

The study examines women's access to land in Ngondoma irrigation scheme. Results of in-depth on-site interviews showed that 75% of farmers who hold land rights in the scheme are women. The paper argues that land acquisition by women is inadvertent rather than a result of explicit policy decisions to empower women. Once acquired land is held in perpetuity. Some women acquired land in their own right 42%, while others acquired land from; in-laws 40%, matrikin 6%, patrikin 4% and nonfamily 8%. Land holdings vary in size from 0.1 ha to 1.0 ha. Decline in size of holdings between 1968 and 2003 is attributed to land fragmentation due to cultural practices of partible inheritance. Problems faced by women include spousal control over marketing of produce, demand by disemployed spouses to have title to land, high costs and unavailability of inputs as well as produce wastage due to lack of markets.