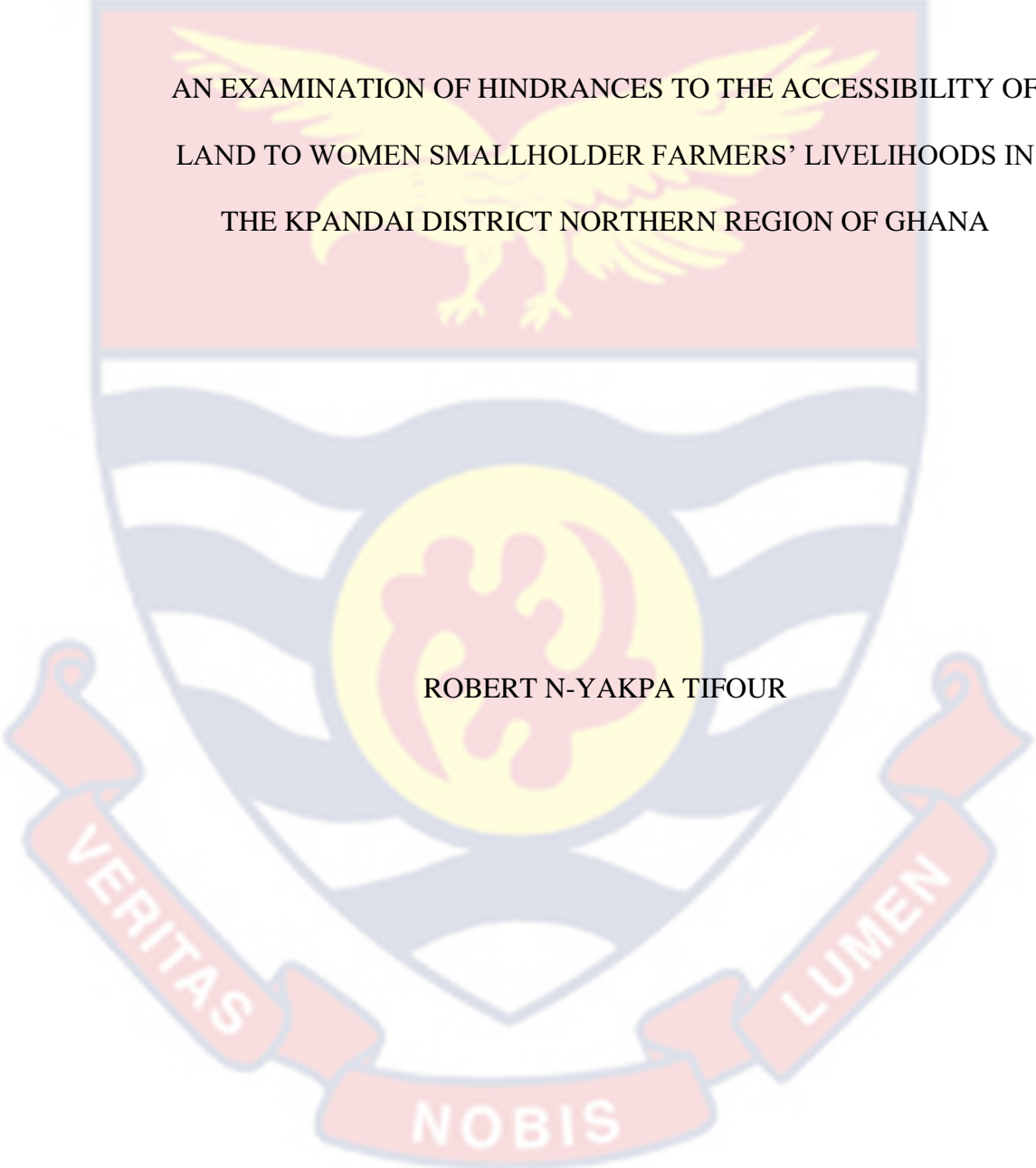


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



AN EXAMINATION OF HINDRANCES TO THE ACCESSIBILITY OF
LAND TO WOMEN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS' LIVELIHOODS IN
THE KPANDAI DISTRICT NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA

ROBERT N-YAKPA TIFOUR

2024



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LAND TO WOMEN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS' LIVELIHOODS IN
THE KPANDAI DISTRICT NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA

BY

ROBERT N-YAKPA TIFOUR

A thesis submitted to the Department of Geography and Regional Planning,
Faculty of Social Sciences, College of Humanities and Legal Studies,
University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award
of a Master of Philosophy degree in Geography and Regional Planning

AUGUST 2024

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my original research, and no part of it has been presented for another degree at this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature Date

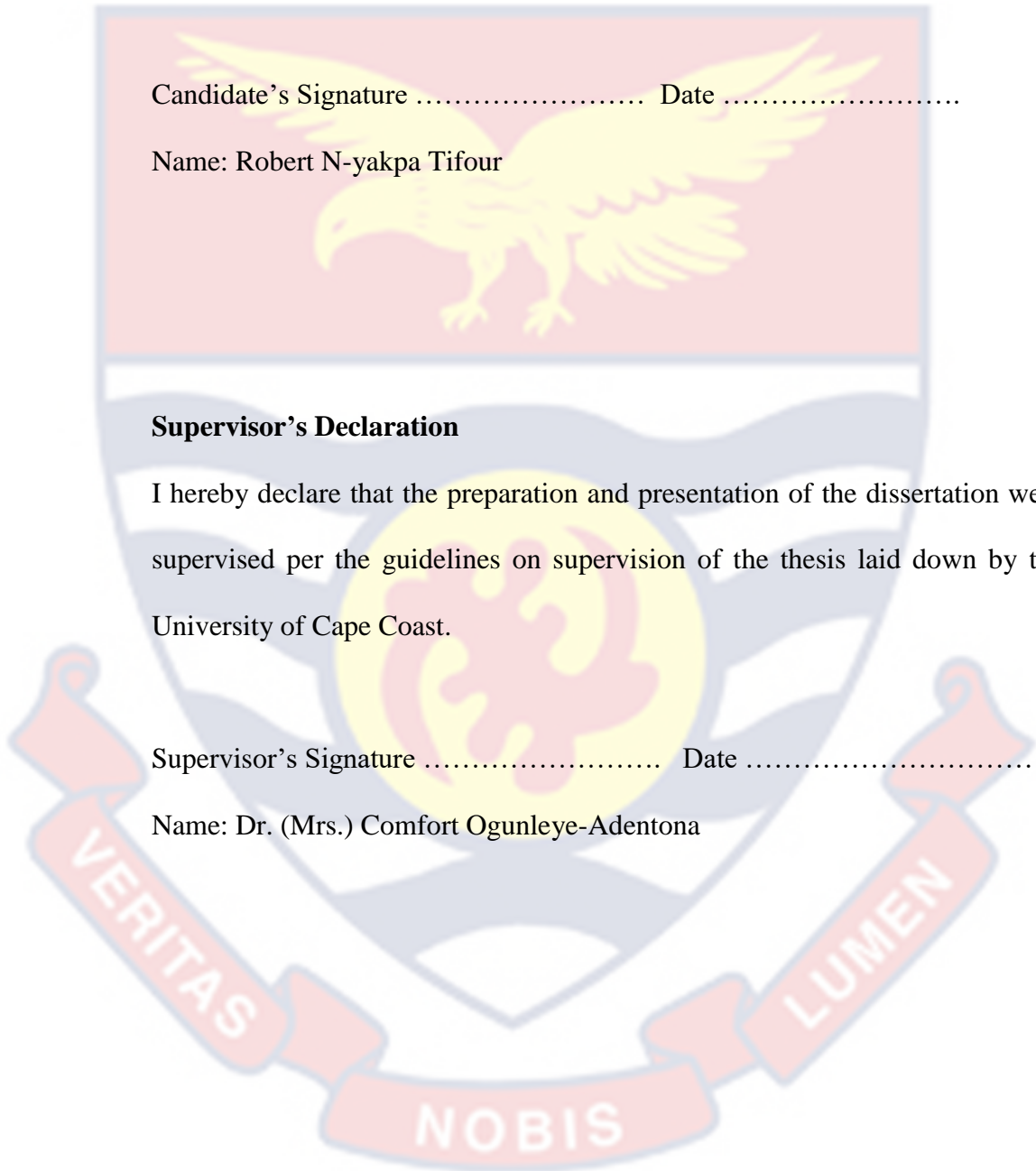
Name: Robert N-yakpa Tifour

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised per the guidelines on supervision of the thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature Date

Name: Dr. (Mrs.) Comfort Ogunleye-Adentona



ABSTRACT

This study examined access to land and its implications on women smallholder farmers in the Kpandai District, Ghana. The study adopted the qualitative research approach guided by the descriptive research design and the interpretivism philosophy. Data was collected from 35 participants through convenience and purposive sampling techniques using an interview guide and focus group discussion. The study discovered that land scarcity, time, labour constraints, customs and traditions, and lack of credit facilities determined women's access to land in the Kpandai district. The poor implementation of legal provisions, the dominance of men in decision-making processes and inheritance practices, and existing legislative and traditional structures fail to protect women's smallholder farmers' access to land in the Kpandai District. It is recommended that there should be collaborative efforts by the Kpandai District Assembly and Non-Governmental Agencies with traditional leaders, community elders, and local organisations to challenge customary discriminatory practices hindering women's smallholder farmers' access to land.

KEYWORDS

Access to Land

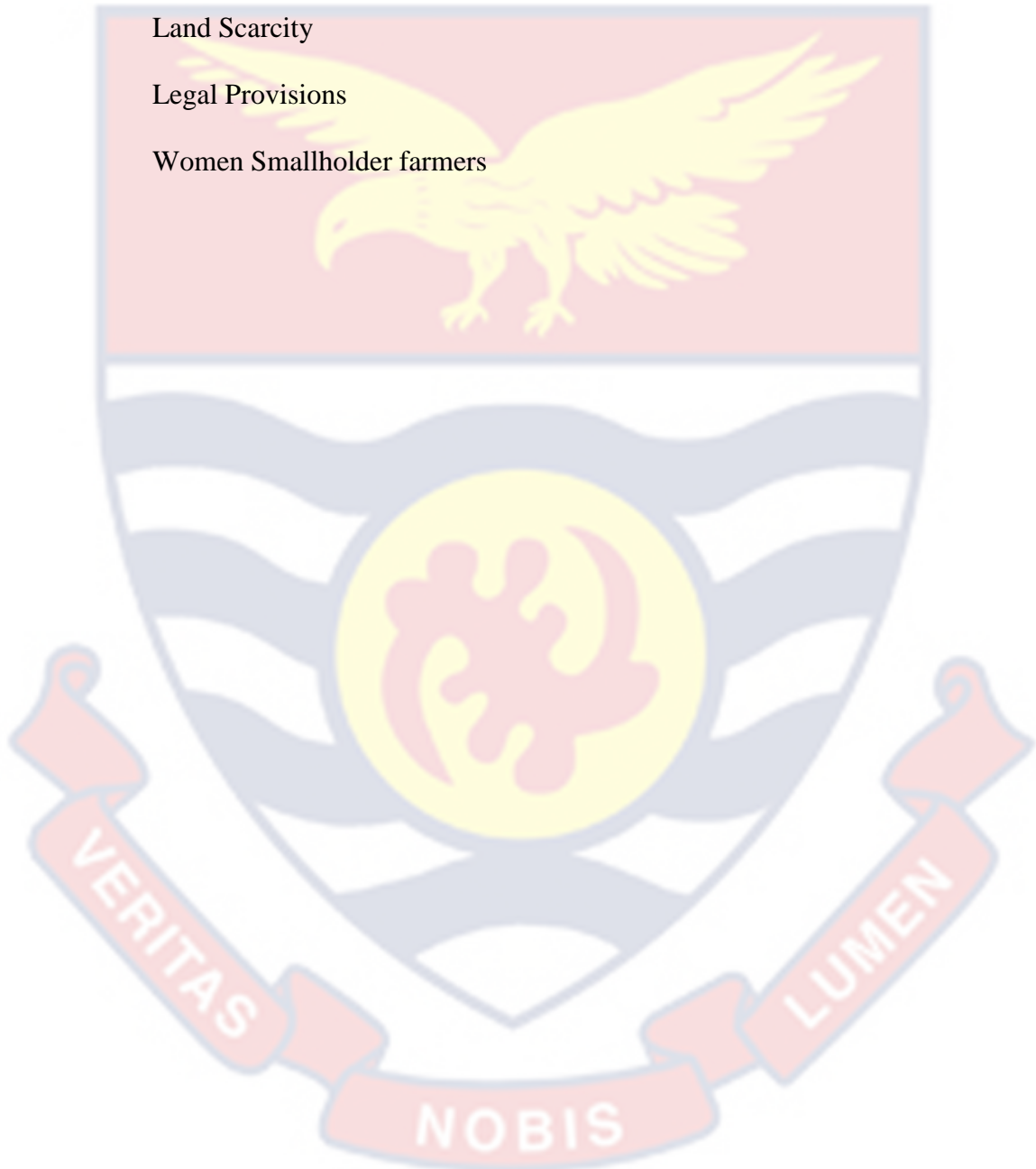
Customs and Traditions

Gender discrimination

Land Scarcity

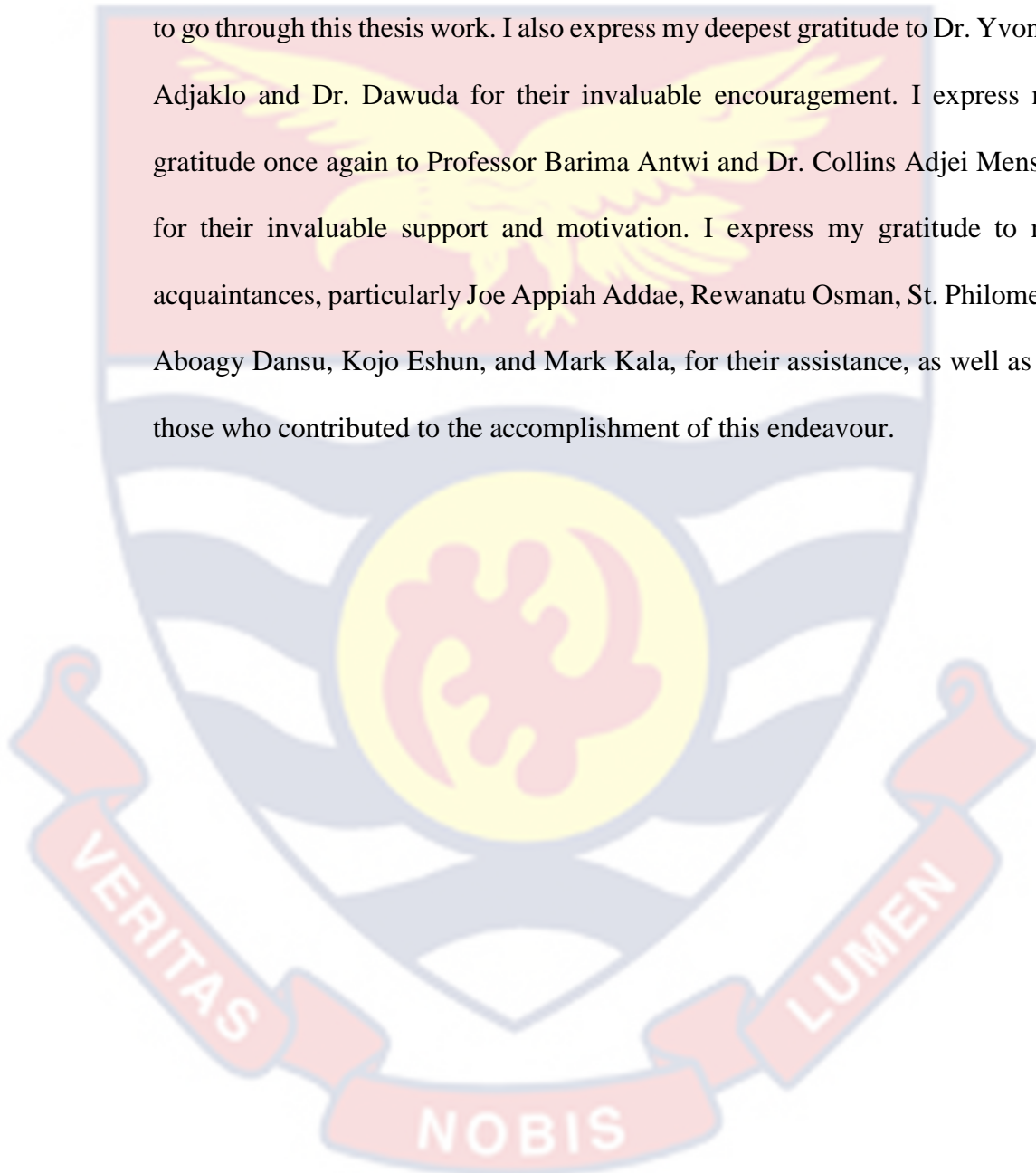
Legal Provisions

Women Smallholder farmers



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DEDICATION

To my wife, Gmayimi Najo Grace, and my brother, Tifour Robert Junior



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SLF	Sustainable Livelihood Framework
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
URT	United Republic of Tanzania



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Smallholder farmers are individuals or households who cultivate a small plot of land for subsistence or market-oriented agriculture (Fan & Rue, 2020). These farmers are often characterized by low capital, limited resource access, and a reliance on manual labour. Globally, securing land and property rights for smallholder farmers has been recognized as a vital step towards economic development. However, the restricted access to land significantly affects these women's livelihoods, as it limits their ability to invest in farming activities and income-generating opportunities. Women are frequently compelled to engage in subsistence farming, which provides minimal income and exposes them to food insecurity (Odeny, 2013). Additionally, gender-based discrimination limits their participation in decision-making processes related to land management and resource allocation, further marginalizing them from impacting policies and practices that affect their lives and community sustainability (Tsikata, 2009).

In Africa, women face significant barriers to accessing and controlling land, which is crucial for their economic empowerment and food security. Despite producing 70-80% of the continent's food (Gladwin, 2002), women own less than 10% of the land, primarily due to patriarchal customary land tenure systems that favour male ownership and control. Although some countries have enacted laws to promote gender equality in land rights, these laws are often poorly implemented, and cultural norms frequently override statutory protections. As a result, women's land rights remain precarious, limiting their ability to secure livelihoods and exacerbating poverty and gender inequality.

Similarly, in Ghana, smallholder farmers are predominantly women who face significant challenges in accessing land and securing their livelihoods due to traditional and customary laws that favour males (Alidu, 2015; Yaro, 2010;). Consequently, women often rely on informal land tenure arrangements or leasehold agreements, which expose them to land disputes and eviction. This scenario is accentuated in the Northern Region of Ghana, which has been identified as one of the areas with a significant gender imbalance in land ownership (Alidu, 2015). Despite these challenges, women contribute substantially to agricultural output, accounting for 60% of total agricultural production in Ghana (IFAD, 2011).

Transitioning to a broader framework, it is imperative to note that securing land rights for women not only enhances their productivity but also promotes gender equality and women's empowerment, crucial elements recognized in the 2003 Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa (Fontan Sers & Mughal, 2019). However, progress in addressing the challenges faced by women smallholder farmers in terms of land access and livelihood security has been gradual. This is because there is a limited understanding of the gendered dynamics of land access, which hampers the development of targeted interventions (Anagloet al., 2014; Tetteh Anang, 2015). The limited understanding of the gendered dynamics of land access and its livelihood implications has hindered the development of targeted interventions to address the challenges women smallholder farmers face. Gaining a comprehensive comprehension of the obstacles encountered by women smallholder farmers in terms of land access and livelihood security is

crucial to devising impactful interventions that promote gender equality and empower women in the agricultural sector.

Problem Statement

Agriculture plays a crucial role in Ghana's economy, significantly contributing to the nation's food security and employing a large segment of the population (Ecker, 2018). In the Northern Regions of Ghana, women smallholder farmers, who constitute a considerable portion of the agricultural workforce, frequently encounter obstacles in accessing essential resources such as land, credit, and agricultural inputs. The difference in access to resources between men and women in Kpandai is largely influenced by societal structures and norms. Men predominantly control land distribution due to the patriarchal nature of the community, often limiting women's access unless they have familial ties to male relatives who can facilitate this access (Kuusaana, Kidido & Halidu-Adam, 2013). Such patriarchal systems significantly disadvantage women, impacting not just land access but also their ability to obtain other crucial agricultural resources. Men typically have better access to credit and inputs as they are more likely to hold formal land titles and other necessary documentation that can be used as collateral. These barriers significantly hinder their productivity and economic well-being. Specifically, in Kpandai, traditional and patriarchal norms (“Liwangul”) often restrict women's land ownership, despite legal frameworks like the PNDC Law 111 and Article 22(3) that support gender equality in property rights (Kuusaana et al., 2013). The lack of formal land titles further exacerbates these challenges, as it impedes women’s access to credit, participation in governmental programs, and enforcement of land rights (Alidu, 2015).

Furthermore, women in Kpandai face additional difficulties in securing other agricultural resources. The absence of collateral or formal documentation limits their access to credit, thereby restricting their capacity to invest in and expand their agricultural activities. They also struggle to acquire high-quality seeds and other inputs, which are critical for improving crop yields and overall productivity. These resource access disparities not only contribute to ongoing food insecurity but also perpetuate poverty and lower standards of living among women farmers and their families (Alidu, 2015).

Purpose of the Study

The study aims to examine access to land and its implications on women smallholder farmers in the Kpandai District.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guided the study;

- a. Examine the factors that influence women smallholder farmers' access to land in the Kpandai district.
- b. Examine the legal structures that protect women smallholder farmers' access to land in the Kpandai district.
- c. Examine the traditional structures that influence women smallholder farmers' access to land in the Kpandai district.
- d. Explore the livelihood outcomes associated with women's access to land.

Research Questions

- a. What are the factors influencing women smallholder farmers' land access in the Kpandai district?

- b. How effective are the legislative structures that protect women smallholder farmers' access to land in the Kpandai district?
- c. What are the traditional factors that influence women smallholder farmers' access to land in the Kpandai district?
- d. What are the livelihood outcomes associated with women's access to land?

Significance of the Study

The research findings will facilitate policy formulation on women's access to land in the Kpandia district. This study is anticipated to offer alternatives for the state, researchers, NGOs, and FBOs, among other players, to implement interventions that promote women smallholder farmers' land ownership. The findings would help reshape existing policies toward the challenges of women smallholder farmers' access to land. Livelihood insecurity threatens many women who are smallholder farmers in the Kpandai District. There is no guarantee that people's livelihoods will be stable as they migrate from one source of income to another. Consequently, it is anticipated that the research will have an impact on the livelihood activities of smallholder farmers, leading to changes and repercussions. Moreover, this study would yield significant insights for policymakers, planners, and various stakeholders within the district, including the District Assembly, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and gender-focused organisations. Specifically, it would shed light on the challenges faced by women engaged in small-scale farming in terms of their access to land, as well as the potential consequences on their overall livelihoods. This would facilitate the advancement of strategies aimed at guaranteeing livelihood security for women smallholder farmers.

Ultimately, this study would contribute to the existing body of literature, therefore providing a foundation for future research endeavours. This research would contribute to the current body of information on rural livelihoods, with a particular focus on smallholder farmers in the Kpandai District. This forum will facilitate a deeper investigation into issues in rural life. The study results are anticipated to stimulate scholarly discourse on the strategies used by women smallholder farmers in addressing the obstacles associated with land access, with the ultimate goal of improving multiple livelihoods.

Delimitation of the Study

Geographically the study was limited to some selected communities or towns in the Kpandai district of the northern region of Ghana which was selected randomly. The study seeks to gather information from an examination of hindrances to the accessibility of land to smallholder farmers' livelihoods in the Kpandai district of the northern region of Ghana. Therefore, the study is expected to assess the factors that influence women's smallholder access to land in the Kpandai district, examine the legal structures that protect women's smallholder access to land, examine the traditional factors that influence women's smallholder access to land and the livelihoods outcomes associated with women smallholder access to land.

Organization of the Study

The study is in five chapters. The first chapter focuses on the introduction of the study. Chapter Two presents the review of relevant literature, theories and conceptual framework that guides the study. Chapter three presents the methodology of the study. This includes the research approach, design, sampling, data sources and analysis. Chapter four presents the results and

discussions of the field data. Chapter Five presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on women's access to land and livelihood implications. The review provides conceptual definitions of terms, the theoretical framework that guides the study, and the empirical review of the studies relating to the research objectives.

Conceptual Review

This section presents the definition of concepts used in the study and the conceptual review of other issues relevant to the study. The concepts include land access, livelihood, religion culture and legal systems. Other conceptual issues regarding Gender, ideologies, norms, land tenure and access and factors influencing women's land access are reviewed in this section.

Land Access

The concept of land access is pivotal in understanding socio-economic dynamics, particularly in rural and agricultural communities. Land access refers to the ability of individuals or groups to obtain, use, and control land for various purposes such as agriculture, habitation, or commerce (Yaro, 2010). This concept is intricately linked to issues of equity, social justice, and economic development. In many developing countries, traditional and legal frameworks often govern land access, creating complex scenarios where customary practices and statutory laws intersect (Alden Wily, 2018). Women's land access is particularly critical, as it directly affects their autonomy, productivity, and livelihoods. Studies have shown that barriers to land access for women, including cultural norms and legal constraints, significantly hinder their

economic empowerment and contribute to persistent gender inequalities (Chigbu, 2019; Akinola, 2018).

Livelihood

The concept of livelihood includes the means, activities, entitlements, and assets by which people make a living, emphasizing the sustainable ability to maintain and improve the standard of living over time (Karki, 2021). Livelihood strategies are diverse and context-specific, integrating various assets such as human, social, physical, natural, and financial capital, which individuals and households utilize to achieve desired livelihood outcomes (Scoones, 1998). This multifaceted approach shows the dynamic interplay between resources and the external environment, including social, economic, and political contexts, which collectively influence people's ability to pursue and sustain livelihoods (Ellis, 2000).

Religion and Customs

Customs and religion are deeply intertwined aspects of human societies that significantly shape cultural norms and individual behaviours. Customs, defined as traditional practices and social behaviours specific to a particular community, often derive their legitimacy and continuity from religious beliefs and practices (Abdulla, 2018). Religion provides a sacred framework within which customs are practised, ensuring their perpetuation through generations. For instance, in many cultures, religious rituals and ceremonies form the basis of social customs related to birth, marriage, and death. These customs reinforce social cohesion by providing a shared sense of identity and community. However, while customs can unify, they can also be sources of conflict,

particularly when they intersect with changing social values and human rights issues.

Legal Systems

Legal systems are the frameworks through which societies enforce their laws, and they are critical for maintaining order and justice within a community (Selznick, 2020). Different countries follow various types of legal systems, broadly categorized into common law, civil law, religious law, and customary law. Common law, prevalent in the United Kingdom and its former colonies, relies heavily on court precedents and judicial opinions to make legal decisions (Bursat, 2019). Civil law is based on comprehensive sets of written statutes that judges apply directly. Religious law, such as Islamic Sharia, bases its rules on religious texts and is primary in several Middle Eastern countries. Customary law, often observed in indigenous communities, is guided by long-standing traditions and practices. Each system has its strengths and weaknesses, shaping the legal landscapes in diverse ways to reflect cultural and societal norms.

Gender, ideologies, and norms

The examination and analysis of gender ideas, norms, and interactions are of utmost importance as they serve as the fundamental basis for the approach used in this research. Women's land rights are often influenced by gender norms which are prevalent across various levels of society in African countries. The prevailing notions on the rightful ownership of land and other assets are encapsulated within the framework of sociocultural and gender values and norms (Sultana & Busra, 2013). Gender norms and beliefs have a significant role in shaping and influencing gender interactions daily. Gender ideology refers to a collection of societal perspectives about the roles and interactions of

individuals based on their gender, including both public and private domains (Bayisenge, 2015). Gender ideology may manifest in several domains of lived experience, including but not limited to sexual difference, parenting, family and marital dynamics, and access to resources such as land.

Gender has a significant role in carrying and shaping ideologies within a given sociocultural context (Steady, 2005). Hence, it can be seen that gender relations and ideologies are influenced by social norms, social interactions, and social institutions, which play a significant role in governing and managing individuals' behaviours and actions in both broader societal contexts and individual interpersonal exchanges (Radtke & Stam, 1994). Social standards refer to the established and implicit norms that govern individuals' behaviour, dictating what is considered desirable and acceptable within a certain cultural context (Namabira & Kamanzi, 2013).

Radtke and Stam (1994) have argued that power dynamics are also present in interactions between genders. When examining how women's and men's lives are organised within the domains of society, finance, and geopolitics, it becomes evident that gender problems are inherently characterised by inequality (Siltanen & Doucet, 2008). The limited availability of resources and opportunities often hinders women's ability to secure their survival and exercise agency, hence perpetuating gender disparities and injustices (Chant, 2007; World Bank, 2005). Gender hierarchy, although being shaped by social constructs, ethnicity, and subject to potential changes, is often seen as the norm. Disparities exist across several domains, including income, wealth, social status, and cultural impact (Connell, 2009). In addition to financial disparities, there is a presence of inequality in several aspects such as

authority, respect, service, comfort, housing, access to formal authority, emotional stability, and autonomy over one's own life (Connel, 2009).

Land tenure

Land tenure refers to the relationship individuals and groups have with the land, defining how property rights to land are allocated, transferred, and managed within a society (Bohannon, 2018). Various types of land tenure systems exist, each with distinct characteristics and implications. Private land tenure assigns rights to individuals or groups, promoting efficient land use but potentially excluding marginalized populations. Communal land tenure allows communities to manage land collectively, fostering social cohesion but sometimes struggling with external pressures. Open-access land tenure offers no exclusive rights, often leading to overuse. State land tenure involves public sector control, which can ensure equal access but may suffer from bureaucratic inefficiencies.

Determinants of Women's Access to Land

The concepts of land ownership, access, and control exhibit distinct connotations and interpretations (GAAP, 2013). The establishment of criteria and metrics is vital in comprehending the gender aspect of land ownership, and it is advantageous in the comparative analysis of research on gender-based land ownership and land access. Land ownership refers to the acquisition of land rights via legally specified or customary methods. According to Doss et al. (2013), land ownership might take the form of individual ownership, community ownership, or joint ownership. The concept of ownership may include an individual's authority in determining land use and the ability to make

choices about its possible sale. Alternatively, it can also signify a situation where there is shared ownership, resulting in limited personal control.

In the African context, it is observed that gender disparities exist in the allocation and exercise of land use rights and control, even in cases when land ownership is held jointly by a couple. In contrast to the concept of ownership, the notion of access to property refers to the granting of temporary use rights to land, without the full authority to dispose of or utilise it (Duncan & Brants, 2004). The UNECA (2007) asserts that the mere provision of land access to women does not necessarily ensure their ability to maintain secure tenure or effectively use the land. The determination of women's land access among patrilineal groups in Northern Malawi is contingent upon their marital status, as noted by Byant (2012). The study conducted by Budlender et al. (2011) in south Africa and Alidu (2015) in Ghana provides evidence of the precarious nature of women's land rights, particularly in cases when marriages cease due to death or divorce. In the context of marital households, divorced women experience a loss of land usage rights, while widows rely on their sons to maintain ongoing access to land resources. A widow who does not have any offspring is prohibited from accessing the property owned by her late spouse. The imposition of cultural beliefs that see women only as transient members of the family has the effect of constraining their agency and impeding their ability to exercise control over their land rights.

In the countries of Somalia, Sudan, and Tanzania, the constitutional provisions that ban gender-based discrimination in the domains of marriage, divorce, and inheritance, particularly in cases where customary law is applicable, recognise some exceptions that prioritise the rights of women above

their wider pursuit of equality with men (FAO, 2010). A further concern is the acknowledgement of dual registration as proprietors, wherein several African women have had difficulties in jointly registering their husbands' names on the property (FAO, 2010). According to Claassens (2009), women in institutions such as tribal councils and traditional courts that handle land distribution problems are subjected to disrespectful treatment and marginalisation. The achievement of gender equity in terms of access to and control over resources such as land has proven to be a complex endeavour, mostly owing to the existing disparities between legislative mandates and their practical implementation.

It is often said by individuals of the male gender that in the event of women acquiring land, such land may potentially be transferred to the family of the husband upon marriage, hence maintaining their dominant position in the transmission of assets that contribute to productivity (Bonye & Kpieta, 2012). In the present scenario, the land is seen as a means of acquiring riches, exerting power, and exercising control inside the home and family domain, rather than only functioning as a source of production. Bonye and Kpieta (2012) argue that the spiritual value attributed to land imposes restrictions on women's ability to access agricultural fields in Northern Ghana. This is due to the prevailing cultural norm that prohibits women from performing land sacrifices since this responsibility is traditionally reserved for males who hold the role of caretakers. The ownership of property is contingent upon a woman's ability to make sacrifices. In some instances, individuals of this kind are seen as individuals who are not deemed reliable or trustworthy when it comes to the stewardship of valuable resources, such as land. Duncan and Brants (2004) assert that in Ghana,

male individuals possess more power in making choices about the management and use of land, even within the context of marriage.

The study of gender norms within agricultural communities has yielded valuable insights into the mechanisms through which women might attain land ownership. In Ghana's Mamprugu and Sisal areas, women engage in agricultural activities on their farms due to restrictions that prevent them from cultivating yam (Apusigah, 2009). In the context of land ownership, it is observed that women in Ghana now have comparatively greater levels of access when compared to their counterparts in other African countries. This may be primarily attributed to the implementation of legal measures such as PNDC law 111, Land Act 2020 section four and chapter five of the 1992 constitution and initiatives by both governmental and non-profit entities. The gains in Ghana have shown regional variations, mostly occurring in urban areas (UNECA, 2007). The women in the Upper East Region of Ghana are seeing an increase in their land access, as more men are providing them with land for cultivation. This is due to the recognition of women's contributions to the family's income (Bonye & Kpieta, 2012). According to Apusigah (2009), it has been argued that women in Northern Ghana can get access to land using their work contributions. Engaged in agricultural activities, individuals labouring on family farms engage in negotiations to get permission to use privately-owned lands for cultivation purposes. There exists a divergence of opinions among scholars about the provision of land access since some argue that its informal nature compromises the formalities and security measures necessary for women. In peri-urban communities, the sale of land by chiefs and family leaders has become prevalent. This trend is primarily driven by the commercialization and

privatisation of these areas, resulting in a significant surge in land demand. Unfortunately, this has resulted in the exclusion of women from accessing land for agricultural purposes (Mutangadura, 2007; Tiskata & Yaro, 2014).

Livelihood implication of Women's land Access

The land has significant importance in facilitating development throughout the African continent, serving as the fundamental basis for several livelihoods. Based on the findings of the Rural Development Institute (2007), it can be inferred that women who own land are inclined to embrace sustainable agricultural techniques and allocate resources towards the development of their land for agricultural pursuits. Other advantages include;

- improved household nutrition and food security,
- increased status and power for women in the home and community, and
- more significant incentives to adopt sustainable farming practices.

Rural households depend on land as the primary source of subsistence and saleable goods because it offers a stable basis for raising families, providing shelter, and creating plans for their future (FAO, 2010). Land remains a vital resource for rural inhabitants and their livelihood. Increased access to various forms of capital is facilitated by having access to land. This makes them less vulnerable to stress and shocks that affect their livelihood.

The New Agriculturalist (2010) reports that across Africa, the proportion of women involved in agricultural activities ranges from 60% to 80% of the total work force. Moreover, they assume a progressively substantial role in the management of resources and the production of food, accounting for over 80% of the food eaten in rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa. In the rural regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, the ownership of land by women is very low, accounting

for less than 1% of total land ownership. This is particularly noteworthy considering the vital role that women play in the production of food within this context (OECD, 2010). The OECD (2010) reported that women were tasked with various agricultural activities, including the dissemination of seedlings, pruning, the use of fertilizers and pesticides, crop harvesting, and threshing. In traditional African society, where males are often seen as the primary figures of authority inside households, the significant contributions of women as cultivators, food producers, and providers are sometimes disregarded. As a consequence, rural women often experience a lack of agency in matters of land ownership and control over family resources, such as financial assets, which are directly generated by their labour. This power imbalance extends to both communal and domestic land use.

According to Serrat (2008), there exists a paradoxical scenario wherein women bear the ongoing burden of addressing household food insecurity, a predicament that is closely tied to their limited control and utilisation of land. This observation highlights the interrelationship between household food insecurity and the absence of authority and access to land resources. The limited access to land is a significant obstacle for women in their pursuit of economic opportunities and efforts to alleviate poverty by enhancing their means of livelihood.

Daley (2010) expresses worry about the perceived reduced significance attributed to the contributions of rural women in comparison to males, to livelihoods. The survival strategies of impoverished rural women are further complicated by their primary responsibility for safeguarding the household's food security (Serrat, 2008). Primarily, households led by women have the

potential of being ensnared in cycles of poverty (Songelwa, 2009; World Bank et al., 2009), hence affecting their well-being at both the individual and family levels due to their pivotal role as the major providers of socioeconomic stability and sustenance. Poverty is characterised by the persistence of prejudice or generational injustice, shown as the exclusion of women from land ownership due to male inheritance practises.

Theoretical Framework of the study

Utilizing various approaches and tactics is necessary to examine the implications of women's access to land and means of subsistence. Women's land rights, legal frameworks, consequences for livelihoods, and religion have frequently been mixed by scholars to reflect one another. Several models, including the Sustainable livelihood framework, have been used to evaluate women's access to land and its effects on livelihoods. The conceptual model of Women's Access to Land and Housing Rights and the Sustainable Livelihood Framework is the foundation for this study. These models will assist in identifying problems, issues, and needs relating to women's difficulties in acquiring land and its access

Women's Access to Land and Housing Model

Komjathy and Nicholas (2002) constructed a framework in their research aimed at comprehending the underlying reasons for the gender-related challenges encountered in accessing land. They defined access as the entitlement or privilege to use, manage, or govern property and its associated resources. This concept includes the ability to both get and effectively employ the resource in question. Land access includes factors such as land ownership

type, size, economic worth, legal clarity, and documented land rights. These factors are essential in protecting an individual's access to land.

In many civilizations, the preservation of traditional and religious customs has resulted in the restriction of women's entitlement to land, whether through ownership or inheritance. Customary arrangements on the provision of use rights for land, particularly in the context of community membership, have become a prevalent practice due to the significant role women play as main food providers within families. Nevertheless, the current use of rights fails to sufficiently protect women in situations when conventional family structures break down. The economic and social well-being of women and their children is jeopardised when they encounter widowhood or divorce or when the male household leader fails to meet his customary responsibilities towards the family.

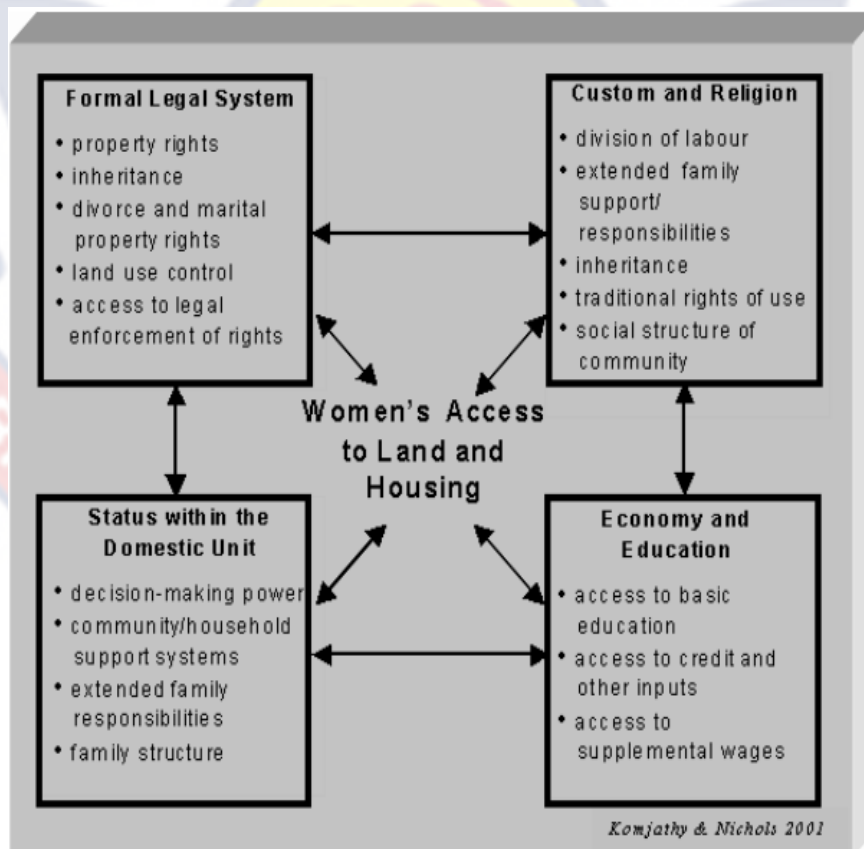


Figure 1 : Women's Access to land and housing Rights

Source: Komjathy & Nicholas (2002)

Both statutory and customary rules can restrict access to land. In situations when traditional norms and national law conflict, community members tend to prioritise and enforce local standards, particularly when it pertains to women's rights. The presence of written national rules that provide women's access to resources for production is crucial; yet, the recognition and enforcement of these rights need the backing of local communities. Consequently, the mere existence of a statute does not guarantee that women will have practical access to legal recourse in cases when it is violated. Fair access to land includes more than just the distribution of rights. The preservation or enforcement of land access is necessary to exercise one's rights and avail oneself of the associated opportunities. This may include safeguarding against unlawful or coercive land seizures. To achieve effective and fair access, it is essential to consider the availability of supplementary resources, including but not limited to financial support, transportation infrastructure, and irrigation systems. The safeguarding and enhancement of women's land acquisition necessitate collaboration across official, traditional, and religious organisations.

Komjathy and Nicholas's conceptualization of women's access to land is shown in Figure 1. The model (Figure 1) contains variables that together influence women's land access and housing. The relationship between the variables—legal systems, customs and rights, status within the domestic unit, economy, and education—in the model shown in Figure 1 can be understood through their collective influence on women's access to land and housing. The legal system consists of the formal laws and regulations that govern land ownership and property rights. These include property rights, inheritance, divorce and marital property rights, land use control, and access to legal

enforcement of rights. If the legal framework is inclusive and supportive of gender equality, it can facilitate women's access to land and housing. Conversely, discriminatory legal systems can restrict women's property rights.

Moreover, customs and religion often play a significant role in determining access to resources for women. It influences the division of labour, extended family support, inheritance, traditional rights of use and the social structure of community for women. These customs can either support or hinder women's rights to land and housing, depending on whether they uphold patriarchal values or promote gender equality. Also, the variable, Status Within the Domestic Unit, focuses on how a woman's role and status within her household can greatly influence her access to land and housing. Higher status, often associated with greater decision-making power and economic contributions, can lead to better access to these resources. Conversely, lower status can limit access. Lastly, the model contains economic and educational variables. Economic conditions affect the overall availability and affordability of land and housing, access to credit and wages for women. Women's economic empowerment, through employment and income, can enhance their ability to purchase or inherit land and housing. Education empowers women with knowledge and skills, enabling them to understand and navigate legal and economic systems. Educated women are more likely to advocate for their rights and access to land and housing. Education also tends to correlate with higher income and better economic opportunities. Together, these variables interact dynamically to shape women's access to land and housing. For example, an educated woman in a supportive legal system and an egalitarian household is more likely to have access to land and housing than an uneducated woman

facing discriminatory customs and poor economic conditions. The interplay between these factors determines the overall accessibility and ownership rights for women regarding land and housing.

Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF)

The sustainable livelihoods (SL) method is a comprehensive strategy that aims to understand and identify the fundamental characteristics and root causes of poverty, without limiting the emphasis to a selected few variables such as economic factors and food security. Additionally, it aims to elucidate the interrelationships among the several dimensions of poverty, including its underlying causes and observable symptoms (Scoones, 1998). This endeavour facilitates a more effective and efficient approach to prioritising and implementing interventions. The Sustainable Livelihoods (SL) approach aims to support individuals living in poverty by enhancing their long-term well-being (Chambers, 1995).

The SLF (Figure 2) conceptualize livelihoods by considering the many aspects of living standards and the benefits and limitations (Scoones, 1998). The limitations and opportunities discussed are shaped by various factors, encompassing local regulations and customs, the resources accessible to households or individuals, and broader global or national patterns and structures that individuals may lack control over and may not even be cognizant of. The framework, which serves as the fundamental basis of the sustainable livelihoods approach, functions as a valuable instrument for examining the lives of individuals with limited financial resources, while also providing a visual representation of the key factors that have significant influence (Chambers & Conway, 1992).

It urges people to reflect on the contexts and interactions involved in development activities, allowing those activities to become more process-oriented. As a result, they are driven to seek out several access points and transcend a single communal orientation as well as a narrow sectoral viewpoint.

It represents a considerable shift away from focusing on the project's inputs and outputs, as well as the assumed mechanical links between them. The sustainable livelihoods method emphasizes the importance of understanding institutions by mapping the institutional framework and connecting the micro and macro levels, as well as formal and informal settings.

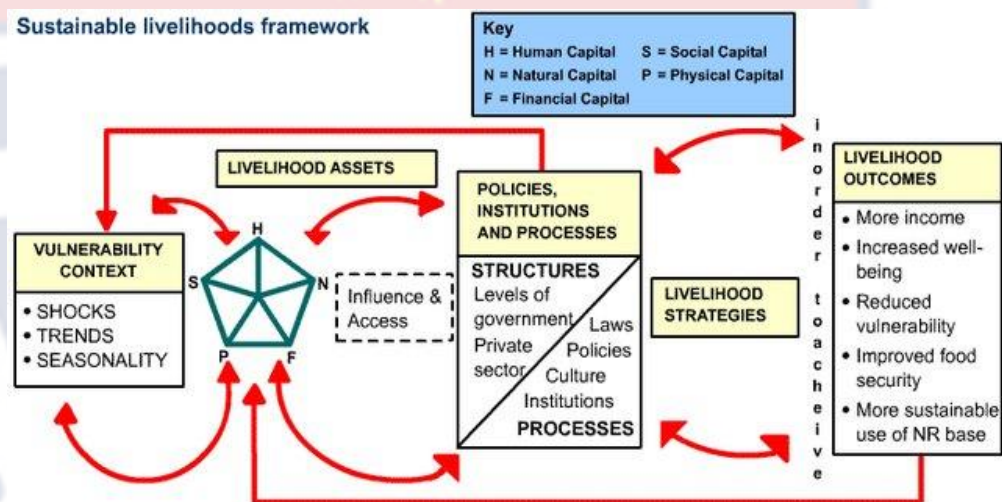


Figure 2 : Sustainable livelihood Framework

Source: DFID (2001)

The fundamental representation of the notion portrays stakeholders operating inside a Context of Vulnerability while they have access to certain Assets. The existing social, institutional, and organisational environment has a significant role in shaping and assigning meanings and values (Transforming Structures and Processes). The environment in which individuals reside significantly influences the range of livelihood methods they might use to achieve their desired positive life results (Chambers & Conway, 1992). The framework illustrates the interconnectedness of these factors, emphasising the underlying

impacts, processes, and their diverse interactions with lifestyles. Here is a breakdown of these components.

Vulnerability Context

The vulnerability context refers to the external circumstances in which individuals reside and derive significance, which directly impacts their asset status. The framework includes various factors, including trends related to shifting demographics, resource utilisation patterns, and advancements in governance (Devereux, 2001). Additionally, it incorporates shocks, such as disruptions to human, livestock, or crop well-being, environmental calamities like floods or earthquakes, economic instabilities, and conflicts in the form of national or international wars. Furthermore, seasonality, characterised by periodic fluctuations in prices, products, or employment opportunities, is also considered. This component of the framework represents the aspect that lies beyond the direct influence of stakeholders.

Livelihood Assets

The approach places people as its priority. Therefore, analysing how people attempt to transform their assets into favourable livelihood situations is essential to have an accurate and realistic picture of people's strengths (assets). People require various kinds of assets to achieve their objectives; nevertheless, no financial endowment is sufficient to deliver the desired outcomes on its own (Bebbington, 1999).

- **Human capital:** This term refers to the abilities, knowledge, labour force productivity, and physical and mental health (DFID, 2000), when combined allow individuals to pursue various livelihood methods and achieve their livelihood objectives. It fluctuates at the household level

depending on family size, skillsets, leadership capabilities, and health.

It is an essential consideration when using any other asset.

- **Social Capital** refers to the networks and linkages that enhance people's trust and cooperation capacity and their participation in more formalized groups with their institutions and regulatory norms and sanctions, from which people draw to achieve their sustainable livelihoods.
- **Natural Capital:** The accumulation of natural resources, including air quality, erosion management, land, water, forests, biodiversity, and the pace of change necessary for subsistence, is often known as natural capital.
- **Physical Capital:** The concept includes the essential resources and foundational infrastructure necessary for the maintenance of livelihoods (DFID, 2000), including producer commodities as well as access to knowledge, secure housing and infrastructure, and reliable deliveries of potable water and sanitation.
- **Financial Capital:** The term "livelihood" pertains to the resources that people use to accomplish their goals in life (DFID, 2000). This includes the essential presence of monetary funds or their equivalents, enabling individuals to choose from a diverse range of options for sustaining their livelihoods

Transforming Structures and Processes

Institutions, organizations, policies, and sections of legislation that have an impact on people's livelihoods are represented by changing structures and processes. Because they act at all levels, they are crucial in determining accessibility, the terms of trade between different types of capital, as well as the

benefits of any certain lifestyle approach private and governmental entities to create and implement laws and regulations, offer services, make purchases, engage in transactions, and engage in a variety of other actions that have an impact on people's quality of life (Shankland, 2000; DFID, 2000). The "software" that controls how structures and people behave and interact comprises processes. Critical livelihood processes may motivate people to make decisions, control access to resources, or permit stakeholders to adapt and substitute one resource type with another.

Livelihood Strategies

Livelihood strategies refer to the diverse and integrated range of activities and choices undertaken by individuals to achieve their goals related to sustaining their livelihoods (Shankland, 2000; Keeley, 2001). Individuals engage in numerous activities within these dynamic processes to fulfil their distinct requirements, which may vary based on different temporal, geographical, or economic factors. Their position within the framework highlights their reliance on asset status as well as developing institutions and processes. A shifting asset position may aid or hinder various strategies depending on the institutional structures and rules.

Livelihood Outcomes

The successes of livelihood strategies include increased income (for example, cash), increased well-being (for example, intangible items like self-worth, health, access to public services, and integration), decreased vulnerability, increased food security, and enhanced resilience of the environment (DFID, 2000). By understanding the outcomes, we may better comprehend the "output" of the current configuration of components in the

livelihood framework. They illustrate the factors that drive stakeholders' behaviour and their top priorities. They could provide insight into potential responses from people to new opportunities and which performance metrics to employ to evaluate support action.

Strength of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF)

The sustainable livelihoods theory has two strengths: it may give a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexity of rural livelihoods and it has the potential to empower smallholder farmers through market-driven rural development programs. It also emphasizes the significance of taking into account a variety of factors during the development process, including assets, institutions, strategies, and outcomes (Chambers, 1995). Furthermore, the theory highlights the role of information and communication in supporting sustainable livelihoods, as well as the importance of participatory techniques in policy implementation.

The SLF approach demonstrates the many tasks humans perform to support themselves, frequently in tandem. In the case of people experiencing poverty, who frequently depend on various diverse economic activities for their subsistence, this is particularly crucial because it is not just any activity that matters but how those activities collectively affect the household economy (Chambers, 1995). The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) is a methodology that aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the many assets individuals use to establish their means of living. By examining the diverse range of resources and their combinations, the SLF offers insights into the important elements required for those facing poverty to enhance their livelihoods. Examining a range of factors at several levels that directly or

indirectly influence or hinder the ability of individuals living in poverty to access different resources and assets, hence affecting their lives, facilitates a deeper comprehension of the underlying root causes of poverty (DFID, 2000). Various local formal and informal institutional and social factors, together with the prevailing macroeconomic processes, policies, and legal frameworks, may collectively impose limitations or restrictions on a given situation.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) emphasizes the process by which individuals create and enhance their means of earning a living to achieve objectives in light of unique vulnerabilities. The portrayal illustrates how those who are economically disadvantaged and lacking in resources make decisions that have consequences for their quality of life. According to Frankenberger (1996), the development of assistance programmes that effectively use the abilities of individuals from poor backgrounds is of utmost importance. The SLA aims to use and derive benefits from the attributes of other established development methodologies rather than opposing them. The study incorporates many conventional methodologies, such as “reasonable governance evaluation processes,” “participatory rural appraisal (PRA), and participatory poverty assessment (PPA)”. The concept of livelihood provides a more credible framework for evaluating the impact on individuals’ living standards, hence providing a more viable approach for assessing the socioeconomic results of programmes aimed at poverty eradication as a component of their aims.

Limitations of the Sustainability Livelihood Framework

Despite the framework’s popularity, the Sustainable Livelihood Framework has faced criticisms from scholars due to its weakness in both

theoretical and operationalization. Some of these limitations are explained below.

The primary focus of the SL approach is the alleviation of poverty. What criteria determine the classification of poverty? Research has shown that poverty is a complex issue with several dimensions, extending beyond just economic deprivation (Davies & Krantz, 1999). To implement the strategy, it is important to respond to this inquiry. To ascertain the impoverished individuals within a given society, a viable approach would involve selecting a specific geographical area that is recognised for its prevalent poverty. Subsequently, it would be reasonable to assume that a substantial portion of the residents within this region would meet the criteria for poverty, as determined by a justifiable standard. To further refine the selection, additional poverty indicators such as proximity to roadways and affiliation with an ethnic minority group could be taken into account (Davies & Krantz, 1999). Nevertheless, it is rare for poverty to be evenly distributed throughout a given geographical area. Many development projects and programmes operate on the assumption that communities are cohesive and homogeneous social units (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999).

Moreover, criticism has been directed at the framework for its failure to include gender-related power dynamics in the quest for sustainable livelihoods (Harcourt, 2017). Despite the inclusion of these processes inside the framework, their practical implications have not been well addressed. Social capital has often been seen as exclusively beneficial, although social networks may be both inclusive and exclusive, sometimes marginalising the most vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals. Furthermore, these contacts often include coercive

and hierarchical dynamics that limit opportunities for persons in subordinate positions. Even in cases when these partnerships exhibit more egalitarian characteristics, the associated obligations may still be onerous.

Finally, the sociolinguistic (SL) method requires a substantial amount of information and analytical aptitude. The counterpart organisation may not allocate personnel to engage in close collaboration with the local community, as anticipated by the plan, especially if the opposing entity is a government-affiliated extension agency. Furthermore, according to Mosse (1994), those who struggle to grasp the complexities of poverty and livelihood concerns may find themselves without the necessary analytical skills and overall knowledge needed to properly use the approach.

Relevance of SLF to the Study

The Sustainable Livelihood Framework is relevant in studying access to land and its implications for women smallholder farmers in the Kpandai District because it provides an integrated approach to understanding how resource availability directly influences livelihood outcomes. This approach may successfully analyse how land access—or lack thereof—influences the economic and social dimensions of women farmers' lives, taking into account the many capitals (human, social, financial, physical, and natural) required for sustainable livelihoods. By focussing on the strengths and assets available to these farmers rather than just the challenges they face, the Sustainable Livelihood Framework helps to identify practical interventions that improve their ability to use land effectively, as well as advocating for policies that ensure equitable land distribution and access, promoting gender equality and empowering women in the community.

Empirical Review

Factors Influencing Women's Land Access

Despite legislative protections, women cannot claim equal land and land ownership in many nations (World Bank, FAO & IFAD, 2009). The continuance of discriminatory societal norms and behaviour poses a significant barrier to women's access to land rights. The issue is made worse by the non-enforcement policies, a lack of resources to execute the law, and a lack of policy backing (World Bank, 2019).

According to Deng, Hoekstra, and Elsinga (2019), governmental institutions frequently hinder women's access to land in China, even though gender equality is a politically significant issue. Chinese law does not have frameworks for women's land rights inside a household (Guo, 2011). Therefore, violating the woman's land rights was simple if her marital status changed (Sargeson, 2012).

Like most Hindus in India and Nepal, patrilineal kinship ties govern Muslim women in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Women are temporary landowners since they derive their social identity from their fathers. She is morally entitled to land rights but loses her land inheritance because she becomes the husband's property after marriage (Jackson, 2003). Despite the changing laws, few women have claimed land because of the erroneous legal presumptions of a woman's independence (Rao, 2011). Since marriage is vital, sacred, and inseparable, and patrilocal residency is ideal, there is a compelling and socially acceptable rationale for women to get a portion of their marital property and not their natal property (Rao, 2008, Rao 2011).

Secure land ownership is crucial for food production, shelter, and community development, and it poses significant challenges for African women (FAO, 2002). Therefore, development initiatives or programs must consider factors such as management, land availability, and tenure security, as these can impact women's security and quality of life (Paradza, 2011). Moreover, the enhancement of land access is crucial in expanding economic opportunities for African women. The issue of women's land rights in Africa is of utmost importance due to their limited access to livelihood opportunities (Chigbu, Izugbara & de Vries, 2018).

The study conducted on the vulnerability of women's land ownership in Zimbabwe suggests that existing research on this topic tends to overemphasise the influence of patriarchy (Makura-Paradza, 2010). Another study conducted in Nigeria revealed that women's behaviours and lack of action might sometimes add to the obstacles they face in obtaining property rights (Chigbu, 2019). These studies elucidate the factors that contribute to the governance of resource sharing, which extend beyond the influence of patriarchy. These factors include several institutions and governance structures that receive authority from multiple sources, including the government, political parties, traditional leaders, and formal law.

In the context of Tanzania, it is observed that widows possess exclusive rights and responsibilities about the upbringing and welfare of their children while being legally prohibited from inheriting property or other significant assets. The Law of Marriage Act of 1971 confers to married women equal entitlements to acquire, hold, and transfer property. The partition of property after divorce is addressed, however, there is no mention of the distribution of

land upon death. The Tanzanian Land Policy of 1995 grants women the legal entitlement to land ownership in Tanzania. However, it is important to note that the policy also recognises that customary practises and traditions regulate the succession of clan property.

In Ethiopia, there are unequal land rights based on gender, affecting both males and females. Despite the seemingly attractive and gender-responsive nature of Ethiopia's land reform policy, which promises the allocation of rural land adequate for personal and family subsistence to those willing to cultivate it, studies indicate that this policy does not effectively deliver on its promises. In a similar vein, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in Uganda (2001) acknowledges that the limited access of women farmers to financial services, labour, technology, and other resources, along with their tenuous land tenure, poses significant obstacles to their agricultural productivity inside the country.

In Kenya, women own little ownership of property, with prevailing cultural views discouraging their active engagement in matters of land (Davison, 2019). The regulation of property access and ownership is governed by a combination of statutory regulations, customary norms, and religious laws. The marital status of women is a crucial factor in determining their ability to own or acquire property. According to research undertaken by the East African Women and Law Research Group (Mitulla, 2002), it is observed that women generally own movable property or chattels per inheritance laws and practises.

In Africa, there has been a growing trend towards the commodification of land ownership and private use rights, particularly to tenancy under customary tenure (Daley & Englert, 2010a, 2010b). The traditional land rights of women in Eastern Africa and other African nations are being compromised

by the commoditization and transformation processes, leading to heightened ambiguity over their access to land (Pedersen, 2015; Daley & Englert, 2010a, 2010b). For instance, due to a somewhat lower level of competitiveness shown by women in the market compared to males, the implementation of land title registration may potentially lead to a situation where a majority of women experience land loss. Even though a significant number of women experience land loss as a result of increasing commoditization, there are instances when some women have managed to acquire property via opportunities facilitated by the commoditization process (Daley & Englert 2010b).

In Ghana, gender disparities caused by socially accepted gender segregation make acquiring and exercising authority over the land challenging. Cultural, social, economic, and demographic constraints make it challenging for women to obtain land, and the areas of land they manage are typically less fruitful, which is made worse by unsafe holding (Abebe, Synnevag & Aune, 2020). Doss et al. (2020) argue that the issue of land access exhibits gendered dynamics that perpetuate discrimination against women. This conclusion aligns with previous research conducted by other authors, which highlights the disparity in women's access to agricultural spaces (Jumpah, Adams, & Ayeduvor, 2020). According to the findings of Nyantakyi-Frimpong (2020), there is a limited number of women in Ghana who own secure tenure over land. The limited access that women have to resources such as land, labour, and money continues to impede their ability to participate in sustainable environmental practises. This has resulted in detrimental effects on the agricultural sector (Kang, Schwab & Yu, 2020).

According to Aduamoah (2016), traditional leaders in Ghana exercise significant authority in matters of property rights and land transfer for various reasons, notably for agricultural activities, which serve as the primary economic endeavour in rural regions. This authority is derived from the patrilineal inheritance system. Numerous advocates for women's rights question the discrepancy that exists between the substantial contributions made by women to society and their comparatively limited level of influence and power. The disparity seen may be attributed to several variables, with cultural norms and values playing a significant role, especially in nations that follow patrilineal systems. Culture has a significant role in the normalisation of discriminatory behaviours, which are often manifested via various rituals and customs. Article 26 of the Ghanaian Constitution imposes some requirements on the general public, while also affirming the freedom of individuals to engage in the enjoyment, practise, declaration, preservation, and support of any cultural, linguistic, customary, or religious beliefs, provided that such activities are under the rules outlined in the Constitution. The Constitution expressly forbids everyday actions that dehumanize people or harm emotional well-being. Chapter 5 section 22 of the 1992 Constitution, Land Act 2010 (1093), and Land Act 2020 section 4 under the common law freehold are examples of legal structures that protect and promote women's access to property including land. However, this is different in many rural parts of Ghana at the village level (Aduamoah, 2016).

Apusigah (2009) asserts that the issue of land ownership in rural Ghana is influenced by political dynamics, and gender considerations, and is prone to disputes. According to Apusigah (2009), women belonging to the Mamprugu

and Sisal tribes engage in agricultural labour on farms during the yam cultivation period due to restrictions that prevent them from directly cultivating yam in the Upper West Region of Ghana. Apusigah (2009) asserts that women residing in Northern Ghana can get access to land via their employment. The individuals engaged in negotiations to secure the privilege of cultivating their land while operating small-scale, family-owned agricultural enterprises. Certain scholars argue that the lack of formal and secure land accessibility adversely affects women. In metropolitan regions characterised by high risk, where there is a growing trend of commercialization and privatisation leading to increased land demand, it has been seen that chiefs and family leaders have engaged in the sale of land (Mutangadura 2007; Tiskata & Yaro 2014).

However, in the middle belt of Ghana, things are different. For instance, property is usually passed down through the mother's family in the Ashanti. Inheriting lineage property can only be done by a matrilineal member instead of self-owned property. Therefore, the mother's brother passes wealth and dignity to the sister's child. The heir frequently disregards the usual duties assigned to the widow and her kid, who is still alive. Compared to patrilineal women, matrilineal women have greater ownership of and control over land. Under patrilineal inheritance arrangements, women have no inheritance rights (Kuusaana, 2007).

Legal Structures and women's access to land

The discussions of women's property rights depend on their land ownership and management. Because women's property rights frequently vary from men's, there may be gender variations in obtaining major land

acquisitions. According to Doss, Meinzen-Dick, and Bomuhangi (2014), a classification of land property rights comprises:

- Accessibility (the right to inhabit land).
- Withdrawal “(the right to take something from the land, such as water, fuel, or produce)”.
- Control “(the right to alter the land, for example, by growing crops or trees):.
- Exclusion (the right to keep others from using the land).
- Alienation “(the right to rent, bequeath, or sell one’s land to another)”.

All or most of these rights include an idea of ownership. However, they are not always related, and women may have less entitlement to land than men. Exclusion and alienation rights for women are less widespread than management, access, and withdrawal rights (Doss et al., 2014). This worry is reminiscent of Deere’s (1985) earlier research on Latin America, where she asserts that most land reforms did not include women.

The possession of a legally recognised land certificate does not provide complete assurance about the land rights of rural Chinese women, despite the existence of several studies that highlight the positive impact of formal land tenure on women’s empowerment (Han et al., 2019). In China, the rural land is owned collectively by the community, which poses a potential danger to the farmers’ land tenure since it lacks individual ownership. This implies that the collective has the authority to alter, impose charges on, or seize the farmers’ property. Rural women’s land tenure security is influenced by a variety of risk variables, including both formal and informal governance mechanisms. These risk factors include formal governance agreements, such as the land contract

policy, as well as informal system arrangements, such as societal norms. Additionally, the formal system arrangements, such as the autonomous political system of rural households, also play a role in shaping women's land tenure security in rural areas.

The access of women to land in Pakistan is constrained by formal and legal rights, which are shaped by cultural and religious factors. This effect of tradition and religion on the legislation on land rights creates a significant divide and fosters discrimination against women (Khalid et al., 2015). In the context of Pakistan, it is within the purview of the courts to grant women the right to access and manage property. However, it is worth noting that in rural regions, prevailing cultural norms and taboos sometimes supersede legal structures. Consequently, women have challenges in freely navigating the court system to secure property ownership. The denial of land entitlement and access rights to women may be attributed to the compromised nature of civil laws and the prevalence of legal agreements based on Pashtunwali traditions, legal procedures, and Sharia. Female individuals are often used by their family members as a means to gain control over inherited assets. The exploitation shows the fine line between rightful access, use, and property ownership. Although there is still a gender gap in Pakistani society, there have been gradual improvements in women's access to land and their ability to exercise their rights, including better negotiation possibilities and greater awareness (Khalid et al., 2015).

In Africa, the concept of land rights includes more than the mere creation of gender roles. It includes the capacity to use or administer land, which is a vital resource. This also involves the entitlement to access information on land,

the authority to influence choices about land, and finally, the capacity to get benefits from it (Akinola, 2018). In the context of South Africa, it is worth noting that despite the constitutional guarantee of gender equality, the implementation of customary law has resulted in the exclusion of women from property ownership in rural regions (Rangan & Gilmartin, 2002).

Numerous African nations have already formulated or are now implementing their land policies such as the Land Act of Uganda (1998), PNDC Law 111, and the Communal Land Rights Act of Namibia (2002), to guarantee that women are not put at a disadvantage. It is necessary to assess the economic, social, and political aspects of property rights while implementing changes that are aimed at establishing and protecting these rights (Ahikire, 2011).

Despite the legislative and legal gains achieved by African nations in addressing the land problem, Hallward-Driemeier and Hasam (2013) indicate that women may lack awareness of their legal rights, even in countries with equitable legislation. Moreover, the administration may continue to exhibit prejudice against women, while law enforcement practices may be significantly inadequate or discriminating. For instance, while women in Kenya have the legal right to own property, the majority of land ownership in the nation is concentrated among male elders (Jagero & Onego, 2011). Assisting women necessitates a synchronised effort and the meticulous implementation of newly enacted land legislation.

The analysis of legislation on women's ownership rights in African nations is of utmost importance, particularly regarding the specific rights conferred and how they are implemented, including the ability of women to own property in their names. In addition to land laws, it is important to analyse the

legal framework for women's land rights. In the context of women's land rights, the significance of inheritance and family laws cannot be overstated. Despite the presence of laws including beneficial action-oriented components in several African countries, the actual implementation of these measures remains challenging Odeny, (2013).

Legal pluralism in Ghana is a characteristic of land property ownership, accessibility, and transfer (Rünger & Manager, 2006). The 1992 Constitution's Article 11 states that in addition to the Conventional law, which includes traditional law, Ghana's laws must also contain the Constitution, legislation, orders, regulations, and ordinances. Thus, establishing a pluralist legal system without a hierarchy among the numerous, perhaps incompatible, sources of law. From the outside, one could assume that common law alone or a mixture of conventional law and laws governs the land.

The complexity of land rights and tenure systems may be attributed to the confluence of many legal systems, including customary law, statute law, constitutional laws, and religion law, which together govern these rights. The management of the Ghanaian legal system has encountered a notable challenge in ensuring the preservation of secure tenure for all sectors of society. The presence of many legal systems controlling land in Ghana has posed distinct issues, particularly for marginalised groups, including women and the impoverished populations residing in rural and urban areas.

Access to formal legal proceedings is limited for rural populations, particularly women, due to factors such as the intricate nature, high costs, and general lack of awareness of legal needs. Consequently, individuals are experiencing significant ambiguity to their land rights, since their entitlements

are now situated in a state of legal uncertainty. In instances when prominent developers, backed by governmental authorities or the local elite, contest women's land rights, women sometimes face resource and information disparities about their legal entitlements. As a result, individuals often face challenges in effectively exercising their rights, leading to a lack of action on their part to exercise their rights (Odeny, 2013).

Women sometimes have limited access to the formal processes established by the government to ensure secure tenure in public or formal domains, including regulatory systems and other services related to land. The legal procedures involved in establishing tenure security, such as registration formalities, sometimes impose burdensome requirements in terms of cost, time, and effort.

Traditional/Customary structures and women's access to land

Customary land rights still dominate some regions of the world, and these rights frequently conflict with statutory legislation (Alden Wily, 2011). By registering tribal traditional land rights and issuing tribal and clans, several nations have tried to strengthen and legitimize customary land rights (Holden & Ghebru, 2016). For instance, some of the legal frameworks or structures that called for equal access to property including land include Chapter 5 section 22 of the 1992 constitution, Land Act 2010 (1093), and Land Act 2020 section 4 under the common law freehold are examples of legal structures that protect and promote women's access to property including land.

The proportion of women in the population of each landowner. The percentage of land access in Latin America and the Caribbean varies among countries due to the influence of inheritance and community property rights

associated with marriage legislation. For instance, Chile has a higher land access rate of 30%, while Belize and Guatemala have comparatively lower rates of 8% (Yana & Nidhiya, 2012). The spectrum under consideration exhibits similarities to the Asian context, where the implementation of land policy adjustments has had little effectiveness in resolving gender disparities resulting from inheritance practises that have traditionally benefitted males in several countries. There are notable variations between Asian countries in terms of gender representation among individual landowners, with women comprising around 8% and 27% of landowners in Nepal and Thailand, respectively. The challenges faced by women in obtaining land access and the ambiguity surrounding their property rights have led to a substantial disparity in agricultural productivity and profitability between genders.

The distribution of land ownership in the northern region of Bangladesh has a significant role in shaping social hierarchies and power relations among rural communities (Besra, 2014). The disparity in power dynamics between women and patrilineal customary or traditional rules in Bangladesh results in the deprivation of their legitimate entitlement to land (Ahmed, 2012). Consequently, these individuals experience marginalisation, endure acts of violence, and are systematically deprived of opportunities to attain positions of power.

land tenure in Africa is regulated by the authority of lineages or clans. In patrilineal systems, the transmission of land occurs from one generation to the next via the male lineage. Conversely, in matrilineal systems, the transfer of property takes place through the son of the sister (Akinola, 2018). In contemporary societies, there persists a prevailing inclination towards favouring

sons over daughters and men over females as primary custodians of property and other assets. In regions where legislation promoting gender parity has been enacted, customary norms persist in restricting women's ability to inherit land. The cultural limitations on women's rights, such as those related to patrimony and inherited property, originated from indigenous legal systems and customary practices. For instance, some Konkomba traditions permit property including land to be shared with widows after their husbands pass on to enable the women to farm on land to take care of the orphans especially when they are male children. However, these norms or structures are not observed and thus contribute to their limited access to land. Despite undergoing political modernization and adopting liberal political philosophy, the communities in Ghana such as the Konkombas, exhibit resistance towards implementing gender-neutral property rights(Sone, 2021).

In Nigeria, traditional leaders have taken on the responsibility of preserving culture and managing land, serving as intermediaries in land allocation and engaging in entrepreneurial activities (Eniola & Akinola, 2019). The cultural values prevalent in pre-colonial Africa, characterised by the suppression of women's land rights, find strength in their ability to build a meaningful relationship between the historical context and contemporary circumstances. In some cases, the administration of land may be entrusted to traditional councils. The traditional council's land redistribution practises exhibit a notable absence of gender fairness. The conventional governing bodies, which adhere to the concept of inherited power, exhibit a preference for the patriarchal system. Moreover, it has been argued by Rangan and Gilmartin (2002) that customary law, which regulates the conduct of the traditional

council, is not consistent with principles of equality. Within governmental organisations, there exists a prevailing pattern of male domination, particularly in sectors responsible for overseeing land reform initiatives.

There exists a recognition of land rights that mostly favours males, hence constraining the ability of women to exercise control, occupy, or inherit land (Garvelink, 2012). However, Ethiopia and Nigeria, examples of nations that have some of the greatest implementation gaps in Africa demonstrate the need for proper implementation. Customary law is a fundamental aspect of property ownership. Eniola and Akinola (2019) argue that some cultural practices uphold the notion that women are unable to exercise control over real estate and that their societal influence acts as an obstacle to the actualization of women's property rights. The principle underlying the devolution of property in a patrilineal manner serves as its foundation. The foundational principle of land ownership and intergenerational transmission of lineage is predicated on the societal expectation that males, as the primary agents of marriage and familial permanence, would perpetuate their father's succession (Eniola & Akinola, 2019). According to Garvelink (2012), while legislation may exhibit gender-neutrality, it is mostly influenced by conventional legal principles that are rooted in a patriarchal framework.

There is a prevailing male dominance seen not just inside cultural institutions, but also in the realms of politics and other significant decision-making processes within communities and families. Men exert influence over political decision-making to shape outcomes according to their preferences. Yeboah (2014) argues that men in Ghana who possess an influential position in economic decision-making and serve as custodians of assets, including land,

play a crucial role. Consequently, the existence of gender disparities concerning land ownership and control may be attributed to cultural factors.

Furthermore, it has been observed that the definition of property rights is inadequately established within the context of communal ownership and herds, resulting in challenges associated with their acquisition (Akinola, 2018). These instances have just served to emphasise the subordinate economic position of women in comparison to men, as well as the resistance faced by women in their efforts to gain control over influential institutions that govern property access, ownership, and tenure. In some instances, there exists a cohort of females who have espoused the notion of maintaining the gender gap as a means to uphold social hierarchy and safeguard traditional norms.

Management over resources often follows distinctly segregated structures rooted in traditional values under Ghana's customary land tenure system (Bonye & Kpieta, 2012). How societal standards operate imposes limitations on women's rights in comparison to males. Hence, the presence of male-centric family institutions and power dynamics often results in the limitation of women's land rights in favour of males, exerting control over women's ownership and management of resources, namely land (Owusu, 2008). Moreover, the extent to which women can reach agricultural regions from their married houses is contingent upon the longevity and stability of their marital unions. According to Bortei-Dorku (1990), there exists discrimination against widows and divorcees in their pursuit of land access. The limited recognition of women's social identity and the absence of clear distinctions for both women and strangers contribute to the erosion of women's land access rights.

The study conducted by Duncan and Brants (2004) examined the issue of women's land rights in the Volta Region of Ghana. The researchers conducted an investigation examining the extent of control and access that individuals of both genders possess over property. Despite the majority of participants asserting that men and women in their respective communities had equitable land access, their research revealed a notable discrepancy in the extent of land ownership between males and females within these regions. The researchers discovered that in the context of land ownership, males possess exclusive rights, but women often have limited or restricted access rights. In a study conducted by Sewornu (2010), she provided evidence supporting the existence of discrepancies in land access between males and females. The study specifically focused on the Ho Municipality in the Volta Region.

The Northern Region of Ghana employs a patrilineal system of land inheritance to control land tenure (Yaro, 2010). The land transfer mechanism described in the literature serves to protect and maintain men's control and decision-making power regarding land ownership, use, and administration (Apusigah, 2009; Paaga, 2013). Moreover, as stated by Kasanga et al. (2017), the issue of maintaining equitable land access across different socioeconomic strata in the largely agricultural Northern Region remains a source of conflict among families. Due to the existing discrepancy within the traditional land tenure system prevalent in the Northern Region, which is mostly rural in nature, women have a higher vulnerability to poverty. This, in turn, has adverse consequences on their overall functioning, well-being, and capacity to actively contribute to the advancement of rural families.

Livelihood outcomes associated with women's access to land

Women's inaccessibility to and authority over land hinders productivity and economic advancement (Kelkar, 2011). The ownership of land may provide women with essential resources, enabling them to engage in productive employment and effectively manage resource allocation within the household. Moreover, it can provide essential resources such as sustenance, potable water, housing, and economic stability (Wickeri & Kalhan, 2009). To achieve substantial reductions in hunger and poverty in Asia, it is imperative to enhance women's access to land (Quisumbing, 2013).

Research conducted by Rahman (2010), Aly and Shields (2010), and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 2011) has shown that the labour productivity of female agricultural workers in Bangladesh, Indonesian oil palm cultivation, and Nepalese rice production is comparable to that of male labour, provided that there is equal access to land resources.

In Africa, the ownership of land by women has the potential to significantly influence agricultural practises and other means of sustenance. The augmentation of investment in land has the potential to bolster agricultural production on both an individual and communal level by permitting improved access to financing for investment purposes. By promoting increased availability of finance, which in turn stimulates the expansion of non-agricultural livelihoods, as well as by permitting enhanced access to land rental and sales markets, these measures might potentially influence the development of non-agricultural livelihoods.

According to Persha et al. (2017), the use of land documentation might facilitate the acquisition of microcredit or financial aid from private sources.

This is achieved by establishing a connection between the bearer and a property, so demonstrating their ability to return the borrowed funds. In Ethiopia, the practise of mortgaging land is permitted, hence rendering land ineligible as collateral for loans. The researchers found that the expansion of women's land access rights via second-tier land registration resulted in increased availability of credit for households headed by women.

Using information from 400 Tigray families before and thereafter the land registration procedure, Holden et al. (2011) used a QE technique. They discovered that female landowners with certificates are more inclined to rent their property. They contend that better tenure security enables women to rent their land without worrying about losing it and generate extra revenue for their families.

Agriculture serves as a substantial economic driver in several African countries, including Tanzania. The availability of land is a vital avenue for impoverished individuals, especially women, to secure sustenance for their families, hence mitigating the prevalence of hunger and malnutrition within rural communities (Jacobs, 2002). Additionally, farming offers a means of generating cash. The predominant demographic in Tanzania and other Sub-Saharan African nations consists of rural inhabitants who are small-scale farmers and depend on agricultural activities for their sustenance (Mutangadura, 2005; ECA, 2003). The migration of the rural worker population to urban areas has resulted in an increased involvement of women in agricultural practises throughout the majority of Sub-Saharan African countries. Women have a key role in the economic landscape of the country, actively participating in the agricultural sector. According to a report by the United Republic of Tanzania

(URT, 2012), the proportion of women engaged in agricultural activities in Tanzania reached 79% by the year 2006. According to the Institute of Economic Affairs (2008) and Stevenson and St-Onge (2005), a significant proportion of women residing in rural areas of Kenya and Uganda, namely 80%, engage in agricultural activities.

In Ghana, the difficulties women face in gaining ownership of land cause tremendous hardship for their livelihood. Cultural and financial barriers preventing people from accessing land limit their ability to engage in economic activities, weakening their attempts to advance their economic and social well-being (Amu, 2015). Thus, they become farm labourers or land workers for their husbands, becoming economically reliant on them, lowering women's agricultural output.

According to a study on gender disparities in land access conducted by Deere et al. (2013), it was found that women have ownership rights to around 9.8% of agricultural land, while males have authority over approximately 81% of agricultural parcels of land. The FAO (2011) and the IFAD (2011) have asserted that the absence of land access restricts women from realising their capabilities and skills, rendering them susceptible to rural impoverishment.

According to the findings of Cuthbert et al. (2020), it is argued that women residing in the Northern Region of Ghana face obstacles in obtaining and maintaining secure rights to land. This lack of access and control over land has negative implications for the overall welfare of households, as well as the environment. Specifically, households that do not possess land ownership, particularly those headed by women, are compelled to engage in tree-felling activities for economic gain to sustain their livelihoods. The lack of recognition

of equity in land ownership under traditional land tenure systems is a significant constraint on development in northern Ghana. This constraint hinders the potential for poverty reduction through enhanced income, food security, land tenure security, and participation.

Women in their natal homes in Wa are restricted to helping their male family members in their field in exchange for other types of support when necessary due to women's incapacity to access land and own land (Kuusaana et al., 2015). As a result, they often rely on them to meet their requirements, which are seldom met. Those fortunate enough to inherit land belonging to their fathers or siblings who are male brothers do not have stable rights to it; when they desire to sell, settle debts, or perform funeral or wedding rites, the land might be collected from them at any time. Additionally, because they lack land to use as collateral, women cannot get formal credit. Even when titles exist, women still face social and cultural discrimination (FAO, 2005). Women in poverty essentially have no access to housing loans. Financial companies may choose to grant large credit facilities that the underprivileged, particularly women, cannot return since their monthly wages are insufficient.

Consequently, women usually require a male relative's consent to conduct deals (Quist, undated). Due to this circumstance, most young, single women have moved south to Kumasi and Accra in search of non-existent work to support their necessities. However, most of them engage in vices, including drug dealing, prostitution, and teen pregnancy.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model comprises information from the livelihood sustainability and the women's access to land and housing rights framework. The model contains five variables: sociodemographic characteristics, Formal Legal systems, customs, women's access to land, and livelihood outcomes. Figure 3 depicts the association between the variables. The interconnection between the sociodemographic traits, formal legal systems and practises, and religion of women in Kpandai is shown in figure 3. These variables have a role in determining whether women will have access to land within communities. Various factors, including age, inheritance, the social structure of the community, and the size and structure of the family, play a significant role in determining the level of accessibility a woman in Kpandai has to land resources. The significance of land access lies in its ability to enhance an individual's social standing within a given locality. Ultimately, the extent to which women can acquire land is influenced by these characteristics, which in turn define the socio-economic results experienced by women. The access to land for women has a crucial role in determining the extent to which improvements in livelihood, such as income, food security, and quality of living, are attained. This is because women are responsible for producing several food crops for family use and taking care of the family.

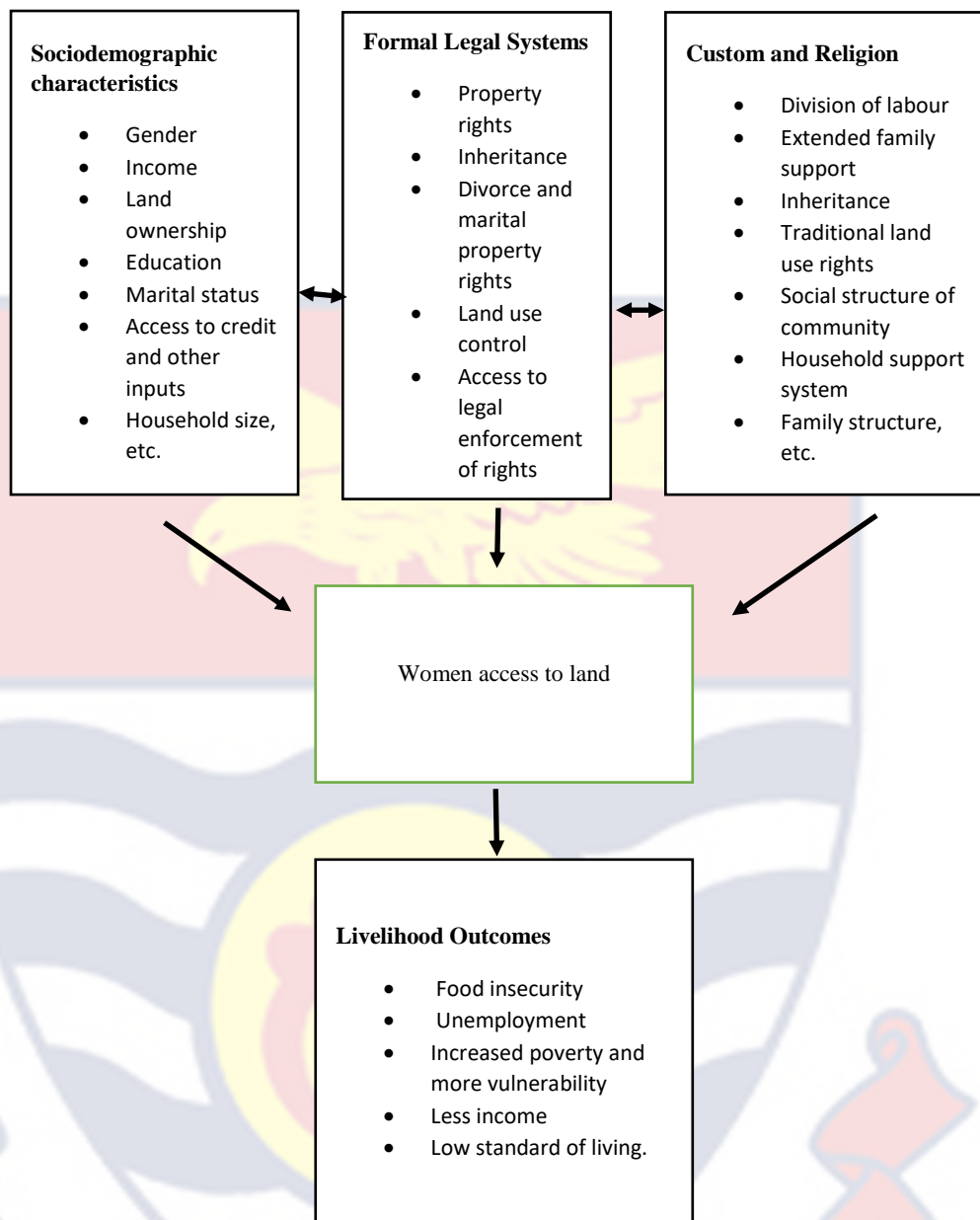


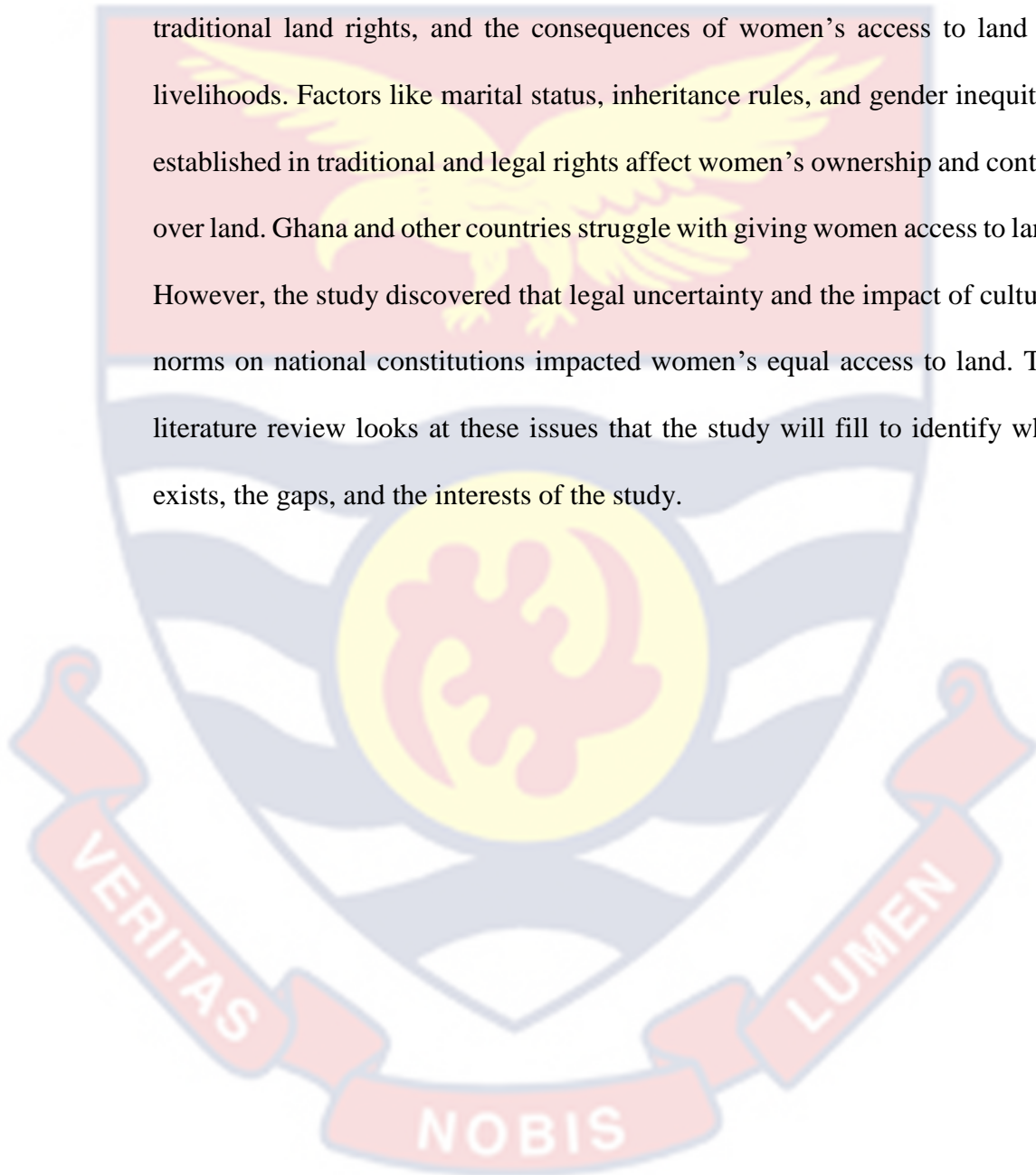
Figure 3: Women's access to land

Source: Adapted from Carney (1998); Scoones (1998); Komjathy and Nicholas (2001)

Chapter Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the relevant literature that was examined for this investigation. The chapter was divided into three basic sections: theoretical, conceptual, and empirical reviews. The present study included a theoretical examination of the legislative framework for women's entitlements to land and housing rights. The central argument of the research is

that women need to own property ownership rights. The analysis showed that the concept of women having access to land does not have a single definition. Many academics have examined concerns in many contexts, including traditional and legal land access. These concerns drive the legal system, traditional land rights, and the consequences of women's access to land on livelihoods. Factors like marital status, inheritance rules, and gender inequities established in traditional and legal rights affect women's ownership and control over land. Ghana and other countries struggle with giving women access to land. However, the study discovered that legal uncertainty and the impact of cultural norms on national constitutions impacted women's equal access to land. The literature review looks at these issues that the study will fill to identify what exists, the gaps, and the interests of the study.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology of the study. It describes the study area, design, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, data and sources, research instruments, analytical tools, ethical considerations, and challenges from the field.

Study Area

Kpandai District is one of sixteen districts in Ghana's Northern Region. In 1988, it was part of the then-East Gonja District until the eastern portion was carved off to form the Kpandai District. The district is located in the southern section of the Northern Region, and its main city is Kpandai. The district is primarily rural, with roughly ninety percent of the inhabitants engaged in small-scale farming. The district population was 126,213 as of the 2020 Population Housing Census, with at least 24 ethnic groups represented (GSS, 2021). The district has a total population of 126,213, with 62,881 (49.8%) males and 63,332 (50.2%) females.

Most of the population are farmers who cultivate root and tuber crops like yam and cassava on fertile lands. Crops grown in the area are legumes such as soya, cowpea, groundnuts, and cereals such as maize, rice, and sorghum. They also raise cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, ducks, pigeons and turkeys. Additionally, fishing is a significant economic activity mostly carried out by the abattoirs on the Oti, Dakar, White Volta, and their respective tributaries. The midday sun is usually overhead in the Kpandai district's tropical continental climate zone; maximum temperatures are high and vary from 29 to 40 degrees

Celsius. Maximum temperatures often occur in April, which also signifies the start of the wet season and the end of the dry season. The district is impacted by the Wet South-West Monsoons and the North-East Trade Winds, which are correlated with the period of increased precipitation and the season of dry harmattan weather, respectively. The region is characterised by the presence of Guinea Savannah Woodland.



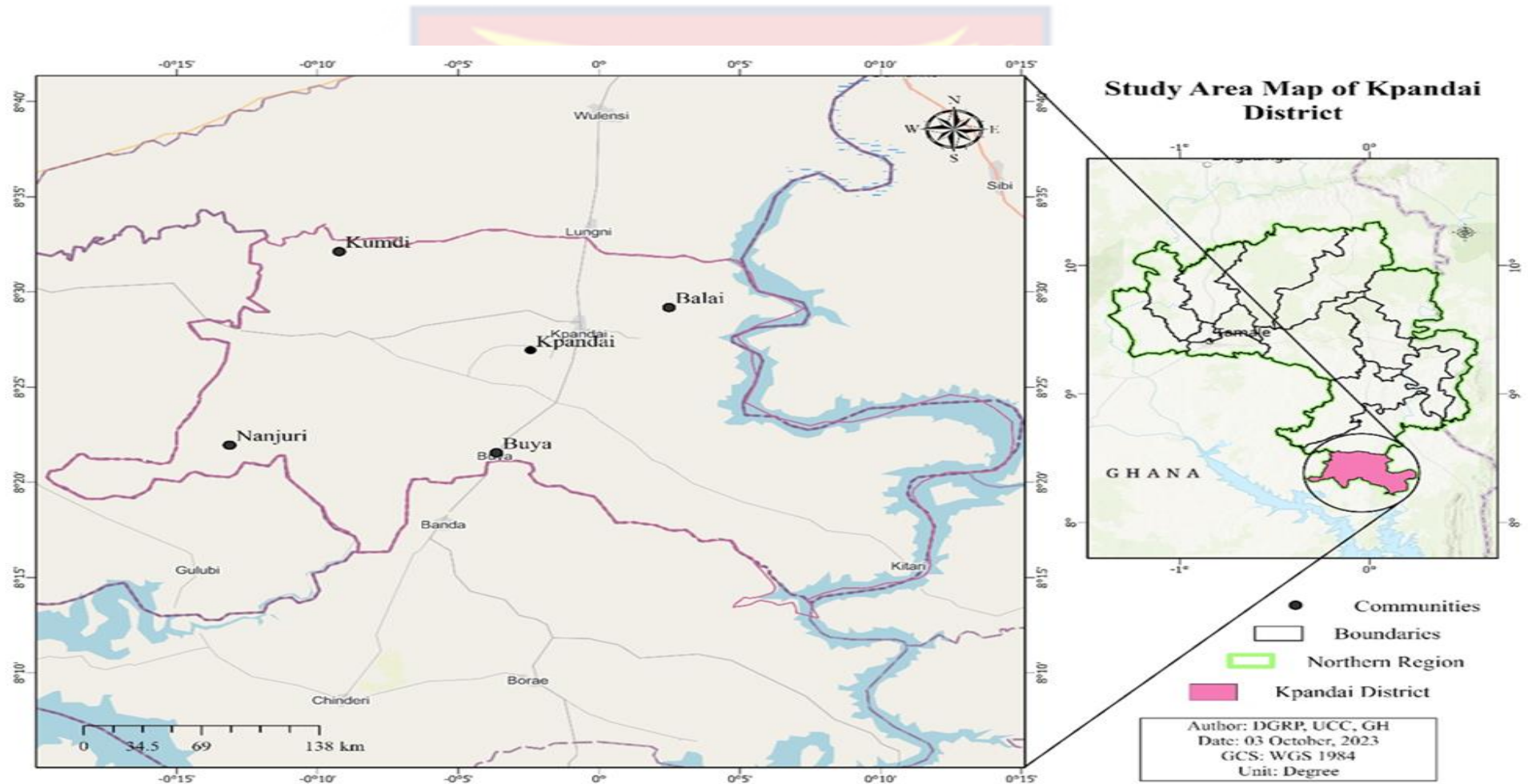


Figure 4: Map of Kpandai District

Source: GIS Department, DGRP, UCC (2023)

Study Design

The concept of research design includes the systematic methodologies used in the acquisition, examination, interpretation, and dissemination of data within scientific investigations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The interpretive research philosophy and descriptive design approach were used in the study. The interpretive philosophy is a qualitative research methodology that places focus on the subjective character of human experience and aims to comprehend the significance and interpretation of social events through the lens of the persons engaged in them (Nickerson, 2022). The descriptive research design involves analysing and describing a particular phenomenon to generate insights and understanding about the subject of study as it occurs (Patnaik & Pandey, 2019). In the context of smallholder women farmers' access to land and livelihood, a descriptive research design was used to collect and analyse data on women farmers' current situation regarding land ownership, access to resources, and the impact on their livelihoods.

Population

The district has a total population of 126,213 as of the 2021 Population Housing Census, with at least 24 ethnic groups represented (GSS, 2021). With this, 62,881 (49.8%) males and 63,332 (50.2%) females. The target population for the study are women smallholder farmers in the Kpandai district and other stakeholders (key informants). The selection of women smallholder farmers in the Kpandai district as the target population is justified because they possess firsthand knowledge and experience concerning access to land, which is critical for assessing and enhancing their agricultural practices and livelihoods.

Smallholders are small-scale farmers, livestock farmers, forest keepers, and fishermen who manage land ranging from less than one hectare to ten hectares. According to FAO,2017 smallholders are defined by family-focused objectives such as favouring the stability of the farm household structure, employing mostly family labour for production, and using part of the harvest for family use.

Sampling and Sampling Procedure

The study's respondents were chosen using purposive and convenient sampling approaches for the interview and focus group discussion.

Purposive Sampling Technique

The researcher used a purposive sample strategy to carefully identify the stakeholders for the study. The purposive sampling approach is a non-probability sampling method that involves the deliberate selection of units based on a common attribute (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). The four communities (Kumdi, Balai, Buya and Nanjuro) were purposively selected based on the data obtained from the Kpandai District Assembly as the major communities with land issues and problems related to women's land rights and livelihood challenges. This segregation was done to ensure that the respondents who were selected from these communities had detailed insight into the economic, social and legal contexts affecting women's land access. The criteria that were used for selecting the stakeholders are;

- a. Knowledge of land access in the Kpandai District
- b. Knowledge of issues related to women's land access rights and livelihood challenges

The respondents selected for the interview included community leaders, Government officials, and women smallholder farmers' association Leaders.

The respondents who were selected for the interview are; In all Elven (11) respondents were selected for the interview based on their knowledge of land ownership, customs and traditions, gender-related issues, access to land, and productivity in agriculture.

. The respondents who were selected are:

- The Traditional Authorities of the four communities (Buya, Najuro, Balai, and Kumdi) 4
- Assembly members of the four communities 4
- The District Director of MOFA for Kpandai District 1
- The District Gender Officer 1
- Kpandai district Local Women Farmers Association representative

Convenience Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling is a kind of nonprobability sampling that involves selecting individuals from a target group based on practical considerations such as accessibility, proximity, availability and desire to participate in the research (Dörnyei, 2007). The convenience sampling method was used in the selection of women smallholder farmers for the focus group discussion that was held in the communities. The criteria that were used in the selection of the participants were:

- a. Willingness to participate in the study,
- b. Ownership of agricultural land in the community,
- c. Knowledge of women's land rights and challenges,
- d. Residing in the community for more than a year.

The participants that were chosen are women smallholder farmers in the four communities. The justification for the selection of the communities was due to the similar characteristics that were observed during a visit to ten (10) of the communities for an exercise by Ghana Statistical Services in 2021 which necessitated a further probe into reasons why most of the households were not able to feed their households even though they lived in farming communities.

These individuals were chosen based on their knowledge of women smallholder farmers' land access and livelihood implications so that they could give accurate information. In all, four (4) focus groups were formed containing six (6) members, with one in each of the four communities (Buya, Najuro, Balai, and Kumdi). The four-focus group was formed because it will help get different perspectives of women smallholder farmers on the problem of women's land access and its livelihood implications. Therefore, twenty-four (24) respondents were selected for the focus group discussion. The 24 respondents were selected randomly from the list of small-scale farmers from each of the communities. The total sample size selected for the study's interview and focus group discussion was thirty-five (35) respondents.

Data Source

The data used in this research was obtained from primary and secondary sources. The main sources of data were acquired via interviews and focus group discussions. The secondary sources were obtained from various journals and other published items.

Instruments

Interview and Focus Group discussions were used in the collection of data for the study. A semi-structured interview guide was used in the collection

of data from the respondents. The semi-structured interview guide was used because it allows the interviewer to adapt questions on women's challenges to land access based on the interviewee's responses. The interview guide was in four sections. The first section focused on questions related to the socio-demographic information of the respondents. The second section deals with the legal frameworks on women's land access. The third section focused on traditional factors that influence women smallholder farmers access to land. The last section solicited questions on the livelihood outcomes associated with women's access to land. Moreover, a focus group discussion guide was also used to collect information from the respondents in the study communities. The focus group discussion also follows four sections that solicit the same information as the semi-structured interview guide. The focus group discussion guide was used because it helped to provide different views from the respondents.

Pre-testing

The developed instrument for data collection was piloted at Lesseni, a farming community on the road to Bimbilla, in April 2023. The purpose of this exercise is to assess the instrument's validity and allow for the necessary corrections to be made to the data collection instruments.

Recruitment and Training of field Assistants

Three field assistants were recruited from the Kpandai district. They were recruited on their ability to speak English to help translate questions and responses into Konkomba, Nchumuru, and English, respectively. A two-day intensive training was organized for field assistants to be well-informed on how to go about the entire data collection process. They were trained on how to input

responses from respondents on a tablet. The minimum qualification a field assistant possessed was a WASSCE certificate.

Data Collection Procedures

The qualitative data using interview schedules was gathered from the women smallholder farmers in Buya, Najuro, Balai, and Kumdi. A simple Random Sampling method was employed to choose women smallholder farmers who were part of the Kpandai Farmers Associations and interviewed. The interview did not exceed 30 minutes. This offered more knowledge on women's access to land and the livelihood implications. Data was gathered with the help of field assistants to overcome the language barrier. All ethical issues that would protect the respondent were appropriately applied.

The following data collection procedure was an in-depth interview. This was conducted by engaging with key informants involving each key stakeholder in the various communities. After the successful booking of the appointments, permission was asked before recording the conversation on the actual day of the data collection. The interviews did not exceed 30 minutes. This procedure offered more information because there was no third party to influence the participant's response.

The other data collection procedure for this study was Focus Group Discussion (FGD). This was done by purposively selecting participants who were willing to partake in the study in the communities. A group of six (6) members was selected based on their knowledge of the subject matter from each community. The study selected respondents based on experience and years spent in farming. The sections lasted between 45-60 minutes. In all, four sections were conducted, one each in every community.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of extracting insights and patterns from data to answer questions, test hypotheses, and solve problems (Donoho,2000). The data was transcribed manually and analysed using content analysis based on the thematic areas of the study. The analyses included transcriptions as well as direct quotations. Maxqda is used to analyse the thematic areas of the data. Maxqda is generally regarded as the best program for qualitative data analysis. It includes a wide range of skills to analyze and comprehend qualitative data, including being able to code and categorize the data, detect patterns and themes, and produce visual illustrations of the data.

Data Management

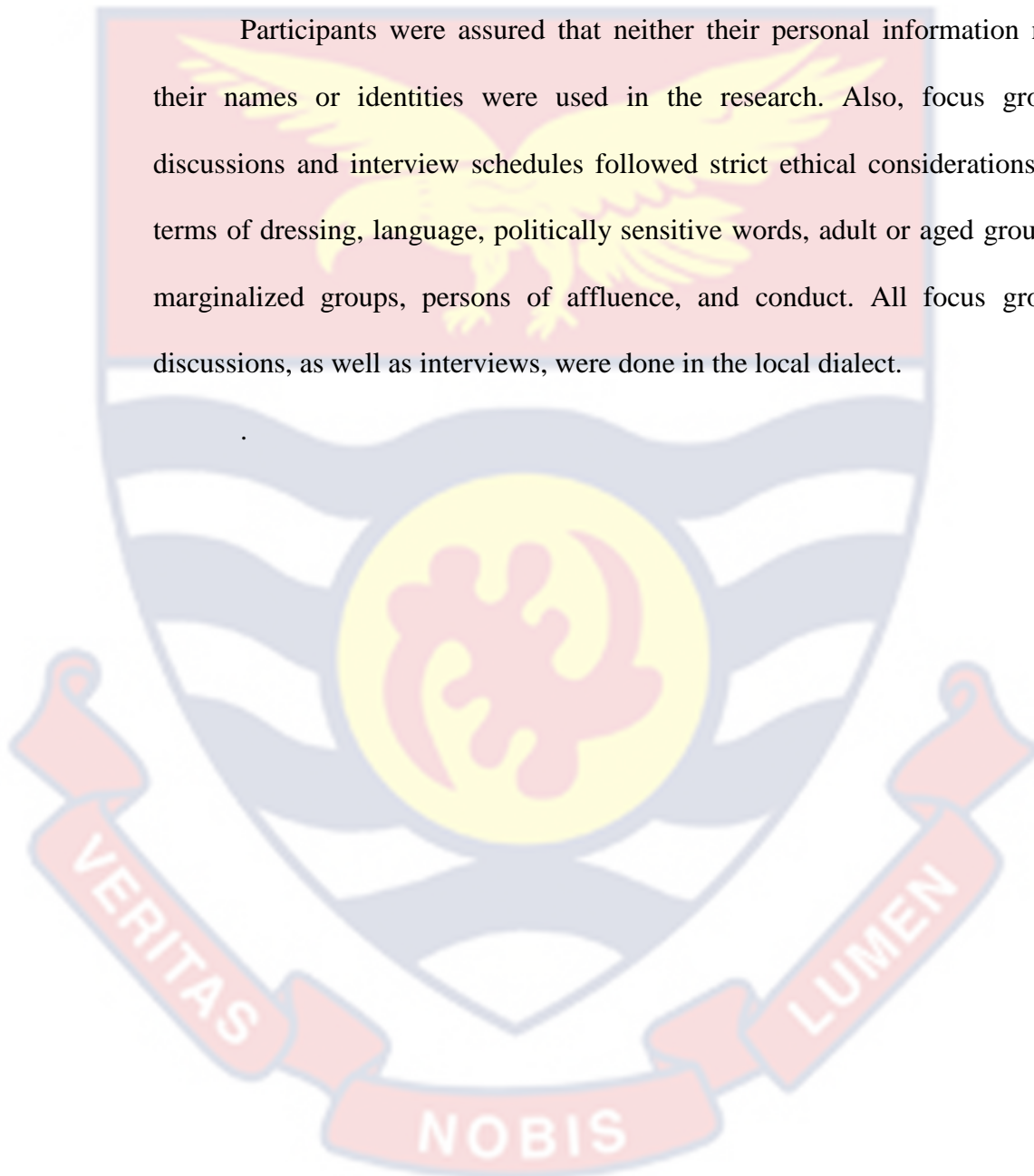
Data gathered for this study was managed so that all participants were protected. The data was available only to the researcher's supervisor. The data was cleaned after transcribing for it to be free from grammatical errors so that the participants' ideas would not be altered. After visible cleaning, the data would be in my possession for the next two years because I would have been able to use it for my thesis and publications. The data was stored in my Google Drive.

Ethical Considerations

First, before the study was conducted, Ethical approval was requested from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Cape Coast. All participants were told of the researcher's goal after permission was granted, guaranteeing that they had given their informed consent. They were informed that the study was only being done for academic purposes and that there were no known dangers associated with participation. The consent form was

administered from 1st to 5th June 2023 to seek their consent to participate in the study. This was done before the data collection period to ensure that the participants (farmers, community elders, and farmer group leaders) were fully aware and consented before data collection started.

Participants were assured that neither their personal information nor their names or identities were used in the research. Also, focus group discussions and interview schedules followed strict ethical considerations in terms of dressing, language, politically sensitive words, adult or aged groups, marginalized groups, persons of affluence, and conduct. All focus group discussions, as well as interviews, were done in the local dialect.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussions of the findings of the study. It also discusses the results of earlier studies on access to land and its livelihood implication on women smallholder farmers. The results are guided by the objectives of the study. Various feedback from the interviews and focus group discussions findings are categorised and discussed under the objectives of the studies, which are as follows: (1) Examine factors influencing women's land access in the Kpandai District, (2) Examine the existing legislative structures to protect women's access to land, (3) Examine the traditional structures that influence women smallholder farmers access to land, and (4) Explore the livelihood outcomes associated with women smallholder farmers access to land.

Socio-Demographic Information of Respondents

This section provides information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The data on the socio-demographics are presented in table 1. The study included 35 respondents with a variety of socio-demographic characteristics, reflecting a diverse sample. Gender distribution shows a higher proportion of female respondents, with 24 females compared to 10 males. This indicates that the study predominantly involved female participants, which aligns with the focus on women smallholder farmers and their access to land. Moreover, the respondents' ages range across four categories, highlighting a diverse age group. The largest age group is the 20-29 range, comprising 13 respondents. This suggests that younger individuals are

significantly represented in the study. The next group is the 50-59 category, with 9 respondents, indicating a notable presence of older participants. The 30-39 age group includes 8 respondents, while the 40-49 age group has the fewest respondents, with only 5 individuals. This distribution suggests a balanced mix of young and middle-aged respondents, with a slight emphasis on the younger demographic.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n=35)
Gender	Male	10
	Female	24
Age	20 – 29	13
	30 – 39	8
	40 – 49	5
	50 - 59	9
Education Level	No Formal Education	11
	Primary	5
	Secondary	14
	Tertiary	6
Marital Status	Single	9
	Married	22
	Divorce	4

Source: Field Data

Nevertheless, education levels among the respondents show a varied range. A notable proportion, 11 respondents, have no formal education, which could reflect the broader educational challenges in rural areas. Primary education is the lowest category with 5 respondents. Secondary education is the most common among respondents, with 14 individuals, indicating that a significant number of participants have some level of formal education. Tertiary education is the least represented, with 6 respondents, suggesting limited access

to higher education among the study participants. Lastly, marital status also varies among respondents. The majority, 22 respondents, are married, reflecting the societal norm in rural settings where marriage is prevalent. Single respondents constitute 9 individuals, indicating a fair representation of unmarried individuals. The study also includes 4 divorced respondents, revealing the presence of individuals who have experienced marital dissolution.

Factors Influencing Women's Land Access in the Kpandai District

This section deals with objective one, which assesses the determinants of women's land access in the Kpandai District. Land rights are only a first step towards greater autonomy for rural women. However, women's access to land in the Kpandai District was attributed to many factors, such as scarcity, labour, customs, and other factors. In Ghana, cultural, social, economic, and demographic challenges make it difficult for women to obtain land (Abebe, Synnevag & Aune, 2020). From the study, it was identified that scarcity of land is one of the constraints that affect women in the Kpandai District. According to a 30-year-old-female cassava farmer from Buya:

Land scarcity is a severe threat to women having land in the community.

This is due to the unavailability of agricultural land for farming activities. For instance, when more males dominate a family, women often do not have access to land. The fragmentation of land into smaller plots for more family members due to population growth threatens women's access to land.

Population pressure and growing competition for land have shaped land rights in Ghana and Africa. In northern Ghana, families dominated by males tend to give lands to males due to the patrilineal cultural system. This aligns with the

findings of Mitulla (2002), which states that customary rights often regulate women's access to land in Africa.

Moreover, the study further discovered that time and labour affect women's land access in the Kpandai district. Time and labour are barriers that are becoming hurdles to women's ownership of land. This is because women in the Kpandai district cannot afford the associated costs of labour related to clearing virgin lands with trees, stumps, rocks, and weeds. Therefore, some are compared to using land that may not interest them. Abebe, Synnevag, and Aune (2020) highlighted such a situation by explaining that cultural, social, economic, and demographic characteristics such as cost of labour and constraints make it difficult for women to obtain land, and the areas of land they manage are typically less fruitful. It was also discovered from the interviews in Balai that married women in the communities often do not get time to engage in agricultural work since they spend most of their time doing household chores or assisting their husbands. These statements showed that women's access to land for productivity hinges on time and financial ability.

Furthermore, it was discovered that women's access to land in the Kpandai district is affected by the customs of the communities. It was observed that the women in the communities in Kpandai are blocked by the area's customs and traditions, which gives them limited access to land and other natural resources. For instance, women were discriminated against on cultural grounds since they did not participate in sacrifices to the gods and could not control land in societies. Such customs are prevalent not only in Kpandai but in many places in the northern sector of Ghana. Aduamoah (2016) posits that the patrilineal inheritance systems in most rural areas in Ghana discriminate among

women, giving men more authority over resources such as land. According to a 28-year-old farmer in Kumdi:

The patrilineal inheritance systems give men more authority to possess land than women. Despite the constitution of Ghana allowing for equal rights for males and females to have access to land, men have always controlled land issues such as ownership, allocation, and access.

Another 44-year-old farmer also stated concerning cultural discrimination:

The traditional factors that ensure equal access to land in society do not work effectively. For instance, the inheritance regime of most societies in the Kpandai area gives men power over women regarding land control and ownership. Since males control society, the traditional structure does not ensure that women have equal access to land. This is because women are seen as strangers in their marital homes and, therefore, cannot be entrusted with assets such as land, which is deeply rooted in the minds of society.

A 32-year-old divorcee in Balai also stated:

Society has established particular gender norms, and any deviation from such roles is considered an attack on society's norms. Many believe that agricultural pursuits are men's rights and women are restricted to the kitchen.

In response to these statements, a key informant from Buya also stated that:

All lands in Ghana are under the custody of traditional authorities, and unfortunately, the legal and customary tenure systems have eroded women's rights, and they now often perform subordinate roles. He believes that women farmers are forced to pick and build their means of

sustenance while working within patriarchal and biased customary tenure frameworks.

From these statements, it is clear that the culture and traditions of residents in the Kpandai district play a significant role in preventing women from accessing land for agricultural and other economic activities. Regardless of these mishaps, these gender views, conventions, and inheritance systems are the communities' foundation. Apusigah (2009) observed similar circumstances where land ownership in rural Ghana is politically driven and gender-based. As a result, households always have contention in sustaining equity in land access throughout the socioeconomic level in the Northern Regions of Ghana (Kasanga et al., 2017).

Access to capital, loans, and credit facilities is essential to the ownership and development of land. Odeny (2013) posits that women often have limited access to credit options and lack the financial resources to buy land in African countries. The study discovered that women in the Kpandai district lack credit facilities in their quest for land ownership and access. According to the leader of the women's local farmers group in Balai, "most women cannot secure financial assistance from the financial institutions to support the purchase of land and the cost of production." It was further discovered that even if women own the land, they cannot care for it. A 37-year-old indicated she could not care for her six-acre farm due to financial constraints. These statements align with the findings of studies that observed that women often have restricted access to credit facilities, lack financial resources, and often have difficulties in securing credit facilities to support production even if they have deeds that tie them to the land (Persha, Greif & Huntington, 2017; Odeny, 2013).

In summary, the findings of this study shed light on the various factors influencing women's land access challenges in the Kpandai District. The scarcity of land emerged as a significant challenge, as the availability of agricultural land for women was limited due to the dominance of males in families and the fragmentation of land resulting from population growth. Cultural and customary practices, particularly the patrilineal inheritance systems, also played a role in restricting women's access to land. Time and labour constraints further hindered women's ability to access and cultivate the land, as the associated costs of clearing virgin lands and the demands of household chores limited their opportunities.

Additionally, the lack of credit facilities and financial resources prevented women from purchasing land or adequately investing in its development. These findings highlight the complex web of social, cultural, and economic factors perpetuating gender inequalities in land access in Ghana's Kpandai District and other regions. Customary practices and deep-rooted gender norms undermine women's rights to land and resources despite the constitutional provisions for equal access. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive efforts to challenge discriminatory customs, provide financial support and credit facilities to women, and create opportunities for women's empowerment and participation in decision-making processes regarding land ownership and allocation. It is crucial to engage with local communities, traditional authorities, policymakers, and civil society organisations to promote gender-responsive land reforms and implement strategies that ensure women's equal access to and control over land by recognising the importance of land rights as a stepping stone toward greater autonomy for rural women. By

addressing these factors and promoting gender equality in land access, the Kpandai District and other localities can unlock women's full potential as agricultural producers, strengthen rural economies, and contribute to sustainable development and social justice.

The Legislative Structures that Protect Women Smallholder Farmer's Access to Land

Several African nations have developed and implemented land policies that take into account the economic, social, and political aspects of property rights, to prevent women from experiencing negative consequences as a result of these policies. An example of a country that has implemented legislation to address gender equality in land ownership is Ghana, where the Land Act 2010 (ACT 1093), Land Act 2020 (1036) section four, chapter 5 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana section 22 are legal structures that have been enacted, This acts specifically acknowledges and upholds the equal rights of both women and men to acquire, own, and transfer property. In addition, it is essential to establish regulations that prevent traditional practices that perpetuate gender-based discrimination concerning land ownership. Despite the progress made in resolving land-related concerns, research indicates that women may lack awareness of their legal rights, despite the existence of fair legislation. In the context of Ghana, Kuusaana, Kidido, and Halidu-Adam (2013) conducted an observation that revealed that a significant number of women residing in Wa lack awareness regarding their legal entitlements. This lack of awareness stems from their limited exposure to legal claims and their unfamiliarity with the application of the Intestate Succession Law (PNDCL 111), which safeguards the distribution of assets, such as land, belonging to deceased spouses. During

the course of the research, it was found that the participants exhibited a lack of awareness of the prevailing legislation on land access. As per the perspective of a women's rights advocate:

Women in the northern sector do not know their legal land ownership rights. They are used to the customary land ownership system, which does not favour them. Even when the women purchase the land, it is often under the husband's name, which does not help the women in marital disputes or divorce.

When asked about their knowledge of legal land rights, the participant in Buya stated,

We are unaware of laws protecting women from accessing and owning land in the community. The customary system often controls the land and does not favour women. (FGD, Buya)

This finding aligns with the observations made by Odeny (2013) who observed that due to the complexity, expense, and general lack of knowledge of Ghana's legal requirements, most women rarely have access to the official legal process. As a result, they are uncertain about their land rights as they are in a condition of legal limbo.

Moreover, some participants had some form of knowledge of the legal land rights for women but doubted their effectiveness. According to a 39 years old woman from Kumdi:

Some legislations exist in Ghana that aim to protect women in land ownership and access. However, these legislations only exist in documents but do not work in the interest of women. Moreover, even

when issues on land ownership are taken to court, they do not favour women.

A key informant in the Buya electoral area stated:

The legal frameworks in Ghana cannot ensure women's access to land and empowerment in rural areas. Although the government has included gender issues in the constitution and laws, they have not been effectively implemented.

To this, a women activist in Buya, Najuro, asserts that:

"Women in the Buya, Najuro, and surrounding communities often lack the resources to cover legal fees and proceedings in land ownership and access disputes. Often, these cases are against prominent and high community leaders, which can be expensive for women".

When women's rights are challenged by influential and high figures in societies with political and traditional system backing, they often lack the resources and access to pertinent knowledge about their legal rights to take action (Odeny, 2013). As a result, they are frequently unable to take action to assert their rights. This does not favour women as they may lose their farmlands and properties, which serve as their source of living in the communities, leading to issues such as poverty and food shortage, a recurrent problem in the northern sector of Ghana.

The legal structures in Ghana, especially the Land Act., 2010 (Act 1036), aim to ensure equitable and non-discriminatory access to land in Buya, Najuro, Balai, and Kumdi. The structures have been poorly implemented due to the lack of commitment to women's ownership of land and tenure rights. The respondents believed new legislation should be enacted to be sure women's

equal access to land. They indicated that the legislative instruments make men the custodians of the land in most communities in the area. Djurfeldt et al. (2018) explained that the misinterpretation is often due to complications because the land rights in sub-Saharan Africa often favour men. These complications and misinterpretation of the legislative instruments and other laws ultimately result in men being seen as the custodians of the land in the communities.

To address such problems, a 35-year-old woman in Buya stated, “The government needs to formally engage women on the part of legislative frameworks that protect women’s access.” She further explained that “there should be a broader consultation about the implementation of the legislative framework that protects women’s land access for them to be aware of such legislation.” Consultation and public education on land rights are essential to ensure women know their rights. According to Goldman, Davis, and Little (2016), educating women on their land rights strengthens their social relations, expands their access to traditional authorities, and increases their knowledge of the political process.

The District Gender Officer of Kpandai District also added:

Gender equality in land access is enshrined in the constitutions, land laws, and family laws governing marriage, inheritance, and even divorce in many nations. These laws ban discrimination against women and are upheld by courts of law in Ghana. However, access to the courts is required to enforce the rights guaranteed by these statutes. This poses a problem for rural women, who are often isolated from the

courts and unable to comprehend the complexities of the legal system or obtain legal assistance.

This statement suggests that while gender equality in land access is guaranteed by constitutions, land laws, and family laws governing marriage, inheritance, and divorce in Ghana, rural women still face challenges in accessing courts to enforce their rights. This is due to their isolation from courts and inability to comprehend the complexities of the legal system or obtain legal assistance. This issue is not unique to Ghana, as literature shows that women in many countries have weaker land rights, including inheritance rights, than men (Djurfeldt, 2020; Doss & Meinzen-Dick, 2020; Bambio & Agha, 2018). Discriminatory inheritance and marital laws and practices against women influence gender inequality in access to property. There is a need to address these challenges and enable women to have equitable access to courts and legal assistance to improve and ensure women's ownership of land.

In summary, the existing legislative structures protecting women smallholder farmers' access to land in Kpandai District areas, such as Buya, Najuro, Balai, and Kumdi in Ghana, are weak. While Ghana has developed land policies that recognise the equal rights of women and men to acquire, own, and dispose of land, the findings show that several women are unaware of their formal rights. Customary land ownership systems and a lack of knowledge about the existing laws about land access contribute to this lack of awareness. Even when women have some knowledge of their legal land rights, they express doubt as they are not effective in protecting women. Challenges faced by women in accessing legal resources and knowledge further hinder their ability to assert their rights. The lack of financial resources to cover legal fees and

proceedings limits women's ability to take action. This situation disadvantages women, as they may lose their farmlands and properties, leading to poverty and food shortages. While legislative frameworks exist to protect women's access to land, their effectiveness is hindered by factors such as lack of awareness, poor implementation, limited resources, and the legal system's complexity. Addressing these issues through education, consultations, and improved access to legal resources can empower women and ensure their land rights.

The Traditional Structures that Influence Women Smallholder Farmers' Access to Land

This section addresses objective three of the study, which examined the traditional structures that influence women smallholder farmers' access to land. In Ghana, customary laws embody the traditional norms or customs people acknowledge. Traditional land tenure frameworks denote privileges conveyed through community arrangements rather than statutory laws. Therefore, a customary or traditional land tenure system may be characterised as a community framework governed by a codified set of regulations that are entrusted to traditional leaders, such as chiefs. The matter of women's land rights has long been a contentious subject, mostly due to the historical absence of customary land tenure practises that recognise and empower women in land management. For instance, 'liwangul' is a term in the Kokonmba tradition which means property. Sharing of these liwangul which include land is shared among the family members including the widow especially if she has male children with the deceased husband. In the patrilineal communities located in the northern areas of Ghana, the allocation of land rights to women for agricultural and other purposes is often determined by their affiliations and

ability to negotiate within a traditional framework of property rights. According to a resident of Balai:

In the community, women often associate their land ownership with their marriages and husbands, which they may lose in the event of a divorce or the husband's passing. (FGD, Balai)

However, from the interview, it came to light that most women are unaware of the conventions and traditions that ensure women equal access to land in the community or stipulate their ownership of land. According to a 43-year-old woman:

Access to land in the community boosts productivity and enhances land-based livelihoods. However, women in the community do not know about the traditions and customs that guide its ownership. Therefore, the beneficiary of the land often depends on the rules and customs that govern land tenure in various situations.

A 30-year-old woman from Balai also added:

The issue with land ownership and access is complicated because the traditions and religious practices prevent women's rights through ownership or inheritance. Customary agreements for indirect access are the form of usage of rights as community members are standard because women are the primary food producers for families.

Regardless of how complicated the issue of women's land ownership is in the Kpandai district, it is not out of the ordinary in the area. The study revealed that women residing inside the community are often seen as unfamiliar individuals within their marital households, lacking customary entitlements to participate in land-related decision-making processes. Consequently, their influence and

power in issues about land are significantly diminished. This was observed by Alidu (2015) that women in the northern regions of Ghana often do not have rights over land, and ownership hinges on their marriages. A 29-year-old-female maize farmer from Buya confirmed this by stating that:

Women in the community do not have complete access to agricultural land. It is stated by the traditions of the “Liwangul” For women to have equal access to land as males, there should be a complete change in the cultural systems of inheritance in the community. However, that is not possible as the customs are rooted deeply in the foundation of the communities in Kpandai.

This shows that the current inheritance and land ownership systems in Kpandai favour men over women, making them dominate in every aspect of their social life. It further shows that too many norms and traditions act against women’s access, control, and management of land in the communities in Kpandai. Paaga’s (2013) findings align with the observations made in the Kpandai district that the land transfer or ownership mechanisms safeguard men’s decision-making over ownership, usage, and management. This aligns with the observations that the cultural inheritance system in Kpandai prioritises sons over daughters, which significantly impedes women’s access to farmland.

Moreover, the traditional structures do not consider women as stakeholders in handling land issues in the Kpandai district. According to a 50-year-old woman from Najuro, “The women in Najuro do not have authority over handling land in the area”. She further explained that “the issue is as a result of the patrilineal system in the community.” This challenge has been compounded by the patrilineal inheritance systems in which property, such as land, is handed

to the men lineage for the protection and continuation of the family (Kidido & Biitir, 2022). However, it was revealed from the interview that women are often given land after their husbands pass away. Even with that, her land rights are transient and dependent on how she gets along with her in-laws or the extended family. According to a widow in Najuro,

When my husband passed on, all the lands he gave me for farming were taken back by his extended family members with the explanation that women do not own land on their own unless they marry a man or their children release some portions of their father's land to their mother.

The respondents revealed this situation to be worse in case the woman's children are at a tender age and cannot lay claim to the lands. According to a 45-year-old-woman from Kumdi:

Providing food for my children was left as my sole responsibility after my husband passed on in 2009, and getting a piece of land to farm to take care of them was very challenging. It was frustrating and traumatising when the piece of farmland we owned was taken away.

Speaking on the matters of decision-making over land in Kumdi, the head of the local women's farmers' association made the following comments:

Decision-making over land matters in this community remains preserved for the men. The traditions or customs do not protect women's access to land. This is because women are often regarded as strangers and ignorant about land matters in the community. As a result, any land ownership decisions always favour the men and the male children in the community.

The Assembly Member of Kumdi also stated that:

The system of culture and traditions does not give women equal access to land in the rural communities, which is rooted in the traditions and customs in the area. Therefore, to change this, there must be a change in the traditional systems, which put men over women, because this does not ensure the progress of agricultural development in the northern sector and Ghana. Women's livelihoods will only improve when all social conventions and behaviours prohibiting women from gaining land rights are removed. The problem is exacerbated by non-enforcement practices, a lack of resources to carry out the law, and a lack of legislative backing.

A 47-year-old farmer also added:

The "Liwangul" custom in our community does not protect women and grant them access to land. Due to this tradition, we have problems when regarding the inheritance of lands as women are marginalised in the community. For the traditions to work properly, the "Liwangul" must be modified to protect women's access to land without any challenges.

This shows that the traditional factors in the Kpandai District do not support and protect women's land ownership rights. According to Kasanga et al. (2017), because of this disparity in the northern region of Ghana's traditional land tenure and ownership systems, women are more at risk of poverty, which negatively affects their functioning, wellness, and ability to contribute to the development of rural households. These findings revealed that women's land rights in the Kpandai district are less secure than men which is not beneficial to their livelihood. However, the

only way they can access land is through marriage, their fathers, brothers or children, which is often plagued with issues with family members in case of inheritance or death of a spouse.

The Livelihood Outcomes Associated with Women Smallholder Farmers'

Access to Land

This section explores objective four of the study, which examined the livelihood outcomes associated with women's access to land in the Kpandai District. Access to land is a crucial factor in determining the livelihood outcome of women in any given area. When women have secure and equitable access to land, it can positively impact various aspects of their livelihood. The same is true for the negative livelihood consequences if women are excluded from land ownership. The study discovered that women smallholder farmers in the Kpandai district face challenges in accessing land, threatening their very survival. It was discovered that women's inability to obtain agricultural land for productive economic activities had created intense poverty and led to a dramatic shift in income-generating activities for women in the communities in the Kpandai district. Cuthbert et al. (2020) posit that since women in the northern region of Ghana are denied access to land because of the dynamics of the customary land tenure system, they are forced into poverty since the land is crucial for their household well-being and the provision of food. Moreover, the Assemblyman of Najuro stated that:

The inability of women to access agricultural land has directly affected their livelihood. This situation has triggered an increase in down-south migration for non-existing jobs such as "Kayaye," felling of trees for charcoal business, prostitution, teenage pregnancy, school dropout,

malnutrition, food insecurity, and general low standard of living are some of the implications caused by poverty because of the women not having access to land.

These findings align with the observations by Cuthbert et al. (2020) that women in the northern region resort to felling trees and other activities to escape poverty when denied access to and control of agricultural land.

Moreover, food insecurity was discovered to be one of the livelihood difficulties women smallholder farmers faced in the district due to their inability to access agricultural land. According to a 38-year-old woman in Balai, “the inaccessibility of land by women in the community makes them vulnerable to hunger and food shortages”. She further explained that “sometimes feeding the children becomes a challenge since they have been unable to access farms to produce more food to feed their household and the larger community.” Serrat (2008) described this situation as paradoxical as women are constantly responsible for managing food insecurity in homes is a problem that has a direct link to insufficient authority and use of land, drawing attention to the connection between household food insecurity and lack of land access. The District Director of Agriculture was of the view that women in the Kpandai district do not have access to land which increases their insecurity and livelihood challenges.

A 38-year-old farmer from Balai also stated:

Agriculture remains the most important source of income in Balai and other rural areas of the northern region of Ghana. Most of this group are smallholder farmers, who are also the most likely to face poverty

and food insecurity daily. Therefore, owning land is an important asset that is the regular income source for most rural women.

This statement shows the magnitude of the contribution women smallholder farmers in the district have in combating hunger and increasing food productivity. Therefore, if women were given access to agricultural land in the Kpandai district, they could help solve the problem of hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity, which is predominant in the northern sector of Ghana.

Land ownership in Ghana places an individual in a social class. Therefore, if women can own land, it will gain them social recognition and help them participate in societal decision-making. However, it was discovered from the interviews that women in the Kpandai district do not have any social standing or recognition because they do not own or have access to land. According to the women representative in Buya:

When women in the Kpandai district have secure land rights, they will enjoy several benefits. More substantial women's rights to land and productive assets are associated with higher status, better living conditions, better nutrition and food sovereignty, better health and education outcomes, higher earnings and individual savings, better access to credit, and better protection from gender violence.

She also added that:

Women's access to land allows women to increase their bargaining power within the family, which means they play a more active role in making decisions about the household's production and consumption that contribute to the overall welfare of the household.

The restriction of women's property rights in the Kpandai district by the social norms, customs, and legislation limits their economic status and opportunities to rise out of poverty. The respondents expressed worry that most smallholder farmers in the district are women who contribute more than 75% of agricultural labour; however, they are denied the right to win the land on which they cultivate and raise their families. This situation makes it difficult for women to access credit facilities and loans and engage in other economic activities that will empower them to raise more revenue for their standard of living and their families (Persha, Greif & Huntington, 2017).

Furthermore, land and property ownership empowers women by providing income and security. Without resources such as land, women in the Kpandai district have little influence in decision-making and no recourse to assets in crises. This frequently relates to vulnerabilities such as unemployment, domestic violence, prostitution, urban migration, and women falling victim to HIV/AIDS. Sharing the plight of women in Buya, a female vegetable farmer bemoaned how access to land is a critical tool for a financial breakthrough from poverty in rural areas. She further explained that women in the rural areas in the Kpandai district must have access to land to improve their well-being and income. The District Gender Desk Officer also stated:

Women's equal access to land and property is critical to economic empowerment because land can be used as a base for food production and income generation, collateral for credit, a means of holding assets, and putting money aside for the future.

The District Director of Agriculture also added:

Women's economic empowerment is critical for promoting gender equality and is a prerequisite for long-term development and growth. Equal access and control over economic resources and opportunities, as well as the elimination of structural gender inequalities, can lead to women's economic empowerment. Women's unequal access to land and property is a significant impediment to economic empowerment, and it is an area where access to land and tenure security is closely linked to other natural resources such as water and forests, but the scope of this quick guide is limited to women's access to land.

These findings underscore the importance of women's access to land for their livelihoods, food security, social recognition, and economic empowerment. However, the current gender inequalities and limited access to land hinder women's empowerment in the district, negatively influencing their livelihoods and households.

Addressing these negative livelihood implications requires a multifaceted approach from the women, community leaders, and the government. Speaking to the four assembly members and the chiefs of the four communities during the interview, they suggested that women's empowerment in the northern region needs a multifaceted approach that includes raising awareness, building capacity, and advocacy. This must be done in collaboration with traditional leaders and other stakeholders, such as District Assemblies, to increase support for women's activities by training them in packaging products to be more marketable and engaging in skill development in alternative

economic activities such as soap-making to provide consistent income. The Assemblyman of Najuro also stated that:

Employment promotion and job creation through policy, skills and enterprise development should be at the top of the government's priority to engage the livelihood of women in rural areas.

He further added that:

Gender equality breaks the cycle of gender discrimination that keeps poor and uneducated women in lower-paying, less-skilled, and more insecure jobs. This includes ensuring rural women's access to training and skills, self-employment start-up grants and financial services, support for cooperative formation, and decent work opportunities in employment-intensive infrastructure development projects. Simultaneously, ensuring access to technical and vocational training in non-traditional professions helps to increase women's access to rural labour markets while preventing discrimination against women.

Moreover, due to the discrimination about women's access to land, most women engage in activities that contribute to the destruction of the environment. Most respondents believed that women's empowerment would limit their engagement in the charcoal business, which has caused rapid bushfires in the region and the destruction of the environment. A 33-year-old woman from Najuro stated:

Women who have access to land and engage in large farming have more income compared to those without land in the community. Because most women are deprived of land, they engage in charcoal burning as a means of sustenance in rural areas. The charcoal business has been causing bushfires and rapid-fire outbreaks in the localities, contributing

to the destruction of the environment over the years. Therefore, if women are trained to engage in other alternative means of livelihood, it will help improve their living standards, reduce reliance on farmlands and reduce poverty and its associated problems in the district.

From the above statements, it can also be noted that women who have access to land have a better standard of living compared to those who have no land because of the income from the sale of goods. However, the respondents proposed several interventions to address the challenges faced by women in the Kpandai District regarding access to land and its impact on their livelihoods. These interventions include raising awareness, building capacity, and advocacy to support women's activities, as well as providing training in marketable product packaging and skill development in alternative economic activities. Promoting employment, job creation, and skill development through policy and enterprise development is also recommended as a priority for the government to enhance the livelihoods of women in rural areas (Dadzie, Fumey & Namara, 2020). Additionally, empowering women smallholder farmers with training and alternative livelihood opportunities can reduce their engagement in environmentally damaging activities such as charcoal burning and contribute to the sustainable development of the district.

Raising awareness, advocacy, and building capacity are crucial steps in addressing the issue of women's smallholder farmers' access to land. By creating awareness about the importance of gender equality in land ownership and its benefits to women's livelihoods, communities and stakeholders can be mobilised to encourage women's rights (Dodds, Ali & Galaski, 2018). Capacity-building initiatives can include training programs that enhance

women's skills and knowledge in agriculture, entrepreneurship, and other income-generating activities. These initiatives can empower women to participate more effectively in economic activities and improve their well-being. Advocacy also plays a vital role in driving policy changes and creating an enabling environment for women's empowerment (Sen, 2019). It involves engaging policymakers, community leaders, and other stakeholders to advocate for gender-responsive land policies and reforms. This can lead to the creation of legal frameworks that recognise and protect women's land rights, ensuring equitable access and control over land resources. Promoting employment, job creation, and skill development is critical for improving women's economic opportunities in rural areas. Government policies and initiatives in the district should generate employment and support entrepreneurship, which can create avenues for women to engage in productive economic activities. Skill development programs targeted at women can enhance their capabilities, enabling them to access better employment opportunities and increase their income. This, in turn, contributes to poverty reduction and the overall well-being of women smallholder farmers and their households.

Chapter Summary

The chapter examined the impact of land access on the livelihoods of women smallholder farmers in Ghana's Kpandai District. It indicates the cultural norms and legal difficulties that impede their ability to own land and pursue economic opportunities. Male-dominated inheritance customs, land fragmentation caused by population growth, and labour constraints related to family responsibilities significantly limit women's ability to obtain land. Although there exist national laws that promote gender equality in land rights,

a significant number of women lack awareness of their legal entitlements and doubt the laws' ability to effectively safeguard their interests. The absence of knowledge, along with insufficient legal support and financial limitations, hinders women from acquiring land, hence perpetuating poverty and food insecurity. The chapter proposed strategies such as education, advocacy, and cooperation with local authorities to expand women's access to land and advance gender equality.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study based on the findings. The chapter also presents suggestions for future studies.

Overview of the Study

The study assessed land and its livelihood implications on women smallholder farmers in the Kpandai district. The study employed the interpretive research philosophy and descriptive research design. As a result, thirty-five (35) women smallholder farmers and key informants were interviewed using purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Interview and focus group discussion guides were used in collecting data for the study.

Summary of the Findings

This section presents the summary of the findings of the study. The summary of findings is tied to the study's research objectives, as indicated below. First, objective one examines the factors that influence smallholder women farmers' land access in the Kpandai district. The study discovered a scarcity of land, time and labour constraints, customs and traditions, and lack of credit facilities as the challenges affecting women's access to land. These factors demonstrate the complex interplay of social, cultural, and economic factors that perpetuate gender inequality in land access in the Kpandai district.

Moreover, research objective two examined the existing legislative structures that protect women smallholder farmers' access to land. It was discovered that regardless of the legal frameworks in Ghana, such as the Land

Act, 2010 (Act 1093), making provisions for equitable land access, the legal structures have been poorly implemented, leading to limited effectiveness in ensuring women's access to land. It was further discovered that women in the Kpandai district also lack knowledge about the existing land access and ownership laws, a significant barrier as women in the area are more accustomed to the customary land ownership and access system that does not favour them. Moreover, the poor implementation of the legislation was attributed to the misinterpretation and complications surrounding land rights in the district, favouring men, resulting in men being seen as custodians of the land in many communities.

Furthermore, objective three examined the traditional structures that influence women's smallholder farmers' access to land. Customary land tenure systems in the Kpandai district are based on traditional customs and norms, which often do not ensure equal access to land for women. It was discovered that women's land management and their land rights are typically influenced by their connections and arrangements within the traditional property rights system. Regardless, women in the Kpandai district communities were generally unaware of the customs and traditions that guarantee their equal access to land or stipulate their ownership rights. Access to land was discovered to be often tied to marriages, and women could be deprived of land in case of divorce or the death of their husbands. Inheritance and land ownership systems in the Kpandai district favour men over women, making men dominate decision-making processes related to land. Women are considered strangers in their matrimonial homes and have less authority in land matters. The cultural systems of inheritance prioritise sons over daughters, which hinders women's access to

farmland. In summary, the traditional factors in the Kpandai district do not support or protect women's land access and ownership rights. This puts them at a greater risk of poverty and negatively affects their well-being and ability to contribute to rural household development.

Lastly, the fourth objective was to investigate how land access affects the livelihood outcomes of women smallholder farmers in the Kpandai district. The study found a multitude of challenges, including extreme poverty, lack of access to food, high-risk methods of producing cash such as migration, charcoal manufacture, prostitution, adolescent pregnancy, school dropouts, and hunger. Access to land was vital for women's societal acknowledgement, involvement in decision-making, and empowerment. There was a relationship between land ownership and a range of socio-economic factors: living conditions, nutrition, health, education, income, access to credit, and protection against female violence. To effectively address these negative effects, it is essential to implement a comprehensive approach that includes raising awareness, enhancing skills, advocating for change, collaborating with local leaders, promoting alternative economic opportunities, creating jobs, and improving women's access to financial services to empower them and fight against gender inequality.

Conclusions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following conclusions have been drawn:

- The factors that influence smallholder women's access to land include, Land scarcity, time and labour constraints, customs and traditions, and

lack of credit facilities determined women's access to land in the Kpandai district.

- The PNDC Law 111, Article 33(2) and other legal frameworks fail to protect women's smallholder farmers' land access in the Kpandai District.
- The "Liwangul" tradition in the communities does not protect women's access to land in the Kpandai district. The tradition stresses the dominance of men in decision-making processes and inheritance practices which promotes gender inequality in land access.
- Women smallholder farmers in the Kpandai district face intense poverty, health problems, food insecurity and displacement due to their inability to access land.

The Implication of the Findings for Regional and Urban Planning

The conclusions and findings of the study have significant implications for regional and urban planning, particularly in the Kpandai district and other areas facing similar challenges. First, it will help in legal and policy reforms. The study reveals that existing legislative structures have been poorly implemented, resulting in limited effectiveness in ensuring women's smallholder farmers access to land. Regional and urban planners need to improve the implementation of these laws and address the misinterpretation and complications surrounding land rights. This may involve conducting legal reviews, strengthening enforcement mechanisms, and promoting awareness among women about their land rights.

Furthermore, the traditional structures ("*Liwangul*") examined do not favour women smallholder farmers, as access to land is often tied to marriages

and inheritance practices favouring men over women. Planners should collaborate with local communities and traditional leaders to promote gender-sensitive reforms within customary land tenure systems. This could involve sensitisation programs, dialogue sessions, and the development of inclusive land governance structures that consider women's rights and interests.

Moreover, the factors influencing smallholder farmers' access to land, such as scarcity of land, time and labour constraints, and lack of credit facilities, highlight the complex interplay of social, cultural, and economic factors perpetuating gender inequality. This will help planners adopt a gender-responsive approach in their planning processes, considering the specific needs and challenges women smallholder farmers face. This could involve conducting gender assessments, integrating gender considerations into land allocation and infrastructure development, and promoting women's economic empowerment through targeted interventions.

Nevertheless, the study identifies various adverse livelihood outcomes associated with women's smallholder farmers' limited access to land, including poverty, food insecurity, and limited opportunities for income generation. Planners in the Kpandai district should prioritise interventions to improve women's access to land, as this can have positive cascading effects on their overall well-being and household development. This may include facilitating access to credit, promoting alternative economic activities, and providing training and support for women smallholder farmers in marketable skills.

Lastly, addressing the issues related to women's smallholder farmers' access to land requires a multifaceted approach involving collaboration with various stakeholders. Planners should engage with traditional leaders,

community-based organisations, civil society groups, and other relevant actors to promote gender equality in land access. Capacity-building initiatives, such as training programs and awareness campaigns, can empower women and enhance their participation in decision-making processes related to land use and urban planning.

In summary, the study underscores the need for regional and urban planners to adopt a gender-sensitive and inclusive approach to addressing women's smallholder farmers' access to land. By focusing on legal reforms, customising land tenure systems, adopting gender-responsive planning practices, and promoting collaboration and capacity building, planners can contribute to empowering women, reducing gender inequalities, and fostering sustainable and inclusive development in the Kpandai district and Ghana.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

- The Kpandai District Assembly should implement and enforce legal provisions that protect women's access to land, such as Ghana's Land Act 2010 (Act 1093), Land Act 2020 (1036), and Chapter 5, Section 22 of the 1992 Constitution, due to the poor implementation of these structures found in the Kpandai district.
- Most of the women in the Kpandai district were found to be not aware of their land ownership rights. Hence, it is recommended that the Kpandai District Assembly, together with the traditional authorities, should conduct a targeted awareness campaign to educate women smallholder farmers in the district about their rights and entitlements regarding land access and ownership.

- The Liwangul custom was found to discriminate against women's access to land. Therefore, the Kpandai District Assembly and non-governmental organisations collaborate with traditional leaders, community elders, and local organisations to challenge customary practices that impede women's smallholder farmers' access to land.
- Inadequate farm inputs and a lack of financial resources contributed to women's limited access to land. It is therefore recommended that the Kpandai District Assembly work with the central government and non-profit organisations to empower women smallholder farmers economically by providing training in marketable skills to promote alternative economic activities, create employment opportunities, and facilitate access to financial services.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Researchers and professionals who wish to conduct further studies in this area should consider a comparative analysis of gender-sensitive land policies, an examination of the role of traditional leaders in influencing women's smallholder farmers' land access and ownership rights, and an in-depth exploration of the customary land tenure practices in different regions of Ghana.

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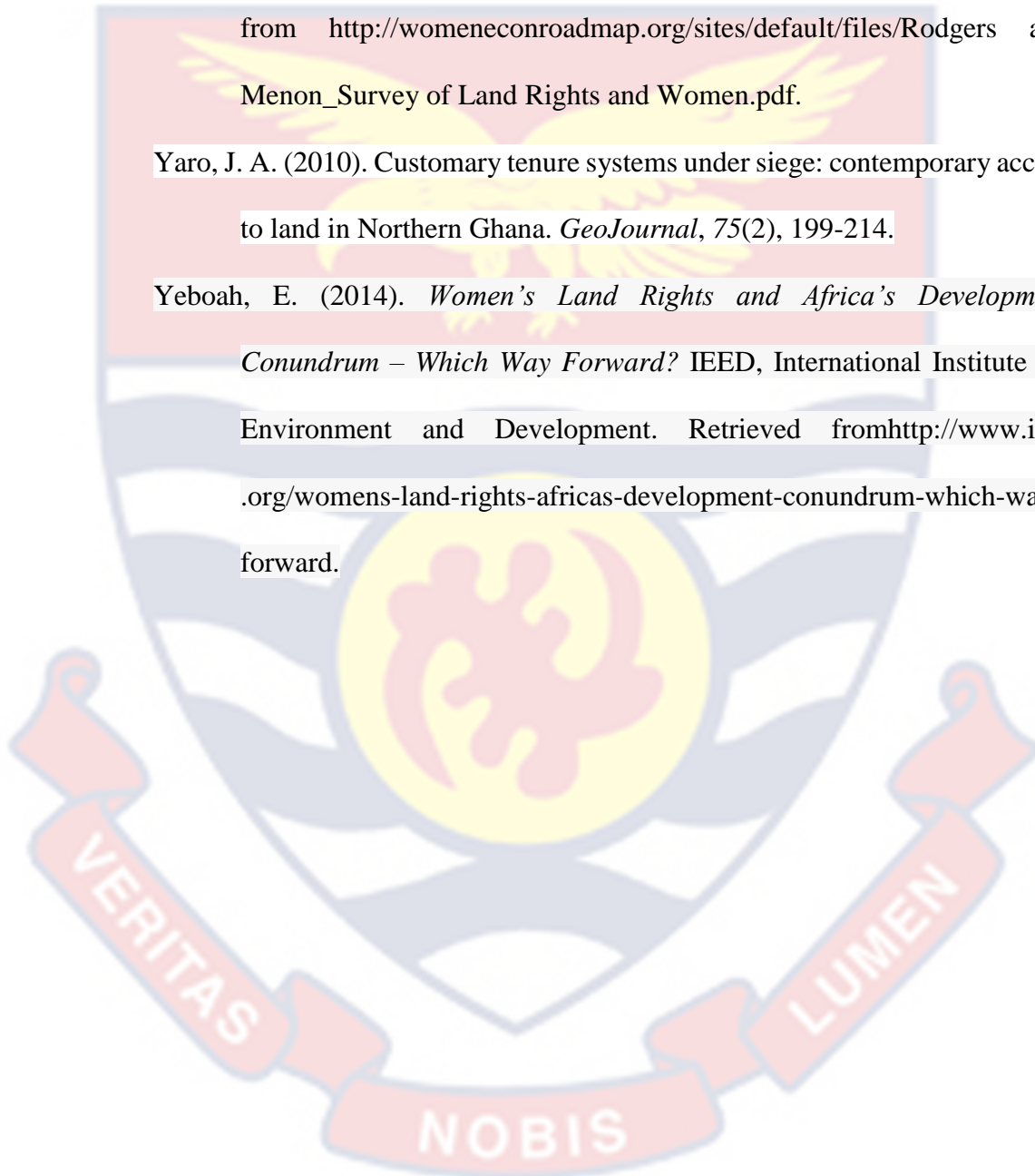
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS.

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, CAPE COAST

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

**RESEARCH TOPIC: ACCESS TO LAND: IMPLICATIONS ON
WOMEN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN KPANDAIA DISTRICT,
GHANA.**

Section A: Background Information

1. Please can you introduce yourself?

Section B: Women Smallholder Farmers Access to Land

2. What are the factors that determine women access to land and how do they impact land ownership?

Section C: The Legislative Structures That Protect Women Smallholder Farmers Access To Land

3. Are you aware of legal frameworks that protect women's access to land?
4. Has the government engaged you about any existing legal legislation that protects women's access to land?
5. Do women lack the capacity to fight for their land rights?
6. What is your advice to the government about the enforcement of the existing legislation that protects women's access to land in Ghana?
7. Should the government enact new legislation apart from the existing ones to ensure equal access to land?
 - a. If yes, why?

Section D: Examine the Traditional Structures that Influence Women Smallholder Farmers Access to Land

8. Are you aware of the existing traditional frameworks that protect women's right to access land?
9. Is there any form of social structure(s) that facilitates women's access to land in this community?
10. Why are women excluded from taking part in decision-making over land matters in this community?
11. Should there be changes in the traditional system of inheritance in our society?

Section E: The Livelihood Outcomes Associated With Women's Access To Land

12. What are the livelihood outcomes as a result of women's access to land?
13. Women's access to land is a source of economic empowerment.
 - a. If yes, explain the impact on the following;
 - i. source of income.
 - ii. well-being.
 - iii. employment?
 - iv. social life?
 - v. What are the alternative means of livelihood?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

Dear Interviewee,

This interview is meant to elicit your views on Land and livelihood implications; the perspective of women smallholder farmers in the Kpandia District. The study is purely for academic purposes and is conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Master of Philosophy Degree in Geography at the University of Cape Coast. Your cooperation and exact responses are needed for the success of this exercise. Your responses shall be accorded the highest degree of confidentiality that they deserve. Please, kindly express your views and knowledge on the following questions I pose them to you.

1. Can you give a brief background details of yourself?

DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN LAND ACCESS

1. What are the factors that determine women access to land and how do they impact land ownership?

LEGAL STRUCTURES ON WOMEN LAND ACCESS

1. Are you aware of the legal frameworks that protect women's access to land?
2. Has the government engaged you about any existing legal legislation that protects women's access to land?
3. In your own observation, how would you assess the performance of the existing frameworks that protect women's access to land?
4. Do women lack the capacity to fight for their land rights?
5. What is your advice to the government about the enforcement of the existing legislation that protects women's access to land in Ghana?

6. Should the government enact new legislation apart from the existing ones to ensure equal access to land?

**TRADITIONAL STRUCTURES THAT INFLUENCE WOMEN
SMALLHOLDER FARMERS ACCESS TO LAND.**

7. Are you aware of the existing traditional frameworks that protect women's right to access land?
8. Is there any form of social structure that facilitates women's access to land in this community?
9. Why are women excluded from taking part in decision-making over land matters in this community?
10. Should there be changes in the traditional system of inheritance in our society?

**THE LIVELIHOOD OUTCOMES ASSOCIATED WITH WOMEN'S
ACCESS TO LAND**

1. What are the livelihood outcomes as a result of women's access to land?
2. Women's access to land is a source of economic empowerment.
3. If yes, explain the impact on the following;
 1. source of income.
 2. well-being.
 3. employment?
 4. social life?
4. What are the alternative means of livelihood?

APPENDIX C: INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY & REGIONAL PLANNING

Our Ref: GRP/G.4th/22/V.3/8

Your Ref:

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA
WEST AFRICA7th July, 2022

The Chairperson
Institutional Review Board
University of Cape Coast
Cape Coast.

Dear Sir,

**ETHICAL CLEARANCE FOR CONDUCT OF RESEARCH MR ROBERT N-YAKPA
TIFOUR -STUDENT IDENTITY NUMBER: SS/GRP/20/0003**

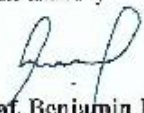
We write to introduce *Mr. Robert N-Yakpa Tifour*, who is pursuing a Master of Philosophy Degree at the Department of Geography and Regional Planning, University of Cape Coast. He requires ethical clearance to proceed with his data collection for this thesis titled "*Land and Livelihood Implications. The perspective of woman of Small Farm Holders in Kpandai District Ghana.*"

By this letter, we confirm that the Department has approved Mr Tifour's research proposal and has granted his permission to conduct and complete his thesis as part of the requirements for obtaining a Master of Philosophy degree.

We would therefore be most grateful if his thesis proposal could be reviewed to enable him carry out the research.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully


Prof. Benjamin Kofi Nyarko
HEAD

APPENDIX D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD SECRETARIAT

TEL: 0558093143 / 0508878309
E-MAIL: irb@ucc.edu.gh
OUR REF: IRB/C3/Vol.1/0147
YOUR REF:
OMB NO: 0990-0279
IORG #: IORG0011497

11TH MAY 2023

Mr Robert N-yakpa Tifour
Department of Geography and Regional Planning
University of Cape Coast

Dear Mr Tifour,
ETHICAL CLEARANCE – ID (UCCIRB/CHLS/2022/94)

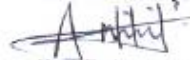
The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB) has granted Provisional Approval for the implementation of your research on **Land Access and livelihood Implications: The Perspective of Women of Smallholder Farmers in Kpandai, Ghana**. This approval is valid from **11th May 2023 to 10th May 2024**. You may apply for a renewal subject to the submission of all the required documents that will be prescribed by the UCCIRB.

Please note that any modification to the project must be submitted to the UCCIRB for review and approval before its implementation. You are required to submit a periodic review of the protocol to the Board and a final full review to the UCCIRB on completion of the research. The UCCIRB may observe or cause to be observed procedures and records of the research during and after implementation.

You are also required to report all serious adverse events related to this study to the UCCIRB within seven days verbally and fourteen days in writing.

Always quote the protocol identification number in all future correspondence with us in relation to this protocol.

Yours faithfully,


Kofi F. Amuquandoh
Ag. Administrator

ADMINISTRATOR
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST