their male counterparts. In addition, their low level of education disqualified many women from vying for electoral offices or leadership positions in

the constituency development fund. Therefore, despite the importance placed upon the participation of all people in development programmes, many agencies still experience poor participation of women (Guijt and Shah, 1998; World Bank, 1996).

In the views of Slocum et al. (1995), participatory rural appraisal (PRA) does not explicitly address issues of social relations including gender. Rarely do these methodologies take into account gender analysis, gender-based differences in labour allocation and gender differences in access to and control over resources and their benefits. Gender is usually hidden in seemingly inclusive terms such as the people or the community while in most cases what is referred to as the community actually means the male community (Guijt and Shah, 1998). Buckley (1997) has recommended that participatory development projects should seek to improve gender inequalities through providing a means by which women can take part in decision-making processes. As Guijt and Shah (1998) argue, greater involvement of women and attention to gender-differentiated needs are the roads to more effective and equitable processes of participatory development.

#### **2.4 Changes in the socio-economic status of women as a result of constituency development fund**

In a basic definition of empowerment, Kabeer, (2004) states that strategic life choices refer to decisions that influence a person's life trajectory and subsequent ability to exercise autonomy and to make choices. Examples include decisions related to marriage, education, employment and childbearing. An increase in the resources of women or a better approach to credit facilities can result in increased well-being of the family especially for the children (Kabeer, 2004). Local structures of gender inequality are typically experienced as natural and, therefore, may seem unalterable to actors in a particular social setting.

Similarly, Kabeer (2004) elaborates on this by pointing to the aspects of tradition and culture, which is so, taken-for-granted that they have become naturalized. When women internalise their subordinate status and view themselves as persons of lesser value, their sense of their own rights and entitlements is diminished. In fact, they may comply with violence against them. Internalised subordination has since received particular attention among writers on

international education, informed by a Freirian perspective on raising the critical consciousness of the poor (Freire 1994).

Studies show that the fact that a woman brings resources into a home or marriage may strengthen her position in the household, even if she exercises little control over the resources. For example, the assets of a woman at marriage or her participation in a micro-credit program may help establish her bargaining position in a conjugal relationship even if the actual utilization of a resource is in the hands of her husband (Hashemi et al. 1996). Hashemi et al. (1996) further focused on changes in outcomes believed to be associated with credit and they too obtained positive results, including the involvement of women in decision-making, participation in public action, increased mobility of women, political and legal awareness and the ability to make small and large purchases.

There are bold, but only sporadic, efforts in the literature at capturing empowerment indicators for social capital and supports or the engagement of women in public spaces and processes (economic, social, and political), emerging more from qualitative rather than quantitative studies (Mayoux and Hartl, 2009). Although several household surveys measure contextual indicators at the community level, few consider the possibility of measuring the engagement of individual women in community or political processes. Hashemi et al. (1996) include the political and legal awareness and political participation of women, while Kabear (1998) includes confidence in community interactions in separate analyses of micro-credit and the empowerment of women in Bangladesh.

## **2.5 Barriers to the access of women to the constituency development fund**

According to National Taxpayers Association (2012), barriers to effective community participation in the implementation of the constituency development fund projects include lack of transition plans for committee members, lack of adequate knowledge of project planning and non-existent publicity. Other factors identified were a lack of strategic plans at the constituency level and none synchronization of projects with other existing development initiatives funded by other devolved funds.

Therefore, there is a need to sensitise and promote the participation of community members including women on their roles in development through devolved funds. Studies by Mapesa and Kibua (2006) and Ng'ang'a (2011) focus on weaker institution for decision-making in the community, thus, participation in project selection, execution, selection of committees and monitoring and evaluation is inadequate. This has been necessitated by lack of insufficient information on the constituency development fund policies and operation guidelines hindering the participation of target beneficiaries in the community including women in all project phases.

According to Ng'ang'a (2011), barriers to the participation of women in the constituency development fund activities are socio-cultural in nature. These include the perceived inferior status of women as well as the relegation of women to the domestic sphere rather than be given public positions such as those in the constituency development fund management institutions. The existence of gender-blind policies in the management of the constituency development fund projects at the devolved level is another social factor leading to the lower participation of women. The social barriers combine with economic aspects, which include lack of strong economic associations for women that improve their management skills in financial affairs.

The socio-economic characteristics of rural areas have a bearing on community access to constituency development funds and, in fact, key factors are those that impact on social capital. The average level of education in a constituency is expected to influence the involvement of the community and also the extent to which it is able to monitor the utilization of funds (Ng'ang'a 2011). The constituency development fund projects will be more in line with priorities in areas where the average level of education of the residents is higher. Kimenyi (2005) has argued that factors such as religious affiliation may also influence the choice of projects and cohesiveness of a community.

A research done by KIPPRA (2008) on different kinds of involvement in the management of decentralized funds found that generally access is very low in the various funds, particularly in decision-making processes. This study revealed that while 32.8% of community members were involved to the extent of receiving information or listening at barazas, less than 10% attended meetings to discuss specific issues and less than 5% felt that they were involved in decision-making. A majority of the informants indicated that they were not involved in the setting up of the development agendas of their areas (KIPPRA 2008).



The dimensions that arise from the nature and management of constituency development fund indicate that the beneficiaries consider the funds as being free. Thus, they are not motivated to monitor a utilization of the funds since they do not take into account the costs of the projects. Kimenyi (2005) argues that the constituency development fund has some direct political implications. This is because political leaders may view the constituency development fund as an investment in their political careers with returns spread over the electoral cycles. Simply, a politician would prefer projects that maximize political returns while voters would prefer projects that maximize welfare. Though these two objectives may be in performance, there are many cases where the constituency characteristics might result in a discrepancy such that political maximization is not equivalent to welfare maximization. When Members of Parliament have a key role in the identification and implementation of the projects, choices are influenced by political maximization (Kimenyi 2005).

## **2.6 Theoretical framework**

### **2.6.1 Women's empowerment framework**

This study adopted the theoretical framework of women's empowerment as developed by Longwe (1990). This is a framework to help one think through what women's empowerment and equality means in practice and to what extent an intervention is supports this empowerment. Specifically, Longwe (1990) defines women's empowerment as enabling women to take an equal place with men and to participate equally in the development process in order to achieve control over the factors of production.

In the Longwe framework, development is defined as concerned with enabling people to take charge of their own lives and escape from poverty, which arises not from lack of productivity but from oppression and exploitation. Longwe (1990) argues that much of the development literature is concerned with defining equality according to conventional sectors such as economics, equality in education and employment. However, in her formulation Longwe (1990) identifies five different levels of equality that assess women's empowerment in any area of social and/or economic life. Specifically, Longwe (1990) suggests that these levels of equality are in a hierarchical relationship so that equality of control is more important for women's development than equality of welfare. It is also suggested that the higher levels of equality are automatically higher levels of development and empowerment. That is, equal participation in the

decision-making process about certain resources is more important in terms of women's empowerment than equal access to resources but neither is as important as equal control.

According to Longwe (1990), the five levels of women's empowerment include (a) welfare, which refers to the level of the material welfare of women relative to men in such matters as food supply, income and medical care, (b) access, which is connected with the access of women to the factors of production on an equal basis with men as well as equal access to land, labour, credit, training, marketing facilities and all publicly available services and benefits. In this level, equality in access is obtained by ensuring the principle of equality of opportunity, which typically entails reforming the law and administrative practices in order to remove all forms of discrimination against women, (c) conscientisation and this connotes an understanding of the differences between sex roles and gender roles and that the latter are cultural and can be changed. Conscientisation also involves a belief that the sexual division of labour should be fair and agreeable to both sides and it should not involve the economic or political domination of one sex by the other. A belief in sexual equality lies at the basis of gender awareness and provides the basis for collective participation in the process of the development of women; (d) participation is the equal involvement of women in the decision-making process, policy-making, planning and administration. It is a particularly important aspect of development projects, where participation means involvement in needs assessment, project formulation, implementation and evaluation. Equality in participation also implies involving women of a community affected by the decisions taken and involving them in the same proportion in decision-making as their proportion in the community at large, and (e) control that means a utilization of the participation of women in the decision-making process through conscientisation and mobilization in order to achieve equality of control over the factors of production and the distribution of benefits. Equality of control means a balance of control between men and women.

### **2.6.2 Conceptual framework**

It is conceived that the constituency development fund is the independent variable while empowerment is the dependent variable. The intervening variables include the time and level of involvement in the constituency development fund. It is conceived that the higher the level of involvement, the higher the empowerment and vice versa with the highest level of involvement being control. It is also conceived that the length of the time of involvement also contributes to

empowerment and the more one is involved in the constituency development fund projects the greater the empowerment.

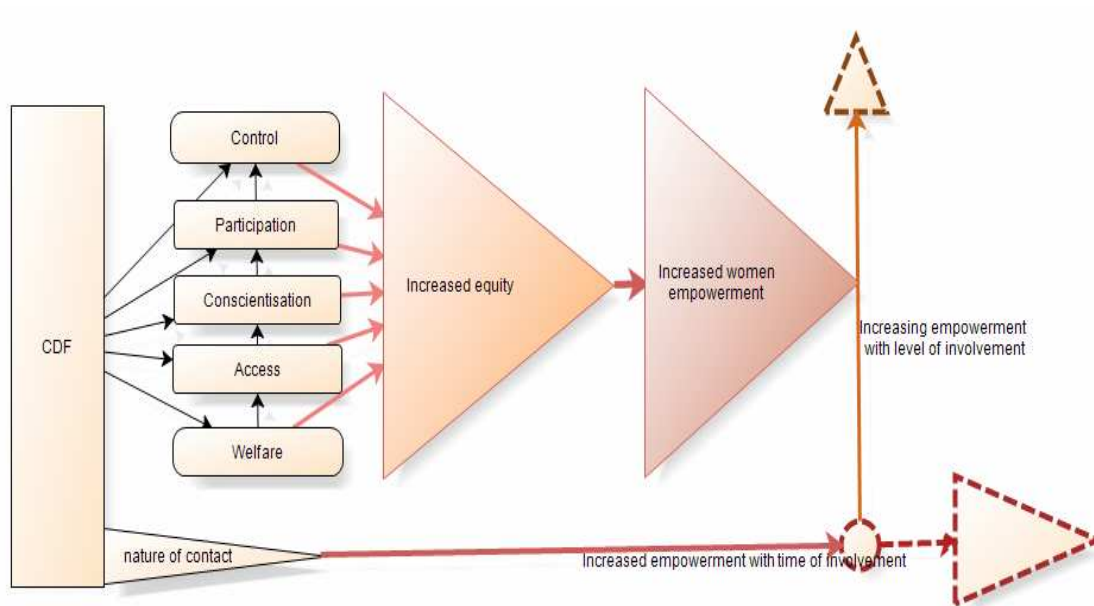


Figure 2.1: Women's empowerment framework

Source: Longwe (1990)

### 2.6.3 Relevance of the theory to the study

Women's empowerment framework is useful because it highlights the different levels of the involvement of women in the constituency development fund projects. It also shows how the level and time of this involvement can empower women in Mbita Constituency. The framework permits an assessment of what advantages exist in the day-to-day situations of women in the study region and what still has to be done. The framework also shows the level of the participation of women in the fund and, therefore, it is particularly useful in explaining that empowerment is intrinsic to the process of development. Thus, it illustrates those aspects of society, which have previously not been sufficiently recognized or appreciated by development workers.

In relation to gender equality, this approach holds that economic development is central to increasing the pool of women eligible for positions of social power. This framework, therefore, makes it easier to assess the level of the participation of women in development and it informs this study on the role that the constituency development fund has played in empowering women.

## **2.7 Assumptions of the study**

The following assumptions have been formulated for this study:

1. There is participation of women in the projects initiated by the constituency development fund in Mbita Constituency.
2. There are changes in the status of women as a result of the constituency development fund in the study region.
3. Women face barriers in accessing the constituency development fund in Mbita Constituency.

## **2.8 Definition of terms**

**Social empowerment** – This is the creation of an enabling environment through various affirmative policies and programmes for women besides providing them with easy and equal access to all the basic minimum services so as to enable them to realize their full potentials.

**Economic empowerment** – This is the ensuring of the provision of training, employment and income generation activities with both ‘forward’ and ‘backward’ linkages with the ultimate objective of making all potential individuals economically independent and self-reliant.

**Micro finance** - This is the provision of a broad range of financial services such as deposits, loans, repayment services, money transfers and insurance to poor and low – income households and their enterprises.

**Devolved funds** – Includes monies that are meant to trickle down to the local communities for the sake of local development initiatives in Kenya. They include but are not limited to Constituency Development Fund (CDF), Local Authorities Transfer Fund (LATF), Bursary Fund, Fuel Levy Funds, Roads maintenance fund, Youth Enterprise Development Fund, Education, Free and Women Enterprise Development Fund (WEDF).

Empowerment – This is the process of acquiring power individually and collectively as well as making own decisions regarding life and society.

Constituency development fund – Refers to an annual budgetary allocation of not less than 2.5% of the national budget disbursed by the national government of Kenya to constituencies as a grant

Women’s empowerment- This is the process by which women take control and ownership of their lives through expansion of their choices. Thus, it is the process of acquiring the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability has previously been denied.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the methodology that was used in the study. It focuses on the research design, the target population, the sampling design, the sample, research instruments as well as data collection and data analysis procedures. The chapter finally presents the ethical considerations which guided the study.

#### 3.2 Research site

The study was carried out in Mbita Constituency, Homa Bay County, western Kenya. Mbita is one of the eight constituencies in Homa Bay County and it covers a total of 415.7 square kilometers. Its geographical coordinates are 0° 25' 0" South, 34° 12' 0" East (Map1). Mbita Constituency has 5 wards, which include Mfangano Island, Rusinga Island, Kasungu, Gembe and Lambwe (Republic of Kenya, 2009) (Map2). The region is predominantly inhabited by the Nilotic-speaking Luo. These people are believed to have migrated from southern Sudan down the Nile and settled mainly along the shores of L. Victoria in western Kenya in the 15<sup>th</sup> century between 1490 A.D and 1517 A.D (Ogot, 2009). In the study area, there are also Abasuba who are Bantu and are believed to have originally migrated from Uganda across L. Victoria and settled in the islands of Rusinga and Mfangano. There are also Wasama and Wateju from Tanzania who have also settled in the two islands. The Luyia and Gusii have also settled in Mbita and through a process of cultural assimilation some of these people today speak Dholuo language (Ogot, 2009).

Mbita Point town is the headquarters and the major commercial hub of the constituency. The town has a number of attractive entrepreneurial opportunities in the service industry such as banking, health facilities, government services and a number of tourist attractions such as Ruma National Park, cultural villages, Lake Victoria Islands such as Mfangano, Rusinga, Takawiri, Mbasa, and Kibuogi. There are also small-scale traders, transport and communications (Republic of Kenya, (2009). The constituency has a growth potential for technologies which include mobile telephones, mobile banking as well as the Internet (Republic of Kenya, 2009).

The area receives two rainy seasons a year March to June and September to December. The economic activities in Mbita constituency include mainly fish farming and agriculture as the main sources of food and income. Farming is mostly subsistence base and major crops grown are sorghum, potatoes, cassava, beans and maize. In the past some farmers used to grow cotton as a cash crop but they stopped because of market unreliability. However, there are small amounts of sugarcane and pepper as cash crops, most farmers prefer to grow crops they can consume and sell locally. Livestock and poultry keeping are also practiced in the study region; local breeds make up most of the livestock farmer's cross-breed cattle to raise the quality of the local breeds (Republic of Kenya, 2009).

Map of Kenya and the location of Mbita Constituency



Map 1:

Source: <http://www.google.co.ke/imgres?imgurl>





### **3.4 Study population and unit of analysis**

The study population comprised of all registered men and women voters aged 18 years and above. According to the IEBC (2012) these were 37,089 registered voters in Mbita constituency who constituted the study population and which was drawn from Rusinga Island, Kasungu and Gembe wards. This study population included both men and women who have in one way or another been involved in the constituency development fund in Mbita constituency. The unit of analysis was the individual voters.

### **3.5 Sampling procedure**

The study used simple random sampling to select respondents for the survey questionnaire. The IEBC register acted as the sampling frame where a sample of men and women, respectively, were drawn from Rusinga Island, Kasungu and Gembe wards. On the other hand, purposive sampling was used to select participants for focus group discussions based on their locations within the wards. Purposive sampling was also used in selecting key informants because of their level of involvement in the constituency development fund in the wards and the constituency at large.

### **3.6 Sample size**

The study targeted all registered voters in the three wards including the key stakeholders, NGO representative, chairman of the constituency development fund, members of the constituency development fund committees and management officers of the constituency development fund Mbita constituency. A sample population of 90 respondents was picked for the survey questionnaire, 6 participants were picked for focus group discussions. In addition, there were 4 key informants bringing the sample size to 100 respondents.

### **3.7 Data collection methods**

#### **3.7.1 Survey questionnaire**

The research employed a self-administered questionnaire which was used to obtain information from 100 respondents. The questionnaire (Appendix i) was preferred because most participants taking part in the study were capable of responding to the items personally. The structured questionnaire employed both closed-and open-ended questions and it also allowed for both quantification and qualification of the data collected.

### **3.7.2 Participant and indirect observations**

The study employed participant observation techniques to supplement the survey questionnaire. This was done during the constituency development fund committee meeting, for instance, observing what was going on. It also involved visiting some of the constituency development fund on-going projects in the study region and recording the observations. During the observations, the answered questions were recorded manually and views collected analyzed keenly.

### **3.7.3 Focus group discussions**

The discussion group composed of 6 people who were mainly committee and management members (Rudqvist, 2001). This was important because it allowed the discussants to fully participate in the discussions as well as providing diversity of perceptions and opinions on the level of the participation of women in the projects initiated by the constituency development fund, the changes in the status of women as a result of the constituency development fund and the barriers that women face in accessing the constituency development funds in Mbita Constituency. The focus group discussions aided in discussing attitudes and beliefs, participants feelings and expectations as well as observe their reaction to the process which may not have been captured by individual interviews. An interview guide for focus group discussion with set of instructions was used (Appendix ii).

### **3.7.4 Key informant interviews**

The key informants were purposively chosen on the basis of their positions and knowledge about the constituency development fund in the study area. A key informant interview guide (Appendix iii) was used to collect information from the following individuals: The chairperson of constituency development fund committee, the constituency development fund manager, the county planning officer and a non-governmental organization (NGO) representative. The key informants gave insights in the roles of the main actors in constituency development fund project planning, the roles of women in constituency development fund project planning, implementation and the level of the participation of women in the projects initiated by the constituency development fund in Mbita Constituency.

### **3.7.5 Sources of secondary data**

Documentary materials such as journals, books, articles and the Internet were used to explore for information with regards to issues that are pertinent to the study.

### **3.8 Data analysis and presentation**

Data analysis was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Quantitative data in the structured questionnaires were analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Prior to the analysis, a codebook for the various quantitative variables was prepared based on the numbering system of the questionnaires. All the questionnaires had been numbered before data collection for ease of referencing. All the quantitative variables were chronologically arranged to ensure that the correct code was entered for each variable.

By using the coded variable number and the questionnaire number, it was easy to identify and rectify mistakes performed during data entry. Data cleaning then followed where unnecessary. After verifying that all data entered were correct, analyses using the various Statistical Packages for Social Sciences tools were then conducted and various tables and graphs were developed for ease of data presentation and clarity.

A qualitative data checklist was developed and which become a principle guide in qualitative data analysis. The checklist was clustered along the main themes of the research to ease consolidation of information and interpretation

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

Due to the fact that this research was purely academic a research permit was obtained from the Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Also constituency development fund offices and IEBC offices in the study region were visited for familiarization purposes and to give relevant letters seeking their consent to carry out research. Similarly, the purpose, duration and potential use of the research results were clarified to the informants to receive informed consent before any data were collected. During the fieldwork interviews were carried out with only those who agreed to participate in the study. Informants were also informed of their rights to withdraw at any stage of the study. Therefore, the information that the researcher received was treated in confidence and purely for academic purposes. The names of the respondents were not used or mentioned in the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE IMPACT OF THE CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUND IN EMPOWERING WOMEN IN MBITA CONSTITUENCY

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the impact of the constituency development fund in empowering women. The findings are presented according to the specific objectives of the study.

#### 4.2 Socio-demographic characteristics of the study

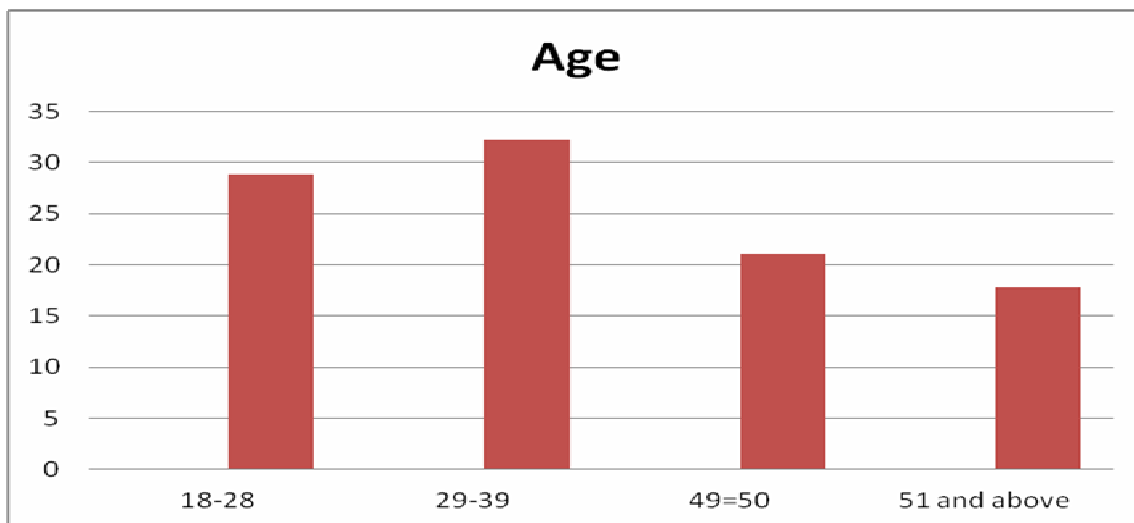
##### 4.2.1 The Genders of respondents

This study sought to determine the genders of the respondents in order to find out their attitudes in regards to the constituency development fund in the study site. It is clear from the findings that a majority of the respondents (54%) were female while a minority (46%) male.

##### 4.2.2 The Ages of respondents

The ages of the respondents ages ranged from 18 to 51 years and above. According to the results, most of the respondents within the age bracket of 29-39 years old constituted the highest percentage (32.2%) 28.9% were 18-28 years old, 21.1% were 49-50 years old and 17.8% were 51 and above .( Figure 4.1).

**Figure 4.1 The ages of the respondents**



### 4.2.3 Marital status of the respondents

The study sought to establish the marital status of the respondents. The findings indicate that a majority of the respondents (53.3%) were married while the single ones constituted 30%, 6.7% were divorced and 10% were (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1 Marital status of the respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Single	27	30.0	30.0	30.0
Married	48	53.3	53.3	83.3
Divorced	6	6.7	6.7	90.0
Widowed	9	10.0	<b>10.0</b>	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

### 4.2.4 Occupations of the respondents

The respondents were required to indicate their occupations. The findings of the study show that a large number (46%) were carrying out various businesses to earn a living, 24% were unemployed, 15% were employed by the government, 11% were employed in other areas such as house helps, farm attendants, bus conductors and loaders while 4% were employed in the private sector (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2 Occupation of the respondents**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative percent</b>
Government				
Employed	13	14.4	14.4	14.4
Private Sector	4	4.4	4.4	18.9
Business	41	45.6	45.6	64.4
Unemployed	22	24.4	24.4	88.9
Others (specify)	10	11.1	11.1	100.0
Total	90	100.0	100.0	

**4.2.5 Education levels of respondents**

The findings of the study reveal that a majority of the respondents (46.7%) have attained secondary school education, 25.6% had attained college or university level education, 22% only had primary education and 5.6% had not attained any education (Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3 Education level of respondents**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative percent</b>
None	5	5.6	5.6	5.6
Primary	20	22.2	22.2	27.8
Secondary	42	46.7	46.7	74.4
College/University	23	25.6	25.6	100.0
Total	90	100.0	100.0	

### **4.3 The level of the participation of women in the constituency development fund projects**

#### **4.3.1 Awareness of the constituency development fund projects**

The data indicate that nearly 91% of the respondents are aware of the constituency development fund projects or activities and were making constant enquiries on various issues related to the fund. However, 9% of the respondents were not aware of the constituency development fund projects or activities in Mbita Constituency and they could not differentiate it from other funds. About 60% of the respondents stated that they had visited the constituency development fund office. Of those who had visited the office, 52% were female. Most of the enquiries to the office were related to the constituency development fund education bursary. Further analyses showed that a majority of the respondents were also able to state the various types of constituency development fund projects in the study site. Respondents stated that the fund has built classrooms, health centres and dispensaries, roads, police posts and bridges. The funds have also been used to dig boreholes and provided water, supplied electricity, irrigated farms and provided bursaries for children from poor and vulnerable families.

Respondents were asked to indicate if the constituency development fund projects were a priority to the women. A majority of the respondents (61.1%) found the projects to be a priority to women while 38.9% did not. Further, the order of priority for those who said yes was important to the study. The data show that a majority of the respondents were able to list three of the projects in the order of their priorities and these were provision of health services, provision of clean safe water and education of children from poor families. They were also able to state how the projects initiated by constituency development fund are identified. In these locations, the village elders and chiefs arranged for community meetings where the local people identified and deliberated on the projects at the community level. Locational meetings were then held where people of a particular area prioritized projects of their locations. It was also established that involving local men and women in identifying and prioritizing projects is very important since the people understand their own problems better and they are better placed to come up with lasting solutions for such problems.

The findings indicated that 38.9% of the respondents said that women feel they own the projects while 61.1% of the respondents felt that women do not. These findings agree with



Kimenyi (2005) and Ng'ang'a, (2011) who point out that there is poor project ownership by the constituents because they have not been completely involved in decision-making, identification, selection and prioritization.

A total of 47.8% of the respondents admitted that the constituency development fund projects are utilized well while 52.2% said that the projects are not utilized well. This is because there were delays in the implementations of the projects. Other informants stated that projects were officially allocated funds but the implementations are not started within the given period.

The respondents were asked if the projects served the intended purposes. In response to this, 60.2% of the respondents agreed that the projects served the intended purposes while 37.8% said the projects did not. Those who responded positively explained that the constituency development fund has to some extent given the local people an opportunity to come up with their own ways in terms of the projects to address their own developmental problems.

#### **4.3.2 Level of women participation in constituency development fund**

A majority of the respondents (63.3%) said that women do participate in the projects initiated by constituency development fund while 36.7% stated that women do not. The participation of women in the constituency development fund is important because they also have a right to know what is going on since they are taxpayers just like the rest of the Kenyans and, therefore, they contribute to the constituency development fund kitty.

The study sought to establish the opinions of the respondents in regard to the level of the participation of women in constituency development fund in the study area. The data show that 77% of the respondents said that the level of the participation of women in constituency development fund was low while 23% stated that the level of the participation was high. These findings agree with Mapesa and Kibua (2006) who note that there is a low level of the participation by community members including women in constituency development fund projects which has led to a high level of dissatisfaction with the projects.

### 4.3.3 Stage at which women participate in constituency development fund

The data indicate that 55.6% of the respondents said that women do participate at the identification stage of the projects in the constituency development fund, 21.1% indicated that women participate at decision-making level, 15.6% mentioned that women participate at the planning level while 7% said that women participate at the monitoring stage (Table 4.4). These findings agree with the National Taxpayers Association (2012) which states that 85% of the informants from Mbita Constituency acknowledged that the participation of women in the constituency development fund was in project identification. The results are also supported by Mapesa and Kibua (2006) and Ng'ang'a (2011) who point out that women are not able to influence the location, implementation and monitoring of the constituency development fund projects. This is because most of the projects are regarded as belonging to the area Members of Parliament. Similarly, there has been little awareness about the implementation of the constituency development fund projects in the study region.

**Table 4.4: Stage at which women participate in constituency development fund**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Planning	14	15.6	15.6	15.6
Decision-making	19	21.1	21.1	36.7
Identification	50	55.6	55.6	92.2
Monitoring	7	7.8	7.8	100.0
Total	90	100.0	100.0	

### 4.4. Changes in the status of women as a result of the constituency development fund

The respondents were asked to state if the constituency development fund projects have changed their individual lives 60% agreed that the projects have changed their lives while 40% said that the constituency development fund projects have not. Those who responded positively said that employment for local residents has been created as people are hired to provide labour in various constituency development fund projects. Specifically, the youth have been employed as

builders and women involved in catering enterprises have experienced a boom in their businesses such as local hotels and an increase of fish supply to the neighboring wards.

The respondents were asked to state if the constituency development fund projects have changed the social lives of women in any way. In response to this, 62.2% agreed that the projects have changed the lives of women while 37.8% said that the projects had not. Further, it was elaborated that the projects have enhanced accessibility to health care services to a majority of the women in the three research wards. One respondent noted that cases of women giving birth at home have reduced as health services have been brought closer to the people.

The respondents were asked to state if the status of women interacting with the constituency development fund in this society has changed socially. In response to this, 60 respondents agreed that the constituency development fund projects have changed the status of women while 30 respondents said that it had not. This implies that a majority of the respondents were aware of the importance of the constituency development fund. In fact they were able to mention that the constituency development fund has made it possible for the construction and the rehabilitation of recreational facilities such as social halls and playing grounds. These facilities have been a major benefit especially to the youth since they have given them an opportunity to engage in extra-curricula activities, thereby, reducing idleness and developing their talents. The constituency development fund has also constructed markets where women sell their goods which they use to support their families.

From the findings, 53% of the respondents said that the status of women interacting with constituency development fund in this society has changed economically while 46.7% said that it has not. This implies that by interacting with the constituency development fund it increased the ability of women to do business, increased productivity levels, for example, in agriculture and it has similarly led to the initiation of development projects at the local level, thereby, availing financial resources at the grassroots level. A few of respondents pointed out that women in the study area are able to access credit from the women development fund and youth development funds in order to boost their businesses. These businesses include catering services offered by women groups at social gatherings, fish mongers, vegetables, household goods, bookshops, second-hand clothes and furniture traders.

#### 4.5 Barriers that woman face in accessing the constituency development fund

From the study, a large number of respondents (65%) were able to state some of the socio-economic barriers that woman experience in accessing the constituency development fund in the study region while 35% were able to state at least one barrier women experience in accessing the fund. Similarly, a majority (23.3%) of the respondents stated that the poverty level in the study region was a major barrier that women face in accessing the constituency development fund. The data indicate that women constitute 22.2% of the illiterates, which is worsened by deep rooted cultural beliefs and practices such as forced and early marriages (Table4.5).

**Table 4.5 Barriers that woman face in accessing the constituency development fund**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative percent</b>
Illiteracy	20	22.2	22.2	22.2
Ignorance	15	16.7	16.7	38.9
Poverty	21	23.3	23.3	62.2
Corruption	15	16.7	16.7	78.9
Cultural belief	13	14.4	14.4	93.3
Others	6	6.7	6.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

##### 4.5.1 Problems woman encounter in accessing the constituency development fund

Respondents were asked to state the problems women in the study region encounter in accessing the constituency development fund. A majority of respondents (60%) stated that most women were not aware of the amount of money allocated to constituency development fund in their wards and 40% were actually not aware of how the amounts received had been spent. Thus, they can not hold the committees accountable in terms of the implementation of the constituency development fund projects.

Another problem that respondents stated was equitable representation in the constituency development fund committee this is because 53.2% of respondents said that women in the study region were not fully represented in most of the management committees. In fact 46.8% of respondents stated that most of the management committees are composed of men compared to women. Specifically, men tend to be so aggressive than women, thus, barriers to the participation of women in the constituency development fund activities are to some extent viewed as socio-cultural in nature. These barriers include the perceived inferior status of women as well as the relegation of women to the domestic sphere rather than being given public positions such as those in the constituency development fund management institutions

Another barrier that was identified is related to the bureaucratic nature to get school bursaries especially for children from poor families headed by women. Although the application forms are available at the constituency development fund offices, 58% of the respondents stated that the process to get the forms approved takes quit a lot of time and lacks transparency while 12% of the respondents said that they were not aware of the procedures for accessing the education fund. However, 30% of the respondents felt that on the issue of educational bursaries guidelines need to be developed stipulating the criteria for determining who is awarded a bursary and how much. Similarly, the awarding of bursaries should take into consideration the gender disparity in educational achievement levels. Efficiency in releasing bursary funds should also be enhanced.

#### 4.5.2 Improvement on effectiveness of the constituency development fund

Asked what need to be changed in order to improve effectiveness of the constituency development fund in the study region, the responses was analysed and is presented on (Table 4.6).

**Table 4.6: Improvement on effectiveness of the constituency development fund**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative percent</b>
Conduct civic education	22	24.4	22.2	22.2
Equitable representation	24	26.7	16.7	38.9
Transparency and accountability	21	23.3	23.3	62.2
Leadership	16	17.8	17.8	92.2
Fairness in allocation of education fund	7	7.8	7.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses as well as provides conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further study.

#### **5.2 Discussion and Conclusion**

##### **5.2.1 Participation of women in the projects initiated by the constituency development fund**

The study assessed the levels of awareness of the respondents about the constituency development fund and the opportunities available to them in the fund. Given the fact that it was introduced as a means of realizing community based development many of the respondents knew where the constituency development fund office was located. A majority stated that they had visited the constituency development fund office and most of the enquiries to the offices were related to the education bursary.

The results of the study show that a majority of the respondents said that women do participate in the projects initiated by the constituency development fund while a few said that women do not. The findings however, indicate that an overwhelming number of the respondents were of the opinion that the level of the participation of women in the constituency development fund was low while a minority said that the level of the participation for women was high. Similarly, these findings concur with Mapesa and Kibua (2006) who noted that there is a low level of participation by community members including women in the constituency development fund projects which has led to a high level of dissatisfaction with the projects. There is a need to increase the participation of women in the identification and prioritization of projects in order to actually address the real issues affecting the women and create ownership of the projects among the women.

The data on the stage at which women participate in constituency development fund show that a majority of them do participate at the identification stage while a few women participate at the decision-making, planning and the monitoring stages. It was also established

that a majority of men participate in planning, decision-making, identification and monitoring of constituency development fund in the study region. These findings agree with the National Taxpayers Association (2012) which states that a majority of the informants from Mbita Constituency acknowledged that the participation of women in the constituency development fund was in project identification. The results are also supported by Mapesa and Kibua (2006) and Ng'ang'a (2011) who point out that women are not able to influence the location, implementation and monitoring of the constituency development fund projects. Therefore, women participation is placed at a distance in their levels of hierarchical relationship Longwe (1990) contends that higher levels of equality are automatically higher levels of development and empowerment. That is, equal participation in the decision-making process about certain resources is more important in terms of women's empowerment than equal access to resources but neither is as important as equal control.

It was surprising to learn that less than half of the respondents admitted that the constituency development fund projects are utilized well while many said that the projects are not utilized well. In addition, some of the projects were officially allocated funds but the implementations were delayed. However, a number of projects implemented in the constituency had tried to ensure that there was transparency and accountability. Transparency should also be enhanced by record keeping, public reporting of projects as well expenditures, awardees of tenders and amounts, funds received and expended failure to do so should be actionable by the constituency development fund Board.

The findings indicate that many of the respondents were of the opinion that the projects served their intended purpose while a minority said the projects did not. The study revealed that several of the projects have been implemented through the constituency development fund and to some extent the local people have been given an opportunity to come up with their own ways in terms of projects to address their own developmental problems. They were happy that the constituency development fund is here to stay and it will not depend on any particular person or government since there is a law, which will always ensure that every year there will be money allocated to the constituency development fund.



## **5.2. 2 Changes in the socio-economic status of women as a result of the constituency development fund**

The study established that there have been positive changes in the socio-economic status of women from Mbita Constituency as a result of the constituency development fund. A majority of respondents agreed that the projects have changed their lives while a few said that the constituency development fund projects have not. Those who responded positively said that it has led to the initiation of development projects at the local level thereby availing financial resources at the grassroots thus, empowering women economically. However, this varies from one ward to another. Conversely, employment for local residents has been created as people are hired to provide labour in various constituency development fund projects. Specifically, the youth have been employed as builders and women involved in catering enterprises have experienced a boom in their businesses.

The respondents were also in agreement that the constituency development fund has enhanced accessibility of health care services to a majority of the women in the study region. One respondent noted that cases of women giving birth at home have reduced as health services have been brought closer to the people. Thus, the constituency development fund has greatly contributed to an increase of health facilities in the study site.

The study reveals that women in particular were happy that through the constituency development fund many boreholes have been sunk, water wells rehabilitated and maintained and piped water availed to the local villages. Respondents in Gembe ward, for instance, reported that people used to fetch water from the lake and rivers which were not clean but now community members can access piped water, thus, improving their health status. This has enhanced accessibility to clean, healthy and safe drinking water to the local people. Similarly, this has contributed significantly to community development through improved health by reduced water-borne diseases, reduced time to fetch water by the women, thus, spending more time in productive activities. The water projects have revolutionized the lives of women. Other women reported that they had formed groups and were in the process of starting collective vegetable farming.

The study revealed that in Rusinga island, for example, a women group started a water project as an initiative from the women group members who at first contributed resources towards its establishment. There was an elected project committee that was entrusted with the implementation of the community project which comprised of seven men and four women. The committee members were elected by the community from the location where the Assistant chief announced the exercise. The selection was conducted at the chief's meeting. This committee was supposed to oversee the proper implementation of the community project. It was also responsible for the monitoring of the project.

Further, a majority of the respondents agreed that the status of women interacting with the constituency development fund in this society has changed socially and economically while a few felt nothing had changed. Many of the other respondents were of the opinion that the constituency development fund has led to the expansion of education infrastructure through the construction of new schools in the study region. This has improved accessibility of education to boys and girls at the primary and secondary school levels. Parents, especially women, are relieved of building classrooms. Respondents also reported that they are relieved from the burden of constantly repairing mud-walled classrooms as their children now learn in favorable conditions. The increase in the number of schools and classrooms has increased enrollment rates and reduced crowding in schools. Also schools have been equipped with books, desks, chairs and laboratory equipment. Dormitories and laboratories have also been constructed, renovated and expanded. In addition, the constituency development fund bursary has enabled needy children especially girls from poor backgrounds, to acquire education in both primary and secondary schools. The vocational training institutes conversely have provided the youth with a chance to pursue several courses and to learn life skills.

A number of respondents revealed that the construction and rehabilitation of trading facilities such as shades to traders in market centers, provision of clean toilets, as well as shades at the bus stations have been of major benefit particularly to the youth and women since it has given them an opportunity to carry out business in a better and healthy environment. In some areas, it has led to improved security by constructing police posts.

The study also discovered that the constituency development fund in Mbita Constituency has contributed significantly to the improvement of infrastructure, thereby, making many areas

accessible and hence, improving transport and communication. For instance, more rural access and feeder roads have been constructed and bridges have been erected and these has increased efficiency in transport, communication and have improved the well-being of women. Respondents also reported that a majority of women in Mbita live below the poverty line, thus, they are not able to fully fund the education of their children. Two ways in which the constituency development fund has helped is firstly, schools have been constructed closer to the community and they have greatly reduced the expenses that parents used to incur. Secondly, the bursary that is given to needy and bright children has helped them in the payment of fees. Through this, parents are able to save some money for their small businesses which in the end play a very big role in positively changing their social lives. This implies that the constituency development fund has increased the ability of women to do businesses and it has played a pivotal role in the socio-economic transformation of women in Mbita.

### **5.2.3 Barriers that women experience in accessing the constituency development funds and possible solutions**

A majority of the respondents were of the opinion that if the constituency development fund can be better implemented, through involving them in all the constituency development fund processes and activities, it can play an integral role in stimulating local development and addressing the pressing needs of women. This implies that the constituency development fund needs to devise effective strategies and programmes aimed at sensitizing women and creating awareness about constituency development fund projects. For instance, there should be open fora, workshops and seminars where issues concerning the constituency development fund could be shared and deliberated upon by women and the constituency development fund officials at all levels. Information on constituency development fund should be disseminated through public notices, barazas, the media, religious institutions, and women groups.

The study revealed that a majority of the respondents were not aware of the amount of money allocated to constituency development fund in their wards and some were actually not aware of how the amounts received had been spent. Thus, they can not hold the committees accountable in terms of the implementation of the constituency development fund projects. Given the numerous devolved funds present in the study region there is an urgent need for proper coordination and management of all the devolved funds to avoid duplication of projects in the

study region. Enhanced partnership with other funds would enable the pooling together of resources for the benefit of the women. This implies that civic education is needed to empower the women to understand the management of the constituency development fund and its role in making the committees more accountable. This is also in line with the spirit of the constitution of Kenya, (2010) that encourages citizen participation as provided in Articles 201(a), 10(2) (a), 118(b), Article 174(c) and Article 196 (1) (b) and the CDF Act (2013) (Republic of Kenya 2010).

A number of respondents revealed that, to some extent, women are not fully represented in most of the management committees. The study established that a majority of the women do participate in the constituency development fund projects, however, the level of women participation is low, hence, women in the study region can not influence decisions. For instance, an analysis of the data on the stage at which women participate in constituency development fund show that a majority of the women do participate at the identification stage of the projects in the constituency development fund while a few women participate at decision-making, planning and at the monitoring stage. It was also established that a majority of men participate in management committees, specifically men tend to be so aggressive than women, thus, barriers to the participation of women in the constituency development fund activities are to some extent viewed as socio-cultural in nature. These include the perceived inferior status of women as well as the relegation of women to the domestic sphere rather than being given public positions such as those in the constituency development fund management institutions.

Another barrier that is identified is related to the bureaucratic nature to get school bursaries especially for children from poor families headed by women. Although the application forms are available at the constituency development fund offices, a number of women stated that the process to get the forms approved is not that smooth. A majority of women felt that on the issue of educational bursaries, guidelines need to be developed stipulating the criteria for determining who is awarded a bursary and how much. The awarding of bursaries should take into consideration the gender disparity in educational achievement levels. Efficiency in releasing bursary funds should also be enhanced.

A majority of the respondents mentioned another factor that denied women accessing constituency development funds is the fact that there had been cases of fraud, mismanagement

and corruption in handling the constituency development fund in the study region. This is hampering the achievement of the constituency development fund objectives. There is a dire need to enhance transparency and accountability in the management of the entire constituency development fund.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The constituency development fund has now become a popular development initiative in Kenya and it has a great potential of transforming the lives of women in Mbita Constituency. For instance, by turning around the economy if better utilized and the funds optimally utilized. The greatest benefit of the constituency development fund is that it reaches all parts of Mbita in particular and the country in general. In theory, it gives the local communities an opportunity to participate directly in their own development agenda. Strengthening the constituency development fund is, therefore, not an option but a prerequisite. The constituency development fund is a novel concept and one that is expected to have a major positive impact in constituency development on empowering women in Mbita constituency.

This study focuses on women's empowerment framework. Specifically, Longwe (1990) recognizes that it is important to empower men and women to make decisions on matters that affect their lives. It is not enough to devolve funds at the community level if the beneficiaries do not have any power to make decisions over those resources. In addition, the ultimate goal of this framework is to ensure that men and women have control over their own resources and participates in decision making on issues that affect their lives. The study took the view that the constituency development fund management and implementation in the study region should move in this direction. The framework recognizes that for the constituency development fund in mbita constituency to achieve the desired results, it is critical that issues of men's and women's access to the constituency development fund resources, participation in identification of priority projects, participation in allocation of resources, participation in decision making on issues relating to constituency development fund, participation in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of constituency development fund activities, are given due consideration. This study, therefore, concludes that women were in favour of the constituency development fund since it has a positive impact in empowering them.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

There is a need to increase women's participation in the identification and prioritization of projects in order to actually address the real issues affecting women and create ownership of the projects among the women in Mbita Constituency. An overwhelming 55.6% of the respondents said that women do participate at the identification stage of the projects in the constituency development fund, 21.1% indicated that women participate at decision-making level, 15.6% mentioned that women participate at planning level while 7% said that women participate at the monitoring stage. These findings agree with the National Taxpayers Association (2012) which states that 85% of the informants from Mbita Constituency acknowledged that the participation of women in the constituency development fund was in project identification. The findings indicated that 38.9% of the respondents said that women feel they own the project while 61.1% of the respondents felt that women do not.

Civic education is needed to empower the women to understand the management of the constituency development fund and their role in making the committees more accountable. The study revealed that a substantial 60% of the respondents were not aware of the amount of money allocated to the constituency development fund in their wards. Further, 40% of the respondents were actually not aware of how the amounts had been spent. Thus, they cannot hold the committees accountable in terms of the constituency development fund implementation in the study region.

There is a need to enhance transparency and accountability in the management of the entire constituency development fund. A majority of the women felt that on the issue of educational bursaries, guidelines need to be developed stipulating the criteria for determining who is awarded a bursary and how much. The awarding of bursaries should take into consideration the gender disparity in educational achievement levels. Efficiency in releasing bursary funds should also be enhanced.

## **5.5 Areas for future research**

Studies about other devolved funds should be carried out so as to fully understand how such funds contribute to the empowerment of women.

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## **APPENDIX I**

### **Survey Questions**

#### **Introduction**

I am Josephine Juma, a Masters of Arts student in gender and development studies of the University of Nairobi. I am carrying out a research on the impact of the constituency development fund on empowering women in Mbita Constituency, Homa Bay County. I would, therefore want to find out the level of the participation of women in the projects initiated by the constituency development fund, changes in the status of women as a result of the constituency development fund and the barriers that women experience in accessing the constituency development funds. All the information given in this study will be treated with confidence. I wish to request you to spare some time to answer some questions.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

#### **Section A: Demographic information**

Please respond by putting a tick (√) in the space provided.

##### 1. Gender

Male ( )      Female ( )

##### 2. Age

18-28 years ( )    29 – 39 years ( )      49 – 50 ( ) years 51 years and above ( )

##### 3. Marital statuses

Single ( ) Married ( )    Divorced ( )    Widowed ( )    Separated ( )

##### 4. Occupation

Government employed ( )    Private sector ( )    Business ( )

Unemployed ( )    others (specify) ( )

5. Education background

- 1. None: ( )
- 2. Primary: ( )
- 3. Secondary: ( )
- 4. College /University: ( )

**Section B: Level of the participation of women in the projects initiated by the constituency development fund.**

Are you aware of any the constituency development fund projects or activities in this constituency?

- 1. Yes ( )
- 2. No ( )

1.2. If yes, please state the types of the projects present.

.....  
.....  
.....

1.3. Are these projects a priority to the women?

- 1. Yes ( )
- 2. No ( )

1.4 If yes, what would you list as the priorities?

Please list three in order of priority.....  
.....  
.....

1.5. How are the projects initiated by the constituency development fund identified?

Please specify 1.....  
2.....  
3.....

1.6. Do women participate in the projects initiated by the constituency development fund in the Constituency?

1. Yes ( )

2. No ( )

1.7. In your opinion, what is the level of participation of women in the CDF funded projects in this constituency?

1. High ( )

2. Low ( )

1.8. At what stage do women participate in the constituency development fund projects?

1. Planning ( )

2. Decision making ( )

3. Identification ( )

4. Monitoring ( )

1.9 Do the women feel they own the projects?

1. Yes ( )

2. No ( )

2.0 Are the projects well utilized?

1. Yes ( )

2. No ( )

2.1. In your opinion, do the projects serve the intended purpose?

1. Yes ( )

2. No ( )

**Section C: Changes in the status of women as a result of the constituency development**

**fund.**

1. As an individual, has the constituency development fund project changed your life in any way?

Yes ( )                      No ( )

2. Has the constituency development funds changed the lives of women in any way?

Yes ( )                      No ( )

If yes explain the ways.....  
.....  
.....

3. Do you think the status of women interacting with constituency development fund in this society has changed?

1. Socially                      Yes ( )    No ( )

2. Economically                      Yes ( )    No ( )

If yes explains.....  
.....  
.....

**Section D: Barriers that women experience in accessing constituency development funds**

1. Identify some of socio-economic barriers to constructive engagement of the constituency development fund by women from Mbita Constituency.

2. What problems are encountered in accessing of the constituency development by women from Mbita Constituency?

3. What needs to be changed or done to improve effectiveness of the constituency development fund among the women in Mbita Constituency?

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Focus group interview guide**

#### **Introduction**

I am Josephine Juma, a Masters of Arts student in gender and development studies of the University of Nairobi. I am carrying out a research on the impact of the constituency development fund on empowering women in Mbita Constituency, Homabay County. I would therefore want to find out the level of the participation of women in the projects initiated by the constituency development fund, the changes in the status of women as a result of the constituency development fund and the barriers that women experience in accessing the constituency development funds. All the information given in this study will be treated with confidence. I wish to request you to spare some time to answer some questions.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

1. Who are the main actors in the constituency development fund project planning and implementation?
2. Which are the roles played by different stakeholders the constituency development fund project phases?
3. What is the role of women in the constituency development fund projects?
4. How are women in Mbita constituency mobilized and sensitized to participate in the constituency development fund projects?
5. How are the realities of women captured in the constituency development fund projects in Mbita constituency?
6. How has the constituency development fund contributed to Mbita women's empowerment?
7. Which are the barriers that women experience in accessing the constituency development funds and what possible solutions could you recommend?
8. How can the constituency development fund be made more accessible to women from Mbita constituency?
9. What is your view on the barriers women experience in accessing the constituency development funds in Mbita constituency?



10. How in your view could these barriers be addressed?

11. Based on your experience through interaction with women from Mbita constituency, how has the constituency development fund impacted on their socio-economic status?

## **APPENDIX III**

### **Key informant interview guide**

#### **Introduction**

I am Josephine Juma, a Masters of Arts student in gender and development studies of the University of Nairobi. I am carrying out a research on the impact of the constituency development fund on empowering women in Mbita Constituency, Homa Bay County. I would therefore want to find out the level of the participation of women in the projects initiated by the constituency development fund, the changes in the status of women as a result of the constituency development fund and the barriers that women experience in accessing the constituency development funds. All the information given in this study will be treated with confidence. I wish to request you to spare some time to answer some questions.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

1. Name of organization /group represented?
2. What is your position in the society/ group?
3. Duration in this position?
4. What is your level of education?
5. What is your marital status?
6. Who are the main actors in the constituency development fund project planning and implementation?
7. Which are the roles played by different stakeholders the constituency development fund project phases?
8. What is the role of women the constituency development fund projects?
9. How are women in Mbita constituency mobilized and sensitized to participate the constituency development fund projects?
10. How are the realities of women captured in the constituency development fund projects in Mbita Constituency?

11. How has the constituency development fund contributed to Mbita women's empowerment?
12. Which are the barriers that women experience in accessing the constituency development funds and what possible solutions could you recommend?
13. How can the constituency development fund be made more accessible to women from Mbita Constituency?
14. What is your view on the barriers women experience in accessing the constituency development fund in Mbita Constituency?
15. How in your view could these barriers be addressed?
16. Based on your experience through interaction with women from Mbita Constituency, how has the constituency development fund impacted on their socio-economic status?