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### Fluctuating Stances: How land Deputes Actuate and Renovates Gender Norms in Malazai Pakhtun

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Original Article

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#### Keywords

#### Abstract

Land disputes, Custom and land Tenure, Property Rights, Women Changing Status

This research investigates the impact of land disputes on the activation and transformation of gender norms within the Pakhtun community of Dir Upper, located in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The community confronts considerable challenges arising from land disputes, which produce both adverse consequences and, as the study title intimates, certain adaptive functions. To elucidate the relationship between land disputes and gender norms, two sub-themes of gender dynamics were delineated, drawing on data from a doctoral study employing an ethnographic methodology. Data was obtained from 45 participants through the use of a semi-structured interview guide, with participants selected via purposive sampling. Thematic analysis facilitated the derivation of key inferences and the construction of the report. The results demonstrate that, although land disputes frequently exert negative effects on women and their entitlements, they simultaneously precipitate transformations in entrenched customary practices pertaining to gender and property rights. The proliferation of legal cases is generating judicial precedents that augment women's awareness of their agency and property entitlements to an unprecedented degree within the cultural history of this group. Moreover, land disputes involving sisters without brothers are gaining increased salience in public discourse, while the prevalence of pejorative constructions such as 'Meraat' is diminishing within the study population. In addition, religious authorities and social media influencers—galvanized by ongoing land disputes—are actively advocating for women's property rights, resulting in a growing number of individuals granting full or partial property rights to female relatives.

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#### Introduction

Land and property rights constitute a foundational component in the pursuit of gender equality and have played a pivotal role in the historical trajectory of women's resistance to patriarchal structures and conservative ideologies (Polanyi, 1944; Neeson, 1993; Thompson, 1963). Throughout history, land has been deified, imbued with emotional significance, linked to concepts of identity, and valued for both its existential and productive qualities (Baranyi & Weitzner, 2006; Cotula, Toulmin, and Hesse, 2004; & Nsamba-Gayiyi and Kamusiime, 2006). During the early stages of human history, particularly during the course of the nomadic era, land was not subject to individual ownership but was instead regarded

as a communal natural resource (Gilbert, 2007). Gradually, processes such as population expansion and social development precipitated the shift toward private land ownership (Baker & Conning, 2023). The transformation became especially pronounced with the enactment of enclosure laws in the sixteenth century and was further accelerated by the advent of industrialization in the eighteenth century (Enclosing the Land, 2020). However, through these transformations, women, who comprise nearly half of the global population, were systematically marginalized and excluded from ownership of the vital resource (Curtin et al., 2025).

Throughout history and into the present, women's property rights have reflected broader social progress and enduring challenges. As part of social progress, women's property rights have been central to their evolving social status, highlighting ongoing struggles and achievements in this area. The initial recorded discourse concerning women's property rights appears in Mary Wollstonecraft's "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792). In the following decades, Elizabeth Cady Stanton became a prominent proponent of women's entitlements to education, suffrage, and property ownership in the United States. The contemporary world though has made significant advances in letter, the domain of spirit lag behind considerably (Ali & Kadir, 2010). Most of women in many parts of the world still struggle to win and control property. It is pertinent to note that, most of the constitutional laws and religions of the world acknowledge women property and other rights like that of their male counterpart, the customary practices diverge and perpetuate women disadvantageous position (Khan, 2016). This study reinstates the Durkheimian assertion, i.e., the advantages of conflict, and synthesizes that disputes over land, contrary to its manifest function like chaos, disruption and destruction, latently produce inducement and stimulation in women's social psychology to more actively assert their rights to own and dispose of property.

Land plays an essential role in human survival and is deeply integrated into social relationships, making it a common source of conflict and, at times, violence (Baranyi & Weitzner, 2006). Understanding the variety of land conflicts, which range from disputes between different communities to those within a single community, can help us appreciate their complexity (GLTN, 2018). When land takes on symbolic and emotional significance, the likelihood of violent outcomes increases significantly (USAID, 2004). Additionally, the OECD (2004) notes that both economic and emotional attachments to land heighten the risk of violence. Theoretical perspectives suggest that in environments where ownership norms are strong, land-related disputes are more common (Winchester, 2020). This study occurs in a context that is prone to various types of land disputes, both intercommunal and intra-communal, and is characterized by a conservative and orthodox outlook. Many studies have recognized the economic, cultural, political, and ideological importance of land for the target ethnicity (Barth, 1956; Landholm, 1982).

#### **Historical Background of Dir Valley**

Numerous studies indicate that the Dir valley, inhabited by the Malazi people, a sub-branch of the Yusufzai Pakhtun, remains insufficiently documented in the existing literature (Rahman, 2015; Zeb, 2017). This lack of scholarly attention is attributed to the region's remoteness, challenging yet strategically significant topography, and the conservative, orthodox, and tribal characteristics of its population (Jan, 2019). Research by Spain (1963), Dani (1986), Ahmad (1976), and Nichols (2008) demonstrates that the valley has hosted at least fifteen civilizations from 1500 BC to 1500 AD, including Achaemenian, Dravidian, Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim societies, as well as influences from Greek civilization (Rahman, 2015). The arrival of the current inhabitants, specifically the Malazai-Yusufzai Pakhtun, can be traced to their displacement from Kabul following the battle of 'Ghwarah Margha' against Uluag Baig, the king of Afghanistan (Caroe, 1958). This event led to their exile and subsequent migration to the Peshawar valley and Malakand division, including Dir and Swat, in the sixteenth century, a fact well documented in the literature (Jan, 2019; Zeb, 2017). Khan (2024) contends that, after conquering the region, the tribe played a pivotal role in shaping the social and tribal structure of Dir. After its establishment as a polity in the sixteenth century, Dir was governed by various khans until 1890 (Shahid, 2005). In that year, Umara Khan of Jandul deposed the then khan of Dir, Sharif Khan, and ruled for five years. In 1895, Sharif Khan, with the support of British colonial authorities, was reinstated as the ruler of Dir (Nawaz, 2024). He was subsequently granted the title of Nawab, and his rule received formal recognition from the colonial administration (Jamil, 1994; Shahid, 2005; Ali, 2024; Nawaz, 2024). The state of Dir was incorporated into Pakistan in 1969 and, in 1970, became a district within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Ali, 2024; Zeb, 2017).

In 1996, the original district was divided into Dir Upper and Dir Lower to address demographic growth and extensive geographic coverage, thereby enhancing administrative efficiency (Shahid, 2005; Ali and Sultana, 2024). Dir Upper covers 3,699 square kilometers and has a population of 946,421 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2024). Research indicates that agriculture, horticulture, tourism, mineral extraction, and remittances from abroad constitute the primary sources of household income in the district (Haq,

2012; Ali and Sultana, 2024; Shahid, 2025). The area contains 81,332 hectares of forest, mainly used for firewood, with limited industrial utilization (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2024). Notable valleys in Upper Dir include Barawal, Dir Khas, Kohistan, Ushary, Nehag, Roghanian, Sultankhil Bala, and Kaihr (Shahid, 2010).

### **Gendered Aspects of Land Disputes in Dir**

The prevailing system of land tenure governing ownership and distribution in the study area is primarily rooted in customary law, which systematically excludes non-Pakhtun populations, specific occupational cohorts, and particularly women from acquiring tenure rights over immovable property (Ali & Kadir, 2010; Shah, 2012). Although the community is characterized by a pronounced Muslim identity and is noted for its religious conservatism, these entrenched customary norms effectively override Islamic legal provisions that formally guarantee women's rights to property, thereby perpetuating traditional patriarchal structures (Ahmad, 2020; Goheer, 2003). Following the administrative integration of the area into a formal district and its subsequent subdivision to enhance governance, the state asserted its authority by enshrining women's property rights within the constitutional framework (Goheer, 2003; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2013). Nevertheless, these constitutional protections remain largely ineffectual in practice (Ali & Kadir, 2010; Shah, 2012). The deeply ingrained nature of customary norms discourages most women from claiming their inheritance rights, notwithstanding the critical role such rights play in advancing women's empowerment and agency (Ahmad, 2020; Khan, 2016). Women are frequently compelled to forgo their inheritance entitlements, and attempts to assert these rights are often met with social stigma, marginalization, threats to personal security, and deterioration of familial relationships (Goheer, 2003; Shah, 2012; Khan, 2016).

Islamic values among a minority of the population, combined with the influence of modernity, are gradually permeating the social fabric. This shift has led a significant portion of the population to grant women their rightful share in land and other assets (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2013; Ahmad, 2020). Furthermore, many educated and informed women are actively asserting their agency and claiming inheritance rights through formal institutional channels (Khan, 2016; Goheer, 2003). These emerging social trends within the study population and beyond indicate a transition toward a more inclusive social structure that recognizes gender equality (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2013; Ahmad, 2020). Historically, the community has been characterized as segmented and acephalous, with strict gender segregation that excluded women from property rights (Shah, 2012; Ali & Kadir, 2010). Some scholars have argued that women were regarded as property themselves, rather than as individuals entitled to own property (Goheer, 2003; Ahmad, 2020). Recent developments, however, indicate a shift, as increasing numbers of women are becoming property owners and exercising control over inherited and purchased land in various capacities (Khan, 2016; Ahmad, 2020; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2013).

### **Rationale of the Study**

Land disputes are widespread both within the study area and nationally, constituting approximately 70 to 75 percent of all reported cases (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2013). Beyond these reported cases, a substantial number of unreported disputes persist, varying in nature and occurring at multiple levels, from micro-level conflicts to intercommunal disputes (Ali & Kadir, 2010; Shah, 2012). In certain ethnic groups, such as the Pakhtun, reporting land or women-related disputes is often stigmatized, as it is perceived to compromise family honor and expose vulnerability (Goheer, 2003). A significant proportion of land-related disputes involve women and their inheritance rights (Ahmad, 2020; Khan, 2016). These cases possess considerable legal and religious significance and can enhance the social identity of the women involved, although they may strain sibling relationships and attract criticism from conservative segments of the community (Shah, 2012; Ahmad, 2020). Increased connectivity in contemporary society facilitates the rapid dissemination of information about such cases, motivating many women to assert their agency and improve their social standing within their in-laws' families by claiming property rights (Khan, 2016; Goheer, 2003). Additionally, exposure to these cases raises awareness among other community members, who may subsequently choose to grant complete or partial property rights to women, thereby enhancing their own religious and political standing and contributing to women's empowerment (Ahmad, 2020; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2013). Legal precedents involving land disputes among sisters without brothers are challenging the customary gender-discriminatory norm of 'merat' within the study population (Ali & Kadir, 2010; Shah, 2012). The term 'merat,' originating from Pashto, traditionally refers to childless parents but is also used for individuals with only daughters. In such cases, property rights should, according to legal and religious principles, be transferred to daughters rather than to closer male relatives, such as fraternal first cousins, as the now largely outdated custom of 'merat' suggests (Shah, 2012). Consequently, gender-related land disputes are instrumental in fostering new norms that support women's ownership and control of

property, thereby contributing to community development. This study aims to document the reluctance of tribal communities to adapt to evolving gender norms regarding inheritance and the increasing agency of women. Although disputes and conflicts often result in hardship, particularly for vulnerable women, children, and the elderly, the involvement of women as legal parties in land disputes, at least within the study population and potentially in other contexts, can yield positive outcomes that promote greater gender equality and societal prosperity.

#### **Objective of the Study**

1. To examine the extent to which women exercise agency in asserting their claims to property and inheritance rights.
2. To document the impact of resolved and pending gender-related legal cases on the community, with particular attention to women.
3. To analyze the evolution of traditions concerning only sisters' rights within their families and their parental estates.

#### **Methodology**

This study adopts an interpretivist research design utilizing an ethnographic framework to empirically examine the impact of women's property acquisition through inheritance and other legal rights on the broader study population. A review of relevant literature facilitated an understanding of both historical and contemporary customary and statutory land governance models, informing the development of an interview guide for the ethnographic fieldwork. Burns and Grove (2003) assert that interpretative research is inherently idiosyncratic, comprehensive, and inductive, employing process-oriented induction to interpret, describe, and explain phenomena or settings. Consistent with this interpretivist approach, data collection involved observation and in-depth interviews. A total of 45 in-depth interviews were conducted, with participants purposively selected from diverse backgrounds, including individuals involved in land disputes, land record holders and fatwari, legal specialists, mediators, and members of the police department. Verbal responses, post-interview informal behaviors, and interactions with the general population during the three-month fieldwork period (December 2024 to March 2025) and beyond were documented as field notes. Additionally, participant observation in various land dispute resolution council meetings expanded the base of firsthand information utilized in this study.

The transcribed data underwent thematic analysis utilizing Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework for qualitative inquiry. The analytical process commenced with an in-depth familiarization with the data, facilitating the generation of initial codes. These codes were systematically categorized and organized into principal themes and sub-themes, each of which was subsequently refined to inform the present report. Braun and Clarke (2006) underscore that thematic analysis constitutes a flexible yet rigorous methodological approach, well-suited for elucidating patterns within shared phenomena.

#### **Results and Discussion**

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of land disputes involving women's property rights and their impact on women's collective perspectives and potential for increased agency. The underlying causes of these conflicts have a significant effect on the community, and the data indicate that most community members are in conflict with the evolving status of women regarding property rights and contemporary roles. The data further demonstrate that women's inheritance cases raise awareness within neighborhoods and social networks, prompting many women to consider asserting their inheritance rights in property and land. Additionally, the data reveal that the custom of excluding sisters from property rights is diminishing, influenced by legal precedents and the timely administration of justice in such matters.

#### **The Role of Land Disputes in Enhancing Women's Agency**

Despite persistent constraints on women's property and human rights within the study population, recent developments reveal an increasing trend of women asserting their legal rights against exploitative kinship structures to claim inheritance of land and other assets. Hartly (2024) contends that women in Pakistan are not passive observers of their circumstances; instead, they are determined, resilient, and active agents of change. According to statistics from the Peshawar High Court, Ali (2025) reports that over 5,300 women's inheritance cases remain undecided before 370 civil courts across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with an additional 2,349 succession cases pending before the provincial Ombudsperson. These figures suggest that women are more active than at any previous time in the history of this ethnic group in claiming their rightful agency and control over property and other immovable assets.

Several participants in this study indicated that they now treat their female siblings with greater care and caution to ensure continued agreement and silence regarding inheritance rights. Other participants reported that they have allocated certain shares of land to their daughters and sisters. Although the shares assigned in most cases did not meet the full legal entitlement, this practice nonetheless

enhances women's agency and respect, while maintaining customarily acknowledged sibling relationships and support.

*"I have six daughters; two are married and four are still studying. One of my married daughters needed land to construct a home, so I granted her the rights. The other has not requested anything yet. I will not disappoint any of them in this regard (Naeem Ullah, Ashary).*

Numerous respondents articulated critical perspectives regarding the practice of enabling daughters to exercise their inheritance rights, voicing apprehension that such practices may facilitate the transfer of substantial landholdings to external kinship groups—a concern accentuated in instances where the number of daughters exceeds that of sons. Some participants conveyed sentiments of resentment toward sisters who pursued legal recourse, interpreting such actions as sources of familial dishonor and as direct challenges to prevailing patriarchal norms. A participant possessing expertise in both sharia and cosmopolitan legal frameworks noted that recent legislative reforms are beginning to affect women who have historically occupied marginalized roles within their familial and extended kinship structures. Another participant stated:

*In the local community, a woman initially chose to forgo her inheritance rights in order to maintain positive relationships with her five brothers, including one step-brother. After experiencing unfavorable treatment from her brothers, she asserted her inheritance rights against her biological brothers and relinquished the portion allocated to her step-brother. As a result, she now possesses property valued at several million Pakistani rupees (Badsha Rahim, Nasirabad).*

A persistent issue within the study population is that those who currently control and govern the tenure system often do not support the inclusion of women in property distribution. However, the evolving status of women, the existence of numerous legal precedents, and the influence of social media in disseminating information are contributing to the transformation and, in some cases, innovation of traditional practices toward greater gender inclusivity.

#### **The Advancement of Women's Inheritance Rights and the Community**

Western scholars such as Spain (1962), Andre (1982), Landholm (1982), Churchill (1916), Miller (1918), Barth (1956), and Caroe (1958) have argued that women occupy a secondary position in Pakhtun society, often being commodified and equated with property rather than recognized as rights holders. Landholm (1982) and Grima (1992) observed that the introduction of a cash economy and democratic influences in the Malakand division has altered normative structures, enabling many marginalized groups to achieve socio-economic stability and transform their social status and identities. Nawaz (2010) identifies a notable shift in contemporary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where an increasing segment of the population is acknowledging and protecting women's legal rights to land and wealth. Grima (2004) attributes the gradual reduction of traditional barriers to Pakhtun women's tenure rights to several interconnected factors, including the resurgence of Islamic jurisprudence, women's legal activism, rising female literacy, and growing economic pressures. Field data further support the evolving status of women, with the majority of respondents confirming that more women are now acquiring property rights through inheritance and other means.

While most respondents expressed acceptance of women's changing status regarding property rights, only a minority reported actually granting such rights to female family members. Additionally, many respondents appeared reluctant to share their genuine views and attempted to conceal their true intentions. For example, during an interview, when the interviewer inquired whether the respondent's allocation of inheritance to his daughter was consistent with sharia law, the respondent's assistant signaled to discontinue the question, indicating discomfort or lack of understanding.

In both target Union Councils (UCs) i.e. UC Chaper and UC Banday, examined in this study, very few women were able to attain their full inheritance without causing familial discord. Many respondents stated that they would support their female relatives throughout their lives but would not permit them to transfer ancestral property outside the patrilineal lineage. Some respondents, acknowledging both legal and religious perspectives, arranged strategic intermarriages to ensure that ancestral property remained within the patrilineal line. Despite these restrictive practices aimed at preserving tradition and retaining land within the family, some individuals actively advocate for women's property rights in various forums and contribute to challenging longstanding discriminatory customs that exclude women from property ownership.

The emergent social stratum that acknowledges women's property rights—as delineated in both religious doctrine and statutory frameworks—encompasses educated individuals, social media influencers, young religious scholars, and members of the political and economic elite within the study population. This segment not only espouses the legitimacy of women's property rights in principle but

also demonstrates this commitment in practice; multiple respondents from these backgrounds reported conferring full inheritance entitlements upon all female family members. One religious scholar articulates the view that:

*According to Qazi Abdur Rahim, individuals cannot credibly advocate for women's inheritance rights within their community unless they have first ensured these rights for their own female relatives. This is because community members are often well-acquainted, and promoting such education without personal adherence may result in public criticism, social stigma, or even direct confrontation from anonymous social media accounts (Qazi Abdur Rahim, Bandy).*

The use of social media by religious practitioners, along with their advocacy for women's rights, raises public awareness about un-Islamic practices and the associated consequences in the afterlife. Additionally, these efforts increase awareness among women in the community, enabling them to acquire knowledge that strengthens their agency and self-respect. Another important factor influencing changing communal attitudes is the increasing literacy rate among women in the study population. Many respondents indicated that, in the near future, it will become increasingly difficult to deny women their inheritance rights due to their rising literacy and growing understanding of their legitimate property rights. One respondent stated that

*On one occasion, my daughters were discussing the issue of women's inheritance while preparing for their terminal examination when his wife interrupted their conversation. When I inquired about the reason for her intervention, she explained that she feared her own sisters might overhear the discussion and subsequently desire inheritance rights (Saeed, Bandy).*

While having lunch with a relative's family in the study population, a middle school girl joined our discussion and argued that families do not send their daughters to school because education would enable them to claim their property rights. When asked where she learned this, she replied that her teacher had explained it during a lesson at school.

Although the majority of individuals in the study population do not support gender equality or women's property rights, increasing awareness and the growing number of women who legally challenge the confiscation of their property rights are gradually shifting community perceptions regarding women's tenure rights over land. Furthermore, a significant number of individuals and families, for various reasons, are beginning to override traditional norms and allocate rightful shares of property and assets to women.

The Chief Minister of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Secretariat (2025) underscores the essential role of gender parity in fostering a more equitable and inclusive society, highlighting the province's commitment to substantive legal and policy reforms that enhance women's rights and economic autonomy. The enactment of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Enforcement of Women Ownership Rights Act (2012) constitutes a pivotal development, reflecting both the evolving sociopolitical context for Pakhtun women and the marked increase in inheritance claims filed by women in the province. The subsequent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Enforcement of Women Property Act (2019) further advances legislative progress by explicitly facilitating women's access to and control over property. In addition, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women Act (2016) institutionalizes the protection and promotion of women's interests, particularly concerning property and legal entitlements, throughout the province. As a result of these constitutional provisions and increased civil society engagement, a growing number of women are attaining proprietorship rights over land.

### **The Impact of Enhanced Female Agency on Patriarchal Customs**

Within the study population, prevailing customary views regard fathers with only daughters as lacking appropriate inheritors or beneficiaries. Consequently, a father's legacy is often transferred to his brothers and nephews rather than to his own offspring, who are the legal heirs. Such individuals are considered 'merat' and experience various hardships related to their estates during their lifetimes. After their deaths, their offspring are customarily deprived of inheritance rights and other succession benefits. A comprehensive review of relevant texts using multiple search terms did not yield sources directly addressing the term 'Meraat' or closely related concepts. However, a preference for sons is evident in nearly all societies, as noted by Williason (1976) and Ijaz and Zada (2017). Despite explicit provisions in the Succession Act of 1925 and Islamic doctrine that recognize daughters as legal beneficiaries, customary practices discourage them from asserting or even aspiring to their inheritance rights. In contrast, increased connectivity and expanding institutional infrastructure, and disintegration of information of a large scale in the contemporary era are challenging longstanding norms and encouraging women in these circumstances to claim and uphold their inalienable succession rights.

Women who have successfully acquired their estates now serve as examples for others who have yet to do so.

Empirical data from the field suggest a gradual assimilation of modern democratic values within the study population, evidenced by the increasing inclusion of women—historically marginalized by customary norms—in inheritance practices. While the majority of respondents acknowledged women's religious and statutory rights to parental estates, entrenched customary practices continue to obstruct their realization of property rights. Respondents referenced cases wherein women initiated legal proceedings against individuals who had expropriated their rights and ultimately prevailed. The predominant view maintained that male family members bear the responsibility for mediating such issues internally, thereby discouraging women from seeking external avenues—such as police intervention or judicial recourse—that might contravene established traditions. Certain respondents characterized these exclusionary customs as inhumane and antithetical to religious doctrine, advocating for their immediate abrogation. Those with higher educational attainment or legal expertise further asserted the untenability of these practices, emphasizing that a growing cohort of women is actively engaged in efforts to reform them.

Field observations indicate that numerous women have obtained their ancestral property from male relatives through judicial intervention. However, many other women continue to lack the agency and structural opportunities necessary to pursue legal action against those who exploit their inheritance rights. In such cases, women may either lack support within their in-laws' families or have reached complete agreement with their cousins and their families. One participant stated that

*It is now a matter of choice, as women without brothers only need to submit a simple application at the nearest police station. Subsequently, many individuals within their social network come forward to assist her in pursuing their objectives. He further stated that many organizations are working on women's rights and safety, and their interventions can also facilitate women's pleas for inheritance rights (Umar Khan, Chaper).*

Empirical evidence suggests that the conferral of inheritance rights to sisters in the absence of male siblings is predominantly governed by individual discretion rather than codified by prevailing tradition. The observed instances in which such rights are granted consistently yield favorable outcomes for the female beneficiaries, thereby fostering a normative environment that encourages analogous practices within other familial units. At present, this emergent custom finds its principal expression in the folk songs of these women and in their interactions with marital kin, as they remain devoid of the institutionalized support mechanisms identified by Landholm (1982) in his study of the Swat district. Notably, women are experiencing enhanced agency in inheritance matters, paralleled by an increased cognizance of responsibilities among male counterparts. Consequently, there is a discernible trend of men extending inheritance rights to their female cousins who lack brothers, primarily to mitigate social stigma and preempt legal contestation that may jeopardize claims to appropriated property.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the findings of this study underscore the considerable challenges that persist in the realization of comprehensive property rights for women within the study population. Nonetheless, the notable increase in inheritance cases initiated by women before judicial and ombudsman institutions constitutes a positive trajectory toward the assertion of their legal entitlements. Women are exhibiting unprecedented levels of confidence and agency, actively pursuing their inheritance rights through both conciliatory and legal avenues. This emergent assertiveness is instrumental in dismantling entrenched customs that have historically precluded women—particularly those without brothers—from inheriting parental property. Moreover, this evolving dynamic is engendering heightened awareness among male counterparts, motivating some to recognize and allocate women's rightful share of familial assets.

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