



Rural women's access to land and household food security: implications of agricultural intensification in Ghana

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Introduction and objectives

- Rural women in Ghana contribute to household food security with activities from growing to processing.
- With increasing pressure on land for large-scale commercial agriculture, resource constrained women in patrilineal societies such as the Dagbon in the Northern Region are increasingly vulnerable to losing access to land and its benefits.
- As a case of large-scale commercial agriculture in Africa, this study uses the land acquisition by the Integrated Tamale Fruit Company (ITFC), a European-Ghanaian organic fruit company involved in the cultivation and processing of certified organic mangoes for the local and export markets.
- The aim was to investigate the Dagbon customary land tenure and ITFCs land acquisition in Savelugu Municipality and unearth their implications on women access to land and their food security in the Northern region.

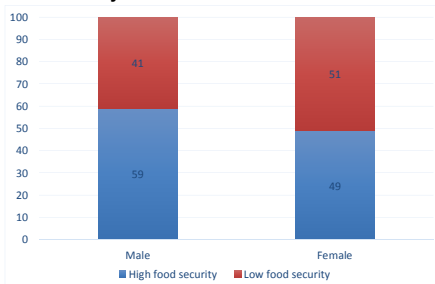
Conclusions

- Access to land is critical for rural women to achieve food security. ITFCs mango outgrower scheme has led to a contraction of cultivated lands, fruit trees and fuelwood which are critical to the food security of rural women.
- Different food security statutes can be recorded for men and women in the same household.
- ITFC failed to give much attention to the differentiated needs, time use and labor burdens of men and women thereby perpetuating the existing gender inequalities.
- Low yields and incomes from the mangoes raises concerns on the sustainability of large scale commercial farming in the region

Results

1. Relationship between women's access to land and their food security

Figure 1. Food Security Status of Men and Women from the same Households



Even when men are food secure, it does not mean that women in the same household are also food secure. Men's farms are nearly 3 times larger than women's (2.9 acres for women as compared to 8.5 acres for men). Although these women have relatively large compared to other women's farms in the community, they still did not have steady access to food.

When access is granted to women, the mode of accessing the land is through insecure modes which have implications on not only the women but also their children.

Wilcoxon signed rank test reveals a significant difference between men's and women's access to land and their food security status. The a priori expectation of Z score is -6.037 (60%) with a significant corresponding value (0.000). This indicates women are most insecure in access to land which leads to their high food insecurity levels.

In a Focus Group Discussion (FGD), a female participant explained that:

"If your husband doesn't give you land to farm your groundnuts where will you get it? Unless you go and borrow someone else's for a small portion. You can't go yourself, your husband has to go and borrow that land for you. It is difficult because you have to find a farmer who is not cultivating his plot. Some people agree and others don't" (Nabogo, 11th July, 2018).

2. The effects of the outgrower scheme of ITFC on women's access to land and their food security

Reduction in the availability of land, reduces access to resources such as fuel wood, game, and fruit trees. Particularly, *Vitellaria paradoxa* (shea tree) and *Parkia biglobosa* (locust bean, known as *dawadawa* in the region) are critical for women's income.

For the rural women who are already resource constrained, a decrease in access to land and other land based resources leads to their food insecurity.



Photo: One of the few surviving mango farms for an ITFC outgrower at Nyeglo



Photo: The dawadawa seed in its sweet pulp

For example, the land (shown above) was once used for crop farming by the male owner and housed over 50 trees from which his wives and children harvested fruits and collected fuel wood for cooking.

Women are now forced to travel farther in search of shea nut and *dawadawa* fruit while being faced with the challenge of reduced quantity.

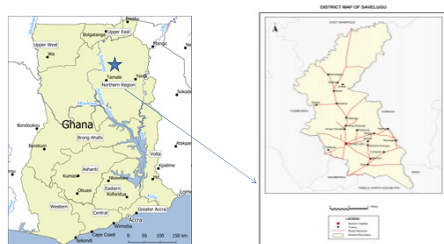
They are also constrained by time as they are obligated to serve as unpaid labor on their husband's food crop farms and mango farms.

In a FGD, a female participant complained in frustration that:

"Now we don't have shea or dawadawa or fuelwood. We have mango trees - yet we do not benefit from it because it doesn't fruit" (Gushie, 13th July, 2018).

Study Area

A Map of Ghana and detail of Savelugu showing the ITFC operational areas



Source: Ghana Statistical Service, GSS



Photo: A woman showing researchers her trees

Methods of Data Collection

A case study design was used to study ITFC in-depth using a mixed method of data collection.

Quantitative: A survey was conducted using questionnaire for 185(male= 95, female=90) respondents, sampled using snowballing technique in 6 ITFC operational communities. Analyzed with SPSS 23.0 for frequencies, percentages, cross tabulation and Wilcoxon signed rank test. USDAs 6point scale measurement of food security was used to determine the food security status of survey respondents. in tables, graphs and charts.

Qualitative: A retired ITFC manager and the current manager were purposively selected as key informants for interviews
10 members(mixed gender) of Organic Mango Outgrowers Association(OMOA) in each of the 6 communities were selected for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) . A total of 6 FGDs for the study. Manual transcriptions of interview recordings and field notes were categorized under themes related to each objective. Presented as narrations and direct quotations.



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