



Gender Justice and Legal Empowerment in Rural Ethiopia: A Mixed Methods Inquiry

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Abstract

In rural Ethiopia, gender disparities in legal rights persist despite recent legislative reforms aimed at enhancing women's empowerment. The study employed both qualitative in-depth interviews ($n=30$) with women's rights advocates and quantitative survey data ($n=500$) to gather information on legal awareness and perceived barriers to justice. Data were analysed using thematic coding for qualitative analysis and descriptive statistics for quantitative analysis. The findings revealed that while there has been a significant increase in women's access to legal aid and courts, cultural norms continue to pose substantial obstacles to gender equality in rural settings. Specifically, only 45% of respondents reported feeling adequately informed about their rights compared to the legislative mandate of 100%. Furthermore, over 60% cited lack of awareness as a key hindrance. The mixed methods approach highlights both areas where legal empowerment has been successful and those requiring further intervention. The study underscores the need for targeted educational programmes and community engagement initiatives to address cultural biases and improve women's access to justice. Recommendation 1: Develop culturally sensitive legal education programmes tailored to rural communities. Recommendation 2: Enhance collaboration between government agencies, civil society organizations, and local leaders to promote gender equality through multi-sectoral approaches.

Keywords: African Geography, Legal Empowerment, Gender Justice, Qualitative Research, Mixed Methods, Rural Areas, Social Change

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

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