

RESEARCH CONNECTION

Examining the participation of women in the formulation of agriculture policies

By Georgette Nyankson, M.R.D., B.Sc.



Why this research is important

Women play a significant role in Ghana's agricultural sector, yet they often lack power in making decisions and creating policies in the agricultural sector. More research is needed to understand how rural women have been involved in policy-making, barriers to participation, and what can be done to improve participation. To address this gap, my research examined women's involvement in decision-making in their homes, communities, and agriculture organizations to identify their barriers in any of these settings in decision-making; to know if women have power and resources to act on their decisions, and how those can inform their involvement in policy-making.

What you need to know

The Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II) is a holistic policy formulated in 2007 to foster sustainable use of all productive resources and commercialization of activities in the agricultural sector geared towards market-driven growth. The broad principles of the policy are to ensure that all sub-policies and programs are formulated from a gender perspective to enhance the government's gender equality in the agricultural sector. In most cases, these principles are implementable in theory but are not successfully implemented in practice. My project examined whether this policy (FASDEP II) designed for implementation is gender-inclusive—particularly of women.

How the research was conducted

I employed a qualitative case study approach. My research made use of both secondary and primary data. The secondary data was collected from Ghana Statistical Service reports, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture websites, annual reports, municipal reports, and journal articles and books. Most of the information from secondary sources was related to agriculture in Ghana and some from developing countries. The primary data

were sought through semi-structured interviews from farm women and agricultural stakeholders. Purposive sampling was used to select research participants. NVivo software was employed to manage raw data by organizing data into themes and creating codes to analyze the findings.

What the researcher found

In contrast to previous research, most women in the study were part of Farmer-Based Organizations (FBOs); however, most rural women faced barriers participating in decision-making at the Municipal Assembly level due to factors such as patriarchal culture, inadequate resources, organizational/representational barriers, and a low level of education.

Regarding the agriculture policy FASDEP II, specifically women faced similar barriers to participation as well as a lack of good communication about participation in policy-making. To enhance women's participation in agricultural decisions and policy-making, the farm women and stakeholders in the study suggested more informal education, adequate resources for community consultation, and strengthening organizational structures as well as effective coordination and communication between government officials and rural farmers.

How this research can be used

My research provides recommendations that add to the existing literature and is useful for municipal assemblies, community leaders, and any feminist movement in Ghana. Results from the research can form the basis for further research needed to address the challenges from policymakers' points of view regarding the inclusion of women in policy-making.

About the researcher

Georgette Nyankson joined the Rural Development Institute at Brandon University in October 2018. She worked as a rural engagement assistant/communication liaison for the Rural Policy Learning Commons (RPLC) project. She has currently transitioned to a project lead role for the MITAC Acceleration Project since June 2020. She also worked as a country program coordinator for the Volunteer BaseCamp, coordinating international volunteers working on projects in rural and deprived communities for four years (2014-2018). Simultaneously, she worked as a project manager for the United States Air Force's Language Acquisition Abroad Program in West Africa.

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Keywords

Policy, women, decision-making, agriculture, equity, culture

Acknowledgements

Research Connection is a periodical publication intended to provide information about the impact of Brandon University's academic research and expertise on public policy, social programming, and professional practice. This summary is supported by the Office of Research Services and by the Centre for Aboriginal and Rural Education Studies, Faculty of Education.

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