

22.00.00 Sociological sciences

22.00.00 Социологические науки

UDC 316

**The Potential of Women's Organization for Rural Development in Sierra Leone**<sup>1</sup> Theresa Tenneh Dick<sup>2</sup> Jianzhong Gao<sup>1</sup> Northwest A & F University, China

College of Economics and Management

3 Taicheng Road Yangling, Shaanxi 712100 PRC

MSc. (Rural and Regional Development), Student

E-mail: theretendick@yahoo.com.au

<sup>2</sup> Northwest A & F University, China

College of Economics and Management

3 Taicheng Road Yangling, Shaanxi 712100 PRC

Dr. (Agriculture and Forestry Economics), Professor

E-mail: gaojianzhong2003@yahoo.com.cn

**Abstract.** Organizations are among the preferred outlets women use both to voice societal prejudices against them and to showcase their potential for rural/community development. There is an increasing advocacy for gender equality, women's empowerment and the integration of women folks into the socio-economic, political and cultural fabrics of society. Girl-child education and women-based capacity building programs such as micro-finance, entrepreneurship, political activism, etc. have surfaced prominently on these women's empowerment efforts. In this study, a questionnaire-driven survey is conducted in two districts in southern Sierra Leone. The survey covers 36 influential women in 36 town-level communities in the country. The study analyzes the personal and organization characteristics of the women in relation to social perceptions and rural/community development. A large percent of the women surveyed are educated, married and belong to social organizations. In addition to other social/development organizations, women's organizations are also present in each of the surveyed communities. Most of the women organizations are local in nature and operate entirely on funds raised from within the local communities. This display of organizational ability of the surveyed rural women shows a significant perceptual shift towards recognizing women folks as productive counterparts in our societies. This trend also psychologically strengthens the women community to take on tangible responsibilities that were ones meant for men only. The analysis also shows that rural women hold managerial and other administrative positions in the organizations which are strongly oriented towards various forms of rural/community development. This is a significant positive deviation from the traditional perception which has unduly confined the women folks to the backyard for centuries now. This trend not only has the potential of benefiting the millions more women languishing in the developing world, but will also help affected countries to realize full national potentials of their God-given human resources.

**Keywords:** Sierra Leone, rural development, social perception, gender equality, women's organization.

**Introduction**

Debates on the participation of women in national development processes have intensified in recent decades [Kongolo & Bamgose, 2002]. States are urged to proactively seek for economic independence of women by creating employment, facilitating access to resources/credit, and eradicating poverty, malnutrition, poor health and illiteracy amongst women [UNIFEM, 2000]. Although a vital national development element, gender inequality continues to limit the full realization of women's potential in nation building efforts [IFAD, 2011]. Gender inequality is especially prevalent in rural communities of developing countries (including those in Africa, Asia

and the Arab world) where the education of a girl-child or a woman is limited and sometimes even prohibited.

Significant portions of the populations of developing countries reside in rural communities where over seventy percent are women [Cartledge, 1995]. There is ample evidence that development policies in these countries overlook women's issues, especially those related to the participation and empowerment of rural women [HP, 2000]. Such gender prejudices have led to the discrimination and suppression of rural women from participating in national development processes [Meer, 1998]. Development is a process of up-scale social transformation from a low (despised) to high (respected) social class [Olopoenia, 1983; Pradip, 1984]. It is a process that awakens people to the opportunities provided within the services and functions of the society [Seer, 1981; Gwanya, 1989].

Development opportunities begin with education and grow with training and which process in turn sets the basis for productive engagement (e.g., entrepreneurship) in nation building [Sathiabama, 2010]. According to [Kuratka & Richard 2001], entrepreneurship is the dynamic process of creating accumulated wealth. Small-scale entrepreneurship utilizes the productive resources of society to create meaningful employment and thereby improving the livelihoods of especially the rural poor men [Sigh, 2009]. In essence, this is the desired benefit of education and gender equality in modern society.

In addition to arduous loads of housework, women are engaged in other fields and on average work of 4–6 hours more per day than men [Buvinic et al., 1978; Sneyder & Tadesse, 1995; IFAD, 2011]. Demographic attributes such as migration, divorces, wars, deaths, etc., favour not only female population growth, but also the number of women's headed households. Hence women are increasingly taking the responsibility of managing families such as raising, feeding and educating the children [FAO, 1998; HP, 2000]. Irrespectively, women still remain amongst the poorest, least educated and most underrepresented sector of the population in the developing world [WDR, 2004]. Because women are bypassed in development processes, per-capita income in Africa has generally remained low. The consequences of this include overall negative growth, unemployment and impoverishment of over 40% of the population, etc. [UNDP, 1997]. In fact pervasive gender biases have limited women's contribution to Africa's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) to less than 20% [UN, 1996].

[UNDP, 1998] reported a near one-to-one male-female ratio in China, the most populated country in the world with some 1.4 billion people. This population is gradually skewing towards males due to pre-screened births [Croll, 1996]. In fact, pre-screened birth is worse in India (the second highest populated country) and the Arab world (a highest population density region) where socio-cultural practices favour the boy-child. Of the 1.3 billion people who live in absolute poverty around the globe, 70% are women. For these women, poverty is not only about scarcity/want but also the rights denied, opportunities curtailed and voices silenced [CARE, 2005]. Biases of this magnitude against the female folks deter development efforts in affected countries [UNDP, 1998]. Women's empowerment is a development sine-quo-non of modern society [Sathiabama, 2010]. The need for higher income forces especially women who are household heads to participate in income generating activities and development organizations [FAO, 1995]. Women's organisations could be vital for capacity building, human resources development, socio-economic employment and more importantly for rural/community development [Sathiabama, 2010]. Despite this tremendous human potential, women are bonded by unproductive and discriminatory traditions, cultures and beliefs especially in the developing world.

Deci et al. [2012] noted that family roles and generally high unemployment create unequal states of economic and national relevance against women. Socio-economic barriers limit any meaningful participation of women in critical development organizations. Masika & Joeke [1996] opined that increased gender inequality in terms of access to resources forces women resort to unsustainable ways of livelihood. UN [1995] defines empowerment as the resourceful participation in organizations, decision-making and power state that lay the basis for equitable development and sustainable peace. Development is only sustainable if it is open to all sectors of the population; where men and women are not limited by socio-political, cultural and religious prejudices. In fact, women's empowerment is about encouraging unlimited access to resources and right to the power structures of society [UNDP, 2012].

The research task of this study was to determine the role of women's organizations in rural/community development in the developing world. The study analyzed other relevant factors (e.g., personal characteristics and social perceptions) regarding women's participation in rural organizations. It also suggested strategies for transforming communities into more women pro-active and development oriented societies. Thus this study will add to the significant positive achievements in terms of empowering the millions of women not only in Sierra Leone, but also the millions more in the developing world.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Study Area**

This study was conducted in the Southern Province of Sierra Leone, specifically in the rural communities of Bo and Moyamba Districts. Sierra Leone lies between latitudes 6.91–10.08 °N and longitudes 10.21–13.32 °W on the west coast of Africa, bordering the Atlantic Ocean on the north. It has an area of 71 740 km<sup>2</sup>, and from a total of 1360 km border extent, 402 km is coastline, 652 km is land border with Guinea and another 306 km is land border with Liberia [CIA, 2011].

Sierra Leone has a population of some 6 million people with an annual growth rate of 2.2% [UN, 2011]. Some 52% of the population is female, less than 8% is literate with university education, 41% is under 15 years old and 62% resides in rural communities and the urbanization rate is 3%. Despite its abundant natural wealth, over 70% of the population of Sierra Leone lives in poverty and with per-capita annual income of less than US\$ 366. Sierra Leone has among the least human development index (0.336) in the world, with only 4.3% of its US\$ 2.2 billion GDP invested in education [CIA, 2011; UNDP, 2012].

The economy of Sierra Leone is heavily driven by agriculture, accounting for 45% of its GDP and providing direct employment to over 70% of the working population. The main cultivated crops include cocoa, coffee, oil palm, rice, millet, cassava, yam and potato. Among the natural resources are diamond, gold, bauxite, rutile, zircon, iron ore and petroleum. Several governmental and non-governmental organizations operate especially in the rural communities of the country in the areas of agriculture, women's empowerment and community development [UNDP, 2012].

### **2.2. Data Collection & Analysis**

A questionnaire-based survey, aided with personal observation and informal interaction, was the primary mode of data collection in this study. The questionnaire was administered to a total of 36 women respondents, 50% each in Bo and Moyamba Districts. Only one influential woman was interviewed per town-level community (community with at least 5000 residents) in the two districts; implying that the survey covered a total of 36 town-level rural communities. As the targeted were located in every community, the survey response rate was considered to be 100%. According to Lindner et al. [2001], non-response error in the external validity of a study is insignificant when the response rate reaches 85%.

The questionnaire solicited pertinent information relating to the interaction effects of personal, organizational and perceptual characteristics of women on rural/community development. In other words, this study analyzed the socio-cultural influences of women and women's organizations on rural/community development. The data collection campaign lasted for a period of two months, spanning from April through May in 2012. The collected data were processed using simple descriptive and analytical statistics in the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software environment.

## **3. Results and Analysis**

Most of the results of the survey are summarized in Table and those responses requiring explanations are discussed in the subsequent sections. Table is divided into personal, organizational and perceptual traits of the women covered in the survey. Also simple percentages are used to measure the trends of the responses to the investigated variables. It is important to note that the variables considered in this study are designed for maximum insight into the degree of empowerment invested into the women of Sierra Leone. In this study, Sierra Leone could be viewed as typically representing the prevailing conditions in the developing world.

**Table.** Summary: statistics of women’s personal, organizational and perceptual traits in the Bo/Moyamba Districts of Sierra Leone.

<b>Personal trait</b>			<b>Organizational trait</b>			<b>Women’s perception</b>		
Main-variable	Option	Percent	Main-variable	Option	Percent	Main-variable	Option	Percent
Age	<21	0.00	Women’s organization	Exist	80.56	Woman stays home	Agree	16.67
	21-30	41.67		Non-exist	19.44		Strongly agree	30.56
	31-40	44.44	Memberships	Member	55.56		Disagree	27.78
	41-50	08.33		Non-member	44.44		Strongly Disagree	25.00
	>50	05.56		Leader	10.00		Agree	33.33
Marital Status	Married	55.56	Status in organization	Deputy	05.00	Woman shares home-run cost	Strongly agree	61.11
	Engaged	22.22		Sec. Gen	10.00		Disagree	02.78
	Separated	02.78		PRO	05.00		Strongly Disagree	02.78
	Divorced	02.78		Member	45.00	Agree	30.56	
	Others	16.67		Others	25.00	Woman manages income	Strongly agree	25.00
Religion	Muslim	44.44	External fund	Access	37.50	Woman all-time submissive	Disagree	25.00
	Christian	55.56		Non-access	62.50		Strongly Disagree	19.44
	Buddhist	00.00	<b>Other organizational trait</b>			Woman manages income	Agree	27.78
	Hindu	00.00	Total No. of organization	79	Strongly agree		33.33	
	others	00.00	No. of women’s organization	29	Disagree		30.56	
Occupation	Student	33.33	No of town-level community	36	Decision making	Strongly Disagree	08.33	
	Farmer	16.67	No. of women respondent	36		Husband	63.89	
	Business Worker	19.44				Wife	13.89	
	Housewife	11.11				Shared	19.44	
	Others	00.00				Others	02.78	
					Economic activity	Supportive	76.39	
						Non-supportive	23.61	
					Own income control	Supportive	83.33	
						Non-supportive	16.67	
					Take own decision	Supportive	91.67	
						Non-supportive	08.33	
					Extra-domestic activity	Supportive	37.50	
						Non-supportive	62.50	

**3.1. Personal Traits**

Some 44% of the women surveyed are in the age range of 31–40 years and another 42% in the age range of 21–30 years [Table]. As the focus is on the most influential women in town-level communities, the age range suggests that women enter influential state at the age of 21 and hit popularity peak at the age of 40. In other words, age 31–40 is the most productive period of women in the study area. This is not entirely surprising because development opportunities in third-world countries are limited and usually come late in life. Even among the male folks, real-life achievement generally begins in the ages of thirty and become relatively accomplished in the forties to early fifties.

Also some 56% of the women surveyed are married and another 22% engaged. About 17% of the women have either never married before, are widows or something else [Table]. The above personal traits suggest that marriage is a critical requirement for building an influential status in the study area. The perception in Sierra Leone and other developing countries in general is that married women who are sufficiently secured and command considerable respect. In fact, this cultural factor is the key reason why especially rural women get into early marriages in developing countries. The survey shows that some 78% of the women engaged, married, divorced or separated did so before the age of 25.

The population of Sierra Leone is about 60% Muslim, 20–30% Christian and another 5–10% indigenous Animist [USDS, 2007; PRC, 2009]. However, some 66% of the women surveyed are Christians and the other 44% are Muslims. This shows that in terms of religion, women somehow defy the general trend in the country. In Sierra Leone, as in many other developing countries, towns and cities generally lean toward Christianity while villages are more Islamic. These trends generally reflect the type of work prevalent in these communities. While Christian populations favor white-collar jobs prevalent in towns/cities, Muslim populations more or less favor the kind of jobs offered in the more rural communities.

About 33% of the respondents are students, 17% are farmers, 19% are engaged in businesses and 11% are housewives [Table]. It is important to note that learning age in Sierra Leone (one of the least developed countries), as in the most developing countries, can be as high as 40 or above. Thus the high percent of the respondents engaged in some form of learning is good for women's empowerment. Education is an indispensable means to unlocking and protecting human rights. It ensures the right to good health, liberty, security, economic well-being, social and political participation, etc. and reduces the inequalities among men and women [Sen, 1991; Human Rights, 1948; UN, 2005]. Hence in realization of the fact that education is a fundamental requirement for development, the women could as well be making up for lost golden ages of childhood. There is therefore the need to strengthen this trend and continue to encourage women's education to lift them from housewifery into some other protective workforce.

### ***3.2. Organizational Traits***

There is at least a form of women's organization in most of the communities covered in this study. Out of a total of 79 identified organizations, 29 are purely women's organizations. This implies that 81% of the surveyed communities have women's organizations [Table]. Another 56% of the women belong to one or more of these women's organizations. Women's organizations in the communities show that rural women have the ability and are now cultivating the culture of coming together to organize and discuss issues pertinent to rural/community livelihoods. These capacity building processes possibly seek solutions to better rural life which in turn earn the women considerable influence in their respective communities. Apart from material and moral benefits, organizations also provide informal learning (one of the most resourceful human development tools) for the members and communities in which they operate.

Out of the 56% women respondents with membership in the women's organizations, 30% are in executive positions (10% leaders, 5% deputies, 10% secretary generals and 5% public relations officers), 25% play various other roles and 45% hold ordinary membership see [Table]. What is even more striking is that only 37.5% of the women's organizations operate on external funds. The rest are funded from within, either through membership dues or other forms of localized funding. This shows the level of determination of women to commit individual and collective resources to their respective communities.

### **3.3. Social Perceptions**

Perception is an important indicator for social behavior, what people believe and pursue and are likely to accomplish in life. Women's perceptions about their own place in the family, in organization and in society determine what likely roles they will play in these social units. In this study, the respondents' perceptions are varied and sometimes very much in contrast with popular debates on women's empowerment. Whereas some 47% of the respondents think the woman's place in the society is confined to the home, some other 94% would like women to share the running costs of homes with men folks. Also 56% of the participants support the notion that women take the lead in managing home affairs and another 61% liken women to be all time submissive to men. Men are preferred in leading family decisions (64%), only 14% women lead family decisions and some 19% share family decisions [Table]. Women also engage in income generating activities (76%), control own income (83%), take independent decisions (92%) and pursue extra-domestic activities (38%).

Although the above perception shows a significant deviation from the typical cultural role of women especially in African societies, the complete liberalization of the society regarding gender equality is to fully take root even among the women folks. While the more liberal men folks advocate for greater or full gender equality, the women themselves are to be seen believing in such advocacies by taking the lead to enforce gender equality. This implies that male dominance, especially in the developing world, should be challenged and efficiently neutralized by the women folks.

## **4. Discussions**

### **4.1. Personal Traits and Rural Development**

Personal traits such as good education and happy marriage could contribute to rural/community development. Education, the most critical tool for human resources development, refines people's perception of what is right, and therefore their obligations to the society [Ommani, 2011]. When combined with age, which is in many ways an indicator for experience, education empowers especially the rural women to defend their rights. Education strengthens social and political participation by emboldening the women folks to air their voices in the corridors of decision-making bodies [Lahai, 2006].

Over 33% of the women seek education with another 19% mostly in white-collar jobs. Also some 44% of the women are in the age group of 31–40, which, in terms of experience, is the critical range for setting out on clear visions in life. The experiences drawn from education and age could make people feel positive about the society. Such positive optimism encourages the establishment of organizations. This in turn stems from the realization that individual efforts could not be as successful as collective efforts in terms of rural/community development. This could be the reason why some 56% of the women folks belong to various women's organizations. The forms of these organizations along with the individual, collective and community benefits are discussed in the next sections.

### **4.2. Organizational Traits and Rural Empowerment**

Here, organization is the spontaneous or plane coalition of interests for a common purpose. In this context, organizations are amongst the most favored means of rural/community development [Pinto, 2009]. The need for accomplishment drives the formations of organizations. Needs such as universal rights, equal access to the resources, equal opportunities in societies, resisting male dominance, political inclusion, etc. have driven people into organizations [CARE, 2005].

Rural development is the process that leads to improved livelihood, social, political, economic and physical wellbeing of people [Moseley, 2003; Ward & Brown, 2009], be they in isolated and populated communities. In this study, a total of 72 different organizations are identified in 36 town-level communities. Also 29 (40.3%) of the organizations are purely women oriented and 13 (62.5%) of which have no external funding. These organizations are founded, chaired and funded from within and have no external input. This clearly shows that women in (rural African) communities are ready to master not only their own fate, but also to positively influence that of posterity.

Based on the study, the stated objectives of the women's organizations are varied and inclusive. Among others, the organizations aim to counsel disadvantaged women, help unemployed women seek jobs, encourage women's participation in politics, prepare women for decision-making, denounce women's marginalization, educate a girl-child and teach her self-reliance, promote mutual assistance and gender equality, teach women's rights and responsibilities, encourage religious development, advocate investment in a girl-child, sensitize members/communities about the gender and right-to-child acts, denounce violence and sexual exploitation, teach reproductive health, HIV and AIDS, promote agriculture and food security, create micro-credit facilities, help the sick and care for the aged, and teach about peace corps-hood in family and society.

With these diverse and inclusive objectives, the women's organizations are uniquely redefining the courses of livelihoods in respective communities. Through these organizations, rural women are helping a girl-child to understand the setbacks of early/unplanned pregnancy, the consequences of illiteracy, the benefits of education, and the need for religious tolerance, and the responsibility to promote local cultures. These organizations are gradually building a stronger women's voice in the society. This in turn help to reshape the communities by ensuring more opportunities for individual and collective development. Surely, rural women today are increasing shaking off male stereotypes that have for centuries dominated our communities. These stereotypes have forced the women folks to take the backbench in communal decisions and development efforts.

#### **4.3. Social Perception and Rural Empowerment**

Perception is a surrogate for identifying and interpreting events, and thus the ability to understand circumstances and organize for beneficial outcomes. People perceptions about events and others significantly affect their approaches in society. In this study, the general perceptions of women only allowed for passive participation in critical development efforts. For instance, women are not allowed to vie for paramount chiefship in some communities. Some other community perceptions derogate the women folks to the backyards, the kitchens and mere caretakers at homes.

Regarding perceptual positivism and rural development among the women folks, statistical analysis shows strong correlations among the element and education ( $R = 0.87$ ), organizational role ( $R = 0.83$ ) and social status ( $R = 0.89$ ) in society. Women's earning capacity and degree of freedom to work and participate in socio-political organizations, and the number of organizations in communities are interrelated ( $R \geq 0.78$ ) with perceived rural development. The fact that a good percent of the women have these attributes suggests limitations to women's empowerment, organizational participation and rural development.

#### **5. Conclusions**

This study explores the organizational capacity of rural women and how it translates into rural development in 36 town-level communities in rural Bo and Moyamba Districts of Sierra Leone. The concept of rural development hinges on the exploitation of land-intensive resources such as agriculture and forestry. However, the need for rural communities to approach development from within now pushes decision-makers to look beyond merely dishing out incentives for agricultural production and to be all-inclusive regarding quality livelihood that is free of a priori prejudices. Promotion of gender equity into the spheres of education, entrepreneurship, socio-physical infrastructure, social perception, etc. is critical for sustainable rural development. Thus this study focuses on how the interactions of personal, organizational and perceptual attributes of women could foster the development of rural communities in developing countries.

Based on the study, the rural women of Sierra Leone are aggressively transforming themselves from a dormant to dominant force of society. Rural women are deeply in the business of education which is reshaping every aspect of community livelihood and also stereotypic social perceptions about the women folks. The study suggests that women penetrate into elite echelons of society, decision-making bodies (in families and organizations), income generating class (to run homes and develop local communities), etc. Sustainable and meaningful developments must come from people and from within the communities they dwell. Thus this new attributes of the women folks is strategic for equitable, all-inclusive community development, especially the rural

communities of the developing world. If sustained, it has the tendency to firmly put rural societies and the developing world on the superhighway to realizing their fullest potential.

### **Acknowledgements**

This study was funded by the Sino-Sierra Leone scholarship arrangement under the China Scholarship Council (CSC). I am grateful to the reviewers, the editors and the many other people who contributed in diverse ways to the research design, data collection and analysis and write-up, and also by way of critical/insightful suggestions in the manuscript stage of the article.

### **References:**

1. Kongolo, M. & Bamgose, OO. 2002: Participation of Rural Women in Development: A Case Study of Tsheseng, Thintwa, and Makhalaneng Villages, South Africa.
2. UNIFEM. 2000. United Nations Development Fund for Women. Women and Economic Empowerment, New York.
3. IFAD. 2011. Women and Rural Development. Enabling poor rural people to overcome poverty.
4. Cartledge, B.1995. Population and environment: Women the neglected factor in sustainable development. Oxford University Press, New York.
5. HP. 2000. Hunger Project: The African women food farmer initiative: Exclusion from development policy and programming equation, New York.
6. Meer, S. 1998. Women speak: Reflections on our struggles 1982-1987. Cape Town, Kwela Books and Oxfam GB in Association with Speak.
7. Olopoenia, R. A. 1983. On the meaning of development. In Osayimwese, I. Z. (ed), Development economics and planning, Ibadan. University Press, Nigeria.
8. Pradip, K. G. 1984. Population, environment, resources and Third World development. Washington, D. C., Greenwood Press.
9. Seer, D. 1981. The meaning of development. In Crouch, B. & Chamala, S. (eds), Extension education and rural development. John Wiley and Sons, New York.
10. Gwanya, T. T. 1989. Rural development planning in developing countries. A fact paper No 5, University of Transkei, Bureau of Development Research and Training.
11. Sathibama, K. 2010. Rural Women Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Development: Research Scholar, Department of Political Science and Development Administration, Gandhigram Rural Institute, Dindigul District.
12. Kuratka, D.F., and Richard M. H. 1997. "Entrepreneurship". Dryden Press Series in Entrepreneurship, Hardcover, USA.
13. Singh, S. 2009. "Spencer's Retail" quoted in M. Harper, Inclusive value chains in India: Linking the smallest producers to modern markets. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing.
14. Buvinic, M., Margaret, L. A. & William, M. 1987. Women and Poverty in the Third World. The Johns Hopkins University Press, USA.
15. Snyder, C. M. & Tadesse, M. 1995. African women and development. Witwatersrand University Press, South Africa.
16. IFAD.2011. Rural Poverty Report: New realities, new challenges: new opportunities for tomorrow's generation. Via Paolo Di Dono, 4400142, Rome Italy.
17. FAO.1998. Report on Asia's women in Agriculture environment and rural production, China.
18. WDR, 2004. World Development Report: Making Services Work for Poor People. Washington, D.C. 20433
19. UNDP. 1997. Human Development Report, Oxford University Press, New York.
20. UN.1996. Growth for Human Development?. Overview: Available from: [Accessed 24 December 2012].
21. UNDP. 1998. Gender and Development in China. UNDP, Beijing.
22. Croll, E.1996. Rural Migration in Rural Development in the Evolving Market Economy. Food Agriculture Organization of United Nations.
23. CARE. 2005. Global Research Framework for CARE's Strategic Impact Inquiry on Women's Empowerment, 2005.



24. FAO. 1995. Rural women and the right to food. FAO Women and Population Division, Sustainable Development Department
25. Deci, E., et al. 2012. Rural Women's Role in Agriculture Markets: Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness, Agricultural University of Tirana Koder Kamez, Tirana, Albania.
26. Masika. R. and Joeke S.1996. Employment and sustainable livelihoods: A gender perspective Report prepared at the request of the Gender Office of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Report No 37. ISBN: 1 85864 172 1. Institute of Development Studies, Brighton.
27. UN. 1995. Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. New York: United Nations.
28. UNDP.2012. Africa Human Development Report 2012. Towards a Food Secure Future.
29. CIA. 2011. Central Intelligence Agency: The World Fact Book.[Online] Available from:[http://home.speedbit.com/search.aspx?s=CA9a206&q=UN+REPORT+ON+Sierrea + Leone+2011](http://home.speedbit.com/search.aspx?s=CA9a206&q=UN+REPORT+ON+Sierrea+Leone+2011). [ Accessed: 26 December 2012].
30. UNDP.2011. Human Development Index (HDI) value [Online]. Available from: <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/103106.html>. [Accessed: 26 December 2012].
31. Lindner, J.R., T.H. Murphy and G. Brier, 2001. Handling nonresponse in social science research. Journal of Agriculture Education, 42(4): 43-53.
32. Ommami, A. R. 2011. Social, Economic and Farming Characteristics Affecting Perception of Rural Youths Regarding the Appropriateness of a Career in Production.
33. UN.2005. Commission on the Status of Women. In: D.Lahai, ed. Fiftieth session. Enhancing participation of women in development: an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of education, health and work. New York, 27 February – 10 March 2005.
34. Pinto, A.C., Agricultural Cooperatives and Farmers Organizations: role in rural development and poverty reduction. Stockholm, (April 2009).
35. Drinkwater, M. CARE 2005. We are also Human Identity and Power in Gender Relations.
36. Crawford, M., 2011. Rural Women's Role in Agriculture. UN Women In cooperation with FAO, IFAD and WFP Expert Group Meeting Enabling rural women's economic empowerment institutions, opportunities and participation., Accra Ghana. Expert paper prepared by: Mildred Crawford Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers, Jamaica.
37. Ward N. and Brown, D. L. (2009). Placing the rural in regional development. Regional Studies, 43(10): 1237–1244. doi:10.1080/00343400903234696.

УДК 316

### **Потенциал женских организаций для развития сельской местности в Сьерра-Леоне**

<sup>1</sup> Тереза Теннех Дик

<sup>2</sup> Жианджонг Гао

<sup>1</sup> Северо-западный университет А & F, Китай

Факультет экономики и менеджмента

3 Taicheng Road Yangling, Shaanxi 712100 PRC

Магистр наук (Развитие сельской местности и региональное развитие), студентка

E-mail: theretendick@yahoo.com.au

<sup>2</sup> Северо-западный университет А & F, Китай

Факультет экономики и менеджмента

3 Taicheng Road Yangling, Shaanxi 712100 PRC

Доктор (Экономика сельского и лесного хозяйства), Профессор

E-mail: gaojianzhong2003@yahoo.com.cn

**Аннотация.** Женщины используют организации, чтобы выразить протест против социальных предрассудков в отношении их и продемонстрировать потенциал для развития

сельской местности/общества. Пропаганда равенства полов, усиление влияния женщин и интеграция женских общественных групп в социально-экономические, политические и культурные слои общества возрастают. Образование девочек и программы по наращиванию потенциала для женщин, такие как микро-финансы, предпринимательство, политический активизм, т.д. сказались на усилиях этих женщин расширить свои права. Данное исследование, основанное на анкетировании, было проведено в двух районах южной Сьерра-Леоне. Исследование охватывает 36 влиятельных женщин в 36 городских сообществах в стране. В исследовании анализируются личностные и организационные характеристики женщин в отношении социальных восприятий и развития сельской местности/общества. Большой процент исследуемых женщин получили образование, замужем и являются членами социальных организаций. В дополнение к другим социальным организациям/организациям по развитию, женские организации также присутствуют в каждом исследуемом сообществе. Большинство женских организаций являются местными по своему характеру и существуют на средства, собранные в местном сообществе. Данное проявление организационных способностей исследуемых деревенских жительниц характеризует значительный перцептивный сдвиг к признанию женских общественных групп продуктивными членами нашего общества. Это направление также психологически поощряет женские сообщества принять значительные обязательства, которые некогда предназначались только для мужчин. Анализ также показывает, что деревенские жительницы занимают управленческие и другие административные должности в организациях, целью которых является развития сельской местности/общества различными способами. Это существенное позитивное отклонение от традиционного восприятия, которое несправедливо оттеснило женские общественные группы на задворки на века. Данное направление способно не только помочь миллионам женщин, изнемогающим в развивающемся мире, но и способствовать осознанию национального потенциала неиспользованных свыше человеческих ресурсов соответствующими странами.

**Keywords:** Сьерра-Леоне; развития сельской местности; социальное восприятие; равенство полов; женские организации.