



GENDER GAP IN AGRICULTURAL LAND OWNERSHIP IN RURAL TANZANIA: IMPLICATION ON WEALTH DISTRIBUTION

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Introduction

- The National Land Policy of 1995, the Land Act and the Village Land Act, both of 1999, expressly give equal land ownership rights to both men and women.
- Even the Land (Allocation Committees) Regulations of 2001 emphasise gender balance in land allocation.
- Furthermore, Tanzania is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Introduction Cont..

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- The land tenure reform in Tanzania is an example of a legal model that incorporates customary policies while at the same time putting in place mechanisms that provide women with protection from discrimination (Ikdaahl, 2005)
- Land policies and laws in Tanzania are considered as among the most gender-sensitive in Sub-Saharan Africa (Knight, 2010)

Introduction Cont..

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- The Land Act, 1999 and the Village Land Act, 1999 explicitly include the principle of non-discrimination (Ikdahl, et al., 2005)
- Some of the provisions seeking to strengthen women's land rights in Tanzania include imposition of quotas for women participation in the Village Land Council and the requirement of spousal consent to disposition and mortgaging of land

Justification and Link to the Literature

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- ➔ Although the importance of securing women's land and inheritance rights has been recognized in a growing number of national and international legal instruments, evidence from a gender perspective shows that, most land tenure systems in Africa favour men, granting women rights primarily through a father, husband, brother or son (Moyo, 2017; FAO, 2011; World Bank, FAO and IFAD, 2009; UN-HABITAT, 2006; Tsikata, 2003; UN-HABITAT, 2006; USAID, 2013).

Justification Cont..

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- The fact that Tanzania is predominantly an agricultural country, limited access and control over land by women limits women and children's access to various social and economic rights such as food, education, health and shelter.
- Under customary land law and traditions in developing countries, women are given usufructuary rights (i.e. rights of use), this is the case for women in Tanzania as well (Leavens and Leigh, 2011; Makota 2013).
- In many countries, land is still the most important component of wealth, particularly in rural areas, but in many cases women are excluded from sharing the wealth (Deere and Doss, 2016).

Methodology

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- Thirty (30) semi-structured in-depth interviews with women and men in Kisarawe, Mkuranga and Mbozi Districts
- Questionnaire was administered to 70 people
- The respondents were randomly selected
- A total of 64 people returned filled out questionnaire (91% response rate)

The collected data intends (1) to provide a reflection as to the extent of gender gap to wealth distribution in rural Tanzania (2) to explore the best way of harmonizing customs and traditions with the statutory land rights

Results: Awareness on Land Related Laws

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- It was evident that despite the fact that the Land Acts No. 4 and No. 5 both of 1999 are existence for almost two decades, only 5% of women interviewed were noted to be aware of some provisions of the laws.
- However, all women who attempted to acquire land on their own names reported that they were not perceived negatively by the society

Results: Awareness on Land Related Laws cont..

- No woman who tried to acquire customary land on her name reported to have been denied land merely because she was a women
- To a village council, ability to pay for the land/farm was the essential prerequisite for one to be allocated land
- A few gender discrimination elements in acquiring land were reported. 20% of the respondents recalled few incidents of discrimination, the rest didn't recall any of such incidents.

Result: Gender and Access to Land

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- It was evident that although equal access to land is pronounced in the statutory land rights, customary land tenure norms are still predominant over statutory laws in decision making and land ownership practices in rural Tanzania
- Most women were noted to still access land through their male relatives, but to varying degrees depending on their ethnic group, family relations and socio-economic status
- Change in woman's relationship with her relatives, such as husband's death or divorce, endangered her access to land

Result: Gender and Access to Land Cont..

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- It was apparent from the selected districts that gender bias against women was highly pronounced. Customary land tenure was generally noted to favour men especially in: land allocation, dispute resolution and in decision making
- To a great extent the practice compromised tenure security, with women being more likely to suffer economically than men

Result: Gender Gap in Wealth/Income Distribution

- Although 65.5% of women said that they were not excluded from the right to use agricultural land, it was noted that men took the leading role in selling farm products and deciding on the income.
- Regarding wealth distribution between men and women, 61.1% of women revealed that they normally got a small share of farm product sales and 22.2% reported that they didn't get anything. 16.7% of Muslim women living under traditional Islamic norms were noted to get even much less share

Result: Extent of Women involvement in Agricultural Activities

- It was noted that extent to which women are involved in agricultural activities was higher (63.6%) compared to men, but this was largely in subsistence farming
- Only 2.5% of women managed to construct their own houses using their share of income from agricultural activities
- It was also noted that women's income benefited the entire family as much of it was spent on children's health, education and other essential family basic requirements

Result: Gender balance in Land Ownership Rights in Rural Tanzania

- ▶ Although women accounted for the majority of farm workers, evidence shows that gender balance in land ownership rights did not reflect that reality – the opposite was true
- ▶ It was noted that a majority of women did not bother about the concept of gender balance
- ▶ 70% of them knew very little about the concept and 30% were aware of the concept and were of the opinion that gender balance was a good idea to be pursued by the society

The Concept of Gender Balance in Land Ownership Rights in Rural Tanzania cont..

Consequences of Gender Gaps in Access to Land to Wealth Distribution

Consequence mentioned	Frequency of mentioning	%
Limited investment on land	2	3.8
Harassment to women due to landlessness	3	5.8
Remaining financially dependents to their husbands	7	13.5
Losing everything in case of divorce	2	3.8
Women are exploited	5	9.6
Marriage conflicts which lead to litigation, divorce and family breakdown	4	7.7
Stressful life which result into diseases	6	11.5
Poverty	11	21.4
Overworking to get income to take care of the family	1	1.9
Failure to service loans	2	3.8
Suicide attempts	1	1.9
Stealing from their husbands	2	3.8
Becoming unfaithful to their marriage	3	5.8
Being unable to take care of the family when separated or husbands die	2	3.8
Failure to join microfinance groups to raise capital for starting small business	1	1.9

Land Policies and Gender Sensitivity in Rural Tanzania

- It is evident from the study that women have equal rights to access land but its quality is undermined by lack of awareness on land rights among the majority
- Those who acquired land on their own names directly from the Village Councils revealed that there were no discriminatory elements during allocation
- However, implementation of the land policies and laws has seen to have little emphasis on the negative impact of the cultural dimension

Concluding Remarks

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- Strict implementation of the land policies and laws is crucial in order to address the loopholes that permit customary law to discriminate against women
- Despite the fact that there is unequal wealth distribution between men and women, women's contribution to the agriculture sector is significant in rural areas.
- This emphasizes that there should be a clear system of land rights which guarantees women's rights. As seen in the study, majority of the women are not discriminated from owning land, rather they are not aware of their rights

Concluding Remarks Cont..

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- Realization of de facto gender equality in land ownership in rural areas requires education and public awareness
- Deliberate efforts should be put in place to provide land rights awareness to women in rural areas. Effectiveness of the policies and land laws will only be achieved when the society is well understand the respective policies and laws
- Effectiveness of the law will also depend on its enforcement, acceptability and respect for it

Thank you

