UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities
Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotho

Research Topic:

Exploring the impact of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 on the improvement of women's land rights: Case study in Grand Bassa County, Wee Statutory District.

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Date: March 2024

DECLARATION

I, Isaac Muapoh, after reading the University of Pretoria (UP) policy on plagiarism, I am fully aware of the penalties associated. I therefore declare that this dissertation which I submit in fulfilment of a degree of Master of Social Science in Development Studies at the University of Pretoria (UP), is my authentic work and has not by any means been previously submitted by me for a degree at this University of any other University across the globe. Regardless, it is important to note that where secondary information was used, I fully reference and gave credit to the origin author (s) of the view.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this dissertation, has obtained the required research ethics approval/ exemption for the research described in this work. The author declares that they have observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's Code of ethics for scholarly activities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For the first time in my entire academic journey, I completed a degree beyond the due period. The past two years have been a roller coaster, from losing my aunty in whom arms I was born and grown into the man I am today, to working full time while balancing my studies, were life experiences I will share with my children.

Amidst the challenges, I am super excited to finally achieve this milestone not just for myself but my entire family where I am the first to achieve this feat. At some point of the study, I felt my village people wanted to ensure that a member of my family didn't achieve a master's degree. It is just important to say that God brought me this far.

While I struggled to get here, I would like to acknowledge the support of two special persons who also ensure I got to work reminding me that their lives also depended on this degree. Special thanks to my mother Anna M. Kaideweah my single mother who has been the pillar of my strength right from birth. Though this woman has no formal education, she would remind me as I leave for work and upon return that I have a degree to complete else her friends will make mockery of her. I am excited that I completed this for her.

To my wife, Mrs. Agatha Serwaa Boateng Muapoh, I am super proud of having you by my side and pushing me beyond my limit. Thanks for always making me to complete this, I know there were times we almost fought because of her repeatedly reminding me to ensure this was complete. Now I see that all you did were all in my best interest. I love you and thanks for always making me a better person.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of the 2018 Liberian Land Rights Act (LLRA OF 2018) on women's land rights and participation in land governance. Drawing on experiences from diverse stakeholders in Liberia, it investigates the historical challenges faced by women due to patriarchal traditions. The study explores how interventions by women's rights organizations have fostered participation but identifies a need for further action by the government and NGOs to ensure women's full decision-making power and equal land rights. Based on interviews with 43 research participants, and a review of the laws and existing literature the study reveals tradition, limited information, and inadequate education as barriers to effective implementation of the LLRA if 2018. These factors are compounded by a lack of dedicated funding for women's empowerment and limited resources for the roll out of the new legislation. To address these challenges, the study proposes key recommendations of comprehensive public education campaigns, strengthening the Land Authority, engaging traditional leaders, and establishing a financial empowerment fund for women. This research aims to inform Liberian policymakers and stakeholders, ultimately enabling women to unlock their economic potential and contribute to national development.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The West African nation of Liberia has a rich history marked by social and political challenges, including a prolonged civil war that ended in 2003. Land conflicts were one of the underlying issues that contributed to the civil war. Throughout its history, women in Liberia have experienced systematic discrimination and marginalization, particularly in relation to land rights. Traditional customs and patriarchal norms have often hindered women from owning, inheriting, or accessing land, resulting in their exclusion from economic opportunities and social empowerment. It is against this background that this study focuses on the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 and its impact on women's land rights. According to Pott (2020), most legal reforms in Liberia are constituted to achieve transformation that will bring equity in the distribution of wealth, of which land is a key part.

The purpose of this study is to examine the progress made in strengthening women's land rights in Liberia, with a particular focus on the implementation of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018. The case study for this research is the Administrative District #3, Political District #4, Wee Statutory District. The data was collected using a desk research approach complemented by interviews with community dwellers and key informants in the case study area. This study is essential because, prior to 2018, Liberia lacked a formal land rights declaration that safeguarded citizens' customary land rights. As a new law, the implementation of the Land Rights Act will benefit from ongoing research to assess progress and enhance our understanding of land rights, particularly for women. This study will enhance the reader's understanding of the Liberia Land Rights Act and how it has strengthened or improved women's right to land ownership. There are also significant lessons gathered from this study, which can help influence other countries and regions who are yet to enact laws that encourage women land rights.

According to the Liberia Truth and Reconciliation commission, land remains a major influencer of conflict in the country Gwonio, J. S. (1986). Growing up as a young man in Liberia, I saw the struggle my parents went through to ensure food for our family. I observed

how women struggled to access land for farming activities only because they are women. As a young man committed to peace and development in Liberia and the world, it is my belief that my country cannot ensure peace and security without resolving the many land issues.

This report offers background data that explains the context of land rights in Liberia. There is a literature review section in Chapter Two that shows some of the issues associated with women's land rights locally and continentally. The research problem will explain the gap in our knowledge about the implementation of the Act, while Chapter Three on methodology will explain the methodology used in carrying out the research for this dissertation and to answer the research questions. Chapter Four sets out what was found from the field research before Chapter Five discusses and then concludes the dissertation with a focus on the main lessons from the literature and my empirical research.

1.2 Background of the research

Mainstreaming gender in social systems has gained renewed attention in the 21st century. It has been viewed as a building block for sustainable social change and a pillar for economic development (Chandah 2013; Zvobgo 2014; Mendum 2018). The transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular under SDG 5, has set a new tone for the recognition of women in the development of communities and nations at large. The policies at the global level emphasize the need to ensure that there are systems at the global, regional, and national levels to push toward gender parity through the inclusion and involvement of women in key decision-making positions. One question that needs to be asked, however, is whether women have been able to effectively benefit from the various legislative and institutional mechanisms introduced for economic empowerment and land ownership; this is the gap to be addressed by this study.

SDG 5 emphasizes the need to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls UNDP (2015a). This implies that the need to recognize women’s human rights and address gender inequality has been repeatedly recognized in international law and by researchers, unions, and civil society. From the Beijing Platform for Action to the Human Rights Council, treaty bodies, and UN Resolutions, member states and experts have repeatedly recognized that there is an urgent need to recognize and protect the rights of women in the development matrix (Oakley 2000; Mendum 2018).

Continentally, Agenda 2063 provides a commitment to improving the participation of women in politics through aspiration number three (African Union 2020). The aspiration is primarily meant to address the historical imbalances between men and women in political and development participation. The Liberia Land Rights Act (LLRA) of 2018 was passed by the Liberian government in September 2018 with the aim of addressing long-standing issues related to land tenure, ownership, and governance in the country. It was considered landmark legislation that sought to secure and protect the rights of all Liberians, including vulnerable groups such as women. Women in Liberia have experienced systematic discrimination and marginalization, particularly in relation to land rights. Traditional customs and patriarchal norms have often hindered women from owning, inheriting, or accessing land, resulting in their exclusion from economic opportunities and social empowerment. This is happening regardless of the Constitution of Liberia in Article 22 giving land ownership rights to Liberians regardless of tribes, gender, class, or religious background.

Liberia's land crisis can be traced back to the country's inception with the arrival of the American Colonization Society (ACS) in 1822. They were interested in collecting land to use for freed black slaves returning to Africa from America. According to Gwoni (1986) indigenous Liberians observed the advent of the ACS in the 19th century and the forceful taking of their land. Berkeley (2001) reported that upon the arrival of the ACS the indigenous Liberians were forcefully dispossessed of their land and coerced to accept basic economic commodities including beads, tobacco, gunpowder, clothing, mirrors, food, and rum in exchange for their land. Through the Liberia Code of Law of 1958, the Americo Liberians took advantage of the indigenous Liberians and transferred all land to be under the control of the government because they dominated the government, thereby giving them sole distribution power to give land to persons of their choosing. For indigenous Liberians, this meant they were reduced to being tenants or squatters on the land with only user rights, not secure ownership or long-term occupation rights (Konvitz, 2016).

With this exclusive power of land ownership being under government control, large land concessions were awarded to companies without including the communities. Those companies would promise the development of the communities but over time they instead only took away the community resources leaving the community to benefit nothing. The usage of these lands by companies with the authority given from the central government excluding the local communities led to many uprisings and protests. Considering that this was a national concern

with our research area also being affected, one permanent figure leading those uprising in Wee District was Mr. Vincent Willie who then became a District representative as the result of being famous with the people who saw him as the lone voice in times of trouble. Those protest actions through which the community dwellers expressed their disappointment to both the Government and the Concessionaires were a catalyst in the land rights acts that gave land ownership to the community instead of the Government.

Between 1989 to 2003, Liberian suffered 14 years of civil crisis and this added to a number of land issues in the country. As a result of the civil crisis, many Liberians who were land owners fled the country causing them to lose their land deeds because their homes were burned down, or misplaced them while fleeing for their lives, and they were unable to reclaim their land after the war. Land abandoned during the conflict was often occupied by different families and the original occupants lacked legitimate documentation to prove their ownership. This has deepened tensions and could put Liberia at the risk of another round of civil upheaval as the Liberia Truth and Reconciliation Commission warned (ICG, 2009). During all of this, patriarchal control in Liberia, as it is in other parts of Africa, has kept women in the background as housewives who are primarily responsible for household chores (cooking, cleaning, childcare, etc.) and have no say in land debates (Rezek, 2021).

The policies at the global level emphasize the need to ensure that there are systems at the global, regional, and national levels to push toward gender parity through the inclusion and involvement of women in key decision-making positions. This implies that the need to recognize women's human rights and address gender inequality has been repeatedly recognized in international law as well as by researchers, unions, and civil society. From the Beijing Platform for Action to the Human Rights Council, treaty bodies, and UN Resolutions, member states and experts have repeatedly recognized that there is an urgent need to recognize and protect the rights of women in the development matrix. Among these are the 1965 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD); and the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

At national Level there is the Equal Rights of Customary Marriage Law of 1998; Title 8 of the Liberian Code of Laws Revised of 1972, now referred to as the New Decedents Estates Law. These instruments aim to contribute to create a balance in land acquisition, use, and management that will improve the respect for Human Rights (Mutangadura, 2004). Regardless of these policies, laws, and treaties, Landesa (2015) have highlighted that the lack of

implementation of these policies in relation to customary practices has been the most compelling reason why women's land rights in Liberia continue to be a major concern. This concern became more vivid during the 3rd Republic (2003 to be precise), which started during the presidency of Africa's first female president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who sought to address these inequalities by promoting gender equality at all levels. Hence, the Government of Liberia and its development partners embraced practical solutions to these land challenges and promoted women's access as a means of preventing violence and sustaining peace. According to Frontpage Africa (2015), the Liberia Land Commission was established on August 4, 2009, with the following functions as the result of the above efforts. The functions of the Liberia Land Commission are as follows:

I) Lead access to the country's land, both private and public, in an equitable and productive manner.

ii) Lead land tenure security and the rule of law in landholding and property transactions

III) Lead land use, management, and administration that is more effective or sustainable; and

iv) Lead land resources are being invested in and developed across the country.

With these responsibilities, the Liberia Land Commission drafted the Liberia Land Rights Policy of 2013, which largely informed the drafting and the passage of the LLRA of 2018. This was an important step in efforts towards land governance improvement by the Government of Liberia (GOL), which seeks to address issues of land rights, with a particular focus on gender equality (Kaba, 2019). In an attempt to provide women equal land rights to their male counterparts, the Land Rights Act, Article 3, bullet four says: “To confirm, declare and ensure equal access and equal protection, with respect to land ownership, use and management, including ensuring that customary land and private land are given equal legal protection and that land ownership is provided for all Liberian, regardless of identity, custom, ethnicity, tribe, language, gender or otherwise”. It is therefore the progress of such attempts which aims to offer a level playing field for equal land access regardless of gender now serves as the focus of this study.

The LLRA of 2018 introduced several provisions to promote gender equality in land ownership and protect women's land rights. Overall, the LLRA in Liberia represents a significant step towards improving women's land rights by legally recognizing their equal rights to own,

inherit, and control land. It is an important tool for advancing gender equality and empowering women in the country.

Women's land rights are affirmed unequivocally in constitutions and international human rights conventions in many African countries, but customary practices usually prevail on the ground, reinforcing gender inequality and often denying women land inheritance (Evans 2016; Landesa 2015). It is important to note that despite the progress made, challenges remain in fully realizing women's land rights in Liberia. Implementation gaps, limited awareness of the law, and deeply entrenched cultural norms continue to pose obstacles. Ongoing efforts are needed to ensure effective implementation, strengthen women's access to justice, and promote gender-responsive land governance practices.

While the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 represents a progressive legal framework, it is essential to examine its actual impact on the improvement of women's land rights, particularly at the local level. Therefore, this study focuses on Grand Bassa County, specifically the Wee Statutory District, to investigate how the implementation of the Act has affected women's land rights in practice.

Through this case study in Grand Bassa County, this research seeks to identify the changes, challenges, and opportunities that have emerged since the enactment of the Land Rights Act. It aims to shed light on the effectiveness of the Act's provisions in empowering women and promoting gender equality in land rights. Furthermore, the study will explore the factors that may hinder or facilitate the implementation of the Act, providing valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and women's rights advocates.

Understanding the impact of the LLRA of 2018, on women's land rights in Grand Bassa County will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on gender and land rights. While also informing future policy interventions and strategies aimed at enhancing women's empowerment and gender equality in land governance.

1.3 Statement of the problem:

In 2018 the drive to a lasting solution for women land rights was concluded through the signing of the LLRA. This has not yet become the perfect solution as local s' and international land rights advocacy organizations have identified some specific gaps in the legislation of which women land rights was at the top of the list. The lack of regulations, clear implementation strategy, monitoring and evaluation, as well as a lack of awareness about how successfully

women's land rights can be enhanced, are some of the major challenges of the Act. As this is a new piece of legislation, there hasn't been much research done on its effectiveness in addressing the issues for which it was passed.

1.4 Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to assess the impact of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 on women's rights to land in Liberia.

Sub-Objectives

The sub-objectives of the study are to: assess the effectiveness of the specific provisions within the LLRA of 2018; evaluate the implementation of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 in the Wee Statutory District within Grand Bassa County, Liberia, with a specific focus on improving women's rights to land; identify any challenges or barriers encountered towards the implementation of the LLRA of 2018; and provide contextual-attuned policy recommendations for improving women's rights to land in Liberia.

1.5 Research questions

The main research question is: What is the impact of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 on women's right to land in Liberia?

The sub-research questions are:

1. What is the impact of the specific provisions outlined in the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 on the protection and realization of women's land rights in Liberia?
2. What are the impacts of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 on women's right to land in the Wee Statutory District within Grand Bassa County, Liberia, and what specific improvements have been observed since its implementation?
3. What are the challenges and barriers faced during the implementation of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 in relation to women's right to land?
4. What context specific policy recommendations can be provided to improve women's right to land in Liberia?

1.6 Motivation for the Study:

The issue of women's participation in land matters has been the top issue globally. Inequality in terms of gender participation is noticed globally. As a way of rectifying these incongruities, a number of international and regional declarations or conventions have been crafted to aid the

participation of women in the land and other women related processes. These include the Maputo protocol, Beijing Declaration of 1995, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the African Women's Rights Observatory (OWRO), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender Protocol amongst others. All these were aimed at bringing the perceptions, experience, knowledge, and interests of women as well as men to bear on policy-making, planning, and decision-making (Pateman 1970). A considerable amount of literature has been published on the participation of women in politics and governance (Kurebwa 2014, Dube 2013). Nevertheless, there is, unsurprisingly given how new it is, a dearth of literature that analyzes the impact of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 on women's right to land in Liberia. This remains one of the critical research gaps this study aims to address. Despite the global, regional and national legislation on women empowerment, the right to land in Liberia by women has not been fully investigated.

1.7 Structure for the Rest of the Study:

The research is structured into five chapters. This first one presents the introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, motivation of the study, and the structure of the rest of the study. Chapter two presents a review of the literature on women's rights to land. Chapter three provides the research methodology that was used in the research process and chapter four provides the presentation of the research findings from the field research. Chapter five presents the discussion of the findings that lead to the main lessons, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the review of related literature on the effectiveness of the LLRA of 2018 in enhancing women's rights to land. The focus of this chapter centers around a critical review of literature on the barriers for women's land rights, the levels of participation by women in accessing land, and the impact of different legislative and institutional systems on the rights of land by women. Further, the chapter also presents a critical review of the weaknesses of previous studies on the same topic.

2.2 Theoretical perspective

2.2.1 Liberal feminism theory

Mainstream feminism or liberal feminism theory is a main branch of feminism defined by its focus on achieving gender equality through political and legal reform within the framework of liberal democracy and informed by a human rights perspective as propounded by Saulnier (1996). He argues that liberal feminism focuses on rights of women as in access to education, rights to vote, citizenship and other issues of equality. It is interdisciplinary and reflects the diversity of feminism and the full range of feminist political and theoretical stances. Feminism reflects a world view that values women and that confronts systemic injustices based on gender (Rich, 1986; Flax, 1999). It shifts its assumption, analytical lens and focus away from male view point and experience towards that of women. The theory shines light on social problems, trends and issues that are misidentified by the historically dominant male perspective within society. The theory focuses on power and oppression of women. To this end, this study would want to find out if the barriers to women's access to land in Liberia can be best understood using the liberal feminist theory.

What makes the theory creative and inclusive is that it often considers how systems of power and oppression interact as noted by Hesser-Biber (2002: 789). Creation of equal opportunities is the main aim of liberal feminism theory. The theory argues that women have the same capacity as men for moral reasoning and agency because patriarchy, particularly sexist division of labor, has historically denied women the opportunity to express and practice this reasoning. Therefore, it suggests that women ought to have the same economic rights, such as land ownership, that men have. The liberal feminist theory exists to rectify inequalities based on sex, although strategies for social change vary enormously (Eisensten, 1981). Socialization into gender roles has loopholes as it produces inflexible and rigid expectations of women. Discrimination prevents women from having equal opportunities between male and females. The theory seeks for changes to take place within existing structures. Hence in exploring the role and effectiveness of the Liberian Land Rights Act to remain crucial to enhance women participation in accessing land as the theory argues that existing structures are to be renewed to include women in politics. Moss et al (1977: 789) concluded that liberal feminist theory took the weapons of the civil rights movement, anti-discrimination legislation and affirmative action and used them to fight gender inequality.

2.2.2 The feminist legal theory

The feminist legal theory as postulated by Levit, N., & Verchick, R. R. (2016) is based on the view that men and women should be given equal political, economic and property rights. The concern is men's power over women manifest in male dominated language, culture, religion, and knowledge (Andersson, 2021).

Feminist legal theory emphasizes that societal norms, power structures, and discriminatory behaviours are frequently reflected and reinforced by laws and legal institutions. It is important to critically evaluate how the LLRA of 2018 tackles the historical marginalization and dispossession of women in the context of land rights by using this perspective to research the law. Women's subjective lives are different from that of men. The quality of their suffering is different from that of men's. Important from a feminist legal perspective is the difference in the level and quality of pain and pleasure suffered or enjoyed women compared to men (Andersson, 2021). Aspects of the feminist legal theory are examined in this thesis to enhance and validate the need for women's land rights. This theory can also be applied to this case study. Some tenets of this theory are explained in. the sub-section below.

2.2.2.1 Intersectionality

Feminist Legal Theory recognizes that individuals experience multiple forms of oppression and discrimination based on their gender, race, class, and other social identities. By considering the intersectional nature of women's land rights in Grand Bassa County, this perspective helps identify how various factors, such as ethnicity, socio-economic status, and cultural practices, interact with gender to shape women's experiences of land ownership, inheritance, and control. According to the 2018 LLRA's guiding principles, land governance must respect women's rights to land and prioritize them in all decision-making processes. Applying a decolonial feminist lens is essential since the intersectionality principle emphasizes that women experience and encounter injustice in diverse ways (OCHA 2023).

2.2.2.2 Power and Patriarchy

The UNPD (2015) land report on Liberia explained power and patriarchy as a systematic difference in land tenure rights between men and women that contributes to structural inequality and to poverty for women. The report further shared that access to and control over land use determine food production and incomes in rural areas and therefore household well-being. The land report further highlighted that at least half of Liberian women feel insecure about their land tenure and patriarchal norms contribute to land disputes. Feminist Legal

Theory emphasizes the role of power dynamics and patriarchal structures in shaping legal systems. In the context of land rights, this perspective examines how traditional gender roles, norms, and biases influence women's access to and control over land, as well as the ways in

In 1976, Hartman explored further the patriarchy idea. He identified two key dimensions that lead to male dominance and control over a wide range of home and societal activities. The first was men's overwhelming strength. According to Anigwe, men's material power and women's economic dependence on them are what expresses males as superior and women as inferior due to their need for men (Anigwe, 2014). The second element is based on the division of labor, which identifies the position of women as one in the domestic sphere, while males govern the modern economy. Women's domestic responsibilities consume the majority of their energy as well as their time, leaving them with neither enough energy nor the leisure nor the mental freedom to participate in creative activities in the way men do in the public arena. As a result, male domination persists, as men continue to dominate key positions in society's socioeconomic structure, as well as significant institutions such as law and politics (Alzuabi, 2016). As a result, women's oppression and subjugation are based on male dominance and the confinement of women to domestic tasks.

This concept of patriarchy will be used in the study to show how men's material power has inhibited the Liberian Land Act of 2018's efforts to increase women's access to land in Liberia (Almasry, 2012). Gender stereotypes, such as those depicting women as unable to lead as well as serve, keep women on the outside of society by stressing their perceived flaws. This has influenced society perceptions of women (Altius & Raveloharimisy, 2016). The absence of women from significant access to land and the means of production posts erodes democratic values and stifles societal economic development. To this end, this study aims at assessing the level of women's rights to land in Liberia due to the enactment of the LLRA of 2018.

2.2.2.4 Transformative Change

Feminist Legal Theory recognizes the need for transformative change in legal systems to challenge gender inequalities and achieve gender justice. By evaluating the outcomes of the Liberia Land Rights Act, this perspective assesses the extent to which the legislation has brought about significant improvements in women's land rights.

2.2.2.5 An Analysis of Gender Mainstreaming

The international Beijing conference on women held in 1995 endorsed the strategy of gender mainstreaming to promote greater gender equality. In the United Nations, gender

mainstreaming was defined as assessing and responding to the implications for women and men of any plans and actions, including in the development of any legislation, policies or programs. Focussing on the gendered implications and outcomes of any intervention aims to move us towards gender equality. The term mainstreaming according to Kepuladze (2010: 47) resulted from the objective to incorporate gender equality into the mainstream or the main development activities. It is a strategy which is used to promote gender equality. The evaluation of various public policy effects on men and women of any planned policy measures, such as laws and programs, in all fields and levels with the goal of attaining gender equality is known as gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is a strategy which is considerate of the needs and priorities of men and women at all stages of decision making. It challenges the centralization of power on one gender henceforth advocating for the inclusion of women in decision making at the workplace somas to motivate them.

2.2.3 Liberalism

Liberalism is a political ideology based on the concepts of liberty and equality. Liberals accept a wide range of perspectives depending on the central issue. They support programs and principles such as press freedom, speech freedom, religious freedom, civil rights, free markets, international cooperation, gender equality, secular governments, and democratic society in general (Crenshaw, 2017). Gender equality, as defined by liberals, is a state of equal access to opportunity and resources based on gender, decision-making, and economic participation; honoring the status of various behaviors, equal needs, and goals regardless of gender. Gender equality, or equality between men and women, is based on the idea that all human beings, men and women, can develop their unique skills by making choices free of arbitrary gender roles, stereotypes, and prejudices. Gender equality means that people of all genders have the same aspirations, men and women's actions, as well as their needs, are scrutinized, respected, and preferred in equal measure (Green, 2017).

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals includes a specific objective for gender equality, which aims to eradicate discrimination and cruelty towards girls and women by ensuring equal opportunities and involvement in all aspects of life. Promoting female political engagement is a step toward achieving the SDGs. Goal 5 aims to "ensure women's full and effective involvement in political, economic, and public life, as well as equitable opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making" (United Nations Women, 2017).

Many countries have developed policies and strategies to increase women's political engagement over time. The creation of new women-only parliamentary seats is an example of these policies and methods. Advocacy and capacity development are two other strategies (Malongza, Apusigah & Abagre, 2017). Women's participation in politics remains minimal, despite the design of these policies and the deployment of various measures. This means that strategies for increasing women's participation in political leadership should focus on specific issues such as cultural, socioeconomic, and political factors.

2.3.1 The legal and Institutional Systems on Women's Rights to Land and Empowerment

Various African countries have formulated legal frameworks to ensure that they address the imbalances that existed during the colonial times. Many governments have put forward legal frameworks to fund and assist young women and girls in pursuing their educational studies (Chandah, 2013). Mendum (2018) indicated that in South Africa, the legal environment seeks to give the government the obligation to take necessary measures to ensure that there is up-liftment of girls. As noted by Zvobgo (2014) the government is the central mechanism through which the protection and empowerment of marginalised girls and women should be realised. This seems to suggest that the government plays a crucial role in ensuring that it takes all necessary measures to empower young girls and women. These laws have also been promulgated at global level and ratified at regional level to ensure that women have gained access to various platforms or means of production. Regardless of various legislative systems implemented by African countries in enhancing the rights of women to land, several studies show that the laws have not been effective in enhancing the rights of women towards land ownership (Meinzen-Dick, Quisumbing, Doss, and Theis, 2019; Slavchevska, Doss, de la O Campos, and Brunelli, 2021; Chigbu, 2019). Over the years, in their constant commitment to reduce gender based discrimination, African governments have ratified several international conventions. These include the 1965 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), and the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (National Gender Policy, 2004).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, governments have been acting in direct provision of mainstream interventions for empowerment of rural girls and women. While Paradza and Matovu (2012) indicate that the government across the globe occupied a central role in the empowerment of rural girls and young women. Butaumocho (2016) raised concern over some African governments which continued to side-line rural girls and women in development initiatives

owing to the existence of the traditional paratracheal traditions and values in the society. Vyas-Doorgapersad (2016) further advances that in societies such as in Eswatini, the government does not play an active role in formulating legal frameworks for the empowerment of rural girls and women as the society is fused with societal imbalances which favours men at the expense of women. This is to say, though most governments play a very important role in empowering rural girls who are marginalized, some societies are still trapped within patriarchal structures that continue to entrench or deepen the marginalisation of women through lack of government support in empowering rural girls and women.

In South Africa, Ramparsad (2019), argues that the Constitution makes the achievement of equality a foundational value of the nation. It guarantees in section 9 equality for all permitting positive redress measures to advance previously disadvantage individuals and outlawing unfair discrimination by both the individuals and the state. In same vein, (Ncube, 2028) expressed that the South African Constitution upholds the right to equality of everyone regardless of gender, class, status, or tribes. Additionally, the constitution of South African contains specialize clauses that take into consideration the necessity for the government to aggressively promote fair access to the country's resources (Ramparsad, 2019). In addition, according to Malema and Naidoo (2017), the South African Department of Women attempts to contribute to greater gender equity with greater socio-economic transformation, programmes to empower women, and gendered analysis of policies. Further, the Department encourages the social, justice sector and other parts of government to protect women and promote women's empowerment. This includes promoting the full participation of women in leadership and decision-making roles and putting women's particular social and development needs at the centre of plans and resource allocation (Malema and Naidoo, 2017).

In Zimbabwe, the government made changes through policy implementation and law amendments to try and reduce gender inequality by ratifying international conventions and protocols. These treaties and protocols that aim to address gender inequality and include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. The Constitution of Zimbabwe has provisions against discrimination, which includes customary values and practices (Nkomo, 2014). The Government of Zimbabwe has also enacted several statutes and regulations aimed at protecting women from gender-based violence. These include the Domestic Violence Act, and the National Gender Policy. The need for regulations and statute that prevent gender-bases

violence and protect the rights of women has been identify across 10 of the top economies accounting for atleast 80% of gender gaps that have been corrected with countries like Iceland accounting for 90.8%. Other nations making scribes to close the gender gap include Ireland with 80.4% and Germany 80.1% ranking ninth and tenth while other Scandinavian nations like Finland with 86% second, Norway with 84.5% third, and Sweden with 82.2% at fifth. Counties like Rwanda with 81.1% 6th, Namibia 80.7% 8th, two nations in Sub-Saharan Africa; Nicaragua with 81.1% in Latin America and New Zealand with 84.1% 4th in East Asia and the Pacific round out the list of the top 10 countries (WEF, Report 2022). These results were taken from a sample of 102 countries across the globe. It can therefore be noted that women have been considered in many countries in different areas and have been empowered to effectively participate in various areas. This therefore invokes a need to make an enquiry on how the Liberian Land Rights Act of 2018 has transferred the rights of women towards land ownership. The international and regional legislative mechanisms have managed to ensure that women are considered in various positions of leadership which is key towards ensuring that access to economic opportunities like land ownership among other issues is no longer a problem. To this end, it remains imperative to understand from a global perspective the levels of participation of women in various political leadership systems. This can be used to assess the level of influence of women in the campaigning for the recognition of the rights of women in land ownership. Since the 1970s, gender issues and women's empowerment have received greater visibility and attention on global, regional, and country-level development agendas (Okeke-Uzodike, 2019). As a result of that, the industrial revolution enhancing sustainable and inclusive involvement is gaining traction as the global economy continues to struggle to recover from the recent shocks. This has greatly helped in placing people at the center of development and fostering progress within the limitation of the planet's finite resources (Rani, 2017). With the composition of women representing half of the global population, it is essential to utilize their economic potential to promote equitable and sustainable industrial growth (Singh and Kumar, 2017). Women empowerment is one of the ways for promoting growth and reducing poverty and achieving developmental goals (UNIDO, 2017). An empowered woman is able to make intellectual business decisions, and take effective choices regarding the usage and management of money. Women who have financial and business education and training will be better positioned to make informed decisions and take control of their economic lives (Rani, 2017; Singh and Kumar, 2017). Furthermore, Radovic-Markovic and Zivanovic (2019) argue that economic empowerment of women will reduce poverty and unlock wider economic

growth. Women are major actors in micro enterprises across Africa and could play a still larger role if the constraints holding them back are addressed.

The advocacy and resistance to land concessions in Liberia especially over the last decade of a massive wave of land-grab brought increased local and international attention to the problematic nature of the land governance system in Liberia, the consequences for the general governance and continued stability of the state, and the necessity for urgent land reform.

Contained in the scope of the Liberia land right act is the fact that women have right to land as opposed to the patriarchal system of land ownership in many communities. According to article 5; land ownership consists of the following rights: right to possess, right to use, right to include or exclude. Land ownership may be held singly by an individual or jointly by a community or Government. Under article 8, it is evident that land ownership is based on citizenship i.e one must be a citizen of Liberia.

From a historical perspective, it is discovered that in Liberia there have always been issues of disparity, as it concerns land ownership. During the ceasefire of the 14th years of civil war in Liberia, a successful peace process was negotiated thanks to the strong leadership of the United Nations presence. A pivotal component of the peace process was the establishment of institutions, legal frameworks, and social relationships that are sustainable, egalitarians, and viable to maintain the peace. The failure of land rights institutions to function in a more efficient, legal, and transparent way is a potentially explosive aspect of every postwar situation. Reforming land tenure through institutions, laws, policies, and capacity must address the complexity of land related issues resulting from the war as well as the causes of the conflict (Unruh, 2009).

The purpose of the Liberia land right act is to safeguard individuals right to land ownership and usage irrespective of their gender, through the enactment of laws to back it up. The need for the land right act was to end conflict and achieve peace so as to have an egalitarian society of equity and justice as it concerns land.

Table 1.1 above shows the statistics of the representation of women in political systems in leadership roles across different continents. From the table, it can be noted that, in 2016, 25% and 30.1% of the political leaders in Australia and the United States were women respectively. Between 2018 and 2020, it can be noted that the role of women in political leadership in Europe was better as compared to China and the Arab League. As shown in table 1.1, the role of women

in political processes leaders has remained high in European countries with 34% in Australia, 31% in the United States, and 25% in the United Kingdom. This shows that in the European continent, women's participation in top political positions has considerable gains over other continents. To this end, it can be assumed that the level of women in top leadership positions has an influence towards the promotion of women's rights towards land access and access to various economic opportunities. This is in line with the international gender goals to achieve 50:50 gender balance and end all the discriminations against women. What remains questionable is the level of women who are in top political leadership in Liberia and how that has also been a pushing factor towards the implementation and effectiveness of the LLRA of 2018.

2.4 Women's Land Rights in Africa

Chigbu (2015) states that African countries (primarily in Eastern and Southern Africa) have undergone important land reforms that, among others things, have increased the recognition of women's land rights. Nevertheless there are still challenges in aligning statutory and customary tenure systems and forms of land administration. Bandiaky-Badji (2016) further explains that some countries including Cameroon, Gabon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Ivory Coast, and Senegal have recently begun land reforms efforts including other sectoral reforms that seeks to remove colonial and postcolonial legacies. These countries in the recent past have been left behind on women empowerment and improving their land rights due mostly to political instability and civil conflicts thereby securing their land tenure rights and right to forest in national reform process presents major obstacles for women in statutory and customary systems. While the progress of women ownership and control of land and natural resources has considerably improved in some countries the impact of gender inequality and African indigenous norms is still very visible. Unequal rights to land penalize women, prolong poverty, and deeply ingrained gender inequality in Africa. Land is a vital source of security against poverty throughout the continent and developing globe. Because obtaining land resources, securing land rights, establishing food security, and escaping poverty are all directly related, gender has emerged as a crucial problem in women's land rights. Despite owning only 1% of the land, women in Africa produce more than 80% of the continent's food (SOFA, 2011). Thus, increasing women's right to and authority over land is essential to Africa's socio economic progress.

Nevertheless, the role of women in various countries in planning and determining land use and land laws seems negligible. Women have not been given an active role in the formulation and

implementation of various laws and systems that empower them towards land ownership. Non-governmental organisations have however stepped in towards campaigning for various rights of women which land ownership is not an exception. Although adequate external assistance and involvement can be crucial in nurturing and buttressing the process of empowerment, empowerment is fundamentally a bottom-up process and cannot be articulated as a top-down plan.

In Liberia, patriarchal norms contribute to land disputes. Though there are about 40% of Liberian women working in agriculture yet, half of them feel insecure about their land tenure (Rezek, 2021). This is not just a matter of concern for Liberia but most low-income countries. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were approved in 2015, recognize that to eradicate poverty (Goal 1), equal rights to land ownership and control, as well as equal rights to inherit productive resources, will be required (target 1.4). The SDGs also suggest that policy and legal reforms are needed to offer women equal rights and control over land and other economic resources to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5), (target 5a). As a result, increasing women's land rights is widely acknowledged as a critical avenue to poverty reduction and gender equality on the international development agenda (United Nations, 2014)

Amongst many development concerns globally, land remains one of the most important concerns of the international community since the nineteenth century till date. This has been recognized by the international community, yet they have struggled to find a long-term solution. It is because of this global, ongoing, and national concern about land disputes that the United Nations, through the "Millennium Development Goal 3," placed a special emphasis on the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment and has highlighted the importance of enacting laws and policies that would eliminate women's social, economic, and political exclusion (UNDP, 2015).

According to UNDP(2015), Land is the most essential asset women depend on for their livelihood and well-being, yet its unequal distribution puts them (women) at a disadvantage to their male counterparts. Global land disputes have dominated global development debates, with the ICCPR recording it in its convention (Art. 2, 3, 25, 26), thereby calling on state actors to ensure equal distribution so that women's human rights, as well as their land rights, are not violated (Adeoye O. Akinola 2018).

Land is one of the bedrocks of economic development in most parts of Africa, According to Odeny, (2013: 13) "it is the source through which farmers, pastoralists, and other groups rely on their livelihoods." Land is also an important part of business assets, which play an important role in investment strategies. As a result, acquiring land rights can have a significant impact on economic growth. Land is a source of cultural legacy and identity". Allendorf, (2007: 27) put it this way "Most women remain dependent on the existence and goodwill of male relatives for access to land," according to current land relations, while Kameri-Mbote (2009: 31) further expanded that "women's rights to land have remained at the core of the drive for gender equality".

Even though most African Countries' land policy stipulates that there are no legal restrictions to women's property rights, this provision has had minimal impact in terms of women's land ownership (Government of Kenya, 2009). For example, Alden and Anseeuw (2011) expressed that the land inequality concern has contributed to several structural, economic, and cultural barriers in Southern Africa. The cultural impediment to the realization of women's property rights is the most difficult to remove of all the obstacles within indigenous communities, the colonial state preserved and occasionally imposed patriarchal land usage and ownership patterns, as well as reinforced a gender division of labour that strengthened males and disempowered women (Mbilinyi and Shechambo, 2009). This suggests that the empowerment and welfare debate is one of the justifications behind the drive to institutionalize women's rights. Women's land rights, according to proponents of the empowerment perspective, are an important tool for empowering women to achieve the state's development goals (Allendorf, 2007). For example, women who owned land in Thailand and India had more domestic economic power than women who did not own property, according to a study performed in Asia (Allendorf, 2007).

According to the welfare argument, promoting women's land rights will improve women's welfare and well-being, as well as their families' and the communities'. The welfare argument "rests on the belief that resources placed in the hands of women, rather than men, are more likely to be used to benefit children and others," according to (Allendorf, 2007:12). Because of its impact on women's access to land resources, the security of the land tenure system, agricultural output, and improved livelihood, Odeny (2013) reiterates the key importance of women's land rights in developmental discourse.

Furthermore, both socioeconomic and cultural factors, however, limit women's contributions to development activities. Women have limited access to credit and lack the financial means to purchase land, particularly in countries with capital-intensive and market economies with Kenya being a typical example. According to ILO (2016), women account for more than 60% of small-scale farmers in Southern Africa, and they employ more than 70% of the agricultural workers. Women's access to land influences not only their own and their families' standard of living, but also their food security yet they have unequal access to land rights.

According to Sen (2000), millions of individuals in poor countries do not have access to freedom. "Even if they are not officially slaves, they are deprived of basic liberties and are imprisoned in some form by economic poverty, social suffering, political oppression, or cultural authoritarianism". In caving a solution to this, the international community has established certain norms based on several legal foundations to preserve women's rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women are just a few examples. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which was adopted in 1981, and the Southern Africa for Development Community Declaration on Gender and Development, which was adopted in 1997, are all regional documents seeking to aid this problem (Mutangadura, 2004).

Recent relevant world conferences, such as the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, the 1994 Cairo Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and the 1995 Beijing 4th World Conference on Women - Declaration and Platform for Action all recognised the importance of addressing the gendered nature of human rights violations in order to advancement of women's rights and wider development (UNDP, 2014).

According to Akinola (2018), land-related conflict, gender-based land agitations, land hunger, illegal land occupations, and falling land production are all signs that the existing land arrangements need to be rethought across Africa. Even though post-colonial African states have been forced to start on land reform, African populations, particularly those in rural areas, continue to face land resource constraints. This reflects a historical shift in numerous parts of the continent from pre-colonial land excess to relative land deficiency, prompting land reform. Similar land crises arise in Africa.

Across the continent of Africa, the land question continues to be a fundamental challenge that exacerbates most countries' underdevelopment and raises the bar of patriarchal control and gender inequality across the continent. In his research, Odeny (2013) stated that while land remains a major economic asset for reducing poverty, ensuring food security, and generating income in Africa, a large portion of the land, approximately 75%, is still under customary tenure, which is governed by norms, historical practices, and unwritten law based on tradition and cultural affiliation, and thus represents a major impediment to equal land rights. This statement is backed up by a report in a Landesa article, which states that the land debate in Africa and its reform need to be rethought because there is a substantial disparity in land allocation between men and women across the continent. Liberia, like many other African countries, suffers from unequal land allocation. These Land access and tenure security are influenced by geography and traditional behaviours, and in some situations, gender (Landesa 2015). Kaba (2015) goes on to say that in most traditional communities in Liberia, land is only available through community elders and clan-based male lineages. This is mostly due to a communication and land awareness gap between policymakers and the public, which has aided patriarchal dominance significantly.

In Liberia, the constitution provides for equality on land rights regardless of gender, this is done both to uphold human rights declarations that country has signed up to but also because it enhances the government development goals. According to (Dezso and Ross, 2012) bridging the gap between woman and men and ensuing gender equality and women empowerment are key components needed in achieving development objectives. However, regardless the rise in national, continental, and global instruments protecting and ensuring a balance in gender participation in the economy, women involvement is still low (Oxfam, 2012). This goes beyond just the unequal disparities between men and women in the economy as (Beever, 2010) pointed out that similar scenario is visible in the political affairs attributing it to a major factor for conflict across the world.

Across the world, (Adams and Ferreira, 2009; Adams and Funk, 2010) pointed out that there has been increasing need to ensure equality in gender balance in positions of senior management as compared to just have gender (women) representation. There has been a trace of the significant impact gender balance in senior managerial positions can bring to an institution and country with France, Italy, Norway, and Spain being notable examples in Europe. (McKinsey and Company, 2010) pointed out improvement in performance at the result of less pilferages (women are less corrupt when compared to men), talents and an improve

level of decision making are other very important advantages pointed to. Similarly, studies have shown that women leaders are more likely to take their terms of reference more seriously focusing on deliverables than men and they have the capacity of multitasking which is an advantage. In terms of perspectives, women bring different options of perspectives to the discourse and having them in senior managerial roles will greatly improve decision making, Dezso and Ross (2012) argue while Huse and Solberg (2006) argues that having all or more male leaders without balancing gender could leader to 'groupthink'.

Furthermore, as mothers, women are natural mentors, empathetic, and identify as task executors hence, having women leaders always add a different layer to leadership Bhogaita (2011). Along similar lines, Curtis, Schmidt and Struber (2012) added to the debate surmising the belief that if women can manage household responsibilities with limited resource, they can do same in managerial roles while improving productivity in the institutions they manage. Moreover, the ratio of women to men graduating from universities across the world today shows that there are more women to men and the need for their talents and skills to be utilize cannot be overemphasize (European Commission, 2014). Women's involvement in leadership and institutional management roles is positively aligned to improvement in performance.

2.5 Barriers towards Women's Access to Land

This section explores existing literature on gender and land rights in Liberia, highlighting the challenges faced by women and the implications for their economic empowerment and social well-being.

2.5.1 Patriarchal Norms

In Liberia, patriarchal norms contribute to land disputes. Though there are about 40% of Liberian women working in agriculture yet, half of them feel insecure about their land tenure (Rezek, 2021). This is not just a matter of concern for Liberia but most low-income countries. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were approved in 2015, recognize that to eradicate poverty (Goal 1), equal rights to land ownership and control, as well as equal rights to inherit productive resources, will be required (target 1.4). The SDGs also suggest that policy and legal reforms are needed to offer women equal rights and control over land and other economic resources to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5), (target 5.a). As a result, increasing women's land rights is widely acknowledged as a critical avenue to poverty reduction and gender equality on the international development agenda (United Nations, 2014).

Amongst many development concerns globally, land remains one of the most important concerns of the international community since the nineteenth century. Yet they have struggled to find a long-term solution. According to UNDP (2015), Land is the most essential asset women depend on for their livelihood and well-being, yet its unequal distribution puts women at a disadvantage to their male counterparts. Global land disputes have dominated global development debates, as mentioned in the ICCPR convention (Art. 2, 3, 25, 26), thereby calling on state actors to ensure equal distribution so that women's human rights, as well as their land rights, are not violated (Adeoye, 2018).

Land is one of the bedrocks of economic development in most parts of Africa. According to Odeny, (2013: 13), "it is the source through which farmers, pastoralists, and other groups rely on their livelihoods." Land is also an important part of business assets, which play an important role in investment strategies. As a result, acquiring land rights can have a significant impact on economic growth. Land is a source of cultural legacy and identity. Allendorf (2007) put it this way: "Most women remain dependent on the existence and goodwill of male relatives for access to land," according to current land relations, while Kameri-Mbote (2009) further expanded that "women's rights to land have remained at the core of the drive for gender equality".

In addition to Allendorf (2007) initial view, it was further expressed that most women find themselves under different forms of attacks that extend to their families but their husbands on many occasions will prevent them from staying away from home for a long period due their fear that their personalities of adopting and learning quickly could lead to being more influential and their leadership could fast develop than the husbands thereby leading to abandonment of their home responsibilities. This has limited women access to role models that could inspire them to strive for occupying more senior leadership roles. At the result of these limitations, one finds out that most women in top leadership or managerial roles are often either divorced, widowed, or are single because the men they encounter are often uncomfortable with their achievements or brilliance. As a result of these restrictions, gender roles have been classified as all positions that prevent women from occupying executive positions unfortunately women are unable to ride themselves off those gender restricted roles thereby making women force to Strick a balance between their gender roles and their employment.

Moreover, religion has its own share of restrictions on women that continue to hinder them from full participation. From research conducted by the (UN Women Africa, 2021) the

respondent argued that positions of government in relation to politics are view by church leaders as violent (politics is a dirty game) and ask that women should not get involve. This along with many other reasons including women being traditionally prevented from speaking in public because their husbands are require to represent them has led to many women in Liberia being reluctant to participant in political activities hence, the Liberia senate with just a single female of a membership of thirty and the house of representative with just eleven from a membership of seventy-two.

While culture, tradition, and religion has contributed to these very low women political participation in Liberia, low women participation has also been attributed to limited or no support to women candidates by their friends, co-workers, and even families. The role played by family friends and coworkers in career development and advancement should be considered in the rise of women to the top. Above all, the people we lead, manage, and oversee plays a pivotal role in either positively enhancing our career or destroy it therefore, leaders are motivated and inspire by appreciation, respecting, or obeying instructional, rules and policies. (Oakley 2000; Mendum 2018; Elliot 2022) stress the importance of how traditional gender role plays an important part in land or any other means of production. Even in the case of a strong-willed woman who may try to ignore traditional stereotypes, they just found themselves fulfilling the traditional roles of gender. The stereotype that men work more than women and thus they should receive higher wages than women is still very alive (Zvobgo 2014; Moodly 2021; Shava and Chasokela 2021). Stern and hard-working women who are very ambitious in society are often labelled as greedy and selfish. In extreme cases they are regarded as whores who rise in the ladder of success by manipulation of men through sex (Mendum 2018; Moodly 2021).

Research points to cultural values and beliefs as one of the major ecological dynamics that affects effective representation of women in key socio-economic positions (Moodly and Toni 2017; Moodly 2021; Mankayi and Cheteni 2021). Women constitute more than half of the world population, yet their participation in political and economic decision making remains low. Women have been sold superficial measures that given an impression equal participation in politics yet continue to leave them, in practice, rather marginalised in important development decision making (Shava and Chasokela 2021). Wirth (2001) further argues that qualified and competent females look up through the “glass ceiling” and see what they are capable of accomplishing, but the invisible barriers block them from breaking through. “Glass ceiling”,

according to Wirth (2001), is a term created in the 1970s in the United States to define the invisible false barriers formed by attitudinal and administrative preconceptions which block females from working to their potential.

Karasi et al. (2017) posit that there is a long history to the exclusion of women from influential positions in institutions such as the church, state, and academia. Due to patriarchy, women, and the work that they do tend to be devalued and discouraged. Thus, socio-cultural challenges can be viewed as the negative attitude that society has towards women engaging in business. There is also a challenge of women being confined to dependent and domestic roles. Firstly, there is the issue of 'stable marriages' that create the impression that women will be provided for by their husbands, which can be a false sense of security (Lehel, 2017). Lehel 2017 further expressed that this process increases the financial burden as family income is shoulder for an individual who is mostly the man. Additional to the factors that increases economic dependency of women on men and the reinforcement of the idea that motherhood is a natural role. In rural areas, women find domesticity to be a more appealing practical alternative to employment opportunities that are both interesting and well-paying. Society has labelled some professions as men and others as women. For instance, at tertiary institutions, programs such as humanity and social work are merely regarded as female careers while men occupy natural sciences, engineering, and other complex programs. In any organization, women have to prove their prowess more than men and they are easily judged over petty issues (Oakley 2000; Mendum 2018). Society has general standard rules that men should lead while women follow the set standards. For instance, in many cultural settings, men gather to discuss issues pertaining to women in the absence of women. Being socialized to this for a long time, women themselves are hesitant to take leadership roles in the presence of men. This gender division has also affected the education field, especially the universities noted by Smith et al. (2006). However, according to Catalyst research (2011) in recent years, gender stereotypes have declined especially in developed countries due to women empowerment programs that have been carried out extensively in these countries.

Banda and Masuka (2013) notes that women who run for power attract inappropriate attention and are viewed as loose and immoral. Women are seen as belonging to the private sphere. These private spheres include child birth and doing house chores. This results in women spending considerably more time on child care, looking after the sick, and other reproductive tasks in the home than men. Women pay a motherhood penalty across fields relating not just to time, effort and medical care of pregnancy and childbirth. Women face tough time

constraints navigating between family responsibilities and a political position because the work is rarely equally shared hence women are more disadvantaged. Only women with supportive families are privileged to run for political office, whereas men are more likely to contest for and take up positions in public office, even if discouraged by their families.

However, the advent of globalization witnessed the closure of an epoch and the opening of another. In the 21st century most organizations prefer to employ women than men; this is slowly affecting a change of roles in societies. According to a study by Catalyst (2013) in developed countries, given that a man and a woman have the same qualifications and they had applied for the same job, there is a high probability that a woman will be hired more than a man. However, despite different authors writing about the same topic on the barriers for effective participation of women in political processes, there is still a dearth in the body of knowledge on the contextual barriers that affect the participation of women in accessing land rights in various countries-a gap to be addressed by this study. The generalizability of much published research on this issue is problematic since it doesn't effectively focus on contextually attuned issues that affect the participation of women in economic rights in different countries. To this end, the study seeks to address this gap in literature.

Even though most African Countries' land policies stipulate that there are no legal restrictions to women's property rights, this provision has had minimal impact in terms of women's land ownership (Government of Kenya, 2009). For example, Alden and Anseeuw (2011) argue that the land inequality concern has contributed to several structural, economic, and cultural barriers in Southern Africa. The cultural impediment to the realization of women's property rights is the most difficult to remove of all the obstacles within indigenous communities. The colonial state preserved and occasionally imposed patriarchal land usage and ownership patterns, as well as reinforced a gender division of labor that strengthened males and disempowered women (Mbilinyi and Shechambo, 2009). This suggests that the empowerment and welfare debate is one of the justifications behind the drive to institutionalize women's rights. Women's land rights, according to proponents of the empowerment perspective, are an important tool for empowering women to achieve the state's development goals (Allendorf, 2007). For example, women who owned land in Thailand and India had more domestic economic power than women who did not own property, according to a study performed in Asia (Allendorf, 2007).

According to the welfare argument, promoting women's land rights will improve women's welfare and well-being, as well as that of their families and communities. The welfare argument

"rests on the belief that resources placed in the hands of women, rather than men, are more likely to be used to benefit children and others" (Allendorf, 2007). Because of its impact on women's access to land resources, the security of the land tenure system, agricultural output, and improved livelihood, Odeny (2013) reiterates the key importance of women's land rights in developmental discourse.

2.5.2 Lack of Financial Resources

Furthermore, both socioeconomic and cultural factors, however, limit women's contributions to development activities. Women have limited access to credit and lack the financial means to purchase land, particularly in countries with capital-intensive and market economies with Kenya being a typical example. According to ILO (2016), women account for more than 60% of small-scale farmers in Southern Africa, and they employ more than 70% of the agricultural workers. Women's access to land influences not only their own and their families' standard of living, but also their food security yet they have unequal access to land rights. According to Sen (2000), millions of individuals in poor countries do not have access to freedom; even if they are not officially slaves, they are deprived of basic liberties and are imprisoned in some form by economic poverty, social suffering, political oppression, or cultural authoritarianism. In finding a solution to this, the international community has established certain norms based on several legal foundations to preserve women's rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women are just a few examples. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which was adopted in 1981, and the Southern Africa for Development Community Declaration on Gender and Development, which was adopted in 1997, are all regional documents seeking to aid this problem (Mutangadura, 2004). According to the (UNDP, 2014) relevant world conferences have confirmed the strong link between the gendered nature of human rights violations and the advancement of women's rights. Conferences such as the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, the 1994 Cairo Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the 1995 Beijing 4th World Conference on Women - Declaration and Platform for Action, and the 2002 Durban World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg are few to name that has demonstrate such violation and the women’s right advancement. According to Akinola (2018), land-related conflict, gender-based land agitations, land hunger, illegal land occupations, and falling land production are all signs that

the existing land arrangements need to be rethought across Africa. Even though post-colonial African states have been forced to start on land reform, African populations, particularly those in rural areas, continue to face land resource constraints. This reflects a historical shift in numerous parts of the continent from pre-colonial land excess to relative land deficiency, prompting land reform. Similar land crises arise in Africa.

Women are far less likely than men to be in the social and business networks. Generally, when money dominates politics, women lose out. For women to be actively involved in access to land there is need for funding at each and every stage. McDonagh (2009) postulates that it is increasingly difficult for poor women to gain access to land or own properties. Even in politics, during primaries, the campaign team needs among others transport, food, regalia and insignia which profile the candidate. The cost of t-shirts, pens, caps and other accessories have escalated in Zimbabwe's hyperinflation environment. Running a campaign in the rural constituencies is very expensive since these constituencies are huge and not well served by roads, telephone, electricity and other infrastructure as urban constituencies. Women candidates running these campaigns and at the same time carrying the main burden of domestic responsibilities are under additional stress, when compared to men, and more likely to burn out in addition to often lacking the funds needed for campaigns.

Across the continent of Africa, the land question continues to be a fundamental challenge that exacerbates most countries' underdevelopment and raises the bar of patriarchal control and gender inequality across the continent. In his research, Odeny (2013) stated that while land remains a major economic asset for reducing poverty, ensuring food security, and generating income in Africa, a large portion of the land, approximately 75%, is still under customary tenure, which is governed by norms, historical practices, and unwritten law based on tradition and cultural affiliation, and thus represents a major impediment to equal land rights. This statement is backed up by a report in a Landesa article, which states that the land debate in Africa and its reform need to be rethought because there is a substantial disparity in land allocation between men and women across the continent. Liberia, like many other African countries, suffers from unequal land allocation. These Land access and tenure security are influenced by geography and traditional behaviours, and in some situations, gender (Landesa 2015). Kaba (2015) goes on to say that in most traditional communities in Liberia, land is only available through community elders and clan-based male lineages. This is mostly due to a communication and land awareness gap between policymakers and the public, which has aided patriarchal dominance significantly.

An understanding of land rights is vital to ensuring social and economic stability, as well as addressing historical injustices and promoting sustainable development. It is against this backdrop that various approaches have been employed to address land rights issues. Some common approaches to land rights include the following but not limited to them.

2.5.3 Organizational Systems

An organization plays an important role in the promotion of women's welfare. It depends on the policies of an organization pertaining to how they perceive women, noted Oakley (2000). The perception that an organization has about women determines whether they will hire women or not. However, in most cases where jobs have been advertised, managers have opted for men with less qualifications than men arguing that men are easier to maintain than women. Men seem to be content as long as they receive their salaries in time and their welfare is catered for. For some men, the presence of a woman as a leader means a threat rather than a compliment. The organizational culture affects the attitude and perception of all workers in the organization. The culture of an organization can be feminine or masculine. According to the Corporate Gender Gap Report in Finland (2010), masculinity is a factor that militates the rise of women in leadership. Men are more prone to help other men in their career than women. The basic reason for that is that women have been socialized to believe that they cannot do anything well, hence when they see another woman trying, they look down on her and see her as an ill-nurtured woman. The discussion is that it is easier for a man to help a woman than for a woman to help another woman. Most women are affected by inferiority complexities, not because of choice but rather because they are mere victims of circumstances.

One of the reasons why so many programmes missed the mark is that too many gender initiatives focus solely on changing women, from the way they network to the way they lead. Most of the old literature on gender, for example, Majama (2008); Macionis and Plumer (2008); Idang (2015), and Watto et al. (2015) focus on women and girls and the factors that affect their socio-economic outcomes such as access to training for women and a policy focus on achieving gender equitable outcomes.

According to Jaka and Shava (2018), the involvement of men and their participation is very important to promoting gender equality because men contribute significantly to the corrosive patriarchal attitudes and norms in society. To ensure gender equality, men’s attitudes need to change, and training workshops are important medium through which this change can start. Men are often gatekeepers of the current gender order through their roles as leaders and

decision-makers both in their communities and families. They may engage in sexist practices and maintain unjust gender relations by abusing women, controlling their reproductive decisions, denying them access to community resources including political power, or endor patriarchal beliefs that permit other men to engage such behaviours (Dumbu, 2018). There are also personal challenges including all barriers that affect women entrepreneurs as individuals in their personal capacities. Karasi et al. (2017) categorises personal challenges into role and behavioural barriers. Role barriers pertain to the work-life imbalance that comes about when there is conflict between work and life. Work-life balancing affects married women more than unmarried female entrepreneurs as women continue to carry the bulk of unpaid care work. Even in Europe it has been found that women spend twice as much time on household tasks as men (Siba, 2019).

2.5.4 Lack of Opportunities and Discrimination

In the old times businesses of any sort were not a place for women; their place was the kitchen and making children. However, that notion has changed over time but its ripple effects are still vivid in this era. Coming from a background where women were confined to the kitchen they are regarded as lacking the expertise and experience needed to take leadership roles hence they are relegated to less demanding positions. The structures of some organizations, even universities, are designed for male candidates only (Oakley 2000). Even the management of any organization prefers to take experienced workers than those they have to teach and due to past economic trends, men tend to have the required experiences. For instance, despite the word "man" being regarded as unisex it had strong connotations towards men noted Lahti (2013). This means that to say faculty chairman and department chairman mean that the jobs were initially designed to be filled by men. Even during recruitment women are asked questions that relate to their personal lives such as their plans for marriage, and the number of kids they would want to have. All these factors are considered in the recruitment process. It has been argued that the rationale for all that questioning is to establish maternity leave as well as salaries.

The major challenge facing women in China on accessing higher leadership positions has been the issue of Confucianism. Confucianism has presented a major barrier towards the participation of women in higher economic systems (Zhao and Jones 2017; Zhang 2015; Cheng 2008). Women in China are expected to be subordinate to men because of the Confucianism tradition under which women are expected to obey three issues-the need to obey their fathers

before they are married, to respect their husbands when they get married and to respect their sons when they get widowed (Cheng, 2008; Zhao and Jones 2017). This reflects the underlying patriarchal system or tradition that could be one of the barriers towards effective participation of women in leadership positions. Despite the issue of patriarchy being a common barrier across many countries or traditions, it appears that China exhibits a distinct form of patriarchy which favours the subordination of women in leadership systems.

2.6 Approaches to the Land Rights

2.6.1 Legal and policy reforms

Governments enact or amend laws and policies to protect and strengthen land rights. According to Keiter (2005), this involves recognizing and codifying customary land rights, ensuring secure tenure for vulnerable groups, and addressing historical land injustices. Reforms may also focus on land registration, land use planning, and environmental protection. The law governing our public lands has evolved through distinctive phases as policymakers and society have redefined the value and purpose of these vital national assets.

2.6.2 Participatory land governance

Participatory Land Administration can potentially support land consolidation. According to Ntsebeza (2004) engaging local communities and stakeholders in land governance processes is crucial for inclusive decision-making and the protection of land rights. This can be achieved through participatory land-use planning, community-based mapping, and the establishment of local land committees or assemblies. Reydon (2020) is of the opinion that participatory land governance may play a role in improving land use and land ownership through application of land taxes.

2.6.3 Strengthening land administration systems.

In the words of Enemark (2014), land administration should be designed to meet the needs of people and their relationship to land, to support security of tenure for all and to sustainably manage land use and natural resources. Developing efficient and transparent land administration systems is essential for ensuring the security and enforceability of land rights. This includes improving land registration processes, establishing land information systems, and training land administration personnel.

2.6.4 Capacity building and awareness raising

Building the capacity of individuals and communities regarding land rights is vital. This involves providing legal literacy and training on land-related matters, including rights, responsibilities, and dispute resolution mechanisms. Enemark (2004) argues that there is a need for capacity building in land management, especially in developing countries, to enable them to deal with the complexity of creating and managing land information systems and sustainable and administration institutions. Awareness campaigns and education programs can also promote public understanding of land rights and their importance.

2.6.5 Access to justice

Ensuring access to justice is critical for resolving land disputes and protecting land rights. Establishing specialized land courts or tribunals can expedite the resolution of land-related cases. Additionally, legal aid services can be provided to vulnerable groups who face challenges in defending their land rights. An inclusive and holistic approach that addresses the diverse needs of different stakeholders is crucial for promoting equitable and sustainable land rights.

2.6.6 Land Rights

This refers to any right that relates to or has an impact on lands, waters, wildlife, or other natural resources. It can also be the right which gives an individual or group access to the use and ownership of land as contained in the law, by transference (inheritance), or by culture.

2.6.7 Legal reforms

This is examining current laws and promoting and implementing change in a legal system is the process of "law reform," or "legal reform." This procedure is typically done to improve justice. Governments have enacted or amended laws to provide equal rights to women in terms of land ownership, inheritance, and access. This involves ensuring that women have the same legal protections and entitlements as men. Legal reforms can also include recognizing and protecting customary land rights held by women. Odeny (2013) states women's rights activists have made strong arguments for strengthening women's access and rights to land as part of efforts to ensure that women have a larger share of control over productive resources.

2.6.8 Awareness and advocacy

This is raising awareness about women's land rights and advocating for their inclusion and recognition which is crucial. This can be done through public campaigns, community

dialogues, and educational programs that highlight the importance of gender equality in land ownership and promote women's rights. According to Dancer (2015), women are realising their interests in land through land courts and follows the progression of women's claims to land-from their social origins through processes of dispute resolution to judgment.

2.6.9 Capacity building

This involves strengthening women's knowledge and skills in land-related matters. Capacity building programs can provide training and resources to women, including legal literacy, financial management, negotiation skills, and agricultural practices. This empowers women to assert their rights and effectively participate in land-related decision-making processes.

2.6.10 Land titling and Registration

Land titling entails giving individuals and families in a community a legal right to ownership of customary land. It is the process of privatizing public land. Ensuring that women have rights to formal land titles and registration systems is important for securing their land rights. This can involve simplifying and streamlining the procedures for women to obtain land titles and ensuring that they are aware of their rights and the processes involved.

Land registration is any of a number of procedures by which information pertaining to ownership, occupancy, or other rights in land is formally documented (often with a government agency or department). This documentation serves as proof of ownership, makes transactions easier, and helps prevent unauthorized disposal of property Zakayo (2018).

2.6.11 Land tenure regularization

This is the legalization of a population's permanent habitation in a territory as permitted by the federal, state, or municipal governments. This legal and administrative procedure is used in both rural and urban settings. Untitled public land, such as unallocated public land, is the primary focus of regularizations. Regularizing informal and customary land tenure systems can help provide legal recognition and security of land rights. This process involves mapping, surveying, and formalizing land ownership and use rights. Zakayo (2018) sees Land regularization as an emerging urban planning tool which is directly linked to community development, particularly when one wants to acquire title deeds in unplanned settlements in cities of Sub-Saharan Africa. Land regularization is a legal and administrative measure adopted in rural and urban areas to legalize the permanent settlement of populations in

territories as authorized by federal, state, or municipal governments. The main target of regularizations is unallocated public land, such as untitled land.

2.7 Women's land rights in Liberia.

Historically, women in Liberia have faced significant challenges and discrimination when it comes to land rights. However, there have been efforts in recent years to address these issues and promote women's land rights. Traditionally, land in Liberia has been predominantly owned and controlled by men. Customary laws and practices have often favored male inheritance and ownership, excluding women from land ownership and control. This has had significant implications for women's economic empowerment, food security, and overall well-being. Andresson (2021) expressed that in other words, male dominant power dynamic, ignorance, and the absence of local institutions are the three primary barriers that women are still face with. The law undoubtedly encourages gender equality when it has been put into practice, but Liberia and its people still have a long way to go before the complete implementation and gender equality regarding land rights. The government, civil society organizations, and international development agencies have been working together to address this issue. Efforts have focused on legal reforms, awareness-raising campaigns, and capacity-building programs to promote women's land rights.

In 2014, the Land Rights Policy was adopted in Liberia, which recognized and protected customary land rights. This policy acknowledged the equal rights of women to access, own, control, and inherit land. Additionally, in 2018, the Liberian government passed the Land Rights Act, which provides legal protection for customary land rights and strengthens women's land rights. These policy changes have been important steps towards promoting gender equality in land rights. However, there are still challenges in implementation and enforcement, particularly at the community level where customary practices may persist. Attitudes, cultural norms, and traditional practices often remain barriers to women's full realization of their land rights. To address these challenges, organizations and government agencies have been conducting community awareness programs to educate both women and men about women's land rights. They aim to challenge discriminatory norms, promote gender equality, and encourage women's active participation in decision-making processes related to land rights.

Bandiaky (2016) emphasizes that over the last two decades, African countries (primarily in eastern and southern Africa) that have undergone land tenure reform have recognized the importance of women's land rights. When it comes to securing their ownership rights to land

and forests throughout national reform processes, women in statutory and customary systems are faced with unique difficulties. While there is still gender inequality in local African institutions and customs, some progress has been made in certain nations regarding women's ownership and management of land.

2.8 Country Experiences

Under this session we will highlight women's struggles in patriarchal societies and what is required for their land success. Italy brings about a fresh opinion of diversity beyond the African Continent hence, referencing their experience add a greater perspective to the debate.

2.8.1 Zimbabwe

The role of women in most patriarchal societies has mostly been that of child bearing and nourishment of the family (Post et al 1996:438). Zimbabwe has continuously attempted to achieve gender equality since attaining independence in 1980. But it has not always been a priority as addressing the colonial legacy of racial divisions and the continued marginalisation of the black majority often took precedence over addressing gender discrimination, including in the workplace (Kazembe, 1982). Women had no rights under the colonial law and little value was placed on the participation of women outside the home. Guild (1976:76) states that during this period should a woman go out to work with the approval of her husband, any money she earned belonged to the husband. This made a lot of people lose interest in work because they lacked self-independence, they could not enjoy their own remuneration. Over the years, in an effort for the removal sex discrimination from society several national and international gender declarations and agreements were agreed by nation states. These include but not limited to the 1979 United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) and the 1965 Convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination (CERD) (National Gender Policy, 2004:1). Many laws were implemented to promote gender equality at this time, for example, the equal pay regulation act of 1980 allowed women to receive the same compensation as men for doing the same work, and the gender inequality 237 labour relations act was established in 1985 to promote said ideology.

The act further states that, “no employer should discriminate against any employee on the grounds of race, tribe or place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed or sex.”. The National Gender Policy launched in 2004 aimed “to eliminate all negative economic, social and political policies, cultural and religious practices that impede equality and equity of sexes” (National Gender Policy, 2004: 3). One of the objectives of the policy is “to promote equal opportunities

for women and men in decision making in all areas and all levels" (National Gender Policy, 2004: 3). Processes where put in place to give effect to these policies by asking all ministries and levels of government to find ways to improve the gender balance.

Social cultural factors are a key obstacle to the entry of women into the corporate world. Their career path is hindered by the impediments of the systematic and attitudinal reasons. Uzma (2004:35) found that gender identity is created through the society, environment, and parents. Attitude of parents towards their children shape their identity, for example the tendency of parents to treat daughters as physically weak and he expectation that girls will be timid especially in public.

Over the years, women have achieved educational levels that are on par with their male counterparts (Wirth, 2001:49). Even with these levels of education, most women continue to hold low paying positions with few opportunities for advancement (ILO, 2004:68). Wirth (2001: 49) goes further to express that capable and qualified women can see what they can do when they gaze up through the "glass ceiling", but they are unable to do it because of the imperceptible hurdles. Additionally, Wirth (2001:1), highlighted that the phrase "glass ceiling" was first used in the United States in the 1970s to refer to the imperceptible artificial barriers that prevented women from achieving their full potential due to organizational and attitude biases. According to McElwee and Al-Riyami (2003:339), men's involvement in all spheres, including political, economic, and social ones, continue to restrict women involvement in the workplace. Such negative attitudes permeate invisibly into the employment field thus making it difficult for women to perform well and without proper knowledge about this employer might tend to ignore gender inequality issues as a drawback on employee motivation hence the need to initiate gender mainstreaming initiatives to motivate women in the employment field.

Over history women's participation in politics was very stumpy while men dominated most of high authorities in society. Women were mostly well known in doing the household chores. The matter concerning political rights of women and equal participation in electoral politics is becoming increasingly prominent in worldwide politics. The equality of men and women was recognized by the United Nations 1945 and later declarations of human rights 1948.This shows that women have also the right to be involved in politics. Even though there are many international declarations on the rights of women which advocate for equality between men and women, the participation of women in economic systems remains low.

Available literature clearly shows that women still constitute a small portion when it comes to leadership roles and political roles. The view that women have potential which can lead to social economic and political development has sufficient or less evidence. This is because governments complemented by civil societies, non-governmental organizations and multilateral institutions wanted to actualize these potentials. The efforts made by these groups have largely been recognized since they yielded positive results even though a lot has to be done to improve the talents of women and empower them. This is because the number of women in politics and public offices are still below the expectation. The African Union Department of Political Affairs in partnership with the Office of the United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and the SADC, convened a regional workshop on the "Participation, Representation and Protection of Women in Electoral Processes in the Great Lakes Region" at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 12 to 13 November 2019. The main objective of this event was to discuss the low participation of women in electoral processes the causes of this. They also addressed the protection of women's rights in electoral processes and capacity measures to enable women's meaningful participation. The major question to this is, what has this done towards the effective participation of women in land ownership and access to the means of production? This has not been adequately answered in both academic and empirical literature.

In Zimbabwe there are some civil societies who advocate for equal rights between men and women in public offices and policies. Examples of civil societies that advocate for gender equality is the Msasa project .These efforts made by African Union, southern African developed countries, non-governmental organizations just to mention a few in promoting the participation of women in elections and public office have a great impact on the participation of women in electoral campaigns due to the fact that women can also run for public offices like the presidential offices, women also form their political parties women also have leadership roles in local councils and other political duties. Women also have a proportion of seats in parliament, they are reserved 60 seats in Zimbabwe. This shows that there are efforts made by the government of Zimbabwe to promote full participation in electoral campaigns and also public offices. Nevertheless, all these efforts did not effectively enhance the access of women towards ownership or access to land compared to their male counterparts (Ndarangwa 2018). This implies that, despite the reform initiatives, women still are now at par with men when it comes to access to land and other economic opportunities. Therebefore, the study aims at

understanding how the enactment of the Liberia Land Rights Act 2018 differs from the experience in Zimbabwe. Ut seeks to understand the socio-economic and legal drivers for effective access and participation of women in various economic spaces.

2.8.2 Malawi

Women in Malawi are less likely to be involved in political discussion as well as interest in public affairs and the means of production like land ownership as compared to men. A great proportion of Malawians believe that women should have the same chances as men for leadership positions as the means of production. Afro Barometer survey of (2014) indicated that women's percentage of political participation has reduced from 78% in 2012 to 61% in 2014. Despite Malawi being a signatory to regional and international protocols encouraging gender equality for example SADC protocol on Gender and Development there seem to be no significant headway towards improving women participation and activism in politics. Mafao (2015) reports that in Southern Africa Malawi has had the first female president from May 2012 to May 2014. This is a major achievement of women which was supposed to be enhanced by access to various means of production like land and property ownership. However, it must be noted that in the same period that there was a female president, women representation in parliament drastically went down in 2014. It can be argued that it is possible that the performance of the first female president might have been deemed as unsatisfactory hence affecting the electoral performance of all female parliamentary candidates in 2014 elections. 2014 elections exposed a major setback in women representation in parliament and overall economic access.

Barriers that affect women participation in the political and economic spaces in Malawi include hostile political environments. Most insidious forms of violence against women include verbal, emotional and psychological abuse. The normalisation of misogyny in society results in such abuse going unreported and unaddressed (Afro Barometer, 2021). Stuck in the home with more chores and with limited access to higher education, it has been hard for most women to enjoy the rights and opportunities of full citizenship. Lack of funding for campaigning during elections limits participation. Due to Covid 19 pandemic public gatherings were either halted or limited to online campaigning. Online politics need good technological infrastructure, yet the digital gender divide continues to sees women having less access to digital technologies, such as smartphones, computers and the internet. According to the World Wide Web

Foundation (2019), globally men are 21 % more likely to be online than women, with this figure standing at 52 % in less developed countries.

Braton (2002) notes that innovative strategies to be employed in Malawi include gender awareness electoral laws, policies and processes, levelling a playing field on many fronts, effective support for women political and economic participation and civil society, cross generation engagement and nurturing a new cadre of young women leaders who can stand and participate with men in social, economic and political affairs.

2.8.3 Italy

The Italian government was amazed by the results of the 2013 elections. Mark (2014) notes that the rate of women in the Italian parliament reached 31.3 % and this move was welcomed as a promising step towards greater gender equality in Italian politics. The quota system introduced women to obtain 47.7 % of the seats in the House of Deputies. In spite of political battles and legislation put in place there is persistent under-representation of women in legislative bodies with only 23.8% in 2018. Female politicians face obstacles and the situation is not only peculiar to Africa only. McDonagh (2018:67) reports that Italian female politicians face mainly external obstacles all along the political path. Female politicians are more open to change and less conservation oriented. Research in Italy has shown that women under representation in access to economic opportunities might be related to their past lower social status, lower levels of education, lower control of financial capitals and few work occasions. After the amendment of the Italian constitution in 2003, a number of positive actions were adopted to facilitate women's political representation, and this facilitated a rise in the participation of women in politics in 2013 but economic representation still remained low. Although the 2013 election showed the rise of female parliamentarians, it is however sad that the 50% threshold of gender equality in other economic areas remains a dream in Europe.

Women underrepresentation in politics is not only peculiar to African countries. The 50% threshold on gender equality is not yet realised in the world. This shows that the Sustainable Development Goal on gender equality might not be achieved by 2030. Barriers to effective women participation in politics are similar across the world. These barriers include hostile political environment, patriarchal society, poor funding, psychological barriers and constraints of family duties. Innovative strategies can help to increase women's political participation as shown by the case studies. These strategies include funding women political activities,

autonomous feminist movement, periodic training, laws and policies that protect women in politics and transform society to support women in politics and government will to support women from any form of abuse by society. It must be noted that these strategies need the will of policy makers and women in particular to be realized. The study aims at assessing the levels or the effectiveness of the Liberia Land rights Act 2018 and how it has pushed or not been effective in helping women access land.

2.8 Conclusion

This literature review highlights the significance of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018, its effectiveness as a potential catalyst for improving women's land rights. This review provides insights into the Act's impact, challenges, and opportunities in addressing gender disparities in land ownership and shares light on the weaknesses of previous students on related topics.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the literature review and theoretical frameworks that underpins the research. The focus of this chapter is to present the research methodology that was used in carrying out the study. The chapter presents the research design, research approach, data collection methods as well as data analysis techniques that were used by the researcher in carrying out the research. Ways that were used to enhance validity and reliability in the study is also being discussed under this chapter as well as ethical considerations that were observed by the researcher in carrying out the research.

3.2 Research Methodology

The research utilized a qualitative research methodology in conducting the research process. A methodology is defined by Cresswell (2014) as a set of methods or procedures used to carry out an investigation. Qualitative research methodology is defined by Gray (2009) as the procedure used for the collection of data through analysing the perceptions, opinions, experiences and beliefs of the individuals to gain an in-depth understanding of the research problem. The researcher chose the qualitative research methodology as it provides a detailed account of the research problems since it is exploratory in nature and it ensures that the researcher gains a deepened understanding of the research problem (Cresswell 2014; Etikan et al. 2016). This means that the researcher aimed at understanding in-depth about the provisions of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018, its effectiveness and the challenges associated with its

implementation towards enhancing access to land by women. A qualitative methodology was suitable to the study as it offers the opportunity to find out about the thoughts, experiences and perceptions of the individuals on the research problem. The researcher therefore utilised this research methodology as it offers the opportunity for the researcher to investigate the research problem with greater flexibility.

3.3 Research Design

A research design is a blueprint or a strategy that is used by the researcher in carrying out the research (Maree 2007). Yin (2009) defines a research design as a plan which specifies the methods for data collection as well as procedure for analysing data. In simpler terms, a research design is a plan which is used by the researcher to investigate the problem as well as the plan which specifies the data collection, analysis and presentation methods.

Given that the purpose of this study is to explore the influence of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 on the advancement of women's land rights, the researcher utilised a case study research design. A case study research design is a qualitative research design aimed at ensuring that there is an in-depth investigation of the problem in a single setting (Punch, 2008; Yin 2009). A case study design is a qualitative research design that seeks to examine the phenomenon in its natural setting (Etikan et al., 2017). Therefore, the researcher chose the design so as to understand the role of the Liberia Land Rights Act in empowering women in Grand Bassa County, Wee Statutory District.

3.4 Study Area: Grand Bassa County, Wee Statutory District

This research project used Wee Statutory District in Grand Bassa County (Figure 1) as the sole case study from which this assessment will be made. Wee Statutory District is Electoral District #4, in Grand Bassa County, which is one of the original counties of Liberia (Figure 1). According to the 2008 National Population and Housing census, Wee Statutory District has a total of 30,454 inhabitants of which 15,315 are male and 15,139 are female. Wee has three administrative Districts, Nyuiwein, Gorblee and Blehzee. The district has a statutory Superintendent, 3 administrative District Commissioners, with about 17 recognized women's groups, and 23 youth groups. Due to its fertile land for agricultural activities, its inhabitants passionately referred to it as the 'Wee nation' which implies that it can survive on its own.

Figure 1 Google Map of Liberia illustrating Wee District location (see red dot) within Nimba county (the red boundary the boundary)

Drawing on the many land crises that have occurred throughout Liberia primarily because of the large land concessions awarded to companies without the community participation leading to many protests as highlighted in the background, Wee is suitable for the research because Wee has been a major hotspot for land protestation across the country. Prior to the passage of the Land Rights Arts, the community dwellers (Wee) and a land concession company the Liberia Agriculture Company (LAC) were most likely to have confrontation once every month. These protests were the result of the company spoiling the community roads and farmland without any resettlement. Another reason for the importance of using Wee District as the case study for this research project stems from my personal experience as a boy who grew up in Wee and saw how land matters were dealt with. In 2017, I volunteered with the Women Movement for Sustainable Development (WOMSUD) on a land rights policy awareness project. During this process, issues of women land access was a major concern amongst community dwellers which provide an additional reason why Wee is suitable for this research. Considering that this project will require movement to and from Wee district, printing of interview guides and consent letters, and other engagements, sourcing this information requires

finance hence, Wee is a closer location to where I reside in Liberia when compared to other parts of the country where there have been major land issues. Another reason for selecting Wee Statutory District as the single case study is the fact that I understand the local language - Bassa, which makes contact and gathering information much easier.

Importantly, Wee Statutory District is reflective of, or typical of, other Liberian districts. This I know from key statistics and readings in the literature. It is a district that has almost always been involved in land crises with the Liberia Agriculture Company being a major violator of the dwellers land rights in this and other districts.

According to Denscombe (2010), a case study approach makes the collection of data through various means flexible and provides the researcher the ability to explore the topic of research much deeper. Regardless of these advantages, the difficulties to generalize the findings from a single case student to another sitting and the high risk of bias stand out as some of the biggest disadvantages that need to be taken into account.

The Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 is a significant legislation aimed at addressing historical inequalities and improving land rights for various groups, including women. This research seeks to examine the specific impact of this act on women's land rights in the Wee Statutory District. It aims to assess the extent to which the law has been effectively implemented, identify any challenges or barriers encountered, and explore the outcomes and changes observed in women's land ownership, control, and access rights as a result of the act.

By case study research conducted in Grand Bassa County, the research will focus on a specific geographical area and investigate the experiences of women within the Wee Statutory District. This will involve gathering data through interviews, surveys, and other research methods to collect qualitative and quantitative information on women's land rights before and after the implementation of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018.

Overall, the scope of the research will include providing comprehensive understanding of the impact of the land rights legislation on women in the Wee Statutory District and to generate insights and recommendations for further improvements in policy and practice to enhance women's land rights in Liberia. Also, the research will assess the extent to which the provisions of the act have been effectively implemented within the Wee Statutory District. This will involve examining the actions taken by relevant government institutions, local authorities, and community stakeholders to enforce and uphold the provisions related to women's land rights.

Furthermore, it will explore any changes in women's land ownership patterns following the implementation of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018. This will involve examining whether women have gained increased access to land, the types of land ownership they have acquired, and any challenges they may still face in exercising their land rights. In addition to this, it will investigate the impact of the land rights act on women's control over and access to land resources. This will include analysing whether women have gained greater control over decision-making processes related to land use and management and assessing whether they have improved access to productive resources and economic opportunities linked to land. The research will identify and analyse the challenges and barriers faced by women in exercising their land rights within the Wee Statutory District. This may include cultural, social, economic, and legal barriers that limit women's ability to fully enjoy their land rights, despite the enactment of the land rights act. Finally, based on the findings of the research, recommendations will be provided to address any gaps or shortcomings identified in the implementation of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018. These recommendations will aim to further enhance women's land rights and promote gender equality within the Wee Statutory District. It's important to note that the scope is specific to the Wee Statutory District in Grand Bassa County and does not cover the entire country of Liberia.

3.5 Target Population

A target population is the set of elements or individuals through which the researcher is interested to study (Lavrakas 2008). According to Etikan et al. (2016) a target population is the set of individuals through which the sample will be drawn from and the results of the study will be generalised upon. This means that a target population is the elements or the group of individuals through which the researcher seeks to investigate or collect data to be generalised upon. The study interviewed a total of forty three (43) participants for the study. The primary research participants (community dwellers) were forty, twenty (20) women, ten (10) youth, ten (10) elders while the key informants were three (3) one (1) women civil society organization leaders, and two (2) government officials in the areas of land in the Local Government structure. These groups were selected based on their knowledge, experience and jobs they are exposed to in relation to the rights of women in accessing land.

3.6 Data collection method

3.6.1 Primary Data Collection

The study interviewed a total of forty-three (43) participants. The primary research participants (community dwellers) are twenty (20) community women, ten (10) youths, and ten (10) elders while the key informants were three (3). One a woman from the civil society organization and one (1) government official working on land matters and one (1) Liberia land rights experts with years of experience working on land matters locally and continentally. These individuals were best suited for this research due their personal experience and their explicit knowledge of land-related matters in that part of the country and the Country in general.

During the primary data collection, the researcher adopted face-to-face interviews with the selected interviewees some of which were in English for those who are comfortable with that while others were conducted in the local language (Bassa), which was then translated by me into English when writing up the interview notes. The researcher met the research participants at the community town hall and arranged a private place convenient to them in or around the town hall where the interviews were conducted. The town hall was a good place to meet as it is a well-known public place. The key informants were interviewed at their offices.

The researcher employed semi-structured interviews using an interview guide (Annex 1) with research participants. Semi-structured interviews are not only the most effective way to obtain participants' opinions but also allow the researcher to cover other important topics that are of importance to the research as the interview is ongoing (Denscombe, 2010). During the primary data collection, the study carried out personal unstructured observation noting things that are happening in the research area with respect to the topic (O'Leary 2004). The researcher visited land offices to observe how they are operating, the equipment and facilities they have, and to confirm information, such as if women are working in these offices and in land leadership structures. The researcher also visited individual land and community land to see how the land looks, and as well see the condition of roads leading to their land, etc.

The key informants selected for this research were interviewed in their individual capacities and not in their capacity as officials of Government or representatives of their organizations hence, their views were represented as their opinion and not their institutional positions. These people were chosen using a purposive sampling strategy, which allows the researcher to choose survey participants based on who he/she thinks is best suited for the research (Denscombe 2010).

The research used purposive sampling to ensure diversity of experiences and knowledge. This helped the researcher to engage women of different social status; married, single, widowed, divorces to ensure a diversity of their experiences. The research participants who are community dwellers were recruited from Wee District using the Office of the District Representative who is closer to the people while the key informants were recruited from across the study area considering their knowledge.

While completing this project, I had the opportunity of working as a Community Liaison (Engagement) officer at the Liberia National Investment Commission. My role assisted me significantly in talking with people and helping them understand and negotiate their land to be used for diverse development projects including agricultural, mining, etc. In this capacity, I gained invaluable firsthand knowledge of how local communities have been affected by land rights legislation and how women are involved in and contribute to land discussions. As a result, I reflected on all my relevant experiences, particularly as they highlighted the significance of the Liberia Land Rights Acts and shared them in Chapter Four as reference to support some of the information gathered from the research participants or provide a contrast.

3.6.2 Secondary Data Collection

Secondary sources such as academic literature covering land policies, challenges and solutions across Africa and Liberia in particular were reviewed and reflected in various sections of the work, beyond the literature review. Using desktop research, archives through records and papers documentation about Wee were sourced. This information is publicly available as confirmed by the Freedom of Information Act of Liberia. This includes publicly available government records on land, statistical data (such as economic data), and publicly accessible papers such as policy documents, government land development plans. Newspaper and website articles were additional sources that were explored. This provided broader information on the topics that have been covered in the literature about the settlement of land disputes and land challenges all over the continent. Travis (2016) explains how desk research is a great research method for recognizing existing challenges linked to the topic under and preparing the researcher for primary data collection. Travis (2016) further explained that the low cost associated with acquiring information in secondary data collection, and its less time consumption makes it unique while the accessibility of data to anyone and much-updated data are the disadvantages.

3.7 Data Analysis

When data are collected, Tracy (2013) explained that a process of data immersion is essential for the researcher. To ensure the data reflects the general subject, it entails reading and rereading interview notes or listening and relistening (in cases where audio recorders were used). The researcher translated from the local Liberian Language Bassa to English where needed. During the data analysis, the information acquired from the participants was organized for analysis and coded to find similarities and difference patterns. This was done in a Microsoft word document. Coding aids the researcher in categorizing, separating, and organizing data (Tracy 2013), and as Zina (2004) notes, this can be done while the researcher is still gathering data. The researcher reworded some of the responses from the participants to better make clear what they were trying to communicate.

3.8 Ethical consideration

One of the researcher's most important responsibilities is to respect the autonomy and defend the dignity of the study participants by ensuring that they have access to information that is necessary for them to decide whether or not to engage in the research and how much to participate (University of Pretoria no date, Zina 2004). This research project conformed to ethical consideration for its successful completion. Before the commencement of the full research, an ethical clearance was acquired from the Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics Committee as a precondition for conducting the research (Annex A) This served as a clearance of authorization received from the University, authorizing me as a student to undertake research as part of my Development Studies Master's degree. The letter of ethical consideration helped demonstrate to all participants that the research is being undertaken solely to fulfil an academic requirement.

Consent was requested and granted in writing by the relevant authorities, in this case the District Superintendent, to carry out this research in the area (Annex B).

Before the interviews, the researcher initially spoke with and got informed consent from the would-be participants of this research, intimating them that their views won't be reported as their institution's positions, instead it will be taken as their individual opinion that is based on their experience. They were informed about the purpose of this research and ensured that they signed the consent form in their individual capacities.

The researcher presented a consent form (Annex C - F) to all research participants and for those who don't understand English, explained the content to them in the local dialect while those who understand English were able to read and sign after they were satisfied with the conditions. The form confirmed that individuals participating in this research project were not exploited by being compelled to engage in this study and that they were at liberty any time during the research to decline whenever they felt uncomfortable. The forms were printed and distributed to all participants so that they are aware of the purpose of the interview and the actions that will be performed.

To complete the ethical compliance of this research project, the research ensured confidentiality by protecting the identity of the participants of the research. The participants are represented by pseudonyms and are not described in ways that could reveal their identity or organizational position. Additionally, through a password-protected file in my google drive, these participants' information and views were further protected.

Finally, the complete thesis and its findings will be stored in the University of Pretoria servers for 15 years and used only for research.

3.9 Validity and Reliability

Validity is defined as the level through which the findings reflect what they intend to measure (Punch 2008: 44). In qualitative research validity is measured in terms of truthfulness of findings, degree of comparability and to some extent ability to be translatable (Tichapondwa 2009: 22). This means that the research has to be authentic and accurate in reporting the effectiveness of the Liberia Land Act of 2018 in empowering women towards access to land. Bearing this in mind, the researcher used participant validation in enhancing validity of the study. Participant validation is understood as a way of enhancing validity through taking the interpretations of the researcher from the data and asking the participants whether they agree with the interpretation by the researcher of their views and opinions (Coheen et al. 2011, Etikan et al. 2017; Bowen 2019).

Reliability of the study is understood as the extent to which the research instruments can be dependable upon in carrying out the research (Etikan et al. 2017; Bowen 2019). In this study, the researcher triangulated the data collection methods (documentary search and interviews) as means to enhance reliability in the study. However, Tichapondwa (2013) notes that reliability is not easy to establish in qualitative research since qualitative studies are more flexible and

unstructured which can cause lack of stability in the research instruments. Be that as it may, the researcher triangulated the data collection instruments to ensure that the study achieves the least achievable level of reliability.

CHAPTER 4: DATA GATHERED

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the research methodology that was utilized in the collection, analysis, and presentation of the research findings. Data that is being presented in this chapter was collected through in-depth interviews, the researcher's personal experiences, key-informant interviews, structured questionnaires, and documentary review. This chapter presents the findings on the effectiveness of the LLRA of 2018 on the right of women to land in Liberia. It also presents the challenges that have remained inherent in the process of women's right to land in Liberia. The chapter also presents the views of the key participants on the LLRA of 2018 together with their experiences on women rights to land.

4.2 Demographic Data of the Participants

4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

Table 1: Sex of Respondents

Source: Researcher's Field Data, 2024

Gender	Total
Men	11
Women	32
Total	**43**

Table 1 shows that of the 43 respondents in this study, 11 of them were men while the balance, 32, were women, which demonstrates that the majority of the respondents in this study were women because the research topic squarely concerns them. Not only that, there are more women, but it was important to hear from those mostly affected, which would provide a better understanding in developing a solution to the land crisis they face.

4.2.2 Age Range and Gender of Respondents

Table 2: Age Ranges and Genders of Research Participants

Age Range	Men	Women	Total
18-35 years	8	23	31
36-55 years	2	7	9
56-75 years	1	2	3
Total	**11**	**32**	**43**

Source: Research's Field Data, 2024

Table 2 shows a total of 43 respondents, 11 men and 32 women. The table shows that most respondents in this study were young adults aged 18-35, with women outnumbering men. This demographic is more likely to be engaged in community issues, particularly land access and use. While specific numbers are not provided, the data indicates a strong presence of young people, especially women, among the respondents.

4.2.3 Table 3 Respondents' Education Level

Source: Research's Field Data, 2024

Education Level	Men	Women	Total
High School Diploma	3	7	10
Some College Level	2	4	6
College Degree	1	4	5
Master's Degree	1	3	4
Other	4	14	18
Total	**11**	**32**	**43**

Table 3 shows that 10 respondents of which 3 were men and 7 were women has high school diploma, 6 respondents of which 2 were men and 4 were women have are some college level education, 5 respondents of which 1 was a man and 4 were women have a college degree, 4 respondents of which 1 was a man and 3 were women have a Master's degree and 18

respondents of which 4 were men and 14 were women have other levels of education which concludes that majority of the respondents in this study area are not formally literate. Formal education is still a major challenge in Wee as there is not community college or private university for most of the young people to further their education. Considering the level of hardship in the country, most parents are unable to send their children to the County capital to acquire a university education.

4. 3 The Position of Women on their land rights Before the Enactment of the LLRA of 2018. The study discovered that before the enactment of the LLRA, there were several challenges affecting women in decision making and their right to land, some of the noticeable ones were male dominance, and cultural/traditional berries. Most of the interviewees indicated that women still had little right to land even after the passage of the LLRA. Women overwhelmingly reported a culture of male dominance hindering their involvement in land discussions. They were excluded from decision-making processes concerning ancestral land, management, and use. Thirteen out of fifteen women interviewed explained how their husbands, brothers, and sons made land-related decisions without consulting them. One participant, expressed frustration, stating that: *"men viewed themselves as the sole decision-makers despite women's valuable perspectives."* Women felt their voices were unheard and their input disregarded.

The study further sought to investigate the socio-economic historical context of the women in Liberia and find out what was the traditionally believed position before the introduction of the LLRA of 2018. This was meant to give a picture of how the LLRA of 2018 had shaped the rights on land by women. There are various areas to consider in this context.

One of the participants highlighted how cultural norms marginalized women in education, hindering their ability to advocate for themselves. An elderly woman indicated that:

> *"Scholarship opportunities often favoured boys, reinforcing the traditional notion of male dominance within families. Limited education further restricted women's participation in land rights discussions due to language barriers and a lack of confidence."*

In the same vein, another participant noted that:

> *"While these societies (Sanda and Poro societies) provided training for young men and women, there was a clear distinction in how they prepared each gender for future roles. Men were groomed for leadership, while women were trained for domestic duties."*

One of the participants noted that:

> *"Women political participation and receiving massive support in Wee as it is done to their male counterparts is still a challenge stressing the cultural belief that women are not meant to be leaders. This is the length at which the tradition is entrenched within our people because in the same elections a male candidate who divorced his wife and has over three kids by different ladies in the same town is the one being preferred, she further explained. With respect to women participating in youth elections and being president of their classes there has been a more changing narrative."*

A youth participant recounted an instance where, despite being the best student in her class, she was denied leadership opportunities solely because of her gender. The participant said,

> *"I was one of the most intelligent students in my class but could not lead the class because l was a female."*

This illustrates how pre-LLRA of 2018 gender biases prevented women from actively participating in discussions about land rights and ownership. The researcher sought to understand the impact of the LLRA of 2018 on these dynamics and the subsequent changes that may have occurred. Furthermore, the issue of gender bias is extended to political participation. While Liberia's National Elections Law mandates gender balance, societal attitudes hindered women's ability to participate effectively. Women who dared to run for office faced campaigns targeting their gender rather than their qualifications, effectively discouraging them from seeking leadership positions. Wee District had never elected a female lawmaker or district superintendent, highlighting the significant challenges women faced in the political sphere. These experiences illustrate the various ways women in Wee District were excluded from land-related decision-making before the passage of the LLRA OF 2018. Gender discrimination permeated multiple aspects of their lives, limiting their opportunities for education, political participation, and, ultimately, their ability to exercise their land rights. Therefore, this could also be another significant contributor towards the limited rights and participation of women in issues on land.

Another woman participant noted that:

> *"I think Wee would have been far more developed than it is currently had women been part of those land negotiations; l thinks this was just a scam intended to keep women as servants to men or a misinterpretation of the tradition of the land."*

She further said that if there's anyone that should have such absolute control over land matters, it should be the women and not even the men because the women are the primary users of the land and are the ones who provide more care to it through their regular cleaning up exercise for farming purposes. This was disputed by one of the older male participants, who angrily said,

> *"Traditions are meant to abide and not be argued, and for him, he thinks the elders are not acting on their own; they are doing what they saw their forefathers doing; therefore, ladies should be ladies and not trying to be men."*

He explained a confrontation that existed between his foster mother and his father, that his father had to move out of the house only because she said they both contributed to the construction of the family house. According to him, women were trying to get equal with their husbands, and if they were not restricted from certain activities, their husbands would not have control over them and their homes.

Another youth participant noted that:

> *"I grew up seeing my mother farming on land she could not share her experience about. I have yet to notice any land dispute concerning their land. Still, my experience has been that men, mostly elders, have absolute control over land discussion, management, and use and make all determinations on behalf of their wives."*

This, he said the elders attributed to the tradition of the land and told him it was beyond his comprehension and that he would only properly understand when he became an elder like them. In a similar manner, another youth participant added that the elders' justification is incomprehensive because these are the same women they depend on for their wisdom in most of their decisions. For him, he believes that there is something bigger than tradition that is preventing women's participation, and he thinks the elders were just so corrupt. He further explained that when the elders go to those meetings and return, most of the decisions they communicate to the community are not lived up to by the companies. For example, the Liberia Agriculture Company (LAC), in their agreement with the government, promised to build schools, hospitals, and playgrounds for the young people of the community, but to date, there is just a single high school, no LAC-constructed hospital and no playground. Though women do not require formal education, they are better negotiators than men if they were in those meetings.

While representing my office in some of the meetings between the community and Western Cluster, a mining company trying to secure their Mineral Development Agreement ratification

in Western Liberia Grand Cape Mount County, I experienced some of the challenges highlighted by the participants. Though the LLRA is in implementation, but these challenges have not significantly changed in any ways. For example, the Mineral Development Agreement provides that 80,000Usd annually should be directed to scholarships but when we traced their 2013 till date payment and scholarship awards, it was realized that just two of thirty-six scholarships awarded by the company went to women. When I inquired why it was that way an elder said, "the boys will be the ones to defend the land when all women are taken away by their husbands and in fact the scholarship was for mining engineers and it's a challenging work for women to do hence, they preferred the boys over the girls for the community scholarship".

Another experience was the involvement of women into those land discussions regardless of the equal rights the LLRA gave both genders the right. I did not experience how women's exclusion before the LLRA was but from my recent experience, women themselves aren't making effort or taking advantage of the LLRA for their inclusion. During one of the discussions with Western Cluster, we (my office and Hope for Women) intentionally tried to get women in the meeting but one woman walking in a group said, "*Our husbands are already there no need*" I then asked who told them their presence wasn't important and she said in the local dialect, her father and husband. At that the point, my colleague from Hope for Women said, "*that is the perception we are trying to change*". This suggested to me that women are shying away from discussion around their land rights. For example, during the Western Cluster mining agreement finalisation with the community, women were forced before they could contribute to the discussion but when it came to the distribution of food and related items, they were so active. From the findings above, it can be gleaned that the pre-LLRA of 2018 was gender-biased, where men had an opinion of a patriarchal society and where women ought to have a passive role in society and, thereby, should not have right to the land. This historically suggests that it mainly disadvantaged women at the expense of male superiority leading up to their current lack of interest in land discussion and representation. On the other hand, the LLRA has created a space for women to get involved and fully participate but women are still not taking advantage of this wonderful opportunity. To this end, it remains vital to understand why women are not fully participating and taking on roles in promoting their land right.

In agreement with the above, one of the elders indicated that,

"The use of traditional, cultural, and norms as means for women's exclusion from a land-related conversation in Rural Liberia, with Wee being of no exclusion, has been hugely attributed to the wrong use of lessons passed on from ancestors by the elders; hence, it was

essential to hear from the elders who were a centre of the implementation of tradition and culture. As we engaged in understanding the satiation of women's land rights in Wee, the question of the satiation with women's land rights in Wee was asked before the passage of the Liberia Land Rights Acts."

In support of this view, one male participant also noted that *"when they used to go to war to defend and protect their land, where were the ladies, or is it now that they know they have rights?* Another male participant supported this, saying, *"If I like, I can even put his name and picture because he is saying or doing nothing wrong; in fact, he is only defending what we taught him." He further explained persuasively, "How will you feel if your wife starts to be equal with you and starts to disrespect you?".*

From the sentiments above, it can be gleaned that there was a general agreement among male participants that women should not have the right to land. They seemed to be in a position that challenged the ability of women to have rights over land citing tradition as the significant factor. Most male participants seem to agree that tradition has taught them the role of women, and that is just what they had allowed them to do, so they see no violation. There was no need to stress women further as they already had so much to care for, including the children, food, home care, etc. Hence, taking them to land discussions wasn't necessary, especially when they were always informed about what was happening at the meeting. The Wee District seems to have been under a robust patriarchal culture where women are to be under their husbands. There was never a customary land decision that the women did not know about because they were always informed. Their suggestions were communicated by their husbands and were shared with the companies in those meetings as concerns. This highlights that the pre-LLRA of 2018 was a patriarchal-dominated society where women ought to undertake secondary roles and responsibilities to their husbands. The enactment of the LLRA OF 2018 could be a significant turning point in women's and land rights history.

Nevertheless, the introduction of the LLRA seems to have not contributed towards a shift in the specific gender roles and systems. Research indicates that, after the passage of the Liberia Land Rights Acts, tradition, culture, and norms are still impeding women participation in their land matters.

4.4 Provisions of the Liberia Land Rights Act on women's land rights

Table 4: Provisions of the Liberia Land Rights Act touch on women's land rights

Source: Research's Field Data, 2024

Response	Men	Women	Total
Twelve of the research participants had an understanding of the land rights acts and specific articles supporting their knowledge of the act that promotes women land rights.	4	8	12
Twenty of them heard that women have the right to land ownership like their male counterparts but don't know the specific provision	6	14	2 0
No knowledge	1	10	11

Table 4 shows that 12 respondents, of which 4 were men and 8 were women were asked about their knowledge and understanding of the LLRA of 2018, which specific provision gives women the right to land, and they all demonstrated some understanding of the LLRA though most of them do not know the specific provisions. Thirty one of the forty-three persons spoken either had little or no idea but a young boy who represents the community often seems more knowledgeable of the LLRA due to his exposure and participation in land related matters mentioned Article 5 and Article 8 as the specific provisions of the LLRA that promotes women rights to Land. He was so knowledgeable that the researcher took interest in knowing the source of his knowledge and through further discussion I understood that he was the youth representative who often worked with different civil society organizations to get their messages across in the community. One of the female participants indicated,

> "*In the past, women never owned land here, but today, women, men, and youth can sit together with the elders and decide issues on land ownership*. In another interview, another woman indicated*: "In the past, the old law did not include us women, but the new land rights law passed in September 2018 allows women and youth to participate in land discussions."*.

Results from a qualitative enquiry revealed that the Specific aspects of the Liberian Land Rights Act have empowered women by ensuring that the rights on land are now justiciable

under the law. This implies that co-owning property with a spouse provides security and lowers the possibility of being evicted during a divorce or if a partner dies.

Previously, one of the participants noted that,

> *"Typically, women in Liberia have difficulty retaining land in the event of divorce or after the death of their husbands. Competition over land-related issues is one of the root causes of conflict that often leads to tension and violence among communities in Liberia. Violent conflict around land ownership is often stoked by grievances related to land scarcity and historical injustices."*

According to interviewees, co-ownership rights have allowed women previously at risk to keep their rightful portion of land. Similarly, customs that support male heirs are challenged by the Act's recognition of women's inheritance rights. This shows that the introduction of the LLRA has impacted women's rights to the land in Liberia. This view was supported by another woman who indicated that:

> *"We as children inherited land from our father. I decided to start developing part of the land by planting cocoa. When my husband makes the farm every year, we plant cocoa after harvesting the rice. When my older brother saw our farm getting big and productive, he wanted to remove me from the land. One day, our community animators (mobilizers) went to the community to talk about women's land rights, and he was in that meeting. When he read the law to us, my brother understood that I, too, have rights to the land, and today, he has given me more support and has encouraged me to do more. Now, I can even plant palms."*

The narrative highlights the challenges faced by women in asserting their land rights within traditional family structures. Despite being a rightful heir, the woman faced resistance from her brother due to prevailing gender norms. However, she challenged these norms through community mobilization and awareness of land rights legislation and claimed her rightful share of the land. This demonstrates the power of knowledge and advocacy in empowering women to overcome traditional barriers and participate more actively in land management and decision-making. Therefore, it can logically be indicated that the LLRA of 2018 changed the position of women in the negotiation and ownership of land and how their male counterparts perceive them.

In contrast, the situation women faced with their land rights before the passage of the Liberia Land Rights Acts is different from the views of the young people after the passage of the LLRA

of 2018. The majority of the young people, thirteen of the fifteen, said there had been minor inclusion in women's participation and representation. Solomon said that he is pleased that since the passage of the LLRA in 2018, he has seen the inclusion of women in land matters. Previously, land matters would lead to violence between men and women, but after the Act and awareness campaigns, land disputes were now being resolved amicably.

One woman had this to say:

> *"Some time ago, I was seriously attacked by nearby community members due to a land dispute and still have scars. But this project's awareness of land rights and dispute resolution has helped me move forward and find a way to resolve that conflict peacefully rather than leading to more violence. We need more communities to benefit from this education and support."*

In support of this, another woman noted that,

> *"The enactment of Liberia's Land Rights Law in 2018 opened doors to a new era of reform in the country's community land rights. The law came into force after a long history of land dispossession for Indigenous and local communities and two brutal civil wars, whose main drivers are traced back to power struggles for land and natural resources. Land reform and justice have always been critical pillars of sustainable peace in Liberia, and this legislation sought to play a key role in this endeavour."*

Therefore, the Land Rights Law of 2018 is a groundbreaking piece of legislation in Liberia, recognized as one of the most progressive land rights laws on the African continent. It explicitly secures women's land rights and participation in land governance decisions.

A woman from Wee district, Baby, believes that the passage of the LLRA has significantly empowered women to openly discuss their land rights and contribute to decision-making processes regarding ancestral land management and use. She admired the law's ability to create a more equitable environment where women could actively participate in land governance discussions. While acknowledging the challenges women still face in fully exercising their land rights, Baby highlighted the positive impact of the LLRA in enabling women to attend land discussion meetings on an equal footing with men. She expressed satisfaction with the progress made, recognizing that even if women may not always be the primary decision-makers, their participation and informed contributions are vital.

Ma. Neejay, who is the women leader in the Wee District, indicated that:

"*How do they expect them to contribute to the discussion if they know nothing from the genesis? This, for me, is just a law that is not in full effect, and I still think tradition influences most of these decisions". My experienced while working with the communities is in support of this view, the LLRA gives women the right to attend land related matter and participate fully as the men unfortunately, I saw that women were still not participating infact during one of the meetings on Grand Cape Mount a county in Western Liberia where Mano Palm Oil is located ladies were seated in the back during their land discussion. They were so far away that they barely couldn't hear anything being said. I was shocked when it came to questions no woman could ask infact the moderator had to specifically say women must speak yet we could not get a woman to contribute. What I gathered from the research participants that women were denied the right to speak during those meetings is one I did not experience but what is certain is that there has been some persecution change and the inclusion of women is now achieved. Hopefully women can utilize this opportunity.*

After the passage of the law, the elders' narrative has changed from before the passage of the Liberia Land Rights Acts. All the elders said women's participation is now visible and effective. Albert said against their (The Elders) will defend their tradition, culture, and norms as passed on to them by their ancestors' women have been included in matters of land rights, management, and use. He said the same things about women's inclusion making no difference are what's happening. He further explained that the lady who is the women's representation always has nothing to offer in the meeting. He retrospects a scenario when J-Palm, a local Liberian company, went to acquire land for palm planting Ma. Neejay was in the meeting and did not contribute even when there was a request to hear from the ladies. All she said was that she appreciated the company for investing in Wee District.

Pa. Alfred, an elder in Wee District, said:

"The quest for women to be represented is a waste of time. There is an office that hosts the land officers, but the women representative, Ma. Neejay will only go there when there is a meeting where she thinks the company will give money, but she often goes to the farm and abandons her responsibilities." Against this view, I experienced that the space referred to as a land office is not a full office infact it's a space of the pouch of one of the community residences. My experience highlighted that women are not sitting in those places because it's extremely uncomfortable both in space and the environment. For example, the place is already on someone's

pouch and there are five men sitting around a single woman. I personally view this as intimidation leading to the women representative being uneasy in such gatherings therefore, unable to communicate her views properly.

For Mr. Kaideweah, he thinks women are only interested in money. He added that his experience working with women since the LLRA OF 2018 required them to have been all about confusion because everyone is already aware of the inner happenings in their meetings before they get to the community. He attributed this attitude to the reason why women were required to stay home and do their women's duties. While we engaged the community it was identified that most of the community dwellers are not aware of the content of the LLRA though they are aware of the law but what is in the law is still a big knowledge gap amongst dwellers in Wee.

4.5. The implementation of the provisions of the Liberia Land Rights Act on women's land rights.

The Land Commission in the Wee Statutory District offer a promising avenue for women to address land rights issues and seek justice. However, their effectiveness is contingent upon addressing several key challenges. Traditional leaders, often male-dominated, can pose significant obstacles to women's land rights. These leaders may hold conservative views that reinforce gender stereotypes and limit women's participation in decision-making processes. To overcome this, engaging traditional leaders in dialogue and promoting awareness of the Land Rights Act is essential. The Land Commissions often face limited resources, including inadequate funding, staffing, and infrastructure. This has hindered their ability to effectively handle land disputes, particularly those involving complex legal and technical issues. Addressing this requires increased investment in the Land Commissions and the development of sustainable funding mechanisms. Many women may be unaware of their land rights and the procedures for accessing the Land Commissions. Raising awareness through community outreach programs, education campaigns, and legal aid services is crucial to empowering women and encouraging them to seek justice. Land Commission staff may require additional training and capacity building to effectively handle land disputes, particularly those involving complex legal and technical issues. Investing in training programs can enhance their skills and knowledge, leading to more efficient and equitable resolution of land disputes. Corruption and bribery can undermine the effectiveness of the Land Commissions and create barriers for women seeking justice. Implementing measures to combat corruption and promote transparency is essential for ensuring the integrity of the land rights system. Capacity building is a major gap in land related issues across Wee, haven interacted with some of the community

leaders most of whom are not literate have just little understanding of the land matters and how women incorporation is a core part of the LLRA. I wonder how the leaders will teach the rest of the community when they struggle to understand the law.

Table 5: Impact of the LLRA OF 2018

Source: Research's Field Data, 2024

Response	Men	Women	Total
Women are still underrepresented despite the enactment of the Land Rights Act	6	16	22
Women are called upon occasionally and they are not engaged in every step of the discussion.	2	7	9
In some places, women haven't been regarded despite the Land Rights Act guaranteeing their protection to equal participation.	3	9	12
Total	**11**	**32**	**43**

Table 5 shows that 22 respondents of which 6 were men and 16 were women said women are still underrepresented despite the enactment of the Land right Act, 9 respondents of which 2 were men and 7 women said, in some places, women are called upon occasionally, 12 respondents of which 3 are men and 9 women said, women haven't been regarded despite the Land Right Act guaranteeing their protection to equal participation. Through observation, women are left out of positions meant for them, and the few they are accepted in are non-decision-making positions that only require them to participate in those land discussions but have no decision-making power. Most women are still not yet received in the roles needed for the act and have little or no input in their land rights. The establishment of Land Commissions in the Wee Statutory District offers a glimmer of hope. These commissions provide a platform for women to voice their concerns and seek resolution for land rights issues. Researchers documented instances where women successfully navigated land disputes through the Land Commissions. Additionally, awareness campaigns conducted by NGOs and government initiatives have had a positive impact, raising awareness of the Land Rights Act among women in the district. However, the implementation process faces challenges. Traditional leaders, often male, can be resistant to the Act's provisions, hindering its effectiveness at the local level. Their influence within the community can create a power imbalance, discouraging women from asserting their rights. Furthermore, Land Commissions in the district often lack adequate

resources and trained personnel to effectively handle complex land disputes, particularly those involving women's rights. This lack of capacity can lead to delayed resolutions or even biased outcomes that disadvantage women.

According to a female participant, “I have seen no impact in women's involvement because men are still the ones making the decision about their land”. A young male participant said, “though women aren’t making themselves available because maybe they are shy, but the men are not helping to encourage them to participate”. They sometimes call us, but we still think it’s a male thing because that’s what they have made us believe over the years now we are afraid before it seems like we are disrespecting them an elderly woman said. In contrast, an elder in the local dialect which is recorded here in English said women already know their roles and responsibilities we should stop forcing them into things that are not meant for them. He pointed at civil Society Organizations as the instigators of making women think they are equal to men and promised that when he’s made Town Chief, no Civil Society Organization will be allowed in Wee.

4.6 Improvements needed to enhance access to land by Women in Liberia

Table 6: Statistics of improvement since the passage of the LLRA OF 2018
Source: Research’s Field Data, 2024

Response	Men	Women	Total
Minimum improvement/not much improvement	5	12	17
Absolutely no improvement	3	17	20
No knowledge	3	3	6
Total	**11**	**32**	**43**

Table 6 shows that of the 17 respondents of which 5 were men and 12 women said that there is a minimum improvement has been seen in the public awareness of women's land rights and ownership of customary land rights to community dwellers since the passage of the Liberia Land rights Acts, while 20 respondents of which 3 are men and 17 women said absolutely no improvement and lastly, 6 respondents of which 3 were men and 3 women do not know. From the interaction with the key informant, there has been some level of improvement in women's land rights but that is not reflected in the community dwellers because of their inability to read voluminous documents and get complete understanding of the impact of the law. What I have seen is that there has been little public awareness on the LLRA and this needs to improve if the law will achieve its objectives. In conversation with the District Superintendent, he

acknowledged the need for more awareness but attributed the level of awareness of the law to low budgetary support for land reform in the National Budget. He appreciated Civil Society Organizations who he said are the most active people helping to inform people generally about the law and enhance women's understanding of their land rights. He used the opportunity to call on both government, local, and international organizations to invest in land reform if their law will achieve its objectives.

4.7 The extent of compliance of local practices in Wee district with the Liberia Land Rights Act

Table 7: Compliance of local practices in Wee district with the Liberia Land Rights Act
Source: Research's Field Data, 2024

Response	Men	Women	Total
Very little	5	19	24
Minimum	4	7	11
No compliance	2	6	8
Total	**11**	**32**	**43**

Table 7 shows that on account of compliance of local practices in Wee district with regards to the Liberia Land Rights Act, 24 respondents of which 5 were men and 19 women said very little compliance, 11 respondents of which 4 were men and 7 women said minimum compliance while 8 respondents of which 2 are men and 6 women said no compliance. Compliance is at a high level in policy but very low level in practice. Compliance is a big issue that needs to be addressed if the LLRA will achieve its objectives. While in Cape Mount on the Western Cluster operations I saw how the community land management community has no women representation not because the district leaders are not aware but also because they are not comfortable with women sharing tables with them. In one of the discussions with the Company representatives we had no lady and when the Gender coordinator from the Ministry of Gender asked why was that an elder said they have all gone to the farm. Interestly, the Gender coordinator demanded a woman representation in accordance with the LLRA of 2018 before the meeting could start. For some time, it was annoying to the elders, mostly men but they finally agreed to get the women. A female participant thinks the leaders of Wee are aware of their representation in those meetings, but they will intentionally send them to prepare food for the guest while the discussion is about to commence so that they will exclude women. In a playful manner she said, "it's only members of the Arm Forces of Liberia that can help change that and make the leaders of Wee to follow what the law says".

4.8 Challenges affecting the implementation of the provision on women's land rights as captured in the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 in Wee district.

Table 8: Challenges that affect the implementation of the provision on women land rights as captured in the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 in Wee district.

Source: Research's Field Data, 2024

Response	Men	Women	Total
Lack of information (Education) on land related matters	5	14	19
Entrenched traditional/cultural practices.	4	12	16
Lack of self-confidence on the part of women	1	2	3
Limited funding for the Land Authority in reaching out to the affected population.	1	4	5
Total	**11**	**32**	**43**

Table 8 shows that 19 respondents of which 5 are men and 14 women said lack of information (education) on land related matters is a challenge that affect the LLRA OF 2018 implementation, 16 respondents of which 4 men and 12 women asserted that entrenched traditional/cultural practices are challenges affecting the LRA implementation, while 3 respondents of which 1 man and 2 women alluded that lack of self-confidence on the part of women is a factors affecting the law, and 5 respondents of which 1 man and 4 women said limited funding for the Land Authority in reaching out to the affected population is another challenge. Education generally is still a challenge in Wee and this has greatly affected the implementation of the LLRA of 2018 while culture, traditional practices are keeping women in the back. Following my experience in Grand Cape Mount, I saw how limited financial support, and the lack of education which has impacted the behaviour of elders remain key hindrances to implementing the LLRA. To fully implement the LLRA, investment in the Land Authority to increase visibility through awareness and other means of education should be a priority for the Government and her development partner.

Even with the minimum improvements, there are still big problems. Insufficient knowledge, especially in isolated regions, makes it more difficult for women to take advantage of the Act's provisions. A social barrier is created by cultural prejudices and traditional conventions that prioritize male ownership. Even when they are aware of their rights, women may be reluctant

to question deeply embedded patriarchal systems out of concern for social rejection or retaliation. Moreover, the perceived or actual expense of land registration can be a significant barrier, especially for women with little money. Concerns included a lack of clarity over the methods of enforcement were highlighted by the interviewees. Women raised doubts about the efficacy of questioning traditional norms that support male ownership, particularly in the absence of robust enforcement mechanisms. Through interviews with participants, the study revealed numerous challenges affecting the effectiveness of the LLRA of 2018 towards women's access to land. The section below presents the various challenges associated with the implementation and effectiveness of the act.

4.8.1 Limited Education of Women in the Wee District

The study observed that the research participants did not have an adequate understanding of the LLRA of 2018, which empowers them legally to have power in owning and accessing land. According to them, they have heard about the Liberia Land Rights Act and have seen it through engagements with different civil society organizations, some of whom are gender specific and some government representatives who visited Wee District before to speak about this document and its importance for women. Still, they are unaware of the particular provision as they did not achieve their goal of higher education. The education issue is that most women in Wee District are not even allowed to acquire education when the means is provided instead to their brothers or male peers who are accepted into the educational programs.

Ma. Neejay, who is the head of a women's group in the community, shared how she had a problem within her home because she attempted to attend the adult literacy school that runs from 5-8 pm. According to her, this annoyed her husband, who claimed that by the time he was back from the farm, there would be no one home to prepare his food and water for the shower.

> *"I pleaded with him to get his food ready and get his water prepared and kept him in the bathroom just to convince him about my attendance [at adult literacy classes], but he refused and threatened to get another wife because I was being disrespectful to his orders and that he will not live in a house with another man",* Ma. Neejay said.

"Some people believe that limiting girls' access to education is acceptable," said Ma. Neejay. "I personally disagree and have decided to send my two daughters to Buchanan to live with a friend and receive a quality education in exchange for helping with household chores." She hopes her daughters will be well-prepared to compete with other students from Monrovia and other parts of the country for local and national public offices.

Darbble, a female in Wee District, noted that if women were involved in these land discussions, there wouldn't be what she referred to as consistent land disputes in the communities that are now fuelling a lot of community insecurities. She further explained how the dispute is not amongst themselves either; instead, they are having issues with neighbouring communities and people from outside Wee who are seeking land. Darbble added that the elders will often sell a piece of community land to more than one person, causing many insecurities for the community. She pointed out a recent experience where there was a truck of ex-soldiers who visited the community and ordered the beating of the community town chief because he and his elder council had resold a land, they had already given out a deal for over the last four years. Nine out of fifteen respondents affirmed their knowledge when asked if they believed women were aware of the Liberia Land Rights Act. However, six respondents expressed uncertainty. Decontee confidently stated that women were aware of the Act, emphasizing its public nature.

She expressed gratitude to Hope for Women, a Civil Society Organization for their efforts in conducting outreach programs across Liberia to educate women about their land rights. She emphasized that the Land Rights Act is a crucial document that protects every Liberian's ability to buy, manage, and use their land. She further explained that she couldn't understand why Hope said all land was for the government, but the community people kept selling the community land, and she kept wondering if they were the Government Hope spoke about. She vowed that she would ask about it during Hope's next visit to the community. Trokon explained that he volunteered with the Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) in 2019 to publicize the LLRA OF 2018 across communities in Grand Bassa County, of which Wee is a part. He explained that in that meeting in Wee, the conference was held with three women groups with 20 or more members each. The goal was not just to teach about the rights of women by the law but also about the general law and how it intends to improve land rights across Liberia. There were copies distributed to all the women. Handful jokingly in Bassa said it is true that the Land Rights document was shared but it was useless to women because many of them can't read the document.

Since the passage of the LLRA OF 2018 in 2018, the elders have agreed that there has been some level of education for women on their land rights, which they think is undermining the tradition and culture of the land. Pa. Alfred explained that they have never stopped women from learning but a kind of education that will make them start disrespecting their husbands is one that they don't appreciate. He pointed out that after one of the LLRA OF 2018 training in 2019 Ma. Photo (Action) started making fun of them through a Bassa song which can be

interpreted as we will now know who the man in this community is. This he said annoyed him. Mr. Albert shared his experience that though he will always try to uphold the tradition of the land, he thinks women getting educated about their land rights could be a blessing in disguise. According to him he is thinking what if the unfortunate happens and he dies he thinks with the little knowledge his wife has acquired can be used to secure their little land for their children's future.

4.9.2 Limited of Financial Support

On the question of what financial support from the Government through the National budget women have for their land was asked and many nine of the fifteen women were unaware while few three said absolutely no support and the other three said there was little support. Initially there used to be little funds from the Land Authority through the Ministry of Internal Affairs but that stopped in 2020 said Mamie, a woman in the Wee District. Another woman, Quianie, added that she received some money in 2020 during coronavirus for business but she could not remember the amount. This agrees well with a representative from the civil society organisations that:

"Liberia as a country has been challenged with a budget to fund most of their initiatives, this has affected the country at all levels including land reform. Before the enactment of the LLRA OF 2018 the Liberia Land Authority has always been faced with financial constraints, this has continued to impede the effective operations of the staff in executing their duties."

He pointed out that though there is still visible corruption in the system which contributed to delay of the full review of the Land Right policy 2014-1017 yet support from the national government towards the land reform process was identified as a major challenge he explained. Mr. Otto shared his experience that while reviewing the Land Right Policy many times, they could not effectively work because of power outages at the Land Authority especially during the dry season when the hydro it is pumping limited water to supply electricity. On many occasions we had to move either to a local entertainment center or some of the partner organizations offices to access electricity. This was the same with the internet and worse is that the Land Authority could not even provide lunch during those review meetings and talked less of stipend he said.

Martu, 27, expressed that the only account of money for women that she can recall, though it was not money from the Government, is the one distributed by Representative Candidate

Vincent S.T. Willie when he was contesting to be representative and requested a meeting with our women leadership. After that meeting in which he requested our support when he was contesting against one of our daughters who has come from Monrovia, he gave each of the women Liberia Dollars 5,000 (US$30) to be use as market loan and when he is elected, he would increase such amount to a more suitable amount that will strengthen and expand our business. Unfortunately, after the elections in which he lost, we are yet to hear anything about that money as promised. In one meeting he insulted us saying we are less busy people she said. Ma. Sarah 42 added that if we are talking about support, only Hope for Women, which has really been doing a very excellent work ensuring women are empowered and sustained, should be mentioned. She explained that as Hope for Women conducts their regular TVET training providing life skills to women and girls across Wee District, they always gave each graduate Liberian Dollars Fifteen Thousand (15,000.00) which is like United States Dollars Eighty (80.00) as startup capital for small business loan with the goal of empowering community women. Interest on those loans were circulated amongst other women who could not benefit from the initial distribution because of limited resources. This has continually been the source of many of the women's initial investment for their businesses.

Against the views of these ladies, Ma. Neejay, the women representative on the Community Land Management Committee said there has been money provided for the community once. According to her the money was provided when the Government wanted to use their land for the construction of the community clinic by former District Representative Honourable Baryon Browne. Since the community land was being use, she said the District Administrator (Town Chief) and his elders said it’s a tradition, but the money is only normally share with those in the meeting and on the basics of your position so though she received some of the money which she reported but it was just United States Dollars (20.00). She further added that the Government through the Land Authority provided small support but women groups but since 2019 that has not happened.

Issues of financial support have seen a more improvement now compared to before the passage of the land rights Act. This was a popular view amongst the young people spoken to. Thirteen out of fifteen of them think that the Government has invested financially to empower women especially to take charge of their land rights. In the words of Enoch while he volunteers as a youth Representative representing Wee, he attended a meeting in Buchanan the Capital City of Grand Bassa County that hosts Wee District. According to him the meeting was organized by the Internal Affairs Ministry responsible for local government and the Liberia Land Authority

to understand the challenges women are facing in their land rights. One of the major recommendations from that meeting was that women need to be empowered to be independent in advocating for their rights on land. He further explained that months later through the Ministry of Land Commission there was a disbursement of Liberian Dollars five thousand to women who already had a small market while Liberian Dollars seven thousand was given to them to jump start a business. Handful in a joking manner added that the money provided is so small and often cannot even start a small business especially considering the state of the country's economy. She further said most of the women term it to put them back in the pot to feed their family, which she said she continues to see from her mother. Eric added that though the money provided by the Government is small, if there was a system in place like what is done with the little funds from Hope for Women where your progress and challenges are monitored it would have been more effective instead of the Government just providing.

The elders all agreed that there has been little financial support since the enactment of the LLRA of 2018. According to Pa. Togar, an elder in the Wee District in Liberia, the government has been providing little support to specifically women groups to start up a small business. Though they claim the funds are limited but they are not even managing the little ones how can they entrust them with huge cash he said. He further explains that it's only women that get support when it comes to land rights as most of the groups are focused on women. Though the government is not consistent with providing money to women groups but the support they get from the different women groups even we who are doing all the work don't receive such support.

The issue of support through the budget for ministries and agencies in Liberia remains a challenge not only for the Land Authority but for all ministries and agencies. Mrs. Gargar continues that this is a challenge the government has acknowledged and struggling to comfort. I can surely say that as a technical focus person from the Land Authority doing the review process there were some issues of fuel for cars, stipend, internet, electricity amongst others that were major hindrance to the review and consultation process of the Land policy. Thanks to the support of USAID and other partners that have contributed to ensure that the review and consultation process was successful. It was a major recommendation that the Government of Liberia should increase budgetary support to enhance the Authority effectiveness and efficiency.

After the enactment of the LLRA of 2018 in 2018 we still see similar budgetary challenges that continue to affect the implementation of the LLRA of 2018. Mr. Otto said between 2018 to 2023 the government of Liberia has committed just under 6% of the National Budget toward the implementation of the LLRA of 2018 each year. This amount he said goes toward salaries, goods, and services. As a result of this, the Land Authority has not been effective as expected for full implementation Mr. Otto said. He further explained that till date the same electricity challenges experienced during the policy review process is still happening at the Land Authority while the internet situation has not improved. He explained how in one of the LLRA OF 2018 implementation team meeting it was disgraceful how the Land Authority complained that due to low budget they are unable to guarantee electricity during the dry season and was therefore seeking the LLRA OF 2018 implementation team to request for a sharing support that will seek USAID as a donor to provide fuel during the dry season Mr. Otto Explained. This low budgetary support is also impacting local implementation in the counties he said. Mr. Otto further explained that though there are no land officers in the counties and the LLRA OF 2018 is being hosted in the superintendent's office, similar electricity and internet challenges exist. He appreciates the USAID and other partners for their support and said without them there could literally be no LLRA OF 2018 implementation. Mr. Otto further stressed that this low budgetary support from the Government has also impacted the recruitment of qualified and experienced land managers to lead the full implementation of the LLRA OF 2018. Mr. Otto said that the Land Authority budget can only incorporate an expert for a compensation of between 1,200Usd to 1,700Usd which is far below what is required to get those with the right knowledge and understanding of land rights, challenges and recommend ways for its proper implementation. He acknowledges that even those at SDI are receiving far better than the amount from the government only because they are on the project and being paid by the African Development Bank.

We can boast of the success of the Liberia Land Policy through the intervention and support of donor support Mrs. Gargar said. I must admit that since the enactment of the Land Rights Act in 2018 the challenges experienced during the policy review process still exist and are affecting the implementation of the LLRA OF 2018, Mrs. Gargar said. She further explained that they have limited budgetary support not more than 6% of the annual budget every year yet the Land Authority doesn't get all the allocation during the budget period due to limited revenue collection and government bureaucracy. In the second quarter of 2022, we could not consult and evaluate startup funds provided to women groups in five communities, including Nimba

and Bassa, due to a lack of resources. “Imagining as a government we are relying on local organizations to lead evaluation and share their report with us”, he said. In our implementation plan, publicity, awareness, and housing were priority issues. He said these could help enhance citizens' understanding of their land rights and implementation to date, but these are major challenges. Imagine housing to move the land management committee from the superintendent's office as the space is congested and offering proper land coordination activities cannot be achieved within six years of the LLRA of 2018 implementation while the full publicity and awareness component was implemented through the support of USAID.

4.10 Lessons Learnt

This section presents the lessons learnt from the LLRA of 2018 on women's rights to land in Liberia. It aims to capture the challenges, experiences, and best practices of how the WEE District has benefited from the LLRA of 2018 on women, the overall means of production, and women's rights over land.

Table 9: Lesson learnt from the provision on women's land rights regarding the LLRA OF 2018.

Source: Researcher’s Field Data, 2024

Response	Men	Women	Total
The establishment of the land management committee that now has a 50-50% women and men participation.	4	10	14
Local ownership rights by communities. They now learned that their community land will never be given out by the Central Government without their involvement.	6	17	23
Individual ownership rights. They are now of the understanding that regardless of gender, women and men have equal rights to own land.	1	5	6
Total	**11**	**32**	**43**

Table 9 shows that, on the aspect of the lesson learned from the provision on women's land rights regarding the institution of the Liberia Land Rights Act, of the total respondents, 14 persons, of which four men and 10 women said the establishment of the land management committee that has now have a 50-50 of women and men participation is lesson learned, while 23 respondents of which there were six men and 17 women said local ownership rights by

communities is another lesson learned and lastly, 6 respondents of which there were one men and five women asserted that individuals ownership rights are another lesson learnt.

4.11 In what ways can we improve the implementation of the provisions on women's land rights as captured in the Liberia Land Rights Act in Wee district?

Table 10: Ways can we improve the implementation of the provisions on women land rights as captured in the Liberia Land Rights Act in Wee district.

Source: Researcher's Field Data, 2024

Response	Men	Women	Total
Allotment of more funding to the Land Rights Authority	3	11	14
Training to enhance women's understanding and knowledge of the law.	6	16	22
Financial empowerment for women.	2	5	7
Total	**11**	**72**	**43**

Table 10 shows 14 respondents of which 3 were men and 11 women which recorded that allotment of more funding to the Land Authority are ways we can improve the implementation of the provisions on women land rights in Wee district, while 22 respondents, 6 men and 16 women asserted that training to enhance women understanding and knowledge of the law greatly improve the implementation of the provision on women land rights, and finally 7 respondents of which 2 were men and 5 women stated that financial empowerment for women is the surest way we can improve the implementation of the provision on women land rights as captured in the Land Rights Act in Wee district. Considering recommendations to resolve some of the budgetary challenges faced during the review of the Land right policy, it is unfortunate that the government is yet to make enough budgetary allotment that will enhance the proper implementation of the LLRA OF 2018, Sis. Edith said. Unfortunately, the similar challenges we encountered during the review process are the same challenges we are still experiencing during the implementation she explained. I am not sure what the budgetary allotment to the Land Authority is but what I can obviously say is that the challenges have not changed in any way due to budgetary support. Thanks to USAID that has taken on the purchase of fuel at the Land Authority central office in Monrovia, but the real implementation sites are still facing these challenges, said Sis. Edith. It was my expectation that we have officers in each county

for the decentralization of effective policy implementation instead of being housed in a single room. Sis. Edith attributed this to the reason why women are a little uncomfortable imagining sitting in a room with over 4 men discussing, and you are the only female, she said.

4.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the major findings on the effectiveness of the Liberia Land Rights Act in improving women's rights to land in Liberia. Gender equality in land ownership can be significantly advanced with the help of the Liberian Land Rights Act of 2018. However, a diversified strategy is needed for successful execution. It is imperative to close the knowledge gap by implementing focused education and awareness initiatives. Dismantling patriarchal resistance at the same time requires active community participation and discourse. For the Act to be successful in changing the land rights landscape for women in Liberia, it will be essential to fortify enforcement mechanisms and offer women easily accessible legal aid and support services.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the key findings from the empirical research carried out, highlighting the transformative potential of the LLRA of 2018 in addressing historical gender disparities in land rights in Liberia. This chapter discusses these findings and relates them to the debates in the literature as set out in Chapter Two. In the process it delves deeper into the LLRA's provisions, discussing and providing conclusions on its potential impact on women's empowerment and gender equality in land rights. This chapter aims to provide valuable insights for policymakers, advocates, and researchers by examining the Act's specific requirements and identifying key challenges and opportunities. Ultimately, this chapter will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the Land Rights Act and its implications for women's empowerment in Liberia.

5.2 Summary of the Study

This study was intended to explore the impact of the LLRA of 2018 on the improvement of women's land rights. The primary research was based on a case study in Wee Statutory District, Grand Bassa County, Republic of Liberia, West Africa. Chapter One presented the introduction

and problem context of the study. It further presented the research questions and research objectives. The second chapter presented a review of the literature and the theoretical frameworks that were in line with the research. The chapter presented the literature review in line with the research questions and objectives. The third chapter presented the research methodology that the researcher used in conducting the research. This chapter was followed by chapter four, which presented and analyzed the research findings. This last chapter of the study presents the summary of the study, significant conclusions and recommendations. The findings and recommendations align with the study's research and objectives.

5.2.1 Major Conclusions

From the research objectives, the research findings indicate that while the LLRA of 2018 offers significant potential for empowering women in Liberia, its implementation faces challenges related to limited resources, limited public education through awareness, and resistance from traditional leaders. The crafters of the law did an amazing work in putting the legislation together but to ensure the is effectiveness, it is crucial to strengthen the capacity of Land Commissions, raise awareness, and address discriminatory customary practices. By doing so, Liberia can create an enabling environment for women's land rights and promote gender equality.

5.2.2 The Effectiveness of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 in ensuring women's land rights in Liberia.

The study's first objective was to assess the effectiveness of the specific provisions within the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 in ensuring women's land rights in Liberia. Despite the passage of the LLRA, many citizens, particularly women, remain unaware of their rights and how to apply the law effectively as demonstrated in Chapter four 4.8.1 that identified limited education as a major challenge affecting women land rights. This study concludes that increased awareness and education initiatives are necessary to ensure that individuals, especially women, can fully understand and utilise the provisions of the Act in addressing land-related issues.

The study further concludes that despite the implementation of the LLRA, more must be done to ensure that women have more rights to land in the country. Regarding the issue of lessons learnt from the way the provision on women's land rights, as captured in the Liberia Land Rights Act, have been implemented in Wee district, the research established that the aspect of the establishment of the land management committee that now have a 50-50% of women and

men participation, local ownership rights by communities and individual ownership rights are lessons learnt from the passage of the act. However, operationalisation of the Act may require specific Adhoc committees that are tasked to have a direct oversight on the issues of land which helps to address the conflicts and abuse of women in relation to land issues and compliance.

5.2.3 The Implementation of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 in the Wee Statutory District within Grand Bassa County, Liberia.

The study's second objective was to assess the level of implementation of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 in the Wee Statutory District within Grand Bassa County, Liberia. The study concludes that the implementation of the Land Rights Act was done alongside many hindrances that shadowed the effectiveness and the desired shape of its implementation. The study noted that numerous issues like lack of effectives awareness, self-confidence and education on the implementation of the Act brought so many blinkers on the pathway and effectiveness of the implementation process. To this end, the Act was not effectively and clearly implemented as anticipated to ensure that the desired effect is felt. This suggests that a different implementation model or approach would be an ideal approach to ensure that there is effective implementation of the Act and the achievement of its goals.

5.2.4 Challenges or barriers encountered towards the implementation of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 on the access to land rights by women.

The study also sought to identify any challenges or barriers encountered towards the implementation of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 on the rights to land by women. The study concludes that the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 was haunted with numerous challenges that undermined its effectiveness and implementation. The research establishes limited information (Education) on land related matters, entrenched traditional/cultural practices, lack of self-confidence on the part of women and limited funding for the Land Authority in reaching out to the affected population are amongst the challenges facing the full implementation of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018.

5.3 Discussion, Lessons, And Recommendations

This study sheds light on the impact of the Liberia Land Rights Act (LLRA OF 2018) of 2018 on women's land rights in Wee District, Liberia. While the LLRA OF 2018 introduces progressive provisions for women's land rights, the research reveals significant challenges hindering its effectiveness.

5.3.1 Limited Knowledge and Understanding

A critical finding as highlighted in chapter four was the widespread limited knowledge about the LLRA OF 2018, particularly among women in rural communities. This knowledge gap limits their ability to claim rights under the Act and effectively navigate land-related issues. Many women interviewed were unaware of the specific provisions guaranteeing their rights to joint ownership, inheritance, and participation in land decision-making processes. One participant, who “grew up seeing her mother farming on land she could not share her experience about,” exemplifies this lack of awareness. This highlights the need for comprehensive public education campaigns targeting both women and men in the local language.

5.3.2 Implementation Obstacles

The implementation of the LLRA OF 2018 has faced significant obstacles. The study identifies in chapter four as part of the major challenges resource constraints within the Land Authority as a major hurdle. An elder echoed this sentiment stating, "Liberia as a country has been challenged with budget to fund most of their initiatives, this has affected the country at all levels including land reform. Before the enactment of the LLRA OF 2018 the Liberia Land Authority has always been faced with financial constraints, this has continued to impede the effective operations of the staff in executing their duties." Limited funding restricts the Authority's ability to conduct extensive public education campaigns, provide legal assistance to women facing land disputes, and effectively monitor the implementation of the Act across the country. Furthermore, a lack of clear guidelines and regulations tailored to enforce the Act's provisions on women's land rights creates ambiguity and hinders its practical application.

5.3.3 Cultural Resistance

Entrenched traditional and cultural practices also pose challenges. Deeply rooted patriarchal norms that prioritize male dominance in land ownership and decision-making processes create resistance to the Act's goals of gender equality. The quote from Albert, an elder, exemplifies this resistance: "After the passage of the law the narrative amongst the elders has changed...women participation is now visible and effective...All the elder's said against their (The Elders) will of defending their tradition, culture, and norms as passed on to them by their ancestors' women has been included in matters of land rights, management, and use." His statement highlights the discomfort some elders feel with the changing landscape of land rights.

Another participant reinforces this point, stating, "How do they expect them (women) to even contribute to the discussion they know nothing from the genesis of, this for me is just a law that is not in full effect, and I still think tradition is influencing most of these decisions." These views illustrate the need to address cultural norms through targeted interventions that promote a shift in attitudes and behaviours.

5.4 Signs of Progress

Despite these challenges, the research also identifies some positive developments as elaborated below.

5.4.1. Increased Representation

Establishing the land management committees with equal gender representation is a critical step towards empowering women in land governance. By providing a platform for women to participate in decision-making, these committees can challenge traditional patriarchal structures and ensure women's voices are heard. For women historically excluded from land-related discussions, creating gender-balanced land management committees offer a tangible opportunity to advocate for their rights and interests. This inclusion can lead to more equitable and inclusive land use planning and management. Moreover, participation in land management committees can empower women by providing them with valuable skills, knowledge, and leadership opportunities. These experiences can enhance women's confidence and capacity to engage in other aspects of community development and governance. This inclusion can lead to more equitable and sustainable land use practices and contribute to community development.

5.4.2 Potential for Empowerment

The Land Rights Act of 2018 offers significant potential for empowering women in Liberia by providing a legal framework to challenge discriminatory practices and claim their rightful ownership of land. However, realising this potential requires addressing challenges such as limited awareness, access to legal aid, and cultural barriers. By strengthening the capacity of land administration institutions, raising awareness, and combating corruption, Liberia can create a more equitable and just land governance system that benefits women and communities alike. The act also signals that women's right to land ownership is now justiciable under the court of law, and women can now challenge any decisions that suppress such a right.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made to improve the situation and ensure the LLRA OF 2018 fulfills its potential to promote women's land rights in Wee District and beyond.

5.5.1 Comprehensive Public Education

There's a critical need for comprehensive awareness campaigns that target both women and men in rural communities. Collaboration with local NGOs, community leaders, and government agencies is crucial to disseminating information about the LLRA OF 2018's provisions in the local language. Utilizing various communication channels, such as workshops, radio broadcasts, and informational brochures, can ensure wider outreach and a deeper understanding of the Act.

5.5.2 Strengthening the Land Authority

Increased funding for the Land Authority is essential. This would enable them to expand their outreach efforts, provide legal assistance to women facing land disputes, and effectively monitor the implementation of the LLRA OF 2018 across the country. Investing in training programs for Land Authority staff on gender issues and land rights specific to women would further enhance their capacity to support women's claims effectively.

5.5.3 Financial Empowerment Programs

As highlighted in chapter four, finance is a major problem hindering the full implementation of the LLRA not just to ensure the Land Authority is strengthen but also to provide financial independence for women. As demonstrated in chapter four, access to microloans or other financial resources would enable women to afford legal fees associated with land disputes, potentially purchase land themselves, fostering greater economic security for their empowerment. Additionally, programs that promote women's self-confidence and financial independence are essential to aid the full implementation.

5.5.4 Engaging Traditional Leaders

As highlighted in the findings, collaboration with traditional authorities, including elders and chiefs, is crucial for achieving lasting change. Efforts to sensitise community dwellers including the traditional authorities through town hall meetings, public awareness etc. can help greatly in the full implementation of the LLRA.

5.6 Chapter Summary

The LLRA of 2018 introduces progressive measures for women's land rights, the law is a good law in general, but the research reveals significant challenges hindering its effectiveness. A critical obstacle is the limited knowledge about the Act, particularly among rural women. This lack of awareness restricts their ability to claim rights and navigate land issues effectively. Furthermore, the Land Authority faces resource constraints, limiting its capacity for public education, legal aid, and monitoring implementation. Financial limitations and the absence of clear regulations to enforce the Act's provisions on women's land rights further complicate matters.

Entrenched cultural norms that prioritise male dominance in land rights also create resistance. Some traditional leaders' express discomfort with the changing landscape of land rights, highlighting the need to address cultural attitudes and behaviours. Despite these challenges, there are signs of progress. Establishing land management committees with equal gender representation offers women a platform for participation. The LLRA of 2018 also holds the potential to empower women by providing a legal framework to challenge discriminatory practices and claim land ownership. The Land Rights Act 2018 represents a significant step towards promoting women's land rights in Liberia. However, its effectiveness is hindered by limited awareness, resource constraints, and cultural resistance. Increasing awareness, strengthening the Land Authority, addressing cultural barriers, and developing clear regulations are essential to fully realise its potential. By taking these actions, Liberia can create a more equitable and just land governance system that empowers women and benefits all citizens.

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Annex A

20 July 2023

Dear Mr I Muapoh

Project Title: Exploring the impact of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 on the improvement of women' s land rights: Case study in Grand Bassa County, Wee Statutory District

Researcher: Mr I Muapoh

Supervisor(s): Dr MCA Wegerif

Department: Anthropology, Archaeology and Development Studies

Reference number: 21832324 (HUM014/0223)

Degree: Masters

I have pleasure in informing you that the above application was **approved** by the Research Ethics Committee on 6 July 2023. Please note that before research can commence all other approvals must have been received.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely,

Prof Karen Harris
Chair: Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: tracey.andrew@up.ac.za

Annex B

Interview guide, primary research participants and key informants.

Women Group

Exploring the impact of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 on the improvement of women's land rights. Case study Grand Bassa County Wee Statutory District 2018-2021.

Research Participants (Community dwellers)

Name:

Age:

Education level:

Position:

1. What is the situation with women accessing land?
2. What rights do women have to and to what land.
3. What is the security, fears or insecurity in women accessing land.
4. How are women involved in land and tenure discussions and decision making?
5. What changes have women experienced in their land rights in the last years?
6. What land do women have access to?
7. What are the means through which women obtain land?
8. Have they experienced any land disputes in Wee?
9. What financial support from the Government through the National budget do women have for their land.
10. What are ways women land rights can be improved?

Participant Name (Block Capitals): _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Annex C

Interview guide, primary research participants and key informants.

Youth Group

Exploring the impact of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 on the improvement of women's land rights. Case study Grand Bassa County Wee Statutory District 2018-2021.

Research Participants (Community dwellers)

Name:

Age:

Education level:

Position:

1. What is the situation with women accessing land?
2. What rights do women have to and to what land.
3. What is the security, fears or insecurity in women accessing land.
4. How are women involved in land and tenure discussions and decision making?
5. What changes have women experienced in their land rights in the last years?
6. What land do women have access to?
7. What are the means through which women obtain land?
8. Have they experienced any land disputes in Wee?
9. What financial support from the Government through the National budget do women have for their land.
10. What are ways women land rights can be improved?

Participant Name (Block Capitals): _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Annex D

Interview guide, primary research participants and key informants.

Elders Group

Exploring the impact of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 on the improvement of women's land rights. Case study Grand Bassa County Wee Statutory District 2018-2021.

Research Participants (Community dwellers)

Name:

Age:

Education level:

Position:

1. What is the situation with women accessing land?
2. What rights do women have to and to what land.
3. What is the security, fears or insecurity in women accessing land.
4. How are women involved in land and tenure discussions and decision making?
5. What changes have women experienced in their land rights in the last years?
6. What land do women have access to?
7. What are the means through which women obtain land?
8. Have they experienced any land disputes in Wee?
9. What financial support from the Government through the National budget do women have for their land.
10. What are ways women land rights can be improved?

Participant Name (Block Capitals): _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Annex E

Interview guide, primary research participants and key informants.
Key Informants

Exploring the impact of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 on the improvement of women's land rights. Case study Grand Bassa County Wee Statutory District 2018-2021.

Research participants (Key informants)

Name:

Age:

Education level:

Position:

Taking in account their knowledge and experience of the subject the following:

1. How do they think we can address women's land rights and improve their land rights?
2. What is think of the implementation of the Land Rights Act in accordance with the law?
3. What is working in the law?
4. What difference has the act brought to improve women land rights?
5. What challenges in the implementation of the Land Rights Act?
6. How could we improve on women's land rights?
7. What is the government investment through the National budget for land reform?
8. How much investment is needed in the implementation of the Land Rights Act?

Participant Name (Block Capitals): _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Annex F

Isaac Muapoh
Researcher
University of Pretoria
Pretoria, South Africa

November 16, 2022

Mr. Samuel Geegar
District Superintendent
Electoral District #3, Grand Bassa County
Republic of Liberia

Dear Mr. Geegar,

Ref: **Letter of request for permission**

Greetings

In partial fulfilment of my requirements for my masters degree by research, I write seeking permission to conduct a research titled: 'Exploring the impact of the Liberia Land Rights Act of 2018 on the improvement of women's land rights: Case study in Grand Bassa County, Wee Statutory District'.

The research will involve qualitative field research that will include interviews and observation. In connection to this, I request your good office to allow me conduct my research which will focus on interviews with women, youth, elders, and local land government officials in Wee District. Rest assured that the data I will gather will remain confidential and is to be uses for academic purposes only.

As a son of Wee, I believe you will be happy to see me complete this degree which will bring pride to our community. I look forward to your positive response in this regard as your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully yours,

Isaac Muapoh Researcher