



Land Reform and Socio-Economic Transformation in Post-Apartheid Eswatini: An Ethnographic Inquiry into Its Impacts

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Abstract

Land reform in Eswatini (Swaziland), following its independence from British rule and subsequent transition from apartheid governance, has been a critical socio-economic policy area. Post-apartheid reforms aimed to address historical injustices and promote equitable land distribution among the population. This ethnographic study employed participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions among local farmers, women's groups, and community leaders in rural areas of Eswatini. Data were analysed using thematic coding to identify patterns across different socio-economic contexts. Findings reveal significant disparities in land access and utilization between male and female-headed households, with women often facing challenges in accessing formal credit mechanisms despite legal reforms aimed at equalizing rights. Traditional leadership played a crucial role in mediating disputes over land use, particularly regarding communal lands. The study underscores the necessity for further policy interventions to ensure equitable access to resources for all community members and strengthen support structures for marginalized groups, especially women and youth. Recommendations include enhancing gender-sensitive training programmes for traditional leaders and policymakers, promoting inclusive financial services tailored to rural needs, and fostering community-led initiatives that address local land management challenges.

Keywords: *Africanization, Ethnicity, Land Rights, Multidisciplinarity, Postcolonialism, Resettlement, Transformation*

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