

## ISSUES IN GENDER AND LAND TENURE IN SAFANA LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

A. Sada<sup>1</sup>, N. Mohammed<sup>2</sup>

Department Of Geography, Bayero University, Kano,  
NIGERIA.

[nuratu1960@gmail.com](mailto:nuratu1960@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*The research studied and compared gender based stratification in land tenure by means of investigation the level of access to land by gender and explanation of the means through which land is owned and controlled in the study area. Systematic random sampling technique was employed whereby one out of tenth household in the study area was picked. Open ended questionnaire survey in addition to the use of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) used to collect data for the study. The data collected was analysed using the SPSS package, where by statistical function of tables, percentages mean, charts and graphs were used. In addition chi square statistical test of significant difference was also used. The results of the study showed there is less inequality in ownership of land between males and females whereby 91% of all lands belong to the males while 85% belong to the females.*

**Keywords:** Gender, Access and Land Tenure

### INTRODUCTION

Historically women's access to land was based on status within the family and it involved right of use, not ownership. In Asia, the most prevalent barrier to acquiring real property is inheritance, laws that favour male inheritance over female. If a woman inherits property, it is managed by her husband (Parsons, 1991). In Africa, customs rather than religious practice excludes women from ownership. Property is held in a man's name and passed patrilineal within the group. A widow's right to remain on land is not secured (Parsons, 1991). In Latin America, discrimination results more from limited status under the law. Women for example, may reach maturity age at 21, but still be required to be represented by their husbands in all legal capacities. As women became aware of their rights these previous practices are gradually vanishing (Parsons, 1991).

Women's access to land and natural resources is now inhibited by social and cultural tradition in the West African region, where land is a source of income and power in society (FAO Focus, 2007).

In sub Saharan Africa, rural land tenure systems are undergoing rapid changes, affected by a number of processes, transitions and transformations. In particular, in some areas, a growing number of transactions are occurring in which land permanently changes hands in return for cash. Other new practices are also changing land tenure situation, such as temporary leasing of land for cash, gift, inheritance, and enforced repossession of land previously granted to a tenant, resulting in conflict (Amnesty, 2005).

Although various aspects of the land questions have been closely studied over time, it is only recently that there has emerged an increasing intellectual and activist concern with the gender dimension of the issue, with particular reference to women's right of independent access to this critical resource (Davison, 1988 as cited in Aluko 2006).

In Safana Local Government Area, land tenure which is one of the many aspects of development is affecting both male and female, but without knowing precisely the extent to which both parties are being affected and the ownership pattern.

It is against this background, that one needs to study the gender- based stratification in land tenure, by means of investigating the level of access to land along gender line. In order to achieve this aim the following research questions were postulated and tackled:

- i. How is land acquired, owned and controlled?
- ii. How is land used and transferred from one person to another in the area?
- iii. Is there any form of gendered discrimination in access to land?

The aim of the research is to study and compare the gender based stratifications in land tenure. To achieve the aim the following objectives have been set:

- i. To examine the forms of land ownership by male and female segments of the population, in order to see whether there exist any discriminations in access to land ,
- ii. To identify the various modes through which both men and women gain access to and exercise control over land.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Safana Local Government is located in the west of Katsina state of Nigeria, It lies between Latitude  $12^{\circ} 15'$  North to  $12^{\circ} 45'$  North and Longitude  $7^{\circ} 01'$  East to  $7^{\circ} 26'$  East.

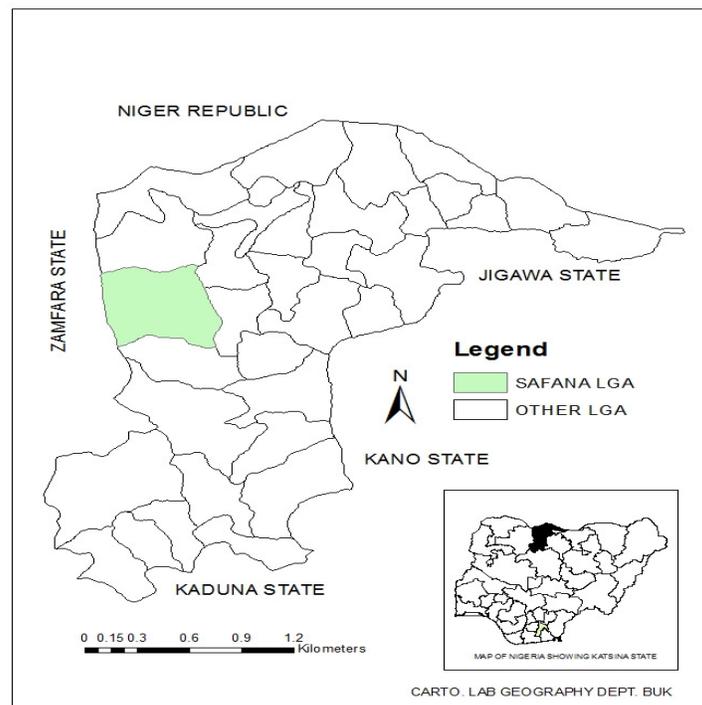
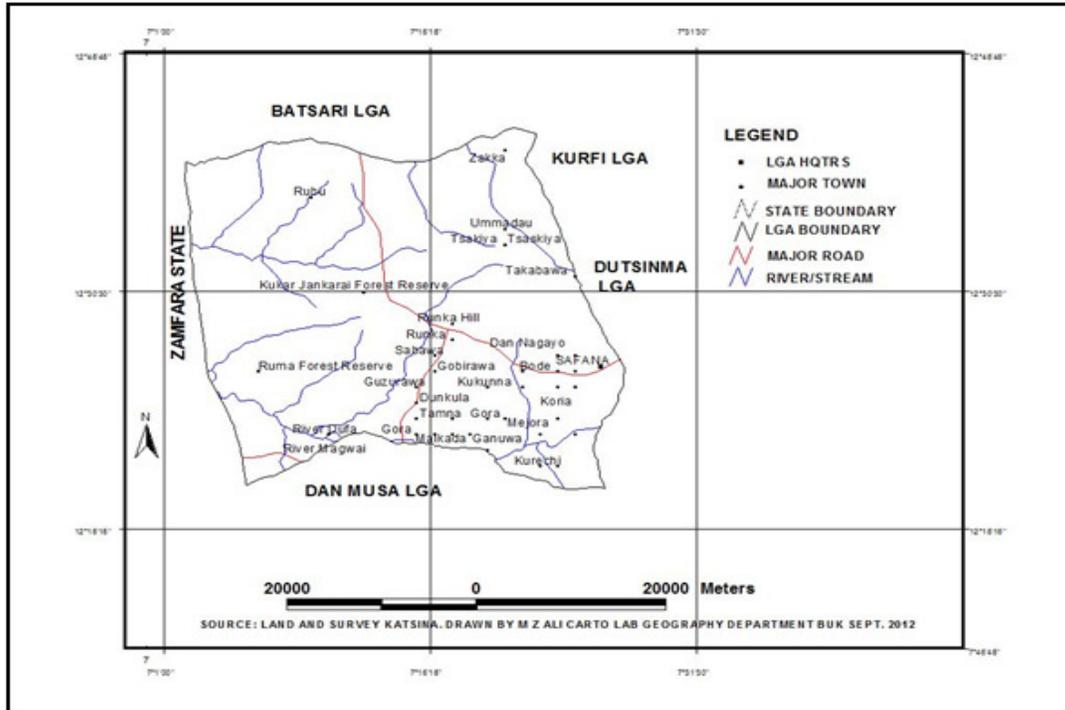


Figure 1. Katsina state showing the study area Safana Local Government

The Local Government came into being in 1989 carved out of Dutsinma Local Government Area; Safana Local Government Area has two districts made up of Safana and Zakka, with a projected population of 183,779 people based on 2006 population census exercise. In addition the local government is one among the most densely populated local government areas in the state with an average growth rate of 2.8%. Moreover slight difference occurred between male

– female figure where female figure remained higher. The area has an open undulating landscape with occasional rocky-out-crop in the northern part. The area is well drained with a gentle slope.



It has an area of 282km<sup>2</sup>. The area is boarded to Dutsin ma local government to the east, Dan-musa Local Government to the south, Batsari Local Government to the west and Zamfara State to the South West (Ministry of land and survey, Katsina, 2008).

The dominant ethnic group in safana is the Hausa\Fulani’s who are mostly farmers and grazers. Farming is the leading economic activity of the people in the study area. In addition some people engaged in other activities like trading, craft industries, and few are civil servants as well as unemployed people. The data for this research was collected in six selected village in the local government area. Two of these villages were purposively selected because they are the district headquarters, Safana and Zakka districts. Under each district two villages were randomly selected. Under safana district, Runka and Gora were selected, under Zakka district, BabbanDuhu and Illela were selected, making a total of six sample villages. These villages represent one third of the total villages in safana.

**Table 1. Sample Size**

SAFANA	210
GORA	100
RUNKA	100
ZAKKAH	150
ILLELA	100
<i>BABBAN DUHU</i>	<i>100</i>
TOTAL	760

Source: field survey (2009).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study is presented and discussed below.

### Land Ownership and Gender

The nature of land ownership varies between genders in the study area. Normally people who have land in Safana are the original inhabitants or natives of the land. Land can be obtained through inheritance or gift from parents and relatives, those who do not have land are usually strangers to the villages. With time they can get access to land through buying, lease, and even gift from well-wishers. Table 2 shows land ownership pattern in Safana Local Government.

**Table 2. Gender and Land Ownership**

<i>Land ownership</i>	<i>Sex</i>					
	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	no	%	no	%	no	%
yes	345	91	300	79	645	85
No	35	9	80	21	116	15
Total	380	100	380	100	760	100

Source: Field Work, (2009).

Table 3 Statistical Analysis for significant difference in land ownership by gender

Chi square ( $\chi^2$ ) test was used to test significant difference in land ownership among gender in the study area. The number of those with land and those without land by gender were used as observed frequencies and the expected frequencies were calculated then.

**Table 3. Observed and Expected Frequencies for Chi Square**

<i>Land Ownership</i>	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>	
	<i>O</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>E</i>
Yes	345	322	300	322
No	35	58	80	58

Source: Fieldwork, 2009

O = Observed frequencies

E = Expected frequencies

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference in land ownership among gender in the study area.

Critical value at 0.05% = 3.841 and calculated value =20

The calculated value (20) is greater than the critical value (3.841) we reject null hypothesis that there is significant difference in land ownership by gender.

From table 2 it can be seen that about ninety one per cent of the male respondents have land and the remaining nine per cent have no land, while four out of five women have land and one fifth don't have land. This shows that women are not discriminated against in land

ownership issues. The study further revealed that, there is less inequality in land ownership between gender (male and Female) in the study area, hence there is no discrimination between gender in land holding in Safana. The men's access was slightly higher than the women.

As earlier mentioned six hundred and forty five (645) out of seven hundred and sixty (760) respondents are land owners. Specifically three hundred (300) are women representing approximately forty six percent (46%) and their male counterparts have three hundred and forty five (345) male respondents' representing fifty four percent (54%), had access to land.

### Ownership and Control of Land amongst Women in Safana

Although in Safana local government area, women have access to land. This access however is not direct as a result of socio-cultural and religious reasons. Female lands are usually held in trust by the male member of the family be it sons, brothers or husbands and other male relatives. Table 4 shows the percentage of the trustees of women as far as their plots are concerned.

**Table 4. Land Held in Trust for Women**

<i>Land Held In Trust By</i>	<i>Number Of Response</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Sons	105	35
Spouse	78	26
Brother	63	21
Relatives	30	10
Others	24	8
Total	300	100

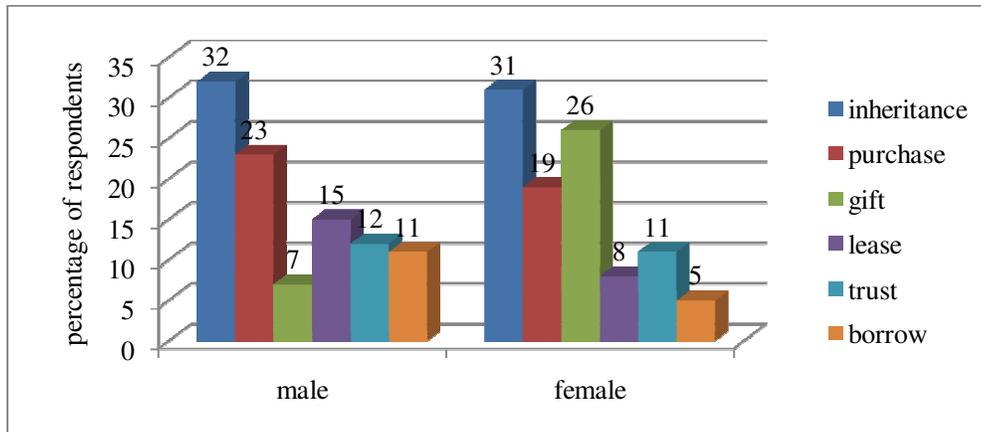
Source: field work, (2009).

### Accessibility to Land

In Safana Local Government, as is the case in other part of Northern Nigeria people can get access to land through various means, but the most common methods are through inheritance, borrowing, purchase, gift and lease.

Fig 4.2 shows that thirty two percent (32%) of male respondents and thirty one percent (31%) of female respondents got access to land via inheritance (*gado*), twenty three percent (23%) of male respondents and nineteen percent (19%) of female respondents got their land through purchase (*saye*), seven percent (7%) of male respondents and twenty six (26%) of female respondents got theirs via gift (*kyauta*) from relatives and well wishers, fifteen percent (15%) of male respondents and eight (8%) of female respondents got theirs via lease (*jingina*), twelve percent (12%) of male respondents and eleven percent (11%) of female respondents had access to land via trust (*amana*). Moreover eleven (11%) of male respondents and five percent (5%) of female respondents acquired land through borrowing (*aro*). Trust, lease and borrow are just right of use to some certain extent and the situation may likely continue indefinitely.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of the means through which both male and females acquired their land.



Source: Field Work, (2009).

Figure 1. Means of Access to Land by Gender

The greater percentage of land ownership is through inheritance (by gender) One third of men had access to land via inheritance, so also with women. Men are a little higher than women with one percent (1%). This shows that both men and women in the area can inherit land. Though, women inherit land, but most of them cannot work on the land directly due to socio-cultural and religious reasons, as such women's lands are usually held in trust by the male relative either on trust or borrowing. This in most cases may result in the woman losing her land when the relative passes away. This is one of the major constraints women are facing regarding land tenure in the study area .One quarter of men had access to land via purchase, while women accounted for one fifth. The male respondents are higher than the female respondents with four percent (4%). This indicates that land can be bought and sold, and could be done through monetary payments, trade by barter, or compensation.

Another means of obtaining land in Safana local government area is through gift from relatives and well-wishers which is the third highest after purchase. Women accounted for one quarter, whereas only fourteen percent (14%) of the men got the[r land through gift, a slightly higher number of females nineteen percent (19%) got theirs through gift.

Lease is another way of acquiring land in Safana Area. According one sixth of men got land through lease while one out of twelve women had land through lease.

As regards, acquisition of land through borrowing, few women borrow land, because one out of twenty borrows land, while one out of nine men borrows land. This shows that men borrow land more often than women.

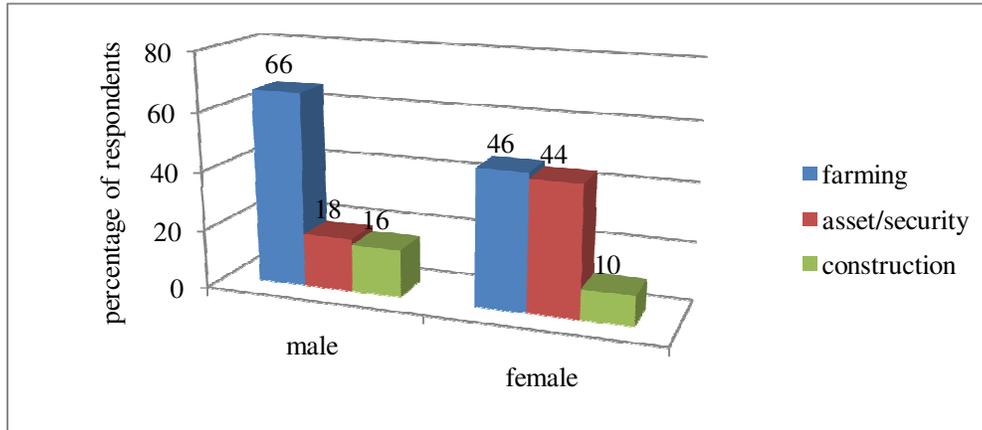
### Land Use Type

The vast majority of people in Safana consider farming as their primary occupation, because most of the lands surveyed were used for farming. Three-quarters of the lands were used for cultivation; the remaining one-quarter goes to construction, assets and security.

The farm land can be differentiated; firstly rain fed upland fields (*gona*), which support crops of relatively lower value per unit of land area, such as millet, sorghum, ground nuts. The second is low land fields (*fadama*) which supports more labor intensive crops of relatively higher value per unit of land area , such as sugarcane, vegetables i.e. tomatoes, pepper, onions.

*Gona* land is by far the most dominant, accounting for ninety two percent or 3.6 hectares of the average farm. *Gona* land is usually permanently cultivated, soil fertility being maintained

through the addition of organic fertilizer, farther away from the residences. Fadama land permits year round cultivation because the water table is located close to the surface.



Source: field work, (2009)

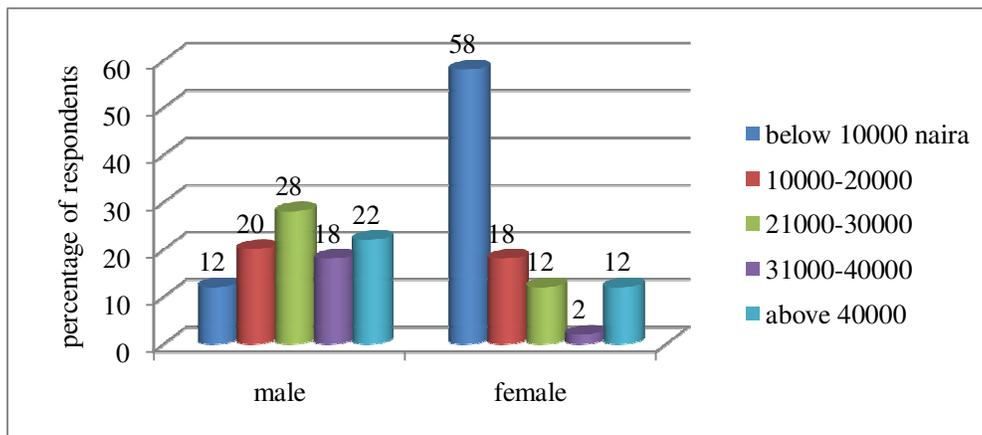
Figure 2. Land Use Type

Fig 2 shows that sixty six percent (66%) of male respondents are farmers, they are more involved in farming activities than the women with twenty percent (20%), but still women are trying because by having forty four percent (44%) of women farmers shows that, women too are contributing towards agricultural development. Some women said it was the first time they were given government subsidized fertilizer directly from the government, so they look at it as an encouragement for them to go to farm.

However women that acquired land and kept it as an asset and security reasons are twice that of men. Some of them no matter what the situation is will not sell it. They prefer to keep it for their children as an asset, which is meant for inheritance by the holder’s children or heirs.

**FARMERS EARNINGS FROM LAND**

As far as the income earnings of respondents is concerned they were asked how many bags they produced from their farms and then how much is the cost of each bag for quantification in naira. It was found that the income of the respondents ranged from below 10,000 to above 40,000.



Source: field Work, (2009).

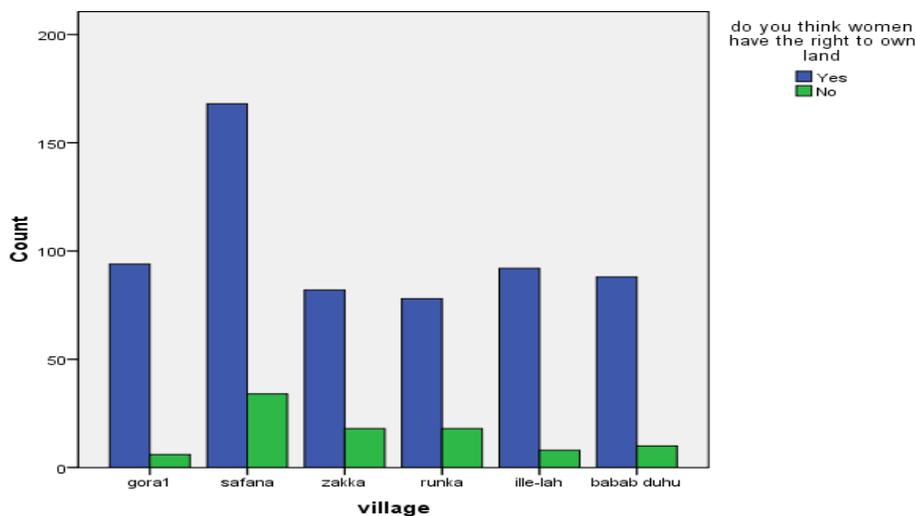
Figure 3. Farm Income (In Naira)

Figure 3 reflects income earning by gender in safana L.G.A, where one eighth of women respondents claimed that they earned above forty thousand naira (>40000) from their farm plots, while men accounted for one fifth, these can be said to belong to high income bracket. Men are higher than women with ten percent (10%). One out of fifty women earn between thirty one thousand naira to forty thousand naira (31,000 to 40,000) per annum, while men accounted for one sixth and this can be said to belong to middle income bracket. Men are higher than women with sixteen percent (16%). More than half of the women respondents earn below ten thousand naira (<10000) per annum, while men accounted for one eighth. Women are higher than men in this class with forty six percent (46%). Furthermore one sixth of women earn ten thousand naira to twenty thousand naira (10000-20000), while their male counterparts accounted for one fifth. Men are higher with two percent (2%). This can be said to be in the low income bracket. If you look at the above presentation, women dominate the low income bracket while the male dominate the high income bracket. This is a setback for women in the study area.

### Perception of Men on Women’s Right to Land

Traditionally, in the study area men generally consider women as their subordinates, which is why they consider women as second to men in all aspects of production and development. The research found that only few men think that women don’t have the right to own land, most of which are of the pagans (*maguzawa*).

Figure 4 shows that eighty one percent (81%) believed that women have the right to own land, while thirteen percent (13%) are of the opinion that women don’t have the right to own land and six percent (6%) of the respondents were neutral.



Source: field work, (2009).

Figure 4. Perception of Men on Women’s Right to Land

### CONCLUSION

The research focused on the gender based stratification in land tenure by means of investigating the level of access to land by gender; this unravels the extent to which male and female held control land in Safana Local Government Area of Katsina State, Nigeria.

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