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**Interrogating Gender-Specific Challenges Facing Rural Female Farmers: The case of  
Kambia District, Sierra Leone**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to interrogate gender-specific challenges facing rural female farmers in the Kambia district of Sierra Leone. For purposes of this study, Kambia District in Sierra Leone was chosen as the locality on which the case study was based. This study employed qualitative research design because it allowed for the collection of qualitative data of lived experiences of female farmers about the factors feeding the problems they face in food production chains. This study adopted multi sampling technique to select the respondents to participate in the study. The researcher interviewed 8 leaders of the women group and 12 members from the group participated in focus group discussions. The data was collected through both semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher used semi-structured interviews for 8 key informants who are leaders of the Makuiya Women Farmers' Cooperative. Collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis technique.

The results reveal several insights about the discrimination of female farmers. With regard to access and control of agricultural resources, marital status, male support, low- income status and low educational status, low political power were found and lack of land ownership were found to undermine the farmers' access to and control over these resources. Moreover, patriarchal community setting, male-leadership culture, gender roles, lack of family support, low education, and low mobility, as well as negative attitudes, and perceptions of women in the community all played a significant part in influencing the low socio-economic status of female farmers. The findings of the study reveals that cultural and customary norms heavily influence social relations among people involved in the agricultural sector. The patriarchal nature of the communities involved in this study allow for male household and community leaders to hold more power when it comes to making decisions about control, access, and usage of agricultural resources.

To cope with the gender-based discrimination that female farmers encounter in the agricultural sector, women also employ several social, economic, and legal strategies such as working together, organizing fundraisings, using savings and loan schemes, and relying on support groups. Legal gender-specific challenges are addressed through engagement with stakeholders who are in the position of helping to pass bills in parliament and follow-up to ensure the implementation of those bills. Furthermore, female farmers get assistance from those organizations that work with women to advocate for justice. A perceived limitation of this study may be that it did not include male farmers to compare their views that those of female farmers. Future studies on productivity differences in women's and men's farmers in developing countries should include a comparative analysis of male and female farmers.

## **Relevance to development studies**

Compared to other industries, agriculture is more likely to offer a variety of options for empowering women and contributing to SDG 2 on hunger and SDG 5 on gender inequality. But obstacles that prohibit women farmers from providing for their families and making further investments in their livelihoods keep them back. This study is significant in assessing the progress made by women farmers toward equality with male farmers by concentrating on the relationship between gender differences in production and access to and utilization of agricultural resources.

**Dedication**

This paper is dedicated to God almighty, my caring parents and my fiancé for supporting me throughout this journey.

**Acknowledgment**

I want to take this opportunity to thank Alhassan Daramy former MA student at ISS for introducing this program to me. Special thanks to my Mentor Kees Biekart for supporting me throughout my studies. Not forgetting my supervisor and second reader Cynthia Embido Bejeno and Professor Wendy Harcourt for their support.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter presents the introduction part of the study. The chapter begins with the context, followed by the research problem and the research questions and objectives. Finally, it closes with the justification of the study.

### **1.1 Context of research topic**

The majority of the world's farmers are women. According to data from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) the plurality of economically engaged women in the least industrialized nations are employed in agriculture (FAO, 1995). In general, women in Africa have a substantial role in planting, weeding, applying fertilizers, harvesting, food processing, transportation, applying pesticides and selling farm produce. In addition to working with women on some of the above-mentioned agricultural activities, men are primarily in charge of clearing and preparing the fields for planting as well as ploughing (FAO, 2003). Although female farmers comprise the majority in small-scale agriculture, the agricultural labour force, and day-to-day family subsistence, they face more barriers in accessing resources like land, loans, and inputs and services that increase productivity than males (Ogunlela & Mukhtar, 2009; Butt et al, 2010; Doss, 2015; Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, 2015; Doss, 2018). Duckett (2019) mentions that the marginalization of female farmers is present across the world including the developed nations like the United States and emerging economies like China but is more prevalent and understudied in Sub-Saharan nations.

As consumers in the agricultural sector, women are more likely than males to be food insecure globally. The gender difference in food insecurity propensity is often considered a consequence of gender-based discrimination in agriculture (Botreau & Cohen, 2019). Food security is not only defined as the availability and access to food but also in regard to the allocation of resources used to produce food and the ability to purchase food in places where it is not produced (FAO and Sustainable Development Department, 2003). Therefore, gender-based discrimination facing women in the agricultural sector involving denial of access and control over resources all contribute to their food insecurity (Dixon, 1985; Randolph & Sanders, 1988; Campaign, 2014; Sarwosri et al., 2016; Salazar & Del Rio, 2017; Larkoh et al., 2021). The discrimination of female farmers highlights the gendered politics of the rural agricultural sector.

A significant drawback of gender-based discrimination in agriculture is that it hinders women's potential for contributing to food security through effective participation in agricultural development. Gender discrimination against female farmers leads to low yields and earnings compared to male farmers (Collins et al, 2020; Larkoh et al., 2021). As the global community pursues the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which includes SDG2, which focuses on ending hunger and malnutrition by 2030, women can be the chief agents of change in agricultural development and rural development. Female farmers can institute positive

changes to food production and consumption that would ensure sustainable land use if provided with enhanced access to training, information, and resources. Based on the implications of female farmers' discrimination on food insecurity, female farmers' contribution to food security becomes an important point of concern for agricultural development and the poverty alleviation agenda. Therefore, it is important to comprehend the issues that female farmers face in order to improve their effective participation in agriculture in order to increase food security. The focus should be placed on ensuring gender equity in agriculture in order to realize gender-inclusive agricultural development. Collins et al. (2020) propose that recognizing and addressing the gender gap in agriculture has the potential to improve livelihoods for individuals more generally while also increasing agricultural production and yields.

## **1.2 Background**

Agriculture is one of the most common economic activities in the world and it plays a big role in food production, food security and rural employment (Liepins, 2007). Most farming activities occur in rural areas around the world.

However, rural agriculture has been characterized by gendered politics that is impacting negatively on the development of the sector which is one of the main stays of many economies, especially the developing countries (Ghosh & Ghosh, 2014). Empirical studies around the world show that rural agriculture is highly engendered and characterized by gender inequality that favours men at the expense of women (Narasimham, 2014; Quisumbing et al., 2014; Palacios-Lopez et al., 2017). According to OECD (2021), in many developing nations, land is mainly owned by men, and is transferred inter-generationally to other males of the family. Deere (1995) observed that in most societies, the land is seen as the property of the man, not the woman. Therefore, women are only expected to till the portion of the land that they have been allowed by their husbands. This creates a situation where most women in developing nations lack access to land, livestock and water rights which act as a barrier to their participation in agriculture and food production. The OECD (2021) further notes that even in situations where women have access to land to till, the fact that the majority lack ownership of the land discourages most women from engaging in agricultural activities which consequently lowers production.

Gender inequality in rural agriculture is also manifested in education and training. Education has been shown to be one of the most important tools for increasing agricultural productivity and reducing malnutrition and poverty (Liepins, 2007). Farmers with good education and training are better able to apply their knowledge and skills to increase agricultural yields which consequently helps reduce poverty and malnutrition (Deere, 1995). Unfortunately, studies around the world show that women and girls do not get adequate training and educational opportunities as men. Apusigah (2009) attributes this to gender discrimination in most societies where women are still seen as a lesser gender compared to their male counterparts. Statistically, the OECD (2021) reveals that the problem is particularly widespread in the developing world where girls have less



access to basic education while women receive only about 5% of agricultural extension services globally. As stated by Kaisi & Al Zoughbi, (2006) the implication of gender inequality in rural agriculture is that it leads to lower agricultural productivity, increased malnutrition, and poverty in rural areas.

Additionally, gender inequality in rural agriculture is manifested in terms of access to credit and control over financial resources. Dery (2015) mentions that agriculture is resource intensive as it requires financial resources to acquire the farm inputs like fertilizers, tractors for tilling the land and preparing it for planting, pesticides to keep the pests away and labour to assist in tilling and preparing the land for harvesting and harvesting. The observation is supported by Razavi (2003) who notes that agriculture is resource intensive, especially where commercial agriculture is involved. Unfortunately, the OECD (2021) observed that agriculture is gendered when it comes to access to credit and financial resources. The OECD says that although women form the majority of those that are involved in agriculture, they have less access to credit and financial resources required to increase agricultural productivity. The OECD (2021) cites women in Africa which have access to only 1% of available credit in the agricultural sector. Dery (2015) attributes this phenomenon to the fact that women do not receive such credits because of the lack of collaterals that are usually required as a precondition to get credit from organizations advancing credit to farmers like cooperative societies. Lack of access to credit for women has implications on agricultural productivity as it limits the ability of women to buy the necessary agricultural tools, fertilizers, and seeds or hire labour.

Literature on women in agriculture shows that women's participation in agriculture is hindered by lack of access to appropriate technology, inputs and tools required to ensure productive farming. Farming is one of the sectors that have been greatly impacted by recent technological developments. Razavi (2003) indicates that agriculture has been remarkably mechanized in many parts of the world today as a way to improve yields and efficiency. Unfortunately, women are disadvantaged as discovered in a study conducted in African countries (Kenya, Burkina Faso, Zambia and Nigeria) that found that women were more disadvantaged than men when they grew the same crop on individuals' farms due to differential control over resources. Specifically, the study found that men compared to women were more at an advantage because they have access to technology, inputs and other tools required for agriculture than their female counterparts. Interestingly, the researchers observed that agricultural inputs like fertilizers and labour went to plots owned by men compared to women. According to USAID (n.d.), a section of researchers has estimated that agricultural output in sub-Saharan Africa would grow by 10% to 20% if females had access to equal resources as their male counterparts.

An overload of responsibilities has also been cited as a major challenge faced by women involved in agriculture in what is attributed to the gendering of agriculture. Doss (2001) observed that in many societies, especially in the developing world, women are still expected to be the ones

nurturing children, fetching water and firewood and cooking meals for the family. As a result, they locate less time on agriculture as they have to balance between agriculture and family expectations (Razavi, 2003). As the OECD (2021) notes, women's participation in agriculture is constrained by the fact that they are tied to their homes and are the primary caretakers of children. Doss (2001) argues that women face the burden of being seen as caretakers in families, which affects their participation in agriculture, consequently negatively impacting their agricultural yields. Moreover, women are more susceptible to risks to their safety, especially in areas that are affected by conflicts like civil wars or where violence against women is widespread.

### **1.3 Research problem**

Despite women being the majority sex in agricultural activities and the acknowledgement of their potential for enhancing food security if gender inequities are addressed, the policies and programs adopted to ensure this have achieved less progress (Doss & Meinzen-Dick, 2020; OXFAM, 2019). For instance, Steady (2005) and Larkoh et al. (2021) explain that in Sierra Leone, female farmers are faced with gender-based discrimination that limits their control over and access to resources including finances, land, and training opportunities for improvement of processing, production, and marketing of agricultural produce. For instance, according to Collins et al. (2020), ingrained gender stereotypes restrict women from selling their harvests or even leaving their homes without the permission of their husbands as selling is seen to be a man's job. Cultural norms and customs largely restrict women from household chores and taking care of the home and the family. Therefore, they are unlikely to find time to engage in the selling of their produce in the market because that would require that they abandon their roles at home. Such an action creates friction in the family and it may lead to misunderstanding and violence (Ogunlela & Mukhtar, 2009). Women are expected to follow their husband's instructions and when permission is denied they cannot go against it.

An important point of gender-based discrimination in agricultural production is land ownership rights (Bejeno, 2021). As noted by the World Bank report of 2018, African women own only 38% of land compared to men who own the majority (Gaddis et al., 2018). Moreover, women in some parts of the continent are still not able to govern or legally own land.

In Sierra Leone, most female farmers only have access to small pieces of land for family gardening. The majority of women have little control over land or seldom own land (Aid, 2012). According to FAO (2011), only 9.4% of people who own land in Sierra Leone are female while 22.7% are male as of 2018 (FAO, 2022). It is impractical for such female farmers who do not own land to establish arrangements on contract farming that would provide better pay and more stable sources of income as they do not have the authority to make pronouncements about the land they work on. As Duckett, (2019) explains, they need to ask for permission to even plough

the field or sow seeds. These barriers (land of access to land, lack of capital and labour etc) put female farmers at a tremendous disadvantage.

Furthermore, as a result of women's limited access to and participation in training and the sector's rapid technical developments, along with the destructive consequences of climate change, natural disasters, or violent conflicts, reducing gender inequity in agriculture is even more difficult (Salazar & Del Rio, 2017). As a result, despite participating more in the reproductive work of agriculture female farmers fall well behind their male counterparts in terms of crop production and earnings (Bala, 2010; FAO, 2011). Farms run by women yield 20 to 30% less than farms run by males on average (Duckett, 2019:1). According to the FAO (2011), the reasons for this disparity in crop yield do not emanate from agricultural ability but rather from gender-specific barriers. This proposition by FAO implies that the realization of women's potential to contribute to food security as touted by its advocates is stifled by gender-based discrimination in agriculture.

Gender blindness in studies on agricultural development in the rural setting is also prevalent. This blindness results in a lack of understanding of the unique and diverse roles that men and women play and contribute to agricultural production and food security (Shiva, 2009; Salazar, & Del Rio, 2017). Without being aware of these policymakers, planners, and agricultural extension officers continue to act as if the situation and demands on farms were the same for female and male farmers (Kaisi & Al Zoughbi, 2006). As a result, the conditions and requirements of male farmers are met, but not those of female farmers. Furthermore, the planning, policymaking, and extension services in the agricultural sector are based on a limited understanding of reality. Against this background, the current study aims to examine the contextual factors enabling the gender-based discrimination facing female farmers in rural areas of Sierra Leone using the case study of Kambia District.

#### **1.4 Research objective and questions**

##### **Key Objective**

To examine the sources of the gender-based challenges that Makuiya female farmers face, the solutions employed and how their capacities can be enhanced in addressing these challenges.

## **Main question**

Why are female farmers facing discrimination in the agricultural sector of Kambia District, how are they coping and what can be done to remedy the situation?

## **Sub-questions**

1. How are gender-specific obstacles manifested and reinforced in Kambia's agricultural sector?
2. What are the female farmers' coping strategies for gender-based discrimination in the agricultural sector?
3. How can the capacities of female farmers in the agricultural sector be enhanced in addressing gender-based discrimination?

## **1.5 Justification and Relevance of the Study**

Recognizing the potential of empowering female farmers, it is important to understand women's roles in agriculture and how these roles can be leveraged to transform sustainable agricultural production and consequently food insecurity. The current study attempts to contribute to this understanding in the setting of the Kambia district in Sierra Leone. In order to enhance women's capacities in agriculture is urged by Doss & Meinzen-Dick (2020) it is imperative to carefully examine the context-specific threats and opportunities that face women's participation in agricultural production. In addition, there is a need to examine the practices that play a role in restricting or upholding women's rights of equal participation in agricultural roles. Therefore, this study will examine the factors that hinder the ability of female farmers to effectively participate in agriculture production and therefore improve food security in the Kambia District. The academic relevance of this study is contributing to the growing literature on the plight of female farmers in Global South nations. Many studies on gender-based discrimination in Sierra Leone in different sectors of the economy including formal workplaces and political participation have been done (Castillejo, 2009; Maclure & Denov, 2009; Abdullah & Fofana-Ibrahim, 2010; Lahai, 2016). However, fewer studies have been done on gender-based discrimination in agriculture, which is an important sector of the economy that supports the livelihoods of a large proportion of Sierra Leonians (Collins et al., 2020; Larkoh et al., 2021). Following in the footsteps of these few studies, my RP hopes to contribute to the literature on the predicament of female farmers in the developing world. The findings of this research will be compared with the findings of other studies conducted in other contexts in a bid to contribute to the literature on the feminist political ecology of agricultural resource access and control. Furthermore, this will create a more inclusive and wider picture of women's rights in access and control of agricultural resources in different contexts.

Agriculture has seen a boom in new inventions for improving production, but the women who make up the majority of this industry are not given enough prominence. Development actors can promote more women inclusion and have a greater social impact by concentrating on gender equity. Apart from such a social impact, these actors can simultaneously address food insecurity by boosting agricultural production and yields (Collins et al., 2020). As a social relevance, this study also hopes to create an understanding of gender-based discrimination against female farmers in Kambia District from their own lived experiences. By doing so, the study hopes to generate thoughts and reactions that would contribute to the formation of viable solutions to the issues facing female farmers in Kambia District and the Sierra Leone nation at large.

## **Chapter 2: Background to the study**

In this chapter, a literature review on the subject of female farmers' marginalization is presented. The chapter begins by reviewing the situation of farmers globally followed by the situation of female farmers in Sierra Leone.

### **2.1 The situation of female farmers globally**

Agriculture is one of the most widespread economic activities in the world, which plays a big role in food production, food security and rural employment. Most farming activities occur in rural areas around the world (Liepins, 2007). However, rural agriculture has been characterized by gendered politics that is impacting negatively on the development of the sector which is one of the main stays of many economies, especially the developing countries (Ghosh & Ghosh, 2014). Empirical studies around the world show that rural agriculture is highly engendered and characterized by gender inequality that favours men at the expense of women (Narasimham, 2014; Quisumbing et al., 2014; Palacios-Lopez et al., 2017). In many developing economies, land is primarily owned by men and passed down via male generations, according to OECD (2021). Deere (1995) observed that in most societies, the land is seen as the property of the man, not the woman. Therefore, women are only expected to till the portion of the land that they have been allowed by their husbands. This creates a situation where most women in developing countries lack access to land, livestock and water rights which act as a barrier to their participation in agriculture and food production. The OECD (2021) further notes that even in situations where women have access to land to till, the fact that the majority lack ownership of the land discourages most women from engaging in agricultural activities which consequently lowers production.

Gender inequality in rural agriculture is also manifested in education and training. Education has been shown to be one of the most significant tools for increasing agricultural productivity and reducing malnutrition and poverty (Liepins, 2007). Farmers with good education and training are better able to apply their knowledge and skills to increase agricultural yields which consequently helps reduce poverty and malnutrition (Deere, 1995). Unfortunately, studies around the world show that women and girls do not get adequate training and educational opportunities as men. Apusigah (2009) attributes this to gender discrimination in most societies where women are still seen as subordinate to men. . Statistically, the OECD (2021) reveals that the problem is particularly widespread in the developing world where girls have limited access to basic education while women receive only about 5% of agricultural extension services globally. The implication of gender inequality in rural agriculture is that it leads to lower agricultural productivity, increased malnutrition, and poverty in rural areas.

Additionally, gender inequality in rural agriculture is manifested in terms of access to credit and control over financial resources. Dery (2015) mentions that agriculture is resource intensive as it requires financial resources to acquire the farm inputs like fertilizers, tractors for tilling the land and preparing it for planting, pesticides to keep the pests away and labour to assist in tilling and preparing the land for harvesting and harvesting. The observation is supported by Razavi (2003) who notes that agriculture is resource intensive, especially where commercial agriculture is involved. Unfortunately, the OECD (2021) observed that agriculture is gendered when it comes to access to credit and financial resources. The OECD says that although women form the majority of those that are involved in agriculture, they have less access to credit and financial resources required to increase agricultural productivity. The OECD (2021) cites women in Africa which have access to only 1% of available credit in the agricultural sector. Dery (2015) attributes this phenomenon to the fact that women do not receive such credits because of the lack of collaterals that are usually required as a precondition to get credit from organizations advancing credit to farmers like cooperative societies. Lack of access to credit for women has implications on agricultural productivity as it limits the ability of women to buy the necessary agricultural tools, fertilizers, and seeds or hire labour.

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An overload of responsibilities has also been cited as a major challenge faced by women involved in agriculture in what is attributed to the gendering of agriculture. Doss (2001) observed that in many societies, especially in the developing world, women are still expected to be the ones nurturing children, fetching water and firewood and preparing meals for the family. As a result, they locate less time on agriculture as they have to balance between agriculture and family expectations (Razavi, 2003). As the OECD (2021) notes, women's participation in agriculture is constrained by the fact that they are tied to their homes and are the primary caretakers of children.

Doss (2001) argues that women face the burden of being seen as caretakers in families, which affects their participation in agriculture, consequently negatively impacting their agricultural yields. Moreover, women are more susceptible to risks to their safety, especially in areas that are affected by conflicts like civil wars or where violence against women is widespread.

## **2.2 The situation of female farmers in Sierra Leone**

### ***Sierra Leone's agricultural sector***

Agriculture is the mainstay of Sierra Leone, accounting for about 59.5% in 2020 of the country's GDP (World Food Programme, 2021). The country's agricultural sector is an important sector of the economy. It employs about half of the country's economically active labour force (15-64 years). The land and climate support a variety of crops in Sierra Leone, including millet, cassava, groundnuts, rice, mangoes, cocoa, coffee, palm oil and livestock. The other crops that are also grown in a large scale include bananas, sugarcane, and pineapples. Just like in other developing worlds, women constitute the largest percentage of those that are involved in agriculture in Sierra Leone. The majority of the agricultural labour force in Sierra Leone is predominantly women (70% as of 2017) (The World Bank, 2021:1; UN Women, 2017). According to Safilios-Rothschild (1985) and Alphaeus (2014) women in Sierra Leon are primarily involved in subsistence farming. Subsistence farming is a farming practice that focuses on the production of food, not for commercial purposes but rather for family use.

### ***Roles of female farmers in Sierra Leone***

In subsistence farming, the women wake up early in the morning to attend to their farms where they till the land and grow a variety of crops, such as cassava, millet, cocoa, coffee, and many other crops to enable them to have enough food during harvest to sustain themselves and their families. They are also the ones expected to weed the farms to ensure good yield for their farm produce (Alphaeus, 2014). As a result, Sierra Leone women spend most of their time on the farms. During harvesting time, Sierra Leone women are expected by custom to do the harvesting though men are also involved. Further, FAO (2022) reveals that the role of women in agriculture in Sierra Leone does not end with harvesting; instead, they are expected to go to the markets to sell some of the produce to get food for the family.

Apart from planting crops, Sierra Leone women are also involved in livestock farming. In Sierra Leone, the main livestock kept by most households are cattle, goats, sheep, poultry and pigs. Although the number of livestock in the country declined significantly in late 1990 following the civil war, the number of livestock has begun to rise. In Sierra Leone, women are expected to attend to the livestock. This includes seeing that the livestock are grazed and that they were given water to drink. The women are also involved in milking which is considered the work of women. This means that every morning, the women have to ensure that the cattle are milked and the same



applies to the evening (Wamala, 2021; Yeung, 2022). In case of surplus, the women are also expected to sell the excess milk to get the money to feed the family.

### ***Gender-specific challenges facing female farmers in Sierra Leone***

Just like most farmers across the globe, female farmers in Sierra Leone are faced with a myriad of challenges including technical challenges, infrastructural challenges and climate change.

FAO (2022) observed that agricultural practices for commercial purposes have not been achieved in Sierra Leone. UN Women Africa (2017) reveals that Sierra Leone women are primarily involved in subsistence farming practices because the country lacks a viable agricultural value chain and entrepreneurial activity. FAO (2022) also notes that Sierra Leone women are mainly engaged in peasant farming which is meant to sustain them and their families. However, rice is the main staple food in Sierra Leone, which is grown by most households, especially women.

The report links the situation to the lack of capital required to engage in large-scale or mechanised farming. The situation is also attributed to a lack of quality inputs and processing equipment. Resultantly, Sierra Leone women do farming using their hands. Specifically, the women use traditional hoes. Some according to UN Women Africa (2017) also use ploughs being pulled by bulls to till the lands. Collins et al., 2020) and Larkoh et al., 2021) note that in spite of being the majority gender in agricultural labour, female farmers in Sierra Leone are faced with gender-specific barriers that negatively affect their agricultural productivity and sustainability.

## **Chapter 3: Conceptual framework**

### **3.1 The relationship between gender inequality in the agricultural sector and development**

Based on SDG 5, the FAO's mission to achieve food security for all, increase agricultural productivity and ensure full participation of the rural population in decision-making processes is centered on gender equality and women's empowerment (FAO, n.d). Faced with the challenges of ending hunger, alleviating poverty, and ending gender inequality, the agriculture industry should operate at peak efficiency, while also becoming more inclusive, sustainable, and efficient. The FAO is aware that in order to achieve food security the lingering injustices that contribute to the poor performance of agriculture in many nations have to be addressed (FAO, n.d). This admission points to the need for working with and empowering rural female and male farmers.

The focus of the Gender and Development (GAD) approach is on the existing socially created variances between women and men, the importance of challenging constructed gender roles and relations, and the creation and impacts of class disparities on development (Muyoyeta, 2020). The greatest inspiration for this approach was the works of accomplished scholars Oakley (1972) and Rubin (1975), who suggested that the existing social relationships between males and females in society have put women in subordinate positions (Doss, 2011). GAD creates a shift in thought about the importance of understanding how males and females are socially constructed and the manner in which these constructions are strongly supported by the social activities that outline and are outlined by them (Collins, 2013). The fundamental focus of GAD is on the gendered division of labour and gender as a relation of power entrenched in institutions. The GAD approach encompasses two key frameworks which include 'Gender roles' and 'social relations analysis'. The focus of 'gender roles' is on the social construction of identity inside the family and it also discloses the anticipations from 'maleness and femaleness' in their comparative access to resources (Basu & Galiè, 2021). On the other hand, 'social relations analysis' creates exposure to the social dimensions of tiered power arrangements entrenched within social institutions, alongside its determining impact on 'the comparative places of men and women in society.' (Muyoyeta, 2020). This comparative positioning normally discriminates against women.

The GAD approach applies gender analysis with the aim of uncovering the manner in which women and men cooperate. In a bid to achieve gender equality by giving women similar opportunities to men, the policies of GAD try to redefine the traditional expectations of gender roles (Muyoyeta, 2020). Traditionally, women are denied opportunities to own land and farm it because their assigned gender roles do not have room for that. As men engage in breadwinning which includes market production and paid labour, women bear and raise children and perform management tasks. The role of the woman basically revolves around motherhood (Doss, 2011).

Although women also engage in farming, gender-specific obstacles including absence of access to land, shortage of financing, limited access to markets, inadequate agricultural training and education, absence of appropriate working conditions, and unequal treatment place women at a major disadvantage. One of the biggest hindrances is land rights (Basu & Galiè, 2021). In the developing world, a mere 10 to 20 percent of landholders are female, and in certain parts of the world, women are not allowed to legally own or have control of land (Muyoyeta, 2020). Furthermore, entrenched gender roles in the developing world limit women from taking their harvest to the market or even leaving the village without the permission of their husbands. With the adoption of the gender and development approach, all was bound to change. GAD would bring about equality and it would help to give women a voice in the family and society and break the social construction of gender roles and division of labour that hinders women from engaging in meaningful and profitable agriculture (Kristjanson et al., 2017). With improved power relations between women through GAD, where women have more say on land ownership and control, it would be easier for them to overcome any form of discrimination in matters of land and farming so that they make decisions about land and agricultural activities. The GAD approach helps to reduce the subordination of women in matters of land ownership and control so that they become empowered to obtain land, finances, credit, market, and other resources needed for meaningful farming.

### **3.2 The Gender and Development (GAD) approach**

The gender and Development approach was advanced in the 1980s as a substitute for the Women in Development (WID) strategy. Early in the 1970s, a group of female development experts in Washington coined the slogan "women in development" (Tinker, 1990:30). They questioned "trickle-down" concepts of development based on their own experiences working in foreign missions, claiming that modernization had distinct impacts on women and men. Their findings were that the development process had an impact of decline in status and rights of women instead of enhancing them. Therefore, during the United Nations Decade for Women (1976–1985), the WID movement was launched and championed for social justice and equality for women. Although the WID method was centered on an understanding of women's subordination, the fundamentally relational aspect of this subordination had received little attention (Miller & Razavi, 1995). Without questioning the contribution of gender relations to the initial restriction of women's access, WID acknowledged that women lacked proper access to resources and this contributed to their subordination. The focus on women in isolation, which appeared to be a major aspect of the WID method, was being questioned by several development professionals by the late 1970s.

The GAD approach was created as a result. The GAD method, in contrast to WID, is more concerned with how society assigns roles, responsibilities, and expectations to both men and

women. It examines how men and women cooperate while disseminating discoveries in a manner that is both impartial in terms of competence and the economy. According to Ghale et al. (2018), the GAD approach was created with the goal of focusing on empowerment, challenging uneven power relations between men and women, access to resources as well as the value of women's many roles, varying identities and demands throughout communities. By perceiving women as having the same opportunities as men, GAD policies attempt to reinterpret old gender role expectations in an effort to promote gender equality (Muyoyeta, 2020). GAD primarily concentrates on the analysis of social relations and gender roles using the Social Relations Analysis and Gender Roles framework. In this study, the GAD concepts that will be used to discuss the findings and answer the research questions are gender roles and social roles. The Gender and Development approach will be deployed in this study to understand the relationship between gender roles and women's socio-economic development through farming. Since this study seeks to understand why female farmers are facing discrimination in the agricultural sector of Kambia District, how they are coping, and what can be done to remedy the situation, the GAD approach will be appropriate for this purpose because it analyzes the causes of gender inequality in the context of relations between men and women and their social structures. It also seeks to change the stereotyped division of labour based on gender as well as the institutions and systems causing gender disparity (Ghale et al., 2018).

The use of the gender and development approach in examining women's discrimination in matters of land can cause a change in gender power relations and finally make sure that women are better empowered to cope with the situation. The premise for this is that there is a link between women's rights on land, women's economic empowerment, reducing poverty, and food security together with other crucial aspects of development (Muyoyeta, 2020). The prevailing gender-based discrimination in laws, practices, and customs leads to major inequalities in women's ability to own, control and access land. Women are also at a disadvantage because of their limited role in making decisions at home. Therefore, the GAD approach helps to investigate the challenges women face and it helps to improve their welfare as far as land rights are concerned. In this study, the GAD approach is instrumental in understanding the gender roles and social roles of women and how they differ from those of men and how these differences affect women's rights to own land by sponsoring discrimination against women based on their gender, especially when it comes to land ownership, access, and control.

### **3.2.1 The Gender roles framework**

The Harvard gender roles analytical framework is a simple set of instruments for determining the kinds and quantities of work men and women perform in a home, farm, or community and then analyzing the factors influencing the work and access and control of resources involved

(Ludgate, 2016). It was created by academics at the Harvard Institute of International Development in conjunction with USAID's Women in Development Office, and it is now widely used by other traditional development organizations (Miller & Razavi, 1995). The expectations of "maleness and femaleness" in terms of their respective access to resources are indicated by the gender roles framework, which emphasizes how identities are socially produced within the family. The framework starts with the premise that a home is not a homogeneous collection of individuals performing a single production and consuming function. Families are thought of as their own systems for allocating resources (Feldstein et al., 1989). In terms of individual access to and control over resources, gender equity is defined. Allocating resources to women is justified by their productive contributions (Miller & Razavi, 1995). Thus, economic efficiency and gender equity go hand in hand.

In this paper, I adopted the Harvard Analytical Framework as adapted by Ludgate (2016). Nargiza Ludgate is the Assistant Scholar in the Office for Global Research Engagement at the UF International Center. She improved the Harvard Analytical Framework which is also known as the gender roles framework. This framework is important for understanding the differences between women and men as they take part in the economy. The framework is important for collecting information from households and the community. It provides a description of who undertakes which activity, who accesses and controls resources and the influence it has on gender roles (Ludgate, 2016). In this study, the framework will be useful for understanding the gender roles of men and women in Kambia District of Sierra Leone. Traditionally, women have different roles from men in the Sierra Leone setting. For example, women are tasked with home making and raising children. Such roles and many others have been found to influence access and control of resources, especially land. Therefore, the framework is needed to help identify the roles of men and women and how they differ from one another. Having identified and understood these roles using the Harvard Analytical Framework, it will be easier to explain how they affect access and control of agricultural resources, where men have more control than women. This modified framework helps to highlight the differences in gendered access and control of resources in agriculture including seeds, water, land, or extension information. The data is collected using three interrelated tools: an access control profile, an activity profile, and a list of influencing factors. These tools have a series of checklists for important queries.

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
<b>The activity profile</b>	Embroids inquiries about who does what for all relevant farm, home, and community tasks.
	It involves the questions of Who does what? When? and Where?
<b>The Access and Control Profile</b>	It attempts to clarify and document who has access to resources and who controls their use in relation to the tasks identified in the Activity Profile.
	It asks the questions of Who has access to and control over resources and Who has access to and control over benefits?
<b>The Influencing Factors tool</b>	It involves identification of factors that shape differences between men and women.
	What are political, economic, or cultural factors affecting the gender differences identified in the above two profiles? What are the past and present influences? What are the opportunities and constraints?

Source: Ludgate (2016)

### **3.2.2 Social relations analysis**

The social relations framework this study adopted for gender analysis was advanced by Naila Kabeer at the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex University, UK. She accomplished the task of developing the framework with the help of activists, policymakers, and academics. Kabeer's approach to social relations analysis provides an analysis of gender inequality and considers gender relations as part of social relations (Miles, 2016). The approach is based on the premise that there are structural and systemic causes of gender inequality and there is a need to address their root causes. The framework is founded on different theoretical ideas. The first idea is the development concept which is the process where the well-being of people is increased (Kabeer, 2005). The second concept refers to social relations and as stated by Kabeer, social relations are basically structural relationships creating and reproducing systemic disparities in the

positioning of groups of individuals. Finally, the framework depends on institutional analysis. The origins of gender inequality are not restricted to the family and household level but they are reproduced in an array of institutions at every level (Kabeer, 2005). Social relations analysis demonstrates the social components of the hierarchical power structures established in social organizations. According to Pearson (2005), it also emphasizes how social aspects of hierarchical power relations impact how men and women are positioned in relation to one another in society. Social relations are the structural connections that establish and reproduce systemic disparities in how various groups of people are positioned. These connections define who we are, our duties and obligations, and the claims we can make. They also define rights and the degree of influence that individuals have on their own lives and the lives of others (Ridgeway, 2009). Cross-cutting disparities created by social interactions assign each person a place in the hierarchy and structure of their society (Reddock, 2005). One sort of social relationship is that of gender; others include relationships based on class, race, and ethnicity. The term "gender relations" refers specifically to those facets of social relationships that affect how men and women are positioned within social processes (Miller & Razavi, 1995). Men are granted a stronger capacity than women to mobilize a range of cultural roles and material resources in service of their own goals due to gender relations.

The goal of development is to improve human welfare. Human well-being is viewed as involving aspects of survival, security, and autonomy, where autonomy is defined as the capacity to actively participate in decisions that affect one's choices and possibilities for success in life on both a personal and a collective level (Kabeer, 2005). The main issue with the social relations analysis is not women's inclusion in development by itself, but rather the social structures, processes, and relationships that lead to women's disadvantage in a particular society. Because of this, removing women's subordination is seen as more than just a matter of redistributing financial resources. It entails dispersing power. The premise here is that it could be challenging to redistribute economic resources fairly without changes in social relations (Miller & Razavi, 1995). Social relations analysis places the political aspect of gender at the centre of its analysis, rather than downplaying it. Bloom et al. (2001) explain that the social relation analysis looks at the social dimensions within ordered power relations rooted in social institutions and the impact it has on the relative position that women and men hold within a particular context.

I adopt Kabeer's social relations analysis approach in this study to conduct an institutional analysis in the context of female farmers' marginalization in Kambia District. The underlying factors that contribute to gender inequality are not just present in the home and family but also in a number of other institutions, including the state, the marketplace, and the international community (Hillenbrand et al., 2014). Institutions guarantee the development, maintenance, and reproduction of social relations, resulting in the creation and maintenance of social

inequality and difference (Kabeer, 2003). The state, the market, the community, and the family are the four main institutional areas that can be usefully considered. These are the components that will be examined in the findings alongside the rules, activities, resources, people, and power.

Kabeer's approach mainly asks the following questions about the institutional elements of these areas:

<b>Institutional elements</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Rules (How things get done)</i>	Institutional conduct is governed by rules, some of which may be formal and documented. It involves questions like: What is done? How is it done? By whom is it done? Who will benefit?
<i>Activities (What is done?)</i>	Institutions work to accomplish their objectives by abiding by their own norms. These can be productive, distributive, or regulating activities. It embroils the questions of Who does what? Who gets what? Who can claim what?
<i>Resources (What is used and produced?)</i>	Institutions mobilize and allocate resources as well. These could be ethereal resources like knowledge, political sway, goodwill, and contacts or tangible ones like food, assets, property and money, or human resources like <u>labour</u> , education, and skills.
<i>People (Who is in, who is out, who does what?)</i>	Institutions work with people and are picky about who they admit and who they reject, about who gets what resources, jobs, and responsibilities, and about where people are placed in the hierarchy.
<i>Power (Who decides, and whose interests are served?)</i>	Institutions represent power relationships. Even those institutions that claim to be egalitarian rarely actually are. Some institutional actors have influence and control over others due to the unequal allocation of resources and duties and the official and unofficial regulations that support and legitimize this distribution.

Adapted from Equilo (n.d).

In this paper, I adopted the gender roles framework adapted by Ludgate (2016) and Kabeer's Social relations analysis framework to analyze the disparate access and control of agricultural resources based on gender in Kambia District. This viewpoint relates to the questions of how



and why female farmers are left behind compared to their male counterparts in agricultural production.

There is a connection between the Harvard Analytical Framework by Ludgate (2016) and Kabeer's social relations analysis approach. These two theories will be important for answering the research question in the sense that both focus on the factors that cause gender inequality. As Harvard Analytical Framework focuses on the home, Kabeer's social analysis theory focuses on institutions. Institutions sponsor the development, maintenance, and reproduction of social relations, that lead to the creation and maintenance of social inequality and differences (Hillenbrand et al., 2014). These inequalities and differences are deeply investigated through the Harvard Analytical Framework as the key causes of the unbalanced access to and control of land resources by men and women (Reddock, 2000). As the Harvard Analytical Framework collects information from families within the community, the social relations approach the focus is on the larger community which encompasses the households. Therefore, these two concepts connect to the family which is the basic institution in society as they touch on the large society through different families and institutions. With these two concepts, it will be possible to investigate the social and institutional factors within the family and the community that contribute to gender inequality in Kambia, differences in gender and social roles and their contribution to the unbalanced access to and control of land and other resources needed for agriculture.

## **Chapter 4: Research methodology**

In this chapter, the research methodology is discussed. The chapter begins with the case study, followed by the research design. Next is the sampling process, followed by community entry, data collection tools and data analysis. Next is research ethics and finally the demographic information.

### **4.1 Case study**

Saunders et al. (2007) research onion model identifies a number of research designs that are used to conduct a study, the choice of which is determined by the research objectives. These include experimental, case study, action research, survey, ethnography, and archival research. This study used a case study design to examine how the ability of farmers to improve food security can be leveraged in an agricultural sector that is affected by gender discrimination. A case study refers to a form of research design that investigates a given phenomenon within its real-life context.

For purposes of this study, Kambia District in Sierra Leone was chosen as the locality for which the case study will be based. Kambia District is a region in Northern Province that shares borders with the Republic of Guinea to the North, Bombali district to the East and Port Loko district to the South. Kambia town is the largest town and the capital of Kambia District (FAO Sierra Leone, 2022). According to available data on population, Kambia District has a population of slightly more than 2,000 people (Trócaire, 2022). The low population in the district is attributed to the civil war in 2002 that resulted in massive displacement of people. Up to 78% of the district's population lives in rural areas with farming being the main economic activity in the district (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security: The Republic of Sierra Leone, 2009). The main crops cultivated in Kambia District include rice, cassava, yam and root crops (International Cities of Peace, 2019). However, fishing is also a major economic activity where men are involved in fishing while women are involved in fish mongering and trade (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security, 2009).

Just like the rest of Sierra Leone, Kambia District is severely ravaged by poverty with women and children being the most affected. This is attributed to barriers that women in Kambia District face that make them more exposed to poverty. Based on their culture, women in Sierra Leone are charged with the responsibility of feeding and taking care of homes and children (International Cities of Peace, 2019). As such, they are expected to stay at home and work on agricultural farm large that is largely subsistence. A large percentage of women in Kambia District are also illiterate as the region does not prioritize girl-child education (FAO Sierra Leone, 2022). Instead, as soon as the girl undergoes female genital mutilation, they are married off and this only worsens the position of women in Kambia District as far as development is concerned (Trócaire, 2022). Accordingly, it is because of these barriers that women in Kambia District face that make it a suitable region to use as a case study to understand the challenges facing women farmers in the agricultural sector given that the majority of women in the district are involved in subsistence

farming. Kambia District also serves as a suitable case study region because of extensive data on the research problem that will be readily available.

#### **4.2 Research design**

This study employed a qualitative research design because it would allow for the collection of qualitative data on lived experiences of female farmers about the issues contributing to the obstacle female farmers face in food production chains. A qualitative study is a type of research methodology that involves the use of non-numerical data to collect and analyse data (Maxwell, 2012). This differs from the quantitative method which involves the use of numerical or scientific data to answer a research problem. On one hand, the qualitative method is useful when the aim is to test a hypothesis or theory based on scientific data. On the other hand, qualitative research is considered most appropriate for us when the aim of the research is to understand the respondents' thoughts, views, or experiences. This study aimed to gain a deep understanding of the experiences and thoughts of the female residents of Kambia District in Sierra Leone about the gender-based obstacles they face in the agricultural sector, the factors fuelling the obstacles and the solutions thereof from the local's perspective. Accordingly, this justifies the need to use qualitative rather than quantitative research to investigate and answer the research problems.

#### **4.3 Sampling process**

The quality of data used in addressing a research problem is determined to a large extent by the samples and sampling technique used. There are several sampling techniques in use that are divided into probabilistic and non-probabilistic sampling techniques (Mujere, 2016). The choice of sampling technique used is influenced by many factors, including population size, the cost involved, convenience and accessibility. This study adopted multi-sampling technique to select the respondents to participate in the study. In the beginning, critical case sampling was used to identify the women's corporative society that serves primarily women. Critical case sampling is a sampling technique where the researcher uses his or her knowledge or experience or professional judgment to identify the population to recruit (Shaheen & Pradhan, 2019). Based on this sampling procedure, the researcher identified the Makuiya Women Farmers' Cooperative as the most ideal sample group. Since the members of this cooperative are all female farmers, they will be a critical case sample as they experience discrimination in agricultural production or are in close proximity to other women who have such experiences. As a critical sample, these women are more likely to provide more relevant, direct, and accurate information on the gender-based challenges facing female farmers in Kambia district. The researcher interviewed 8 leaders of the women's group and 12 members of the group participated in focus group discussions. The next step involved using simple random sampling techniques to recruit the women to participate in the study. Simple random sampling is a type of sampling that gives all members of a population an equal chance of being selected (Emerson, 2015). This method is considered advantageous because it eliminates the possibility of biasness

(Sharma, 2017). Using a simple random sampling technique 4 leaders and 12 members of Makuiya Women Farmers' Cooperative members were recruited for the study.

#### **4.4 Community entry**

Since the researcher was not able to travel to Sierra Leone for data collection, a research assistant was hired to aid in the data collection process in Kambia District. The research assistant is an agricultural extension officer employed by the Sierra Leone's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security for three years. She previously had a training session with Makuiya Women Farmers' Cooperative on the improvement of agricultural production last year. Since then, she is still linked with the cooperative as she performs monitoring and evaluation duties of various projects that the cooperative is undertaking in partnership with the ministry. The research assistant acted as a gate keeper by making the initial contact with the prospective participants and requesting their voluntary participation in the study after explaining to them the purpose of the study. Upon their acceptance to participate research assistant also sought the informed consent of the respondents through the signing of consent forms.

#### **4.5 Data collection tools**

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher used semi-structured interviews with 8 key informants who are leaders of the Makuiya Women Farmers' Cooperative. The semi-structured interviews were useful to collect data from respondents who have personal experiences, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes about the subject under investigation. In addition, the structure of the interviews gave the informants the freedom to express their opinions on their own terms. As Brinkmann (2014) notes, a semi-structured interview gives the participants room to express their views and opinions in detail. Accordingly, this method of data collection enabled the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the female participants in the study regarding the gender-based barriers that women face in the agricultural sector in Kambia, Sierra Leone. The researcher will conduct the interviews online.

The researcher employed focus group discussions in engaging with the 20 members of the Makuiya Women Farmers' Cooperative. Because of their similar experiences and backgrounds with regard to gender discrimination, focus group discussions may generate an in-depth understanding of the female farmers as a collective (Hennink, 2013). Also, because of its interactive nature, focus group discussions may generate more opinions and ideas among participants. Furthermore, focus group discussions are more appropriate for collecting data as it allows the researcher to get feedback from the respondents and give them a chance to ask questions as well as get an immediate response (Escalada & Heong, 2014). The main shortcoming of the focus group discussion was that only a few people might be active in the discussion, which might affect the quality of data gathered. The research assistant addressed

this limitation by constantly encouraging all members to participate in answering all questions by probing further and including follow-up questions.

#### **4.6 Data collection process**

After obtaining the informed consent of the leaders of Makuiya Women Farmers' Cooperative, the researcher and research assistant proceeded to schedule the date and time of the interview with each of these leaders at their most appropriate and convenient time. This was important because it would increase the response rate of the target respondents (Brinkmann, 2014). The interviews were conducted via WhatsApp calls. The researcher limited the duration of each interview to no more than 30 minutes. This was important as it made the managers more willing to participate in the study knowing that the interview will not take much of their time. Saunders et al. (2007) established that most respondents that abandon an interview cite lack of time as the main reason. For this reason, each interview was kept short to ensure that the respondents participate fully in the interview.

As for the focus group respondents, the process of data collection began with the research assistant inviting the 20 female participants that were already identified through random sampling and voluntarily agreed to participate. Because data from these participants were collected through a focus group meeting, the research assistant requested the management of the co-operative society to provide a hall within the facility where the focus group discussion would happen. In recognition of the fact that a large percentage of the participants have a low level of education due to barriers faced by Sierra Leone women, the researcher expected to experience language barrier. This is because although English is the de facto language in Sierra Leone, this is mainly spoken by the educated, while Krio is the local dialect that is spoken by the majority. For this reason, to overcome language barriers, the research assistant acted as a translator to the female respondents who may not understand the English language. This was important as it ensured good understanding between the interviewer and the respondents. Consequently, this ensured the full participation of all the respondents recruited in the study. Unlike the semi-structured interview, which is limited to 30 minutes each, the focus group session lasted for two hours. This was to ensure that each participant in the study gets a chance to give their views on the subject.

#### **4.7 Data analysis**

Collected data was analysed using the thematic analysis technique. As explained by Terry et al. (2017), thematic analysis is an effective approach to employ when trying to understand something concerning the experiences, knowledge, values, beliefs, or ideas of an individual from a set of qualitative data. Thematic analysis can be carried out in various manners with the most common method having six steps namely: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining, and labelling themes, and reporting findings (Joffe, 2012). Using qualitative data from interviews and focus groups the researcher established and



(R1)	34	Farmer and petty trader	1 acre	Family-owned	Primary 5	Average	Married
(R2)	46	Farmer and Traditional birth attendant (TBA)	1 acre	The husband is the owner	Illiterate	Low	Married
(R3)	29	Farmer and petty trader	½ an acre	The woman is the owner	Primary 4	Average	Single
(R4)	42	Farmer and petty trader	1 acre	The husband is the owner	Illiterate	Average	Married with 5 children
(R5)	39	Farmer and (TBA)	½ an acre	The husband is the owner	Illiterate	Low	Married with 2 children
(R6)	50	Farmer	1 acre	The husband is the owner	Illiterate	Low	Widow
(R7)	41	Farmer	1 acre	The husband is the owner	Illiterate	Average	Married with 4 children
(R8)	40	Farmer	¼ an acre	The woman is the owner	Primary 5	Low	Married
F o c u s g r o u p	2 5 0 5 5	Farmers	A v e r a g e o f 1 a c r e	The husband is the landowner for 11 of the women 1-woman farms on family-owned land	Highly illiterate	Low	Married Single widowed

The above table displays the demographic information of those people who took part in the study. All 8 respondents were over 29 years and below 50 years old. Their occupations include farming (3 people), farming and trade (3 people), farming, and traditional birth attendant (2 people). All the respondents have 1 acre of land except two whose land is less than an acre. Out of the 8 interviewees, one said her land is owned by the family, five stated that their husbands own the land, and two women said they are the owners of their land. From the focus group of 12 people, 11 women said their husbands own the land and only one woman was farming on family-owned land. The land ownership statistics show that the number of women who own the land they are farming is very small. Except for three respondents who are educated to primary four and five, the rest are illiterate. Four respondents stated that their income is average with the rest reporting low income. Five respondents are married and out of this number three have 5, 2, and 4 children respectively. One respondent is a widow and another one is single.

The last row in the table above comprises information about the focus group members. All 12 focus group members were aged between 25 and 55 years. All of them are farmers with land the size of 1 acre on average. All of them are highly illiterate with low-income levels. The group of

12 focus group participants was made up of single, married, and widowed people. The name of the group is the Makuiya women farmers group which was formed six years ago by vulnerable and marginalized women who are predominantly engaged in subsistence farming. The women are engaged in rice, groundnut, and vegetable gardening to sustain their lives, and pay school charges and medical bills for their families.



## Chapter 5: Findings and Analysis

In this chapter, the findings and the consequent discussion are presented. The discussion starts with gender-specific obstacles facing female farmers in agricultural production and their influencing factors. Next, it discusses the challenges faced by female farmers in accessing agricultural training opportunities, the improvement of the capacities of female farmers in the agricultural sector to be enhanced in addressing gender-based discrimination and the coping strategies of female farmers to gender-based discrimination in the agricultural sector.

### **5.1 Manifestation and reinforcement of gender-specific obstacles facing female farmers**

All the interview respondents (n=8) and focus group members (n=12) confessed that as female farmers they face various gender-specific challenges when they try to get resources for farming, access training opportunities and also marketing their produce.

#### **5.1.1 Access to and control over farming resources**

##### ***Land***

Some of the respondents (both from the focus group and interviews) complained about their small plots of land which are not sufficient for farming. Most of the power over land is vested in men and women suffer a lot when they want to get land. One of the participants mentioned that

*“Although I am a mother of six children, I have a very tiny piece of land for farming because that is what my husband has given me. I would love to get a bigger one but it is not possible now.”* (R 3)

Another participant explained that

*“Since my husband manages all the matters pertaining to the larger tracts of land, I only farm the small piece of land around the house. This is also convenient because I have to look after the children in the home because we have no nanny and he does not allow me to leave the home”* (R 4)

##### ***Farming tools***

Women also suffer from a lack of working tools. Two women complained of their inability to get good tools for farming.

*“I get many challenges with farming because my neighbours no longer want to lend me their tools for farming. Since the heads of neighbouring families are male, they are often opposed to me advancing in farming because they feel a woman should not outshine them. I am forced to pay money for farming tools which makes it hard for me to get the appropriate tools for farming...”* (R 7).

##### ***Good seeds***

Out of the 8 interview respondents, three of them complained of not having good seeds to sow. 6 of the 12 focus group members also raised the same issue.

*“My husband does not want to help me purchase seeds and my major challenge is accessing seeds on time for farming as most of the time I only get access to good seeds at the end of the farming season when the rains have gone which makes me not get better yields. (R 2)*

Another respondent mentioned that

*“Good seeds can be found in the shops but my financial capacity does not allow me to get them.” (R 6)*

### **Labor**

Of the 8 women interviewed, two stated that they faced challenges in accessing money for themselves which makes it difficult for them to hire labour for their farming, men will decide how much money or resources should be controlled by the woman. One respondent explained that,

*“Money has always been a big problem to me because I have no means of getting extra income or credit to support my farming and my husband says he is heavily burdened with other family needs that he cannot support me. We have seven children and that is proving to be a heavy burden on us” (R 3).*

### **Capital**

The female farmers also expressed lack of adequate capital to reinvest in their farming activities through paying for labour and goods seeds as most of their farm income is used to pay for daily family expenses and cater for food. One of the respondents mentioned that

*“I often have to take loan from our osusu kitty to buy seeds during planting season since most of money from the farm is finished on feeding the family and buying the children clothes.”*

The findings show that female farmers face challenges such as a lack of land, tools, seeds, and capital. A consistent study by the OECD (2020) shows that in many developing countries, the land is predominantly owned by men and women only farm the portion of the land that they have been allowed by their husbands hence their lack of access to land. The findings are supported by Kristjanson et al., (2017) who found that gender inequality in rural agriculture is manifested in terms of access to credit and control over financial resources because such resources are out of reach for most women. In another consistent study, Dery (2015) mentions that agriculture is resource intensive as it requires financial resources to acquire farm inputs.

The findings can be explained through the gender and development approach which suggests that gender roles and socially constructed differences between women and men in the family put

women in a subordinate position (Muyoyeta, 2020). The social construction of men and women denies women the power (socially and economically) to acquire land and capital for farming. Similarly, a study by Clement et al., (2019) explains how the feminist political ecology can be used to explore how gender dynamics affect how various people have access to agricultural resources. Since women are subordinated in their power dynamics with men, the availability of land and related resources to them and their control of it is limited.

### **5.1.2 Access and control over training opportunities**

Female farmers also complained of a lack of access to adequate formal agricultural training. From the focus group, a majority of the participants stated that they have no education or training opportunities. A respondent mentioned that

*“Most of us female farmers do not have formal education and that denies us the opportunity to receive training in agriculture and therefore, we only use our traditional methods to farm.... However, my two educated sons give some tips on modern agriculture but that is not enough” (FG 3)*

Traditional methods of farming are not effective but the women lack money to pay people to train them. From the interviews, all the respondents also lamented their lack of attending free training offered by the government but this is caused by different reasons such as lack of time, language barrier, and training being offered for a very short time. One participant recounted that:

*“Being a widow, accessing agricultural training is a big challenge for me as I have never been to school and most of this training is not done in the language I understand. I have no husband or children to help me in that” (R 1)*

Respondent 2 said that;

*“Most of the training is conducted at the district level for two or three days so it is hard for me to attend most times as I have to take care of my family.” (R 2)*

The respondents also cited a lack of permission from their husbands to attend training, a lack of invites, and the long distance they travel to reach the venue. For instance, one respondent mentioned that

*“Most of the time my husband refused to allow me to attend agricultural training as he sees it as a waste of time, he said I should be more focused on taking care of the children than travelling for training” (R 3)*

Another respondent explained that:

*“I have faced challenges with the transportation system because I live far from where the training takes place so most times I don’t attend. The organizers of the training have not been helpful in bringing the training closer to us” (R 4)*

The findings that women face a lack of education and training due to factors such as lack of time, language barrier, training being offered for a very short time, lack of permission, not being invited, and travelling for long distances to reach the training venue are supported in the literature by Liepins (2007) who states that globally, women and girls do not get adequate training and educational opportunities as men. The findings are congruent with Apusigah (2009) who attributes gender discrimination in most societies where women are still being seen as a lesser gender compared to their male counterparts. Therefore, society does not value their social and economic contribution and that is why they cannot be facilitated to get education and training. Based on the gender and development approach women are denied opportunities to own land and farm it because their assigned gender roles do not have room for that. Although women also engage in farming, gender-specific obstacles including lack of agricultural training and education and unequal treatment place them at a major disadvantage. (Basu & Galiè, 2021). Furthermore, Elmhirst, (2015) suggests that women lack education and training because they are under the control of their husbands who choose whether or not to allow them to attend training programs.

### **5.1.3 Access to markets and control over marketing decisions**

The participants from the Makuiya women farmers group (n=12) identified transport challenges in their effort to market their produce. They stated that they lack transportation due to bad road networks in the area. One woman mentioned that

*“There are no vehicles to transport our produce to the market and as a result, our goods perish and we experience a big loss.”*

Interviewees (n=8) also narrated their challenges in marketing their produce. They find it difficult to transport their produce to the market and some of them opt to sell it at cheaper prices to those who come to buy from them. A participant explained that

*“I face the challenge of transporting my produce to the market as I live far from the big town, I always face difficulties to meet people and telling them about my business.” (R 1)*

The challenges of farm produce getting spoilt due to lack of transport is a reality for female farmers. This leads to exploitation from middlemen and sometimes when the farmers reach the market with difficulty, they miss finding the targeted customers. With regard to this, respondent 9 mentioned that

*“I face the challenge with adding value to my farm produce as my vegetables get spoilt easily so getting people to buy them is difficult for me” (R 9)*

Another respondent mentioned that

*“My challenge is by the time I reach the market my vegetables will end up getting spoilt because of the bad road network so they will have less value, and no one will want to buy them.” (R 12)*

From the responses given, all the challenges faced by female farmers such as exploitation by middlemen, selling at a cheaper price, farm produce perishing and failing to get customers are linked to the lack of means for transport to the market. The findings are consistent with Hadley et al. (2008) who observed that a lot of women are wallowing in hunger and poverty more than their male counterparts because of discriminatory gender norms, cultural practices, and social structures in the communities. A similar observation is shared by Baig-Ansari et al. (2006) who observed that more women than men experience food insecurity due to discrimination against women on account of their gender and due to cultural practices. Women would be able to transport their farm produce to the market easily if they had the economic power to do that. However, such power lies with men. As suggested in the gender and development approach, the gender roles given to women such as raising children normally deny them opportunities to make money which they can invest in farming. In the gender and development approach, power dynamics and relations favour men (Kristjanson et al., 2017) and that means that women must depend on them to get the financial support they need for transporting their produce to the market. Due to gender discrimination and the subordination of women, such help may not be available all the time.

## **Analysis**

### ***i. Gender roles analysis of the findings***

The tools of the Harvard analytical framework are used in analyzing the situation of female farmers in Kambia district based on the responses provided by the participants.

### ***The activity profile analysis of the findings***

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Number of women</b>
<b>Productive activities</b>	
Agriculture	20
Employment	0
Small business owners	5
<b>Reproductive activities</b>	
Cooking	20
Childcare	20
Household cleaning chores	20
Water fetching	20

<b>Community involvement</b>	
Communal projects	8
Ceremonies	12
Community council meetings	5

*\*The total number of respondents was 20*

While all women engage in farming, three of them engage in small-scale trading and 2 of them act as traditional birth attendants. All the participants engage in reproductive labour activities mainly including taking care of the children, cleaning, and cooking. When it comes to community involvement, while a relatively high number of women are involved in community ceremonies, their role in these ceremonies is reproductive activities like cooking and event organizing. Fewer participants were however involved in community development projects and community council meetings, which embroils decision-making that affects the community in general.

#### ***The access and control profile analysis of the findings***

	<b>Number of women with access to resources/benefits</b>	<b>Number of women with control over resources/benefits</b>
<b>Resources</b>		
Land	19	7
Labour	8	6
Seed	13	9
Technology	6	8
Training	12	5
<b>Benefits</b>		
Income	7	4
Assets	9	3
Political power/prestige	5	3

*\*The total number of respondents was 20*

While the married women have access to the land they farm on, they do not own them because the title deeds of the lands are in the name of their husbands or their husband's families. Women who owned the land had more control over how the land can be used. Regarding access and control over the benefits of the land, the participants were found to have more access to benefits than control over these benefits. Some of the reasons for these included the man receiving the income and making decisions about how it should be used. Furthermore, the resulting assets of

the farming were mostly in the male’s name and he also had more say on how these assets should be used. With regard to agricultural training opportunities, many of the women could not access formal training opportunities as a result of such factors as language barrier and adequate time away from their childcare and house chores.

***The influencing factor analysis of the findings***

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Number of women affected</b>
Cultural norms	20
Social hierarchy	19
Institutional factors	29
Economic factors	19
Political factors	20

The community norms that were found to affect the female farmers’ access and control to agricultural resources included culture norms such as gender roles dictated by the community and enforced by chiefs, village elders and household heads. Various institutional factors were found to affect women’s access and control over agricultural resources by shaping their socio-economic status in the social hierarchy. The community setting, culture, home responsibilities and roles, family support, attitudes, and perceptions of women in the community, education, awareness, and mobility, all play a significant part in determining the socioeconomic status of female farmers. These findings are reflective of female farmers’ situation even in the developed nations as found by the studies of Sachs. et al. (2016) and Trauger (2004). The female farmers have low participation in providing economic support to the family because of their low level of education and socio-economic status. With regard to political factors, female farmers have low participation in decision-making regarding farming resources and benefits in male-headed families. These finding are similar to the study of Gurung (2008) who found that due to ingrained social inequality and economic hardship, women farmers have poor socioeconomic position. Ball (2020) also suggests similar hindrances for farmers.

**ii. Factors reinforcing gender-specific obstacles facing female farmers**

**Social relations analysis of the findings**

<b>Institutional elements of social relations</b>	<b>Findings of this study</b>
<b>Rules (How things get done)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customary and cultural norms dictate what is done? How is it done? By whom is it done? Who will benefit?</li> </ul>

<b>Activities (what is done)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In this study, household heads, family or the community own the land, women have access to conduct most of the farming activities</li> <li>• The benefits of the farming are used by the family/community but in the case of married women, their husbands often have control over the use of the benefits.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources (what is used and produced)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land is used to produce food and income</li> <li>• Decisions on how the lands and its benefits are utilized is mainly in the hands of men rather than the women who farm the land</li> </ul>
<b>People (who is in, who does what)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women mainly engage in reproductive labor</li> <li>• Agriculture and small trading are the main productive activities of women</li> </ul>
<b>Power (who decides and whose interests were served)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Husbands</li> <li>• Adult male members of the family</li> <li>• Household heads</li> <li>• Community chiefs</li> <li>• Heads of extended families (who are males)</li> </ul>

The main institutional areas considered in Kabeer’s Social relations analysis framework are the state, the market, the community, and the family.

The findings of the study reveals that cultural and customary norms heavily influence social relations among people involved in the agricultural sector. The patriarchal nature of the communities involved in this study allow for male household and community leaders to hold more power when it comes to making decisions about control, access, and usage of agricultural resources.

## **5.2 The coping mechanisms of female farmers to gender discrimination**

In order to improve their capacities in the agricultural sector female farmers apply various coping strategies to effectively address the social, legal, and economic challenges facing them.

### **5.2.1 Coping with the social gender-specific challenges**

The respondents discussed how they address the social gender challenges they face in accessing agricultural resources and making decisions and marketing their produce. The focus group members stated that they work together with other female farmers to speak out and demand their rights. A focus group participant said that



*“I collaborate with other women farmers, some of whom are my neighbours to raise our voices and demand for our rights. We lobby with NGOs to advocate for empowerment training. Sometimes we negotiate with them to bring the training programs in our area.”*  
(Focus Group 10)

The interviewees gave different strategies which they use to address the above-mentioned challenges. Two respondents stated that they have joined women’s groups and CBOs which help them in advocacy, especially for women empowerment. According to respondent 1,

*“I belong to a females-only farming group, so I can explain this gender-based discrimination in accessing resources to NGOs and civil society organizations that help to lobby and advocate for us.”* (R 1)

For others, joining Farm Based Organizations and Community Based Organizations and attending the trainings they conduct for farmers helps them to engage in better farming, make good decisions, and get market for their produce.

Three respondents stated that they rely on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) conducting training for men to help them teach those men about the rights of women when it comes to accessing resources. Others meet higher authorities that advocate for women to assist them to access land. Respondent 8 said that

*“Civil society organizations and NGOs advocating for women empowerment conducts training and invite the men, they help lobby and advocates for us to access resources which have helped us a lot.”* (R 8)

## **Analysis**

The findings that female farmers join women groups, CBO, FBO, and NGOs to help them overcome gender-based discrimination in farming are corroborated in the literature by Adeyemi (2010) who noted that gender-based inequality is widespread in the agricultural sector with the female gender being the most affected. The challenges experienced by women in farming may be solved through the gender and development approach. Ghale et al. (2018) argue that the idea of gender and development was created with the goal of focusing on empowerment, challenging uneven power relations between women and men, and also access to resources. Through NGOs, women can get the advocacy and support they need to challenge uneven power relations and the subordination they are subjected to by men. Furthermore, based on the food sovereignty agenda women can use these organizations and groups to democratically control food prices (Desmarais, 2007). To reverse present gender biases and discriminations, women will need to also enhance their capacity for collective action to ensure they are heard. The findings may also be understood through the feminist political ecology which according to Soto-Alarcón & González-Gómez, (2021) suggests that the use of natural resources by women is influenced by their gender

identities, social interactions, and relatively unequal decision-making rights. Therefore, feminist political ecology can be used to effectively analyse gender power relations in farming when they bargain for better relations with their husbands and decision-making opportunities.

### **5.2.2 Coping with economic gender-specific challenges**

The participants also discussed how they address the economic gender-specific challenges they face in accessing agricultural resources and making decisions and marketing produce. Most of the focus group reports stated that they organize fundraising and use village savings and loan schemes which they find useful for helping one another. One of the focus group' participants mentioned that

*“with other villagers, we embark on fundraising and establish village savings and loan schemes to help each other. We also engage the ministry of agriculture for training support and agricultural inputs.” (FG 5)*

From the responses given by the interviewees, women rely on loans from various institutions and village associations to overcome the gender-specific challenges they face. They also take part in support groups where they raise money for use on their farms. Respondent 1 uses institutions as she explained below

*“I often take loans from micro finance institutions so that I can be able to access resources for my agriculture.” (R 1)*

Another possible strategy is to use money obtained through the sale of farm produce to get the needed resources. Others get grants from government offices which are also used in offsetting economic challenges. Respondent 3 mentioned...

*“For me, I received grants from the agriculture office with small interest which I use to access land for farming and transporting my produce to the market.” (R 3).*

Other methods used by the women include working on the farms of other people to earn money for use on their own needs. Respondent 8 said:

*“Most times my services are hired to work on people's farms, I get paid and the money is used to cover other expenses. Sometimes these jobs are not there and I have to go without money” (R 8)*

All the above quotes show the innovative nature of women in finding alternative sources of money to meet their needs as female farmers.

### **Analysis**

The findings that women depend on fundraising, loans, selling farm produce, and working on the farms of other people can be understood based on the food sovereignty agenda which suggests

that it is not the market that controls food systems, but individuals along with their democratic organizations and institutions (Desmarais, 2008). Food policy should be the domain of ordinary men and women. Therefore, women should be proactive in finding solutions to their economic challenges as far as farming is concerned. The findings may also be considered through feminist political ecology which explores how gender dynamics affect how various people have access to agricultural resources and how to address these issues, notably through the empowerment of women socially and economically (Clement et al., 2019). Based on this approach, women should get economic empowerment through employment, the sale of farm produce, obtaining credit, and other ways so that they address the challenges facing them as female farmers. The findings may also be interpreted through the gender and development approach. As stated by Kristjanson et al., (2017), through the lens of GAD, there is need for empowerment of female farmers to access to land, finances, credit, market, training, and other resources which they need for meaningful farming.

### **5.2.3 Coping with the legal gender-specific challenges**

In order to address the legal gender-specific challenges faced by women, the participants of the focus group stated that they are in the process of engaging stakeholders who can help pass the bill in parliament and make sure that it is properly implemented. Respondent 7 mentioned that

*“We will engage our stakeholders to support the passing of the land bill right in parliament and ensure its implementation.” R 7*

The interviewees also narrated about a number of strategies they use to deal with the challenges they face as women. Some respondents (n=4) stated that they depend on legal organizations to help them get justice. Respondent 1 mentioned that

*“Legal organizations like The Access to Justice work with our farmers groups to help us fight these challenges. They often hold meetings to discuss important issues” (R 1)*

Another participant R2 explained that

*“As a female farmer, I ask help from organizations working with women to lobby and advocate for me since the justice system is slow and biased in terms of land disputes.” (R 2)*

Women also register the support of legal organizations to help them tackle legal issues that they are grappling with in their farming activities. They also get help from the women leader of their community to champion the rights of the local women through advocacy. Participant R4 mentioned that

*“Legal organizations provide support in different ways especially training” (R 4)*

## **Analysis**

As per the findings, the legal gender-specific challenges that women face can be overcome by engaging stakeholders, depending on legal organizations, and enlisting the help of organizations that advocate for their rights. These findings are consistent with Collins (2013) who argues that the challenge of female farmers can be solved through a higher social status attained by women. All the steps listed in the findings are geared toward creating empowerment for women, challenging uneven power relations between men and women, and increasing access to resources which are the goals of the gender and development approach. Based on this approach the mentioned strategies can help to solve the legal issues related to women. Furthermore, as stated by Joshi et al., (2021) the gender and development approach calls for addressing the underlying political and structural factors in agricultural management that cause gender discrimination. This approach should be applied to deal with the legal gender-specific factors affecting women in agriculture.

### **5.3 Enhancement of the capacities of the female farmers**

As narrated by the focus group members, female farmers apply various strategies to effectively address the social, legal, and economic challenges facing them in accessing agricultural resources and making decisions and marketing produce. Five respondents stated that they take part in radio discussions for the purpose of informing the public about the reasons why women should be allowed to access agricultural resources. Through radio, they can reach many people, especially men who need to understand the purpose of letting women get the resources they need for farming.

*“We cooperate with some NGOs through radio discussions to sensitize the public on the importance of women’s access to agricultural resources.” (FG 5)*

The women also said that they reach out to stakeholders such as the government from which they hope to get help in their struggle to enhance the capacities of women to address gender-based discrimination.

*“We engage stakeholders such as the chiefs, and district council. Ministry of agriculture and ministry of Lands to advocate for the reformation of the customary laws hindering women’s participation in agriculture. We also seek advocacy around the implementation of the land bill by landowners.” (FG 7).*

Some of the women who took part in the interviews stated that they cooperate with other members of their community to seek to be supported from Non-governmental organizations, governments, and civil society organizations.

*“I will join forces with other farmers to advocate for support from NGOs, civil society organizations and the government” (R 1)*

Another important strategy applied by the female farmers is talking to stakeholders to persuade them to treat women and men equally when they give opportunities for taking part in agriculture and acquiring resources and opportunities for making decisions.

*“We talk to stakeholders such as the government and local agricultural organizations to give equal opportunity to both women and men to participate in agriculture, access to agricultural resources and decision-making processes.” (R 3)*

In engaging stakeholders, the women also plan for and attend meetings with government officials and stakeholders to reconstruct feeder roads to facilitate the quick and swift transportation of goods from the farms to the market. Engaging stakeholders to lobby the government to bring development to their areas is a suggestion given by some women but so far, they have not succeeded in bringing the government to reconstruct any road. However, the women expressed optimism that through their local leaders and other relevant stakeholders their efforts will bear fruit because they are approaching the issue in groups and not individually.

*“We will organize meetings with both stakeholders and government authorities to rehabilitate the feeder roads to make them accessible to vehicles so traders and buyers can come to our community to buy our produce” (R 4)*

Some of the interview participants said that they come together and make contributions of money which they put to use in paying for transportation to take their farm produce to the market.

*“We will contribute money to hire vehicles to convey our products to the market. That will succeed because as farmers we cooperate and work things out with unity.” (R 3)*

Since it is not always easy to get adequate financial support from their husbands and other men in their families and community, some of the female farmers opt to put together their own contributions which they collectively use to acquire transport vehicles to carry what they harvest on their farms to the market.

Advocating for agricultural and marketing training for women’s groups is considered by women to be a strategy for becoming self-reliant in their farming. This is important because reliance on men is not helping them to move forward but instead many of them complained that they are stuck due to the many obstacles in their way.

*“I have already discussed with my fellow women to team up and advocate for agricultural and marketing training for women groups to build our capacity and be self-reliant.” (R 5)*

Training is important for women to get the skills and knowledge required for them to conduct their farming activities in a modern way.

Advocating for the cutting down of the costs of transport so that it becomes easier for them to take their farm produce to the market was also cited as one of the ways of increasing their capacities to deal with gender-based discrimination.

*“We are discussing with our husbands who are willing to help us advocate for a reduction in the transport cost so that we can be able to convey our products to the market without incurring high costs that can erode our profits” (R 7)*

The respondents also stated that they have plans to speak to their husbands and other men in their families whom they believe are playing a role in their subordination to ensure that these men understand how and why women need to be given equal treatment with men. As female farmers, they may try many techniques but helping their men to understand the benefits of treating them equally is paramount.

*“We try to request our husbands to attend our meetings where we educate men to treat us equally and allow access to community resources and let them know that empowered women can build happy homes. Some men are willing but others are showing resistance” (R 8)*

Educating men may be a difficult strategy to implement because society does not allow women to have a voice in the family but with time it may bear fruits.

## **Analysis**

In this section, the study found that for them to improve their capacities in the agricultural sector, women take part in radio discussions, reach out to stakeholders, cooperate with other members of their community to seek to be supported from Non-governmental organizations and cooperate with other community members. They also talk to stakeholders to persuade them to treat women and men equally, attend meetings with government officials to renovate feeder roads, advocate for agricultural and marketing training for women’s groups, advocate for the cutting down of the costs of transport and advocate for agricultural and marketing training for women’s groups. In the literature, (Dallmann et al. (2015) these findings may be related to the food sovereignty agenda which advocates for the control of food systems by people and their own institutions. This means that through different efforts such as those mentioned in the findings, women must become empowered to take control of food systems including production and marketing.

The gender and development approach may also be used to discuss the findings of this study. The GAD approach advocates for improved power relations between men and women and a review of the gender roles given to women which deny them rights to land and other resources necessary for farming. A study by Kristjanson et al., (2017) shows that GAD can ensure that there is equality and it can reinforce the efforts identified in the findings by giving women a voice in the family and society and breaking the social construction of gender roles and division of labour that stops women from engaging in meaningful and profitable agriculture. Muyoyeta (2020) states that by GAD enhancing power relations so that women have a bigger say in the ownership and control of land, the capacities of female farmers in the agricultural sector would be enhanced. Female

farmers would then overcome any type of discrimination in land access and control so that they can make meaningful decisions about land and farm activities (Basu & Galiè, 2021). With the GAD approach, female farmers would no longer be subordinated when it comes to land access and control so that they become empowered to acquire land, credit, finances, market, and other resources that are necessary for profitable farming.

The study findings may also be discussed in view of the feminist political ecology approach. As stated by Sundberg (2016) the feminist political ecology approach argues that gender plays a serious role in determining who has access to, authority over, and understanding of resources including those resources needed for agriculture. Since women face gender discrimination, their access to and control of the resources needed for farming is limited. Therefore, to try and gain more power they must employ tactics such as the ones described in the findings. For example, taking part in radio discussions may help to create awareness about their plight as female farmers and the outcome would be the relaxation of the customs and traditions that deny women access to land. Seeking the support of the government for infrastructural (road) development and working with NGOs and other stakeholders are important strategies for improving the capacity of women. Facilitating education for men can also help to educate men about women empowerment and the need to abandon retrogressive traditional practices where women are treated as subordinates.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

This study sought to examine the sources of the gender-based challenges that Makuiya female farmers face, the solutions employed and how their capacities can be enhanced in addressing these challenges. To achieve this objective the study employed secondary and primary research approaches through a pragmatic research design. The study arrived at a number of essential findings about the topic under investigation.

Regarding the factors influencing the discrimination of female farmers, gender roles analysis revealed that they mainly engage in reproductive activities (childcare, household chores) and this sometimes limit their capacity to engage in productive farming. Furthermore, their involvement in community activities that affect decision making on general agricultural activities is limited. With regard to access and control of agricultural resources, marital status, male support, low-income status and low educational status, low political power were found and lack of land ownership were found to undermine the farmers' access to and control over these resources. Moreover, patriarchal community setting, male-leadership culture, gender roles, lack of family support, low education, and low mobility, as well as negative attitudes, and perceptions of women in the community all played a significant part in influencing the low socio-economic status of female farmers. The findings of the study reveals that cultural and customary norms heavily influence social relations among people involved in the agricultural sector. The patriarchal nature of the communities involved in this study allow for male household and community leaders to hold more power when it comes to making decisions about control, access, and usage of agricultural resources.

To cope with the gender-based discrimination that female farmers encounter in the agricultural sector, women also employ several social, economic, and legal strategies. Female farmers deal with economic gender-specific challenges they face in accessing agricultural resources by organizing fundraising and using women micro-financial capital accumulation savings and loan schemes called '*osusu*' which they find useful for helping one another. Legal gender-specific challenges are addressed through engagement with stakeholders who are in the position of helping to pass bills in parliament and follow-up to ensure the implementation of those bills.

The notion of gender and development was created with the goal of focusing on empowerment, challenging uneven power relations between women and men, as well as access to resources and the worth of women's many roles, their various identities and demands throughout communities. Most of the efforts made by the respondents are in line with the above-described GAD policy. However, a few observations do not fit into the GAD policy. It was expected that men would support their wives in getting training and education because that is part of empowering them. Men were also expected to support their wives financially so that they can improve their agricultural output but that is not prevalently happening as seen from the findings of this study. Female farmers complained of high levels of subversion with very low levels of cooperation from



their husbands. The produce and income generated from the subsistence farming was expected to feed the family and provide cater for everyday expenses. After doing this, the female farmers would not be left with adequate income to reinvest in the farm by paying for good seeds, labour, and formal training.

When undertaking this study, there were several challenges. Getting the women to talk openly about their gender-related challenges in the community was especially difficult. Given the high level of subservience of female farmers, some of them were too shy to explain matters pertaining to the lack of cooperation from their husbands because they did not want to paint them in a bad light as the heads of the families. However, the researcher assured them that the data collected will be confidential and anonymous and they opened up.

A perceived limitation of this study may be that it did not include male farmers to compare their views that those of female farmers. Future studies on productivity differences in women's and men's farmers in developing countries should include a comparative analysis of male and female farmers.

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