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“Exploring opportunities ...
for managing natural resources and a better life for all”

A systematic review of gender-responsive social learning research in agriculture and land management in Africa

PETER ASARE-NUAMAH¹, DAVID ANAAFO², TINA BEUCHELT¹, CONSTANCE AKURUGU³

¹*University of Bonn, Center for Development Research (ZEF), Germany*

²*West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL), Interfaces, Burkina Faso*

³*Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies, Ghana*

Abstract

Addressing gender inequality is essential for sustainable development. Hence, contemporary research and development approaches, particularly implementation research, emphasize the need to adopt a gendered approach. Participatory social learning therefore offers a unique opportunity for engendering development approaches as it provides a common platform for diverse stakeholders to co-develop and implement collective actions for development. Given the vulnerability of the African continent coupled with the complex system of development, participatory social learning is gaining traction as an approach to both address gender inequality and advance collective development, especially in agriculture and natural resource management. However, to what extent are existing research in agriculture and natural resources management participatory and how do they address gender issues in their approaches. This study adopts a preferred reporting items for systematic review and meta-analysis (PRISMA) to explore the growth trajectory of participatory social learning research in agriculture and natural resources management in Africa and the approaches adopted to integrate gender in collective learning. Guided by the PRISMA guideline, the study used Web of Science and Scopus databases for the search and retrieval of 120 documents. The trend analysis shows an exponential growth in social learning research in Africa since 1979, peaking in 2019. Yet, only 14 of the reviewed documents adopted gender-responsive approaches. Diverse approaches are adopted although many studies explored gender from a binary perspective mainly due to the data collection procedure. Studies that provide space for social learning for diverse stakeholders, especially workshops, are better suited to address and integrate gender and intersectionality in collective development. We recommend research and development efforts in agriculture and natural resource management in Africa to go beyond mere male and female analysis in promoting collective and collaborative development.

Keywords: Collaborative governance, gender, implementation research, social learning, sustainable development