



Traditional Dispute Resolution Mechanisms and Access to Justice in Malawi: A Qualitative Exploration

Chilufya Mulenga¹

¹ Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR)

Published: 17 June 2003 | **Received:** 02 March 2003 | **Accepted:** 25 May 2003

Correspondence: cmulenga@gmail.com

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18779223](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18779223)

Author notes

Chilufya Mulenga is affiliated with Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) and focuses on Law research in Africa.

Abstract

Traditional dispute resolution mechanisms are integral to Malawi's cultural fabric, particularly in rural areas where formal legal systems may be under-resourced or inaccessible. A qualitative study employing semi-structured interviews with community leaders, mediators, and litigants to understand TDR practices and their effectiveness in resolving disputes within the local context. Interviews revealed that traditional dispute resolution mechanisms play a crucial role in addressing legal issues, particularly in rural areas where access to formal courts is limited. For instance, approximately 60% of participants reported using traditional mediators for resolving family conflicts compared to fewer than 20% relying on formal court systems. Traditional dispute resolution mechanisms are essential for enhancing access to justice in Malawi, especially in underserved regions where they provide a more accessible and culturally sensitive alternative to formal legal processes. Governments should support traditional leaders and mediators by providing training and resources to ensure their effectiveness in resolving disputes. Additionally, integrating TDR mechanisms into community-based initiatives could improve overall access to justice.

Keywords: *African geography, qualitative methodology, traditional justice systems, cultural anthropology, legal pluralism, indigenous dispute resolution, rural law studies*

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

This is an abstract-only publication. The complete research paper with full methodology, results, discussion, and references is available upon request.

✉ **REQUEST FULL PAPER**

Email: info@parj.africa

Request your copy of the full paper today!

SUBMIT YOUR RESEARCH

Are you a researcher in Africa? We welcome your submissions!

Join our community of African scholars and share your groundbreaking work.

Submit at: app.parj.africa



Scan to visit app.parj.africa

Open Access Scholarship from PARJ

Empowering African Research | Advancing Global Knowledge