

Gender Norms in Land Tenure and Sustainable Land Management in Northern Ghana

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Interfaces



SUPPORTING PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA



Introduction

- Women/females play crucial roles in sustaining human existence through their productive and reproductive roles
- Ghanaian customary land norms ascribes higher land rights to males in both matrilineal and patrilineal systems.
- Women's ability to access land largely depends on their relationship with a male (Apusigah, 2009, Britwum et al, 2014, Dery, 2015).

- The altering land tenure system can be attributed to several factors:

- Economic and Market Factors: Commodification of land
- Population Growth and Urbanisation



- The pattern of land access in Northern Ghana is undergoing rapid transformation with growing inequalities in access, control and ownership
- Lands are sold by chiefs and family heads in peri-urban areas where commercialization and privatisation have led to a high demand for land

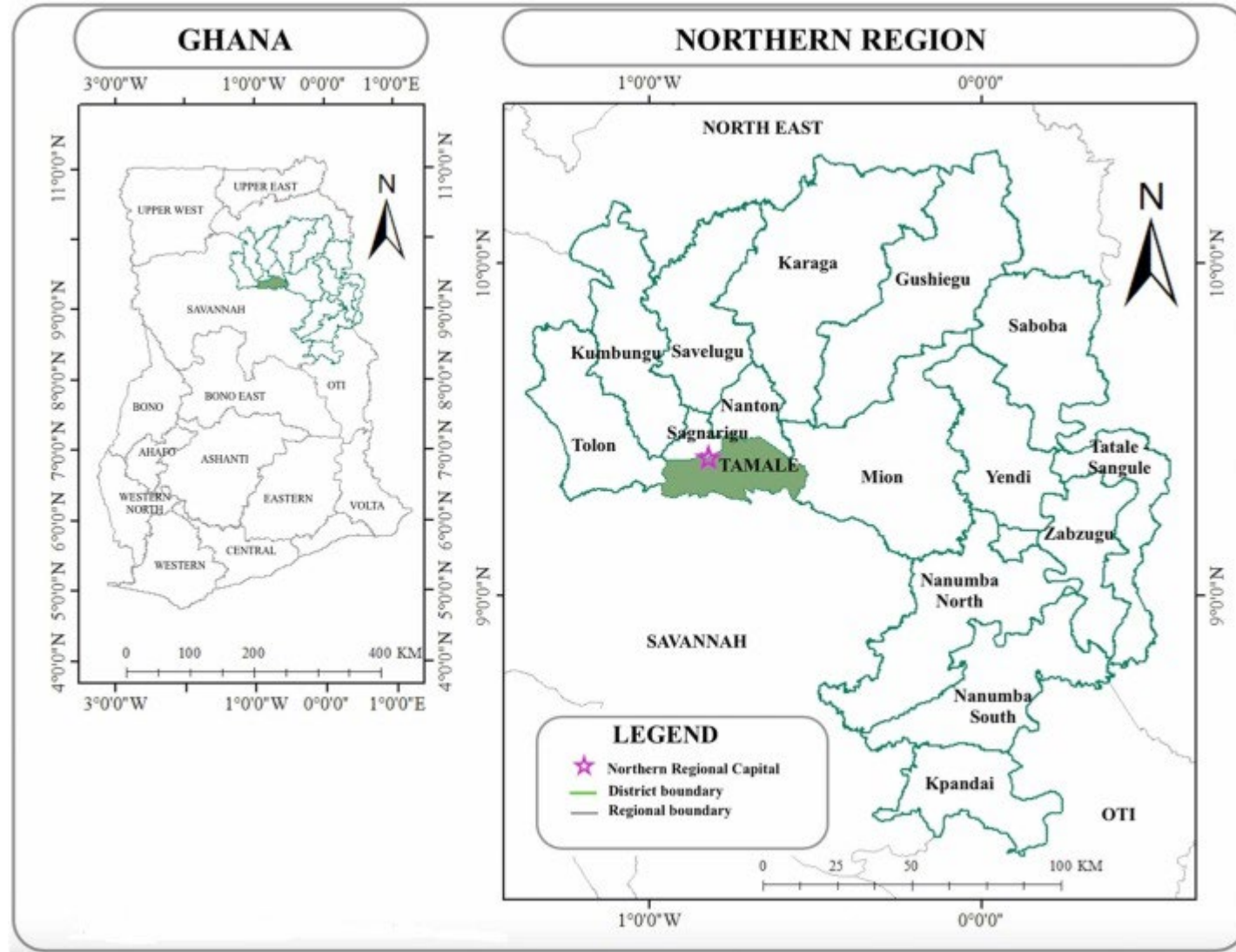


Research Questions

- How is pressure on land altering the customary land tenure system?
- What alternative routes are women using to navigate constraints to land access?
- How are alterations in women's tenure routes impacting gender norms?
- How are changing tenure forms impacting the adoption of farming practices?

Study Area and Methodology

- 4 Farming Communities
- Dimabi - customary land tenure system intact (not much land)
- Nanpkanzoo – land availability/customary system intact
- Taripkaa – threat of losing land is real/surveying ongoing
- Libga – everyone has lost land/pillars, construction materials on farmlands
- Qualitative Research
- Interviews and Focus Group Discussions





Preliminary Findings

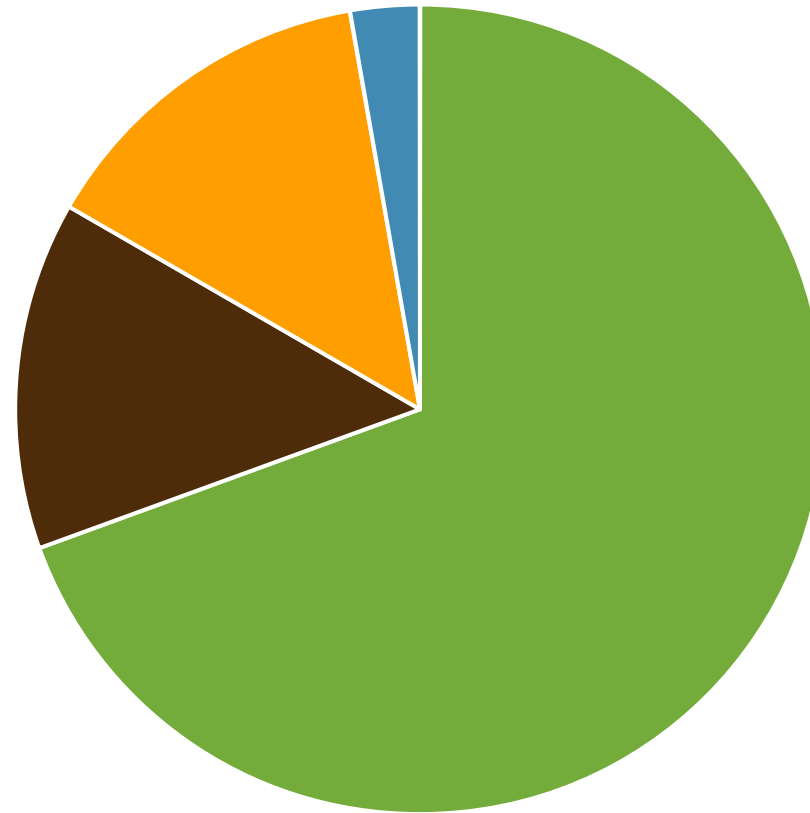
Reasons for Changes/Pressure on Land

- Changes in Land Tenure and Pressure on land tenure present in Taripkaa and Libga – peri urban locations/location of Tamale Airport
- Sale of lands by customary authorities – very active land market with a plot of land selling above 150,000 GHS
- Population increase and subdivision of lands among brothers (building on farmlands as population increases)
- Building and speculation by land agents. Land availability was not a problem in the past but now all our lands have pillars. This started four years ago”

Gender Roles and Land Access

- Female land access depends on social relations : all females interviewed gained access through husbands or fathers/brothers
- Women's land access hinges strongly on gender roles as wives, cooks, and childbearing: a Dagomba custom to be recognized a cook before granting land access
- Most females have an acre or less in areas with pressure on land; biggest female holding 3 acres (widow inherited husband's lands because she has sons and late husband's Christian family).

Means of Women's Land Access



■ From Husband ■ Father/Brothers ■ Both Husband/Father ■ Begged



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