



No Development without Better Life for Rural Women - A Case of Tanzania

Author

SABBATH M. UROMI

Assistant Lecturer

TANZANIA PUBLIC SERVICE COLLEGE

P.O.BOX 329

TABORA- TANZANIA

Cell Phone: 0782-503638

Email: sabatouromi@yahoo.com

Abstracts

Tanzania has a broad scope for agricultural diversification and a great potential to enhance production through agricultural intensification. The country has 945,090 km of land and 40 million ha (i.e. 42%) is cultivatable; but only 16% (6.3 million ha.) are currently being cultivated.

Despite a rich endowment of natural resources, good climate and abundant land, Tanzania's agriculture performance is unsatisfactory due to exclusive of women in agriculture policies making. Therefore poverty eradication will not become reality in Africa unless all women, particularly rural women, enjoyed better living conditions and when Africa governments and regional economic communities combat the liberalization policies in Agriculture and develop Agricultural policies that can help their people reach food security. In Tanzania's rural services and infrastructure are extremely poor and underdeveloped. African women play a key role in food production and supply, the real value of their contribution is not valued enough for the part it plays in the gross domestic product, (Dr. Sophia Mlote, 2014).

Moreover, in Tanzania women's skill and knowledge of the age – old technologies they use in food production, processing and preservation are not recognized as they should be and are not showcased accordingly. For instance in Zimbabwe nearly 20% percent of women own the land they use, Kenya 3% percent while in Tanzania only one percent of women enjoyed the right to land. Hence this poverty is by and large in the rural areas. Most poor and marginalized groups are women, the agriculture sector as main workforce that makes a huge contribution to food production in African countries. This is why there is a talk of feminization of Poverty in Africa. This article presents the implications for agricultural Policies in Africa and consequences for Africa's Rural Women as well as mitigations toward those consequences.

Keywords: *Mainstreaming, inequalities in Agriculture*

1.1 Introduction

African women are the backbone of family agriculture, according to several sources, they make up the bulk of the agricultural workforce and provide between 70% and 75% of the food of the

continent. Women are involved also in processing and marketing agricultural products. In several countries women's groups use local products to cereals and beverages that are popular even in large hotels, and tourist resorts (Dr Ngaiza, 2014).

The impact of higher food prices on women is particularly profound. Women play key roles in Agricultural Societies. Sub-Saharan Africa, Women contribute about 80 % of the total food production. Their contribution is about 65 per cent in Asia and 45% in Latin America. In rural communities, in particular, women play a central role in ensuring food security; when women have access to income they tend to spend a high percentage on food for the family, while men tend to spend more on themselves. When there is less money for food, women go hungry. The challenge is on how to enable them use their land more productively (Mizengo Pinda, 2008).

In addition, Tanzania declared war against three enemies being poverty; ignorance and disease. Following this various extensive programmes in pursuit of eradicating poverty and transforming structure of the economy have been initiated but to reach these targets, there has to be support for family farms and recognition of women's contribution to the efforts made to supply food African community. For instance one the greatest injustice against women's is the difficulty they face in getting access to land and credit in Tanzania. Only a few countries in Africa have made progress to this area.

1.2 Definition of the Rural Areas

Rural areas are defined as geographical areas in which primary production takes place and where populations are found in varying densities. These areas are characterized by activities related to primary and secondary processing, township enterprises, marketing and services that serve rural and urban populations. Therefore, rural areas include a wide range of farm and non-farm activities and they include small towns and the district centers (RDS, 2001).

Generally, rural areas experience variety of social, economic, political and moral problems such as lower per capita income, lower educational level, fewer employment opportunities, limited educational and cultural facilities, out-migration, less developed health and transport services, fewer commercial facilities, declining small towns, and

less confidence in the future prospects (Navaratnam, 1986).

2.1 Women and Land in Tanzania

What are the main characteristics of women's relations to land in Tanzania at the present? How do women come to be in possession of land either as a life (usufructuary) or an absolute interest? In answering these questions, this section will start by tracing the ways in which women are theoretically able to acquire land; and secondly, the gap between theory and practice in women's access to land. In so doing, it hopes to show the constraints facing women's ability to own, control and manage land.

There are three different types of land in Tanzania: clan, family and self-acquired land. "The rights of widows and daughters to the three different types of land are contained in the provisions of the Customary law (Declaration) Order 1963 which codified the rules of intestate inheritance in patrilineal groups in Tanzania. 'Self-acquired land' may be defined as property which has been obtained through the efforts of an individual or a family. Such property is usually acquired by clearing virgin lands. 'Family land' is land which in the past had been owned by individuals of the same family lineage. (Ambreena Manji, 1996).

However, the Tanzanian programme of villagisation under which farming was to be carried out collectively by all members of a village, altered the concept of family land. 'Family land' may now be defined as small plots or homesteads retained by individual families within villages and farmed by them. 'Clan land' is land vested in the clan under traditional systems of land tenure.

However, it should be noted that the Customary Law (Declaration) Order does not distinguish between family and clan land, and that the two terms may therefore be used interchangeably. The more important distinction, therefore, pertains to self-acquired land as opposed to family or clan land. Women are excluded from inheriting clan or family land. It is possible to find

two justifications for this prohibition against females inheriting clan land in traditional land tenure.

Firstly, it is considered that; given the practice of virilocal residence by women after marriage, they are bound to leave the area of their natal clan to settle on the land of their marital clan. The assumption is that a woman will be provided with land, in whatever capacity, by her marital clan, and therefore has no need to inherit from their natal clan.

Secondly, it is thought that giving women the right to hold property in their natal clan land will lead to interference in such land from strangers, that is a woman's husband and his family who are non-kin.

2.2 Women's Land Rights

In Tanzania the current legislation guarantees equal rights to acquire, hold, use and deal with land for women and men. A Village Council may not adopt adverse discriminatory practices or attitudes towards women, who have applied for a customary right of occupancy. In this respect, the Tanzanian legislation is perhaps the most progressive in the East Africa region (Maulidi. 2007).

However, customary norms in rural areas are still biased against women as wives, widows, sisters, daughters, divorced and separated women – limiting their ownership of and control over this resource.

The Constitution and the national legislations on marriage and inheritance after independence in 1963, changes in land tenure and use occurred in Tanzania: based on the Arusha Declaration in 1967 and the policy of Ujamaa, agriculture and rural development were organised through a dual system of large scale farming – under state control – and small-scale agriculture – under villagisation (Tsikata, D. 2001).

Further Women's rights to land were affected by the enactment of the Villages and Ujamaa Villages Act No. 21 of 1975, repealed in 1978, which provided for allocation of land to the head of the household or family unit: as household

or family unit head were usually men, women's lacked independent access to land. The impact of the law was felt especially in matrilineal communities, where land came to be vested in men as household heads instead of being controlled by women or maternal uncles (UN_HABITAT. 2002).

In 1977 the Constitution assigned equal rights for women and men: it prohibited discrimination on the ground of sex, and although it does not contain specific article devoted to land, it confirmed under Article 24 the right of every person to own property (United Republic of Tanzania. 1977).

In 1995 the Ministry of Lands and Human Settlements Development issued the National Land Policy (NLP) to promote the equitable distribution of land to all people. The NLP recognized customary and statutory rights of occupancy and provided for the registration of such titles that stipulated equal and equitable access to land for all citizens. Although under customary land law, women generally have inferior land rights relative to men, and their access to land is indirect and insecure. Traditional provisions, which used to protect women's land use rights, have been eroded. In allocating land village councils have been guided by custom and have continued to discriminate against women by allocating land to heads of household who are usually men. (Paragraph 4.2.5 of the National Land Policy 1995)

3.1 Contribution of both women and men in Agricultural activities in Tanzania

Emerging from the several studies suggest the following facts in Tanzania: (a) that rural women in the state are major contributors to food production (b) that these rural women have successfully managed human and economic resources to achieve optimum results; (c) that they became employers of labour, thereby reducing unemployment; and (d) that output from the farms of these rural women contributed to reduction in food shortage crisis. By so doing, they contribute substantially to national agricultural output,

maintenance of the environment and family food security (Brown et al., 2012).

Table 1: Division of labour in Agriculture

| Division of labor in Agriculture | % of hrs spent on task | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|------|
| | Female | Male |
| General crop production | 56 | 44 |
| Food crop production | 75 | 25 |
| Land tilling | 56 | 44 |
| Sowing | 74 | 26 |
| Weeding | 70 | 30 |
| Harvesting | 71 | 29 |
| Marketing | 73 | 27 |

Source: national Sample census of Agriculture, 1996 Keller (1999) cited in Ellis (2007)

The table above suggest that women do most of the crops marketing, other sources, however strongly indicate otherwise and NCSA data are unclear about how and whether food and cash crops are separately addressed.

3.2 Gender issues in Agricultural for Rural women in Tanzania

Gender inequality refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender. It arises from differences in socially constructed gender roles as well as biologically through chromosomes, brain structure and hormonal differences (Mmasa Joel, 2011).

However, gender inequality in Tanzania which adversely affects their overall performance and output has persistently manifested in a number of ways: high level of poverty (World Bank, 2001), vulnerability to external and uncontrollable hazards (IDB, 2000), low strength or energy level (Kaul, 1996), low educational attainment (Filmer, 1996), poor anthropometric variables (Kaul, 1996) marginalization by agricultural extension (FAO, 2006), high productive and reproductive work load (Commonwealth, 1992), and restricted access to

productive resources (Saito and Spurling, 1992; Saito et al, 1994; Quisumbing, 1994; Gray and Kevan, 1996). It is common knowledge that gender inequality is one of the most pervasive forms of inequality, particularly because it cuts across other forms of inequality (Franklin, 2007). Different rules, norms and values govern the gender division of labour and the gender distribution of resources, responsibilities, agency and power. These are critical elements for understanding the nature of gender inequality in different societies. Gender segmentation in household arrangements in sub-Saharan Africa is prevalent in the face of highly complex lineage-based homesteads. Much of Sub-Saharan African (SSA) is matrilineal, with women's access to land being through usufruct rights through their husband's lineage group.

Since women's obligation to the family includes provision of food and caring for their children, they are granted this access to enable them carry out these responsibilities.

In parts of West Africa women generally have usufruct rights to separate holdings through their husband's lineage. Women's low participation in national and regional policy-making, their invisibility in national statistics and their low participation in extension services have meant that those issues of most concern to women have been neglected in the design and implementation of many development policies and programmes. In some countries such as the Benin Republic, the programmes developed were far from addressing the main concerns of women as they were neither involved in policy making decisions nor were they directly consulted to articulate their needs (IFAD, 2007).

4.1 Land Policies Implications

4.2 National Land Policy and Women Access to Land

The overall objective of the national land policy of 1997 was to promote and ensure land tenure system, encourage the optimal use of land resources, and facilitate broad based social

economic development without upsetting or endangering the ecological balance of the environment. Further, all land in Tanzania is public land vested in the president as trustee on behalf of all citizens. According to section 4.2.1 of the National land policy of 1997b women access to land under customary law, women generally have inferior land rights relative to men and their access to land indirect and insecure. Traditional provisions which used to protect women's land use rights have been eroded. In allocating land village councils have been guided by custom and have continued to discriminate against women by allocating land to heads of households who are usually men.

5.1 General consequences for Africa's Rural Women and possible mitigations

- i. Limited access to credit and extension services especially for small farmers, most of whom are women in the rural areas. Access to credit is a limited mostly because women are rarely own land. Microcredit though is available, is limited and only 6% of Tanzania borrow from microcredit Institutions. Group lending is an established practice in Tanzania, but effective individual lending that would allow small enterprises to expand is underdeveloped because of bank regulations.
- ii. Lack of political will on the part of the policy/decision makers and leaders, where pressure from women's organizations is on the low side.
- iii. Poor understanding of the gender issues, meaning the awareness that economic and trade policies affect women and men in different ways.
- iv. The farmers in the Tanzania are among the voiceless, especially with respect to influencing agricultural policies. Such policies, which are aimed at increasing food security and food production, tend to underestimate or totally ignore women's role in both production and the general

decision-making process within the household.

- v. Women face significant culture and practical obstacles in entering the cash crops market. Increased marketing by women creates household conflict and defies prohibitive cultural norms in Tanzania. Once they may face harassment from market officials and confiscation of their produce, especially if they can't afford the high price of permits. Even when women farmers form association, their groups are less successful than men's group in accessing new contract opportunities (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1992).
- vi. Despite legislative and tenure changes in favour of small holders, women's in Tanzania continued to be placed in a disadvantaged position in terms of access to land. Women's access to land was rarely discussed and thus their benefits from land reforms were few (FAO, 1988). Socio-economic characteristics of the farmers, among other factors, affect their decision-making in agriculture. (Source: IFAD's Governing Council- 14- February 2007)
- vii. Overall, in Tanzania women hold an extremely low number of decision-making positions in the ministries dealing with agriculture and rural development.

5.2 The possible mitigations

- i. To achieve the intended goals regional communities and states have to adopt policies that protect and support agriculture especially small scale family farming activities and food production, which area areas run predominantly by women.
- ii. It is important for women's organizations and women to be present in decision making-centers during public policy development and implementation, so that they can draw attention to the important of taking a gender responsive approach to the economic and social development process.

- iii. There should effective programs and policies to empower African women and allocate more resources towards gender equality and women's empowerment- Honorable Sophia M. Simba, Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children (MCDGC) - 7 April, 2011.
- iv. In addition, such policy must be anchored in strategy for food sovereignty, the sure way to overcome dependency on foreign assistance and the recurrent problems of hunger and malnutrition.
- v. There should be equal right of participation of both men and women in agricultural activities in Tanzania. Participation and the involvement of women, youth and vulnerable groups in Agriculture are of paramount important in reduction of rural- urban migration..."-Hon. Stephen Masato Wasira- Former Minister (MAFSC) – Tanzania.
- [2] Commonwealth Secretariat (1992). Women Conservation and Agriculture: A Manual for Farmers, London.
- [3] Commonwealth Secretariat (2003). Gender Mainstreaming In Agriculture and Rural Development. A Reference Manual for Government and other Stakeholders.
- [4] Ellis, A. (2007). Gender and Economic Growth in Tanzania. The World Bank: Washington, D.C.
- [5] Filmer D. (1996). The Structure of Social Disadvantage in Education: Gender and Wealth. Policy Research Report on Gender and Development. Working Paper Series No. 5, World Bank Washington D.C.
- [6] Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (1994). Women, Agriculture and Rural Development: A Synthesis Report of the Africa Region, Rome.
- [7] Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (1993). Agricultural Extension and Farm Women in the 1980s Rome, FAO.
- [8] Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (1995). A Synthesis Report of the African Region: Women, Agriculture and Rural Development. Report prepared under the auspices of FAO's Programme of Assistance in Support of Rural Women in Preparation for the Fourth World Conference of Women; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, Italy.
- [9] Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (1998). My Talents, many Women Feed the World. United Nations, Rome Pp 3-7.

Conclusion

The contribution made by rural women to agricultural production and rural development in Tanzania is grossly underappreciated in spite of the dominant role women play in all sectors. That women compete more favourably with their men folks in terms of their over-participation in agricultural activities and contribution to household economy and food security would be an understatement. The survival and sustenance of agriculture and rural development in Tanzania, as well as in many sub-Saharan Africa countries, rest squarely on the rural women. They therefore deserve to be given due recognition as far as participation in agriculture is concerned. Also the whole community at large must know that there is development without better life for rural women.

References

- [1] C. Mark Blackden and Magdalena Rwebangira (2004). Strategic Country Gender Assessment. Office of the Sector Director Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network. Africa Region, World Bank
- [11] Fresco, L. and E. Westphal. (1988). 'Hierarchical Classification of Farming Systems', *Experimental Agriculture* 24: 399-419.
- [10] Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (2006). Gender and Agricultural Support Systems. Sustainable Development FAO: <http://www.fao.org/sd/wp-direct/4/15/2010>.

- [12] Gray, L., and M. Kevane (1996). Land Tenure Status of African Women. Washington, D.C. World Bank.
- [13] Horenstein, N.R. (1989). Women and Food Security in Kenya-Washington DC. World Bank.
- [14] Mbilinyi, M. (1988). Agribusiness and women peasants in Tanzania. *Development and Change*, 19:4. Pp. 549-583
- [15] Mbilinyi, M. (1994). Restructuring gender in agriculture. In Himmelstrand, U., Kinyanjui, K., Mburugu, E. *African Perspectives on Development* New York: St. Martin's Press
- [16] Meeker, J., Meekers, D. (1997). The precarious socio-economic position of women in rural Africa: The case of the Kaguru of Tanzania. *African Studies Review*, 40: 1pp. 35-58.
- [17] Meena, R. (1991). The impact of structural adjustment programmes on women in Tanzania, in Gladstone, C. H. (ed.) *Structural Adjustment and African Women Farmers*, University of Florida Press, Gainesville, pp. 169-190.
- [18] Ovensen, G. (2010). Tracing gender effects among Tanzanian households. Statistics Norway: Oslo. [http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/00/02/10/rapp_201026_en/Peterman, A. \(2011\).](http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/00/02/10/rapp_201026_en/Peterman, A. (2011).)
- [19] Sender, J., Smith, S. (1990). *Poverty, Class and Gender in Rural Africa: A Tanzanian case study*. New York: Routledge.
- [20] Shimba, H. (200). Women, weeding and agriculture in Iringa Region, Tanzania. In Starkey, P. and Simalenga, T. *Animal power for weed control*. ATNESA: Wagenigen, The Netherlands. Accessed at: www.atnesa.org.
- [21] Hampton, K., Cagley J. H., Klawitter, M. (2009). *Gender and Cropping: Maize in Sub-Saharan*