



Dynamics of Climate Change, Land Scarcity, and Gender in Northern Ghana's Food and Land Systems

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Background and research question

- Gender significantly influences sustainable land management in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Climate change threatens agricultural productivity and recent development gains.
- This research explores:
 - Gender norms and roles in adopting sustainable land practices under climate stress.
 - Impact of land availability on gendered access to land.
 - Pathways to enhance gender equity in research and innovation.

Methods

- Inter- and transdisciplinary qualitative research
- Sex-disaggregated focus groups, semi-structured interviews (male & female farmers)
- Multi-stakeholder workshops and participant observation

Key findings

Women have central agricultural and food system roles but face continued systemic barriers (social norms, customary law).

Social determinants – such as age, marital status, ethnicity, and religion – influence women's access to land and other resources, their decision-making and climate change adaptation.

Land scarcity and climate extremes intensify constraints – especially for widows, divorced women, and women in polygynous households.



Gender inequalities increase women's exposure to economic and physical violence as it is increasing negative effects of climate change.

Discussion and conclusion

- Consideration of heterogeneity in farm households allows better targeting of climate change adaptation.
- Urgent need for gender-transformative policies in land and food systems: Discriminatory norms and gender-based violence in agriculture should be addressed.
- Land titling is insufficient to improve women's access to land. Fair and equitable communal land allocation needs to be strengthened.
- Integration of intersectional and equity-based approaches in research and policy for food systems is needed.
- Co-design, social learning, and theories of change can further support institutional transformation.
- More research is required on enabling change processes at institutional and political-level.

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