

### Gender differences in access to and ownership of Agricultural assets and services in Konso southern Ethiopia

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**Abstract:** The study was conducted at KonsospacialWoreda. The main objective of this study was focused on the assessment of gender disparity in access to agricultural resources and services. This study covers the three Kebeles from the KonsospacialWoreda. From those three Kebeles 190 respondent households were included in this study. The data were analyzed through simple descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage and mean) and inferential statistics (independent t-test) and chi square tests. The result showed that male respondents had better mean land holding size than that of female respondents. Male farmers had own more farm land and livestock. Even though both male and female farmers lack formal education, the male group had better education level. Male farmers had better access to extension services than female farmers. In the study area both male and female respondent farmers were affected by different constraints in access to productive resource. The finding suggested that, the governmental and non-governmental organization should give empathies for adult education and extension training for women. It improves women's awareness and understanding about different agricultural resources and improved farm technologies.

**Keywords:** Gender, Disparity, Resources and Services

#### Introduction

In Africa's agricultural sector, women are responsible for producing 80% of the food, as opposed to men who tend to engage more in income generating activities such as cash crop production, perhaps because of their responsibility of availing food for the family. Despite this essential contribution to household food production and provision, access to resources such as appropriate technologies, modern farming methods,

markets, credit and extension services for women is limited [5]. Gender of household heads, as revealed in a study conducted in Ethiopia, influenced participation in governmental extension programs, with male-headed households taking dominance (75%). Factors such as age, farm size, religion, education level and income were reported to have a significant effect on accessibility to extension services by women [9].

Gender is a key factor in explaining the variation in access to social services in rural low-income communities in Uganda; it would therefore be useful to separately analyze accessibility of male- and female-headed households to social support services in sweet potato production [2]. Men and women farmers play important roles in agriculture throughout the world. Particularly striking is that women's contribution to farm work is as high as between 60% - 90% of the total farm task performed [4]. The fact that women are often involved in household chores gives them little time to receive extension services, unlike their male counterparts. The lack of information is therefore an obstacle to reducing gender bias in access to social services and consequently hinders poverty reduction and economic development programs. The contribution of women to food security cannot be overlooked [10]. Men and women play important role in agricultural activities in Ethiopia. Since

Ethiopia is the country of multi-ethnic and cultural groups, all ethnic and cultural groups have different gender roles in production and marketing. Gender inequalities and lack of attention to gender role in agricultural development contribute to lower productivity, higher levels of poverty, as well as under-nutrition [5]. Women in developing countries like Ethiopia are generally silent and their voice has been quite by economic and cultural factors. Economic and cultural factors coupled with institutional factor dictate the gender based division of labor; rights, responsibilities, opportunities and access to and control over productive resources are some of the area of gender disparities [8]. There is no study conducted on the gender disparity in access to agricultural resources and services in the study area. Therefore this study was initiated to assess the gender disparity in access to agricultural resources and services at Konso special woreda, southern Ethiopia with two objectives;

- To assess and examine the disparity between men and women farmers in access to agricultural resources.
- To assess and examine the disparity between men and women farmers in access to agricultural services.

## **Materials and Methods**

In this study, a multi-stage sampling procedure was employed for the selection of *Woreda*, sample *Kebeles* and respondent households. In the first stage, the *Woreda* was selected purposively based on working culture of the Konso people. In the second stage, three sample *Kebeles* (*Fasha, Gaho* and *Arfayide*) were randomly selected through simple random sampling method. In the third stage, the total households found in the tree sample *Kebeles* were stratified into two strata (Male and female headed households) and the total

sample of 104 respondent farmers were included in this study by population proportion. The respondents for the two strata were selected from population frame through systematic sampling technique.

The data were collected from both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected by using structured questionnaire from respondent households whereas the secondary data was collected from published and unpublished sources. The data were analyzed through simple descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage and mean) and inferential statistics (independent t-test).

## Result

This section presents and discusses the results of the analysis that has been conducted to address specific objectives of the study. The section includes the respondents' access to agricultural resources and services.

### Access to Farm Land

The results in Table 1 show that the mean land holding size men respondents' was 0.91 hectares and that of women respondents' was 0.49 hectares. The t-value result also revealed that the mean land holding of men farmers had significantly larger than that of women farmers at 1% significance level. This mean difference also shows that male respondents had better access to land than women respondents.

### Livestock Holding Size

The results in table 1 show that the mean livestock holding of male respondents' was 2.9 and that of female respondents' was 1.48. The t-value result also revealed that the mean livestock holding of men farmers had significantly larger than that of women farmers at 1% significance level.

## Access to Local Agricultural Markets

The information gathered respondents show that farmers have well access to local market to sale their product. Therefore, in the study are both groups have equal access to local market. In terms of distance the market also, there was no significant difference between the two groups.

### Education

The study revealed that the education level of men women was significantly different in terms of involvement as well as extent of participation. The mean year of participation to formal education for men and women was 2.72 years and 1 year, respectively (Table 1).

### Labor force

Labor availability depends on both the amount of family labor that a household can mobilize and the amount of labor that can be hired in local labor markets. Hired labor was not common in the study area for both groups as they were practicing small scale farming. The family labor force men and women was 5.7 and 4.7, respectively (Table 1).

*Table 1 Gender differentials among education, livestock holding, farm land size, labor force and extension agent visit*

	Sex of HH head	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t- test
Distance of the important market	Male	159	2.98	2.49	NS
	Female	31	2.62	2.29	
Education level of HH head	Male	159	2.72	3.90	2.381**
	Female	31	1.00	2.28	
Total farm area of the HH	Male	159	0.91	0.72	3.18***
	Female	31	0.49	0.29	
Frequency of development agent visit	Male	159	1.72	1.35	1.895*.
	Female	31	1.23	1.15	
Total livestock unit	Male	159	2.90	2.69	

Working labor force	Female	31	1.48	0.84	2.90***
	Male	159	5.69	2.78	2.051**
	Female	31	4.58	2.66	

### Access to Extension Training

Extension services encompass the wide range of services from communication to education activities provided by experts in the areas of agriculture, agribusiness, health and others and designed to improve productivity and overall wellbeing of rural populations. The results in table 1 show that out of the total men respondents 86.8% did

attended while from the total women respondents 71% did attended on training that focused on agricultural related practice (Table 2). On the other hand development agent follow up and visit for men farmers was 1.72 and that of female respondents' was 1.23 (Table 1).

Table 2 access to extension services among male and female farmers

Involvement extension services	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
No	21	21.2	9	29	30	15.8
Yes	138	86.8	22	71	160	84.2
Total	159	100	31	100	190	100

Pearson Chi-Square 4.89\*\*

### Access to Farm Credit

The results in table 3 show that out of the total men respondents 50.9% and from the total women respondents 64.5% didn't use credit. This result also shows that the use of credit was very low by two groups

Table 3 Access to credit among male and female farmers

Credit services	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
No	81	50.9	20	64.5	101	53.2
Yes	78	49.1	11	35.5	89	46.8
Total	159	100	31	100	190	100

### Access to Farm Cooperatives

The results in table 2 show that out of the total respondents only 8.4 % were involved in cooperatives. About ninety two percent men respondents and ninety percent women respondents didn't have any involvement to cooperatives. This result also shows that the use of cooperatives was very low by two groups.

Table 4 Access to credit among male and female farmers

Involvement in cooperatives	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
No	146	91.8	28	90.3	174	91.6
Yes	13	8.2	3	9.7	16	8.4
Total	159	100	31	100	190	100

## Discussion

The finding revealed that women farmers had less access farm land as compared with men counterpart. In agreement with this finding, the evidence illustrating the inequalities in access to land is overwhelming and straddles continents and cultural contexts. In regions, such as Latin America, where private property systems are the norm, inheritance is the most frequent source of transfer of ownership of land. As a result of customs, women are much less likely to inherit. In addition, there is usually male privilege in marriage, and state programs of land redistribution (land reform) have tended to be biased towards men [3]. In sub-Saharan Africa, where communal property regimes are more common, community heads tend to assign land to males, not females, and where private property prevails cultural norms generally dictate that men are the owners of land while women gain access to land through their relationship with a male relative: father, husband, brother or other [7]. Improving women's access to land and security of tenure has direct impacts on farm productivity, but can have far reaching implications for improving household welfare as well [5].

The mean difference of livestock holding shows men respondents had better than women respondents. Livestock as an asset plays a fundamental role in rural areas as it is often the most valuable agricultural asset and represents an important source of income through direct sale or through the

sale of livestock products. Improving women's livestock ownership has direct impacts on farm productivity, but can have far reaching implications for improving household welfare as well [5].

Education plays a major role not only for individual's opportunities in society, but also for the productive capacity and wellbeing of a household. Even though both group have low level of education, women's participation to education was very low because they spent their childhood life by helping their mothers in household chores. Almost universally, studies that analyze income, agricultural production, and other measures of welfare find that education, - human capital available in the household (usually measured as the education of the head of household, or the average education of working age adults) is strongly correlated with welfare measures [5].

There was a significant difference in labor force between the two groups. This may be due to the female headed household miss the adult man (spouse). Labor constraints can be more acute for both women and female-headed households than for men and male-headed households for a number of reasons. Women generally face gender-specific constraints as agricultural laborers and in hiring-in labor [5].

The study revealed that men farmers had better access to extension training than women farmers. Because of women farmers have less contact and communication with development agents. The reason behind this is due to cultural influence most of rural women have no access to contact with

extension agents. The t-value result also revealed that the mean frequency of development agent visit for men farmers had significantly larger than that of women farmers at 10% significance level. Men farmers had better access to extension training than women farmers. Because of women farmers have less contact and communication with development agents. The reason behind this is due to cultural influence most of rural women have no access to contact with extension agents [1].

This study revealed that both men and women group had low access and

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

This paper document that female-headed households and farms lag their male counterpart in their access to and ownership of most assets and services that are relevant for productive activities in the study areas. This biased distribution of assets damages not only women: it is also a hindrance to increased social welfare. A better distribution of assets across genders would improve overall well-being. The result also shows that male farmers have better access to extension training than female farmers. Because of female farmers have less contact

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participation to credit and cooperatives. Producers who are unable to cover their short term expenses, or want to access more productive, but more expensive technologies must rely on either credit markets or informal credit sources. Without access to credit producers may fail to make the necessary upfront investments to boost their productivity or be unable to bear additional risks that may enhance their income and improve their wellbeing [12].

and communication with development agents. And also the use of credit from microfinance institution was very low by two groups. The governmental and non-governmental organization should give empathies for adult education and extension training for women. It improves women's awareness and understanding about different productive resources and improved farm technologies. Concerned bodies should give special attention for women farmers about credit services because it improves their capability and empower them.

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