

Feminist Africa 2020
Gender and Rural Livelihoods

Volume 2, Issue 2

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Numerous studies have sought to unravel the social and economic dynamics of rural women's constraints in accessing and controlling productive resources in agriculture. A focus largely informed by the high prevalence of poverty amongst rural women. At the policy level there have been several interventions to overcome resource access constraints to boost agricultural productivity. The preponderance of interventions notwithstanding, studies lament persistent deprivation in the face of resistant social norms that govern women's access to productive resources. Such revelations have led to an increasing demand to involve beneficiaries of development interventions in projects design and their implementation. Noting such concerns, the Gender and Rural Livelihoods research cluster of the International Center for Development and Decent Work of the University of Kassel, Germany, carried out a series of case studies over a period of 4 four years examining the situation of rural women. The team of researchers are from three countries of the global south, two African, Ghana and Kenya and the other Asian, Pakistan. Their studies explored factors promoting rural women's uptake of agricultural interventions and the empowering potential of these interventions in the three countries.

Findings from the three countries reveal that differences in resource access and control for rural women engaged in agriculture derive mainly from dominant land tenure systems and levels of agricultural intensification. Generally, Pakistan with higher levels of land privatisation and intensive agricultural production has more women engaged as waged labourers in agriculture. In Ghana where plurality of tenure systems allows communal landholding there are higher levels of peasant production, and most women are mainly unpaid household labourers. Kenya stood midway in these two cases with instances of women working as paid and unpaid farmhands.

Over the years the project has accumulated results from the case studies on rural women in the three countries. The intention is to bring the findings together in a Feminist Africa issue under the title '*Gender and Rural livelihoods*'. The proposal is to have an edition based on the case studies derived from this project.

The issue will be made up of feature articles addressing three themes in three parts:

Part One: Profiling rural women's access and control over productive resources

Levels of agriculture productivity.

Resource access and control.

Main players determining rural women's access and control over productive resources.

Part Two: Agricultural Interventions and Rural Women's livelihoods

Existing interventions and levels of gender sensitivity.

Gender and adoption criteria (female and male differences).

Intervention sustainability and policy implications.

Part three: Rural Women's Voices on Empowerment

Women's spheres of influence, (changing trends)

Men reacting to women's empowerment

Women and the exercise of power.