

Post spring: Rural women's access to land inheritance under a patriarchal system (Egyptian Case study)

Short Policy paper¹

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This policy paper done under the project of women inheritance to land run by

BENAA Foundtaion in Egypt and Masarat nesaya in Tunisia

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1. Introduction:

Egypt is going through a decade of dramatic political, economic, and social transformation, eleven years after the Arab uprisings. The rhetoric carried during the riots and the reality experienced is at odds. Therefore, this wind of revolution did not produce any fruit. Egypt is seen as having an Arab Eastern and Islamic social structure, yet it also upholds patriarchal social standards that prevent rural women from accessing ancestral land. Human rights are being questioned despite the revolutions, and in Egypt and all the patriarchal countries in the Arab region and beyond, discrimination and inequality in inheritance still exist.

Land continues to be dominated by and controlled by men, impacting society's social, economic, and environmental facets. There are tighter laws in rural areas. Compared to metropolitan areas, rural areas are more marked by rigid patriarchal families and societal institutions³. Since Arab women cannot inherit land with men, it is considered both a "Wealth" and a source of poverty in rural regions, which has an impact on important aspects of social and economic development, justice, peace, and stability in the Arab world. In this context, the twining project's central research question was "How does patriarchal social culture affect the rule of law in inheritance matters?"

³ UN Women, 2018. Profile of women in rural Egypt. Egypt, country office, Cairo.
<https://egypt.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/05/profile-of-rural-women>

2. Overview of the research

2.1 Egyptian women and land ownership: between right and reality

The land is seen as an honor in Arab culture. According to statistics, the MENA region, including Egypt, has the lowest percentage of women who own land worldwide (5%). Although more than 40% of women in Egypt work in agriculture⁴, rural Egyptian women have relatively restricted access to land and property ownership. According to 2014 survey data conducted by the UN Women, only 2% of Egyptian women own land, even though they have the legal right to own, inherit, and independently use property and land⁵.

The Egyptian Constitution, approved in 2014, contains numerous articles addressing the special status of women in rural areas. These amendments to the existing legal framework are aimed at promoting greater gender equality. The Constitution's Article 9 forbade discrimination against women and enshrined the idea of equal opportunity for all people, regardless of sex. The State is required by Article 11 to ensure gender equality and women's access to their civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights⁶. Law No. 219, which amends Law No. 77 of 1943, was recently published in 2017. It stipulates that anybody who willfully refuses to give one of the heirs their lawful portion of the inheritance will be imprisoned for at least six months and a fine of between 20,000 and 100,000 LE⁷.

⁴ Kandeel, Amal (2017). Millions of Rural Working Women in Egypt at Risk from Climate Change. Middle East Institute <https://www.mei.edu/publications/millions-rural-working-women-egypt-risk-climate-change>

⁵ UN Women, 2018. Profile of women in rural Egypt. Egypt, country office, Cairo.

<https://egypt.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/05/profile-of-rural-women>

⁶ Same reference; UN Women (2018)

⁷ Egyptian Penal Code. Law No. 219/2017.

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2.2 Egyptian women & agriculture empowerment

58% of Egyptians live in rural areas of the country. Rural Upper Egypt, home to 44% of Egypt's rural population, and rural Lower Egypt, home to 56% of the rural population, have very different socio-cultural norms and an accompanying economic and political environment, respectively. The roles, responsibilities, and social standing of women and the rates of land ownership that follow are likewise uneven. In essential categories, including health, literacy, and poverty, rural Upper Egypt has more significant gender inequalities than rural Lower Egypt. Particularly in rural areas, women's participation in the labor force is still hidden. While men's labor force participation in rural areas reached 81% in 2012, women's involvement was only 21%⁸.

A viable path to empowering women is through the land, linking land rights and women's empowerment. She contends that women can achieve status, participate in public life, and dismantle repressive patriarchal norms by having access to land. In addition to the fields above, women's restricted involvement in public life also limits their potential to contribute to the expansion and advancement of the agricultural industry. Thus, different domains should be the focus of women's empowerment in the agriculture industry. Effective initiatives for women's licenses must also be precisely targeted. Standard empowerment policies that offer broad interventions and recommendations for various empowerment scenarios frequently need to consider the variety of requirements and profiles of women. To improve women's capacities

⁸ UN Women, 2018. Profile of women in rural Egypt. Egypt, country office, Cairo.
<https://egypt.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/05/profile-of-rural-women>

Post spring: Rural women's access to land inheritance under a patriarchal system (Egyptian Case study) and lives, particular activities and policies must be undertaken for each type of empowerment profile⁹.

Men own and manage the land in Egypt, while women work the land. A woman inherits half as much as a man, as is the case throughout the rest of the Arab world. The land women in rural communities should inherit occasionally taken from them by their brothers and uncles.

2.3 Research approach

The paper draws on; a) literature reviews, b) participatory fieldwork and c) A knowledge exchange event with experts from the MENA region.

- a) The author conducted intensive literature reviews in order to understand the cultural situation and obstacles that prevent women from owning inherited land. Also, understanding agriculture empowerment and rural sociology and how to empower rural women in this realm.
- b) Both teams (BEMAA Foundation¹⁰, Egypt) & (Masarat Nesaya, Tunisia) collaborated in designing two workshops for each country. Therefore, the main research questions (and sub-questions) guiding this fieldwork were as follows.
 - What is the legal and cultural situation of women entitled to land inheritance in Egypt before and after the enactment of Law No. 219 of 2017?

⁹ Dina Najjar & Aymen Frija & Aman El Garhi, 2018. "A Typology Analysis of Agricultural Empowerment Profiles in Rural Egypt with a Particular Focus on Women," Working Papers 1198, Economic Research Forum, revised 24 May 2018.

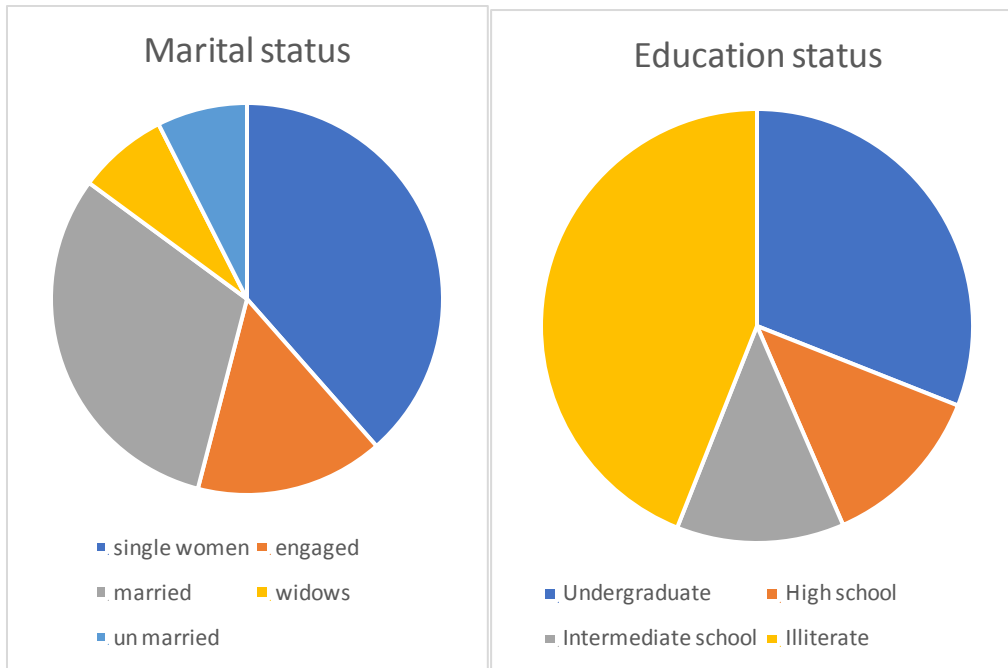
¹⁰ The author works as a consultant trainer and researcher with BENAA Foundation.

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-To what extent do the cultural and legal aspects of land structure each other, and how
does this structuring reflect gender (in) equality?

Sub questions

1. How is the inheritance of land experience for women? What is the relationship between the religious and legal rules/theories on land inheritance and the practical application in everyday life?
2. How do they view the experience for men? Is it notably easier? More straightforward?
3. Do they have any feelings of inequity or inequality?
4. Specifically, what are their experiences of land inheritance living in their rural area?
5. Do they believe or think that the experience is very different in urban areas (of course, from their knowledge, not necessarily comparative if they don't have lived experience)
6. Do they know of or have any personal experience with unfair or otherwise problematic land inheritance issues? Here they can share stories of their own
7. How do they deal with disputes and grievances? Is there social pressure to accept decisions because they are women?
8. What is the process for accessing justice when there is a grievance? Is the process more difficult for women?

Post spring: Rural women's access to land inheritance under a patriarchal system (Egyptian Case study) BENAA Foundation collaborated with the Charitable Community Development Association¹¹, the host organization at Gahdam in Assiut, Upper Egypt, to provide two participatory workshops¹² (storytelling & capacity development) for 16 rural women aged 18 to 42.



Following; 1) Knowledge-sharing methods and tools

The two-day workshop is based on practical and participatory experience in most stages (if not all). Everyone is a facilitator and participant by testing different concepts and theories and coming up with conclusions and ideas. We believe everyone is part of a single learning group within which roles are exchanged.

¹¹ The author wants to thank the volunteer team and participants in the two days workshops.

¹² Limitations: The organizing team work could not provide rural Christian women to attend these workshops. Therefore, we failed to conduct data regarding the challenges facing Christian women as minorities in rural Upper Egypt regarding their right to inherit the land. Likewise, men did not attend the workshops. Therefore, we did not know their motives in continuing to deprive women of land or to involve them in finding alternative solutions satisfactory to all parties and achieving justice.

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2) Qualitative research methods (Narrative Model):

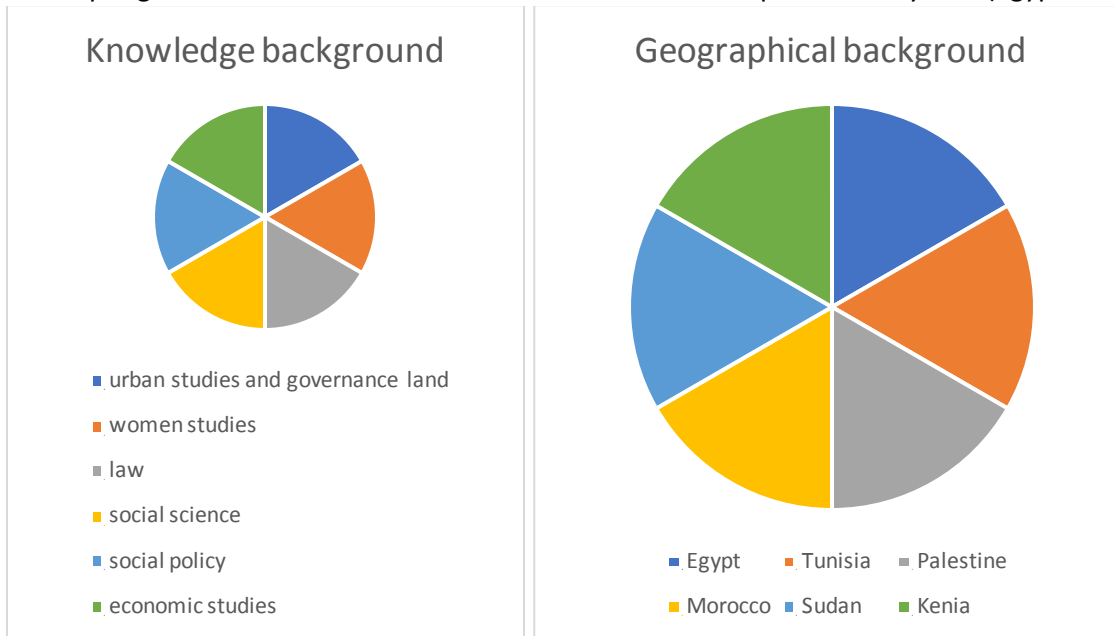
Qualitative research is a type of social action that emphasizes how people interpret and make sense of their experiences to understand individuals' social realities. It is exploratory, attempting to explain 'how' and 'why' a particular social phenomenon, or program, operates in a given context. It attempts to explain the social world and why things are the way they are. Qualitative research refers to the theoretical perspectives designed as a narrative approach. This method includes analyzing narrative text characteristics and, more recently, the meaning of inter-human relations in social, historical, and cultural contexts. It examines people's stories, whether about themselves or a series of events¹³.

C) The Egyptian and Tunisian work teams organized a hybrid knowledge exchange event. The purpose of delivering this event is to discuss the key findings from the fieldwork of both NGOs (BENAA & Masarat) with experts from the MENA region. By sharing feedback from the experts and discussing the relevant challenges in the MENA and the recommended reasonable implication to empower women to access land.

Knowledge Exchange Event; Audience background

¹³ Mohajan, Haradhan. Kumar (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects. Journal of Economic Development, Environment, and People

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3. Key findings

3.1 Women's access to land in rural areas: Experience living

The majority of women in the Arab world, and even most developing nations, collectively suffer from being denied their ability to inherit the land. Despite having legislation supporting them, most of these nations did not protect women from cultural and hereditary abuses of their entitlement to property ownership. For too long, women in some rural areas of Egypt were denied the ability to inherit land since it was believed that agricultural land belonged to men. In her research on women's legacy, professor of sociology Salwa Al-Mahdi found that 95.5 percent of Egyptian women in Upper Egypt are denied their just share of the inheritance¹⁴.

3.1.1 Gender, discrimination, and distribution of land ownership in rural areas

¹⁴ Khodary, Yasmin (2018). What Difference Can It Make? Assessing the impact of gender equality and empowerment in matters of inheritance in Egypt, The Journal of the Middle East and Africa, 9:2, 173-193, DOI: 10.1080/21520844.2018.1499336

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There is obvious discrimination against women in this context. The land sector, for instance, belongs to men in Egypt. According to a report on the Egyptian file published by the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) in 2016, the majority of Egyptian women farmers are widows (70%) and their land holdings are typically very small (1.4 acres compared to 3.5 for a man)¹⁵. Two of the 16 women in this study¹⁶ only gained their rights to land inheritance, according to the fieldwork findings. Men in Upper Egypt did not surrender their sister, who was married to a different family, the family land because they thought it was an honor and she would pass it down to her husband and progeny. As a result, they created two custom laws (urf). Women are first prohibited from selling their inherited land to a non-family member. The second is known as compensation, "Alradwa"¹⁷, which refers to the fact that their family members purchased the land at a significantly reduced price than the market value and is incomparable to the full amount they are due.

Women's access to their inherited lands may vary when men's roles in the household shift. By registering the ground in their daughters' names, for example, most fathers and grandfathers today support women are inheriting their land. However, if the land is managed by a brother or an uncle and women are not allowed to inherit, "the situation changes. Women in our village are vulnerable; for instance, if a woman is divorced or unmarried, the other family members perceive her as a second-class citizen. Some fathers have now begun to register their

¹⁵ FAO. 2016. AQUASTAT Country Profile – Egypt. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Rome, Italy

¹⁶ Participatory workshops, Upper Egypt, Feb 2022

¹⁷ Note: The process of consent "Al-Radwa," by non-pricing of the right to land at its actual value, is not only in Egypt. An expert from Jordan shared with us that this process also occurs in Jordan and Palestine and is called the exit process "Al-Takharuj," meaning that the woman gives up her land in exchange for a bit of money, which is not equal to the actual value of the land. (Hybrid Knowledge Exchange Event, Egypt, Oct 2022)

Post spring: Rural women's access to land inheritance under a patriarchal system (Egyptian Case study) daughter's land inheritance in the agricultural association in their lifetime to ensure they will have access to their inheritance land because they exploit her inhumanely in the service of the home. The scenario started to change more. As a member of the agricultural association, I receive numerous land registration requests from dads to their daughters daily. They remark that we should console our daughters. My daughters are my life, and we know they won't demand legal entitlement to the land.¹⁸

Do women support other female family members to inherit their land? We notice some mothers recommending that their daughters be deprived of the inheritance of land and the family home to preserve their male sons' rights¹⁹. One of the participants²⁰ said that one of the mothers instructed her male sons to deprive their daughters of the family home and land inheritance. So far, they are following this commandment despite the critical economic situation that one of their sisters suffers from.

Another participant described the conflict between the grandfather and the uncles: "We are five sisters. My uncle tried to get my grandfather to give up our inheritance rights, but my grandfather wouldn't do it. After my grandfather passed away, my older sister and I demanded our rights to inherit the land, but our uncles asked us to reduce the asking price, which we agreed to because we considered a few factors. The first is that if we refuse and file a case in

¹⁸ Participatory workshops, Upper Egypt, Feb 2022

¹⁹ Note: According to an expert, the tribe believes that a woman's inheritance of land may cause her to marry someone from another tribe, which would result in the land belonging to this tribe being transferred to another tribe. ((Hybrid Knowledge Exchange Event, Egypt, Oct 2022)

²⁰ Participatory workshops, Upper Egypt, Feb 2022

Post spring: Rural women's access to land inheritance under a patriarchal system (Egyptian Case study) family court, it will take too long, the lawyer will charge too much in expenditures and fees, and we will also permanently lose our uncles' financial support."²¹

Rural women, however, think that women's access to land inheritance is considerably different in urban regions based on the results of the fieldwork. They believe that women who were raised in cities, such as "Assiut city," are luckier than women who were raised in rural regions because they inherit the full amount they are due. "I knew some women who had grown up in Assiut and had wed in our community; they had long since passed away, and their heirs had sent their inheritance to the women's sons. They grant her rights to everything, including the land, that will be inherited. Compared to us, the situation is totally different."²²

Women also do not have access to the inherited family home since most families believe that a stranger—a daughter's husband—would be sharing their property in such a scenario. "We do not inherit the family home in addition to not inheriting the property. However, as per Sharia law, I am entitled to inherit the property and the house."²³

Men may also be the targets of discrimination; it is not just directed at women. The accounts we gathered in Egypt reveal it in two instances. The first situation involves the conciliation of privileges, which also denies you the right to inherit. For example, educated men, primarily those who traveled to the Gulf, were deprived of land inheritance by their uneducated male brothers²⁴ who worked in agriculture. The second case of males deprived of land is those with

²¹ Participatory workshops, Upper Egypt, Feb 2022

²² Participatory workshops, Upper Egypt, Feb 2022

²³ Participatory workshops, Upper Egypt, Feb 2022

²⁴ However, it is good to think of alternative solutions that men must bargain in patriarchal societies to give up their privilege in return for empowering women worldwide.

Post spring: Rural women's access to land inheritance under a patriarchal system (Egyptian Case study) intellectual disabilities. A participant says that her husband, who has a slight intellectual disability, was denied land in exchange for us living in the family home²⁵.

3.1.2 The reality of rural women: early school dropouts and impoverishment of women:

Rural Upper Egypt has much higher poverty rates than the rest of Egypt, primarily due to regional differences. Rural residents experience greater multidimensional poverty and deprivation levels than urban lower governorates. Rural Upper Egypt, where 43.7% of the population lives in poverty, has one of the worst rates of poverty in the country. As a result, women in rural Egypt also tend to marry earlier than those living in urban regions. According to data from the most recent census, 13% of rural women under 20 have been or are married, which is over twice as many as the proportion of early weddings among women of the same age living in urban regions (7%)⁹. More than 6% of girls aged 15 to 17 and 15% of girls aged 15 to 19 will get married, according to other statistical sources²⁶.

According to data on education, 20 percent of women in urban Upper Egypt and 43% of women in rural Upper Egypt are illiterate, respectively. Women in rural Lower Egypt have a 31 percent illiteracy rate²⁷. "Most rural women in upper Egypt have not completed their education or are

²⁵ Participatory workshops, Upper Egypt, Feb 2022

²⁶ UN Women, 2018. Profile of women in rural Egypt. Egypt, country office, Cairo.

<https://egypt.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/05/profile-of-rural-women>

²⁷ Ghanem, Hafez. (2014). Improving regional and rural development for inclusive growth in Egypt. Brookings Global Working Paper Series. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/improving-regional-and-rural-development-for-inclusive-growth-in-egypt/>

Post spring: Rural women's access to land inheritance under a patriarchal system (Egyptian Case study) illiterate, so the man takes advantage of this situation by having his sisters sign the waiver of their right to inherit the land without knowing what is in the contract²⁸."

That leads to most adult Egyptian women still struggling to make enough money to pay for a high school education. Therefore, Egyptian women make up a minority of professionals²⁹. However, according to a 2011 FAO research, increasing women's access to resources, particularly land, would lead to a 4% increase in global food production and a 17% reduction in world hunger. The Middle East continues to be largely excluded from discussions on how women should have access to land and how this access might best result in their empowerment³⁰.

Overall, depriving women of education naturally leads to their economic impoverishment and even exploitation in the loss of their financial rights and land ownership in some cases. Folk examples of cultural heritage often discriminate against women and their rights, for instance, "Teach me instead of giving me the inheritance."³¹ Although these cultures do not change, we can collect these testimonies and the amounts of losses that can affect the collective mind and mind in the long term to bring about positive changes in society³².

²⁸ Participatory workshops, Upper Egypt, Feb 2022

²⁹ Kandeel, Amal (2017). Millions of Rural Working Women in Egypt at Risk from Climate Change. Middle East Institute <https://www.mei.edu/publications/millions-rural-working-women-egypt-risk-climate-change>
UN Women, 2018. Profile of women in rural Egypt. Egypt, country office, Cairo.

³⁰ Dina Najjar & Aymen Frija & Aman El Garhi, 2018. "A Typology Analysis of Agricultural Empowerment Profiles in Rural Egypt with a Particular Focus on Women," Working Papers 1198, Economic Research Forum, revised 24 May 2018.

³¹ Participatory workshops, Upper Egypt, Feb 2022

³² Participation from the Hybrid Knowledge Exchange Event, Egypt, Oct 2022

3.2 Women's economic rights and land ownership in Egypt:

By creating national policies and visions to empower women in the majority of sectors, Arab nations, particularly Egypt, work to enhance the economic condition of women. The National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030³³, which the Egyptian government launched, focuses primarily on the protection of women, the economic empowerment of women, the social empowerment of women, and the political empowerment of women and enhancing their leadership roles. Nevertheless, we can see Egypt's position in the World Economic Forum's global index³⁴ of the gender gap in terms of the economic opportunities open to women. After the United Arab Emirates and Tunisia, Egypt will rank 129th out of 156 nations in the globe and fourth in the Middle East and North Africa in 2021.

3.2.1 The economic reality of rural women in Egypt:

Nearly half of Egypt's female work force is employed in the agricultural industry, which is the country's largest employer of women. According to the FAO data, about 45 percent of Egyptian women work in agriculture and closely related fields, such as irrigation and water management³⁵.

³³ The vision and objectives of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030, Observatory of Egyptian Women 2030 Website
<https://www.enow.gov.eg/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A4%D9%8A%D8%A9%20%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D8%AF%D9%81%20%D9%81%D9%8A%202030>

³⁴ Global Gender Gap Report 2021, World Economic Forum
https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf

³⁵ FAO. 2022. Gender, water and agriculture – Assessing the nexus in Egypt Cairo.
<https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0452en>

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Access to financing and extension services is restricted for Egyptian women. She argues that a lack of female extension agents and a lack of female property ownership, which may serve as collateral, are to blame for women's limited access to credit and extension services. Although people who lack land can get small amounts of credit, those who own land are the only ones who can access larger amounts of credit above 6,000 EGP. Therefore, it is crucial to think about empowering women in rural Egypt, particularly in light of their access to resources like knowledge, land, and credit³⁶. However, as development professionals or policymakers, we can consider the effects of economic empowerment and attempt to prevent their detrimental effects on women in general and rural women in particular. For instance, we can consider how to deal with issues of domestic violence, the rise in the divorce rate, and its detrimental effects on the needs of women and their children. As many women who participate in programs for economic empowerment continue to hold the notion that alimony belongs to the male and that he is the first to benefit from it, it is crucial to fight to change this belief³⁷.

3.2.2 Precarious employment and exploitation of women in rural areas:

The primary source of employment for women, accounting for nearly half (45%) of all women in the workforce, is agriculture, which accounts for a significant portion of the Egyptian economy (14.5% of GDP). Women working in agriculture frequently have seasonal jobs. 26. Only 5% of women in non-agricultural occupations work only a portion of the year, compared to 38% of

³⁶ Dina Najjar & Aymen Frija & Aman El Garhi, 2018. "A Typology Analysis of Agricultural Empowerment Profiles in Rural Egypt with a Particular Focus on Women," Working Papers 1198, Economic Research Forum, revised 24 May 2018.

³⁷ Participation from the Hybrid Knowledge Exchange Event, Egypt, Oct 2022

Post spring: Rural women's access to land inheritance under a patriarchal system (Egyptian Case study) women who work in agriculture. In addition, rural Egypt has exceptionally high informal employment rates. A significant portion of rural women work unpaid (family) jobs. In 2012, unpaid family work was performed by 33% of rural working women³⁸.

Women still suffer from the power of their husbands over them, and this power may prevent their right to work. "I worked and struggled; my daughter and I were opening a restaurant at home, making food, and selling it; however, my house is tiny, and I stopped because my husband pressured me to stop working without any reason. I also separated and lived in my parents' house for two years, thinking about divorce. At this time, my older son was working selling groceries and sending some money to me, so my husband beat my son and said that she thought of the divorce because you gave."³⁹ Empowering women to claim and access their inheritance improves their ability to obtain and control resources, take action, and participate in decision-making in their families, communities, and markets. Furthermore, female ownership of agricultural land and other property contributes to women's independence. Their ability to make decisions increases their sense of safety in separation from their male partners, such as divorce or death. According to studies, women who own a home or land are less vulnerable to domestic violence. Women who fight for the right to inherit usually struggle financially and are afraid of their children becoming homeless⁴⁰.

3.2.3 Financial independence initiative& family obstacles:

³⁸ UN Women, 2018. Profile of women in rural Egypt. Egypt, country office, Cairo.

<https://egypt.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/05/profile-of-rural-women>

³⁹ Participatory workshops, Upper Egypt, Feb 2022

⁴⁰ Khodary, Yasmin (2018). What Difference Can It Make? Assessing the impact of gender equality and empowerment in matters of inheritance in Egypt, The Journal of the Middle East and Africa, 9:2, 173-193, DOI: 10.1080/21520844.2018.1499336

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a. Fears of women's financial independence

These fears are primarily present within rural communities. Some think that a woman's financial independence makes her rebellious against her family or families, and then society resorts to deliberately impoverishing her or not making her completely independent. Although Khodadry⁴¹ mentioned in her article "Women, land and rural development in Egypt: a socio-cultural perspective" that initiatives changed cultural notions and perceptions and made a positive shift occurred in the societal perceptions and practices about women's ownership and inheritance of agricultural land, there has been an assumption among most participants that a woman's financial independence will make her dispense for a man. "If the woman is the owner, she will not consider the man's opinion⁴²."

b. Difficulty in registering small plots of land:

The information that is currently available on gender and property ownership does not distinguish between control and ownership, nor does it offer any information on how control and ownership may alter over the course of an individual's life. Although it is commonly known that asset ownership patterns differ for men and women around the world, such studies do not pay attention to asset preferences. Although scholars have debated on what those preferences are, they have significant effects on wellbeing and agency. Men can reasonably anticipate both having their own home and having close relationships with their families. For a number of reasons, gendered preferences for assets should be taken into account. For instance, it's critical

⁴¹ Khodary, Yasmin. (2022). Women, land and rural development in Egypt: a socio-cultural perspective. Journal of Chinese Economic and Foreign Trade Studies, (ahead-of-print).

⁴² Participatory workshops, Upper Egypt, Feb 2022

Post spring: Rural women's access to land inheritance under a patriarchal system (Egyptian Case study) to comprehend which assets males think are significant from a cultural and generational standpoint because they may have a significant influence on how women access, manage, and own assets, particularly land. The perceptions of women may also have an impact on the assets they choose to pursue⁴³. In Sudan⁴⁴, for example, one of the problems we face is that in the event of land inheritance being transferred to women in urban areas, the land, for example, is owned by the father after his death and passed on to daughters and sons. When the inheritance is distributed, the woman's share is small, for example, 50 meters. You cannot register it (as a possession), and in this case, you cannot sell it with the actual value of the land. In most cases, women cannot take care of or dispose of the ground appropriately. Therefore, most women resort to selling the land to one of their family members, primarily brothers, after distributing the shares, even if it is less than the natural land right.

4. Legal bases and women's right to access land inheritance in Egypt:

a. Land inheritance laws in Egypt

The Egyptian Personal Status Law no. 77/1943 governs inheritance following Islamic law. According to Sharia, men have a share of what their parents and close relatives leave, and women have a percentage of what their parents and close relatives leave, whether small or large, a definite share. The male heir should receive twice as much as the female counterpart⁴⁵.

b. New Criminal Provision to Protect Inheritance Rights

⁴³ Dina Najjar, Bipasha Baruah & Aman El Garhi (2020): Gender and Asset Ownership in the Old and New Lands of Egypt, *Feminist Economics*, DOI: 10.1080/13545701.2020.1743877

⁴⁴ Participation from the Hybrid Knowledge Exchange Event, Egypt, Oct 2022

⁴⁵ Khodary, Yasmin (2018). What Difference Can It Make? Assessing the impact of gender equality and empowerment in matters of inheritance in Egypt, *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 9:2, 173-193, DOI: 10.1080/21520844.2018.1499336

Post spring: Rural women's access to land inheritance under a patriarchal system (Egyptian Case study) Law No. 219/2017 added a new provision (Art. 49) to the Law on Inheritance No. 77/1943 in 2017. This provision makes it a crime to intentionally refuse to give an heir their due share of the estate or withhold documents confirming such allocation. The offender may face imprisonment and a fine. This new provision aims to end a seemingly widespread practice, particularly in rural areas where women are denied their rightful share of the estate. According to some media reports, courts have already applied this law⁴⁶.

Although Egyptian law criminalizes those who deny inheritance to its owner and increases the penalty with imprisonment or a fine, it is the last stop for women to resort to when they claim their right. In many cases, they completely give up their right to inheritance so as not to stand against their brothers in the courts. "The women are claiming their rights through the arbitration of the mayor and village elders. She is not the one who goes to complain about herself, but she sends her men, like her son, who goes to the mayor after he understands what she wants to say to the mayor. However, her husband does not have the right to demand her right to inherit. She must ask first. The mayor here intervenes to solve the issue. Suppose the mayor does not know how to solve the problem. In this case, the mayor says to go and complain to the court. Few women complain because they can't stand up against their brothers in court. Women will not be satisfied if they stand against their brothers in the courts because this is not an easy thing. In the end, the brother is supportive."⁴⁷

⁴⁶ El Chazli, Karim. (2022). Recent Developments in Egyptian Family and Inheritance Law. Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law Online, 1(aop), 1-7. Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden DOI:10.1163/22112987-12340009

⁴⁷ Participatory workshops, Upper Egypt, Feb 2022

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5. Recommendations⁴⁸:

a. Multi-empowering implementation

a.1 Family economic empowerment and joint wealth

Applying the principle of hard work and endeavor allows the sharing of combined wealth between spouses in the case of building combined wealth. This principle provides for a fair redistribution of wealth as it becomes a mechanism for empowering women and a mechanism for the right to movable property, such as money, and immovable property, such as land. Properties

a.2 Cognitive empowerment and the right to access information/data

In this field, it is still required to make data available. Therefore civil society and community institutions need to help in providing alternative data and information and providing accurate and reliable data that we can rely on in advocacy, changing specific policies, and demanding the enactment of new legislation or changing inappropriate laws as well as by working or setting tangible indicators of the extent to which land rights are achieved in its various forms of possession, women's rights, and others. As networks, we are supposed to stand in solidarity by supporting the idea of alternative information and analyzing the official data that exists and what might serve the policies of those who abuse land rights in general and women's possession in particular. We need studies on the economic contribution of women in general and rural women in particular.

⁴⁸ All these recommendations are the result of group discussions with a variety of experts in various journals during the hybrid knowledge exchange event, Egypt, Oct 2022.

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b. Rural women in agriculture sectors & access to finance

c. Policy-making, alliances, and participatory approach

c.1 Developing strategies for influencing agricultural policies, advocating for women's rights, presenting them, and discussing them with decision-makers through growing spaces or meetings for policy dialogues on the empowerment of women farmers.

c.2 Integration of the legal part with any developmental intervention

c.3 Reviewing current policies to include rural women in the policies and strategic plans based on the state, especially since rural women have different needs from women working in the private or government sectors.

c.4 The importance of cooperatives in the process of change on the ground

c.5 The participatory approach and the importance of creating community organizations that contribute to the processes of making national policies and plans

d. Building capacities and promoting concepts:

d.1 Awareness and training; to shift from the traditional capacity-building strategy to sharing experiences (participatory learning action)

d.2 Encourage and promote the family farming concept