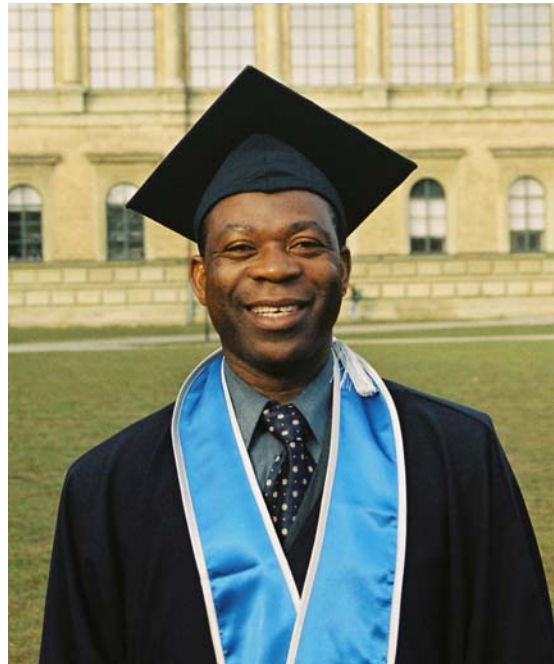


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**Gender Differentials in Land Ownership and Their Impact
on Household Food Security:
A Comparative Study of the Northern and Brong Ahafo
Regions of Ghana**

This thesis focuses on a much neglected issue: the links between gender inequities and command over property. The study was done to assess gender-based inequities in ownership of resources particularly land and their impact on household food security. The conceptual part of this thesis (literature review) is supported with data gathered from a survey conducted in two districts, each in a different region. The study employed a three-stage random sampling procedure to select 100 rural households in the Tolon-Kumbungu District and another 100 households in the Berekum District. Qualitative and quantitative methods have been used to assess the gender differentials in land ownership and their impact on household food security.

The findings summarize the basic demographic features, women and men's views on land access, food security, as well as their views on extension services, production, and access to credit. The survey of households was complemented by a survey of organisations and professionals at the district and regional level within the study area. The views of these professionals concerning access to land, food security, credit, and extension services are included in the findings.

The results show that although there are differences concerning access to land between patrilineal and matrilineal societies, both tenure systems are disadvantageous to women.

Results also indicate that limited rights over land result in insufficient access to land which again leads to higher food insecurity among women headed households compared to men headed household. However, the key issues that influenced vulnerability of household to food insecurity in the study area were land tenure security (number of parcels owned), gender of household head and access to credit and extension services. Furthermore, the results indicate that there were clear gender-based distinctions between men and women in terms of access, ownership and control of production resources; more especially land.

Even though the male headed households operated, owned and cultivated more land and had a significantly higher total income than the female headed households, the latter had a higher household expenditure. One of the major findings of the study is that customary land tenure systems contribute to a high level of land tenure insecurity among women.

The thesis finally draws some broad policy implications by pointing out the critical need to address women's land rights issues. These policies include the making and enforcement of laws that will help to give women more rights to land, as well as the development of institutions that provide access to modern inputs and extension services. The need to adopt a land tenure system that provides security by vesting property or legal ownership rights to women is one of the key policy implications of the study.

Key words: Women's access to land, land tenure systems, customary land tenure, tenure security, food security, gender studies, Tolon-Kumbungu District, Berekum District, Ghana.