Young Female Decision Makers in Ghana, Senegal, and Liberia

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Every person matters and should be counted to achieve sustainable development. The United Nations predicts and monitors world demographic trends, but the prevailing mass displacement over the past decades its impact on people was never anticipated.

This paper traces the events leading to the post-conflict period in Ghana, Senegal, and Liberia. Analysis of the 2007 and the 2013 Liberia Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) makes it possible to explain why rural Liberian females are more vulnerable to gender inequality, urbanization, and social systems that their sisters in urban areas.

The DHS contain characteristics of multistage sampling design. With sample strata, clusters, and weights, researchers can magnify a disparity.

Agriculture is a major but inadequate source of income in rural Liberia. Even after a fourteen-year civil war ended in 2003, rural households cannot harvest enough staple crops because of improper land preparation, few inputs, and insufficient farming technology. The Center on Conflict and Development at Texas A&M University, sponsored by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, reported in 2013 the prevalence of 'traditional' agricultural techniques dating to the 1970s, which resulted in stagnant rice yields of less than two metric tons per hectare. As a long-term consequence, underprivileged daughters and young mothers in this rural society may not have opportunities to be literate and educated. Meanwhile, females in the capital city, Monrovia, have almost equal chances to live a better life compared to male urbanites.

Urbanization has widened an economic, social, and educational gap in rural and urban Liberia. The other West African countries é Ghana and Senegal é have had the same trend.

Not only the 2007 and the 2014 Ghana DHS, but also the 2007 and 2015 Senegal DHS provide target populations who have similar economic, geographic, and social advantages/disadvantages to Liberia. Grouped 15 to 19-year-old females in Ghana, Senegal, and Liberia by these factors a Monte Carlo Simulation was performed to predict various decision-making processes over a thirty-year period.

Three main findings were found. (1) If social systems provide equal educational opportunities to young Ghanaian, Senegalese and Liberian females, their wealth indicators may increase. (2) In some rural households in which female heads allocate resources, the accumulation of wealth may be higher than when husbands decide. (3) Female empowerment benefits individuals and the entire family because of a better family decision-making process.

The results from this study have important implications. The more females in the city that pursue goals of achieving a better life, the more knotty are the problems for daughters and young

mothers in rural areas who will be isolated, abandoned, and neglected. To ameliorate the issues faced by rural females, they must be targeted for development. It is abundantly clear that to achieve sustainable development females must be the decision makers. Recognizing this situation in many countries that are in post-conflict recovery is of paramount importance in the preparation of students with professional interests in international development. Only in this way will development organizations succeed in overcoming the development challenges that exist across the world today.