



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**WOMEN'S ACCESS TO LAND
AS OWNERS AND FARM WORKERS:
SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR EXTENSION PLANNING**

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By

MAIMUNAH ISMAIL

**Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of The Requirements for
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GLOSSARY

DID	:	Drainage and Irrigation Department
DOA	:	Department of Agriculture
FAMA	:	Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority
FELCRA	:	Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority
FELDA	:	Federal Land Development Authority
FOA	:	Farmers Organisation Authority
KEMAS	:	The Community Development Division, Ministry of Rural Development
LKIM	:	Malaysian Fishery Development Authority
MADA	:	Muda Agricultural Development Authority
MARDI	:	Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute
RISDA	:	Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority.
Ringgit	:	It is the Malaysian unit of currency. One US dollar is equivalent to 2.723 Malaysian ringgit.
acre	:	Unit of measure which is still being used in land dealings in Malaysia. One acre is equivalent to 0.4047 hectare.



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SEPTEMBER 1992

Chairman : Professor Sulaiman Hj. Mohd Yassin, Ph.D.

Faculty : Centre for Extension and Continuing Education

The focus of the study was on women's access to land. The primary objective was to examine factors associated with women's access to the agricultural resource. Access was operationalised into two areas, i.e. access to land as owners and as farm workers.

The study was conducted in two villages in the district of Kuala Langat, Selangor. Interviews with 143 household spouses from the two villages were conducted. In-depth interviews on women's life history were carried out with selected women. The analysis comprised two components. The first component was on hypothesis analysis and answering research questions related to women's access to land as owners. This component used quantitative tools such as t-test, chi-square test and regression analyses. Tobit and Multiple Regression analyses were conducted to find the relationship between the selected independent variables and the land size owned by women and men as the dependent variables.



The second component of the analysis was on the associated situations leading to women's access to land as farm workers. Qualitative data were used for the analysis.

The results of the statistical analysis showed that there was a significant difference between land size owned by women and men with the averages of 0.461 and 3.787 acres respectively. Women acquired land mainly through inheritance. While men in addition to inheritance, also acquired land effectively through government land allocation programmes and purchases.

The Tobit analysis showed that older women were more likely to own land than the younger ones. Women from male-headed families had better access to land ownership than those from female-headed families and so were the non-uxorilocal compared to uxorilocal. Family income, family size, types of family phase and length of residence did not contribute toward explaining the dependent variable. While among men, the study found that there was a significant positive relationship between family income and their land size. Other variables did not appear to contribute to land size owned by men.

The qualitative data showed that women had continual access to land as farm workers ever since they settled in the village. Some of the factors that led to their continual access to farm work were the family-related factors such as women had been very important family labour in farm production; they had to play the role as family income earners; they were from the female-headed households; and they were involved in

making farm decisions. The structural-related factors on the other hand were the availability of employment opportunities in the villages; the multiplicity of crop cultivation and the usage of less labour-saving technologies in most of the farming operation.

Recommendations are provided for both Extension and future research. The recommendations for Extension are based on the fact that the findings generated are useful for Extension policy and programme planning for rural women. A comparative study on women's access to land between those in mixed farming with oil-palm as the major cash-crop and mixed farming characterised by crops other than oil-palm was recommended.

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**AKSES WANITA TERHADAP TANAH
SEBAGAI PEMILIK DAN PEKERJA LADANG: BEBERAPA
IMPLIKASI DALAM PERANCANGAN PENGEMBANGAN**

Oleh

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Fokus kajian ialah mengenai akses wanita terhadap tanah. Objektif utama adalah untuk mengenalpasti faktor-faktor yang berkaitan dengan akses wanita terhadap sumber tersebut. Akses ditakrifkan kepada dua komponen iaitu akses terhadap tanah pertanian sebagai pemilik dan pekerja ladang.

Kajian telah dijalankan di dua buah kampung di daerah Kuala Langat, Selangor. Temubual telah dijalankan di kalangan suami dan isteri daripada 143 buah keluarga. Temubual yang lebih mendalam mengenai latar belakang sejarah responden juga dikendalikan ke atas wanita terpilih.

Analisis kajian mempunyai dua komponen. Komponen pertama menganalisis hipotesis dan persoalan-persoalan yang dikemukakan berkaitan dengan akses wanita terhadap tanah sebagai pemilik. Komponen ini menggunakan ujian statistik seperti ujian-t, 'chi-square' dan analisis regresi. Analisis Tobit dan Regresi Berganda telah dijalankan untuk

mencari perkaitan di antara variabel bebas dengan keluasan tanah milik wanita dan lelaki sebagai variabel bersandar.

Komponen analisis kedua ialah mengenai situasi yang membolehkan wanita untuk menjadi pekerja di tanah pertanian. Analisis ini menggunakan data kualitatif.

Keputusan analisis statistik menunjukkan terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan di antara keluasan tanah milik wanita (purata 0.461 ekar) dan lelaki (purata 3.787 ekar). Wanita memperolehi tanah hanya melalui perwarisan, sementara lelaki selain daripada perwarisan juga mendapat tanah secara efektif melalui program pembangunan tanah kerajaan dan pembelian.

Analisis Tobit juga mendapati wanita yang lebih berumur berkemungkinan untuk memiliki tanah daripada wanita muda. Wanita dari keluarga yang mempunyai ketua keluarga lelaki lebih berkemungkinan memiliki tanah daripada mereka yang mengetuai keluarga bersendirian. Begitu juga dengan wanita yang 'uxorilocal' berbanding dengan 'bukan-uxorilocal'. Sementara di kalangan lelaki analisis menunjukkan hanya variabel pendapatan keluarga mempunyai perkaitan yang bermakna secara positif dengan saiz tanah yang dimiliki. Faktor-faktor lain tidak menunjukkan sebarang perkaitan yang bermakna dengan keluasan tanah yang mereka miliki.

Analisis data kualitatif pula menunjukkan faktor yang membolehkan wanita menjadi pekerja ladang adalah berkaitan dengan faktor mikro seperti berikut: wanita merupakan buruh keluarga dalam pengeluaran pertanian; wanita mempunyai peranan sebagai pencari nafkah; wanita

mengetuai keluarga kerana ketiadaan suami, dan mereka terlibat dalam membuat keputusan berkaitan kerja pertanian. Sementara faktor makro pula ialah terdapatnya peluang-peluang pekerjaan yang sentiasa memerlukan buruh ladang; kepelbagaian penanaman dan corak pertanian yang kurang menggunakan teknologi mekanisasi dalam kebanyakan aktiviti.

Kajian telah mengutarakan cadangan untuk Pengembangan dan untuk kajian akan datang. Cadangan kepada Pengembangan adalah berasaskan kepada hakikat bahawa penemuan yang diperolehi amat berguna untuk digunakan dalam perancangan program wanita desa. Satu kajian perbandingan adalah dicadangkan mengenai akses wanita terhadap tanah di antara mereka yang mengerjakan pertanian campor yang mana kelapa sawit merupakan tanaman utama dengan wanita dari sistem pertanian campor yang tanamannya selain daripada kelapa sawit.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Land constitutes the single most important productive resource in Asian rural production. There is an enormous diversity in the access that rural women have to this resource, whether as outright owners or as workers (Wazir, 1987). In order to understand the different ways in which women gain access to land, it is necessary to analyse the specific factors which shape the issue of accessibility. This suggests the need to examine the problem of women's access to land in a wider context, i.e. the ways in which women acquire land, and the related socio-economic structures which may affect their access to the resource. Such an analytical framework is crucial since land is an important but a scarce resource in agricultural production and women are among the clientele groups of extension programmes in the rural areas.

In order to examine the various socio-economic forces influencing rural women's access to land, two important issues need to be addressed. The issues are (i) Rural Development and the concern on women, and (ii) the importance of women's access to land.

Rural Development and the Concern on Women

It is necessary at the outset to examine some definitions of Rural Development. The World Bank (1975) defines rural development "as a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific



group of people, that is the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas." The essence of this definition is that it emphasises the importance of helping the poor who are mostly found in the rural areas. Therefore, they should continue to be the priority target group of rural development programmes.

Another definition places stress on increased productivity, higher incomes and rural employment opportunities. Kocher (1975) who shares this view, states that, "Rural Development primarily implies generalised increases in rural labour productivity resulting in growing incomes, and rural employment opportunities sufficient to absorb the large numbers of new entrants into the labour force."

These two definitions suffice to reflect the general understanding and perception of development scholars on rural development before and during the seventies. Due to the generality in its scope of understanding, issues were put forward, for instance by social scientists and women advocates alike, pointing to the need in specifying the 'actors' and 'beneficiaries' of rural development by gender. This specificity went on in response to questions such as, "Who are the poor, who are the workers and producers in the rural areas?" "Who would benefit most from the various rural development programmes?" and "Who are responsible for meeting the basic needs of families?"

Criticism on the rhetoric and practice on rural development has since transpired, pointing to the insufficient standardised socio-economic data particularly by male to female breakdown. Consequently very little information was available for instance, on the economic and social status

of women, or their contributions to non-market or market production. On the other hand, anthropological studies (Etienne and Leacock, 1980; Sack, 1975) have indicated that women should be at the very heart of the new development concern. Not only were landlessness, unemployment and malnutrition increasing in many developing countries, but women appeared to be the worst affected social group of all. This certainly poses a new challenge in rural development.

The shift in emphasis on development from growth to socio-economic oriented approach, prompted the United Nations to announce the period of 1960 to 1970 as the First Development Decade. One of the major new inputs which ran parallel to the development debate was precisely the inclusion of women's issues into the development concept. Therefore, in 1970, for the first time, women's issues and development were conceptually linked.

In her inspiring book "The Role of Women in Economic Development", Boserup highlighted evidences and hence proposed convincingly that women should be integrated into the development process (Boserup, 1970). The basis of her argument was that in many Third World countries, women formed the predominant segment of the agricultural labour force (from 40% to 80%), yet their economic contribution was not reflected in national statistics nor in the planning and implementation of development projects.

The global statistics on the composition of women in the agricultural labour force as depicted in Table 1 generally show that agriculture is overwhelmingly important for Asian women. The relative importance of

agriculture for female compared with male employment also varied according to continents. Women are important in agriculture in most regions, with the strong exception of Latin America where male labour is more favoured than female labour. This is due to the extensive scale of agriculture in the form of large plantations.

Table 1
Percentage of Female Agriculture
Labour Force from 32 Countries

Region	Number of Countries	Female Agricultural Labour Force (%)
Sub-Saharan Africa	11	47.2
North Africa, Middle East	6	25.2
South, South-East Asia	5	40.2
Central, South America	8	19.0
Caribbean	2	54.0
Total	32	35.6

Source: FAO, (1979:110).

The reorientation of rural development policies in most developing countries has also run parallel to the United Nations Decade for women (1975-84). The decade that would concentrate on women the world over began in 1975 which was also conceived as International Women's Year. Since then, at national and international fora, women's role in the economic process has been a major component, and the race for "women in development" (WID) has been on. Formal and non-formal education, vocational and technical training were seen as essential prerequisites for

women to move into the development process. Having women in decision-making positions, allocating funding for women's projects and creating opportunities towards employment for women would further hasten the WID process. The theory was that, as women's work was not recognised as part of the national economy, sufficient opportunities should be made available for women to move them into the market economy. This could ensure income generation for them and a sense of self-confidence to participate in the development process.

The United Nations also outlined emphases on WID, and a few suggested strategies in order to improve the employment conditions of rural women were, promoting special projects and programmes for women and giving women access to resources (ILO, 1985a:5).

The urge for women's access to resources was also contained in the guidelines and strategies of Article 14 of the 'Convention in the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women' (United Nations, 1979). The article includes measures to ensure equal participation by rural women and men in the formulation and, implementation of development planning at all levels. Some of the measures include, access to agricultural inputs, marketing facilities and appropriate technology, and equal treatment in land matters and agrarian reform. It has also been extensively discussed in the literature that the extent to which women are involved in subsistence farming in Asian, African and Latin American countries is part of the function of their access to resources such as land and the degree of commercialisation of the agrarian sector (Kandiyoti, 1985).

Importance of Women's Access to Land

Land is a form of natural resource. When a piece of land is owned and has productive potential it is regarded as a property. As a point of departure in discussing the importance of women's access to land, the following statistics would be helpful in illuminating the status of women in relation to property:

Women and girls who constitute 52% of the world's population are counted as 33% of the official labour force, yet they perform 67% of all hours worked. Females make up over 60% of the illiterates, receive only 10% of the world's income and own less than 1% of the world's real property.

(Sipila, 1979:1)

These statistics imply that in general women own far too little amount of property despite their high involvement in work. This also means that in the rural areas fewer women have access to land in terms of ownership. Literature on Asian and African farming also shows that women are not only food producers and animal husbanders but are also involved in storage, processing and marketing of foodstuffs. However, their farming activities take place on a limited resource base such as land and land-related resources (Kandiyoti, 1985). To highlight further the importance of exploring women's access to land, Rogers, Meynen and White reiterate:

Of all resources necessary for subsistence (other than one's own labour) by far the most important is land. Without land, people lose their security and are reduced to a state of dependence on those with land for the provision of employment.

(Rogers, 1980:122)

. . . thus access to and control over land mean wealth and power, but lack of them, mean poverty and dependence.

(Meynen and White, 1982:5)