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Women Access To Land And Food Security In Savelugu Municipal: A Case Of Integrated Tamale Fruit Company Land Acquisition

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ABSTRACT

The population of the people in the Northern region is predominantly rural and as such depends mostly on land and its related resources for their livelihood. This is especially true for women since land is critical for them in achieving their responsibilities as food producers and food processors and also for achieving food security. However, women access to land is deeply inequitable under the Dagbon land governance system which is typical with patrilineal societies. Their access is often mediated by a male relative which is likely to be lost with changing priorities of male land owners. With growing interest in rural land by investors for commercial agriculture, land in the countryside have come under pressure and women are increasingly faced with challenges of losing an important livelihood source which have implications on their food security. The study therefore examined women's access to land and SDG five using the Integrated Tamale Fruit Company (ITFC) as the case of a large-scale land acquisition for commercial agriculture while relating it to the food security of women in the Northern region. Using a case study design, ITFC was examined in-depth in order to make logical description of the issues under study. A mixed method of data collection was adopted to answer the research questions. Two key informants; a current and retired manager of ITFC were interviewed. Sixty organic mango association members constituted 6 (membership of 10) separate focus group discussions. One in each of the 6 study communities and 185 respondents selected for the survey in the same communities. Data was collected using interview guides and questionnaires to find out the relationship between access to land and the food security of rural women. The study also sought to find out the effects of the mango outgrower scheme of ITFC on rural women access to land and their food security and the opportunities large-scale commercial agriculture offers to rural women to improve their food security. The results showed that, women recorded higher levels of food insecurities while their male counterparts recorded higher levels of food security. The results from the Wilcoxon signed rank test further revealed a strong relationship between women food insecurity and their low levels of access to land and the loss of common resources. The results further show since it started operation, several employees have been laid off as the company's operations have seen a decline resulting from cash flow challenges. The mango outgrower scheme instituted by the company have generally been characterized by poor yields and low incomes. Recommendations are geared towards ensuring that investment projects generate real positive benefits to rural women. Lands Commission should make gender certification an additional requirement before permits are granted to commercial agricultural investors. Contracts should clearly state and define agreements and should also include opportunities for periodic cost-benefit analysis

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