Pathways to African Feminism and Development
Journal of the African Women Studies Centre

Land Governance and Women's Land Rights in Kenya: Advancing Gender Equality and Sustainable Development

ISSN (Online): 2309-3625

Volume 10, Issue 1, December 2025



Gendered Land Rights and Sustainable Development: A Case of the Isukha Community, Kakamega County

Parita S. Shah[1]

Abstract

In Kenya, women constitute nearly 80% of the agricultural labour force, yet severe imbalances in land rights persist due to deeply entrenched patriarchal practices. This study investigates the gendered nexus between land tenure, livelihoods, and sustainable development within the Isukha community of Kakamega County. Grounded in Raewyn Connell's (1987) gender relations theory and the Gender, Agriculture and Assets Project (GAAP) framework, the study examines the extent of women's access to and control over land, and how these dynamics shape economic empowerment, household food security, and climate change adaptation. Employing a mixed-methods research design, empirical data were collected from 60 women respondents through structured questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews.

The findings reveal that despite fifteen years of progressive statutory protections under the 2010 Constitution of Kenya, women's actual land ownership community remains critically low. The local gender regime enforces male monopolisation of land property, forcing women to negotiate cultivation permissions from husbands or male relatives and undermining their food security and climate resilience. However, a new countertrend is emerging.

Driven by adult literacy (Gumbaru) schools, NGO interventions, and financial cooperatives, women are increasingly overcoming the vicious cycle of land-rights illiteracy. Collective investment in land plots, enhanced legal awareness, and the strategic adoption of digital land governance tools such as Ardhisasa are enabling Isukha women to bypass customary blockades and assert new forms of agency.

The study concludes that securing women's land rights is structurally essential to dismantling the "poverty of feminism"[2] and fostering climate-resilient, economically empowered rural communities. Strengthening enforcement institutions, expanding legal and digital literacy, and harmonizing customary and statutory frameworks are critical pathways toward sustainable development.

Key words: *Constitutional Reforms, Empowerment, Isukha Women, Land Rights, Livelihoods, Sustainability.*

1.0 Introduction

Land, one of the most prestigious and contested natural resources, has long been a source of inequality across Africa, South America, and Asia. Since colonial times, land tenure systems have entrenched gender inequality, with men historically holding more and higher-value natural assets than women. Land remains the most important productive resource and a lifeline for the economically vulnerable (Lipton, 2009). Globally, men continue to own more land than women, whether solely or jointly (Kieran et. al., 2017). In

[1] Department of Geography, Population and Environmental Studies, University of Nairobi | Email: parita@uonbi.ac.ke.
[2]The phrase "the poverty of feminism" appears in earlier literature, including Karamazov's 1998 text of the same title.

response, many developing countries have adopted land reforms aimed at granting equal ownership rights to both men and women (Akinola, 2018).

In Africa, South America and Asia, natural resource ownership is based on gender roles and further influenced by cultural, religious, and ethnic norms, which determine how responsibilities are distributed between men and women (Food and Agricultural Organisation [FAO], 2011).

Despite this, women constitute a significant proportion of the agricultural workforce: globally 36% of women and 38% of men participate directly in agricultural production. In South Asia, 71% of women and 47% of men are engaged in agriculture, while in Africa the figures stand at 66% and 60% respectively. Yet only 1% of women in these regions own land (FAO, 2023).

Women, as primary food producers, suffer from climate induced weather shocks such as heat stress and drought. Many women work unpaid on their husband's farms, while others work as casual labourers on commercial farms and are paid below the market rates due to limited livelihood alternatives. These conditions reinforce gender inequalities in labour markets. Moreover, gender norms further restrict women's mobility and access to extension services, climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives, and agricultural decision-making; all of which are barriers hindering sustainable development in agriculture.

This article investigates the extent of women's access to and control over land, and how land rights influence economic empowerment and food security. The study focuses on gendered land rights and sustainable development within the agricultural sector of the Isukha community in Kakamega County. Connell's Social Theory of Gender provides the theoretical framework while the Gender, Agriculture and Assets Project (GAAP) framework guides the conceptual analysis. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect field data.

The Isukha community resides in Shinyalu Sub-County, Kakamega County, Kenya, and forms part of the wider *Baluhya* (Luhya) ethnic group. The Luhyas are mainly dominant in Western Kenya (Were, 1967). Luhya communities are also found in Uganda, Rwanda, Congo, Zambia, and Cameroon (Bulimo, 2013). The Isukha primarily inhabit the Ikhonga-murwi (The crying stone) area. Recent initiatives encourage Isukha women to become self-sufficient, knowledgeable about land rights and economically empowered as part of broader sustainable development efforts. A review of existing literature reveals a gap in research on Isukha women in terms of land rights, food security and sustainable development, underscoring the need for this research.

Sustainable development seeks to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs (Brundtland, 1987). Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal rights, opportunities and freedoms for all. Although all 47 Sub-Saharan African countries have non-discriminatory constitutional provisions (Hallward-Driemeier et al., 2013), customary norms continue to limit women's land rights (Alden Wily, 2018).

FAO (2023) reports that women in agricultural households remain at a significant disadvantage in terms of land ownership in comparison to men. SDG indicator 5.A.1 from FAO (2023) research indicates that over 70% of men have rights to agricultural land. Encouragingly, the number of women landowners in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia has increased over the past decade. With land ownership increasing, women's empowerment in agricultural food systems is also increasing, leading to better nutrition, diets, and food security and, in turn, poverty reduction. The rights of women to access land and natural resources for food production were strongly emphasised during the United Nations Decade for Women (1975–1985), signalling growing recognition of women's value and the need to end the "poverty of feminism".

Africa's land rights landscape is paradoxical: although women produce 60-80% of the continent's food, only 1% own land (World Bank, 2019). Their limited access to land exacerbates vulnerability to climate shocks, restricts livelihood, diversification, and limits access to innovation and fair wages. This also means that they face inequalities in the job market, and this hinders sustainable development. Gender norms further constrain women's access to extension services, climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives, and agricultural decision-making, hindering sustainable development in agriculture.

In Kenya, a major agricultural exporter, many workers, especially women, are employed informally, reinforcing gender inequality (Sikenyi, 2017). Climate change intensifies these challenges through floods, droughts, price fluctuations on the global markets and widening wealth inequality (Benni et. al, 2020). In Kenya rapid population growth has led to land fragmentation, particularly in agriculturally productive

regions. As land is subdivided among male heirs, plot sizes shrink, reducing land value and contributing to "land poverty." This male-exclusive inheritance practice fuels competition for land and often triggers family conflicts (World Bank, 2019).

1.1 Women and Land Rights

Land is a critical economic asset used by individuals, communities, and institutions for economic development. It may be held under cultural tenure systems or statutory arrangements (Meinzen-Dick et.al., 2019). Farmers, business owners, miners, pastoralists, governments, and private institutions all rely on land for productive activities. Land rights encompass ownership, whether individual, joint, or communal, as well as the rights to use, transfer, or sell the land. Although often conflated with legal land ownership (legal sector), land rights existed long before formal legal systems were established (Schlager and Ostrom, 1992). According to FAO (2009), land rights allow individual to manage the land as an agent or owner, exercising control over decisions related to its use (ibid). Women's access to land or other natural resources enhances their empowerment and resilience to economic shocks. Furthermore, ownership can be with a government certificate or a legal title deed document. In Asia and Africa, many communities continue to recognise land rights outside statutory legal systems.

Historically, much rural land in Africa was communally owned. However, governments have evicted communities without compensation. The case of the Endorois community of Lake Bogoria, Kenya, is one of the case studies in which the community has been evicted. Despite the African Union ruling affirming their land rights, the Kenyan Government has not restored their access (Sergon et. al., 2022). Communal tenure systems differ significantly from private tenure, leaving communities vulnerable. Gendered land ownership follows a similar pattern; men are typically recognised as the owners of the land, while women lose out. Recent progress in land documentation has improved access to financial services and strengthened tenure security (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2006).

Land underpins economic development through agriculture, mining, tourism, and infrastructure. Securing land rights can transform livelihoods and has far-reaching economic implications. Land also carries cultural significance. In most African communities, land rights for women are not upheld due to gender inequality. Literature review indicates that land rights are also associated with poverty. As most women have unequal land rights, they are often associated with gender inequality and poverty. This is a practice observed across developing countries, and not only for land, but for all natural resources.

This creates a clear nexus between land rights, poverty, economic development, and food security (Aguilar et. al., 2015). Over time, reforms have begun to shift women's roles, reduce inequality, and expand women's land rights, contributing to their economic, social, and political empowerment (Deka, 2024).

International organisations, including UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), FAO and the UNDP, continue to address gender inequality and the role of women in sustainable development to empower them socially, economically and politically (Huyer and Mitter 2003). Working with governments and NGOs these institutions support policy reforms that enhance women's autonomy and enable them to provide essential needs such as healthcare, food and shelter. Such interventions have helped many African women own land (Atozou et al., 2017). When women are restricted from owning land, their access to production inputs and technology is also limited, reducing food production despite their central role in agriculture (Maksimov et. al., 2017).

Research in Benin shows that cultural practices deprive women of land rights resulting in economic hardship, food insecurity, gender inequality and diminished freedom of expression (Atozou et al., 2017). This undermines sustainable development and reverses community progress. Buvinic and Gupta (1997) have pointed out that many households in Sub-Saharan Africa are headed by women who need support in land rights, gender equality and poverty reduction. This is also supported by Cagatay (1998) who has shown a strong correlation between poverty and gender inequality linked to unequal access to productive assets (World Bank, 2019).

Agricultural land use is concentrated in rural areas across South America, Asia and Africa meaning rural women bear the brunt of land-related inequalities. Studies carried out by Bizoza (2019) in the Sahel region – Chad, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, indicate that land remains the property of men, which is a similar practice in East Africa, including in Kenya. This means that women continue to work unpaid on their husbands' farms, lack access to agricultural inputs, rely on rain-fed irrigation, face

inadequate post-harvest storage facility, and experience climate-related shocks that threaten production and livelihoods (Cotula, 2020).

Women's land rights issues are linked to high population growth, lack of education levels, weak reforms, conflicts, and migration to urban areas (Haub and Kaneda, 2014). These challenges underscore the need for land rights reforms. Rwanda offers a leading example: married women inherit land legally under the country's tenure system (Ali et. al., 2014). All this is done through private women's land rights. Ethiopia is another country where private land rights have led to women getting land ownership leading to women's empowerment (Melesse and Bulte, 2015). The government has also launched a government certification programme where land is jointly owned by the married man and woman (Deininger et al., 2015). The case studies of Rwanda and Ethiopia indicate that land rights can only be valued through legal systems, such policies and institutional frameworks. Tanzania also recognises marital property rights that allow joint land ownership (Peterman, 2012; USAID 2016;). Land rights affect everything for these women – their food, water, and fuel, and influence household decision making. Limited land rights increase poverty and women's vulnerability to gender-based violence. During droughts, women spend more time fetching water for domestic use and livestock, reducing time for education and income-generating activities. Declining resources intensify food insecurity, weaken resilience, and deepen poverty (Bizoza, 2019). In 1970, Boserup had emphasised that equitable treatment of women is essential for economic development (Boserup, 1970).

1.2 The Isukha Community: Traditional Cliques

The Isukha community forms part of the larger Luhya ethnic group. Historical evidence indicates that the Luhya were once a unified community, but became dispersed due to wars, famines, ethnic rivalries and political repression. The continuous migrations enabled the various Luhya groups to reconnect, preserving much of their indigenous culture (Muchanga et. al., 2024). The Isukha are one of the eighteen sub-ethnic groups of the Abaluhya, located in the southern part of Buluhya (Bode, 1978). These eighteen sub-ethnic groups are Abashisa, Ababukusu, Abatsotso, Abamarama, Abatura, Abawanga, Abidakho, Abanyore, Abakabaras, Abakhayo, Abanyamala, Ba Busia, Abanyala, Ba Ndombi, Abasamia, Abatirichi, Abamarachi, Abatachioni, Abisukha, and Abalugoli.

The community name 'Isukha' (Bisukha) is derived from the River Isukha. The Isukha community migrated to present-day Kenya from central and western Africa during the Great Bantu migration time (Seidensticker et. al., 2021). The Isukha comprise sixteen distinct clans. They moved to their present location due to over-crowding, increased population, and resource scarcity (Were and Wilson, 1968), as well as climate change, wars, and the search for better lifestyles (Indongole, 2014). The community is well known for the traditional bull fights (*Amakhol*), the *Isukuti* dances and the male circumcision initiation (*Shishebo*).

Within the Isukha community, the father or the grandfather traditionally serves as the head of the family (Muchanga et. al, 2024). According to the community culture, men own land. All family members have designated roles that contribute to household and community well-being. Women grow crops and take care of them, and the menfolk assist in these tasks. Women also undertake weeding, reflecting a gendered division of labour that persists today. The main food crops are maize and beans while tea and sugarcane serve as cash crops. Men historically controlled natural resources and exercised authority not only over land and natural resources but also over their wives, sons under eighteen years and unmarried daughters. Furthermore, the Council of Elders would make decisions on communal natural resource management (Muchanga, 2024).

This Isukha possess a rich heritage of food security practices, communal resource management, and indigenous knowledge. Medical plants use was a skill passed on from one generation to the next. Environmental stewardship was guided by spiritual beliefs. Cultural taboos and the ancestral expectations shaped resource governance. Women were not given ownership of natural resources, especially land, because obedience to ancestral norms was believed to safeguard the community from disaster. The Isukha tradition was clearly adamant that only elderly men would be responsible in the family, and no wife would be given the power to take over this responsibility. Later, the responsibility was slowly given to the 'jural murals' (adult sons in the family). Youngsters, children and women were perceived as likely to misuse resources, thus reinforcing male control over land and household decision-making.

Certain food and resource practices were gender-regulated. Women were prohibited from harvesting food, eating certain foods such as chicken, eggs, and bananas, or cutting down trees. It was a move aimed at preventing overuse of resources. These restrictions were intended to prevent overuse of resources, particularly when men would not be able to monitor what was happening in homesteads as they were away fighting, hunting, or doing other traditional tasks while women stayed at home. Granting women full control was believed that they would finish everything and men and visitors would hardly have food to eat, leading to embarrassment (Embeywa, 1991). Cutting of trees by women was prohibited, as it was believed that it would lead to deforestation. Though women planted food crops, the selection of the seeds was done by men. This was meant to get a better harvest and sustain ecology. This community understood the value of human well-being in relation to biodiversity conservation and, in turn, sustainable development (Chaudary et. al., 2015). They preserved the seeds by covering them with leaves, putting on roof tops or near fireplace or doors. This was indigenous knowledge, as seeds near the fireplace were covered with soot to prevent weevils, and those near the doors and rooftops received blessings from visitors for abundant growth. Besides leaving land to be managed by men due to authoritative leadership, the elders were particular when crop growing was done to have an abundant harvest and prevent impunity.

Cultural norms also governed purity during agricultural activities. During the time of handling seeds or harvesting, no one was allowed to have sexual relationships. The purity factor was clear; thus, men controlled the land rights. Furthermore, crop planting was also communal extended-family activity and labour used was from household members only. However, with increased access to education for all, and the influence of global development agendas — including the Sustainable Development Goals — gender roles in the Isukha community have started changing, as this research study indicates. The lives of women in this community have changed through expanded access to education, innovations, entrepreneurship and gender equality initiatives. These transformations mark a clear pathway towards sustainable development.

2.0 Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Understanding gendered land rights within the Isukha community requires grounding the study in theories that explain how gender is socially constructed and reproduced, and in conceptual models that link women's access to assets with broader development outcomes. Connell's Social Theory of Gender provides the analytical lens for examining how gendered power relations shape land ownership and labour roles, while the Gender, Agriculture and Assets Project (GAAP) framework illustrates how women's access to land influences poverty reduction, food security, and sustainable development. Together, these frameworks guide the interpretation of the study findings.

2.1 Theoretical Framework – Connell's Social Theory of Gender

Connell's Social Theory of Gender (1987) identifies three interrelated structures that shape gender relations: division of labour, power and cathexis.

The division of labour refers to the gendered allocation of work, including the segregation of labour markets, distinctions between "men's jobs" and "women's jobs", promotions, unequal pay, unpaid domestic work, childcare and housework (Connell, 1987:96). These divisions determine who performs agricultural tasks, who controls land, and who benefits from productive resources.

The power structure encompasses gendered authority, control and coercion. In the business and political arena, women are often excluded from decision-making, which directly affects access to and control over land. This gendered division of power is rooted in societal definitions of masculinity and femininity and shapes ownership patterns of natural resources.

The third structure, **cathexis**, concerns emotional attachments, social norms, and cultural expectations that regulate relationships. Cathexis influences how communities perceive gender roles, including beliefs about obedience, purity, and appropriate behaviour for men and women.

In this study, all three structures namely, division of labour, power, and cathexis, are evident within the Isukha community. This theory explains how land rights have historically been gendered and how these patterns influence sustainable development. However, with time, gender-based equality, equity and awareness, the community is becoming more conscious of gendered land rights and is moving forward in a positive manner, enabling more equitable access to land and resources.

2.2 Conceptual Framework - Gender, Agriculture and Assets Project (GAAP) Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is the Gender, Agriculture and Assets Project (GAAP) framework developed by Meinzen-Dick et. al. (2019). This framework features how women's land rights affect sustainable development outcomes.

When women hold land rights, whether through private ownership or state-recognised tenure, they can gain access to financial services such as bank loans, Sacco credit, and other lending facilities. Land documentation also enables women to join farmers' cooperative societies and participate more fully in agricultural value chains. With secure land rights, women are more likely to adopt innovation and technologies related to climate adaptation and mitigation, enhancing food security and natural resource management.

Access to credit facilities enables women to invest in businesses, diversify income sources, and improve their household livelihoods. Increased income strengths women's social and political empowerment and enhances their ability to purchase additional natural resources, including land. These outcomes are only possible when communities and nations come up with strong reform institutions, clear constitutional provisions, and supportive policies and programmes.

This framework aligns with the present study, which demonstrates that when women own land, engage in farming, access education, and obtain financial assistance, they become economic enablers and key partners in sustainable development. Figure 1 illustrates these relationships.

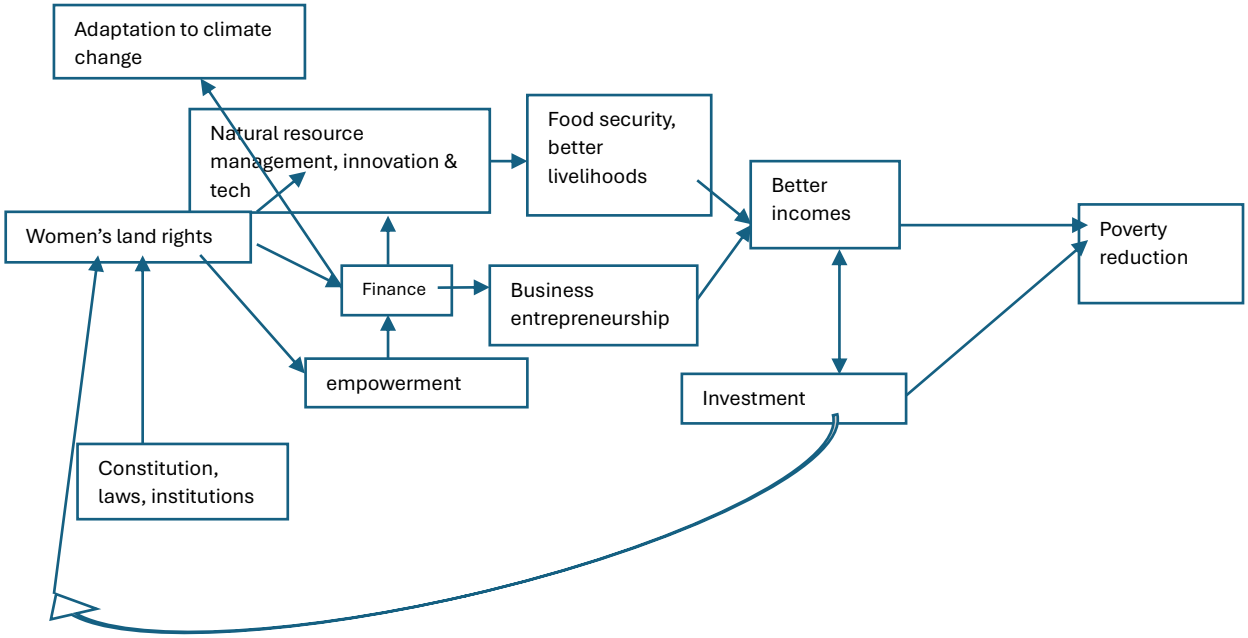


Figure 1: Gender, Agriculture and Assets Project Framework | Source 1: Meinzen-Dick et. al. (2019)

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Setting

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate land rights, constitutional awareness, and sustainable development among Isukha women. The fieldwork was conducted in September 2025 in Museno Village, located within Museno sub-location of Irobho Ward, Kenya.

3.2 Participant Selection and Sampling

The target population comprised women from the Isukha community. A total of 60 women aged 30 to 80+ years were sampled for the study. The lower age limit of 30 years was purposely selected based on a specific historical rationale: the Constitution of Kenya was promulgated in 2010, exactly 15 years prior to this study. Selecting participants who were at least 15 years old at the time of adoption ensured that the sample consisted of individuals who lived through the constitutional transition as adults or young adults. This

allowed the researcher to effectively gauge long-term shifts in the constitutional awareness, land rights understanding, and perceptions of the SDGs within the community.

Quantitative data collection relied on a randomised household selection, while purposive sampling was used for the qualitative components to identify key informants and focus group participants with deep communal knowledge.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

During data collection, few women were available at their homes because the day selected for the collection was Friday, when most of the women were at the market, as Friday is the designated market day. The researcher opted for Friday as during weekdays most of the women were busy on the field planting or harvesting while over the weekends, they preferred to be with their families. This was indicated during the pilot study. Thus, Friday was found to be the best day to collect data as most women did not go to the field but were at least available after they finished their shopping or other market day chores. Data collection occurred between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. due to logistical constraints.

To overcome linguistic and cultural barriers, the researcher recruited and trained three research assistants from the Isukha community. Two were females and one, a male. Their shared cultural background facilitated seamless communication, contextual understanding, and accurate translation during field interactions.

Data collection was divided into two primary streams: **Qualitative Data:** An ethnographic approach was adopted to immerse the research team in the community's daily environment. Participant narratives were captured through semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), allowing women to share their personal stories regarding land ownership and customary law. **Quantitative Data:** Structured questionnaires were administered face-to-face via interviews, ensuring high response rates and clarifying questions for participants in real-time.

3.4 Data Analysis

The qualitative data from FGDs, interviews, and ethnographic observations were transcribed, translated with the assistance of the community researchers. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns related to cultural norms, gender roles, and constitutional awareness.

Quantitative data from the structured questionnaires were cleaned, coded, and entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics (including frequencies and percentages) were generated to summarise demographic characteristics and levels of constitutional awareness across the sample.

The methodological approach provided a robust foundation for analysing how gendered land rights intersect with constitutional awareness and sustainable development. The following section presents the empirical findings, interpreted through Connell's Social Theory of Gender to illuminate how structural gender inequalities continue to shape land ownership patterns within the Isukha community.

4.0 Findings

To examine the nexus between gendered land rights, constitutional awareness, and sustainable development among the Isukha community, this section presents the empirical findings from the field interpreted through Raewyn Connell's social theory of gender. Connell argues that gender inequalities are systematically reproduced through interconnected institutional structures: the gendered division of labour, power relations (authority, control, and governance), and cathexis (cultural taboos, norms, and emotional attachments). Applying these dimensions to the analysis enables a critical assessment of the community's situation fifteen years after the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya.

A total of sixty women, between the ages of 30 to 80+ were interviewed. As noted earlier, the age threshold ensured that all respondents were at least 15 years old when the new Constitution was adopted in 2010 as the study seeks to assess their understanding of constitutional land rights (GoK, 2010). Figure 2 presents the distribution of women respondents across age groups, with the majority falling within the 60-69 age bracket.

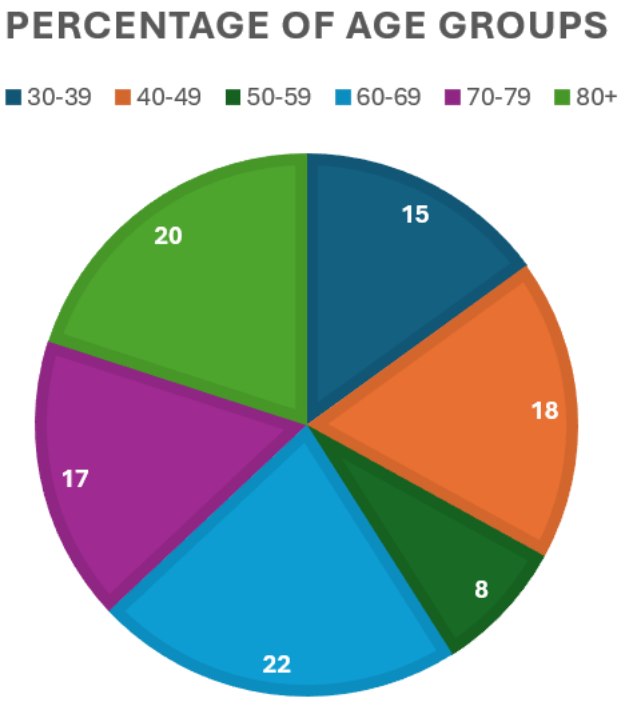


Figure 2: Age group of women participants

The findings indicate a sharp generational divide regarding access to formal education. As shown in Figure 3, most elderly women (aged 50 and above) possessed only informal schooling. This is due to the deeply rooted customary beliefs that viewed educating a girl child as an unnecessary expenditure since daughters would eventually marry and leave their natal households. These norms prevailed before the 2010 Constitution. In contrast, younger cohorts (aged 30–49) demonstrated significantly higher levels of secondary and tertiary education. This educational transition was driven primarily by targeted grassroots interventions by NGOs, church groups, and local women's empowerment initiatives that emerged after the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution. These organisations prioritised girls' education and facilitated women's entry into the labour market.

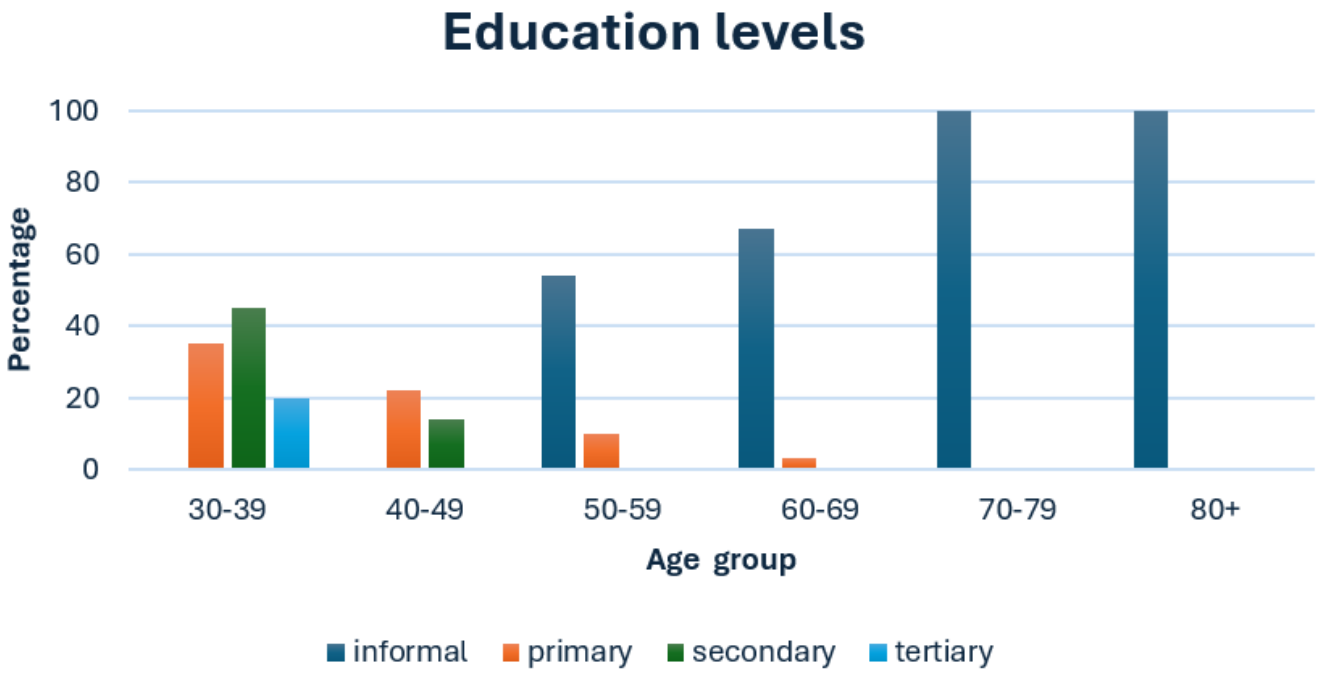


Figure 3: Education levels of women

This structural shift in literacy reflects the impact of Article 27 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010), which guarantees gender equality and has disrupted traditional patriarchal consensus around education.

Connell's dimension of *power* concerns how economic resources and assets are allocated along gender lines. In the Isukha Community, land is the absolute baseline for agricultural productivity, livelihoods, and food security. However, the findings expose a clear asymmetry between those who provide agricultural labour and those who own the capital asset.

Figure 4 indicates that farming remains the primary occupation across almost all age groups. Most women across all age groups, ranging from 84% to 95%, work on farms owned by their husbands or male relatives.

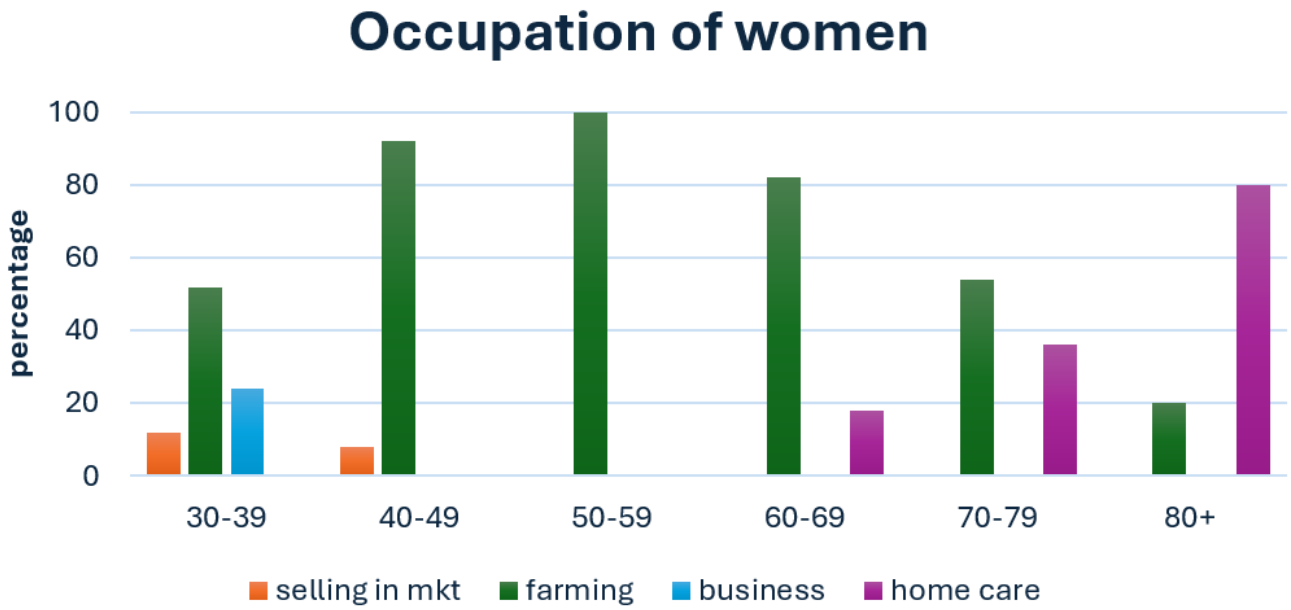


Figure 4: Occupation of women

Women also engage in small businesses such as mobile salon services, which require minimal capital and no fixed premises. Younger women increasingly travel across counties to meet market demands. For instance, some Isukha women procure fish directly from Lake Victoria and sell it in the local Isukha markets at competitive prices.

Given the dominance of farming as an occupation, respondents were asked whether they worked only on their own farms, leased land, or worked on land owned by others. Figure 5 and Table 1 reveal that autonomous land ownership is extremely low, restricted entirely to a nominal fraction of women within the 30-39 age bracket. Across all age groups, 84% to 95% of women work on farms owned by their husbands or male relatives.

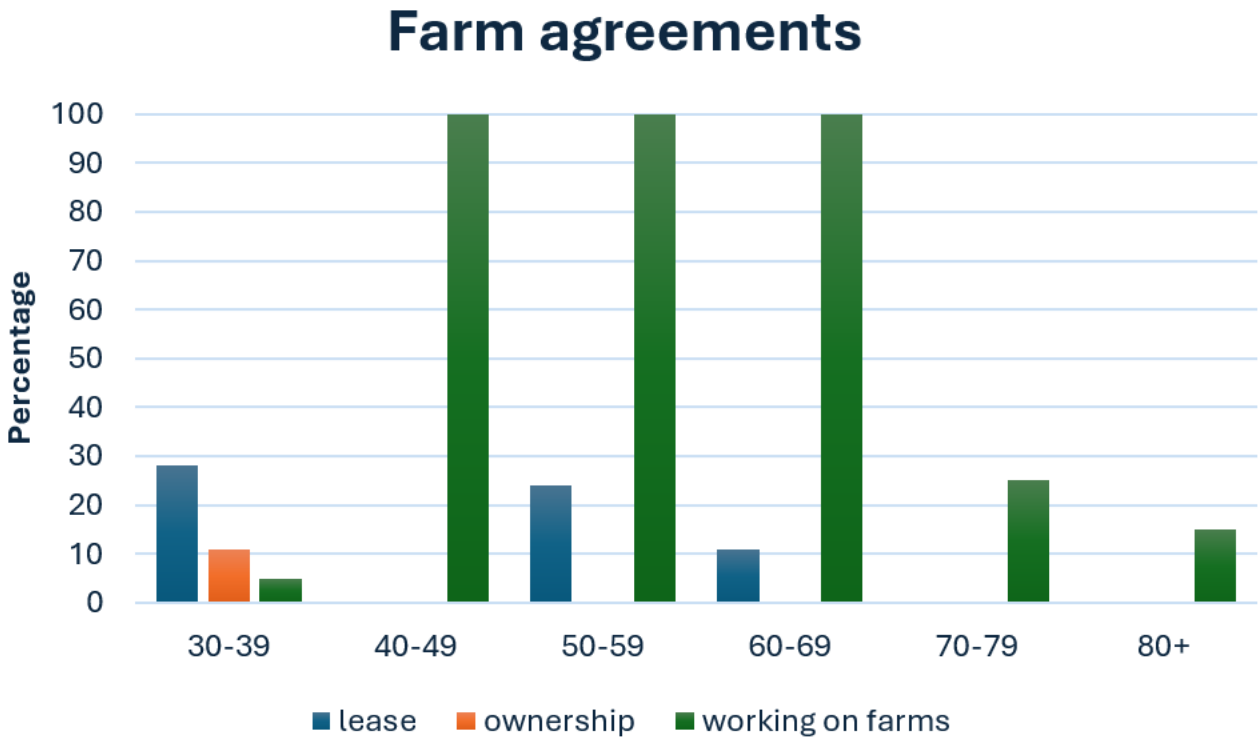


Figure 5: Farm agreements

Table 1: Farmland ownership

Age group	Working on husband's farm (%)	Working on brother's farm (%)	Employed (%)
30-39	95		5
40-49	55	22	23
50-59	84	12	4
60-69	86	10	4
70-79	91	9	
80+	95	5	

These findings align with Ajefu (2024), who indicated that women in their late 30s and older typically lack independent land ownership, while younger women under 35 years of age are beginning to acquire land rights through leasing farms or buying land.

Agarwal (1988) argues that women face numerous obstacles in accessing land, including the need to repeatedly seek permission from male relatives, a practice that can negatively affect women's mental health. This study confirms that women must request permission from husbands or brothers to use family land. The barrier is cultural, despite women being central to food production and environmental conservation (Agarwal & Bina, 1994).

During the FGD, women emphasized that marriage does not automatically grant access to farmland. Permission must be sought from the husband or the extended family to be allowed to work on the farm, and such permission is often temporary. Over 76% of women stated the same. One participant, Ruth, explained:

> *I asked my husband if I can grow food for the family on his farm. Since my husband respects his extended family, he called a family meeting to ask if that was okay. And after deliberation, I was given permission. Now I have food, and it is not a problem.*

Under Connell's framework, Ruth's account represents emphasised femininity, a gendered strategy in which women adopt compliance and deference to successfully negotiate access to vital survival resources within patriarchal structures. Plate 1 shows a woman working on her husband's farm.



Figure 6: An Isukha woman farming on her husband's farm

A small number of women reported farming on their brothers' farms. There were various reasons for this arrangement. In many cases, their husbands' farms were fully allocated to commercial crops, leaving no space for subsistence farming. To ensure food security, the women had to plant food crops and needed small plots for household food production. If their brothers had available space on their farmland, then, with their explicit permission, they could farm on it. Other women lived with their brothers mainly because they had lost their husbands and had not remarried. In all cases, permission was required before accessing the farms. Although no fees were charged, women felt a moral obligation to reciprocate, and in most cases, by sharing part of their harvests. Over 78% of women had the same experiences.

One participant explained: (name has been changed to protect identity).

> *I had to ask permission from my brother because he is the man of the house and owns the land. Since I am a widow now, I have nobody to take care of me or my children as my children are school going. We need food so I asked if I could grow food for my children. My biggest worry is that even with the permission, what will happen if drought takes place and the crops will have failed.*

This distribution demonstrates how the economic system within the Isukha Community relies heavily on women's labour while withholding access to productive assets. Connell's dimension of *power relations* (authority, control, and institutional coercion) helps explain how land access is regulated through patriarchal governance. Although in Kenya, statutory frameworks, including the National Land Policy (GoK, 2009), the Matrimonial Property Act (GoK, 2013), and the Community Land Act (GoK, 2016) were designed to systematically dismantle gendered disparities, the research findings uncover an immense "implementation gap. "Localised customary authority continues to state legislation, reinforcing gendered inequities.

A unique case emerged involving a young widow who lost her husband at a very young age, within eight months of marriage, and had no children. As a tradition, her husband's land now belonged to the husband's family. Under Isukha customary norms, a widow without a son cannot inherit land. She is forced to marry her husband's brother or leave the marital home. This widow had this to say. Grace:

> *My husband died and left me very young. Within eight months of marriage, I became a widow. I was not allowed to get anything. I was told to remarry one of the brothers, but I did not want to as I was not keen on remarrying and wanted to be on my own. My husband's family was kind enough to allow me to stay in the house, but I had to feed myself. So initially I worked as a farm worker on a maize farm and learnt the skills. I worked for ten years before I started my own farm. I, together with six other women, leased a farmland for ten years. This is our third year. The land is five acres. We grow maize, beans, cassava and do small scale farming. Our farm is doing well. In the farm where I worked, I learnt on how to use technology and irrigation for growing crops to combat climate change and solve food security.*

Grace's case demonstrates how customary authority enforces compliance through socio-sexual conditions (e.g., widow inheritance). Her refusal to comply resulted in economic exclusion, stripping her of resource access and forcing her to work for ten years as a casual labourer before pooling resources with six other women to lease land. While these interactions are masked as benevolent family agreements, they reinforce female economic dependency and vulnerability to systemic shocks.

Like many traditional African cultures, the Isukha community practices patrilineal land inheritance system, where the land goes to the sons, the husband, or the brothers. Similar studies have been conducted in the Somali, Orma, Turkana, and Tana communities, where men exclusively hold land rights (FAO and UN Women, 2017). In Muslim communities governed by Sheria law, women also face restricted inheritance rights (USAID, 2016). Across Africa, research consistently shows that women lack secure land rights (Doss et. al., 2015).

Another case involved a widow whose land was forcefully taken away from her by her in-laws. With the help of NGOs and community organisations, she used digital technology to pursue justice. She gave her account:

> *I am a very young woman and lost my husband. I have three children, and they are all the girl children. Thus, in this culture and community, I cannot own land. I am left very poor and am suffering. My suffering is almost ending, thanks to Gumbaru School, Dream Girl and an NGO whose name I will not give. They helped me contact a lawyer who did not charge me. I was advised to present my case through a digital application 'Ardhisasa'. I am almost there and will soon get my land back.*

Her case highlights how digital platforms such as *Ardhisasa* can help bridge the implementation gap between statutory rights and customary practice.

Comparative evidence shows that while Malawi is experimenting with inheritance mechanisms to grant land to women through inheritance, recognising their strong asset management, and intergenerational investment (Behrman, 2017), countries like Mozambique continue to deny widows land rights, mirroring the Isukha experience (Adriano & Machaze, 2016; Bicchieri & Ayalo, 2017 These patterns perpetuate what

scholars describe as the "poverty of feminism", a cycle where gendered norms systematically undermine women's economic security.



Figure 7: Council of elders inspecting a section of farm to be leased

Some women accessed land through leasing arrangements facilitated by women's groups, Saccos, or friends. When land was to be leased, the man of the house would invite elders as witnesses and a formal agreement would be signed between the women, the landlord, the man of the house, and the elders. In most cases, the lease agreement lasted between 3 to 5 years. Plate 2 shows elders inspecting a section of a farm to be leased. This process remains as part of the patriarchal surveillance, where even temporary land access requires male oversight and communal validation.

These individual experiences, while deeply personal, are not isolated. They unfold within a broader ecosystem of community organisations whose interventions increasingly shape women's access to land and livelihood opportunities.

4.2 Women's Emerging Agency Through Land Leasing and Adult Education

The lease encounter of June is very interesting as follows:

> *We were a group of three friends, and two acres of my husband's farmland was lying idle. Since we went to 'Gumbaru' (adult school), we began to understand the value of food security. We requested my husband if he could lease us the two acres and he agreed. The agreement was signed by the chief, my husband and us, the three women farmers. We have leased the land for five years and are growing beans. We are also trying other crops like wheat and red millet. We want to explore the market. We don't want our people to suffer during climate change as we frequently get droughts and once in a while, floods. We have learnt in class there are seeds which are resistant to droughts and we should try and see if they can be a solution to food security.*

The lease encounter narrated by June illustrates a significant shift in women's agency within the Isukha community. June and her two friends, after attending *Gumbaru* (adult education), began to appreciate the importance of food security and sought to utilise idle land belonging to June's husband. With support from the chief, they formalised a five-year lease for two acres, enabling them to cultivate beans, wheat, and red millet. Their decision reflects a growing awareness of climate risks, frequent droughts and occasional floods, and the need to adopt drought-resistant seeds as part of local adaptation strategies. This case demonstrates how adult education catalyses women's confidence to negotiate land access and experiment with climate-smart agriculture.

4.3 Women as Emerging Entrepreneurs Through Community Organisations

Women in Isukha are increasingly engaging in entrepreneurial farming through support from Shining Hope for Communities (SHOFCO), Gumbaru schools, NGOs, Dream Girls, and Walking Banks ("Bank at your doorstep"). These organisations provide economic skills training, life skills, scholarships, medical services, and loans. SHOFCO's impact is particularly notable: two women in the community have acquired land through its programmes, and others have accessed vocational skills such as salon training, leading to employment in Kakamega town. June and her friends also benefitted from SHOFCO's outreach, demonstrating how targeted interventions can expand women's livelihood options beyond subsistence farming.

These parallels highlight how patriarchal customary systems across Africa continue to constrain women's access to land, reinforcing poverty and limiting decision-making power. As these organisations

expand their reach, their influence converges with the growing impact of adult education, creating new spaces where women begin to articulate rights previously obscured by customary norms.

4.4 Education, Rights Awareness, and Changing Attitudes Toward Women's Land Ownership

During the FGD, women respondents consistently stated that they benefited from Gumbaru schools, SHOFCO and Walking Banks for loans, good-will money for schooling, and knowledge of rights. Importantly, all the women respondents stated that they wanted their daughters to own land. They also stated that girls' increasing access to education has enhanced awareness of their rights and challenged cultural norms that restrict women's ownership of natural resources. Women emphasised the need for broader community sensitisation on the role of education, gender equality, and the importance of owning natural resources for women's empowerment. Women were also taught about climate change, food security, and adaptation in line with land rights.

Adult education through the Gumbaru schools, has been pivotal in helping women understand constitutional guarantees. Article 27 of the Constitution of Kenya (GoK, 2010) affirms equal rights and opportunities for men and women across economic, social, political, and cultural arenas.

Women recognised that land ownership opens pathways to decent work, home construction, farming, and food security. This emerging awareness naturally leads women to engage more directly with the statutory frameworks that govern land in Kenya, revealing both the promise of legal reform and the persistent gaps in its implementation.

4.5 Understanding National Development Frameworks and Their Relevance to Women's Land Rights

From the Gumbaru schools, Dream Girl and NGO programmes, the women also learnt about Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which emphasise economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. They also learnt that land ownership would enhance food security, improve their livelihoods, they would become independent, will be able to support their children's education, reduce poverty, and contribute to sustainable development. This demonstrates a growing alignment between grassroots aspirations and national development frameworks.

4.6 Legal and Policy Awareness Through Local Organisations

Women's understanding of land rights is reinforced by local organisations that interpret and translate key laws, including: (i) **Land Policy (GoK, 2009)** – emphasises gender equality in land ownership; (ii) **Matrimonial Property Act (GoK, 2013)** – protects women's property rights within marriage; and (iii) **Community Land Act (GoK, 2016)** – grants women automatic membership in community land governance, including rights to natural resources.

These organisations help women connect legal provisions to everyday experiences, bridging gaps between statutory law, customary norms, and lived realities (Santpoort et. al, 2021). The tensions observed between law and practice resonate beyond the Isukha community, aligning with regional and global patterns documented in the literature on gendered land rights.

4.7 Comparative Insights from Literature and Regional Contexts

The findings align with global literature showing that women's land ownership enhances food security (Allendorf, 2007), improves livelihoods, reduces poverty (Goldstein and Udry, 2008), and promotes environmental conservation (Ali et. al., 2014). Comparative evidence from other African countries reveals similar tensions between constitutional guarantees and customary practices.

In Malawi, the Constitution, like the Constitution of Kenya (2010) provides both genders with ownership rights equally (FAO, 2019). In Uganda, the Constitution allows women to have land rights, but their customary laws do not allow women to own land, and this varies from region to region and often restricts women's rights. Like the Isukha community, the husband cannot grant land rights to his wife (ibid); In Niger, Women may farm small kitchen gardens but lack broader land rights; In Nigeria (Ogoni community), like the Isukha community, women have no rights to any natural resource (Slavchevska et. al., 2020); and In Benin, similar results have been shown in Benin by Atozou et. al (2017) where unequal land rights contribute to poverty, limited education access, and male-dominated control of natural resources.

These parallels highlight how patriarchal customary systems across Africa continue to constrain women's access to land, reinforcing poverty and limiting decision-making power.

Taken together, these findings illuminate a complex interplay between customary authority, statutory reform, and women's evolving strategies for navigating land access. The discussion that follows interprets these dynamics through the lenses of Connell's gender theory and the GAAP framework, situating the Isukha experience within broader debates on gendered resource governance.

5.0 Discussions and Recommendations

5.1 Gender Regimes and Structural Exclusion

Connell's social theory of gender helps explain how the Isukha community's gender regime systematically positions men as custodians of land and women as labourers without ownership. Customary norms, clan authority, and patriarchal lineage systems reinforce male dominance, creating a structural environment where women's access to land is mediated through marriage, widowhood, or seasonal permissions.

While the gender regime remains deeply entrenched, the empirical narratives reveal subtle yet significant forms of agency that complicate any static reading of women's subordination.

5.2 Women's Agency and Counter-Hegemonic Strategies

Women are increasingly adopting innovative strategies to navigate and challenge customary constraints. These include pooling resources to lease land collectively; leveraging mobile money platforms; using digital land governance tools such as *Ardhisasa*; forming women's farming groups; and engaging NGOs for legal literacy and economic empowerment.

These actions demonstrate that women are not passive recipients of patriarchal norms but active agents reshaping property relations. These acts of agency acquire further significance when viewed through the prism of climate vulnerability, where land access becomes not only a gendered resource but a determinant of household resilience.

5.3 Climate Resilience, Food Security, and Land Rights

Women's ability to adopt drought-resistant crops, diversify production, and engage in climate-smart agriculture is directly tied to secure land access. Without ownership or long-term tenure, women cannot invest in soil conservation, irrigation, or improved seeds. Their vulnerability to climate shocks is therefore structurally produced.

The capacity of women to respond to climate pressures, however, remains closely tied to institutional performance, exposing gaps between legislative intent and customary enforcement.

5.4 Policy Implementation Gaps and Institutional Weaknesses

Although Kenya's legal framework is progressive, enforcement remains weak. Chiefs, clan elders, and local land committees often privilege customary norms over statutory rights. This creates a persistent implementation gap that undermines women's land security and perpetuates gender inequality.

The interplay of these forces—customary norms, statutory reforms, emerging agency, and institutional gaps—provides the foundation upon which the study's conclusions are drawn. The conclusion synthesises these insights to reflect on the broader implications for gender equality, land governance, and sustainable development in the Isukha community.

6.0 Conclusion

The objective of this study was to investigate the extent of women's access to and control over land within the Isukha community of Kakamega County, and to evaluate how land rights influence economic empowerment, climate resilience, and food security. By framing the empirical data through Raewyn Connell's social theory of gender and the Gender, Agriculture and Assets Project framework, the study demonstrates that land rights in the Isukha Community remain heavily gender-biased, deeply constrained by a localised patriarchal gender regime.

Despite being the primary agricultural workforce and the bedrock of household food security, Isukha women remain structurally excluded from autonomous land ownership. Across all age cohorts, women predominantly cultivate land owned by husbands or male relatives, relying on precarious seasonal

permissions rather than secure tenure. This structural exclusion leaves women highly vulnerable to climate-induced shocks such as droughts and severely limits their ability to independently access credit facilities, agricultural inputs, and formal value chains. Furthermore, traditional *power relations* enforced by male-dominated customary governance and clan elders supersede progressive state legislations such as the Constitution of Kenya (2010), the Matrimonial Property Act (2013), and the Community Land Act (2016). The result is a persistent implementation gap where legal rights exist on paper but fail to materialize in practice, trapping vulnerable groups such as young and elderly widows, in a cyclical "poverty of feminism".

Yet, the gender regime is not static. The study reveals a dynamic and emerging counter-hegemonic movement driven by grassroots interventions from NGOs, church groups, adult literacy initiatives (Gumbaru schools), and civil society institutions such as SHOFCO. Younger cohorts of women (aged 30–49) are increasingly challenging customary hegemonies by blending traditional realities with legal and technological innovations. Through collaborative strategies such as pooling resources within women's groups to formalise land leases, leveraging mobile financial platforms, and bypassing customary barriers via digital state tools like *Ardhisasa*, Isukha women are actively reshaping property relations. These counter-hegemonic actions allow women to independently adopt climate-mitigation technologies, experiment with drought-resistant crops, and strengthen household food security. In doing so, they create a direct, bottom-up pathway toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 2 (Zero Hunger).

To achieve sustainable development, the persistent gap between statutory law and customary practice must be closed. Ensuring that land rights transition from exclusive male custodianship to equitable partnership requires the following measures:

i. **Strengthening Enforcement Institutions:** Local enforcement mechanisms, from local chiefs to community land management committees, must be structurally empowered to protect women's statutory land rights against customary overreach.
ii. **Broadening Legal and Digital Literacy**: Sustained political goodwill and targeted civic funding must expand grassroot digital and legal education initiatives, ensuring that platforms such as *Ardhisasa* are accessible to all rural women across all age groups.
iii. **Integrating Customary and Statutory Frameworks**: Deliberate and inclusive dialogues with the Council of Elders are essential to harmonise traditional communal governance systems with the non-discriminatory mandates of the Kenyan Constitution (2010) and the African Union frameworks.

Only by dismantling these deeply entrenched gender inequalities can the Isukha community cultivate a resilient, food-secure, and economically empowered society in which women are recognised as equal partners in sustainable development.

7.0 References

Agarwal, B. (1988). Who sows? Who reaps? Women and land rights in India. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 15, 531–581. Doi: 10.1080/03066158808438377

Agarwal, B., and Bina, A. (1994). *A field of one's own: Gender and land rights in South Asia* (No. 58). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Aguilar, A., Carranza, E., Goldstein, M., Kilic, T., & Oseni, G. (2015). Decomposition of gender differentials in agricultural productivity in Ethiopia. *Agricultural Economics* 46(3), 311-334. https://doi.org/10.1111/agec.12167

Ajefu, J., Uchenna, E., & Singh, N. (2024). Women's inheritance rights and child health outcomes in Kenya. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* 45, 137–150. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-023-09895-y

Alden Wily, L. (2018). Collective land ownership in the 21st century: Overview of global trends. *Land* 7:68. doi: 10.3390/land7020068

Ali, D. A.; Deininger, K.; & Goldstein, M. (2014). Environmental and gender impacts of land tenure regularization in Africa: Pilot evidence from Rwanda. *Journal of Development Economics* 110, 262-275.

Allendorf, K. (2007). Do women's land rights promote empowerment and child health in Nepal? *World Development* 35, 1975–1988.

Akinola, A. (2018) Women, culture and Africa's land reform agenda. *Frontiers in Psychology* 9(2234), 1-8

Atozou B, Mayuto R. & Abodohoui A., (2017). Review on gender and poverty, gender inequality in land tenure, violence against woman and women empowerment analysis: Evidence in Benin with survey data. *Journal of Sustainable Development* 10(6)

Behrman, J. A. (2017). Women's land ownership and participation in decision-making about reproductive health in Malawi. *Population and Environment* 38, 327–344. doi: 10.1007/s11111-017-0272-4

Benni, N., Berno, D. & Ho, H. (2020). *Agricultural finance and the youth: Prospects for financial inclusion in Kenya.* Rome, FAO. https://doi.org/10.4060/cb2297en

Biozoza, A. (2019). Land rights and economic resilience of rural women in the G5-Sahel countries, West Africa. *African Journal of Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences*, ISSN2657-2664, Special Issue

Bode, F. (1978). Leadership and politics among the Abaluyia of Kenya 1894-1963. *(Doctoral Dissertation*), Yale University, p. 24

Boserup, E. (1970). *Women's role in economic development*. London: Earthscan/ Allen & Unwin.

Brundtland Commission. (1987). *Our common future. Report on the World Commission on Environment and Development.* UNEP.

Buvinić, M., & Gupta, G. R. (1997). Female-headed households and female-maintained families: Are they worth targeting to reduce poverty in developing countries? *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 45, 259280. https://doi.org/10.1086/452273

Cagatay, N. (1998). *Gender and poverty*. (Working Paper No. 5). New York: United Nations Development Programme, Social Development and Poverty Elimination Division.

Chaudhary, S., McGregor A., Houston. D., & Chettri, N. (2015). The evolution of ecosystem services: A time series and discourse-centred analysis. *Environmental Science and Policy* 55, 25-34.

Connell, R. W. (1987). *Gender and power: Society, the person and sexual politics.* Stanford University Press.

Cotula, L. (2020). Between hope and critique: Human rights, social justice and re-imagining international law from the bottom up, 48 *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law 473*. https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/gjicl/vol48/iss2/5

Deininger, K., Xia, F., & Savastano, S. (2015). *Smallholders' land ownership and access in Sub-Saharan Africa: A new landscape?* (Policy Research Working Paper WPS 7285). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.

Deka, M. (2024). Women's land rights in Africa: Societal demands and challenges. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*. https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2024.v06i05.28721

Doss, C., Kovarik, C., Peterman, A., Quisumbing, A., & Bold, M. (2015). Gender inequalities in ownership and control of land in Africa: Myth and reality. *Agricultural Economics* 46, 403–434.

Embeywa, E. H. (1991). *The place of Kenya culture and values in environmental education. ASESP*. Kenyatta University, Nairobi.

FAO. (2009). *Multilingual thesaurus on land tenure (English Version)*. Rome, Italy.

FAO. (2011). FAO 2010-2011. *Women in agriculture: Closing the gender gap for development*. Rome. FAO of the UN.

FAO. (2019). *Gender and Land Rights Database*. http://www.fao.org/genderlandrights-database/en/

FAO. (2023). *The status of women in agrifood systems – Overview*. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/cc5060en

FAO and UN Women. (2017). *The community land rights of women and youth in Tana River County, Kenya*. (Policy Brief). FAO, UN Women, EU.

GoK., (2016). *Kenya Land Act*. Kenya Gazette Supplement No. 148. Government Printer.

GoK., (2013). *Matrimonial Property Act*. Government Printer.

GoK., (2010). *The Constitution of Kenya.* Government Printer.

GoK., (2009). *Land Policy*. Government Printer.

Goldstein, M., & Udry, C. (2008). The profits of power: Land rights and agricultural investment in Ghana. *Journal of Political Economy* 116, 981–1022.

Hallward-Driemeier, M., Hasan, T., and Rusu, A. B. (2013). *Women's legal rights over 50 years: What is the impact of reform?* (Policy Research Working Paper 6617). Washington DC: The World Bank.

Haub, C. & Kaneda, T. (2014). *World population data sheet*. Population Reference Bureau. Washington, DC.

Huyer, S., & Mitter, S. (2003). *ICTs, globalisation and poverty reduction: Gender dimensions of the knowledge society*. Kampala (Uganda).

Indongole. C. J. (2014). *Abaluyia: An outline history of the origin, migration, and settlement of the Abaluyia sub-tribes and their current clans in western Kenya*. Kakamega: Brainwave Talents Centre.

Karamazov, D. (1998). *The poverty of feminism*. Elephant Editions. (ASIN B073GC637R).

Kieran, C., Sproule, K., Quisumbing, A.R. & Doss, C.R. (2017). Gender gaps in landownership across and within households in four Asian countries. *Land Economics* 93(2), 342–370. http://dx.doi.org/10.3368/le.93.2.342.

Lipton, M. (2009). *Land reforms in developing countries. Property rights and property wrongs*. New York, NY: Routledge: Taylor and Francis

Maksimov, V., Wang, S. L., & Luo, Y. (2017). Reducing poverty in the least developed countries: The role of small and medium enterprises. *Journal of World Business* 52(2), 244-257.

Melesse, B. M. & Bulte, E. (2015). Does land registration and certification boost farm productivity? Evidence from Ethiopia. *Agricultural Economics* 46, 757–768.

Meinzen-Dick, R., Quisumbing, A., Doss, C., & Theis, S. (2019). Women's land rights as a pathway to poverty reduction: Framework and review of available evidence. *Agricultural Systems* 172, 72-82

Muchanga, K.L., Sabatia, K.H & Nairutia, K. (2024). Origin, settlement, and beliefs of the Bisukha and Bidakho of the Luhya Community-Kenya. *Athens Journal of History* 10(3), 175-212

Peterman, A. (2012). Widowhood and asset inheritance in Sub-Saharan Africa: Empirical evidence from 15 countries. *Development Policy Review* 30, 543–571.

Quisumbing, A. R., Meinzen-Dick, R., Raney, T., Croppenstedt, A., Behrman, J., & Peterman, A. (2014). *Gender in agriculture: Closing the knowledge gap.* FAO & Springer.

Santpoort, R., Steel, G, Mkandawire, A., Ntauazi., C., Faye., E.H and Githuku, F. (2021) The land is ours: Bottom-up strategies to secure rural women's access, control and rights to land in Kenya, Mozambique, Senegal and Malawi. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems* 5:697314. doi: 10.3389/fsufs.2021.697314

Schlager, E., & Ostrom, E. (1992). Property-rights regimes and natural resources: A conceptual analysis. Land economics, 249-262

Seidensticker, D., Hubau, W., Verschuren, D., Fortes-Lima, C., de Maret, P., Schlebusch, C. M., & Bostoen, K. (2021). Population collapse in the Congo rainforest from 400 CE urges reassessment of the Bantu Expansion. *Science Advances* 7(7), eabd8352

Sergon, P. J., Akoth, S. O., and Dinekou, J. Y. (2022). The role of indigenous knowledge practices and values in promoting socio-economic well-being and equity among the Endorois community of Kenya. *An Indigenous Journal of Native People* 18(1), 37–45

Sikenyi, M. (2017). *Does Kenya's Youth Enterprise Development Fund serve young people?* Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Bulletin No. 3(48). Brighton, UK, IDS.

Slavchevska, V., Doss, C. R., de la O Campos, A. P., & Brunelli, C. (2020). Beyond ownership: Women's and men's land rights in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Oxford Development Studies 49*(1), 2–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/13600818.2020.1818714

UNDP. (2006). *Land rights reforms and governance in Africa*. UNDP.

USAID. (2016). *Country profile: Property rights and resources governance – Tanzania*. USAID.

Were, G. S. and Wilson, D. A., (1968). *East Africa through a thousand years*. Evans Brothers, Ibadan.

World Bank. (2019). *Kenya economic update: Unbundling the slack in private sector investment – Transforming agriculture sector productivity and linkages to poverty reduction.* Kenya Economic Update No. 19. Washington, DC.