

An Analysis of Gender Mainstreaming in National Agricultural Policies and Programs in Ghana

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Article's History

Submitted: 10th July 2023

Accepted: 29th July 2023

Published: 2nd August 2023

Abstract

Aim: The study examined the extent of gender integration in agricultural policies at the regional and national levels in Northern Ghana.

Methods: Three Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) were purposively sampled from the 16 MMDAs in the region. The interview method was used to obtain information from 24 purposively selected key informants of MoFA and gender focal persons in Accra, Tamale, Savelugu, Zabzugu. Ten selected agricultural policy documents that addressed gender integration in agricultural policies were reviewed and descriptive and content analysis of the documents were conducted. The study applied a framework developed by Gumuchio and Rueda (2015) to analyze the extent of gender mainstreaming in agricultural policies and programmes.

Results: The study found that most national-level agricultural policies and programmes on gender recognize the need for gender equality by specifying issues of concern, but fall short of highlighting the means of addressing the issues. It was also observed that most agricultural policies are moving from gender-blind policies to integrating gender in the objective or cross-cutting issues category, emphasizing an increasingly positive response in the extent of integrating gender in agricultural policies and programmes but with little or no budget provision to operationalize gender integration.

Conclusion: The study concludes that recent agricultural policies (2015 to 2023) are progressively shifting from gender-blind policies to integrating gender at different levels of policies and programmes. The predominance of women's issues in gender policy documents coupled with a lack of clear gender indicators to little or no budget provision to operationalize gender integration in programs and projects.

Recommendation: The study recommends that gender mainstreaming should move beyond women to include men to ensure gender equity. Also, policies and programmes on gender-specific issues of concern should highlight the means of addressing such issues and also ensure that gender-specific policies are accompanied by resource allocations.

Keywords: *Gender mainstreaming, agricultural policies and programmes*

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is key to Ghana's economy accounting for 22 per cent of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2022. Like most African countries, agriculture constitutes the second largest production sector employing 33 percent of Ghana's working people (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). The World Bank (2019) found 43.43% of Ghana's agricultural labor force to be female and 56.56 percent male. Though both men and women contribute significantly to agricultural production yet, their access to agricultural resources differs (Deere & Doss 2006; Food and Agricultural Organization, 2010). Gender inequalities that manifest in the form of inadequate access and control of financial and agricultural resources largely inhibit agricultural intensification (United Nations Women, 2016).

The Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) since 2001 has developed policies and implemented projects and programmes to improve extension delivery with a focus on gender mainstreaming to ensure gender equality. Gender mainstreaming/integration is the process of ensuring that women and men have equal access and control over resources, development benefits and decision-making at all stages of the development process, projects, programmes and policy (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 2015). It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally. The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality (International Labour Organization, 2017). MoFA's key initiatives for gender include the establishment of a Directorate of the Women in Agricultural Development (WIAD), which mainly aims to mainstream gender inclusiveness in all programmes, projects and decision-making at national, regional and district levels (FAO and Economic Community of West African States, 2018). WIAD is also responsible for implementing the Gender and Agriculture Development Strategy (GADS I & II) that highlights gender issues in agriculture, including better access to credit, improved access by women to extension services and increased access to and control over land.

Several studies have been conducted by various researchers on gender mainstreaming in agricultural policies. A study conducted by Paudyal et al (2019), examined the gender issues in agriculture in Nepal and assesses existing policy gaps concerning gender integration in climate change and agriculture policies of Nepal. The study suggests measures to increase access to assets and services for women farmers, improve their capacity to participate in decision-making across levels and promote transformative changes at both local and policy levels. A similar study conducted by Ampaire (2019) analyzed the extent of gender integration on climate change, agriculture, and natural resource policies in Uganda and Tanzania. The study has demonstrated a high level of variation in how gender is understood and integrated into policies and development plans in the two countries, and across different implementation levels.

In Ghana, a study was carried out by Dittoh et al (2015) on gender policies and implementation in agriculture, natural resources and poverty reduction in Ghana's Upper East Region. Its overall aim was to analyze how gender is addressed in national policy and implementation of agricultural and natural resources management initiatives. The study revealed that adopting narratives around gender and gender equity into policy and even programs does not necessarily lead to implementing

projects and activities that increase women's access to resources, control over assets or greater participation and influence in public and political life.

The Problem Statement

The agricultural sector accounts for one-fifth of Ghana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employs nearly half of the workforce and is the main source of livelihood for the majority of the country's poorest households. Agriculture and agribusiness account for a major share of all economic activities and livelihoods among smallholder farmers. Though both men and women contribute significantly to agricultural production yet, their access to agricultural resources differs (Deere et al., 2006; FAO, 2010). Gender inequalities that manifest in the form of inadequate access and control of financial and agricultural resources largely inhibit agricultural intensification (UN Women, 2015).

The recognition and integration of gender concerns into various national policies and programmes in Ghana have increased over the past decade. Despite the availability of gender policies and strategies to reduce gender inequalities, gaps (limited access to resources and decision-making) remain between legislation and implementation (FAO & ECOWAS, 2018). A study carried out by Dittoh et al (2015) on Gender policies and implementation in agriculture, natural resources and poverty reduction in Ghana's Upper East Region suggests that adopting narratives around gender and gender equity into policy and programs does not necessarily lead to the implementation of projects and activities that increase women's access to resources and control over assets.

Amoah (2010), has posited that not much has been achieved to move beyond the rhetoric and paperwork (participation and signing of protocols and conventions) to mainstreaming gender into policies. To address the identified research gaps, the current study aimed: 1) to examine the extent of gender integration in agricultural policies at the regional and national levels and 2) to assess existing policy gaps concerning gender integration in agriculture policies in the Northern region of Ghana.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Northern region of Ghana. Three Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) namely Tamale Metropolitan, Savelugu Municipal, and Zabzugu District were purposively sampled from the 16 MMDAs in the region. The selection of the three MMDAs was to appreciate the gender dynamics within the metropolitan, municipal, and district perspectives to ensure appropriate generalization of results.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches in the data collection and analysis. A total of 10 selected agricultural policy documents were reviewed and descriptive and content analysis of the documents were conducted for the integration of gender issues in policies and programmes.

Most documents were acquired from MoFA offices in Accra and Tamale. Other national-level policies were downloaded from official websites. The list of policy documents was validated and updated by MoFA officials in the Regional and National offices in Accra and Tamale. The documents were assessed on the degree of gender mainstreaming in agricultural policies and programmes and gaps in selected agricultural policies. Table 1 shows a list of Agricultural Policy Documents included in the review.

Table 1. List of agricultural policy documents used in the review

Year	Policy/Program/Project
2001	The Gender and Agricultural Development Strategy (GADS 1)
2002	National Extension Policy
2007	Food and Agriculture Development Policy (FASDEP II)
2011	The Medium-term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP)
2013	Land Administration Project (LAP 11)
2014	Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA II)
2014	The Gender and Agricultural Development Strategy (GADS 11)
2015	Ghana Agricultural Sector Investment Programme (GASIP)
2017	Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ)
2017	Modernizing Agriculture in Ghana (MAG)

Source: (*Field data, 2022*)

The study applied a framework/rubric developed by Gumucio and Rueda (2015) to analyze the degree of gender mainstreaming in agricultural policies and programmes. Under this framework, the documents that did not incorporate gender (i.e. gender blind) are assigned level 1. Documents are assigned level 2 if gender is mentioned only in the objectives or under cross-cutting issues; level 3 if gender is referenced throughout the document but without any clear implementation plan; level 4 if Gender is mentioned throughout the document, with a clear implementation strategy but lacking allocation of financial resources and level 5 if gender is mentioned throughout the document, with a clear implementation strategy and allocation of some financial resources (Table 2).

Additionally, key informant interviews were conducted to explain how gender is understood and integrated into policies. Discussions were held in Accra and Tamale with the heads of MoFA and gender focal persons responsible for gender

Table 2. Level of gender integration in agricultural policies and programmes

Level	Level of gender integration
1	No reference to gender in the document
2	Gender is mentioned only in the objectives or under cross-cutting issues
3	Gender is referenced throughout the document but without any clear implementation plan
4	Gender is mentioned throughout the document, with a clear implementation strategy but lacking allocation of financial resources
5	Gender is mentioned throughout the document, with a clear implementation strategy and allocation of some financial resources

Source: Adapted from Gumucio & Rueda framework (2015)

RESULTS

Level of Gender Integration in Policy Documents

The content of all selected policies and programs were assessed based on the Gumucio & Rueda (2015) framework. Results show that two of the documents, National Extension Policy (NEP) and Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) of the 10 documents reviewed remains gender blind, in other words, the documents were silent on gender. Seven of the 10 documents sampled integrate gender in one way or another. They are Ghana Agricultural Sector Investment Programme (GASIP), Modernizing Agriculture in Ghana (MAG), Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP), Food and Agriculture Development Policy (FASDEP II), Land Administration Project (LAP II) and Gender and Agricultural Development I and Gender and Agricultural Development II. However, 3 of the 7 documents that integrate gender do not have implementation strategies. The documents in question are the Medium-term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP), Food and Agriculture Development Policy (FASDEP II), Land Administration Project (LAP II).

Three of the 7 documents aggregate gender under the “cross-cutting issues” section or objectives. These are the Medium-term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP), Food and Agriculture Development Policy (FASDEP II) and Land Administration Project (LAP II). Most (8 of 10) of the documents that integrate gender significantly fall short of providing an implementation budget. In other words, they are silent on budget allocation to implement the provisions in the agricultural policies/programmes. The only document that integrates gender significantly and provides an implementation budget is the current Modernizing Agriculture in Ghana and the GASIP documents (Figure 1). These findings are consistent with the findings of Gumucio et al (2015), who discovered that gender considerations must be considered from the beginning of a policy's formulation—from the formulation of objectives to the design of an action plan to the creation of a supporting budget for implementation. They emphasized that specific funds be allocated for the implementation of gender-sensitive policies as well as monitoring and evaluation of same.

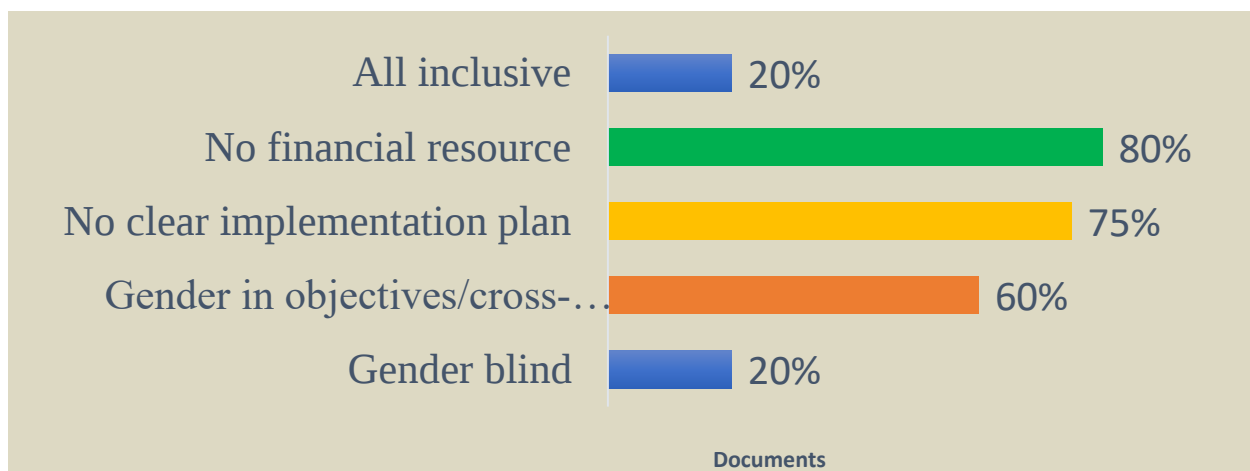


Figure 1. Level of gender integration in policy documents

Source: (Field data, 2022)

Characterization of Women and Men in Policies

Overall, 3 of the 10 documents that referred to gender mentioned women and men trivially. These were Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP), Food and Agriculture Development Policy (FASDEP II), Land Administration Project (LAP II) and Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ). Higher proportions (6 of 8) of documents describe women more than men making gender a women's issue, while only (2 of 8) documents characterized men. Women were largely portrayed as marginalized and vulnerable without control over productive resources in 5 of 8 documents. Additionally, 3 of 8 documents namely Gender and Agricultural Development (GADS I and II) and the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA) II described women as major actors in agriculture.

On the other hand, men's dominance in access to and ownership of productive resources, especially land was emphasized in 4 of 8 documents characterizing men. Contrary to the findings on emphasis on women in many of the gender policies in Ghana, Tu (2015) contends that the promotion and focus solely on women and girls has contributed to a possible changed relationship between men and women, with women receiving more benefits from gender policies than men, which has serious consequences on men's sense of threat toward women empowerment. Meanwhile, IFAD (2012) believes that many gender policies have been implemented in developing countries in the context of agricultural and rural development, with an emphasis on women as the most disadvantaged population with minimal assets.

Gender Provisions and Gaps in Selected Agricultural Policies

Table 3 presents key gender provisions and gaps for selected national agricultural policies and programmes in Ghana. A gap is used in this context to mean a limitation of information or strategy associated with the provisions in the policy. The policy gaps also highlight a set of recommendations for improving gender responsiveness at the policy level.

Table 3. Gender provisions and gaps in selected agricultural policies in Ghana

Policy	Gender provision	Gender gaps
Food and Agriculture Development Policy (FASDEP II) 2007	Promote gender equality and empower women	Gender is shallowly highlighted among other cross-cutting issues; no clear indication of gender in the implementation procedure; and no budget to operationalize gender integration.
Gender and Agricultural Development (GADS) I 2001	Promote gender equity and fairness, justice, and respect women, men, the youth, and vulnerable groups in the development process	No clear gender indicators to guide the work of the directorates. The M&E plan had a column designated "sex-disaggregated data where applicable", but gender indicators were not explicitly defined.

Gender and Agricultural Development (GADS) II 2014	Promote equitable agricultural extension, and access to land and intensify education and demonstration along the value chain; Equitable Access to Land.	Lack of a plan that articulates how the policies will engage with other key ministries/sectors to implement the gender-inclusive approach. A budget is provided but lacks a comprehensive implementation plan.
Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP) 2011	Gender equity is emphasized in all activities along the value chain to ensure that the disadvantaged, especially women and youth play a major role in all activities.	Gender concerns are not highlighted; measures to address constraints of women and men are not provided; except in section 4.1, all other policy sections are gender blind.
Land Administration Project (LAP II)	Develop a Gender Strategy for land rights and land administration that details gender issues to be resolved at the policy, legal, institutional, and local levels.	Lack of indication of the relevance of gender in the different aspects of the Project Development Objectives (PDOs) except component 4 (Human Resource Development and Project Management)
Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA) 2014	Recognizes limited access to extension services, especially to women along the agricultural value chain.	Budget provided for operationalize projects but these were not gender-responsive
National Extension Policy (NEP) 2002	No mention of Gender	No mention of gender
Modernizing Agriculture in Ghana (MAG) 2017	MAG recognizes the need for the development of Regional Gender plans.	Lack of interest of some MMDAs to implement the plans at the local level
Ghana Agricultural Sector Investment Programme (GASIP) 2015	Recognizes the need to contribute to sustainable poverty reduction in rural Ghana by improving the livelihoods of Women.	GASIP was confronted with start-up challenges within the first four years of implementation (June 2015 - June 2020). Coming from a low disbursement rate of 10% as at June 2019.

Planting for Food and Jobs PFJ	No mention of Gender	No mention of gender
2017		

Source: Field data, 2022

Results in Table 3 indicate that most national-level agricultural policies and programmes on gender recognize the need for gender equality by specifying issues of concern, but fall short of highlighting the means of addressing the issues. Results in Table 3 also indicate that recent agricultural policies are seen as moving from gender-blind policies and sometimes to integrating gender in the objective or cross-cutting issues category, emphasizing an increasingly positive response in the extent of integrating gender in agricultural policies and programmes.

In line with these findings, Bryan et al., (2018) contends that local actors and international organizations (such as donors) can employ multi-actor procedures to exert pressure on national governments to promote gender inclusion in policy creation and implementation. Policymakers/government officials were interviewed at both national and regional levels to provide their perspectives on the integration of gender in agricultural policies. From the interviews, it was made clear that current gender policy and programme documents emphasize gender integration more significantly than older gender documents as indicated in this quote.

"The FASDEP was formulated about 10 years ago and at that time gender was not an issue like it is today so it was not highlighted very well. For the past five years, a lot of attention has now been given to gender. The current programme that we are running which is Modernizing Agriculture in Ghana (MAG) programme places stronger emphasis on gender. So, it is something that is being highlighted now" (Key Informant, National level).

Engagement with Policy makers/Government officials revealed that women and men issue in agriculture were emphasized as indicated in these quotes.

"Gender mainstreaming has come to ensure equity for men and women farmers in the implementation of policies". (Key Informant, Regional Level)

"Incorporating the needs of both female and male in programmes in a manner that no one feels left out or deprived with the benefits that come within agriculture". (Key Informant, Regional Level).

In contrast to these findings, Ditoh et al, (2015) contends that most women personnel in ministries are generally indifferent or barely welcome the idea of integrating gender into policy, programs, and projects; many women do not see gender inequality as a problem or believe that it can be solved. Men in comparable positions in ministries (civil servants, policymakers, implementers) are apathetic or even aggressive, implying that gender is "about a struggle between men and women" for some men and "about equality with men" for others."

During the interview, government officials explained that apart from the WIAD officers who seem to be overwhelmed with training activities on gender, the majority of the other officials who are equally key in promoting agricultural development at the local level did not have sufficient skills to conduct proper gender analysis and integrate findings in the planning process. One of the officers had this to say;

“Normally the NGOs only train the WIAD and not the entire officers. Then the WIAD officers will provide us with step-down training. Issues of gender are mentioned during our meetings but we have not been trained on gender mainstreaming in our job”. (Key Informant, Savelugu).

The current Modernizing Agriculture in Ghana which is funding most of the current government flagship programmes (PFJ, RFJ and PERD) has some specific financial indicators that MMDAs for gender mainstreaming. An official from the Regional MoFA office in the region explained how the MAG operates:

“In budgeting, you are supposed to allocate 30 to 40% of your total allocations to gender activities, or else your budget will be rejected. What they want is making sure that women are part of every intervention that is why they usually allocate that percentage and once you don’t meet it you will not be provided with funds”.

In line with these, FAO (2017), contend that the needs and demands of women in the farming sector differ from those of men. USAID (2012) further asserts that society cannot develop successfully unless equitable opportunities, resources, and life prospects are provided for males and females so that they can shape their own lives and contribute to their families and society.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The government of Ghana has over the years made positive strides in integrating gender in policies, development plans, and implementation strategies. The study results show variations in the extent to which gender is integrated into agricultural policies and programmes. It indicates that recent agricultural policies (2015 to 2023) are progressively shifting from gender-blind policies to integrating gender at different levels of policies and programmes. The study also established a predominance of women’s issues in gender policy documents which ranged from a lack of clear gender indicators to little or no budget provision to operationalize gender integration.

The study, recommends the following for policy-makers to consider for adoption.

1. Gender mainstreaming should move beyond the WIAD offices to include other decentralized departmental officers.
2. Policies and programmes on gender-specific issues of concern should highlight the means of addressing the issues as well.
3. Gender-specific policies should be accompanied by resource allocations.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their profound gratitude to the officials of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture at the National, Regional, and Metropolitan Municipal and Districts (Tamale, Savelugu, and Zabzugu) for their enormous support during the data collection.

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