

The Cry of Landless Smallholder Women Farmers and Agro-Processors in Northern Ghana- Evidence from West Mamprusi Municipality

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Abstract

Women's access to critical resources such as land is one of the most topical issues amongst development practitioners, gender advocates, and policymakers alike. Land is one of the bases of wealth, power and authority in most developing countries. As such, no meaningful development takes place without land resources, yet gender inequalities with respect to land allocation and distribution exist in most Sub-Saharan African countries, especially northern Ghana where majority of the affected are women. This paper examined the effect of the customary land tenure system on landless women smallholder farmers and Agro-processors in West Mamprusi Municipality. Primary data from individuals and household heads, chiefs, and Tingban-dima (landowners), were gathered using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews. Secondary was also extensively reviewed as a complement to the primary data in the area of study. The study revealed significant gender disparities between men and women relative to land allocation and land access. Women access to land was abysmal compared to that of men. The situation was also found to be aggravated by the dominant patriarchal relations which favour men relative to property ownership. Only a handful of women had owned and access to some lands but in most cases, such lands were reported to be poorer in quality, and lack proximity relative to complementary resources such as water. Additionally, some lands in the hands of women came in with hefty royalties, thereby exacerbating their plight. The productive capacity of women in food production, agro-processing, vegetable production, and animal husbandry was found to be impeded by the land tenure system which limits their livelihood opportunities thereby widening the poverty-gap amongst women and men. Nonetheless, women's access to land has seen a bit of improvement over the years, considering the recognition of women's contribution to household income and the nutritive diet of children, but indigenous traditional inheritance structures still limit the potentials of women in this direction. The need to therefore advocate for a change in traditional land ownership and distribution by emphasizing on the women's right and contribution to development. The constitution of Ghana allows for equal access to land irrespective of gender; this must therefore be advocated. This will address the gender gap in land and water resources to pave the way for women in agriculture, which will improve rural livelihoods, especially women in reproductive age.

Keywords: Gender disparity, Land tenure system, Patrilineal Inheritance, Agriculture, smallholder farmers, Agro-Processors

1.1 Introduction

Women's access to critical and world's most valued resource such as land is one of the most discussed topical issues among development practitioners, gender advocates and policy makers. Globally, women constitute approximately 49.58% of the world's population representing almost half of the world's 7 billion people [1], and China tops the world with the highest female population. As of 2022, China female population stood at 691 million people, accounting to 17.55% of the world's female population. Apart from United States of America, the other top 4 countries from the top 5 with the highest female population are from the Global South, including India, Indonesia and Pakistan; account 45.67% of its population [1]. In Ghana, more than 50% of the total population constitutes the female of which majority live in the rural areas and are engage in agriculture as the main source of livelihood [2]. Yet, this important segment of the population who constitute majority are classified as the poorest of the poor and are left-behind in terms of equitable access to vital resources, chief amongst them is the ownership of land. Scholarly literature has shown that the inability of women to contribute adequately to development is as a result of the patriarchy tendency which fail to promote gender equality through equitable resource access such as land [3]. Therefore, he further posits that women are still less-represented in the social, economic and political spheres which affects decisions on ownership, control of vital social and economic resources such as land for utilization. The situation is prevalent in many developing countries including Ghana

Agricultural activities are dependent mainly on land and water resources. In fact, land is an important component of production and key factor to smallholder farmers either male or female. Therefore, disproportionate allocation and ownership over one group or the other affects productivity and by extension livelihoods of those involved. To this end, everybody deserves equal access to social, political and economic opportunities irrespective of social class and gender orientation. Land is a valued asset among the Southern countries and Africa in particular [4]. Land tenure is a vital asset for which every community member must have access to in order to live a meaningful life. In Ghana, there are two main ways of property inheritance: matrilineal and patrilineal inheritance. Matrilineal is inheritance from the mother's lineage and Patrilineal on the other hand, is inheritance through the father's lineage. Ghana is geographically divided into two halves: Southern and Northern. In the South, inheritance is based on matriarchy, land rights among women especially among the Asante ethnic group which constitute over 80% of the population within the southern region [5], in this case property is transfer from the mother's brother to the sister's children. Therefore, matrilineal women have more access and control of land resource more than patriarchal females.

Under patrilineal inheritance, which is practice in the northern part of Ghana, wives, daughters, sisters have no inheritance rights to all forms of resources including land [6]. The study area is the West Mamprusi Municipal, one of the districts in the newly created North-East region, carved from the Northern region. The area is predominantly Mamprugu ethnic group or tribe (speak mamprulim or mamprusi) which constitute more than 90% of the population [7]. The study is a case based analytical approach which investigates the impact of land tenure systems and arrangements on smallholder women farmers and agro-processors in the West Mamprusi Municipality. In northern region, traditional institutions such as chieftaincy, family heads, kinships, Tindagban-daaba /Tingbani-diba (land owners) and to some extent household heads are predominantly male headed and thus, little room for women to occupy those positions due to the cultural arrangements, even women who holds land allodial titles by virtue of marriage loses the land holding title after divorce or widowhood. The inability for women to access land may pose a great deal to women smallholder farmers. Therefore, the study seeks to examine how land tenure system affects

smallholder women farmers in the agro processing value chain in West Mamprusi Municipality. The situation of women land access in the area is peculiar due to power relation among women and men relative to land ownership.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Women Land Access

In Sub Saharan Africa, it is estimated that women share and ownership of land amounts to 1% of the total land, yet produce almost 80% of household food consumed [8]. In many African countries, including Tanzania, agriculture is a core economic activity and access to land is a necessary opportunity to enable vulnerable groups, including women, to secure household food needs, thereby reducing hunger and malnutrition in rural areas [9]. Gender disparities between men and women regarding access to land ownership and control is very prevalent partly due to cultural arrangements such as beliefs, myths among others, as land holding is greatly tended in favour of men at the expense of women. In rare cases where land is issued to women, the quality as regards to productive capacity is questionable. For instance, [10], found that land allocated to women in most African countries such as Ethiopia and Northern Ghana with strong patriarchy is often depleted fields or infertile fields with little capacity to support plant growth, thus, limiting their ability to produce and expand. Therefore, gender disparities with respect to land allocation to women in these regions show a wide gender-gap with less land access to women compared to their male counterparts which affects production and income of farmers involved. According [11], in northern Malawi where patrilineal groups are the majority, marital status of women largely determines their rights to land, since they can request a parcel of land only from their husbands and that unmarried women finds it difficult if not impossible to access land with the exception of women with strong financial muscle to rent for given time-frame. In Uganda [12], found that clan and family heads, who are the male custodians of lands are reluctant to release land to women farmers to engage in productive ventures. Moreover, [13], discovered that spiritual and cultural beliefs are among the many factors that restricts women's ability to land access or major a causative factor limiting women's access to northern agricultural land in Ghana as women in the region are unable to perform land sacrifices to appease the gods since the custodial role is strictly the reserved of men. Land is a precious resource, a means of wealth, power and control, which needs spiritual maintenance for which women are culturally not in position to perform the task. Traditionally, it is claim that if a woman especially those unmarried inherits land resources from the male parents, the land eventually becomes the property of the husband when she gets married, thus, limiting the amount of land resources in her biological home. This is one of the many reasons, cultural systems of land tenure and land inheritance favours males over females in patriarchal communities particularly northern Ghana [14]. Interestingly, women who divorce their husbands lose their marital family's land use rights, and widows may have to rely on their sons to continue to acquire land, and a widow without children also loses land rights after the husband passes on. In spite of gender discrimination with respect to land allocation to women, there has been tremendous gains over the year. For instance, in Upper East Region of Ghana, women land access has increased over the years because a growing number of males/landlords are willing and ready to release land to women in agriculture due to their contribution to food production and the value of farm income amongst the females' households.

2.2 Quality and size of Land allocated to Women

In Sub-Saharan Africa, land rights do not guarantee women access to land resource especially in the patrilineal societies [8]. Though land rights are enshrined in the constitution but its enforcement remains questionable as there is no political will to invoke clauses with respect to land rights when the need arises, due to the conflict between the laws and traditional customs and practices. For instance, a review constitutional process to allow equal access of males and females with respect to land access was repugnantly rejected by the chiefs and traditional rulers arguing that their power and control as customs demands would be taken away if the laws were allowed to stand [15].

Similarly, the Ghanaian constitution allows equal rights of males and females to access properties such as land, but such control and power of land allocation is the sole preserve of men due to the tradition and culture especially in the northern part of Ghana where patrilineal system of inheritance is practiced, thus, making the region one of the areas where gender disparities is the widest [16]. Apart from gender disparities to land access, the quality and size of land allotted to women is less and the distant from homes compared to the men [17], this is disincentive to women smallholder farmers who mostly prefer farm fields close to their places of abode, allowing easy access to the fields for management practices coupled with low transaction cost due to the cost associated with transport. For instance, in Ethiopia, households whose fields are distant from their residential places were less motivated to invest in organic production involving the preparation of compost due to the high transportation cost in carting them to the fields. In another vein, the longer the distance from fields to water facility, the less likely of women smallholder farmers to invest in production due the high cost in irrigating farms [18]. This tends to affect the productivity of women's smallholder farmers in Africa.

2.3 Effect of Inadequate Women's Land Access on Production and Livelihoods

The core of this study is gender equality in property rights and land as the focal centre, since it is not only important only as a human rights issue but also one of the vital drivers of the economic development, especially in rural setting where agriculture constitutes a chunk of livelihood. Research has shown that, when women's income increases, the rate of increase go into household consumption while increases in their male counterparts go into personal consumption [19]. Women in northern Ghana have less access to land leading to less shelter, income, clothing, education and healthcare compared to the males, which incapacitates women economical resulting in what many scholars termed as "feminization of poverty." To discuss rural poverty is to discuss women considering the linkage between and poverty and rural women, which emanates from the gender disparities with respect to community resource allocation. The situation could be curtailed if community resources such as land were shared equitable and fairly between males and females, and rural women will see their incomes increase as one of the benefits of legal recognize inheritance rights.

About 80% of Ghana's land is under customary law land tenure system [20]. Although customary laws vary much significantly from ethnic groups and communities, but general context and principle exist relative to land holding since the customary law and land use, access are not based on the market demand and supply and land citizens use rights, but on family lineage, kinship and social relationships. The predominant feature among in various customary practices in Ghana, especially the northern regions show less access of female to land compared to their male counterparts [20]. Aside from that, women are somewhat discriminated in the acquisition of credit to venture into businesses. The assertion is confirmed by [21], who found that financial institutions tend not to provide loans to the poor, especially women due

to the high transaction costs and limited collateral associated with microfinance. As a result, most women are unable to conduct transactions without the approval of a male relative or husband. Moreover, [22], disclosed that women's insecurity and lack of access to land have discouraged land conservation since ecofeminists argue that women are better at managing the environment than men. In most developing countries, especially northern Ghana, women usually rely heavily on shared ownership of basic resources such as water, fuelwood, fertile farmland, vegetables, nuts and fruits as it is usually their responsibility to ensure that the family is provided with these goods.

Therefore, women's inadequate access to land places them in a precarious situation in terms of their survival livelihoods, stifling their effective role and contribution to national development. Considering that agriculture and other natural resources are the main sources of livelihood to rural inhabitants, the consequences of women not having land access and control is not only a threat to women survival but entrenches grave poverty among women folk.

3.0 Research Methodology and Data Sources

3.1 Research Area

The study is conducted in the West Mamprusi District, one of the six (6) districts of the newly created North-East region of Ghana, with Walewale as the Municipal capital. The West Mamprusi Municipal has a total land area of 2610.44 square kilometers and shares boundaries with East Mamprusi and Gushegu Municipalities to the east; West Gonja, Savelugu and Kumbungu Districts to the South; Builsa, Kassena Nankana East districts and Bolgatanga Municipal (Upper East Region) to the north and; and to the west, Mamprugu Moagduri District [23]. In terms of population, it recorded a total population of 121,117 and female constitutes the majority of about 50.8% and 49.2% males and number of households of 14,432 constituting an average household of 8.4. The literacy rate of males (46.4%) is higher than that of females (33.8%). Implying, majority of literate people can read and write in English [23].

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a qualitative and case study design. Case studies promote a holistic view of cause-and-effect relationships in a specific context (Rose et al. 2014). The design provided detailed insights into the phenomenon by providing flexibility in data gathering/collection from diverse sources to make a complete whole. The qualitative research design was deemed as the most appropriate in determining how land tenure system affects smallholder women farmers in the West Mamprusi Municipality. The choice of the method is backed by [24]. who found that qualitative method is premised on people developing their own economic and social interpretations of their natural environment, and these interpretations are often short-lived and situational in nature. Qualitative research methods allow the researcher to probe respondents for further and better information relative the subject being investigated.

3.3 Sampling Techniques

It is neither possible nor feasible to study the entire population at a given period [25]. Therefore, the generality of the study population was so huge that, limited resources and time could not permit the researcher to interview the entire study population and thus, resorting to interviewing a portion of the population as participant. The study employed purposive and snowball sampling techniques in chosen participants for the study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which each component of the population is unknown [26]. Whereas the snowball is commonly used to locate hidden

populations. In a whole, 41 respondents were interviewed including household heads, women, Chiefs, opinion leaders, and Tingban-dima (landowners). Semi-structured questionnaires were employed and respondents interviewed in-depth about the phenomena being studied.

3.4 Data Collection and Type of Data

The study employed both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through the use of a semi-structured interview guide, through face-to-face in-depth interviews with the participants by the researcher. This was helpful as it helps solicit useful information related to the subject under investigation. Secondary data were gathered from published academic journals with relevant related information on the effects of customary land tenure system on landless women in the study area. Semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions allowed both participants and the researcher to openly express themselves without any hindrance from the probes. Focus Group Discussions were held with two groups, women and men at separate locations within the study area. Number per group made of eleven (11) drawn from three (3) electoral areas of the study area. The selection of eleven (11) member group allows the researcher time and space to probe respondents for gist of critical information, for further analysis. The researcher constituted two separate gendered focus groups due to the nuances of tradition of the area, which does not permit women to freely express themselves in the midst of men especially where their husbands are involved. Also, different category of female and male-headed household were identified and chosen for group discussion, married and unmarried were recruited as well. The selection of limited participants for group discussion is key because it allow the research sufficient time to listen, explore, and record the perspectives expressed by the different participants and provide a rich source of information [27]. Additionally, key informants were identified based on their expertise were interviewed. The summary of category and number of respondents for purposes of data collection is shown below;

Table 1 Number of Respondents

Category of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Household heads	12	29
Chiefs	3	7
Tingban-dima (landowners)	3	7
Opinion leaders	6	15
Youth	13	32
Key informants	4	10
Total	41	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

3.4 Data Analysis

During the data analysis, the researcher transcribed audio voice recordings of local language known as Mampruli and translated them into English. Mamprusi who speaks Mampruli language are the most populous ethnic group averaging over 85% of the people within the study. Data were analysed using thematic and content analysis. All the recorded audiotape transcribed were examined resulting in given a clearer picture of what pertains in the study area relative to the subject being investigated.

4.0 Presentation of Results and Discussions

Data analysis following field data was based on content and in three (3) basic thematic areas such as women accessibility to land, land size allocation, quality and the effect of limited women land access on women's livelihoods.

4.1 Land Allocation to Women

“Women's right to use, management of land and other property is a powerful tool that paves the way for women's well-being and empowerment, especially in the least developed countries.” [28].

Land resource among the Northern ethnic groups in Ghana such as Dagombas, Mamprusi and, Gonjas among others are managed through customary practice where land belongs to households and chiefs holds land in trust and on behalf of the people. Therefore, all members of the family or community owns a given land irrespective of the economic and social background. Mamprusi in the North-East region, the study location is not an exception, except that managers of the land resource are male custodians due to cultural set up. In the East Mamprusi Municipal, the study area, economic activities and social responsibilities are defined along gender lines, therefore, women have little or no access to productive assets such as land which are often influenced by social norms, culture and attitudes that favours men.

Internationally, women have land rights ownership and use mostly in the matrilineal societies. For instance, Hurtado et al., (2000) found that women in Old Iroquois in the native American society, control land use and are favoured in land tenure arrangements. Also, women in Mosuo matriarchal society in the People's Republic of China is a major player in land tenure arrangements, land title is given female members of the family [29]. And in most Sub-Saharan African countries, such as the Asantes of southern Ghana and in Malawi, women hold land rights through maternally [30].

However, women in matriarchal societies land rights may not necessarily guaranteed by society ownership and inheritance, since patriarchal influence undermines security tenure of other members of the maternal bloodline. For instance, patrilineal influence is more prominent geographically especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asian countries, which weakens the magnitude of women land allocation globally. Aside, analysis of women land rights in Northern Ghana is largely patrilineal. Majority of female respondents indicated that land allocation to women has been restricted due to the traditional settings which makes men the pride owner to this precious factor of production.

According to the respondents' men are responsible traditionally to hold land in trust of the people and thus decides the quantum and type land to be allocated especially to women. According a key informant; *Women traditionally marry at a certain age and leave the biological home to join the matrimonial home/family, so if she were to inherit land, that parcel would have been transferred to the husband family. Therefore, the tendency of decreasing the land size of the biological family is high. It is however possible for woman's children, if they were some to inherit land and re-allocate some to the mother. If women wish to access land, a request could be channelled to their husbands or the elder son.*

The narrative above confirmed the findings of [31]. who found that women in northern Malawi where patrilineal groups are the majority, thus, marital status of women largely determines their rights to land, since they can request a parcel only from their husbands and that unmarried women finds it difficult if not impossible to access land with the exception of women with strong financial muscle to rent for a given time-frame.

Moreover, a respondent stated that;

Women in this part of the region are not seen as big time or serious farmers, since majority of the people engage in farming related activities are men. They farm and feed the household, take care of the wife and children and therefore need more space.

4.2 Access and Size of land Allocated to Women

Women land access refers to the various ways in which women obtain property rights, usage rights and the right to decide how to use land and enjoy land production including but not limited to; income, food crops, timber, timber [32].

Access to land by world's minority class and women who are usually powerless in the social and economic structure has become topical in recent times. According to [33]. the term access is the ability to derive benefits from material objects, such as people, property, institutions, social and political, economic relations, actions, rights, relations of production and their respective histories that shape the flow of benefits. Access to land by all is not only a right but power to the powerless. Access of women to land resource means power and authority to acquire valuable economic opportunities, and the vice versa.

In the past, and even at present land access for women in Ghana especially in the northern part has had deep-rooted issues relative to the culture, where women have no rights to land ownership since it is the preserved of men. Making it extremely difficult for women to venture into agriculture and agricultural related opportunities and investments.

In the light of this, the leader of Tizzabuni, a women farmer and agro-processing group in Tinguri, near Walewale in the North-East region mentioned that;

Customary principles which tender land in men's favour over women creates a lot of difficulties and problems with respect to land allocation to women, especially the unmarried or windows with no husbands or spouse to share family land with. Therefore, the rights of community members outside of these brackets has no or limited access to and use of land. She, added that, with increasing commercialization of agricultural land, we smallholder women farmers finds it hard to pay for the services in terms of rent for both agricultural and residential. Land value and price has tripled over the last two years. The current happening is that chiefs and Tingban-dima (land owners) who are mainly males who holds land on behalf for their communities sell or lease these lands to the highest bidder without consulting the people nor share the proceeds with them, this is worrying, to say the least (Adisa, Ngboo community).

Another respondent states;

Here in the Tinguri community, land is a powerful asset and a small god, therefore, only those who performs traditional sacrifices to appease the land can have access. The sacrifices have a great of spiritual significance to land especially agricultural land since it contributes to high crop yield. However, this important role by culture and tradition is the preserved of men, and this makes it extremely difficult for women to have access to land since they cannot perform the sacrifices. We are told women menstruate and are considered impure (unclean) to go the shrines to perform sacrifices, and this poses a barrier for us to access land (Tinguri, FGD).

Another respondent agreed with the submission above and adds that;

Men believe that if women are allowed to inherit productive resources such as land, the land will eventually become the property of the husband's family after marriage, this will limit the land size of the woman biological family and empowers her matrimonial home. This confirms the findings of [13], who found men unwillingness to allow women including their sisters to inherit land resources for fear of losing it to the husband at the time of her marriage.

Also, a respondent remarked;

I used to have a parcel of land given to me by my father in consultation with my brothers when I was not married. As a result, I went into maize and soya-bean cultivation which helped in the payments of my school fees and pocket money in my college days as a student of Tamale Teachers Colleges of Education in the northern region, however, as soon I got married, the said parcel of land was taken away from me making me unable to continue farming as a livelihood. Now, am qualified Teacher working with one of the primary schools in the Tamale metropolis where I got married to, though I still have strong passion and interest to continue to be in the farming business as I used at the time, I was not married but due the forfeiture of the land by the male siblings am not able to continue.

These and many of the similar narratives and experiences women go through in their quest to access land has become one too many in the study area. The results collaborate the fact that women's rights to land forfeiture can occur if she is separated, married, divorced or divorced relationship widowhood.

4.3 The impact of Women Land Access on Livelihoods

Customary law comprises traditional norms or customs and common practices which are known and accepted by indigenous people and in some respect given legal backing to operate and embraced by the local people, the rules are documented in the form bye-laws and accepted and operate within the traditional communities [34]. Therefore, customary land tenure system is communal based and its nature is kind of formal and legal binding on the people. In the works of [35] [36]. it is estimated that nearly 80% of land in Sub-Saharan Africa is held under customary land tenure system arrangement and is pervasive in most of rural agrarian communities with ownership and access strictly by the male clan heads. For instance, land ownership in Ghana under the customary tenure is hugely based on kinship and a strong relationship with traditional land holding class such as chiefs. This shy away women from land ownership, possession and access, thus limiting their usage which culminates into increase in poverty among women folk.

A woman respondent state.....

It is stressful having access to land in the entire northern part of Ghana and our community is not an exception, land belongs to male clan heads who make decision with respective to its distribution and allocation is usually gender sensitive, with male getting the chunk of access over us. Only few women with financial wherewithal or muscle can have access through renting, without which one may not have access not to talk of putting into use to help you economically. According to [37], women access to property rights are only the topmost and giant step towards greater autonomy for rural women

Another participant adds;

Women with land access either by hiring, gift from the husband, brother and other members of the family, I can see that their economic and social life is relatively better compared to those us without land access. Take a look at my neighbour, Alimatu is doing pretty well in the vegetable business by supplying the products to restaurants within Tinguri and nearby communities such as Zangung, Wungu and even Nalerigu, the North-East regional capital. Her economic and social life has improved tremendously over the years, all because of the small land access. Most of us are poor not because we are lazy but due to lack of land access.

The narrative above is supported by [38] who found that land-owning women live more dignified and respected lives compared to the landless and support households in various ways including decision-making.

One of the male participants adds;

I am fully aware of the economic and social discriminations or problems women are faced with especially in Zangung community, and I can say that it comes down culture which inhibits women from land access and landed properties, as the customary land tenure system naturally do not favour women, making them not resourceful enough to live decent lives. In my opinion, I think the land tenure system needs to be revisited to incorporate women in land ownership. This will help reduce the rate of poverty among women.

Also, a participant adds

In fact, our inability to access to land goes a long way to hinder women farmers and agro processors access to financial credit from financial institutions to expand even the non-farm businesses majority of us are engaged in. Because land is one if not a major source of collateral security to, we rural women to obtain loans from banks, especially the rural banks such as Tizabuni Rural Bank located at Walewale. Without which, it is very difficult if not impossible to obtain financial credit. Painfully, the lack of credit limits the ability of women small holder farmers from realizing both our agricultural and business potentials, leading increase poverty among small holder farmers especially women.

4.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

Generally, studies have shown that women in Sub Saharan Africa particularly Ghana face several obstacles in exercising their rights to access, own and control land and other essential family properties owing to culture. First among the lists, is the discrimination owing to the inability of the law enforcement agencies and government to enforce laws and regulations that seek to empower women, the current legislations relative to land ownership in the country is not yet to be completely gender-friendly. Over all, laws that seeks to protect all gender as regards to land ownership either directly or indirectly exclude women due to lack of law enforcement. Although the constitution of the Republic of Ghana declares equal rights for men and women.

Aside the failure of legal framework to protecting women to enjoy their constitutional rights like the male counterparts, patriarchal cultural norms continue to be a major stumbling block to women's access to land and properties. Institutional barriers such as insufficient mandates, poor budgetary allocations to women issues and poor human resources prevent women from truly realizing their rights. The results indicate that a large portion of women have limited access to formal education (illiterates) and are not aware of the existing legal framework which grants land rights and entitlement to women, and few educated ones lacks the zeal to fight for their rights including their representation and involvement in land administration institutions.

Also, at the micro or household level, daughters and wives are denied any right to own land through inheritance because relatives believe they will marry into other families and then receive land from there. In cases, where women are allotted land by their husband family after marriage such allocated parcels are small and exhausted mostly vegetable cultivation and crops to support family dietary needs at the expense of producing in commercial quantities for sale to enhance the livelihood of women.

4.5 Recommendations

1. To address the challenge of illiteracy among women, education and awareness campaigns aimed at empowering citizens especially women on the need for equitable access to property rights as enshrined in the constitution.
2. Legal framework which seeks to protecting women to enjoy their constitutional rights like the male counterparts, patriarchal cultural norms continue which is one of the major stumbling blocks to women

women's access to land and properties should be removed through legal enforcement.

3. Institutional barriers such as insufficient mandates, poor budgetary allocations to women issues and poor human resources which prevent women from truly realizing their rights should be tabled at cabinet and appropriate government policy to curb gender imbalance with respect to land access.

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