

GENDER-BASED INEQUITY IN LAND OWNERSHIP IN INDIA

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Abstract

This paper underlines the importance of ownership of land resources for women engaged in the agricultural sector in India; as a step towards their economic and social well-being. Evidence suggests that the share of women in ownership of landholdings is dismally low compared to that of men. This trend is seen across States as well as time periods. Numerous Constitutional and legislative measures have been taken to improve the share of women in ownership of land resources. Gender-based inequity is deeply imbedded in the Indian social and family systems. Concerted efforts to increase the awareness of women regarding their rights over ownership of land resources are needed in order to bring a change.

Keywords: Land Resource, Land Ownership, Land Reforms, Gender Discrimination

JEL Codes: Q24, Q15, J16

INTRODUCTION

Natural resources are important for both men and women in order to meet their basic needs of food, water and shelter as well as earn their livelihoods. However, the access and ownership of natural resources is not the same for men and women. The gender of a person plays a pivotal role in determining whether and to what extent, will he or she be able to avail the use of a natural resource and shall be able to participate in the decision-making process with regard to its management, conservation and development. Similarly, consumption of natural resources is also governed by the societal context in which an individual is placed, viz-a-viz its availability, location or customary rights of use.

Women perform multiple tasks and carry out important responsibilities such as completing day-to-day household chores such as cooking and cleaning, gathering water, fodder and fire wood for household requirements, caring for the sick, the children and the elderly, farming, animal husbandry, dairying, fishing, etc. Most of these tasks consist of unpaid services, i.e., women do not receive any monetary compensation for undertaking these tasks. On the other hand, men perform duties such as farming, managing and selling agricultural produce, managing and decision-making about household assets, savings and investment etc. Most of these tasks are in the form of paid services and carry a monetary value; and are similarly rewarded. Thus, men and women share different responsibilities at the household-level. However, much of the tedious, unpaid and monotonous work is done by the women, which goes unnoticed and unrewarded; whereas the men contribute in the tasks that carry a monetary value to them; and are therefore respected and rewarded for their contribution.

As far as legal rights over natural resources are concerned, women in India suffer from a great inequity in terms of ownership, access and participation in decision-making. observes that .in India, women suffer from an equity with respect to ownership of land. Table 1 presents different gender roles in terms of use of land and water resources.

Table1: Role of Men and Women in Agriculture:

Men	Women
Prefer to produce cash crops such as tobacco, cotton, sugarcane etc.	Prefer to produce subsistence crops for self-consumption such as vegetables, food-grain and coarse grains, fodder crops etc.
Carry out functions such as tilling, land-levelling, irrigation, especially during the nights, harvesting, selling	Carry out functions such as sowing, planting saplings, tending of crops, weeding, winnowing, plucking etc.

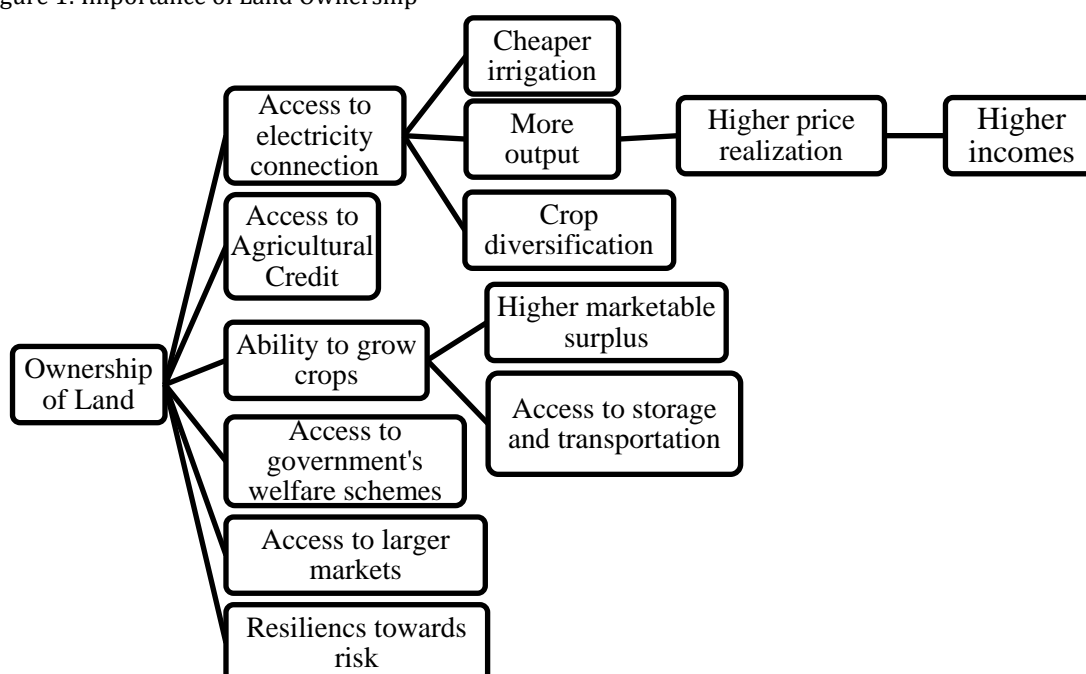
the produce in the market etc.	
Clear overgrowth for the purpose of cultivation	Assisting in the storages and sale of crops
Participate in irrigation institutions and get access of water for irrigation	May are may not be able to access and in irrigation
Access electricity connections for withdrawing water for irrigation	May are may not be able to access
Access storage facilities and agricultural markets for sale of surplus produce	May are may not be able to access

Source: .

Table 1 illustrates how men and women play different roles in the agricultural economy and how the difference in their respective functions contributes to the dominance of men and the subsidiary role of women in agriculture.

Now, the question arises as to what are the reasons behind the subjugation of women in the agricultural sector. The answer to this lies in the fundamental issue i.e., lop-sided nature of ownership of land resources in India. Land is a fixed resource having a finite supply. Agriculture is impossible without the engagement of land. Further, the application and efficiency of use of other agricultural inputs such as irrigation, HYV seeds, fertilizers, storage, transportation credit-worthiness and market access for agricultural produce too, depends upon the availability and security of land use, as illustrated in Figure 1 as follows:

Figure 1: Importance of Land Ownership



Source: Authors' interpretation

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many experts have highlighted the gender discrimination that exists with respect to land ownership rights in India. analysed the status of women's land ownership in Ahmedabad and Mehsana districts of Gujarat and concluded that there was a lack of awareness among women towards their ownership rights over the land that they were engaged on. They were also blissfully unaware of the various legal provisions that existed in their favour in this regard. They did not try to oppose the cultural and social factors that inhibited their ownership rights over land. conducted a study to examine women's participation and gender equity in the agricultural sector in Ummandoor and Moorkanad region in Kerala. This study concluded that several women respondents believed that they did not possess adequate knowledge or expertise over technical work related to farming. Moreover, confirming to social norms and customs were more important to them, so they made no attempt to secure land ownership rights for themselves. Several women who were facing a financial crunch while undertaking agricultural operations; could not access institutional credit due to the fact that they did not have a land ownership title in their own name, which could be offered as a collateral security while availing an institutional loan. Apart from this, they could not become eligible for receiving the benefits from extension activities, subsidies or other assistance available through government schemes.

<https://www.gapgyan.org/>

As a variant of individual ownership over land, some women also hold joint ownership of land along with their spouse or other family members. opines that even though joint ownership of land does not provide complete autonomy, it is still better than no ownership at all; as it gives limited control over land to women. Joint ownership often means that women cannot take independent decisions such as how the land is to be used, what crops to grow, how and where to sell the output etc. However, joint ownership bestows upon the woman, the right of exchange the land. In times of distress, this is a crucial factor that could secure women's livelihood and economic independence. A report on women's participation in the agricultural sector by , notes that despite having a significant participation in agriculture sector, women were facing issues such as lack of technical knowledge regarding farming, difficulties to access of credit, lack of capacity building opportunities etc. examined the situation of land ownership among women with regard to the 'Bhoomi' initiative of the government of Andhra Pradesh in five selected districts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. This study concluded that 'Bhoomi' initiative taken by the state government towards securing land rights for poor, landless women had brought positive consequences in terms increasing the number of women holding land ownership rights.

noted that north-eastern states of India appear to have a higher inequality with respect to female land ownership. On the other hand, northern states have a less skewed pattern with women having a slightly higher share in land-ownership. However, it is still lower than the national average in terms of female land ownership. Conversely, the southern states of India have the least relative skewness in terms female land ownership. Dick et. al. (2019) examined the association between rural poverty and female land ownership and found that both these variables are negatively associated. explained how control of women over land is affected by their ties with their brothers and their whole maternal family in Rajasthan.

noted that as per the Constitution of India, land ownership is governed by laws framed by the respective State governments rather than that by the Government of India. Several state governments have framed and implemented laws regarding women's land ownership. He found that women's land ownership is positively correlated with their economic empowerment and agriculture productivity. Moreover, he concluded that the lack of legal knowledge, social norms and attitudes etc. are the constraints that hinder the increase in land ownership by women in India.

Legislations for securing women's ownership rights over land in India

The Working Group on Women's Land Ownership (WGWLO), an informal, unregistered network of 35 NGOs and CBOs (Community Based Organisations) in Gujarat (<https://www.wgwlo.org/>) has listed three ways in which a woman can own private land . They are as follows:

- (1) By inheritance
- (2) By transfer by the State
- (3) Through purchase from the market

Even though there are three ways for a woman to own land, the main route of land ownership is through inheritance. This is because, poor women and widows may not be financially capable to purchase land at the prevailing market rates, while state transfer of land is done by way of emphasizing equity on the basis of one's being small and marginal male farmers, who are already recorded as such, in the records of the government. Hence, on both the counts namely, purchase from the open market and transfer by the state, the women tend to lose out.

The Constitution of India has many provisions for providing land ownership rights to women. Ownership of land resources is governed by Personal Laws followed by people of different religions in India. For instance, the Hindu Succession Act (1956), amended in 2005 applies to persons who are Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh or Jain by religion. The Act of 1956 provided that only male descendants had an equal right to their ancestral land (from the maternal as well as paternal side). This Act was amended in 2005 to provide that both male and female descendants, i.e., sons as well as daughters have an equal right to share their ancestral land . However, the Muslim Personal Law (1937) that applies to Muslims in India provides that Muslim men and women do not have equal right to share their ancestral land. Daughters are entitled to get only half of the share of land that is received by the sons. Thus, both the Hindu and Muslim law was discriminatory towards women to begin with. However, the Hindu Succession Act has been amended in 2005 to become more inclusive towards women, the Muslim Personal Law is yet to be amended likewise . Property rights for Christian women in India are governed by the Indian Succession Act 1925. As per this Act, when a Christian person dies without a Will, his widow gets one-third share of his land; while the remaining two-thirds is distributed equally among all his lineal children including sons and daughters. However, if the deceased has left a Will, in which, he has left all his land to his sons, then the land is distributed exactly as per the Will and that cannot be challenged in the Court of law. Thus, a Christian widow or a daughter is powerless to challenge her exclusion from the Will . Similarly, in the Parsi community too, if a person dies without leaving a Will, his daughters and sons get an equal share of property.

In Gujarat state, in order to promote land registration in the name of women in either single or joint ownership, the Department of Rural Development, GoG, exempted women from paying registration fees, transfer fees and stamp duty . Thus, if a property purchase is registered in the name of a female, the buyer tends to save on the taxes payable to the GoG. This is the case in most of States in India where if a property is registered in the name

of a female, the respective state government provides certain concessions on stamp duty in order to encourage the registration of property in the name of women and thereby, increasing their share in the ownership of property .

Status of Women with regards to Land Ownership in India

According to Census 2011, out of the total women labourers, about 65% were engaged in the agricultural sector in the capacity of either cultivators or agricultural labours. Conversely, out of the total male labourers, only 49% were engaged in the same. Despite a huge participation and stake of women in agriculture, only 14% women hold legal rights of ownership over land. Lack of ownership right over land leads to deprivation of women from many crucial benefits such as access to institutional credit as well as eligibility to be covered under government schemes regarding agriculture sector . Lack of ownership rights over one's cultivated land has long been recognized as a major factor leading to low productivity in the agricultural sector . Hence, measures towards improving gender equity in respect of ownership rights over land could not only lead to a greater wellbeing of women but is also required in order to improve the productivity of agriculture as a whole and enhancing the development of the nation.

This study attempts to find out the status women with respect to land ownership in various states of India and understand the various legislative measures taken in order to increase the number of women land owners in India. It uses the data from Census 2011 (GoI), Agriculture Census (MoAFW, GoI) 2015-16 as well as other secondary sources such as reports of government of India on agriculture operational holdings and area, articles published in journals and books etc. The data regarding gender wise land ownership were not available at the state level. Therefore, national level data regarding gender-wise land holding in terms of numbers and percentage shares has been used for this study.

Table 2: Work Participation by Gender in India (Census, 2011)

Category	Number of Workers	(Per cent)
Male	331865930	68.89
Female	149877381	31.11
Total	481743311	100

Source: .

The Table 2 shows that males have a higher participation in the workforce at 68.89 % compared to females at 31.11 per cent.

Table 3: %Distribution of Workers in Usual Status by Agriculture Sector During 1977-78 (NSS 32nd Round) to 2017-18 (PLFS)

Sector	Category Of Workers	32nd round 1977-78	38nd round 1983-84	43nd round 1987-88	50nd round 1993-94	55 TH Round 1999-2000	61ST round 2004-05	66th round 2009-10	68th round 2011-12	PLFS 2017-18
Agriculture	Rural Male	80.6	77.5	74.5	74.1	71.4	66.5	62.8	59.4	55
	Rural Female	88.1	87.5	84.7	86.2	85.4	83.3	79	74.9	73.2
	Urban Male	10.6	10.3	9.1	9	6.6	6.1	6	5.6	5.4
	Urban Female	31.9	31	29.4	24.7	17.7	18.1	13.9	10.9	9.1

Source: (PLFS = Periodic Labour Force Survey) (p-63)

Table 3 shows that from 1977-78 to 2017-18, female work participation in agriculture sector was higher than male in rural and urban areas as well. e

On the whole, females have a higher participation than males in the agriculture sector. After the advent of industrialization and subsequent urbanization, migration from rural to urban areas has increased. However, as per the prevalent social norms in rural areas, females tend to have lesser opportunities to migrate to urban areas. Besides, women are not expected to work away from home, but instead, take care of household responsibilities such as child rearing, taking care of the house, farm and cattle in the absence of male members .

Table 4: Sector-wise male-female distribution of workers (per cent)

Category	Total Workers (Per cent)	Cultivators (Per cent)	Agricultural Labourers (Per cent)	Household Industry (Per cent)	Other (Per cent)	Total
Male	68.89	24.92	18.56	2.95	47.20	100
Female	31.11	24.01	55.21	5.71	29.18	100

Total	100	24.64	29.96	3.81	41.60	100
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Source: .

Table 4 shows the sector-wise distribution of male and female workers. It could be seen that agriculture sector employs the highest proportion of labour force as either cultivators or agricultural labourers. Of the total agricultural labourers, the proportion of women is higher than males at 55.21 per cent. The reasons behind this scenario could be many.

Table 4: Gender-wise Distribution of Operational Land Holdings in Indian States

Category	Number and %					
	Number of Individually owned operational land holdings	(Per cent)	Number of Jointly- owned operational land holding	(Per cent)	*Total (number)	Total (Per cent)
Male	9935	87.62	1122	87.62	11057	87.27
Female	1453	12.81	159	12.89	1612	12.72
Total	11338	(100)	1281	(100)	12669	100

Source: .

*Total includes institutional holdings too.

Note: Operational land holding refers to that holding in which a person has the responsibility for the operation of the agricultural holding. The person has full economic responsibility or may share it with others. The operational holder may be individual, joint and institutional. Individual operational holder: "If the holding is operated by either one person or by a group of persons who are the members of the same household this is called individual operational holding."

Joint operational holding: "When two or more persons are from different households, and share the economic and technical responsibilities as partners for the operation of an agriculture holding this holding such holding are considered as joint holding."

Institutional operational holding: "Government farms, sugar cane factories farms, co-operative farms and land managed by the trust are includes in institutional holdings".

Table 5 shows the gender-wise distribution of operational land holdings in India. It could be seen that the share women in the ownership of operational land holdings is much lesser compared to men; be it in terms of individually owned or jointly owned operational land holdings.

Thus Table 6 illustrates that despite high participation in agriculture sector in India women have not entitled to land ownership as men have. Females have the equal right to own land as per constitution of India, but the ground reality is different from the constitutional right. There are several factors affect to the lesser proportion of female land holding such as customs, social norms patriarchal society in nature in India. Table 6: State/Union Territory-wise Distribution of Operational Land Holdings by Males and Females (from the year of 1995-96 to 2015-16)

Sr. No	States/UTs	Number in '000'														
		1995-96			2000-01			2005-06			2010-11			2015-16		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Andhra Pradesh	8673	1927	10603	9180	2347	11532	9392	2646	12044	5463	2153	7621	5955	2565	8524
	Per cent	6.45	17.49	9.17	8.61	18.06	9.62	8.25	17.51	9.32	4.54	12.18	5.51	4.74	12.55	5.82
2	Arunachal Pradesh	88	15	104	95	11	107	96	12	109	95	11	109	97	14	113
	Per cent	0.07	0.14	0.09	0.09	0.08	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.06	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.08
3	Assam	2677	Ne	2683	2656	53	2712	2696	50	2750	2657	58	2720	2691	46	2742
	Per cent	1.99	Ne	2.32	2.49	0.41	2.26	2.37	0.33	2.13	2.21	0.33	1.97	2.14	0.22	1.87
4	Bihar	13056	1076	14155	10436	1119	11574	12828	1807	14657	13889	2277	16191	14090	2297	16413
	Per cent	9.7	9.7	12.	9.7	8.6	9.6	11.	11.	11.	11.	12.	11.	11.	11.	11.

Sr. No	States/UTs	Number in '000'														
		1995-96			2000-01			2005-06			2010-11			2015-16		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
		2	7	24	8	2	5	27	96	34	53	88	7	2	24	21
5	Chhattisgarh	NA	NA	NA	29	34	32	30	39	34	32	47	37	34	55	40
	Per cent	NA	NA	NA	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7
6	Goa	54	16	70	50	14	64	41	11	53	60	13	78	55	19	75
	Per cent	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		4	5	6	5	1	5	4	8	4	5	0.1	6	4	9	5
7	Gujarat	33	42	37	37	47	42	40	64	46	41	69	48	44	87	53
		38	7	81	47	0	39	10	6	61	90	0	86	40	7	21
		2.4	3.8	3.2	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.5	4.2	3.6	3.4	3.9	3.5	3.5	4.2	3.6
		8	7	7	1	2	3	2	7	1	8	3	3	3	9	3
8	Haryana	15	13	17	13	14	15	13	18	16	14	19	16	13	24	16
		85	2	28	71	2	28	98	6	03	05	5	17	71	0	28
	Per cent	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
		8	7	9	9	9	7	3	3	4	7	1.1	7	9	8	1
9	Himachal Pradesh	81	52	86	85	63	91	86	63	93	89	68	96	92	74	99
	Per cent	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.3	0.6
		7	5	5	8	6	6	6	2	2	4	8	9	3	6	8
10	Jammu & Kashmir	12	52	13	13	11	14	12	10	13	13	10	14	13	10	14
		81	36	23	6	43	76	0	78	41	6	49	07	8	17	
	Per cent	0.9	0.4	1.1	1.2	0.8	1.2	1.1	0.6	1.0	1.1	0.6	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.9
		5	7	6	4	9	7	2	6	7	1	5	4	3	7	
11	Jharkhand	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	24	29	27	24	31	28
	Per cent	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	2	1.6	1.9	1.9	1.5	1.9
											8	6	7	4	1	
12	Karnataka	53	89	62	59	11	70	62	13	75	63	14	78	69	17	86
		20	4	21	32	34	79	53	13	81	33	86	32	19	43	81
	Per cent	3.9	8.1	5.3	5.5	8.7	5.9	5.4	8.6	5.8	5.2	8.4	5.6	5.5	8.5	5.9
		6	2	8	6	3	5	9	9	7	6	1	6	5	3	3
5.1	Kerala	47	14	62	52	13	66	55	13	69	54	13	68	57	17	75
		74	60	99	02	74	57	11	27	04	35	40	31	78	42	83
	Per cent	3.5	13.	5.4	4.8	10.	5.5	4.8	8.7	5.3	4.5	7.5	4.9	4.5	8.5	5.1
		5	3	4	8	58	5	4	8	4	1	8	4	9	3	8
14	Madhya Pradesh	89	64	96	68	48	73	73	57	79	80	85	88	88	11	10
		52	7	03	74	3	60	34	1	08	15	5	72	08	89	00
	Per cent	6.6	5.8	8.3	6.4	3.7	6.1	6.4	3.7	6.1	6.6	4.8	6.4	7	5.8	6.8
		6	7		4	2	4	4	8	2	6	3	1		2	3
15	Maharashtra	92	13	10	10	18	12	11	21	13	11	20	13	12	23	15
		61	77	65	22	81	13	54	34	71	62	53	69	89	64	28
	Per cent	6.8	12.	9.2	9.5	14.	10.	10.	14.	10.	9.6	11.	9.9	10.	11.	10.
		9	5	2	8	48	52	14	12	61	5	61	9.9	25	56	44
16	Manipur	13	5	14	14	4	14	14	5	15	14	5	15	14	10	15
		8		3	5		9	6		0	5		1	0		0
	Per cent	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
		4	5	2	4	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	1	1	5	0.1
17	Meghalaya	16	-	16	16	50	21	16	43	20	13	72	21	15	80	23
		0		0	4		4	0		3	7		0	2		2
	Per cent	0.1	-	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1
		1		4	5	8	8	4	8	6	1	1	5	2	9	6

Sr. No	States/UTs	Number in '000'														
		1995-96			2000-01			2005-06			2010-11			2015-16		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
18	Mizoram	59	6	66	69	7	76	80	9	90	82	10	92	79	11	90
	Per cent	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.06
19	Nagaland	138	12	149	132	11	144	154	15	169	160	18	178	177	19	197
	Per cent	0.13	0.12	0.13	0.12	0.11	0.14	0.15	0.15	0.16	0.16	0.18	0.17	0.17	0.19	0.19
20	Odisha	3909	53	3966	3940	12	4067	4235	12	4356	4512	15	4667	4667	19	4866
	Per cent	2.9	0.48	3.43	3.69	0.96	3.39	3.72	0.79	3.37	3.75	0.87	3.37	3.71	0.97	3.32
21	Punjab	1085	7	1093	988	8	997	996	7	1004	1042	10	1053	1074	17	1093
	Per cent	0.8	0.06	0.94	0.93	0.06	0.83	0.87	0.05	0.78	0.87	0.05	0.76	0.85	0.08	0.75
22	Rajasthan	5192	156	5348	5605	198	5819	5855	316	6186	6330	546	6888	6866	77	7655
	Per cent	3.86	1.42	4.64	5.025	1.52	4.85	5.14	2.09	4.79	5.26	3.09	4.98	5.46	3.79	5.23
23	Sikkim	403	3	444	656	1	676	686	53	736	713	3	755	665	5	725
	Per cent	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.06	0.01	0.06	0.06	0.03	0.06	0.06	0.02	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.05
24	Tamil Nadu	6681	1322	8012	6422	1417	7859	6647	1527	8174	6548	1551	8118	6350	1560	7938
	Per cent	4.97	12.01	6.93	6.02	10.91	6.55	5.84	10.14	6.34	5.47	8.77	5.87	5.05	7.63	5.42
25	Telangana	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	4361	1193	5554	4579	1368	5948
	Per cent	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3.62	6.74	4.01	3.64	6.69	4.06
26	Tripura	277	23	301	429	50	479	506	59	565	518	60	578	502	71	573
	Per cent	0.21	0.21	0.26	0.4	0.38	0.44	0.44	0.39	0.44	0.43	0.34	0.42	0.4	0.34	0.39
27	Uttar Pradesh	20376	1128	21564	20520	1238	21808	21005	1428	22458	21680	1621	23325	21972	1824	23822
	Per cent	15.17	10.24	18.63	19.11	9.74	18.07	18.45	9.45	17.38	18	9.17	16.86	17.47	8.92	16.27
28	Uttarakhand	NA	NA	NA	828	60	891	849	70	922	821	90	913	775	105	881
	Per cent	NA	NA	NA	0.78	0.46	0.74	0.75	0.46	0.71	0.68	0.51	0.66	0.62	0.51	0.6
29	West Bengal	6342	205	6547	6561	226	6790	6749	238	6992	6869	249	7123	7008	230	7243
	Per cent	4.72	1.86	5.66	6.15	1.74	5.66	5.93	1.57	5.41	5.7	1.41	5.15	5.57	1.12	4.95
30	Andaman & Nicobar Island	8	2	10	9	3	11	9	3	12	8	3	12	8	4	12
	Per cent	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01
31	Chandigarh	2	Ne	2	1	Ne	1	1	Ne	Ne	1	Ne	1	1	Ne	1

Sr. No.	States/UTs	Number in '000'														
		1995-96			2000-01			2005-06			2010-11			2015-16		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	Per cent	0.01	Neg	0.01	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg
32	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	12	2	14	12	2	14	12	2	14	12	2	15	12	3	15
	Per cent	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01
33	Daman & Diu	3	Neg	3	5	1	6	6	1	8	7	1	8	6	2	8
	Per cent	0.02	Neg	0.02	Neg	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
34	Delhi	30	4	35	24	3	28	21	3	25	17	2	20	17	3	21
	Per cent	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
35	Lakshadweep	7	2	9	6	3	10	5	4	10	5	4	10	5	4	10
	Per cent	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.01	Neg	0.03	0.01	Neg	0.02	0.01	Neg	0.02	0.01
36	Puducherry	26	7	34	29	8	38	25	6	31	25	7	33	26	8	34
	Per cent	0.02	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.02
37	All India	134354	11012	115580	106669	12990	119931	113851	15115	129227	12043	17683	138348	125751	20439	146454
	Per cent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: ,

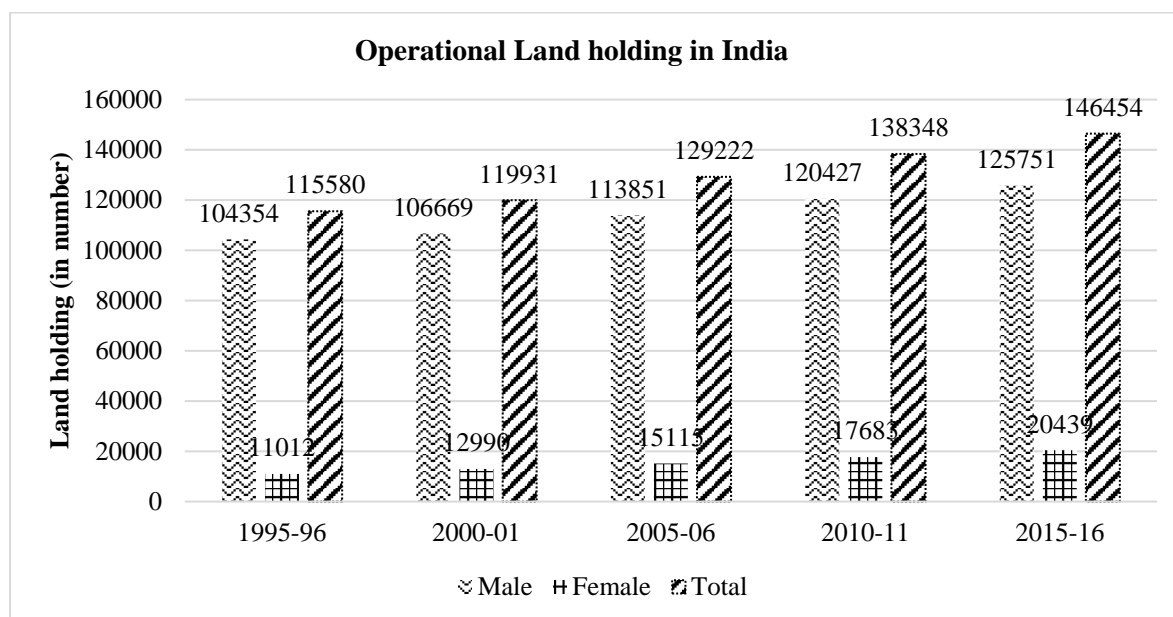
Neg* = Negligible (less than 500) NA* = Not available

Total* = Includes institutional holding also Table 6 shows that the leading states in India with regard to share of women in the ownership of land in 1995-96 were Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Maharashtra. However, in these states too, the share of women in land ownership hovers only between 17 to 18 per cent. Further, in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, the share of women land-owners has increased marginally during the period of 1995-96- to 2000-01 (14 %and 18 %respectively), but in the same time period in Kerala, the share of women land ownership declined from 13 %to 11per cent.

During the time period between 2005-06 to 2010-11, the leading states in India with regard to share of women land ownership were Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Bihar with 17per cent,14%and 12%share respectively. Between 2010-11 and 2015-16, there was a declining trend in women land ownership in all Indian states except Haryana, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Odisha, Tripura, and Rajasthan.

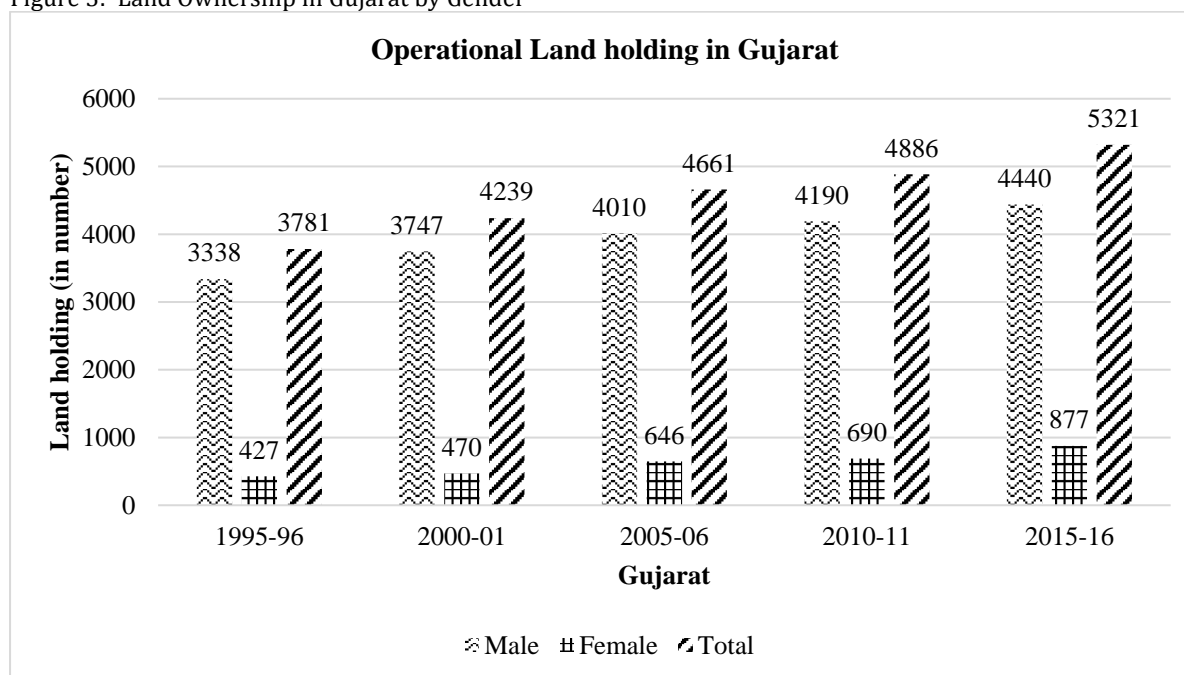
Further, the Table 5 shows that in Arunachal Pradesh and north-eastern states had a lower proportion of female land ownership. The reasons for this could be that in Arunachal Pradesh and other north-eastern states the immovable asset (land) rights are governed by social customs. In Arunachal Pradesh, the ancestral land is given to the sons. If there are no male heirs in the family, the land is given to the other male relatives such as nephews. The Draft Arunachal Pradesh Marriage and Inheritance Property Bill, 2021 suggested that if a woman from AST (Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribes) marries with a man from non-AST, she would be deprived of her tribal status as well as rights over land. . West Bengal was one of the leading states in terms of land reforms but failed to bring gender equity in land ownership. Upper class Hindu and Muslim women did not work on family-owned farms whereas women from Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes worked on their family-owned farms.

Figure 2: Land Ownership in India by Gender



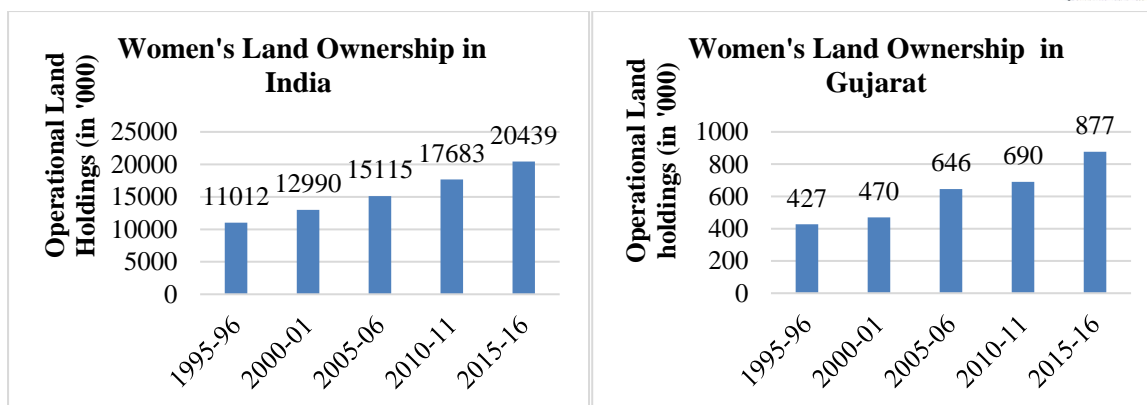
Source:

Figure 3: Land Ownership in Gujarat by Gender



Source:

Figure 4 .1 Figure 4.2
Women's Land Ownership in India Women's Land Ownership in Gujarat



Source:

As shown in Figure 4 .1 and 4.2, Gujarat does not differ much from the all-India trends with regard to land ownership by women. The share of women land-owners is dismal compared to that of male land-owners. However, during the Agricultural Census years 195-96, 2000-01, 2005-06, 2010-11 and 2015-16, the share of women land-owners has improved slightly, both with respect to the State of Gujarat as well as at the all-India level.

Efforts to increase women's land ownership in India

South Indian states lead in terms of female land holding due to the existence of matrilineal social structure . Government initiatives by Andhra Pradesh and Telangana state namely 'Bhoomi' initiative (Bhoomi Nyaya Sahaya Kendram) helps poor women in securing their land rights. Para-legal assistance is also provided for this purpose in these states since 2011 . Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra states ended coparcener's rights at birth to daughters and Kerala state has abandoned the joint land ownership altogether. Gujarat is lagging behind in terms of percentage share of women in land ownership even though government of Gujarat has taken several initiatives regarding women's land ownership rights such as 'Nari Gaurav Niti' in 2006 to promote gender equity in terms of land the registration fees, transfer fees and stamp duty on land registered in the name of women, in order to promote land registration in the name of women either jointly or as individual owners.

CONCLUSION

Ample constitutional and legal provisions exist in India that encourage women to assume the ownership of land. However, the inhibiting factors against women's land ownership are mainly the social customs and traditions that promote and perpetuate patriarchal structure of land ownership; lack of awareness and desire amongst women for owning land as an asset; family structures where women are supposed to migrate from their paternal home after marriage as per social custom; lack of awareness among women about their legal rights etc. A change in social customs and traditions; legal measures to loosen the noose of patriarchy; as well as pro-active efforts by women themselves; are some of the measures to be taken if a higher share of women in land ownership is to be ascertained.

DECLARATION

We declare that the paper submitted for this journal is our original work. It has not been sent elsewhere for the publication.
(Authors)

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