

**GENDER INEQUALITY AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, ACASE STUDY OF LABONGO
LAYAMO SUBCOUNTY, KITGUM DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

In Uganda, the agricultural sector contributes substantially to gross domestic product. Although the involvement of Uganda women in the sector is extensive, female farmers face significant obstacles, caused gendering that impedes their ability to expand their family business and to generate incomes. Gender refers to social or cultural categories by which women and men relationships are conceived. This study was based on the general objective which is to examine the effect of gender inequality on agricultural development. A case of Labongo Layamo sub county, Kitgum District in Northern Uganda. The study further sought to explore the factor that promotes gender inequality in agricultural development. Questionnaire and in-depth interviews were used in collecting the primary data which later were presented in a tabular form. Qualitative and quantitative data was used for interpretation according to the themes (features of participants) arise. The study adopted a participatory approach involving fields visits for the purpose of interactions with the target groups to examine gender inequality in agricultural development in Labongo Layamo subcounty. Sampling techniques and Sample size was the unit of analysis involving men and women in Labongo Layamo Sub County. Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents for the study. Purposive sampling was used to select administrators in agriculture sector, while the selection of farmer's included 15 males, 15 females and 5 youths. From the findings, a majority (79%) indicated that both men and women did not have equal access to land while 21% indicated that men and women had equal access to land in the division. The respondents explained that men had more land accessibility compared to women due to cultural issues such as land inheritance and high economic power. The study sought to know whether both men and women had equal accessibility to mechanization. A majority (88%) of the respondents indicated that men and women did not have equal accessibility to mechanization while 12% stated that both men and women did. Households involved in farming should seriously take the advice of the technical teams to support the gender mainstreaming programs and creating gender awareness within their family and even to the neighbors for their own benefit in improving their livelihood or welfare.

Key words: **gender inequality and agricultural development**

Background of the Study.

Agricultural productivity is generally low in many sub-Saharan African countries, where the majority of farmers are smallholders (Allan et al., 2023). It is even lower for farmers, who make up 50% of the region's agricultural workforce (Collins et al., 2023).

A report by the International Fund for Agricultural Development cited in (Allan et al., 2023) showed that the percentage of female-headed households (FHH) in rural areas of eastern and southern Africa ranges from 25 to 60% (Oromo et al., 2023). Female-headed

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households are not homogeneous. They can be largely divided into two categories: households headed by women who are not married, divorced or widowed (de jure female FHHs whose husbands are away from home for work or other reasons (Zowena et al., 2023). Reasons for the increase in the number of female-headed households are migration of men from rural areas to find work elsewhere, widowhood, divorce and other family disruptions (Lydia et al., 2023). Farmers and farmers vary across and within sub-Saharan African countries. Empirical evidence shows that the agricultural productivity gap between women and men in sub-Saharan African countries is generally around 20 to 30%, with an average of 25% (Christopher, Moses, et al., 2022). The productivity gap between MHH and FHH from northern to southern Ethiopia ranges from 30 to 65%, respectively (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022). One of the key reasons why women farmers have lower productivity is the difference in the use of

inputs such as improved seed, fertilizer and labour, and access to other resources affecting productivity, such as education, extension, and credit (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara et al., 2023).

Uganda is considered an agriculture-based economy and the food basket of East Africa, due to its ability to produce a variety of foods and in large quantities. It includes the subsectors of food and cash crop production, livestock, forestry and fishing. These subsectors contributed 62, 8, 17 and 13 percent to the gross domestic product (GDP) of agriculture in 2011/12 (Frank et al., 2023). Agriculture is considered an important sector, contributing 23.7 percent to GDP (at current prices) in 2011/12 (Lydia et al., 2023). According to the 2008/9 UCA, there were approximately 3.95 million small and medium agricultural households with a population of 19.3 million persons (60% of Uganda's population) producing the majority (over 95 percent) of food and cash crops.

Statement of the Problem

Gender inequality in the agriculture sector in Uganda has been a predominant issue for many decades. This is because access to assets, productive resources, and education remains low especially for women. This has been attributed to various issues such as poverty, high rates of unemployment, increased demand for agricultural land, poor infrastructure, and lack of education as well as diseases especially the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Nelson & Christopher, 2022). In the general district the illiteracy rate is high with female having 68%, high rate of dropout rate 56% for primary schools as compared to national level at 40% this is attributed to the prolonged insurgency causing loss of properties, livestock production and infrastructure. This has led to household food insecurity and high poverty level of 30%. The total primary school enrolment 64245 are pupils (Vincent & Peter, 2023), and 34153 are boys and 30,092 are girls which are unequal boys take 54.4% compared to girls 45% (Ministry of Gender Labor and Social Development, October 21, 2015) in Labongo Layamo Sub county gender inequality in education has been high where enrolment of boy had been 52% compared to that of girls which stands at 48% with the dropout rate for boys being 5.2% compared to that of girls 8.8% (Wegulo et al., 2023). There are gender gaps in the use of agricultural

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technology in Uganda, including applications of inbred varieties and animals breeds, fertilizers, pest control measures, feeds etc. The use of purchase depends availability of commentary asset such land, credits, education and land. all of which are more constraint for female headed households than for male headed house, (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023). The primary school going population (6-13 years) makes up to 20.3% of the district total population and was estimated to be 131,235 in 2011 with the highest percentage being that of boys (Ministry of Education, 2008). Though women in the region is trying to enlist men into active participation in support groups related to agriculture, cultural constraints such as early marriages still remain a hindrance.

Objective of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of gender inequality on Agricultural Development in Labongo Layamo Sub County.

Specific objectives of the Study

1. To explore the factors that promotes gender inequality in agricultural development.
2. To determine the challenges that men, women and youth face in agricultural development.
3. To determine the farmers' perception on men and women inequality in agricultural development.

Methodology

The research adopted a descriptive research design and utilized both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study adopted a participatory approach involving field visits for the purpose of interaction with the target groups to objectively assess gender inequalities in agriculture development in Labongo Layamo Sub County. The study area was conducted in Labongo Layamo Sub County located kilometer from Kitgum town, country Uganda East Africa. Labongo Layamo lie in the position latitude (width) 302203.6 2 N (3.3676800⁰). And longitude (length) 32055.09.4 E (32.9192900⁰) altitude, elevation of 977meters (3,205 feet). The study was conducted in Labongo Layamo Sub County in parishes like Pagen, Paibor, Ocettoke, Kitgum district in northern Uganda. Major food crops grown include maize, simsim, soya bean, cassava and beans. The major cash crop include is simsim. In Labongo Layamo Sub County, the population projection was 11,800 by 2015/07/01; currently the population projection was 12,700 by (2020), areas of 1115.6 km² and population density of 109.9/km² in 2020 and 1.5% Annual population change from (2015 -2020). The population in term of Gender, Males is 6,300 (49.6%) and Females 6,400 (50.4%). Source Uganda Bureau of Statistics. (UBOS Web). The area has rich agricultural land with fertile soils and good climatic conditions. The area was selected for study because of unequal opportunities among the gender and the parishes selected for included Pagen, Paibor and Ocettoke only. The study population comprised of farmers from labongo layamo parishes like Pagen Ocettoki Paibor and villages like Pagen central west, Paibor central and west, Ocettoki west and central villages. The sample frame was obtained from Village local leaders. The list was formally comprised of only head of household from families or groups leaders. With the help of village Agricultural

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Extension officers, the list was updated to include female farmers from those households so as to achieve comprehensiveness of the frame. Therefore, the unit of analysis in this household was individuals involved in agricultural production. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select 30 respondents from the list of all farmers (12 700) from different villages, only 5 households' respondents from each village. The respondents include both men and women from households producing coffee. Though according to (Matata et al., 2001), a range of 80 – 120 respondents is adequate for most of social economic studies in Sub Saharan Africa. The target population consisted of agricultural directors, farmers group leaders, crop production officers, animal production officers, human resources personnel and field extension officers in Labongo Layamo Sub County. These staff will provide information on gender parity and retention ratio and on what they are engaged in currently in achieving gender balance. The target population of the study was the respondents. The unit of analysis involved men and women in Labongo Layamo Parishes. Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents for the study to select 30 farmers from the different households Purposive sampling was used to select 3 administrators in agriculture sector, Random sampling was used to select the sample of respondents to give statistics on the trends in gender issues in agriculture. Sample size was determined using experienced farmers, village leaders' administrator in agriculture sector. Qualitative and quantitative data were interpreted according to the themes arising. Data were presented in the form of frequency tables, pie-charts and graphs using SPSS and STATA (Nelson et al., 2022). Primary data were analyzed with respect to measures of central tendency while frequency distributions were used to establish the number of respondents giving certain information.

RESULTS

Table 1. Agricultural activities of the respondents.

Activities	Men	women	Both	Boys	Girls
Land preparation	15	32	47	5	1
Sowing	17	34	45	1	3
Weeding	27	39	18	2	4
Harvesting	29	42	25	1	1
Value addition	33	50	17	0	0
Marketing	46	29	30	0	0
Drying	33	30	24	0	0

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The respondents were requested to indicate the challenges they faced on the farms while undertaking their activities. Female respondents indicated that they faced challenges such as lack of funds to employ casual laborers and to buy farm tools. The respondents were requested to indicate whether women and men had equal access to land (Ntirandekura, 2022). From the findings, a majority (79%) indicated that both men and women did not have equal access to land while 21% indicated that men and women had equal access to land in the division. The respondents explained that men had more land accessibility compared to women due to cultural issues such as land inheritance and high economic power (Ramadhan et al., 2023). The study sought to know whether both men and women had equal accessibility to mechanization. A majority (88%) of the respondents indicated that men and women did not have equal accessibility to mechanization while 12% stated that both men and women did. The respondents indicated that most women had no skills on how to use machines neither did they have the funds to buy them. The respondents were requested to indicate who determined the planting time and the individual to carry out the planting (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). Many of the informants (41%) indicated that both men and women were responsible for determining the planting time and the person (s) responsible for planting. However, 36% indicated that men decided when planting should be undertaken and the person responsible for planting while 25% of the respondents indicated that women decided when to plant and who did the planting as indicated in table 2 below.

Table 2: Individual responsible for determining planting time and planting responsibility

	Frequency	Percentages
Men	15	10
Women	10	15
Both	5	5
Total	30	30

The study sought to ascertain whether women and men had equal access to savings and credit facilities in SACCOs and cooperatives. From the findings, a majority (88%) indicated that women and men did not have equal accessibility to savings and credit facilities while 12% indicated otherwise (Derrick et al., 2023). The respondents explained that financial institutions such as SACCOs and cooperative tend to discriminate women on financial services since a majority does not have assets that they can offer as collateral to banks as compared to men

The respondents were requested to indicate the challenges facing men and women in accessing inputs in Labongo Layamo subcounty. The respondents indicated that there was a need for sensitization on how they could access funds to buy the inputs. The respondents further indicated that SACCOs and cooperatives should define their

financial services to provide soft loans to enable men and women purchase farm inputs. The respondents were requested to indicate who decides what should be consumed from the farm and what would be sold (Alex & Kazaara, 2023). A majority (53%) of the respondents indicated men greatly influenced what needed to be consumed and what was to be sold, although 29% indicated men and women while 20% indicated women. This implied that men dominate decisions in the selling of farm output.

The respondents were requested to state whether men or women controlled the selling of food crops from the farms (Polycarp et al., 2023). A majority (69%) indicated that men had control on the sale of food crops while 31% indicated women. The respondents explained that food crops were taken to the markets while others were sold to brokers who then searched for markets in the urban centre. On how cash crop produce was sold, the respondents indicated that the cash crops were taken to the factories where they were sold through the farmers' cooperative societies. The respondents were requested to indicate whether women had power over the pricing of agricultural products (N. Moses et al., 2022). A majority (63%) indicated that women had no control over the pricing of the products while 38% indicated that women had control. The respondents explained that men always had an upper hand as they were the ones accorded the responsibilities of looking for the markets, hence; they were more informed on market conditions and on product demands and prices.

The respondents were requested to indicate whether the returns obtained from sales were divided equally. The study results show that 89% of the respondents although 11% stated that the returns were shared equally (Wegulo et al., 2023). The respondents mentioned that men always took the larger share claiming that they had more responsibilities in the family such as buying basic needs, paying school fees and undertaking other investments for the families. The respondents also indicated that men took much of the returns from the sales as culturally they were said to be the heads of the families making women as lesser partners in the process. The respondents were requested to indicate the individual responsible for the utilization of the returns from sales. A majority (56%) indicated that men determine the ways through which returns from the sales were to be utilized. However, 24% mentioned that both men and women decided on the utilization of the returns from the sales while 20% stated that both men and women determined how the returns from the sales were utilized (K. Moses et al., 2023).

This implied that although there were cases where women would be involved in investment decisions, men dominated in determining how returns on farm gains were to be utilized. From the findings, 56% of the respondents indicated that youths were active in agricultural activities while 44% stated that the youth were not. The respondents stated that the common agricultural activities that the youth in engaged in are cultivating, weeding and harvesting. This study sought to know whether there are preferences in the selection of crops to be grown. Eighty four percent of the respondents indicated that there are preferences in the selection of crops to be grown while 16% mentioned that there are no preferences (Faridah et al., 2023).

The study sought to know whether youths have access to credit and savings facilities. A majority (68%) of the respondents indicated that the youth have access to credit and savings facilities while 38% of the respondents stated that they did not. This is because the youth hardly earned enough money to invest in the SACCOs. Further, a proportion of the youth believe that SACCOs are for the elderly (District et al., 2023). On how the youth market and sell their produce, the study found that they take their produce to the local markets, major towns or they sell to the villagers and brokers. This study sought to investigate how sustainable agricultural activities are among the youth. Some respondents indicated that agricultural activities were not suitable at all as they did not give adequate returns for their basic needs (Oscar et al., 2023). The study further found that some agricultural activities enabled the youth to create their own employment opportunities. Also, that they earned money to support themselves and their families, and enabled them to receive basic training on marketing skills and farm management.

Conclusions of the study

The study concluded that women were greatly involved in weeding, harvesting and drying of crops while men undertook the role of value addition as well as marketing. This implied that gender inequalities in agriculture were evident from the disparities in the individuals who undertook farming activities in labongo layamo sub county.

Recommendations

To community

Households involved in farming should seriously take the advice of the technical teams to support the gender mainstreaming programs and creating gender awareness within their family and even to the neighbors for their own benefit in improving their livelihood or welfare.

The community leaders should create awareness on gender equity to the community especially during public meeting or any gathering.

Women should be given access to land, productive resources, technologies and ownership of the resources in their locality.

To local leaders

Local leaders in labongo layamo Sub County, kitgum District should always try to involve both genders especially women in the top administration, sensitization of community about women rights, involving women in the developmental initiatives or projects especially agricultural mechanization and technologies.

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