



**Strategies to Promote Equal Access and Control of Land and Dairy Products for
Improved Household Welfare in Murang'a County, Kenya.**

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Abstract

Studies have revealed that there exist gender inequality in access and control of resources, benefits and opportunities in the society including agricultural resources and benefits. This may influence the provision of household welfare by men and women. This informed the concern of this study which sought to identify the strategies that can be put in place to promote gender equality in access and control of land and dairy products for improved household welfare. The study was done in Murang'a County-Kenya. The study was guided by the Marxist Feminism theory and Women Empowerment Framework advanced by Friedrich Engels and Sarah Longwe respectively. It was a cross-sectional research study focusing on both qualitative and quantitative data. Kigumo Sub County was purposively sampled as the area of the study. In addition, a simple random sampling technique was used to select a total of four hundred and forty-two (442) male and female headed households practicing dairy farming in the Sub-county as the respondents of the study. The key informants of the study were community leaders and key county officers. For data collection the study utilized interview schedules for the selected household heads, guided questionnaires for the key informants and an observation checklist. Qualitative data was analyzed on the basis of themes derived from the study objective while quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS. The study identified and recommended gender awareness raising, enhancement of adult education program, enforcement of legal requirements on human rights as the main strategies for enhancing gender equity on access and control over land and dairy products for enhanced household welfare.

Key words: Strategies, promote, equal, access and control, land and dairy products, household welfare



1.1 Introduction

A number of international, regional and national legal and regulatory frameworks and instruments have been established to promote equality and reduce discrimination in resource distribution, benefits and opportunities in all spheres. Such framework includes the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (1979), the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (1995), the 2003 Protocol to African Charter on Human and People's Rights, and the 2004 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality. Following their endorsement, many countries in Africa formulated different policies and guidelines to promote the goals of safeguarding gender parity. Such strategies entail constitutional amendments and review of existing laws, land reforms amendments and land subdivision policies and plans to be more gender-sensitive and responsive. However, the United Nations (2003) noted that the legislative reforms in many African countries are challenged by a number of major bottlenecks, firstly there is illiteracy which is very high coupled with ignorance of citizens about the important duties and responsibilities that women undertake in the socio-economic growth process of the country. Secondly, the inherent traditional ideologies and obsolete norms and beliefs that hinder female gender from being involved in the economic growth process of the country. Thirdly, there is lack of suitable expertise and technology to reduce the routine duties of women at the family level and finally, there is scarcity of competent women development managers to assist in building women's capacity. This result into increased rates of gender disparity in social economic and political spheres. It is believed that gender inequality is likely to influence the provision of household welfare given that provision of quality household welfare is mainly dependent on use, control of benefits, opportunities, resources and profits that the society has to offer for both women and men.

In Africa, the Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) commonly referred to as the Banjul Charter focuses on the rights of women in relation to property use, control and ownership. Article 21 gives requirements for women rights to own and inherit family possessions. Therefore, similar to global human rights mechanisms, the African Charter recognizes the significance of rights of women to access, control and own resources. Nevertheless, Davis (2012) reported that it is only 36 out of 54 members of the African Union (AU) have "consented" to the agreement. To make it worse, those countries which have ratified the Banjul protocol are faced with challenges of conceptualizing, executing and



comprehending its goals of fairness and justice in access and control of property by both men and women (Davis, 2012). It is unfortunate to note that women lose property control and ownership rights after marriage in spite of the existing constitutional and legal requirements (Bikaako and Ssenkumba, 2006). Although there have been a lot of efforts put in place to promote rights of women to own and control properties, their execution has been sluggish and irregular with some regions showing signs of progress while others lag behind (Davis, 2012). Karen (2013) observed that Kenyan citizens and especially women had high expectation that the implementation of the Kenya Constitution 2010 would in practice supersede customary laws, cultural and customary beliefs and practices in relation to land that currently exist. They thought that it would initiate the change process that could enhance gender parity and justice in relation to women's access, control and ownership of all productive resources in Kenya including land and dairy products. However this did not happen majority of women still lack resources inheritance right.

Kimaro et al. (2013) in their study in Tanzania recommended strategies for empowering women through integration of gender equality in the development process for women's economic and sustainable development. In addition, Olumakaiye and Ajayi (2006) reported that empowering women is fundamental in achieving food security in Africa. While, Bhatta (2001) observed that improving access to productive resources by subsistence farmers is the best ways of promoting sustainable human development which in turn enhances food security and family wellbeing. In addition, Mogute (2015) reported that women's property rights could be enhanced through deliberate efforts geared towards creating awareness on women rights. Although, most people in Kenya do not observe women's property rights because they were largely ignorant of their benefits (Kimani, 2016, Kameri-Mbote, 2007) and KHRC, 2006). Unfortunately, the affected women could not demand for their property rights because they are unaware and majority of them are not educated (KHRC, 2003).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Studies have revealed that there is a lot of legal framework and mechanism at national and international level aimed at addressing the gender inequality in all spheres including agriculture. Despite all these measures gender inequality still exist. Evidently, gendered access and control over agricultural resources, opportunities and utilization of benefits is mainly biased against women. Which is likely to influence the ability of women to provide household



welfare for their families as stipulated in the legal frameworks on gender equity, equality and fulfilment of human rights including the Kenyan constitution (2010). The concern of this study was informed by the observation that despite the remarkable progress in advancement of gender equality and equity in all spheres the imbalances still exist and it is likely to hinder the achievement of sustainable development and the provision of household welfare thus increasing vulnerability to hunger, starvation and poverty. Thus, the concern of this study being the strategies that can be put in place to promote equal access to land and dairy products for improved household welfare in Murang'a County, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to identify strategies that can be put in place to promote equal access and control of land and dairy products for improved household welfare in Murang'a County, Kenya.

1.4 Objective of the Study

The study was guided by the following objective:

- i. To identify strategies to be put in place to improve access and control of land and dairy products for improved household welfare in Murang'a County, Kenya.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Marxist Feminism Theory (MFT) advanced by Friedrich Engels (1884) as well as the Women Empowerment Framework (WEF) advanced by Sarah Longwe (1994).

The theory focuses on the social institutions of private property and capitalism with a focus on gender inequality and oppression emanating from gendered access and control of economic resources. The theorist argues that individual ownership of property promotes economic disparity in ownership, access and control of resources and derived benefits. The relationship ultimately creates domestic struggle between men and women especially in situations of scarce resources. Additionally, the economic inequality may influence the provision of basic necessities at household level. This is particularly true with agricultural activities done around the household and which include dairy farming. The status may influence the provision of family welfare at the household level. In this respect, Marxist feminists believe that barring women from decision making has resulted in male supremacy in control of both social and economic spheres thus expanding the gender gaps in agricultural



production including land and dairy farming. It is in this respect that the study assumes that gendered access and control of land and dairy products may have a direct impact on the general family welfare especially centered on the provision of basic needs.

On the other hand, women empowerment framework by Sarah Longwe aims at helping the planners in questioning the meaning of empowerment and equality in development activities, and in assessing the extent to which access and control of resources enhance empowerment. The framework defines women's empowerment as allowing women to be in control of their lives and participate fully and equally in the development process in order to promote their potential and have full control over the economic factors. Longwe framework views women empowerment as a tool to emancipate people from poverty by giving them power to design their own lives. In the same concept, poverty is not brought by lack of economic productivity, but from inequalities arising from gender discrimination and biases which is represented through subjugation and misuse. The framework further recognizes the gender gap that emanates from lack or limited access and control of agricultural resources between men and women. Based on the above facts, Longwe's framework set the tone that equal access and control of resources can result in increased empowerment.

2.1 Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design by utilizing mixed research methodologies focusing on the study variables namely strategies to promote equal access to and control of land and dairy products for enhanced household welfare. The study was carried out in Murang'a County, Kenya. The unit of investigation was all households practicing dairy farming in the County. The target population was male and female headed households that have engaged in dairy farming for more than three years prior to the study period and those who had two or more dairy cows. The study also relied on information provided by the following key informants: the Chiefs, the milk collection managers, the Sub-county livestock production officers and agricultural officers. Multi stage sampling procedure was used to select the study respondents. First, a simple random sampling was used to select Kigumo Sub-County in Murang'a County. Secondly, the three locations in Kigumo Sub County were selected for this study that is Kinyona, Kigumo and Muthithi. Further a total of four hundred and forty two (442) respondents who met the study inclusion and exclusion criterion were selected from the list of dairy farmers obtained from the County Department of Livestock Production. The study findings were generated through the use of secondary and primary data, the primary data was

generated through the use of three instruments namely: an interview schedule for the household heads, guided questionnaire for the key informants and an observation checklist. Mixed methods of analysis was used to analyze both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data was analyzed based on major themes derived from the study objectives while the quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS and later presented using tables, frequencies and percentages. Ethical and logistical consideration and requirements were adhered to during data collection.

3.1 Findings and Discussion

The study findings revealed the strategies that the household heads thought would enhance household welfare through access and control of land and dairy products by men and women. The frequently mentioned strategy was raising awareness on equal access and control of land and dairy products followed by enhancement of adult education program focusing on women and enforcement of legal requirements on human rights as shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1 Strategies to enhance access and control over land and dairy products for improved household welfare

Strategies	Gender					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Awareness raising on equal access and control of land and dairy products	230	79.6	125	83.9	355	81.1
Enhancement of adult education Program focusing on women	210	72.7	122	81.9	332	75.8
Enforcement of legal requirements on human rights	194	67.1	118	79.2	312	71.2

a) Awareness raising on equal access and control of land and dairy products

Majority of the male and female household heads selected for the study reported that the County government and religious institutions should embark on raising awareness on matters related to the importance of access and control of land and dairy products as shown in **Table 1**. They observed that men and women’s equal access and control over land and dairy products



is an important factor in the provision of adequate household welfare. The household heads reported that raising awareness should focus on changing the cultural beliefs and religious doctrines that hinders women's access and control of land and dairy products, equal/joint ownership of land and dairy products, women's human rights and the constitutional requirements of equal inheritance to resources by men and women and its implications on household welfare. The study also established that the biggest percentage of land and dairy products were mainly controlled by men with very little being in the hands of women who were either single, separated or divorced. This is a clear indication that there is need to sensitize men and women on the importance of equal control of land and dairy products for improved household welfare. Eventually, this will put women in a better position to bargain for their rights when violated this is in line with the findings by Kameri-Mbote (2007) and Kimani (2016) which confirms that awareness of women's property rights will bring about equality in control over resources by both men and women. Further, it argued that most people in Kenya do not observe women's property rights because they are mainly uninformed of their constitutional rights and even the women themselves who are the victims are oblivious of them. Awareness campaign will therefore eliminate or reduce women and men's ignorance on human rights and the benefits associated with equal access to land and dairy products by both men and women for the sustenance of the household.

b) Enhancement of adult education program focusing on women

The finding revealed that male and female household heads reported that there was need to focus on adult education focusing on women to enlighten them to take position and claim their rights in access and control of land and dairy products for enhanced household welfare as shown in **Table 1**. The study established that women education status is lower compared to that of men and thus it could be a hindrance to their capability to access and control land and dairy products. This could also be associated with the fact that women rights are violated frequently and that women themselves seem not to understand them. Therefore, the study established that there is need to ensure that adult education program in the County is strengthened to emancipate people and especially women from illiteracy and ignorance which are the major barriers to access and control of land and dairy products. This will ensure that both men and women will have control of land and dairy products for increased dairy production and enhanced household welfare. These findings are in line with the International Women's Human Rights Center (2014) report identified lack of education and awareness of



women's rights to property as a major hindrance to realizing equality for men and women's access and control of resources. However, men too would require similar education and awareness raising to respect women's rights.

c) Enforcement of the legal requirements on human rights

As shown in **Table 1** the study found that majority of the male and female household heads reported that there was need for the government to come up with a strategy for the enforcement of legal requirements on equal rights for men and women including rights access and control of resources. Both male and female household heads felt that for the promotion of equal control to land and dairy products, there is need for women to have property ownership. This can only be achieved through safeguarding and protecting the rights to property by both men and women for enhanced household welfare. All household heads believed that the constitutional requirement is not enough for the promotion of equal rights and therefore the need for a clear roadmap on how the constitutional and other statutory requirements will be achieved. This is in concurrence with the study by Davis (2012) which found that the countries which have gender responsive constitutions and have ratified the Banjul protocol are faced with challenges of conceptualizing, and operationalizing its goals of gender equity in access and control of property. It is important to note that the solution to gender imbalances lies on political will and commitment to gender equity.

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions in the preceding chapter, the study concludes that the diversity in gendered access and control to the resources spills over to the status of household welfare. It is on the basis of the identified diversities as espoused by the Marxist Feminism theory and Women Empowerment Framework that the study came up with the awareness raising on equal access and control of land and dairy products; enhancement of adult education program focusing on women and enforcement of legal requirements on human rights as strategies and recommendations for redress.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1. The County government in collaboration with community based and religious organizations:**



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- Undertake awareness and sensitization campaigns on the importance of gender equity and equality in access and control of land and dairy products for improved household welfare.
 - Conduct civic education on legal requirements on gender and human rights especially women's rights to access and control resources including land and dairy products.

2. The County government to:

- Demonstrate commitment to the achievement of gender equity by allocating resources in support of gender mainstreaming initiatives in all sectors as stipulated in the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP- 2017-2022).
- Reinforce adult education program to reach as many adult women as possible so that they can be able to make informed choices and decisions on claiming their rights to resources at the household level.

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