



Gender and Land Rights

Understanding the Data and Evidence in South Asia

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**RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON**
Policies,
Institutions,
and Markets

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Overview

- What do we mean by women's land rights?
- Why do women's land rights matter?
 - Private land (housing and farmland)
 - Common and public lands
- Sources of data and information

What do we mean by women's land rights?

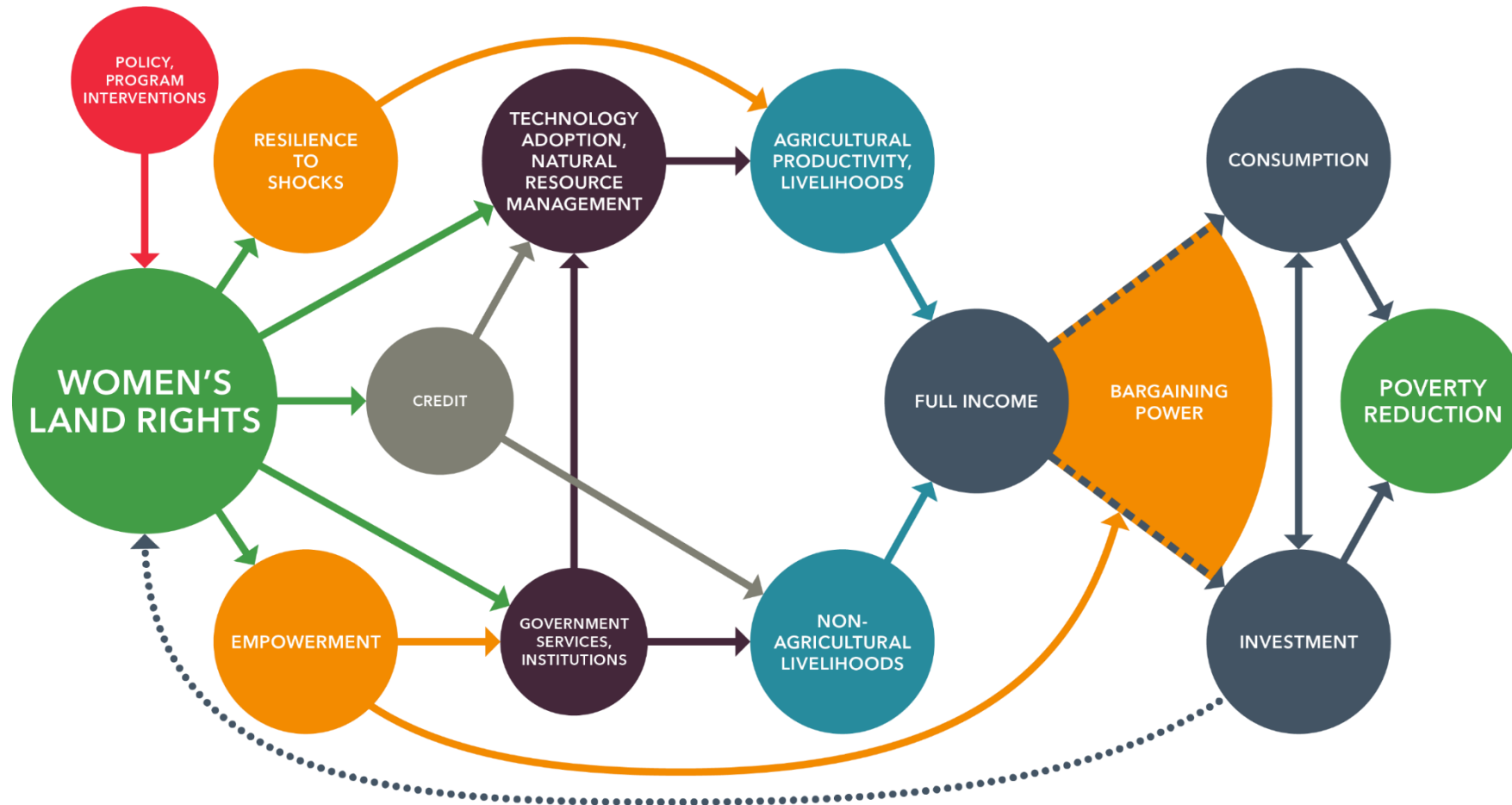
- Not just household level rights, but those of individuals within households
 - May be individual or joint rights (owned with others)
 - Usually self-reported “ownership”—may not be legally documented
- Doesn't just matter for female-headed households. Also need to consider rights of women living in households considered male headed
- Affected by policies and practices on:
 - Inheritance
 - Marital property
 - Ability to purchase land (and whose name it is purchased in)
- Government provisions don't always translate into practice

Gaps in agricultural land ownership

	Bangladesh		Nepal	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
% of landowners who are	22.6	77.4		
% of adult populations who are agricultural land owners (sole or joint)	8.5	52.2	10.0	27.0

Women are less likely to own land, and are likely to own less land than men.

Links from Women's Land Rights to Poverty Reduction



Evidence on why women's land rights matter

- Increases women's bargaining power and decision-making on consumption and investment in next generation (education, health care)
- Increases investment in natural resources (e.g. trees on farms)
- Increases access to government services
- Increases women's bargaining power and reduces domestic violence

Note: Most studies are of **private** agricultural land or housing. Rights to **common** lands also matter

Women's land rights on common lands

Type of commons	Importance to women
Grazing lands/pasture	Fodder, care of livestock
Forest lands and woodlots	Non-timber forest products for income Medicinal plants Fuelwood
Water bodies (e.g. tanks or ponds)	Domestic or livestock water Fish Lotus, aquatic plants
Riverbanks, chars, or coastal beaches	Fish landing or drying sites

Commons are especially important to landless and tribal women.

Recognized rights provide incentive and authority for women to protect and invest in the commons.

Without recognized rights, women are subject to harassment by functionaries (e.g. forest guards).

See video at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/9kjom0pjkn dtmkm/Women%20and%20Forests.mp4?dl=0>

South Asia studies

India:

- Kerala women who own land or house have significantly lower risk of marital violence than propertyless women (Panda and Agarwal 2005)
- Karnataka Owning a house or a plot of agricultural land enhances women's ability to travel to the market, health center, and other places outside the community, and to make decisions about their employment, health, and use of money independently (Swamnathan, Lahoti, and Suchitra 2012)
- Hindu Succession Act Amendment increased women's reported ownership of household land, bargaining power in the household, and probability of inheriting land. This increased spending on women's goods, medical care, and children's education, especially for girls (Brule 2010; Deininger, Goyal, and Nagarajan 2013)
- West Bengal land allocation and registration with women's name on document increased use of credit for agriculture, investment in agricultural inputs, and women's decision making over household food and agriculture (Santos, Fletschner, Savath, and Peterman 2014)

South Asia studies

Nepal:

- Women's landownership significantly increases their empowerment, defined by household decision making in areas of own healthcare, major household purchases, and visits to family or relatives (Mishra and Sam 2016)
- Women who own land are significantly more likely to have the final say in household decisions. Children of mothers who own land are significantly less likely to be severely underweight. Land ownership is comparable to education and employment in its impact on child health (Allendorf 2007)
- Women's land and property rights change over the life cycle. Daughters-in-law are most disempowered. Although new legal provisions make it cheaper and easier to register land in women's names, many women don't ask for their name on land deeds, fearing it will disrupt their marriage (Pradhan, Meinzen-Dick and Theis 2019)

Data sources

- FAO Gender and Land Rights database: <http://www.fao.org/gender-landrights-database>
- Check definitions of indicators—
 - Agricultural **holder** is the decision-maker (not necessarily owner)
 - **Landowner** is self-reported owner, sole or joint, may not be legally recognized
- Currently only not available for India or Pakistan

Land is a crucial resource for poverty reduction, food security and rural development. However, men and women do not always enjoy the same rights to land.

Exploring the Gender and Land Rights Database (GLRD)

Learn more about the different factors that relate to gender inequalities embedded in land rights by exploring the country profiles, gender and land-related statistics and the recently-developed legal assessment tool (LAT).

COUNTRY PROFILES This database analyses the extent to which national legal frameworks and policies and programmes support the advancement of women or induce gender-differentiated access to land in 84 countries +MORE	GENDER AND LAND-RELATED STATISTICS Land-related statistics disaggregated by gender, including the share of men and women who are agricultural holders. Access the statistics through the search tool or the interactive map. +MORE	THE LEGAL ASSESSMENT TOOL (LAT) To provide prompt, targeted and effective policy advice. Based on the legal information of the country profiles, the LAT assigns scores to 30 legal indicators to identify areas where action is required and advance gender-equitable land tenure. +MORE
Select a Country ▾	Select a Country ▾	Select a Country ▾
Select a Topic ▾ SEARCH	Select Statistics ▾ SEARCH	Select LAT ▾ SEARCH

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