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Bridging the Policy-Practice Divide: A Systematic Review of the Determinants and Constraints on Women's Land Tenure Security in Sub-Saharan Africa

Angela Mcharo Jesse^{1*}

¹ Sokoine University of Agriculture, P. O. Box 3000, Chuo Kikuu, Morogoro, Tanzania.

* Author for Correspondence ORCID ID; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7488-6305>; Email: nyahiriangel@gmail.com

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Secure land tenure is a critical asset for agency, livelihoods, and resilience, yet a persistent gender gap in land ownership undermines development and equality in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Despite a proliferation of gender-sensitive land policies, the disparity between legislative intent and on-the-ground reality remains a formidable challenge. This study employs a systematic review methodology, following a PRISMA-inspired protocol. From an initial pool of 2,446 studies identified across major academic databases, 56 met the inclusion criteria based on relevance, methodological rigour, and thematic focus, forming the basis for a thematic synthesis. The review identifies a triad of influencing factors: (1) Policy Mechanisms: including national land reforms, constitutional guarantees, and international frameworks; (2) Implementation Bottlenecks: such as weak enforcement, limited legal awareness, and lack of political will; and (3) Structural Barriers: primarily patriarchal customary tenure systems, discriminatory inheritance norms, and deeply embedded socio-cultural practices that privilege male lineage. The analysis reveals a fundamental tension of legal pluralism, where statutory laws coexist and often conflict with customary systems. The principal impediment is not a lack of policy but a governance disjuncture, a failure to align formal institutions with informal, socially entrenched norms that govern resource allocation at the community level. This review synthesises and advances theoretical frameworks at the intersection of political economy and property rights, demonstrating how patriarchal bargaining and institutional bricolage shape women's land access within plural legal environments. It consolidates a fragmented evidence base to provide a comprehensive, region-wide analysis of the multi-scalar obstacles (from household to state) to women's land tenure security, offering a coherent evidence map for researchers and practitioners. Transforming women's land rights in SSA requires moving beyond technical legal reforms to address the socio-institutional roots of exclusion. Key recommendations include: (1) implementing gender-responsive land governance that integrates customary and statutory systems; (2) investing in grassroots legal empowerment and awareness campaigns; (3) strengthening accountability mechanisms for policy enforcement; and (4) promoting systemic research on gendered outcomes of land tenure interventions.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite land being among the important assets to human success, women, specifically in sub-Saharan Africa, are still facing difficulties in accessing and owning it (Mubangizi & Tlale, 2023). Land ownership is a human right issue because land can be used for many purposes, such as agriculture, business, human settlements, protected areas, plantations, and as collateral to obtain a loan for different purposes (Crowford et al., 2022; Alkali, 2023). For many years, women, specifically in African societies, were denied their rights to property ownership, including land (Gaddis et al., 2022; Olawuni et al., 2022; Ho et al., 2023). This is perpetuated by African tradition, where women were not formally considered in inheriting and owning properties (Gaddis et al., 2022; Mubangizi & Tlale, 2023). The situation leads to male child preference syndrome within African societies, in which married women who give birth to girl children only were despised, oppressed and humiliated, specifically by their spouses and in-laws (Mughal et al., 2023; Pennington et al., 2023). The mentioned syndrome resulted in a huge gap between men and women, as well as creating gender inequality and discrimination within African societies. It has also led to different treatment between the two sexes, where men were highly valued and prioritised in different social,

economic, and political spheres (Wamboye, 2024). In the same way, men were seen as successors in resource or asset ownership, including land, while women were left aside. The mentioned scenario is against human rights, where all people are equal. Thus, the discrimination of women in owning resources, including land, led governments and other organisations to make different efforts to ensure equal access to land resources where both men and women can benefit from it for development purposes.

Among the efforts is the formulation of regulatory frameworks, including policies, guidelines, and acts which directs on the necessity of a woman to own land among other properties. Some of the regulatory frameworks are but not limited to: Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa (2010) with the aim of strengthening land rights, enhance productivity and secure livelihoods; Land Policy in Africa: North Africa Regional Assessment with the target of strengthening land tenure system and facilitate women land ownership rights; Land Tenure and Property Rights Framework by USAID (2013) with the aim of strengthening land tenure system with a special consideration to vulnerable groups including women to the partner countries Africa being among them; Land Governance Mainstreaming Tool by African Union

Development Agency – NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) with the goal of exploring the challenges on land tenure system which leads to the injustice in land ownership in African countries; and Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa aiming at strengthen Land Rights, Enhance Productivity and Secure Livelihoods.

In the same note, different African countries have also developed different regulatory frameworks pertaining to land ownership, where women's right to own land is considered. For instance, the Nigerian Land Act of 1978 and the Land Tenure Law of Northern Nigeria of 1962 were formulated for the aim of making land accessible to all, where women's right to land was considered (Otubu, 2018; Alkali, 2023). The National Land Reform Framework Bill of 2017 of South Africa was formulated to solve land issues, among them being inequality in land distribution, access, and ownership, specifically for women. Moreover, in East Africa, specifically in Tanzania, there are different land regulatory frameworks such as the National Land Policy of 1997; the Land Act of 1999; and, but not limited to, the Land Acquisition Act revise edition of 2019. The mentioned land regulatory frameworks, among other objectives, is to ensure equal access and ownership of land to all citizen regardless of their gender.

The presence of regulatory frameworks ought to facilitate women's land ownership; however, their implementation led to positive and negative results for communities in sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, some studies have shown that implementation of land regulatory frameworks has contributed in creating awareness on the importance of women land ownership to communities (Kehinde et al., 2021; Zhllima et al., 2021; Mahato et al., 2025) which has led to women involvement in decision making at the household levels, reduced the poverty level by improving women economic and social status (Kehinde, et al., 2021). On the other hand, other studies point out that despite having land regulatory frameworks, most women are still facing difficulties in accessing and owning land in sub-Saharan Africa (Chigbu et al., 2019; Massay,

2020; Slavchevska et al., 2020; Wamboye, 2024). In the same way, the World Bank Global Indicator Brief no. 23 explores the fact that, although there are well-established land regulatory frameworks that insist on women property ownership, their implementation is hindered by structural issues, different norms and traditions which discriminate against women on property ownership (Behr et al., 2023). This raises questions on whether the established regulatory frameworks to ensure that women can access and own properties, including land, were successfully implemented. And whether there are hindrances in implementing the established land regulatory frameworks. To answer the raised questions, the review focused on examining strategies to ensure women land ownership in sub-Saharan African countries by observing the gaps which lead to the failure of their implementation, and the hindrances or rather challenges which lead to the failure of women to own land in sub-Saharan Africa. The results of the review provide suggestions which can ultimately assist in the implementation of land regulatory frameworks to ensure gender equality within communities in sub-Saharan African countries.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was accompanied by Legal pluralism theory, which presents the defined bundles of laws and regulations applied to different levels for different purposes (Tamanaha, 2021). In this case, it focuses on different legal frameworks pertaining to land tenure security in Africa. The regulatory frameworks point out clearly women's involvement in the land tenure system, though the process is faced with governance issues. Legal pluralism theory has been used to explore policy implementation for achieving sustainable development in Timor-Leste and Afghanistan (Geoffrey, 2018). It has also been used to understand the integration and implementation of human rights laws (Oomen, 2014). With reference to Legal pluralism theory, there are bundles of land regulatory frameworks, including policies, laws, reforms and regulations established with the aim of ensuring women property ownership, including land in sub-Saharan African countries.

Based on literature, their implementation is hindered by structural, norms and other customs which perpetuate women subordination (Slavchevska et al., 2020; Behr et al., 2023; Wamboye, 2024). Thus, the Legal pluralism theory was applied to assess the established strategies to ensure women land ownership in sub-Saharan African countries, where the focus was on the policy Mechanisms such as national land reforms, constitutional guarantees, and international frameworks. It was also used to explore the implementation bottlenecks, including weak enforcement, limited legal awareness, and lack of political will; and Structural Barriers, including primarily patriarchal customary tenure systems, discriminatory inheritance norms, and deeply embedded socio-cultural practices that privilege male lineage.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a systematic narrative synthesis to map, analyse, and synthesise the extant literature on strategies and barriers to women's land ownership in SSA. The process was guided by the PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews) checklist to ensure transparency and reproducibility (Tricco et al., 2018). The review was based on the formal academic writings through different sources, including AJOL, PubMed, Web of Science, Research Gate, Science Direct, tandfonline, land wise-production, springer, Taylor Francis, and Google Scholar. The ineligibility of the literature included, but was not limited to, the articles which were not written in the English language, mismatched contents, lacking empirical/primary data and others which were not journal articles, a book chapter or a report. Others were those which were not relevant to the topic and the study scope, content type, as well as methodological aspects.

The sample size was 56 studies, which were selected based on the research question, search scope, and available data. The search words/phrases include but not limited to land regulatory frameworks in sub-Saharan Africa; women land ownership in sub-Saharan Africa; strategies to ensure women land ownership in sub-Saharan Africa; hindrances or challenges to women land ownership in sub-Saharan Africa; cultural, norms and women land ownership; patriarchy system and women land ownership; inheritance system and women land ownership in sub-Saharan Africa; customary land tenure system in sub-Saharan Africa; and land reforms in sub-Saharan Africa.

This review provides a history of the existing situation where women did not have access to resources, including land. The identified issue led to the formulation of different land regulatory frameworks to ensure that women in sub-Saharan Africa are provided the opportunity to own resources, including land. Through the Pluralism theory, the review pointed out different factors for the success and failure of land regulatory frameworks implementation in sub-Saharan African countries. Thus, the success and failure of the implementation of land regulatory frameworks led to conducting a review on different strategies employed in ensuring women's land ownership in sub-Saharan African countries and the gaps observed in the implementation process. The review was also conducted to find out the hindrances in the implementation process of land regulatory frameworks in sub-Saharan African countries. The identified data from different studies are presented in tables, and the discussed themes were thematically extracted from the study findings and were later discussed and compared with other studies of the same from elsewhere in the world. The review process is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Review Process

Identified studies	Sources	Total	Exclusion criteria	Remained=
	AJOL= 89 PubMed= 46 Web of Science = 102 Research Gate= 74 Science Direct = 85 Tandfonline= 32 Land wise-production =27 Springer= 35 Taylor Francis= 53 Google Scholar=1903	2446	Duplicate = 382 Ineligible =1009 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not in the English language • Lacking empirical/primary data • Not a journal article, chapter or report 	1,055
Screening	Screened studies = 1,055 Screening criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance to the topic and the study scope • Content type and scope • Methodological feet • Authority credibility 		Excluded studies after screening=999	
Studies included in the study	56			

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This paper discusses different strategies and the identified gaps in their implementation to ensure women's land ownership in sub-Saharan Africa. It is also focusing on pointing out the challenges in the implementation of land regulatory frameworks to ensure women's land ownership in sub-Saharan African countries.

Strategies to Ensure Women's Land Ownership in Sub-Saharan Africa

With reference to Legal pluralism theory, the review was based on different strategies, including the established laws, regulations, policies and programs to ensure women land security in sub-Saharan African countries. During the review process, different gaps were observed in the implementation of the identified land regulatory frameworks and were discussed in relation to the theory and other literature. The review results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Strategies for Women's Land Ownership in Sub-Saharan African Countries

Author	Strategies	Aim	Gaps
Minka, M.L. (2024)	Establishment of laws, regulations, and programs to ensure women land security in the East African Community and SADC	Ensure women's land ownership in East Africa.	Women’s low understanding of laws on resource ownership and their implementation Lack of political will to ensure the implementation of the established laws and regulations to ensure women's ownership of resources, including land

Author	Strategies	Aim	Gaps
Bayisenge, J., Höjer, S., & Espling, M. (2014)	Establishment of land reforms in developing countries by the World Bank, Department for International Development (DFID), and United States Agency for International Development	Ensuring women's land ownership in African countries Creating awareness of land legal provisions	The implementers of land registration and titling in Rwanda faced the following obstacles/hindrances: Polygamy system Patriarchy system in inheritance issues Unwillingness of men to register their marriages based on their customary right Land ownership was deeply embedded in socio-cultural norms.
Odeny, M. (2013)	The Land Policy Initiative (LPI) was established in 2006	Formulation of Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa Promote land policies based on the African women's needs through awareness creation, sharing information, and networking Dialogue facilitation on women's land rights issues Advocating for women land rights issues and facilitating land policy formulation and implementation Enhancing partnership in women's land rights	Constitutional bias: some of the constitutions are neutral, others have elements of discrimination and personal matters, such as inheritance of properties Stereotype: male dominance, specifically in a patriarchal setting, where women inherit land via men through marriage or a male child. Lack of awareness on legal provisions pertaining to land: these include the constitutions which dwell on gender equality, laws and regulations on land ownership which are gender neutral, and other affirmative actions on women's land rights. The undefined gap between countries' high-level commitments and their implementation practice: Individual countries' high-level commitments are not propagated or domesticated in national laws and regulations pertaining women land ownership.
Odeny, M. (2013)	Formulation of land policies that allow women to own land in many African countries	Enhancing partnership in women's land rights	Women may not know their land rights The implementation may be gender biased, where almost all land is registered in male names regardless of the contribution of a woman.

Among the identified strategies employed to ensure women's land ownership in Africa are the establishment of different regulatory frameworks, reforms, and different initiatives, such as creating awareness in the community. The results support the Legal pluralism theory, which represents a bundle of laws and regulations for a certain purpose. The identified strategies are discussed in the subsections:

Establishment of Laws, Regulations, and Programs

The establishment of the mentioned regulatory frameworks was to show the road map on the ways and importance of women's land ownership within communities. Among the aims was to ensure that women have access to and own land in sub-Saharan Africa (Minka, 2024). The establishment of the mentioned regulatory frameworks is supported by the Legal pluralism theory, whose purpose is to enhance women property ownership, including land in SSA. Despite having laws, regulations and programs, different gaps, including low awareness of women on the mentioned regulatory frameworks and a lack of political will, were observed in their implementation process (Odeny, 2013). Political will is among the factors that accelerate the proper implementation of different regulatory frameworks within countries. According to Minka (2024), the lack of political will to ensure the implementation of the established laws and regulations on women ownership of resources, including land, was among the obstacles in the process of women land ownership in sub-Saharan Africa. This was probably influenced by different factors, including stereotypes where men dominate in owning different resources, including land (Odeny, 2013). The situation is also influenced by the patriarchal system, where women inherit land via men through marriage or a male child. Another influence is the polygamy system in which men control all the resources to avoid conflict between wives (Bayisenge et al., 2014). Most polygamous people are striving to ensure peace and harmony in their families; thus, allowing wives to inherit land can lead to the

division of their families. Due to this reason, most men make sure that their wives can only access land to farm and get food for their children, but do not own land in their own names. This implies that, despite having regulatory frameworks and being educated on the importance of women's land ownership, most men still adhere to their traditions and customs, which do not allow women to have formal ownership of resources, including land. Thus, having bundles of rules, regulations and programs as suggested by Legal Pluralism Theory without eliminating unfavourable customs, norms and traditions which hinders their implementation leads to the failure of meeting the expected outcomes.

Establishment of Land Reforms

Based on literature, the reforms were established by the World Bank, Department for International Development (DFID), and United States Agency for International Development with the aim of creating awareness of land legal provision to ensure that women own land in African countries (Bayisenge & Espling, 2014). Although reforms were seen as among the strategies to ensure women's ownership of land, some gaps were recognised in their implementation process. The observed gaps were polygamy and patriarchy system in inheritance issues, of which women access land via husbands or sons (Munemo et al., 2024); unwillingness of men to register their marriages based on their customary right; but also land ownership was deeply embedded in socio-cultural norms (Bayisenge & Espling, 2014). This implies that the acceptance of the formulated land reforms depends on changing the existing systems, including the patriarchy, which focuses more on male lineage inheritance while excluding women in the process. This can be done through awareness creation on the importance of women's rights in land ownership.

Establishment of Land Policy Initiative (LPI)

According to the results in Table 2, the LPI was established for different purposes including formulation of frameworks and guidelines on

Land Policy in Africa; Promote land policies based in the African women needs through awareness creation, sharing information and networking; dialogue facilitation on women land rights issues; advocating for women land right issues and facilitating land policy formulation and implementation; and enhancing partnership in women land rights (Odeny, 2013). The results show the effort made to ensure that, just like men, women also have access to land resources. Despite the efforts, the implementation of LPI had some gaps which hindered the process, including constitutional Bias. Studies reveal the presence of discriminatory constitutions in terms of supporting women’s ownership of resources, including land (Odeny, 2013). This is because of having leaders who emanate from patriarchy system, whereas said earlier that men own land through inheritance via a male child. This leads to the rigidity in implementing regulatory frameworks which are directed at women's ownership of properties, including land. The evidence of this is provided by Wamboye (2024), who reveals that only 30% of women own land

against 70% men in sub-Saharan Africa. Results in Table 2 reveals stereo type, the undefined gap between countries' high-level commitments and their implementation practice, and a lack of awareness of legal provisions pertaining to land, as well as other gaps in the implementation of LPI. The results suggest that, although the regulatory frameworks can be established for a certain purpose as suggested by Legal Pluralism Theory, their implementation has to be agreed upon by the beneficiaries to avoid having the others who accept and those who are not for different reasons.

Hindrances to Women's Land Ownership

Hindrances of women's land ownership were explored through reviewing different studies conducted in sub-Saharan Africa. Some of the hindrances have been discussed within the identified gaps in the former section. Other results are presented in Table 3. The discussed hindrances have been extracted from the findings and discussed in relation to other studies, as shown in the subsections.

Table 3: Hindrances to Women's Land Ownership in Sub-Saharan Africa

AUTHOR(S)	FINDINGS
Fonjong, L (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transfer of communal land to private ownership for agricultural practice affects women's access to and ownership of land. • Having no access to land increases women’s vulnerability to poverty and hunger, as well as exposing them to poor leaving condition.
Wamboye, E.F. (2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inheritance as among the obstacles to women land ownership were women access to land through purchasing or marriage. This leads to only 30%% of women owning land in SSA compared to 70% of men. • The rights of women's ownership over men are very limited compared to those of men.
Rwela, A. (2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's access to, control over, and ownership of land is hindered by cultural practices.
Wamboye, E. (2023)	<p>Inheritance obstacle to women's land ownership, where</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Women acquire land through purchasing ➢ Patrilineal societies through marriage
Balas, M., Lemmen, C., Albuquerque, R., & Casimiro, I. (2022)	<p>The hindrances to women's land ownership include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination within the legal framework • Weak enforcement of the law and institutions

AUTHOR(S)	FINDINGS
Chigbu, U.E. (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customary and social norms that are the root of discriminatory practices against women within African societies.
World Bank (2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male dominance, where men have more power than women. The most preferred is on power (husband power, son power, and father power — to women's landlessness).
Akinola, A.O. (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discriminatory legal protection • Weak enforcement of land regulatory frameworks • Customary land tenure rules and norms
Gaddis, I., Lahoti, R. & Swaminathan, H. (2022).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African culture and norms act as hindrances to women's land ownership.
Moyo, K. (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of discriminatory laws specifically in inheritance, property ownership, and marital regimes
Chigbu, U.E. (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High illiteracy level in land regulatory frameworks • Patriarchy and customary land law are among the hindrances to women's land ownership.

The identified hindrances to women's land ownership, based on the presented results in Table 3, include Inheritance; Weak enforcement of land regulatory frameworks; Customary land tenure rules and norms; and Lack of awareness on land regulatory frameworks.

Inheritance System

Based on the results in Table 3, the inheritance system in most African countries, including sub-Saharan Africa, contributes to the hindrances of women's land ownership (Balas et al., 2022; Wamboye, 2023; Wamboye, 2024). In most cases, men inherit the property while women may get access through their husbands via marriage (Bayisenge, 2018; Bhalotra et al., 2020; Bahrami-Rad, 2021). Very few women can access land through purchasing. According to Mahmud et al. (2023), women with high economic status can manage to own land through purchasing, unlike those who are economically poor. Errico (2021) reveals that women represent less than 15% of landowners in the world. This implies that poor women are continuing to face discrimination on land, specifically in societies that are rigid to change or are less educated on land regulatory frameworks that take into consideration the human rights issues. It is worth understanding that just like men, women also have different needs and perspectives regarding land based on their status; thus, they should not be presented as a

homogeneous group (Chigbu, 2019a). While others need land for cultivation, others need it for other purposes, such as business, construction, and collateral. It is therefore important for them to be able to have access to and ownership of land as part of other human beings.

Ideally, an inheritance system that favours men in most African cultures raises the mindset of sex preference to both male and female parents (Khodary, 2018; Bhalotra et al., 2020). Sex preference has many effects, including mental health issues; having many unplanned children; fornication, specifically when trying to find a male child, which results in conflict within households and breakage of marriages (Cukrowska-Torzewska & Grabowska, 2023). It is also resulting in undermining women who are blessed with girl children only within societies. This suggests that governments and other stakeholders should put more effort into creating awareness in the community on human rights and the importance of gender equality, specifically in rural areas. This will help the community to understand that both sexes have equal rights and contributions to the welfare of the household and the community at large.

Weak Enforcement of Land Regulatory Frameworks

Results in Table 3 show that the enforcement of land regulatory frameworks is among the hindrances to women's land ownership in sub-Saharan Africa (Balas et al., 2022; World Bank, 2023). Ideally, enforcement includes the implementation process in terms of awareness raising and monitoring the application of land regulatory frameworks, including policies, acts, and laws. Some of the literature shows that the empowerment process in terms of creating awareness of land regulatory frameworks portrays different focuses. For instance, the study by Boone (2018) shows different dimensions in implementing or enforcing land regulatory frameworks whereas: other implementers perceive land registration and titling as among strategies of shielding smallholders' rights of access and ownership to land; Others seem to set land registration as part of resource protection for development purposes; and to others legal empowerment is focusing on enhancing market specifically in property rights commodification. In addition to this, Doss & Meinzen-Dick (2020) argue that the policies and programs designed to deal with strengthening women's land tenure security use different definitions, indicators, and data, and are implemented in different contexts. This implies a lack of uniformity, which leads to confusion among the users/community. Moreover, having different focuses, definitions and data within policies and programs leads to different understandings of women's land tenure security among implementers. It is therefore important for the implementers, including governments and other actors, to have the same focus, harmonised policies and programs on women's land tenure security to create a common understanding of land regulatory frameworks and the implementation strategies.

Customary Land Tenure Rules and Norms

Some of the studies show that customary tenure systems, traditions, and norms are among the limitations of women's land ownership in most

countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Boone, 2018; Chigbu et al., 2019a; Chigbu et al., 2019b; Balas et al., 2022). This is because the customary land tenure system relies on an informal way of land management, which is formed based on the traditions which in a way, perpetuate gender inequality within communities. The mentioned tenure system is among the sources of gender discrimination to women in accessing and owning land, which is an important resource in improving their livelihood. According to Errico (2021), women are part of 2.5 billion people whose livelihoods depend on lands that are managed through customary and/or community-based tenure systems, which perpetuate discrimination against women. Thus, most women may be allowed to work on land which is owned by their spouses or sons, where the husbands are no more. However, in some areas in sub-Saharan Africa, customary land tenure has managed to transform the livelihood of people, although it hinders women's ownership of land (Akinola, 2018; Rignall & Kusunose, 2018; Chigbu et al., 2019b). In this case, the customary and formal tenure system has portrayed positives in terms of improving the welfare of rural communities. Thus, deliberate efforts need to be in place to ensure the merging of the two while considering the rights of women in accessing and owning land. This creates a need for the governments in sub-Saharan African countries to harmonise the customary tenure system and other land regulatory frameworks, including policies and Acts, to reduce the confusion between the two when they are implemented at the community level.

Lack of Awareness of Land Regulatory Frameworks

Results in Table 3 show that land regulatory frameworks are not well understood within communities, specifically those situated in rural areas (Ali et al., 2021). Different studies report that most rural people are not well informed on formal land regulatory frameworks and land rights, which ultimately leads women in many societies to lag behind in accessing and owning

land (Alden, 2018; Jansen et al., 2021). According to Hasanbasri et al. (2023), most African communities lack knowledge on how bundles are disseminated across gender and family, the rights of people who use land but do not claim ownership, and the rigidity of rights in a bundle. The most confusing issue in situations where there is an argumentative issue between statutory and customary laws. Failure to be informed on the women's right to land tenure results in continuing to implement practices that lead to gender discrimination in owning properties, including land in African countries. As explained earlier, most patriarchal societies in Africa do not allow women to own land or any other properties, as they belong to men (Bhalotra et al., 2020). In most patriarchal societies, land can be passed down to a male child who is inheriting after his father (Djurfeldt, 2020). However, to most African societies, women receive substantial threats from members of the family or community regarding land, especially in a situation of a spouse's death or divorce (Feyertag, 2022). Other literature portrays that the governance system, in a way, hinders the dissemination of knowledge regarding land regulatory frameworks to the community (Gichenje et al., 2019). Governance issues include a lack of accountability and transparency of some of the leaders at different levels (Gichenje et al., 2019; Jansen et al., 2021). People at the ground level depend much on their government in terms of being educated and implementing the regulatory frameworks, including policies, acts, and other rules and regulations. This implies that government leaders' accountability can be one of the ways of ensuring that the community is aware of any regulatory frameworks and their implementation. This can be through research, which can be facilitated by the government leaders at the lower levels, such as Wards/, small towns/villages, to understand the extent to which communities understand the regulatory frameworks. This can pave the way to prepare training and workshops to capacitate the community for easier implementation of different regulatory frameworks, including those concerning land. Thus, understanding of the regulatory frameworks on land ownership, which

allows everyone, including women, to own land, could be the solution to end discrimination against women in property ownership, including land.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study aligns with the Legal pluralism theory, which asserts the bundle of different regulatory frameworks for different purposes, including the land tenure system as portrayed in this study. Based on the results, the established laws, rules and regulations, policies, reforms and programs are among the strategies to ensure women land ownership in SSA. Despite that, there are different observed gaps in their implementation process, including patriarchy system in inheritance issues, the polygamy system, the unwillingness of men to register their marriages, the law awareness of regulatory frameworks and governance issues. Thus, the study concludes that having bundles of rules, regulations and programs as suggested by Legal Pluralism Theory without eliminating unfavourable customs, norms and traditions which hinders their implementation can be among the obstacles in reaching the intended goal. The study is also concluding that having the contradicting regulatory frameworks (customary land tenure system with traditional and customs and statutory laws) acts as another hindrance in meeting the goal of ensuring women land ownership in SSA. The study further adds that having regulatory frameworks with poor implementation structure can hinder the community from understanding and implementing them in their daily lives. Thus, good governance, specifically in the segment of transparency and accountability, is very important in the implementation of land regulatory frameworks.

Recommendation

The study recommends that the government should research the norms and traditions which in a way, hinder the implementation of land

regulatory frameworks. This assists in developing a workable work plan for the implementation of land regulatory frameworks in sub-Saharan African countries. The study further recommends that governments harmonise the regulatory framework so they can have the same language to avoid confusion in their implementations. The study is also recommending that Governments should set standards for the implementers to show their accountability during the implementation of land regulatory frameworks. It is also important for awareness creation to ensure that the community understand the established land regulatory frameworks and the importance of women's ownership of resources, including land.

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