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**THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER ROLES ON  
HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY IN KUHALO  
COMMUNITY, BOUFALE DISTRICT IN KARA  
REGION, TOGO X**

BY

**Yaovi WAHARE**  
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A PROJECT PAPER SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS IN GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY  
OF NAIROBI, KENYA

June 2007

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**DECLARATION:**

I Yaovi WAHARE do declare that this Project Paper is my original work and has not been submitted for examination in any other University to the best of my knowledge.

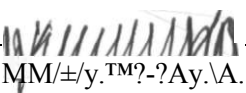
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This Project Paper has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

SUPERVISOR: Dr. SUBBO W. K.

Signature:  / \_\_\_\_\_  
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## **DEDICATION:**

I dedicate this Thesis to my darling spouse **Epiphanie POROMNA** and our daughter **Ornella WAHARE** who inspired and gave me the strength to pursue such studies while on mission, far away from our home country.

Without their keen support, like for many other Foreigners trying to find mechanisms of coping with the reality of their new environment of service; I would not have achieved this work.

I also dedicate this Thesis to the International Movement of Catholic Students - **IMCS Pax Romana- entire Family** in Africa and all over the World which vision of integral education to ensure the coming of a generation of multi-skilled and committed Leaders for social change in our society for a better World; has helped me to look beyond my own expectations.

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Last but not least my thanks go to all the respondents of the Kuhalo community, women and men, who availed themselves to share with me and my assistance team, their experiences about food production and management in their households. They have not only added value to this work but also enriched my knowledge on the influence of gender roles in food production and distribution; to all the Key Informants interviewed in Boufale District and who gave their opinion about food security in the area with an external eye.

I do sincerely hope that the recommendations of this study will contribute towards the improvement of food security in Togolese rural areas where more than 80% of the population lives and works. Especially, in the Kuhalo community household food security by taking into account the influence of gender roles in order to create a better environment for coexistence of both women and men to manage the means and goods of production as partners for the welfare of their households.

## **ABSTRACT**

The question of food security has become a crucial one, because all development initiatives depend on how healthier people are to undertake them. This calls for more research to investigate how food security can be improved at the household level. This study was carried out in Kuhalo community, Boufale District; on the influence of gender roles on household food security. The study sought to investigate motives and conditions that influence gender roles vis-a-vis the control and management of the means and goods of production in Kuhalo community and how it impacts on household food security. Specifically, the study aimed at determining the gender division of labour in food production and its management in Kuhalo community; describing and analyzing the social, economic and cultural factors influencing household food security in Kuhalo community and examining the coping mechanisms adopted by both genders, to counter food security problems facing their households in Kuhalo community.

The research is conducted in the Kuhalo community, in Binah prefecture in the North of Togo. The study subjects mainly included married men and women, widowers and widows as well as single and divorced parents of 100 households sampled from three selected villages. The data collected is about individuals in households, but the household is the unit of analysis because it is the decision-making unit. Personal interviews were used as the principal method of data collection to obtain data on socio-cultural factors affecting household food security such as beliefs, attitudes, values, perceptions as well as marital status, religious backgrounds and education levels that influence the control and management of means and goods of production. Direct observation method was useful in capturing information on food production and management during social events. Focus Group Discussions method was used with the aim of exploring further, the various issues on the influence of gender roles within the household. Key informants, who are not members of Kuhalo community, were also interviewed. The data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and findings were presented using percentages, frequencies and tables.

The major findings of the study revealed that in Boufale District, people produce diversified food crops such as yams, maize, sorghum, beans, rice and millet but decisions making over resources allocation for food crops production and management, are mostly made by men. During the production cycle, women have to negotiate for land from their husbands or relatives and have to borrow the means of production which limit their productive ability. Cultural ceremonies contribute to food shortages that people of Kuhalo community face as individuals and communities. Coping mechanisms to counter food problems were found to affecting household food security in Kuhalo community. Moreover, the social structures encourage women to look at men (their husbands) as the heads of their households. Findings proved that men and women are living in unbalanced power relationships which affect their households' food security.

On the basis of the study findings, it was concluded that the key factor of women's subordination to men lies in the historical background and patrilineal system of food production and management, where only men are seen as bread winners for their households. And therefore, all the activities that women performed were not accounted for as contributing to secure food for their households. During the times of food shortages and hunger, women perform better than men in carrying out income generating activities towards meeting household subsistence needs. Such gender roles biases have affected household food security.

It was therefore, recommended to introduce development programmes of creating gender awareness among the population of the Kuhalo community to help advance women ability in food production to improve their households living conditions. Togolese authorities and development Organizations in the region should technically assist to sensitize people of Kuhalo community about the effects of gender roles on household food security if meaningful contributions are to be realized in the food security arena. This research therefore, can serve as a working paper for establishing gender programmes in the study area and as a basis for formulating a broad societal awareness campaigns on the influence of gender roles on household food security.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

The socio-economic development of a society is largely dependent on various factors among them, the good health of its people. This is an essential human need that is maintained through good nutrition. Unfortunately, in Africa food production, management and consumption has a lot to do with the cultural practices of the people. Most of the African societies are patrilineal, meaning that decisions and resources are accessible to women based on their relationship to men. In the traditional Africa society, men play the role of sole bread winners. This cultural set up could contribute to the household food insecurity. Understanding the inter-personal relations of both genders (men and women as well as boys and girls) in rural households' settings is an important aspect in the battle against food insecurity, especially in developing countries. Unfortunately, policymakers in developing countries, particularly in Africa undermine the role that women play at household levels to secure food for their members and communities at large.

According to FAO (2005), about one third of Sub-Saharan Africa's population remains chronically hungry<sup>1</sup>. As long as this situation continues, it is unlikely that the region can attain the high rates of economic growth to which the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) rightly aspires. The right of access to adequate food for all people is recognized in International Legislation and getting rid of hunger is a moral imperative. It also makes economic sense to eradicate hunger, because undernourished people cannot achieve their full potential; they remain subject to ill health, their learning abilities and productive capacities are compromised. Ill health due to chronic hunger has severely reduced productivity in Africa. According to NEPAD's 2005 report on Africa Agriculture Development Programme, the per capita GDP may have been doubled, relative to its potential if under-nourishment had been eliminated.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005>

The hungry are the poorest in the society, hence reducing hunger must be among the first steps towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal halving poverty by 2015, which is taken as a reference point for NEPAD'.

The concern to build a just society based on the equality of both sexes has been highlighted in various International Conferences and Summits during the last two decades; especially the International Conference on Population and Development- ICPD- held in Cairo, Egypt in 1994; the fourth International Conference on Women- ICW- held in Beijing, China in 1995 and most recently the Millennium Summit- MS- held in New York, USA in 2000 with the aim to achieve Millennium Development Goals- MDGs- at various levels.

Currently, the term gender has assumed a specific meaning that refers to our social identification as women and men, especially to our socially constructed characteristics as opposed to the term sex, which refers to our fixed biological determination. Scholars in Sociology, Anthropology and in the Development arena are in agreement that while sex identifies the biological differences as male and female, gender refers to the culturally specific set of social behaviour that identifies human beings as women and men. Gender is, therefore, not what we are but what we do. Gender becomes a basis for the division of labour among different household members across communities and regions.

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Gender analysis, at the household level provides a clear understanding of different patterns of behaviour and activities that affect the lives of household members. According to Giddens (1984), any meaningful gender analysis should recognize gender as being both constructed and perpetuated at communal and household levels throughout the times. In most parts of the sub Saharan countries, especially in Togo, women constitute the principal labour force for both cash and food crops production. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery of Togo (M.A.L.F. Togo, 1985), more than 90% of women in most rural areas of Togo (compared to less than 10% in big cities and suburban areas) work in subsistence activities for their daily livelihood.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.NEPAD - Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.htm/005>

Though the concept of gender is starting to be part of every development policy, programme or project, the concept of gender itself is most of the time misunderstood by policy-makers, programme managers, project planners as well as the so called beneficiaries themselves and as result, not well applied to bring expected outcomes.

As development process is focused on women, gender has been seen as women's issue and therefore a tendency of mixing gender with sex, which refers to the biological characteristics that make someone being male or female. All over the World, work is seen as proper to human beings. It is first an interaction between human beings and nature. It is the conscious transformation by mankind of the nature for the realization of his/her planned projects. This implies the use of intellectual and physical forces which require proper food diet. As human beings, we work to satisfy our biological and other basic needs such as nutrition, clothing, shelter, healthcare, education, as well as to enjoy ourselves from the fruits gained from our work through leisure.

In Togo, as well as in most of African countries, besides their reproductive roles, rural women are involved in productive activities of cultivating small pieces of land controlled by men. And yet, despite their involvement in most of rural activities, women are not able to meet their food needs. This research attempts to shade light on the situation of men and women in regard to decision- making over resource allocation and management. The research is particularly interested in pointing out how gender roles influence relations between men and women as far as food production and management is concerned and how these have affected the household food security.

Despite the fact that most African countries share common legal and social values, in order to discuss the subject matter in a more concrete manner, we shall be discussing gender roles and food security topic more solely within the context of the Kuhalo community in Boufale District, Togo.



## 1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Globally, the World produces enough food to feed everyone. However, there are countries, regions within countries, villages within regions, households within villages and individuals within households, most of whom are women and children, who are not able to meet their food needs, FAO (1996).

At the World Food Summit in Rome, (WFS, 1996), Togo joined 186 other nations to endorse the Summit's goal to eradicate hunger and to reduce the number of undernourished people by half, no later than 2015. This was already decided before even the Millennium Summit in New York in 2000 that reinforced the goal of poverty reduction and eradication of extreme hunger. A decade after WFS in Rome (1996), we realise that food security is still a great concern, especially in the third World.

The question of food security has become a crucial one, because all development initiatives depend on how healthier people are to undertake them. It is evident that the good health of individuals, families, communities and nations relies on the good and sufficient food at their disposal. Although poverty remains a threat and big challenge confronting African societies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, gender roles in household as far as food production and management is concerned, greatly contribute to its profound negative impact on food security. Estimations from World Food Programme (WFP,1996) reveal that over eight hundred million human beings worldwide do not have enough to eat in a World that produces enough food to feed every man, woman and child. They are still struggling for food in the World and more than 90% of them live in developing countries. The worst thing is that 76% out of the 90% are from rural areas. Vulnerable people or groups particularly women, disabled people and children, in rural areas, are not able to meet their food needs without compromising other basic needs.

With the increasing need for women roles owing to the above factors and introduction of cash crops production, there is a justified concern that the burden of gender roles will be beyond the means of the already vulnerable people that are women in the society. This calls for the need for more research to investigate how food security can

be improved in the household. This study, therefore, aims of increasing our understanding of food security issues in the household with regard to gender roles in Kuhalo community, Boufale District in Binah prefecture, Togo; by addressing the following questions:

- (i) - How is the division of labour for food production done in the household?
- (ii) - How do gender roles influence food management in the household?
- (iii) - How does the decision-making authority over the means of production impact on food security in the household?
- (iv) - What mechanisms are used by both genders, to cope with problems of food insecurity?

These are some of the questions of concern that call for a research to know more about the situation. This proposal will allow an in depth study on the issue of gender roles in relation to food security and its impact on the development of men and women, as well as boys and girls in order to work towards poverty reduction. The findings therefore will enable us to seek re-adjustment measures that will engage all actors involved in food production, management and provision and also local communities, to benefit equitably from the process.

### **1.3. STUDY OBJECTIVES**

We have fixed two levels of objectives in order to achieve our desired goal:

#### **1.3.1. OVERALL OBJECTIVE**

To investigate motives and conditions that influence gender roles vis-a-vis the control and management of the means and goods of production in Kuhalo community and how it impacts on household food security.

#### **1.3.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- (i)- To determine the gender division of labour in food production and its management in Kuhalo community.
- (ii)- To describe and analyse the social, economic and cultural factors influencing household food security in Kuhalo community.

(iii)- To examine the coping mechanisms adopted by both genders, to counter food security problems facing their households in Kuhalo community.

#### **1.4. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY**

Agriculture forms the base of all African societies and dominates national output, exports, income generation and governments' revenue. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Togo (M.A.L. Togo 1985), over 80% of the total population in Togo earn their livelihood from rural food production. Women are the primary food producers on their husbands or male relatives' plots of land. But while women produce much of the household food for consumption, they are more likely to be malnourished or undernourished than men.

Taking into account that food security improves peoples' health, physical and mental development, making them more productive workers in any sector, this study seeks to examine factors and conditions that determine gender division of labour in the household for food production and how this impacts on food security. It seeks to find out the cultural and social attitudes of the target population towards food management by women at household levels. -

The researcher has chosen to carry out this research in a rural setting of Boufale District because in general major farming activities take place in the rural areas of Togo and most African countries. We believe that contributing to the body of knowledge in the rural area where more than 80% of Togolese population live and work, will have a positive impact in the development of rural communities.

The findings of this study therefore, would provide a basis for interventions by governments and other agencies in terms of sound food security policy formulation and seeking for relevant food security programmes. A number of studies on food security and its impacts on people's life have been conducted and various recommendations made. But yet the problem of food insecurity is still a great concern, especially in rural areas, even more crucial than it was before the colonial

period with the use of archaic system of food production. But few, if any, have focussed on the specific and important area of food security issues in relation with gender roles. As such, the research is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge of scholarly work in the field of gender and food security. It is necessary therefore to put in place measures that ensure women and men, as well as girls and boys, an equal share of benefits.

### **1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The concepts being discussed in this research and at the proposed unit of analysis are for the better understanding of food security in relation to gender roles and should serve as reference to those intending to improve the welfare of rural communities. The study will provide a starting point for addressing the influence of gender roles on household food security among grassroots communities which count for more than 80% of the African population. Gender is a key principle in societies' organisation especially regarding labour division among household members, communities, market places and more in the accessibility and control of resources and products of the labour. Gender roles limit both men and women in their activities but its implication has more negative impact on women. It will also pave way for further research to critically see the burdens women face in rural households in adopting coping mechanisms to provide foods for their household members during the times of food shortages and hunger.

The present study, therefore, aims to increase our understanding about the food security problems underlying gender roles influence by taking into consideration production or availability, and access or capacity to acquire nutritional, adequate and safe food for all the household members. Such a study will be a great contribution to the efforts of mainstreaming gender in food security projects as well as policy formulation and will open doors for necessary adjustments if we are to achieve the first Millennium Development Goal of making poverty history for all and ensure food security is a reality for all in the society at large.

## 1.6. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In term of scope, the study will only focus on the issues specified in the objectives. This is due to time and financial constraints that would not allow the investigation of other relevant aspects pertaining to food security in rural areas, such as introduction of non-food or cash crops production which adds more burden to women's workload in relation to food provision; as well as traditional food chains which ensure food availability in local market; economical aspects which ensure access to food to meet one's dietary needs and food preferences.

In terms of limits, this study limited itself to only three villages out of the eight villages that constitute Boufale District; leaving out two villages that share the same geographical space with Kuhalo community but belonging to Lama-Dhissi community that has its own cultural practices and traditions. It would have been of great benefit and interest to the study to cover Lama- Dhissi villages and compare the attitudes and relations that men maintain with women at household and communal level for a better comprehensive appreciation of the influence of gender roles on household food security across communities.

## 1.7. DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERMS

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The key concepts used in this study require clear and contextual definitions in order to confine with the exigency of Emile Durkheim (1937), who recommends that "The first step in Social Sciences is to define all the key terms used in the study in order to allow people to understand the context of the matter"<sup>3</sup>

**Gender** is a socially constructed attribute that makes male individuals as men and female individuals as women as well as children as boys and girls, and has its foundation based on social structures that guide each community. This is the reason why in most African societies, some production and food management roles that were exclusively male oriented in the past, have changed today due to new realities such as men moving to cities to seek for paid jobs or are no longer alive due to the HIV/AIDS

<sup>3</sup> Emile Durkheim, 1937, in "Les regies de la methode sociologique", Paris, PUF, p 34

pandemic and other deadly diseases, and leaving behind women and children who have to take care of themselves.

**Gender roles** are the social and cultural behaviours that are conceived to determine which task or activity is to be performed by men and women in a given society. These gender roles change over time from one culture to another, even often from one social group to another within the same culture, depending on class, ethnicity and race; but other factors such as education, technology, economy and unexpected crises such as war, hunger contribute to modify the gender roles in the society. It is also the social responsibilities ascribed to men and women to suit their so called "needs and situations" at the household level with regard to the access to and control over means and goods of the production. This determines their views, attitudes and perceptions towards what is expected from a woman or a man. The duties devoted to one gender and carried out by another gender in his/her absence will be used to appreciate the changing gender roles in the household.

**Household** is the unit of analysis for the study. It is basically a unit where a man (husband) and a woman (wife) as a monogamous couple or a man as single (widower or divorced), a woman as single (widow or separated) reside with their or his/her children. There are also polygamous households where men live with two or more wives and their children.

**Food security** refers to the state where all the people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

**Household food security** in the study refers to the fact that each member of the household is secure in terms of his/her diet and if the household in general has access to food. The assumption here is that cultural factors can also deprive members of the household (i.e., women and children) from getting an equitable share. The basis for early warning of food insecurity (famine and hunger) would then rest on the identification of the inadequacy of food supplies at the household level. It would focus on monitoring the food stock of the households.

**Food availability at the household level** is a very key aspect of household food security and refers to the presence of food in storage for household members. But there are some intra-household factors that may affect equitable and adequate accessibility to food by all members. The head of the household may have more power in determining the use of food available and may misappropriate it on the expense of other members.

**Food accessibility in the household** refers to the availability of food within the reach and use of each household member to meet his/her food diet. It is also the ability of the household to withstand seasonal variations in availability of staple food through cultivation and storage of harvests. This entails the household's experiences in food shortage and coping mechanisms during times of food crisis.

**Influence of gender roles** refers to the effects on food availability and accessibility, which occur from the relationships between men and women as well as boys and girls, based on the attitudes at household levels towards the management and utilisation of means and goods of the production. This behaviour of both genders is guided by the social and cultural norms that are conceived to determine which task or activity is to be performed by each household member and with which means; has a great impact on the household food security.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Amouzouvi (1990), a research is never something new that one has to carry out. There have been other scholars and researchers who had probably talked partly in one way or another about it in their various writings and research studies that exist somewhere. This assumption shows how important literature review is in any research work. It allows for critical in-depth examination of the works relevant to the study, in order to lay foundation for new findings that will solve the limitation gaps in that specific field of research.

From the documentation research we have done in relation to the influence of gender roles on household food security, some works about the Kuhalo community have treated partly or globally in relation to the Kabye ethnic group to which it is mostly associated in the Northern region of Togo. Other articles that entirely focused on Kuhalo community have been very useful. Research studies dealing with gender, the status of married women in most of African societies, gender division of labour and production of crops in African households and communities, have been consulted with great interest. The International, regional and national publications in relation to the concept of food security at various levels of the society have constituted the large literature that formed the basis of our work. The teachings we received in MA Gender and Development classes at the Institute of African Studies and the various seminars and conferences we have attended and participated in at national and international levels in relation to gender, poverty and development; as well as papers on the Internet, have been very instrumental during this research work. From that large literature review, the following works have proved to be very relevant to our subject:



### **2.1.1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION OF KUHALO COMMUNITY**

The historical background and the environment, in which people of a given society live, contribute to the way they interact and build their relations. Froelich (1949) described the Kabye community as situated in the North of Togo between the 9°25 and 10°10 of North Latitude; 0°50 East and 1°30 West Meridians. The habitants of this region belong to paleonigrinitic type, linked to voltaic populations. In the historical aspect, Froelich (1963), described Boufale (Kuhalo) people as divided into six native villages which are Pare, Tchimande, Kpalugu, Kachika-Koukade, Kuyaking and Tawa, and two other villages namely Lama Tessi I and Lama Tessi II whose population came from Somde, Lama Dhissi group. But Froelich did not put a distinguish line to Kuhalo community as an independent group. Various scholars<sup>4</sup> have talked about Kuhalo community as a subgroup included in the big family of Kabye group (Takassi, 1983) or just in relation to the population of North of Togo without showing us the real and specific aspect of that community.

Iroko (1984), who had dedicated most of his articles to Kuhalo community (Kuhama, People of Kuhalo community) pointed out that they are different from Biyobe, Kabye, Lama Dhissi, Nawda and Tangba that are their neighbouring communities besides the linguistical proximity that seems to bring them close to each other. This is also our *m* view, based on their cultural practices which are different from the ones of Kabye group.

### **2.1.2. GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR**

Traditionally, there was distinct division of labour within the family on the basis of gender. According to Nasimiyu (1985), Kenya economy depends heavily on its agriculture. Women being the majority of rural population, contribute largely to the rural labour force. During the colonial era, although their work remained the same as that which they performed in the traditional subsistence economy, it had become part

<sup>4</sup> J C. Froelich, C. Alexandre et R. Cornevin, 1963, in les Populations du Nord Togo, Paris Ed PUF  
N.L. Gayibor, 1978, in Textes et Documents sur les Populations du Nord Togo, Lome  
L- Ogounde, 1984, in L'origine et l'installation des Kabye dans leur aire culturelle, Lome

and parcel of the new colonial system of production. The introduction of cash crops had added more work for women because they constitute the major labour force in that production, besides their traditional subsistence farming for family consumption. Researchers have revealed that African women in rural areas not only shouldered their traditional role as cultivators, but they combined this with the roles which were preciously associated to men because the men were busy with cash crops like cotton, coffee, cocoa production that had been newly introduced. This cash production led to an increase of workload and longer working hours for women. Despite this involvement, women do not have any control on the means as well as the goods of the production. Various factors such as extension services, taxation for fertilizers used for cotton or coffee growing and the organisation of marketing facilities, have influenced the division of labour in the agricultural system of production. Most of the men in African societies began producing an increasing quantity of cash crops by taking away the arable land that used to be for subsistence crops. This meant that there was more harvesting and weeding work for women because distinctions are not clear-cut between men and women as far as crops production was concerned.

Kariuki (1985), highlighted some of the aspirations expressed by women to improve their conditions of life and ensure food supply for their household members. Rural women wish to have their voices solicited and listened to as well as be recognized as significant and contributing members to their families and the society at large.

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Women perceive that they bear all the burdens and responsibilities of their families, but do not have a share of the benefits which are controlled by men. Therefore, women want to have the opportunity to become independent persons, to control their own lives and have a role not only in their own activities, but also in public policy and community life. However, giving women economic independence without changing the way things are done at the household unit level means that they will continue to be over burdened by the demands of the new patterns of economic activities. As stated by Kariuki, the change from the subsistence economy to money economy has resulted in stress within the family and increased disparities between men and women at various areas of life such as physical and social mobility, economic and political status and interpersonal relationships.

The importance of women's roles in providing food for their households and improve the living conditions is well established by Muga (2004), who observes that food security reduces infant mortality, maternal mortality and stabilises people's lives, especially improving women health, for they need it to efficiently carry out their triple roles. In rural areas, when a woman is ill, all the household members feel the impact due to her major role as a food provider. Close to 87 % of all poor households live in rural areas. Subsistence farmers account for over 50% of the total poor people. Women's reduced economic and food security is caused by Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) because when men became unemployed, women have to work in informal sector and therefore it is impossible to be committed to domestic work to secure food for the family. However, the major issue of food security in the household can not rely on women being away from the household, but rather on the issue of how food is managed in the household. Famine is not simply a question of food unavailability, for it occurs also in countries where there may be plenty of food. Food insecurity in the household is not only a problem of production or availability from domestic production, but it is more a problem of access to means of production and food that is produced and stored. Never the less, woman and the children formed the primary household's labour force for the farms. The position that seems to be taken commonly in the study of gender relations is that women are subordinated to men, who defined the roles and responsibilities of each household member. However, more and more gender studies are taking into account the changes occurring on the role played by women by challenging the social norms that inhibit the participation of women in decision making process that affect their families and communities. Most of the women today, are clear about what they want at the household and communal level than ever before with the majority concerned with the welfare of their children and the wish to be respected for whom they are. Women want the understanding and encouragement from their partners in their efforts to raise and meet the needs of their household members. Women play a central role at the household level, but the low status accorded to them hinder their potential and this negatively affect the household food security.

Abbot (1997) discusses gender roles and aspects of social stratification and examines the effects of male migration for wage employment or male absence in the household due to death on household decision making, more specifically on married women in

rural Kenyan communities in central province. She points out that in addition to domestic work; women in central province have taken over the role played by men who have left. As a result women now work primarily as farmers who are responsible for feeding themselves and their children in their households. Women left in the countryside either because they are widows, separated or their husbands have gone to the cities in quest of paid jobs; have taken over the management of rural households as observed by Atieno Odhiambo et al. (1989). This situation is not only unique to Kenya but also is experienced all over Africa where women find themselves left alone to take care of their household members. The consequence is the high proportion of de facto female-headed households in the rural areas. This situation has compelled women to assume the decision-making positions at the household level and has propelled them to engage in socio-political activities at their communities' level.

### **2.1.3. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FACTORS INFLUENCING HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY**

In African societies, subsistence farming is largely through female labour and life in traditional rural family is a collective enterprise with strong interpersonal and interdependent system of gender roles. Nevertheless, living in patriarchal system, women are the ones to leave and join their husbands wherever they will be. According to Mothokoa (1985), a wife in real life, usually spends most years of her married life unemployed because she would have to leave her job and join her husband or she would have to raise the children and attend to household chores. This is very applicable in rural farming where a woman has to attend to all the domestic chores before joining her husband in food production or going to her subsistence farm. Child bearing and nurturing is time consuming for rural mothers, which takes them away from their farming work. Undoubtedly, their farming work will suffer while that of their husbands will flourish. The concern is that there is always a tendency or failures not to recognize the so called "non-working" women's contribution to their household's prosperity. There is therefore a need to engage in the Process of women empowerment in order to redress and balance relationships within the household between men and women. This will contribute significantly towards increasing the productivity and well use of the household consumption food.

Rowlands (1997), defines empowerment of women as a gender issue that is about transforming social relations and a process where women have to confront gender conditioning of socialization of power relation in the decision making process. She defines power as the ability to make decisions, to control oneself and to gain access to material and non-material resources, as opposed to mere domination and control over others. The term 'empower' contains the word 'power' which may be broadly defined as control over material assets, and resources that increase the influence and control ability of those who distribute material resources, govern social relations in both public and private life. Here one may argue that the extent of power held by particular individuals corresponds to the number and type of resources the person holds. Societies, particularly in Africa, therefore, generally confer power of decision making to men who own more resources than women. Focus should then be on how to improve educational opportunities and how to address factors that inhibit girls and women's ability to fully participate and contribute to their households' social well-being.

Access to and control over means of food production therefore, have a great impact on a household's socio economic status, especially in the rural areas. Kabeberi et al. (1998), observes that although women make up more than 80% of the labour force in the rural agricultural sector, they are still denied the opportunity to make crucial decisions affecting farm production. The result is that men, who are taken as breadwinners of their households, make decision over the means and goods of production without consulting the women. On the other hand, women do the work on the farms, yet when the benefit arise from the farm products, men are the beneficiaries and they make the decision on how to spend such benefit ignoring that women have contributed to its achievement. Joekes (1987), states that it is increasingly accepted that direct money earning does indeed mark an improvement in status of women within the household. She explains that a working class woman contributes to the household's budget and it gives her a say in household decision making as compared to non paid working woman. By virtue of her income as employed woman, she holds a bargaining power within the household because she carries a threat of withdrawal of her financial support. This is the reality for city women but not for rural women who constitute to more than 80% of the labour force in subsistence farming, with the user right of cultivating a piece of their husbands' or relatives' lands and yet, they can not

make any decision over the management of the products of their labour without asking for permission. This has translated to women dependency in rural households' setting, subsequently resulting to the mismanagement of food within the household and at the communal level.

Gwako (1997) explains that income generating activities significantly improve women's position in the household and their self confidence and as a result, such women have an influence in terms of decision making. This view is true and very applicable to rural women, especially in times of food shortages and hunger whereby they have to look for coping mechanisms to meet the food needs for their households. When women engage themselves in small income generating activities such as selling firewood, home made products and charcoal to provide food in their households, they do not have to seek for permission from their husbands before buying the kind of food they may prefer for their household members.

Women in most of African societies have only usufruct rights to land. This is due to the fact that communities are traditionally patrilineal, a social structure in which inheritance of land is passed from a man, to his sons. In this structure, women generally do not own land. Instead, they gain access to it through their male relatives (father, brother, son). In this way, many women, especially those in rural area where traditions are strongly alive, can spend their lives in two worlds: in that of their relatives and then, after the marriage, in that of their husbands. If the husband dies or a woman is divorced, she is then dependent on her sons or male relatives. Also in most societies it is men at large who control the instruments through which property is regulated, such as the institutions that enact, control and implement laws; and play an important role in shaping gender ideologies as pointed out by Agarwal (1994).

This scenario is quite unfortunate for women because first they have to access land through their male relatives or husbands. If for some reasons these ties break or do not exist, then they have no other way of accessing land. This is the case of many widows, single and divorced women who most of the time do not feel comfortable in such situation because the regulation structure over property ownership makes their living conditions very unfavourable in the community. The option of acquiring property through buying is not one that is open to rural women because of their

economic status, which is very limited. The attitude of the general population does not make the matter easier for women either. Majority of men and some women will prefer to sell their properties such as land to men instead of women, unless they have a male supporter as a guarantor. This leads also to women's dependency on men in controlling and managing the property that they have acquired through their own effort. Women subordination, especially in rural area is also expressed through food production: traditionally, a woman was responsible for growing and harvesting the crops but it is the man who decided how the products were sold and how much was kept for household consumption.

The structural organization of most African traditional societies, controlled and perpetuated by men throughout the time, has obliged many rural women with very limited economic resources, to remain in harmful relationships just for the sake of keeping their social status acceptable by the society. Traditionally, it was a shame for a woman to divorce her husband because she would become a burden to her male relatives who would have to take care of her and her children by giving her a piece of land and providing her with a shelter. In this structured system of managing communities' affairs, women do not have an identity outside their marriage life and such social and cultural factors that govern people's lives, reinforce women's acceptance to remain in their subordinate position to men in the society.

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It is clear from the above literature that the impacts and challenges of gender roles on household food security are real and require deliberate efforts if their effects are to be contained. This study hopes to fill some of the above gaps by investigating conditions and factors that influence food security in the household. It is also hoped that the results of this study will further provide a basis for formulating relevant and sustainable food security programmes and policies by taking into account the influence of gender roles on household food security.

## **2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A theoretical framework set out different categories of elements to be considered for analysis and draws attention to key issues to be explored. This study will use two interrelated gender theoretical frameworks namely the gender roles (known as Harvard Analytical framework) and Anthony Giddens' structuration theory. The gender analysis frameworks are theories that are developed as tools used to examine the dynamics of gender relationships, to understand the complex realities of gender concerns in the different components of development projects and programmes as well as for collecting relevant information on gender.

### **2.2.1. THE GENDER ROLES FRAMEWORK**

The gender roles framework is also known as Harvard Analytical framework. It was developed by the Harvard Institute for International Development in collaboration with the Women in Development (WID) office. The aim of this framework is to demonstrate that there is an economic rationale for investing in women as well as men and to map out the work of men and women in the community.

This framework encourages the appreciation of the various activities carried out by men and women at the community and household levels and thus highlights some of their interrelations. Since the framework defines men and women's socio economic opportunities and constraints, it is used for the identification of gender division of labour.

### **2.2.2. ANTHONY GIDDENS' STRUCTURATION THEORY**

According to Giddens (1984), structure refers to rules, values, customs and resources available in a society that determine human behaviour, enabling them to operate in certain ways. Within the structure, are agents/actors who are people with the ability to act in one way or another and such behaviour affects their lives and has an implication on other people' lives. These agents/actors (men and women) perform actions, both



intended and unintended in conformity with their cultural values that govern food distribution in the household, community and society at large. Giddens' concern is to see how the structure and agent are not independent of each other. But the two are involved in a dialectical relationship in which the structure (social constructions), through its rules, values, customs and resources produces the individual (man/woman) and the individual reproduces the structure through his/her actions.

Hence, there is no philosophical dualism (opposition) between the structure and the agent, but there is what Giddens refers to as a duality of structure or structuration.

The individuals' actions go across space and time. Social structures are constituted by human agents (men and women) who behave according to social structure that is at the same time reproduced by human agents. The individuals (men and women) are knowledgeable agents, skilled actors, capable of accounting for their actions and know a great deal about the world in which they operate to meet their needs. Giddens' theory with its duality of structure helps us to understand social production and reproduction. Social production is the way social life is created by people as they engage in social practices throughout their daily experience. The process of socialization has made men and women to behave according to certain norms that regulate their interactions.

### **2.2.3. RELEVANCE OF THE FRAMEWORKS TO THE STUDY**

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We find these two theories very relevant to the study because they help to analyse and understand the gender division of labour and the influence of gender roles on food security at household and community levels in various ways:

The relevance of the gender roles framework is on the various profiles especially the activity profile, then access and control profile and the use of resources profile were relevant in determining how access to and control over resources influence decision making at the household level. It helps to understand the gender division of labour among household members for food production and how such regulations affect household food security. The framework was also used as a tool for analysing the different responsibilities of men and women in the households and it provides insight to productive and communal work carried out by men and women in the study area. It

expounds on the fact that social relations are not fixed but can and do change according to the environment and conditions of life. This is captured in the way gender roles and responsibilities of women have changed in the study area depending on their occupational and marital status.

The relevance of Anthony Giddens' theory is that it provides a framework through which the perpetuation of gender roles, in one way or another across space and time in a given society; for this study, in the Kuhalo community can be explained. As agents/actors, men and women's roles in food production and management have been guided by the social relationships within households' members over time due to the socialization process which replicates the same structure from one generation to another. The way in which both genders (men and women, as well as boys and girls) who are agents/actors at household levels provide different mechanisms to cope with food insecurity in their households during the times of food shortages or hunger, is determined by their social interactions that are guided by the social structure. Both men and women differently use their knowledge, skills, technology and creativity against the workload they face in their daily lives when managing to meet food needs for their households' members.

### **2.3. STUDY ASSUMPTIONS**

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In Togo as well as in most African societies, the gender division of labour as far as food production and management is concerned, is a result of culture. More often than not, it is not true that the duties assigned to women within the household for food production are always less important. Thus, in certain African societies, the close link between soil fertilization and maternal fecundity, has given a mystic and religious base to some duties known as women's work such as sowing and harvesting; while the so called "hard tasks" such as land clearance, soil preparation and turning are seen as men's duties.

From the above statement in relation to African context and especially with the Kuhalo community, the following assumptions are advanced for verification in the field:

Static cultural attitudes and practices nurtured and maintained in the society throughout the time, determine the gender division of labour for food production and management and have an influence on household food security.

In the study area, cultural values governed the food storage systems and distribution for consumption among members at household as well as at community level for social events.

In Kuhalo community, both men and women, have different coping mechanisms to mitigate the food insecurity in their households during times of food shortages and hunger.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the study location, the topography of the study area, land used and farming activities of the people. It also explains the study design, methods of data collection as well as data analysis.

#### **3.1. RESEARCH AREA**

The research on influence of gender roles on household food security is conducted on the Kuhalo community, in the District of the same name but known by Togolese administration as Boufale District of Binah prefecture; Kara region in the North of Togo. The study area consists of the six villages of Kuhalo community namely; Katchika-Koukade, Kpalougou, Kuyaking, Pare, Tawa, Tchimande of Boufale District that counts two other villages of the Lama-Dhissi ethnic group namely, Lama Tessi I and Lama Tessi II.

According to the administrative map of Togo, established in 1908, Kuhalo territory is arbitrary limited to the South and South-West by Binah River and its tributary Gbam; in the West by Doufelgou prefecture; in the North it is limited by Biyobe District known by Togolese administration as Sola District and in the East by Republic of Benin. Boufale District is dominated by Mount Tere or Mount Boufale which culminate at the altitude of 558m (Source: Atlas of Togo, 1980). From the general census of November 1981 that evaluated the population of Boufale District at 4 391 habitants and the general estimate of July 1995 that evaluated it at 7 500 out of 66 000 habitants that constitute Binah prefecture (Source: 1995 general estimation of Togolese population, National statistic Centre), we can estimate the population of Boufale District at 10 000 habitants today. Boufale District is situated in the North of Pagouda town, the headquarters of Binah prefecture; at the distance of 15 km. Boufale District covers an area of 37.5 sq km. The vegetation is of mixed clear and dense savannah trees. Some rivers, others lined by trees, flow across Boufale District. A

main road coming from Pagouda, the headquarters of Binah prefecture crosses Boufale District to Sola.

The soil is stony and scrawny in most parts of the Kuhalo territory. This type of soil is conducive for agricultural activities that are very important for household food security.

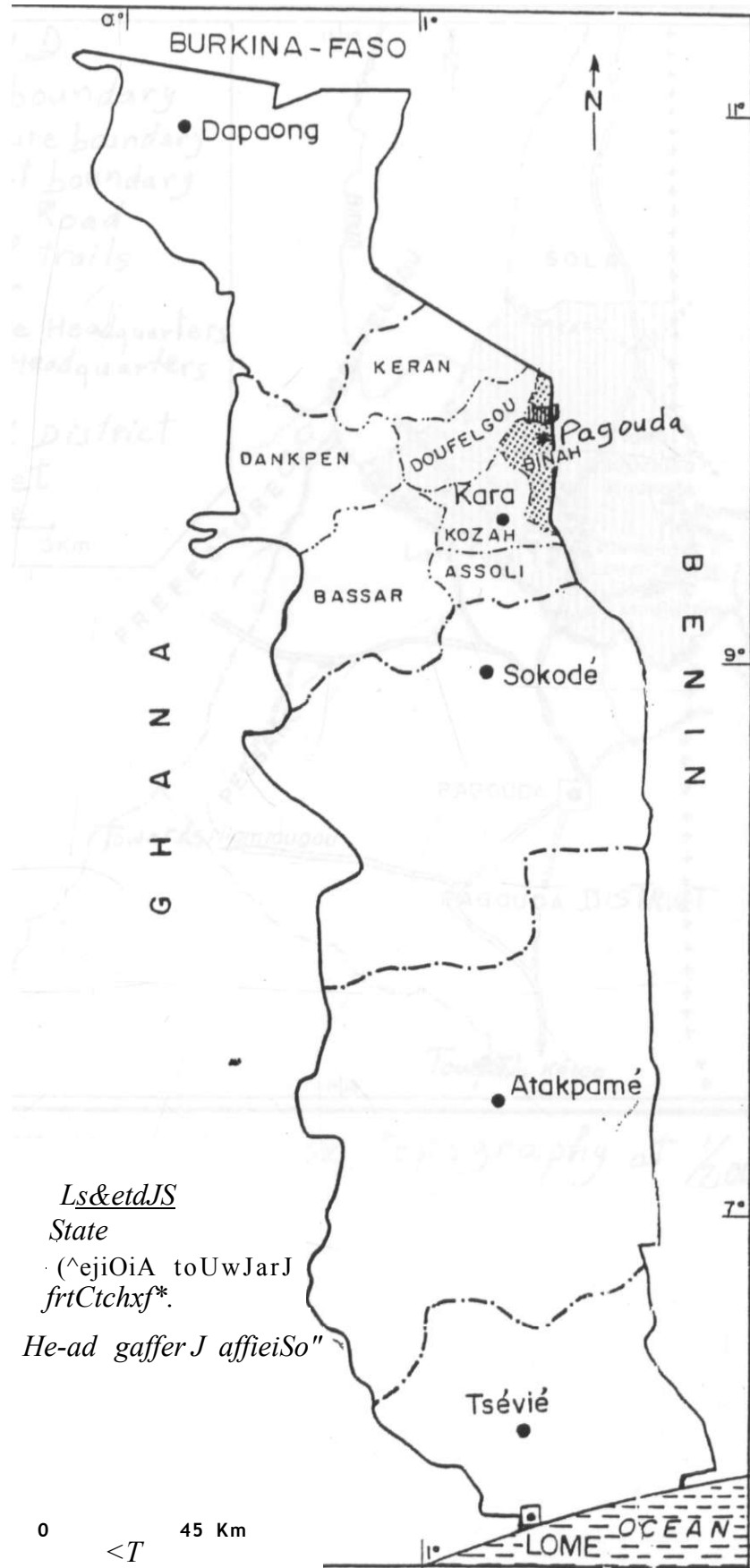
More than 90% of the local population live and work in rural areas. They practice subsistence agriculture such as growing yams, sorghum, millet, beans and maize, the common crops. The introduction of cash crops farming in the area such as cotton and rice for commercial purposes is viewed to be contributing to food scarcity. Livestock rearing such as sheep, goats, chicken, pigs and guinea-fowl supplements crop production.

The weather is comprised of two seasons: The dry season "Lunkure" from November to April and the rainy season "Yolum" from May to October. The "Harmattan" is a dry wind blowing from North-East to South-West on the region from December to February.

Like in most Togolese rural areas, Boufale District has experienced rural-urban migration, with a large number of men and young boys and girls, leaving behind their families to go and look for paid work in towns such as Ketao, Kara, Sokode, Lome and also in far away places across the borders in Benin and Nigeria.

Each village in Boufale District has at least one public primary school to serve all the schooling children and only one secondary school to serve all the boys and girls of the District.

In terms of business, Boufale District has one internationally known market, with the market day taking place every Monday where people come from towns such as Ketao, Kara, Sokode and also across the borders from Benin.

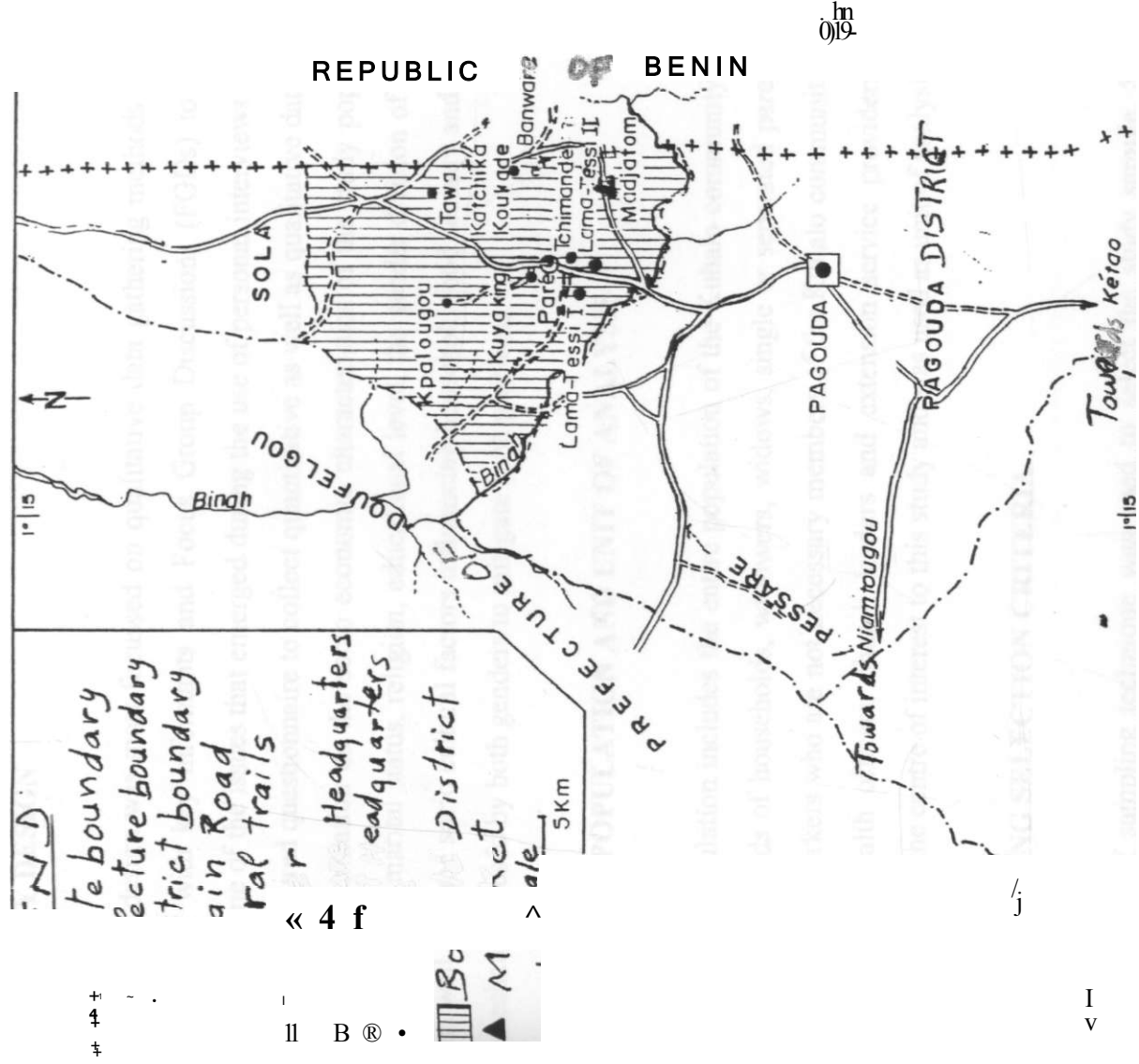


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## **3.2. STUDY DESIGN**

The study design was most focussed on qualitative data gathering methods such as interviews with key informants and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to further explore some of the issues that emerged during the use of personal interviews method with a structured questionnaire to collect quantitative as well as qualitative data. This provided information on the socio economic characteristics of the study population such as age, marital status, religion, educational level, the gender division of labour, as well as some socio cultural factors influencing household food security and coping mechanisms used by both genders to mitigate such problems.

### **3.2.1. STUDY POPULATION AND UNIT OF ANALYSIS**

The study population includes the entire population of the Kuhalo community: male and female heads of households, widowers, widows, single or separated parents, as well as paid workers who are not necessary members of the Kuhalo community such as teachers, health officers, church leaders and extension service providers. The household was the centre of interest to this study and was used as unit of analysis.

### **3.2.2. SAMPLING SELECTION CRITERIA**

Three stages of sampling technique was used to select the study sample. Simple random was used to select three villages from the list of the 6 villages that constitute the Kuhalo community. This method was preferred because it is accurate (Bailey, 1998) and ensures a degree of representativeness by providing the elements with equal chances of being selected. The chiefs from the three selected villages were requested to prepare lists of households that form their villages, and from which the study sample was selected. The prepared lists of households were the sampling frames. On every frame, systematic sampling was employed to select 30 to 40 households in proportion to the number of households (250 to 300) in each village to generate a study sample of 100 households. The 100 sampled households formed the sample size. The data collected is about individuals in households rather than about households as a whole, but the household is the unit of analysis since it is the decision-making unit as far as all issues of food production and consumption are



concerned. Since this study is concerned with gender roles in crops production and food management, married men and women, widowers and widows as well as single and divorced parents were interviewed. There were some cases where some young men who were not yet married were interviewed because of their position as heads of their households, with their mothers and young brothers and sisters under their care. This is because their male parents are no longer alive or have moved to urban centres in search of paid jobs.

A control group of 10 households headed by widows and widowers was also selected for personal interviews. This has enabled us to appreciate how men and women manage their households for food production and management when they lose their partners in marriage and have to face the reality of being alone to take care of the household members. This was also meant to appreciate the cultural dynamism among the population of study according to the realities each gender is facing and has to cope with the specific situation. For the control group, a list of widows and widowers heads of households was drawn from the three selected villages and random sampling was employed to select the sample elements. Each household was assigned a unique number and a lottery technique was used to select the households until the desired sample size of 10 households in the selected villages was reached. Four research assistants within the Kuhalo community were trained by the researcher to help him during the data collection in the field (**Picture No 6 at the back**).

### **3.3. DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

#### **3.3.1. PERSONAL INTERVIEWS**

Personal interviews were used as the principal method of data collection. The semi-structured interviews technique was used to design a standard questionnaire defined in the context of gathering major information, both qualitative and quantitative for the analysis of this study. The questionnaires were pre- tested and revised accordingly prior to the study. The researcher and the four field assistants interviewed the 100 heads (men or women found) in the selected households. The Kuhalo language was used during the interviews and the questionnaires were standardized for all the

respondents. The kind of qualitative information obtained from the questionnaires including the socio-cultural factors affecting household food security such as beliefs, attitudes, values, perceptions as well as marital status, religious backgrounds and education levels that influence the control and management of means and goods of production. The questionnaire was composed of open and closed ended questions to also generate quantitative data on gender division of labour as well as coping mechanisms used by men and women to solve food shortages and hunger problems in their households. The use of closed- ended questions is to allow for probing and flexibility as well as precision and efficiency during coding. Russell Bernard observes that personal interviews have an advantage in gathering data because when the interviewers find a selected sample unavailable, there is always another choice to be made for replacement. It is convenient and flexible since it can be administrated from any place and at any time within the study area (Bernard, 1988). It is also effective in eliciting more information about the same. The level of education was also examined as this may influence the impact of gender roles on household food security.

### **3.3.2. DIRECT OBSERVATION**

Direct observation method was useful in capturing information on food production and management during social events. It is the primary technique for collecting data on non-verbal behaviour. Given the flexibility on this method, the researcher was able to concentrate on any variable that prove to be important and relevant to the study. The information captured from direct observation included the gender division of labour for farming, the decision-making over resources and tasks distribution for food production; the processing, preservation and storage of food as well as coping mechanisms used to counter food security problems in the household.

According to Moser (1969), instead of asking people what they do, one can observe what they do and avoid the case of exaggeration, prestige effects and memory errors in their effort to please the researcher.

### **3.3.3. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDs)**

This method was used with the aim of exploring further, the various issues on the influence of gender roles within the household. It provides qualitative data on the

gender roles of men and women in relation to food production and management; coping mechanisms used by both men and women. Married, divorced, separated, widows and widowers were the participants in these discussions. Three Focus Group Discussions were conducted: First, men only (**Picture No 3**); second, women only (**Picture No 4**) and third, men and women together so as to get disparities and/or similarities in the perceptions of the roles of the two genders in household food production, management and control. A Focus Group Discussion guide was used by the moderator and his assistants during each session of group discussion that composed of 8 to 10 participants. The homogeneity of Focus Group Discussion members in term of age was observed. The information gathered from Focus Group Discussions is useful for comparison to data obtained earlier from personal interviews and compensate for some of the views which were not expressed.

#### **3.3.4. KEY INFORMANTS' INTERVIEWS**

People, who are not members of Kuhalo community but are working and living in that community; because they are knowledgeable about the reality of food production and management in that area, were the target group for this method. Twelve of them were purposively sampled and comprised of two church leaders, two local primary school teachers, two health officers, two veterinaries, two extension services officers, one chemist and one tailor. Such key informants were interviewed by the researcher himself while the field assistant were useful in locating the informants. Qualitative information on how gender roles affect household food security in the area, as well as the suggestions on how to improve the situation of food security in that community were obtained from the key informants using an interview guide. It was not possible to respect gender parity for each sector in order to get the views of the two genders in the same working field because there were no female extension service provider, no female Church Leader and no female veterinary.

#### **3.4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Relationships between household members, especially husband and wife, are seen as private issues that are not supposed to be brought into the public sphere. In the study, there were respondents who shared about their life experiences. Most of this

information was on their personal integrity as well as that of their spouses. For these reasons, we have assured them of confidentiality of the responses they gave, by using pseudonyms or anonymity when writing the report from the data collected. Some of the respondents, who were still not comfortable, were requested to only state their genders and marital status which will be the only information on their backgrounds. We asked for their verbal consent before carrying the personal interviews, Focus Group Discussions or having discussions with key informants. This study was carried out purely for academic purposes and the study findings will be disseminated widely to share the information on the issue of household food security in order to increase the knowledge about the same. We will achieve this by presenting papers in conferences, workshops and seminars to disseminate knowledge and good understanding of issues of gender roles in production and management of goods and how this affects household food security.

### **3.5. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES**

Data was mainly collected from primary sources and analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. We are more concerned with issues of behaviour, attitudes and perceptions of people towards food management in the household, qualitative data were analysed, using qualitative techniques. It involves describing the data obtained from interviews, Focus Group Discussions and direct observation, and showing how such data relate to the study objectives. Direct quotes and selected comments from key informants were also helpful in understanding the wide view of people under study. On the other hand, quantitative data was analysed by computer using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics, mainly percentages, frequencies and other measures of central tendency were obtained from computer analysis. These statistics were used to describe the data collected.

### **3.6. SOLUTIONS TO SOME ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS OF THE STUDY**

Although our approach to data collection in the field was professional and proactive, human interaction and behaviour are unpredictable and certain unenvisioned problems have emerged in the field. The first problem encountered was the demand for

financial favours by the research subjects before volunteering to give information. We tried to resolve this problem by building good rapport with the community members and explaining to them that this research is not for the interest of any third party, as it is the case most of the time; where the target community members think one is sent and paid to do it. We assured them that it was for the purpose of our academic studies and recommendations would be made and addressed to relevant Togolese authorities and other relevant organisations to assist them improve their food situation accordingly. This was possible by meeting with the Prefect of Binah prefecture (**Picture No 1**) to obtain an official authorization for data collection in the field and also having meetings with the Chief of Boufale District (**Picture No 2**) and the Chiefs of the three selected villages (**Picture No 5**) to clarify the purpose of the research. The Chiefs of the selected villages went back to their people with such clarification and respondents were thus requested to provide information on voluntary basis to the researcher and his field assistants. This helped to remove their suspicions and motivate them to cooperate during the research process. We also assured them that the feedback would go to the entire Kuhalo community to make them aware of the influence of gender roles in food production and management and enable them to organise themselves for a better collaboration between men and women to improve household food security.

During the personal interviews, some respondents tried to please interviewers and gave false information on how much they share means and goods of production with other household members, especially their spouses yielding a limitation called prestige bias (Subbo, 2001). Data collected from Focus Group Discussions and key informants have helped to probe or clarify such cases.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the research findings on the individual background information of the respondents, gender division of labour in food production; social, economic and cultural factors influencing food security and coping mechanisms to counter food security problems. The information was summarized in four key issues on which gender roles influence decisions that are made at the household level for food production and management, and which have an impact on food security at household level.

#### **4.2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS**

Some of the characteristics along gender lines that may contribute to the way men and women interact for food production and management including age; marital status; religion and education level, were taken into consideration for the better understanding of the influence of gender roles on household food security.

##### **4.2.1 AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

This study focuses more on men and women with social responsibilities of providing food for their household members. The age was then used to explore when a person is given social task according to his/her age and how by extension that affects the decision making process in the household. Age variation of the 100 respondents ranged from 15 years to 70 years and above. There were 58 male respondents and 42 female respondents. The youngest male respondent was 18 years old 1/58 (1.7%) while the youngest female respondent was 15 years old 1/42 (2.4%) as indicated in the table 1 below. This explains that there are more early marriages of girls than boys at the tender age (below 18 years) with the responsibilities of making decision not only about their own lives but also about their household members. The boy at 18 years old was not married but because of the death of his father, he had the

responsibility to assisting his mother look after his younger brothers and sisters. The average age of male respondents is 40 years ( $2313/58 = 39.88$  years) while for female respondents, the average age is 35 years ( $1466/42 = 34.90$  years). Majority of the respondents, both male and female belonged to the third age bracket (30- 50) as indicated in table 1 below. This is the age bracket when both men and women have settled down in marriage and make decisions on how to run their household activities in terms of food production and management. Most of the women above 60 years were widows who were taking care of some of their children and grand children.

#### **4.2.2. MARITAL STATUS**

Marital status was considered as one of the key characteristics of the respondents in order to analyze how this influenced decision making process in the household.

There were 50 male respondents who are married, representing 86% of the men interviewed while 38 female respondents are married and represent 90% of the women interviewed. There were more monogamist women, 23 (54.8%) than monogamist men, 26 (44.83%). On the other hand, there are more divorced or separated women, 3 (7.1%) than men, 1 (1.72%). Marital status pattern has contributed to the assumption that gender roles are socially conceived to divide labour among men and women. Such division of labour is dynamic and change in accordance to the realities men and women face in their marital life and environment of work. Widowed (men and women) were "set aside as a control group during data collection time to appreciate the changing of gender roles. This has confirmed that gender roles are dynamic and in absence of one gender in the house, especially men; women tend to engage themselves to accomplish certain tasks seen in the society as men responsibilities.

#### **4.2.3. RELIGION**

The religious background of the respondents influences the way men and women relate to each other in the management of means and goods of production in their households. There were more traditionalist men, 43 (74.15%) than their women counterpart, 20 (47.6%). On the other hand, there were less men who believe in the non-traditional religions such as Christianity and Islam, 15 (25.8%) compare to

women, 22 (52.4%). People attached to non-traditional religions are more liberal about the gender roles in their households.

#### 4.2.4. LEVEL OF EDUCATION

The level of education of the respondents was taken into account to determine its influence on their abilities to make decisions as individuals on the management of food production in their households. It was used to explore the possibility that a respondent's educational level; especially women, has an influence on the household decision making processes as far as food management is concerned.

The average level of men education was 4 years while for women, it was 3 years. The highest level of education for men was Tertiary school 2<sup>nd</sup> year while for women it was secondary school form 4. Men who never attended school accounted for 51.92% while for women, they accounted for 42.85%. This explains why some girls who have gone to school (mostly primary level) dropped out to get married to men without formal education (who have never gone to school).

**Table 1: Background characteristics of the respondents**

Variables	Male N = 58 (100 %)	Female N= 42 (100 %)
Age in Years		
15-17	0(0)	3(7)
18- 29	11(19)	13(31)
30 -50	30 (52)	20(48)
51 -69	12(21)	5(12)
70 and Plus	4 (7)	0(0)
Marital Status		
Married	50 (86)	38 (90)
Single Unmarried	6(10.3)	0(0)
Divorced/Separated	1(1.7)	3(7)
Widowed	1 (1.7)	1 (2.4)
Religion of practice		
Christian	13 (22.4)	16(38)



Traditionalist	43 (74.15)	20 (47.6)
Muslim	2(3.4)	6(14.3)
Level of Education		
Never attended School	30 (51.7)	18(42.8)
Primary	15(25.8)	18(42.8)
Secondary	10(17.2)	6(14.3)
Tertiary	3 (5.2)	0(0)

**Source: Personal Interviews data, January 2007**

### **4.3. KEY ISSUES OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

In this section, we analyze data according to the objectives of the study which seek to determine the gender division of labour in food production and its management in the Kuhalo community, to describe and analyse the social, economic and cultural factors influencing household food security in the Kuhalo community and to examine the coping mechanisms adopted by both genders, to counter food security problems facing their households in the Kuhalo community.

#### **4.3.1. GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR IN FOOD PRODUCTION**

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In this section, we discuss about the first objective that states, to determine the gender division of labour among household members in food production and its management in Kuhalo community.

In Boufale District, people produce diversified food crops. According to the respondents, men produce between four to ten types of food crops: 12% of the male respondents produce four types of crops; 39.6% produce five types of crops; 19% produce six types of crops; 19% produce seven types; 7% produce eight types; 1.7% produces nine types and the remaining 1.7% produces ten types of crops. Women cultivate less variety of food crops. They produce between two to six types of crops for their households' consumption and for sale.

The major food crops which are cultivated in Kuhalu community are. yams, maize, sorghum, beans, rice and millet. Yams are found in 98.3% of the respondents' households, maize in 94% of the households, beans in 44.8% of the households, rice in 41.4% of the households and millet in 29.3% of the households. The major crops grown by women are rice (92.9%), beans (71.4%), sorghum (69%), maize (69%), yams (66.7%), millet (40.5%) and vegetables (28.6%).

For male respondents, the crops that are likely to determine their households' food security are yams (79.3%), followed by sorghum (74%), maize (51.7%); while for women respondents, rice (57%) followed by maize (52.4%), sorghum (45.2%) and yams (45%); are the crops likely to determine food security in their households.

Most of the men (70.7%) said they use their high potential land for food and cash crops. 19% of men use their high potential land only for food crops production while 10.3% use such land for cash crops fanning only. Since women do not own land, they have limited choice about the quality of land on which they grow their crops. Most of the time, the land they get from their husbands, brothers or other male relatives, is used for food crops production. Land plays a primary role in farming. In Kuhalo community, land is inherited from ancestors and is very significant in the lives of the families as it binds the lineages and clans through generations. It is a basic necessity because its ownership and control carries with it potential power in terms of decision making in the household.

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94.8% of the male respondents said the decision over the use of the major food crops that determine their households' food security is their entire responsibility. Only 5.2% of male respondents declared that they take decisions over food crops in collaboration with their wives. 21.4% of women (most of them separated /divorced or widows) said they decide over the use of the food crops since they are responsible for the management of their household affairs. 58.4% of women agreed that the decision over the use of the major food crops is the responsibility of men since they are the heads of their households. The justification is given by 19% of women who said it is the duty of men to do so in order to make sure that the food is well managed in their households. Only 4.8% of women confirmed that they were consulted by their husbands in the process of decision making over the food crops that determine their household food security.

In reality, men have never been good food managers; but because they are the heads of their households, it gives women the impression that their husbands are the ones to decide on the food management. For instance, if we take the case of early food crops selling; the decision about selling is made by men, sometime with good reasons to meet certain urgent needs in their households but not always. Men may decide to sell part of the harvested food crops to have leisure with their friends in the bars and during the market day. And it was unanimously recognized during the Focus Group Discussions that in times of hunger and food shortages, women are much involved in finding coping mechanisms to meet the food needs of their household members. This means, women know what they endure during the times of food shortages and hunger; and are more conscious to manage the harvested food in the way that will make it last till the coming harvest.

As summarized in the table 2 below, the decisions over resource allocation for food crops production, tasks carried during a production cycle, food crops processing and storing, are mostly made by men; except in the case of their absence by death or away to look for better conditions of life in cities. In such case, women make decisions after consulting with their male children or brothers- in- law. Women rely on male figures not because they are not able to decide, but to be socially accepted. Tasks such as preparing soil, turning soil and weeding in some cases, are decided and done by men when they are present. The rest of the tasks such as sowing or planting, harvesting, transporting, selling the food crops are decided by men and done by women and girls. In their absence such tasks are decided by women and their boys in consultation with their brothers- in- law and are done by male children (preparing and turning soil) and the rest of the tasks by women and girls. This shows that most of the time consuming tasks during the cycle of production of food crops that are likely to determine households' food security in Kuhalo community, are carried out by women and girls; even if it was argued that men do the most difficult and hard tasks which are preparing and turning the soil. 98.3% of the men own the means for their food crops production while only 26.2% of women have their own means of food production. The 1.7% of the men, who do not own the means of production, borrows from their neighbours. 72.7% of the women, who do not own the means of production, borrow them from their husbands while the rest (27.3%) do so from relatives and neighbours.

Women have to negotiate for land from their husbands or relatives, they have to borrow the means of production and it is natural that they can not control and decide over the use of the goods of their labour.

The respondents were not unanimous on the question whether the amount of food harvested each year determines their household food security. 44.8% of the male respondents said that such amount may determine their household food security, because based on the number of bags of food stored or the number of attics filled; they are able to know if the food will last till the forthcoming harvest. The other 55.2% of male respondents said that the amount of food harvested can not determine their household food security due to the many unpredictable situations such as unexpected health complication, school fees for children where one has to sell the harvested food to meet such needs. The percentage of women who responded positively is the opposite of the percentage of men. 54.8% of women said that the amount of food harvested each year determines their household food security while 44.8% disagreed giving the same reasons as men. It came out clearly that people in this community do not have other sources of income and they have to rely on selling their food crops to solve the problems facing their household members.

**Table 2: Decision making over the allocation of resources and tasks accomplished by each household member**

Readings: (M) for men; (W) for women; (b) for boys and (g) for girls

Tasks	When you are all Dresent		When Men are absent	
	Decide	Do	Decide	Do
Preparing soil	M = 86.4% W = 8.3% MW = 5.3%	M = 77.4% Wg = 3.8% b = 18%	Wb = 50.6% b = 35.3% W = 14%	b = 62.8% Wb = 20% Wg = 16.8%
Turning soil	M = 86.7% W = 9.3% MW = 3.7%	M = 75.5% b = 20% Wg = 4.3%	Wb = 56.3% W = 23.2% b = 20.4%	b = 69% Wb = 19.3 Wg = 10.6%
Sowing/ planting	M = 66.2% W = 30.3% MW = 3.5%	M = 5.1% W = 25.1% Wg = 48.2% MW = 12.7% Wgb = 8.9%	W = 35.3% b = 29.4% Wb = 35.3%	W = 36.8% Wg = 47.4% gb = 12.8% Wbg = 7%

Weeding	M = 86.4% W = 12.4% MW = 1.2%	M = 25.2% Wg = 21% Mb = 45.8% Wbg = 8.3%	b = 14.9% W = 40.3% Wb = 44.8%	Wb = 40.7% b = 25.6% Wg = 13.6% Wbg = 20%
Harvesting	M = 75.7% W = 20.5% MW = 3.8%	W = 25.3% MW = 8.9% Wg = 27.8% Wbg = 35.6%	b = 38% Wb = 47.7% W = 14.3%	W = 14% Wg = 46.9% Wbg = 39%
Transporting	M = 69.1% W = 18.4% MW = 12.5%	MW = 12.7% W = 29.2% Wg = 32.1% Wbg = 26%	b = 35.5% Wb = 43.5% W = 20.9%	W = 22.8 Wg = 42.7% Wbg = 34.4%
Food Storage system	M = 81.3% W = 15% MW = 3.7%	MW = 33.8% Mb = 24.6% MWg = 23% MWb = 18.5%	b = 44.7% Wb = 40% W = 15.3%	Wb = 30.6% Wg = 24.8% Wbg = 44.6%...
Food Selling	M = 82.2% W = 16.4% MW = 1.4%	W = 54.7% Wg = 37.4% Mbg = 7.8%	b = 18.3% Wb = 57.7% W = 24%	W = 26.3% Wg = 31.2% g = 34.4% Wbg = 8%
When to start harvesting	M = 76.4% W = 13.6% MW = 10%	Mb = 44% W = 13.5% Wbg = 27.8% Wg = 14.9%	b = 27% Wb = 50.8% W = 22	Wb = 38% b = 15.9% Wbg = 21.6% Wg = 24.5%
Amount of food to be stored	M = 81.2% W = 16.3% MW = 2.5%	M = 24.7% ICIW = 21% Mb = 25.9% Mbg = 28.3%	b = 33.3% Wb = 46% W = 20.6%	Wb = 39.2% Wbg = 33.7% bg = 26.9%
Quantity of food to be sold	M = 77.5% W = 15% MW = 7.5%	W = 29% Wg = 37% Wbg = 25% Mbg = 8.9%	b = 21.8% Wb = 49.2% W = 28.9%	W = 19.4% Wg = 32.3% Wbg = 28% bg = 19.3%
When to sell the food	M = 81% W = 6% MW = 5% Wb = 8%	W = 54.3% Wg = 32.5% Wb = 9.2% MW = 3.8%	b = 22.8% Wb = 47.7% W = 30.5%	W = 28.4% Wg = 41.3% Wbg = 19% bg = 11.2%

Source: Personal Interviews data, January 2007

### 4.3.2. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FACTORS INFLUENCING HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY

In this section we discuss about the second objective that states, to describe and analyze the social, economic and cultural factors influencing household food security in Kuhalo community.

About the ownership over the land, 44 male respondents (75.87%) said they are farming on their own lands, even though it is family land in term of lineage or clan. The other 14 male respondents (24.13%) said that they do not own the land that they cultivate for their food production. Besides not owning the land, only 2 respondents feel that such land tenure system influences their food production. They gave their reasons such as: giving part of the harvested crops to the person from whom they have leased the land as sign of appreciation or assisting him to take care of his farm during the food production cycle. Those who claim not to have land of their own are people who migrated into the community because if their ancestors were from that community, they would have inherited the land from their ascendants. Land in Kuhalo community is sold so far only around the market place of Madjatom, well known in the region and across the borders for business proposes; but for farming land, one has to lease from others for a specific period of time and in return, not a must but as a sign of appreciation for their kindness, will offer some services materially.

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Women in Kuhalo community, as it is also the case in most of African societies, do not own land. They negotiate for land for their food production, either from their husbands or from the male relatives. Only 8 female respondents, about 19.05% feel that such land tenure system has a negative impact on women as illustrated by one of the female respondent below:

"A twenty eight year old married woman and mother of two kids, who studied up to class 6 and a Christian believer says that men are too unjust in their relations with women. As a woman you have first to provide food for your husband when he is farming in his farm and follow him for sowing or planting. You have to negotiate with him to get a piece of land which, if he is kind enough will prepare it for you; if not you have to look for school boys to assist you to prepare such a piece of land. You have to seek his authorization before you grow any plant or crop of your choice. You



can make your own plan for the day but if he wakes up and decides that you are to do something else for him, you have to cancel your plan for that day. The more touching part is that when the harvest is ready, you have to make sure your husband's farms are harvested and the crops taken to the storing place and by the time you come to harvest in your own farm, the crops might be spoilt already. And after that entire struggle, you can not even decide on your own on how to manage the product from your farm. We are just treated like kids who are unable to make decisions and this makes us completely dependent on our husbands. Such behaviour limits our potential and capacity in term of food production and management in our households. But if a woman wants to oppose such system, she will be seen socially as a bad woman who lacks good familial education to take care of her husband. She hopes that one day men will come to realize that women are also able to achieve much for the good of their households and start relating with them as partners for the benefit of their household members".

**Source: Personal Interviews data, January 2007**

In term of food conservation system, according to the respondents two techniques of food storage are commonly used: cereals are stored in attics mostly by men while women stored them in bags after treating them with insecticide they get from extension service providers. Yams are stored in small houses specifically designed to avoid germination. Women, who use bags as their appropriate technique for food storage, have a cultural explanation as illustrated by this widow of fifty years old during the interview:

"Actually I live alone since my last born studies in town and the rest of my children are living on their own. Storing my food crops in attics, requires that any time I need food provision, I will look around for a boy or man around to get in my attic and get the food out. As you may know, women are not allowed to get into the attics to provide themselves with food, it is a taboo. If your husband is not around, you have to send your male child to give you the amount of food you need from the attic. That is the reason why as a widow, I opted for bags as a best system for food storage, so that any time I may need food, I will get it from my room without depending on others".

**Source: Personal Interviews data, January 2007**

As far as the allocation consumption food is concerned, 35 male respondents (60.3%) said that they were in charge of this duty while 19 male respondents (32.75%) said they leave such responsibility to their wives. Only 2 male respondents (3.4%) pointed out that they share the food allocation role with their wives. For women respondents, 23 of them (54.7%) said that they were in charge of this duty in their households while 13 (31%) said that such responsibility was held by men. Only 6 female respondents acknowledged sharing the duty of allocating consumption food with their husbands.

In reality, based on our direct observation method, women who claimed to be in charge of allocating consumption food in their households, were managing the quantity of food which had already been put aside by their husbands for consumption purposes as illustrated by a forty year old woman who is as second wife in a polygamous household:

"After the harvested food is taken home for storage, our husband gives each one of us, a part of it in proportionality to the members each of us is feeding in the household. That food is stored for each of us to manage for family members' consumption till the forthcoming harvest season. We are fully in charge of the management of such food and we are answerable to our husband if it is misused".

**Source: Focus Group Discussions data, women only group, January 2007**

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Majority of the respondents both men and women said consumption food is distributed equitably among household members by the mother or the person who cooked it. But if the food is not enough, especially during food shortages period, it is distributed by giving priority to children. This comment from a forty five year old married woman and mother of five children illustrate it well:

"I am struggling because of my children. I always make sure that their needs are met, especially food needs. So if the food is not enough, I will make sure they have eaten even before my husband. Though, he needs energy for the work he is doing in the farm to secure food for the household members. During food shortage periods, after cooking, I serve my husband and the children first; I wait for children to eat and I consume what is remaining".

**Source: Personal Interviews data, January 2007**



All the respondents (men and women), unanimously agreed that their household members consume the same food that is cooked, unless a member needs a special diet for medical reasons.

Only 7 male respondents (12%) and 4 female respondents (9.5%) said they do not sell their food crops. It is produced for their household food consumption. The rest of the respondents, 13 men (25.5%) and 11 women (28.9%) confirmed that they do not sell only the "surplus" food after the harvest. The reasons are that when a problem arises in the household, especially a medical problem, one can not watch such family member without taking him or her to the hospital or to witchdoctors for assistance. Also when the children are chased away from school; one needs to provide them with school fees. It is in such situations that they find themselves selling food. The "Surplus" food is known during the storage time. If one has stored two extra bags or extra attics than the previous years and knowing by experience that in the past, such food lasted till the forthcoming harvest; one may consider such extra bags or extra attics as "surplus" food in the household.

The period of selling food crops and purposes for which it is sold by men and women, are summarized in the table below:

From this table, we realize that men and women generally sell food crops when the forthcoming harvest seems good. The stored food will then be sold to leave space for *m* new harvested food. But the reality is that they face financial challenges and with no other alternative sources of income, have no choice but to sell food crops any time a financial need arises. There is a need to look for income generating activities to avoid selling of food crops to solve the financial problems when they arise.

**Table 3: Periods of food crops selling**

Food crops' selling periods	Male N = 58 (100 %)	Female N= 42 (100 %)
Immediately after harvesting	2 (3.4)	1 (2.4)
When the forthcoming harvest seems good	37 (63.8)	20 (47.6)
As long as the household has enough for		

consumption	8(13.6)	10 (23.8)
When financial need arises	11 (19)	11 (26.2)

**Source: Personal Interview data, January 2007**

Cash crops are also cultivated in Kuhalo community. Most of the households cultivate both food crops and non food crops especially cotton production. The reason of having cash crops is to provide the household with a financial security to meet other needs. Unfortunately, the prices on the market are not favorable to the farmers as illustrated by the comments of one of the male respondents:

"I am forty five years old and a father of nine children with two wives. Before, I used to cultivate food crops only on a large piece of land. After the harvest, we would sell part of it to meet other household needs, especially paying school fees for children and for medical care. But since I started cultivating both food crops and cotton, I have drastically reduced my food crops yields with the hope that the income from cotton production will meet our household financial needs and even buy food in case we face food shortages. This is illusion; we spend most of our labour in cotton farms but what we receive as payment at the end of the year after all that effort is not proportional to our investment. This year (for 2006 production), we are been paid in installments and this will not be helpful. When we receive money in installments, we spend it without doing something useful for our household's social and economical security. If it is the way the Government wants to treat us, I would better stop cultivating cotton. After all we have no power to control and fix the price that will be fair because we can not keep cotton to prepare it and feed our children. I will concentrate on my food crops production and make sure that at least my household members will not have any food problem.

**Source: Focus Group Discussions data, men only group, January 2007**

Mutual aids are more practiced among men to clear their farms at less cost. 25 male respondents (43.1%) said men hire labour in their farms when they are overburdened while 27 female respondents (64.3%) said that because of other domestic chores; women have no alternative but to hire labour for their farms. Depending on where there is a need to request for assistance, hired labour will be directed to such farms of food or cash crops.

There are more women (52.4%) compare to men (44.8%) who avail land around their households for kitchen garden production. In such kitchen gardens, they grow "gboma" (spinach), tomatoes, "ademe" (mwenrinda), "nyatou", "gombo" (okra), pepper, beans which are the most commonly used vegetables in the region. The advantages of having such kitchen gardens are several including: easy accessibility to provide vegetables for household consumption; it reduces household expenses by avoiding selling food in order to purchase other basic items for consumption. 76% of male respondents who avail land around their households for kitchen garden production believe that goods from such garden contribute to their households' food security. 82% of female respondents said kitchen gardens have a great impact on their lives and contribute to ensuring food security in their households. It helps to be self reliant in preparing food for their household members.

Various ways of increasing food crops yields have been proposed by respondents. 58.6% of male respondents against 56.7% of female respondents suggested that making fertilizers accessible and at affordable rate for farmers, taking into account their financial reality. The economical and social assistance through grouping systems, cooperatives, micro credits and aid funds were proposed by 26.7% of male respondents and 10% of female respondents. The reduction of cash crops yields in relation to food crops yield increment was suggested by 10.3% of male respondents and 6.7% of female respondents and only 3.4% of men proposed the use of plough as way of increasing food crops yield. 10% of female respondents felt the need to be more committed in food crops farming and 16.7% of women proposed the reduction of labour costs to make it affordable to them as a way of increasing food crops yield.

Unanimously, all the respondents (men and women) identified some of the cultural ceremonies that require an important investment in food during their practice. The common and frequent ceremonies are "Hal'la", "Waga", "Ewaza", "Soga", "Kurtu", "Malah" and funerals. According to the respondents, an important amount of food is required during such ceremonies due to their social character and one has to make sure that there is an abundance of food and local drinks for all the people attending the event.

The respondents, both men and women (except one widow), said the decision making on the amount of food to be used during such ceremonies belong to men. In the absence of men, sons have the responsibility to act by making decisions for their households on the amount of food to be used for the ceremony. There are various reasons why such responsibilities are left to men: First of all, they are the heads of their households and they are the decision makers over the ceremonies. All the ceremonies listed except the funerals, mostly concern men and they are the ones who know all the requirements. Even if the women decide on the amount of food, the last word belongs to the men because they are the ones to provide that food from the storage. 83.3% of male respondents and 93% of female respondents admitted that they experience food shortages after such ceremonies are done.

They were aware of the negative impact of such ceremonies in term of food wastage but it is a tradition that they inherited from the ancestors and they said can not do away with it, maybe they will have to look for ways of mitigating such negative impact they face after the practice of such ceremonies. 15% of the male respondents and 6% of the female respondents said they do not have any food shortages after such ceremonies are done. In fact the performance of such ceremonies is a blessing and provides protection for the people of this community as illustrated by the comments of a 60 year old married man and a father of seven children and grandfather of ten children, a traditional believer:

"I have attended and participated in more than ten events of "Hal'la" ceremonies  
*m*  
which are done once after every five years in the months of January and February. There is always mutual food aids from other Kuhalo community people to assist families who have the candidates for ceremony. In fact it is a blessing and I can ensure you that during the years of performance of major ceremonies; we always have good harvest because the ancestors offer good rainfall. Stopping such ceremonies would make our ancestors and protectors angry and our people would face food shortages as never been seen before because there would be drought, hence there would be no harvest".

**Source: Personal Interviews data, January 2007**

### 4.3.3. COPING MECHANISMS OF MEN AND WOMEN TO COUNTER FOOD SECURITY PROBLEMS

In this section we discuss about the third objective which states that, to examine the coping mechanisms adopted by both genders to counter food security problems facing their households' members in Kuhalo community.

Food shortages and hunger are realities people of Kuhalo community face as individuals and communities due to various natural, social, cultural, human and economic factors. Because of these factors, men and women as social beings have found ways and means to face this situation in their households. Most of the men interviewed (74%) said they had suffered from food shortages and hunger during their lifetime while 72% of women stated the same. The reasons for such food shortages and hunger range from commitment to cultural practices and ceremonies that account for 31% according to men and 38% according to women interviewed; poor harvest due to poor rainfall and high cost and some times unavailability of fertilizers which account for 51.1% (men) and 35.7% (women); early food selling due to health issue for family members and school fees for children account for 13.6% of male respondents and 19% of female respondents. Some women gave the reason of food mismanagement by men as responsible for food shortages in their households. They argued that men exchange part of the food crops immediately after the harvest for local beer with brew dealers or sell it for their pocket money to enjoy with friends.

Majority of men (91.4%) and women (71.4%) interviewed described food sufficiency in their households as when there is food in storage and also enough food to eat in the households. Only 8.6% of the men interviewed and 25% of the women interviewed said that food sufficiency for them means that there is always food available for their household members to meet their food diet.

During the interview, some women pointed out that having food in storage is not sufficient reason to claim your household has food sufficiency, because when men realize that the food in storage will not last till the next harvest, they stop providing it and request women to find ways of getting food for the household members. In such cases, there is food in storage but members may be starving if the woman is not able to run some income generating activities that will help provide food. In this case, one

can not claim that there is sufficient food for the household. It was evident from this comment that men in Kuhalo community are still in charge of food control in their households but it is the responsibility of women to make sure that there is food on the table for the household members.

To face hunger or food shortages in their households, men and women take various measures to meet the diet of their members. Men, in 24.6% of the cases and women in 16.7% of the cases, offer their labour to those who may need it and in return they receive food or they sell their manpower for cash that is used to buy food.

The most common strategy used by both men (44.6%) and women (41.7%) interviewed is to sell animals and poultry in order to meet the food needs of their household members. In 22.9% of women cases, they use their saving while only 10.8% of the men use their savings to provide food for their household members.

During the Focus Group Discussions with the three types of groups (men only, women only and men and women together), it appeared clearly that in times of food shortages, women always engage themselves in small businesses by selling firewood or charcoal (made by men or themselves), home made products and goods from their kitchen gardens to cope with food problems in their households. Women are also the people who often run to their relatives to beg for food if there is shortage in the household. Another option that men and women use during food shortages or hunger to cope with food problems is to borrow food or money from neighbours that they reimburse during the harvest season.

There is no doubt that during food shortages or hunger, women are more concerned about how to meet the food needs for their household members as illustrated below by a forty years old woman, mother of five children:

"When food problems occur in the household, men usually are in the farms or in public places with their friends. Women are left alone with the children at home. Women can not watch the pitiful faces of their sons and daughters without reacting. They use their little savings to provide food for them. Women will be in peace with themselves even if they walk naked but have used their savings to provide food for their children to make sure they are happy"

Source: **Personal Interviews data, January 2007**

The majority of respondents confirmed that coping mechanisms affect the living conditions of household members in various ways: The coping mechanisms may create domestic violence and conflicts, disharmony and problems in couples' lives as pointed out by 49.2% of the male respondents and 44.7% of the female respondents. Such coping mechanisms increase women's workload since they have to add new tasks to their already overburdened schedule of domestic chores. Coping mechanisms also affect the health of family members due to the fact that there is reduction of food intake and they are not able to meet their food diet. 13.6% of the men interviewed and 23.6% of the women interviewed expressed this impact. The impact on children is that it promotes the spirit of crime and prostitution for survival reasons and may break the household members apart because everyone will be going on his/her own to find ways of meeting his/her needs.

To solve the food problems men and women face in their households in the Kuhalo community, the men and women interviewed, as well as Focus Group Discussions participants and key informants in the area of study suggested the following: The issue of fertilizers was very key for both men and women. 75% of the men and 60% of the women said it is very important that the Government makes fertilizers affordable to farmers and extension service officers to make fertilizers accessible and available on time. Nowadays, land in Boufale District is not fertile due to the soil degradation as illustrated below by one of the respondents, a forty five year old polygamous man with two wives and father of six children:

"Time has changed and the soil in our community is no longer productive. In the past we used to use fertilizer only for cotton production and later, for maize and rice production. But today, for every crop to grow, we need fertilizer though it is not affordable in terms of the price and its availability is another problem. One may have means to buy but may not have access due to the scarcity of fertilizer in our region. We can increase the food production spaces, but if there is no fertilizer, we are wasting our time, energy and other resources".

**Source: Personal Interviews data, January 2007**

Another way of solving food problems is good management of the harvested crops. The accusation finger was pointed by some women on men who like selling food for leisure purposes. There is a need to reduce the quantity of food used at ceremonies

and funerals and this was suggested by 46.3% of the men and 57.6% of the women and they proposed to have one common event at a public venue during the celebration where all the households concerned bring food collectively to be shared among all the people who attend such ceremonies. External financial support in terms of credits facilities accessible to farmers through local and friendly cooperatives was proposed by 49.2% of the men and 41.7% of the women interviewed. This will help avoid selling of food at cheap prices to meet other needs of household members.

#### **4.3.4. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDs) CONTRIBUTION**

The attitude of this study community towards the control and management of means and goods of production was clearly evident in the findings of the Focus Group Discussions. Three types of Focus Group Discussions were conducted to determine how each gender's group members react when alone and how they react when being together, using the same Focus Group Discussions question guide.

##### **4.3.4.1. MEN ONLY FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

Some of men households' subsistence activities are farming of yams, sorghum, maize, beans, rice and groundnuts. They breed also poultry and rear sheep, goats and pigs.

At the beginning of the season, men and boys prepare the soil while women and girls follow them to sow the seeds. Some households leave their boys to do communal work for mutual aids in their parents' farms. During the weeding time, men and boys mostly work in yams and sorghum farms while women and girls work in the rice farms. The priority is given to men's farms during the execution of various tasks during the cycle of production. When harvesting, tasks are co-shared: men and boys reap the crops while women and girls collect the crops. Also labour is hired when there is overwhelming work and there is still a lot to do. Mutual aids are also applied during the harvest time where many households members come together to assist each other in harvesting and transporting the crops to the place of storage.



The major crops that determine food security in this area are sorghum, yams, beans and maize. The community faces problems such as incapacity to buy fertilizers, means of food production, frequency of sickness among farmers during the production season, irregularities in rainfall. Wildlife animals also destroy crops before the harvest time. Sometimes, women are also busy with their own activities and they do not sow on time. This generates conflicts between men and women during that demanding period.

In order to solve some of these problems, there is need to make school fees and price of fertilizer affordable for farmers in this area. It is also important to avail credit facilities to farmers at the beginning of the season with friendly repayment terms at the end of the production cycle when the prices are good. There is need for financial support to increase the production in the breeding sector. The products from livestock may be used to make good meals to young people when seeking for their aid in the farms.

As far as the management of food is concerned, they said it is the responsibility of men to take charge, because if any food problem occurs in the household, they will be the ones to solve such situation and provide for family needs. If this task is left to women, they can spoil the food or steal part of it to sell for their own needs. We face some problems in providing food for our families because of early selling of food to meet school fees, funeral and health expenses for family members, and practice of traditional customs that require a lot of food for people. There is need to reduce the quantity of food used during such ceremonies. Sometimes, we sell food just to have drinks and enjoy with friends.

To solve such problems of hunger and food shortages, the respondents said they used to sell their animals and poultry products to meet other needs. They also go out to work in other people's farms in exchange of food or money; they make charcoal for sale. Women, usually manage as they can to provide food in the household. They suggested the need to have some cooperatives in their community and avoid the early selling of food, especially selling food outside our borders. The Government of Togo

needs to assist us by making fertilisers cheap and affordable, reduction of school fees and allocation of credit facilities to farmers.

#### **4.3.4.2. WOMEN ONLY FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

Women cultivate sorghum, yams, rice, beans, maize, millet, groundnuts and vegetables. They also rear pigs, goats and poultry. At the beginning of any production season; men, women and children are engaged collectively in the work of growing the crops. Men and boys prepare the soil while women and girls follow them to sow; it is after women are done with their husbands' farms that they turn to their farms. If the husbands are busy and can not assist in preparing the soil in women's farms, they ask for assistance from boys to clear and prepare their farms. In that case, either women prepare good food and local brew to make them enjoy after the service or they hire labour. Women and girls do communal work and mutual aid services when growing crops. Sorghum, yams, maize, beans and rice are the major crops that can sustain families in term of food security.

During the food production cycle, women lack financial resources to purchase fertilizers without which the productivity is very low, even almost impossible because of the poor soils. There are also (I&ses of sickness which limit their effort in food production to feed their families. To solve such problems, the Government should reduce the cost of fertilizers and make credit facilities accessible and affordable to women. If we have financial support, they said, we can increase food production in order to avoid the problem of food shortages.

Women said that men are the heads of the households; therefore they are the ones to decide on the management of the food in the family. Women usually make some suggestions that may be taken into account or not by men. Women face some Problems in providing food for their family members, especially when the forthcoming harvest is near. This is because of the early selling of food to pay school fees for the children and also medical bills for family members and poor harvest due to the low productivity of the soil and irregularities of rainfall.

It is time that food used during some of the traditional celebrations and funerals is limited. In times of food shortages, women sell firewood and home made products to assist their husbands to solve food problems. The benefits are used to buy food for their household members. If there is some livestock or poultry, they sell them to face the problem of food shortages. Selling of food should be avoided, but it can only be achieved if there are credit facilities to meet other basic needs. Women said they need to come together to express their needs to relevant authorities. They pointed out that there is also a need to create local savings and credit banks for women's groups.

#### **4.3.4.3. MIXED MEN AND WOMEN'S FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

During the discussions, both men and women said in the Kuhalo community, people produce sorghum, yams, beans, maize, rice, vegetables for their subsistence. They also rear goats and poultry for meat supply. Men do collective work to clear farms; prepare soil and weeding while women are in charge of sowing and harvesting. Men may assist to harvest depending on their availability. They hire labour for assistance when there is too much work. Mutual aid is done by family members. Sorghum, maize, yams are the major crops that determine food security in the households.

During the production cycle, farmers face problems such as lack of money to buy the means of production and fertilizers. To solve these problems, there is a need to establish a local bank that will give credit to farmers to buy fertilizers and to women to run some income generating activities, especially trade of food crops. Availability of fertilizers will encourage farmers to increase their food crops yields. Easier accessibility to credit facilities will help both men and women to hire extra labour in order to increase food crops production.

Men are in charge of food management in their households, but if they misuse the food by selling it for leisure activities, women intervene to oppose such mismanagement. The participants said they have food shortages due to lack of fertilizers that forces them to reduce food production. To avoid such problems, they need to get more accessibility to fertilizers and at an affordable price. Men cope with

food shortage problems by offering their services in other people's farms in exchange for food or financial support. Women sell firewood and charcoal to support their husbands in feeding their household members. People of the Kuhalo community also sell their livestock and poultry to buy food.

The community proposed to organize itself as a structured group and request for financial support from development organizations in order to meet its needs.

They requested the Government to provide the community with fertilizers at an affordable price. The Government has also to make sure that the cotton produced by people of the Kuhalo community is bought at a reasonable price and in buck. This system of buying the cotton in instalments is not beneficial and makes them as farmers to contract more debts, instead of benefiting to meet other household needs, and avoid selling food.

#### **4.3.5. CONTRIBUTION FROM KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWS**

Twelve key informants who are outsiders, but work and live in the Kuhalo community were chosen and interviewed in order to get their views on the issue of household food security in that community in relation to gender practices.

Among the key interviewees were two primary school teachers, two nurses, two veterinary officers, one chemist, two extension service providers, two Church Leaders and one tailor.

Most of them said in this Kuhalo community, enough food (especially yams) is produced every year for its population consumption. In fact it is from the people of this community that other neighbouring populations come to buy food. Nevertheless, some households face poor harvest problem due to the degradation of the soils which require the use of fertilizers (which are not affordable for the majority of farmers) to be more productive. The low productivity of the soils encourages young people (active manpower) to migrate from this area to other places of the country and also across the borders to Benin and Nigeria. But the real problem is that the population of this community relies entirely on food selling to meet other household needs. Food management in the household is an issue. Most of the time, there is no concerted

decision between men and women on how to use the available food in order to last till the next harvest. If the husband gives the order to sell food, the wife will not have the power to refuse such decision because the man is the head of the household. They often sell the food at very low prices, immediately after the harvest to pay school fees, reimburse some previous debts contracted during the year or to pay medical bills for their household members. Food is also sold in this area to enable people to buy other requirements for the cultural ceremonies. Such behaviour has a negative impact on household food security in the sense that selling food reduces the quantity of consumption food availability for members. It increases health problems because household members are not able to meet their required food diet.

Cultural practices are very important in this area, especially "Hal'la" and "Waga" which take place every five years to mark the passage from one age bracket to another. Such ceremonies require a lot of investment in food due to their social nature. The importance given to these ceremonies is reflected in the mobilization of members of this community who live and work in other places or abroad who, often return home during the performance of these cultural practices. At the end of these social events, which last up to a month, most of the households find themselves with almost nothing in their food storage. Funerals are also done after the harvest time and a big quantity of sorghum is used to prepare local brew for free consumption; a lot of food is cooked for people to eat and after, the household members face food problems. Though there is a strong spirit of mutual food aid among the people of this community and members coming from outside also bring the cash to meet other expenses, they face food shortages which lead to hunger in their households before the next harvest.

The population of this area produces enough food but it is misused through early selling of food to solve other households' problems but most importantly, it is used during the performance of the cultural ceremonies. It is time to carry out an awareness campaign for the population of this area on the importance of using food in a more rational manner during the ceremonies period. The emphasis should be put on the reduction of quantity of food used and avoid at least food wastage because it will be hard to ask people to abandon what was inherited from their ancestors throughout the generations and they believe is part of their lives. Such cultural practices are an

expression of their identity and give a strong sense of belonging to the community. The population of this community needs a sensitization campaign on how to organise themselves in grouping systems and be assisted by governmental and non governmental development organisations. Measures should be put into place to assist farmers to have access to fertilizers at affordable prices and to provide suitable conditions of accessing, credit facilities. Medical cost, especially on pharmaceutical drugs is too high for the population of this area and action need to be taken by relevant authorities in order to assist people of the Kuhalo community to reduce the food selling to meet such high medical costs for their household members.

The Government's and other organizations' actions are not felt in this area in terms of supporting the population of this area to overcome the challenges that limit their ability to meet their household food security. When the forthcoming harvest is nearer, the food prices are always high due to food scarcity and the Government should assist through its Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries by putting it cereals on the market at low prices to challenge traders' high prices. Unfortunately, such governmental support does not reach the needy people. For instance, when the cereals are delivered at Pagouda, the headquarters of this prefecture; the information is sent to the Chiefs of Districts about such opportunity. People of Kuhalo community have most of the time, to walk or to ride bicycles up to a distance of 15 Km and by the time they reach Pagouda, they will be told the stock is over. It is therefore important to have corrective measures to ensure that Government efforts touch the lives of rural and most vulnerable people by channelling such food to District or even village level for selling at affordable prices for rural people.

#### **4.3.6. RESULTS FROM PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS**

This group was chosen as a kind of control group to determine the way widows and widowers manage the means and goods of production in their households to meet the food diet of their members. Initially the group was supposed to be comprised of 10 respondents (widows and widowers), but in the field the researcher only found widows available for the interviews.

According to the respondents, widows grow a limited variety of food crops, basically sorghum, maize, yams, rice beans and vegetables. They own the means of food production; make most of the decisions, sometime in consultation with their sons regarding the tasks to carry out. Widows and divorced or separated women performed their household activities with their sons and daughters. Among the ten widows interviewed, 80% agreed that the amount of food harvested each year determines their household food security. This strong positive response is a sign that women know how to manage the available food at their disposal till the next harvest. The suitable system of food storage used by women is the storage in bags because using the attics would limit their access since women in the Kuhalo community are not allowed to get food from attics by themselves.

All the ten widows interviewed said they were not engaged in cash crops production: They all ask for labour assistance from boys to perform some of the tasks in their food crops farms. This new demand in labour force from widows in farming means more resources are needed to hire the labour. All the widows interviewed are very keen in availing land around their households for kitchen gardens. They said the kitchen gardens provide most of the vegetable they need for the consumption by their households members. For the interviewed widows, to sustain food security in the area, there is a need to provide the community with a social aid fund that will enable most of the vulnerable people (widows) to buy fertilizers for their food crops.

All the interviewed widows recognized that cultural ceremonies and funerals constitute a major threat to the household food security in that community. But the decision making process over cultural practices is entirely controlled by men and there is nothing they could do as women to oppose them. What can be done is that the elders of the community should call a meeting and reflect on how to reduce food wastage during such ceremonies. The fact is that after such ceremonies are done, there are food shortages that increase women's workload as they have to look for coping mechanisms to face the situation.

Though women have limited resources for food production, the respondents have acknowledged that it will not be easy for them to increase their food crop yields even if they have the good will to do so. Women do not own land and when they ask for a

piece of land from their male relatives, they can not expect to be given a large space. Another limiting factor is the time constraint to do more than what they are doing already because of other domestic demands. Women can only increase the productivity of the soil by using fertilizers which most of the time are not affordable, especially for widows with limited financial resources. Most of the interviewed widows (70%) are involved in small business activities which enable them to meet other needs of their household members. This is a sign that rural women, if they are given the opportunity and adequate resources are able to contribute significantly to their household food security by avoiding early selling of food to meet other household needs.

In terms of support from Togolese Government and Non- Governmental Organizations to the Kuhalo community people, it appears clearly from 98% of respondents both men and women, and from all the Focus Group Discussions participants, as well as widows' interviews that there is no local or governmental organization that assists the population of Boufale District in times of food shortages and hunger. The 2% of the respondents who acknowledged such assistance said it was during the regime of late President Eyadema Gnassingbe where when there was hunger, they were once called to the market place and received some measures of maize. But the key informants interviewed, acknowledged that the Togolese Government gives support not always but sometimes during the times of food shortages and hunger to the people of Kuhalo community. The problem is that such assistance in food is not properly channeled and most of the time ends up not reaching the concerned people in the rural areas.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. CONCLUSIONS**

From the literature review and the study findings based on the objectives of the study, it appears clearly that the issue of household food security is a real problem for the population of the Kuhalo community. Such food security problems occur not because of food unavailability or scarcity, but mostly because of the gender roles that influence its proper production and management.

Some key factors such as educational and religious backgrounds, the control and management of means and goods of the production, decision making over the resources as well as gender division of labour among household members for food production are influenced by the social relations between men and women. Gender roles which are generated from cultural values, beliefs and practices, have a great influence on the decision making process between men and women in the household. It has appeared from the literature review and findings of the study that men are more favoured by the social norms, beliefs and cultural practices thus making women subordinate to men for decision making over the use of household resources for food production and management. Socially because of patriarchal system that governs the life of people in Kuhalo community and most of African societies, men are empowered to own land and means of production. On the other hand, rural women are disadvantaged because they do not own or control the resources required for crops production and therefore can not make any decision over the use of household resources. Moreover, the social structures encourage women to look at men (their husbands) as the heads of their households. This requires women to obey, respect and consult men, which affects their decision-making ability without prior consultation with men.

From the study findings, there is evidence that in some instances, the subordination of women in the process of decision making over means and goods of production has negative impact on the household food security. Though women are the ones carrying out most of the activities such as food selling or enormous food cooking for social events, contributing therefore to the increase of food insecurity in the households; they are performing such duties most of the time against their will because the

socialization process has led women not to oppose their men over the household decision making. In some cases, women can to some extent, make suggestions on how to manage food in the household, but the final decision is made by men. Such gender relations that encourage men to take decisions without consulting or informing their wives have placed their households at risk regarding food and other needs. More over, it is evident from the study that men not only have monopoly of deciding on means and goods of production but also use that position to underestimate women's potential in contributing to their household food security. As illustrated from the findings of the study, women do entirely the domestic work in the households and co-share productive work with men, and yet they do not enjoy the benefits of their labour. For instance, women have to make sure they have finished sowing seeds or planting crops in their husbands' farms before they do the same in their own farms. The same rule is applied during harvest time. But yet, women do not have authority to control the management of the products. It is also clear from the study that the introduction of cash crops has increased women's workload and decreased food production, leading to food insecurity with negative influence on the welfare of their household members.

However, from the literature review and from the study findings, there are apparent changes taking place within the arena of decision making at the household level. Imported religions and education have not only affected the gender based roles between men and women but also the decision making process with more consultations for concerted decisions over the control and use of household resources. Christian households and those who have gone to school at least up to the secondary level, are more liberal in their relationships as men and women; assisting each other wherever possible in performing household tasks. Such women have gained confidence in their ability to contribute to their household food security and are running some small income generating activities to supplement their husbands' efforts and for the benefit of their household members.

From the study findings, it is evident that men and women are living in unbalanced power relationships which affect the household food security. The key factor of women's subordination to men lies in the historical background and patrilineal system, where only men are seen as bread winners for their households. Women found themselves confined to the private sphere and all the activities that they

performed were not accounted for as contributing to secure food for their households. This calls for empowerment of women as a key aspect for securing food at household level and for the development of African societies. Empowerment of women refers to creating an enabling environment for women to maximize the use of their potentials. Women's mobilization and conscientization on issues affecting them are seen as important steps to their confidence building for action. From the study findings, we have realized that during times of food shortages and hunger, women perform better than men in carrying out income generating activities to meet food needs for their household members. This means that women are naturally talented and multi-skilled people who can significantly contribute to food security in their households and in the society at large if they are given the opportunity and necessary support to exploit their potentiality.

As already stated, there is change taking place within the community of study as a result of modernization, rural-urban migration, female or boys headed households due to HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases, imported religions (Christianity, Islam) as well as formal education system that has greatly contributed to the change of attitudes not only among women but also among men. For these reasons, there are cases where men have demonstrated that they make decisions concerning their households' affairs in consultation with their wives. It is thus clear that, although women have been historically and culturally marginalized in the process of decision making in their households on the basis of their gender belonging, there are indications that this perception of gender roles is changing and sooner or later, men and women will relate on equal ground as partners in making major decisions affecting their household members. It is envisaged then that with such dynamism in gender roles and with consciousness campaigns among men and women, they will interact with mutual respect as partners and this will have a positive influence on their household food security.

## **5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The basic right for all the household members is to have equal access and enjoy the use of the food produced or available in order to meet their food diet and be in good health; build their own development and participate in their full potential to the social

and economic development of the society. The decision making process at the household level determines the current and future life of household members in terms of nutrition, health, education and general social status. Given a better chance to participate in making decisions that include access to and control over means of production, management of food, women are bound to improve the welfare status of their households. It is evident from the study findings that gender roles influence attitudes and decrease women's participation in decision making over the control and management of means and goods of production. Since households stand to gain if women actively participate in decision making, there is a need to introduce development programmes which aim at creating gender awareness among the population of the Kuhalo community in Boufale District. Such programmes will contribute to deconstruct patriarchal systems which discriminate women and inhibit their advancement on the basis of gender roles. Residents of the area should be aware of how such discriminatory gender roles contribute to food insecurity in their households.

From the study findings, it is evident that high illiteracy levels are prevailing among members of the Kuhalo community, especially among women. The factors contributing to high primary school drop outs for girls in the area should be addressed in order to sustain girls and boys education to higher levels. Boys and girls emigration through child trafficking across the borders to Benin and Nigeria besides the sensitization campaigns against such migrations is a sign of the high level of poverty prevailing in the area; making parents powerless to retain their children. Development programmes therefore, should be designed to create awareness on the benefits of educating children, especially the girl-child to the family and the society at large, instead of letting them to go away and be exploited in coffee and cocoa plantations or for domestic work for little compensation in return. This study has limited itself to the stated objectives; there is a need therefore to commission a study which will focus on the specific factors that contribute to such high level of child school drop out in the area.

In the study area, generally there is no individual ownership of land. Land is inherited from ancestors by lineage or clan members and is controlled by men of the group due to patrilineal system of decision making. Women only have the user rights. Decision

making on issues pertaining to land is therefore dominated by men who are traditionally considered as heads of the households and are privileged to decide over the use of the land. Women on the other hand do not own land and as a consequence, do not make decisions on its use but have access and work on their husbands or male relatives land for subsistence farming. It is no doubt that such land tenure system has contributed to expose some households to food insecurity due to the fact that, women if not granted any piece of land, will not grow food crops that will contribute to secure food for their household members. It is thus important to carry out an awareness campaign in the area to sensitize both genders to understand that allowing women to freely use land at the maximum of their potential to grow their desired food crops, is for the benefit of their entire households members to meeting their food diet. Though land selling in the area is not yet a reality, except around the Madjatom. market place for business reasons; it is necessary that women are allowed to participate in making decision concerning land in order to avoid being exposed to suffering and destitution in future due to wrong decisions made by one gender over the land.

Apart from subsistence farming, the residents of the study area, are engaged in extensive farming of maize and rice that need fertilizers. Women have also expressed their interest in trading food crops through the grouping system. There should be efforts geared towards establishing, local credit and banking schemes with suitable conditions for men and women to get funds without any bureaucratic system which, most of the time exclude rural people especially women. This will enable men and women to have access to credit facilities for fertilizers or for appropriate system of treatment and storage of food crops in the area.

The respondents in the area have expressed their willingness to organize themselves in farmers' groupings. Togolese authorities and development Organizations in the region should technically assist the population of Kuhalo community to establish groups for their benefit. Actions carried out by Observatory of Food Security in Togo (OSAT in French) and CECODRI (a Church based Organization in Central region of Togo), are to be emulated in all the rural areas in Togo to assist farmers overcome the challenges they face in food production. The weaknesses revealed in the service given by these organizations are the inequality in terms of gender in the services they

provide to the people in rural areas. There is a need therefore to redesign their programmes taking into account the gender concerns to enhance the efficiency of food production.

The issues discussed in the findings have assisted in the effort of establishing the fact that gender roles dictate decision- making over means and goods of production at the household levels which in turn influence the household food security. The fact that gender division of labour is based on social, economic and cultural factors which guide the relationships between men and women, policy makers and development project planners have to take into account such gender roles' influence if they are to achieve their desired development goals in the area. There is a need to carry out specific studies for specific geographical areas within the relevant cultural settings in Togo in order to avoid generalization of approaches to development because the same study if carried out in another area especially in the southern part of Togo where land is hired or sold for food production, will generate different gender roles and therefore will have different influence on household food security.

Addressing gender concerns at the national level to seek for policy changes without linking the issues to the realities and dynamics of the households in the specific cultural settings, will lead to developing programmes that will not meet the needs of men and women. There is therefore, a need for more efforts to focus on gender dynamics and their influence on household food security. The consciousness that should drive researchers, policy makers, development programmes planners, projects managers and other development activists, is how men and women at households levels relate to each other in decision making over the resources for food production and management; if meaningful contributions are to be realized in the food security arena.

This study limited itself to the stated objectives and each issues discussed in this study can generate interest for further inquiry and can be tested on various case studies, with different socio cultural and economic backgrounds. This research therefore, can serve as a working paper for establishing gender programmes in the study area and as a basis for forming a broad societal awareness on the influence of gender roles which in turn will have positive changes in the individuals and subsequently in their way of relating to each other at the household level.

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## APPENDICES

Please answer the questions accordingly as advised in each case. Your responses will serve to investigate the influence of gender roles on food security at the household level; it is intended only to serve an academic purpose and will be held in strict confidence.

### A. APPENDIX I - PERSONAL INTERVIEWS QUESTIONNAIRE

#### SECTION I- Background Information about the Respondents

1. Name (Optional)

2. Village

3. Age

4. Gender

1- Male [

2- Female ]

5. Marital status

1-Monogamist

2- Polygamist •

3- Divorced/Separated

4-Widowed [

6. Religion

1-Christian

2- Muslim •

3- Traditionalist ●

4- Other (specify) Q

7. Education- Have you gone to school?

1-Yes [ ]

2-No ●

8. If Yes, which level?

## SECTION II- Gender Division of Labour in Food production

9. Which food crops do you grow and for what purpose? Choose from the list below:

Crops	Household consumption	Sale	Both
Yams			
Sorghum			
Millet			
Beans			
Rice			
Groundnut			
Sweet potatoes			
Maize			
Cassava			
Vegetables			
Others (specify)			

10. Which of the chosen **ones** from the this list are likely to determine the food security in your household?

A-

B-.....,

C-

11. Do you use your high potential land for food crops or cash crops plantation?

12. If for both, which proportion of your high potential land is used for the production of food crops?

a. Quarter?

b. Half?

c. Three Quarters?

13. Who decides over the use of those major food crops that determine your household food security?

1- Man       2-Woman       3- Boys       4-Girls

14. Who makes decisions on resources allocation and who does the following tasks in the case of the food crops that determine the food security in your household? Who does it when Men are absent from the household?

Symbols to be used: Men = **M**; Women = **W**; Boys = **b**; Girls = **g**

Tasks	When you are all present		When Men are absent	
	Decide	Do	Decide	Do
Preparing soils				
Turning soils				
Sowing/Planting				
Weeding				
Harvesting				
Transporting				
Storage system				
Selling				
When to start harvesting		<i>m</i>		
Amount of food to be stored				
Amount of food to be sold				
When to sell the food				

15. Do you own the means of your food production?

1- Yes

2-No

16. If No, where do you get them from?

1- Borrow from your partner

2- Borrow from your neighbour

3-Hire

4-Other (specify) [ ]

17. Do you think the amount of food you harvest each year determines your household food security?

1-Yes

2-No

18. If No, give your reasons?

### **SECTION III- Social, Economic and Cultural Factors influencing Food Security**

19. Do you own the land used for your food production?

1- Yes  Q J

2-No

20. If No, who gives you the user right over that land?

21. Does such land tenure system have any influence on your food production?

1- Yes  Q j

2-No

22. If Yes, how?

23. How do you store your harvested food crops?

24. Who is in charge of allocating consumption food in the household?  
1- Man                    2- Woman   Q                    3- Boys   Q                    4- Girls   Q

25. How is the consumption food distributed among the various household members?  
1- Priority to Girls?                    2- Priority to Boys?   QJ                    3- Priority to Women?   [                     
4- Priority to Men?

26. Do all the household members consume the same type of food cooked?  
1-Yes   •                    2-No   •

27. If No, why?

28. Do you sell food crops?  
1-Yes   •                    2-No   •

29. If Yes, do you sell only "surplus" food?  
1- Yes   Q ]                    2-No   |   |

30. If so, when do you have "surplus" food?

31. When do you sell your food?  
a. Immediately after harvesting  
b. When the forthcoming harvest seems good [                     
c. As long as the household has enough for consumption  
d. Other (specify)   Q

32. For what purpose is the food sold?

- a. To pay school fees
- b. To ensure medical needs
- c. To provide other needs for the household members
- d. To have leisure with friends
- e. Other (specify)

33. Why do you cultivate cash crops?

34. Do you hire labour in your farm?

1-Yes

No

35. If yes, for which crop?

1- Food crop

2- Cash crop

36. Do you avail land around your house for kitchen garden production?

1- Yes

2-No

*m*

37. If Yes, which types of vegetables do you grow?

38. Give your reasons of having kitchen garden?

39. Do the kitchen garden products have any impact on your household food security?

1- Yes

2- No



40. If Yes, how?

41. What do you think can be done to increase the yields of food crops?

42. Are you aware of some cultural ceremonies that require the investment of a lot of food when they take place?

1- Yes

2-No

43. If yes, name the ceremonies and give reasons why such amount of food is required?

44. Who decides on the amount of food to be used during such ceremonies?

1- Men

2- Women

3- Boys

4- Girls

45. Why?

46. Is there any food shortage after such ceremonies are done?

1- Yes

2-No

**SECTION IV- Coping Mechanisms to counter Food Security Problems**

47. Have you ever suffered from food shortage in your household?

1-Yes Q

2-No

48. If yes, give possible reasons for that shortage?

49. How do you rate food sufficiency in your household?

1 - There is always enough food in storage [ ] 2- There is always enough food to eat

3- Both conditions [ ]

4- Other (specify) £

50. In case of food shortages and hunger in your household, what measures do you take to cope with such situation?

51. How do the coping mechanisms affect the living conditions of your household members? "

52. How do you think such food problems in your household can be solved?

53. Are there local or Governmental organizations assisting your community in times of food shortages and hunger?

1- Yes Q

2- No

**Thank you!!!**

## **B. APPENDIX II- Interview Guide for Key Informants**

1. How do you rate food security in this area? Give reasons for your answer(s)
2. Even after bumper harvest, many households in this area may suffer from food shortages before the next harvest. What is your opinion towards this view?
3. Why do households embark on selling their food?
4. How does this behaviour affect their households' food security?
5. What is your opinion on the decision-making on food in the households?
6. In your opinion, what effects do cultural ceremonies have on household food security in this area?
7. What recommendations would you suggest that could enhance improvement on food security for households in this area?
8. Do you think local or Governmental organizations are doing enough to assist this community in times of hunger and food shortages? Give your reasons.

**Thank you!!**

### C. APPENDIX III- Focus Group Discussions Questions Guide

1. What are some of the subsistence activities of your households?
2. How do you divide your households labour for food production?
3. How do you mobilise extra labour for food production?
4. Which are the food crops that determine your households' food security?
5. Are there some problems that men and women face during the food production cycle? Which are they?
6. How best can these problems be solved?
7. In your opinion, what can be done to increase food production in this area?
8. Do you think men and women have equal opportunity to manage food at their disposal in the household? Justify your argument
9. Do you face any problems in providing food for your household members?  
*ap*
10. What causes such problems? And how do you avoid such problems?
11. How do you cope with food problems in your households in times of food shortages?
12. What can you as a community, the Government of Togo and development Organizations do to help improve the situation of food security in this area?

**Thank you!!!**

**D. APPENDIX IV- Complementary information from the Observatory of Food Security of Togo (Known as Observatoire de la Sécurité Alimentaire du Togo -OSAT- in French)**

This is a structure that was created on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1997 by Presidential Decree No 97-117/PR. The Observatory of Food Security of Togo operates under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. The OSAT plays the role of balancing food availability between regions of high productivity and regions of low productivity. Through the indicators of the reality on the ground, OSAT will advise the Government accordingly about the food prices on the market. It is also a structure of early warning on the food situation in the country for proper measures to be taken on time. The OSAT carries out sensitization campaigns to warn farmers about the danger of early food selling.

During the harvest time, the prices on the market are very low; OSAT offers better prices to discourage farmers from selling their products to food traders unless they raise their prices to the level of OSAT. By this method, it buys food products from farmers at fair prices for storage.

At the beginning of the food production cycle in March, farmers start facing food shortages and OSAT delivers its stored products on the market at fair prices to counter the high prices fixed by food traders. OSAT plays a role of a Mediator between food farmers and food traders. It also encourages farmers to make their own food storage.

The Observatory of Food Security of Togo offers various facilities to farmers such as distribution of fertilizers and means of food production, agricultural credit and school fees facilities countrywide in the five economic regions of Togo namely Maritime, Plateaux, Centrale, Kara and Savanes. Farmers repay during the harvest time at a rate of one bag of 50 kg of fertilizers for one bag of 100 kg of maize. This is to make the farmers avoid selling their food products even sometimes in the farms to traders before the harvest.

OSAT works closely with the Management of Agricultural Statistics, Information and Documentation Centre to get data in food production sector. With such reality on the

ground, it gives advice to relevant authorities on the regulation of food prices on the market.

### **Some Limitations in OSAT Activities**

The action of OSAT is a recommendable one. This shows that the food security issue is a concern in Togo which has drawn the attention of the relevant authorities. The action plan of OSAT will no doubt, contribute to ensuring national food security. But it needs to pay more attention to specific realities on the ground when carrying out its activities. Though OSAT is only ten years old and is still expanding its actions to reach all corners of the Togolese rural population; one important group and the vulnerable one, may find itself left out. For instance, the services offered by OSAT are based on farmers grouping systems. And yet, it is known that farmers' organizations are very limited in Togo and are run by men as far as decision making is concerned. It is therefore clear that the services given by OSAT will only benefit men at the expenses of women who constitute 80% of the labour force in subsistence food crops production.

**E. APPENDIX V- Contribution from the Cooperative Centre of Integrated Rural Development (Known as Centre Cooperatif de Developpement Rural Integre-CECODRI- in French)**

CECODRI is a Project of the Marianist community of Sotouboua in Togo. CECODRI started its activities in October 2005 with the aim of increasing agricultural income for rural households. CECODRI's actions cover only four Districts around the town of Sotouboua in Central region of Togo. CECODRI offers the following services to farmers: Technical and economic assistance, facilitation process of accessing the extension services at affordable prices, the use of mechanized agriculture to increase food crop yields, credit facilities, buying of food crops at fair prices from the farmers for storage. CECODRI also gives fertilizers to farmers during the production cycle for repayment during the harvest time by food crops (one bag of 50 kg of fertilizer against one bag of 100 kg of food crops basically maize, rice and soya beans).

CECODRI organises farmers in "Farmer committees of action" and through such committees, it monitors the progress of their food crops production.

CECODRI services have encouraged and motivated farmers from the area to increase their food crop yields and the quantity of food products.

Does this good yield translate into food availability and accessibility to all in order to meet the food diet needs of each member at household levels? What is the impact of CECODRI services on women and girls taking into account the patriarchal system of decision making that prevails in Togolese communities? There is a need therefore to commission a gender study on the contribution of CECODRI towards improving food security for household members (men and women as well as boys and girls) in the area of action. CECODRI services may contribute to increase women's workload in the farms and yet can not enjoy the benefits of their labour to fully meet their food diet.

## SOME PICTURES DURING DATA COLLECTION IN THE FIELD



1. The Researcher with the Prefect of Binah Prefecture in his office in Pagouda.



2. The Researcher with the Chief of Boufale District (1<sup>st</sup> left) and his collaborators.



3. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with men only.



4. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) with women only.



5. The Researcher with the Chief of Pare village (1<sup>st</sup> right) and his collaborators.



6. The Researcher (2<sup>nd</sup> left) with his field Assistants during an evaluation session.