
UNIT 5 GENDER, LAND AND SOIL*

- **Adopted From Unit 6, Block 2, MGSE 006**

Structure

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Objectives
- 5.3 Why Entitlements to Land for Women
- 5.4 How Women's Land Entitlements Matter
- 5.5 What Determines Women's Access to Land: Inheritance, Transfer from State, Market Purpose
- 5.6 The Way Forward: Platforms and Networks
- 5.7 Learnings from Grassroots Field Experiences
- 5.8 Key International instruments on Women's Land, property and inheritance rights
- 5.9 International Conferences
- 5.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.11 Unit End Questions
- 5.12 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercise
- 5.13 References and Suggested Readings

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the 1990s, livelihood perspective emerged following debates among academicians from varied disciplines, development workers, multilateral and bilateral agencies, representatives of diverse grassroots organizations and policy makers about the nature of agrarian change, particularly in post-colonial societies of the developing countries. The main features of this approach was the need to look at the varied aspects of rural life as being integrated, located within specific contexts, cross sectors and informed by field action and engagements. However, it was gender analysis which emerged in the livelihood approach which highlighted gender relations and its inter-linkages with broader processes of change and brought to the fore (a) new ways at conceptualizing households by debunking its unitary model; (b) highlighting the links of households with broader economic and political structures; (c) a new way of looking at rural markets as social, political and unequal; and (d) the role and limits of institutions- be it state, market or communities (diverse)- in managing natural resources and that these institutions were not gender neutral. It was also in this background that women's entitlements to land and other land based resources began to be addressed since the mid-1990s.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the relationship between land entitlements and women;
- Analyze what limits women's access to land; and
- Explain the international efforts to sensitize nations on the significance of bringing policies, programmes and appropriate legislation to ensure women's access to land.

5.3 WHY ENTITLEMENTS TO LAND FOR WOMEN

The lack of productive asset bases for rural poor women was raised by the international women's movement as early as the first UN Conference on Women in Mexico (1975) where one of the popular slogans was "women *do* 67% of the world's work, *earn* 5% of the world's income and *own* 1% of the world's property". In India, the report of the Committee on Status of Women (CSWI, 1975) noted the sharp decrease in numbers of female cultivators and an increase in the number of female agricultural labour in India. The CSWI also identified land reforms as a key measure to improve condition of rural women. Through the 1980s-1990s and later, the focus of analysis shifted to the large majority of poor women and men from developing countries that are rural and dependent on agriculture. However, women are denied rights in access, ownership and control of the land and few have direct ownership of land in their own right. Very little data exists on the magnitude of gender asset gaps within and across countries. The data that does exist suggests that distribution of land by gender is highly unequal. In Cameroon, where women perform more than 75% of agricultural work, they hold less than 10% of the land titles. A 2001 household survey in Pakistan found that women owned less than 3% of the plots, although 67% of the sampled villages reported that women had a right to inherit land. Throughout South Asia, to a lesser extent in Sri Lanka, women's land ownership remains very low. In India, land ownership by women is not more than 2 per cent. Although concentration of land holdings in South Asia has declined over time, inequalities in ownership continue. The majority of poor rural households own only a small piece of land. The landless are also the poorest households. Women – in particular single, female headed households – are the poorest of poor.

5.4 HOW WOMEN'S LAND ENTITLEMENTS MATTER

Studies have shown that a key factor linked with rural poverty is land. In the South Asian context, arable land has been analyzed as the most valued form of property, for its economic, political and symbolic significance. It is a wealth creating and livelihood sustaining asset. It has also been termed as a metaphor for power, wealth and status. Studies have shown that in regions

where agriculture dominates livelihoods, land is also important for women for reducing the risk of poverty and enhancing food security. Women who own land or control assets are better positioned to improve their lives and cope in the face of crisis. By owning land and homes, women directly gain from the benefits of using land, earning income and also having a secure place to live. Research has shown that individuals who own land generate much higher rural non-farm earnings from self-employment than people without land. Women can also use the land as collateral for credit during crisis or for investing in other income generating work.

Studies also show that property and asset ownership by mothers have led to better outcomes for survival, education and health of children than assets owned by fathers. A study of marginal farmer households in Kerala showed that the mother's cultivation of a home garden (the output of which she controlled) had a consistently positive effect on child nutrition. Access to and control over productive assets such as land can strengthen women's ability to manage economic shocks and social risks. Land is a particularly critical resource for women when the household breaks down (male migration, war, abandonment, violence, divorce, polygamous relationships, illness (e.g., HIV/AIDS), or death. Secure property rights can also help women avoid or mitigate the impacts of violence, in particular, domestic violence. A study in the India context pointed out that women with property who experienced violence from their spouses were far more likely to leave their marital home (71%) than women without property (19%). Research in Kerala indicated that 49% of women with no property reported domestic violence as compared to 7% of women who owned property.

In regions facing hunger and chronic under-nutrition, women often are the main food growers. Rural women are responsible for half of the world's food production. In developing countries they produce 60% to 80% of the food. Studies in countries ranging from China, Ghana, Pakistan, Thailand, and Vietnam have found a clear link between secure land tenure and increased agricultural productivity and land improvement.

Secure property rights for women can have an impact on women's overall role and position in the household and community. A large percentage of households, estimated to be between 20 to 35% in India and Bangladesh, are de-facto, female-headed. For widows and the elderly, in particular, ownership of land also creates possibilities for drawing support from relatives. Land titles also serve as collaterals in accessing the benefits of development programmes such as production credits for farmers. In regions with high male migration and where women are the principal farmers, such support is critical for their households.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- Note: i. Use this space given below to answer the question.
 ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.
1. What is your understanding of the relationship between land and women?

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5.5 FACTORS DETERMINING WOMEN’S ACCESS TO LAND: INHERITANCE, TRANSFER FROM STATE, MARKET PURCHASE

According to several studies, at all of these junctures, women face more obstacles than men owing to male preference in inheritance practices, male privilege in marriage, gender inequality in the land market or male bias in state land distribution programmes. Women in many countries may have access to land and other assets through informal arrangements or traditional methods of household or community decision making. Such practices vary from country to country, community to community. In Latin America, for example, women become land owners mainly through inheritance while men do so through purchase in the land market. In most of South Asia, women traditionally do not own property since land is inherited through the male family line. In the Middle East and North Africa, inheritance laws and practices are based on Sharia law, which defines what share goes to each family member and that a woman’s share is half that of the man’s in cases of both a male and female heir. In most parts of sub-Saharan Africa, women have historically enjoyed access to land and related resources through a father, brother, or husband, depending on a community’s lineage system. In most cultures, inheritance practices are patrilineal. Customary law in many countries often related to marriage, bar women from obtaining primary rights to land. Rather, they only have use rights through their fathers, husbands and brothers. However, access is not ownership. Women’s secondary rights become weaker when norms of social protection diminish.

In most countries, women are legally able to purchase land on the market. However, a weak asset base or high degrees of economic dependency are barriers women face. Often a woman must seek permission from her husband or male family members before committing family resources. This hampers effective use of resources and also lowers the motivation of women to invest in the land they use, for example, adding irrigation in land rehabilitation programmes. Where local customs afford women certain entitlements to land, women may be reluctant to demand them for fear of losing social benefits. In

India, daughters usually waive their land rights in favour of brothers to avoid being termed as selfish and losing the support of their natal households. Where women forego their claims, male relatives forge wills, file court cases, use threats and violence which discourage women from claiming their shares. Studies show that biases also cloud the thinking of land administration officials who refuse to record inheritance shares of daughters.

Entitlements to land are determined by diverse socio-political systems that have evolved over time and sometimes exist concurrently. In South Asia, for example, inheritance patterns in land vary within and between countries and further by region, religion, caste, community, and ethnicity. The social norms and institutions that constrain women from claiming and controlling land vary region by region. They disadvantage women more in certain regions than others. Variations persist, as in India, in relation to inheritance of agricultural land in the tenurial enactments of different states. These variations have been traced back to the colonial heritage when inheritance and marriage laws were perceived as personal laws of communities. Laws enacted later accommodated customary, religious and pluralistic traditions. Inheritance rights to land, particularly agricultural land, have been most difficult to enact. In India, it took almost half a century to amend (2005) the Hindu Succession Act (HSA) of 1956. This amendment overriding the varied tenurial laws of different states, enable daughters, including those who are married, to become coparceners in joint family property.

In South Asia, broad cross-region indicators have been noted for their conduciveness or resistance to women being able to exercise their rights to land. Studies suggest that the most conducive areas include north east and south India, Sri Lanka and Nepal, in areas where women marry either in their natal villages or nearby villages, where close kin marriages prevail, where *purdah* system does not exist and where women's labour force participation is high or medium. Except for Nepal, these areas contain traditionally matrilineal and bilateral communities. The regions where women face the most resistance to their claims are North West India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. In North West India (Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh) where marriages are far from natal villages, close kin marriages are forbidden, and *purdah* and stricter controls over female sexuality prevails. In these regions, female labour force participation rates are low, inequalities in private land ownership are high and common lands are limited and disappearing. While in Bangladesh and Pakistan, marriages within the village and close kin are permitted and women's inheritance rights sanctioned under Islam, strong control over sexuality through practices of female seclusion negate much of the advantage that Islam sanctions.

Another mechanism by which land is acquiring by women involves government laws and policy which involve public land distribution, as in India. Be it poverty alleviation or schemes for land distribution or for resettlement, conceptual biases often impact their implementation. In India, agrarian reforms through the 1950s and later took place at a time when gender equality was marginal to the policy agenda and gender issues lacked their current visibility. In most government land reform programmes and land transfers, women's land rights remained marginal since land reforms

programme continue to be premised on the *assumption of the household as homogeneous* or the *community as a united collection of households*. The household was perceived as the unit of allocation of resources. The *Operation Barga Programme* in West Bengal in the late 1970s for registering tenants and giving land to the landless carried a strong male bias. A village study in Midnapur district found that 98% of holdings distributed went to men. In 90% female-headed households, land was given to the women's sons. No married women received joint titles.

Studies on the household have demonstrated significant inequalities within and between households in the distribution of resources and decision-making and the fallacy of the unified household with its income pooling and sharing assumptions. Amartya Sen's work challenged the unitary model of the household regarding intra-household gender relations. Referring to the Indian experience, Sen pointed to the conflicts of interest that exist within households. He also held that the household is most usefully represented as a case of 'cooperative conflict.' The solution that is finally adopted is the result of the bargaining ability of the couple. However, the couples do not come to the bargaining table with equal power. In addition to self-worth, there are two important factors that determine a person's bargaining power. These are the actual ability of each member to earn an income or to bring valued resources into the household and the value given to that contribution by other household members. Others such as Bina Agarwal have argued that external constraints to women acting in their self-interest, moving beyond intra-household relations to other arenas of power relations within which women are located, was significant. Studies have identified a large number of institutions beyond the household which are also gendered. These include communities, labour markets, property institutions, judicial systems, land administration and local governance. Recent studies have focused on gender as social relations, on subject positions and subjectivities, on meshing of *shared* and *separate* interests within households and on power residing in material assets as well in discourses. These contexts, it is argued, made women's struggles for land more complex. Another study points to the socially embedded nature of land as resource and the mutuality and interdependence between men and women in the productive use of land. More than gender identity, it was the cross-cutting identities of ethnicity, kinship, education and marital status that motivate women to both stake their claim to land as well as oppose the claims of other women and men. Men too adopt different subject positions depending on their own experiences and context. Land was linked with family and kinship relations and structures social relations in South Asia. It defined identity, hierarchy, status.

Another mechanism for acquisition source of land for women is through the market. Given the restricted land market which affects both men and women, the constraints for women are mainly the lack of finances and the feasibility of acting as individuals. Gendering of spaces affects women's physical mobility and participation in activities outside the home, be it market interaction or seeking information on new agricultural practices, technologies, purchasing inputs or selling agricultural products. This limits women's ability to farm independently and attain maximum productivity.

Studies show that market accesses to land are greater when women deal with the land markets as a group or collective and with financial support. Land pooling, collective investment and management can also overcome the problem of small size and fragmentation. Land leasing is another source from the land market and here too the group approach work better in overcoming financial constraints. The collective approach can enable women to access funds for capital investment, take advantage of economies of scale, and come together for labour sharing and to market their produce. Where land is held collectively, the group will have use rights but not the right to alienate, in case of pressure from male family members.

5.6 THE WAY FORWARD: PLATFORMS AND NETWORKS

Since the 1990s, women's engagement with issues of land rights have led to varied land alliances and coalitions in post-colonial developing nations in particular. In several African countries, these have emerged in the context of new legislations or constitutional changes in land tenures. A large number of women have played leadership roles in platforms such as the *Uganda Land Alliance*, the *National Land Forum in Tanzania*, the *Zambia National Land Alliance*, *National Land Committee in South Africa*, *Kenya Land Alliance*, *Rwanda Land Alliance*, and the *Namibian NGO Federation (NANGOF) for land rights of women, pastoral communities and landless*. Regional networks have been formed across countries as *Land Net in East Africa*. In countries such as Mali, Senegal and Madagascar, women's organizations have been formed so that women's rights and entitlements to land are incorporated when changes are made in land laws.

To Consult for Women and Land Rights (CWLR) has evolved as a global forum of local, national and international NGOs and networks, lobbying and advocating for policies, law reform, programmes and administrative mechanisms to increase the resource base for including land rights for the poor, disadvantaged and vulnerable women. Set up in 2004, as an informal, non-governmental, independent forum to impact the outcome from Beijing + 10, the CWLR is involved in lobbying at local, national and international events. The CWLR, which has an India chapter, held dialogues with parliamentarians and women and child departments at the UN ESCAP. Country level consultations were held in India, Nepal, Bangladesh followed by an Asian meeting on women and land. Here, representatives for the UNCSW review meeting were selected. The intense lobbying at UNCSW, in turn, attracted the ministers of India, Nepal, Laos, Norway, Sweden and representatives of UNIFEM, FAO, UNDP, IFAD, etc. The Indian government sought action points from CWLR for the Non Aligned Nations (NAM), Commonwealth and the Millennium Development Summit. For this, a lobby note was drafted, disseminated among women's groups and networks for further inputs. In March 2006, CWLR fed into the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) by providing case studies on women's land rights in India.

UNCSW for its Beijing + 10 review. Land rights impacted gender relations and has increasingly inter-linked with other issue-based networks such as food security, housing, livelihood, property, citizenship, violence against women, starvation, land alienation, migration, dispossession, trafficking, forced eviction and displacement. A *South Asian Network on Women and Land Rights* extending over the SAARC countries of Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka was also set up in 2008 in the context of such processes.

Box No.1 Land grabbing

‘Land grabbing’, however, is an issue of concern that is broader than foreign land acquisitions. It is important to focus on the potential threats that foreign land acquisitions pose to the land rights and livelihoods of smallholder farmers, pastoralists, indigenous communities and other vulnerable groups. But it should neither divert attention from the role being played by domestic elites and weaknesses in national land administration systems, nor should it preclude the possibility that foreign investors could play a constructive role in supporting smallholder farmers. In recent years, the global estimate of foreign interest in land acquisition has been between 15 to 20 million hectares,² although some observers believe the figure is much higher.³ Most of the land is in Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia,⁴ and is already owned de facto by rural communities under a range of diverse tenure systems – although often these rights are not registered. Frequently, national states consider underused land as being available for disposal to outside investors. But this perception is starting to change in many developing countries. It is increasingly recognized that, while some land may be underutilized, very little is not owned, vacant or unused. An important aspect related to the above, is that ‘land grabbing’ does not only involve foreign deals. Indeed, illegitimate foreign land deals may only be a small part of the ‘land grabbing’ occurring in many countries. More significantly, in some countries, land grabs are carried out by national and local elites, competing land users (pastoralists, crop farmers), and land grabs within families (men from women and,

where the incidence of HIV/AIDS is high, from widows and orphans). Focusing only on large-scale land acquisitions by foreigners can divert attention from more serious ‘land grabbing’ in some societies. Therefore, the response to ‘land grabbing’ needs to look more broadly at strengthening transparent, accountable and accessible land administration institutions that protect the rights of vulnerable people against all land grabs. ‘Land grabbing’ is an issue of concern broader than foreign land acquisitions. A range of actions are therefore required to address the threats and challenges faced. Governments in developing countries have a key role to play in fostering the development of smallholder farmers, and in ensuring responsible investment in agriculture with the support of international development partners and civil society organizations. Private-sector investors – whether small or large, domestic or foreign – can play a positive role too. Social mobilization is essential, but so is responsible governance in land administration. Guidelines and principles alone will not address the challenges being faced. Engagement

in the process of defining them, combined with social mobilization and some considered tactical alliances could, however, maximize the opportunity that the concern about ‘land grabbing’ has created for those involved in improving the well-being of smallholder farmers in developing countries.

Source: IFAD Occasional paper Responding to ‘land grabbing’ and promoting responsible investment in agriculture

5.7 LEARNINGS FROM GRASSROOTS FIELD EXPERIENCES

There is growing recognition that women’s ownership and rights of use need to be guaranteed through land and property rights that relate to an enforceable claim, ensuring women’s freedom to rent, bequeath or sell property. In countries where women’s property rights are legally conveyed, differences in application of the statutory and customary laws mean that women’s property rights still may not be guaranteed.

Governmental Reform

In order to ensure effective impact, governmental reforms should be directed at not just change in legal structures affecting women’s land and property rights but also support their claims to realize those rights by:

- Amending and harmonizing statutory and customary law;
- Promoting legal literacy;
- Supporting organizations that enable women to make claims; and
- Recording women’s share of land.

Land Titling

Land titling is a prerequisite to gender disparities in land. Joint titling can help guard against men selling off the land, protect against dispossession of women through separation, desertion, divorce and also increase women’s bargaining power in the household and farm decision making, including cropping pattern. Mandatory joint titling for legally married couples provides the most secure land rights for women. However, some countries have voluntary joint titling, which while less secure, can also provide women significant benefits. Voluntary joint titling also requires significant support, including education of women on the issue, women’s increased access to legal services and male sensitization at the family, community levels, sensitization of male members of households and communities, sensitization of land administration officials including land registration personnel.

Collective Approaches

Studies from the field suggest that women can support each other in varied types of collective approaches to access land. For example:

- Women who own individual land holdings can invest with other women

in capital inputs to improve the land while managing production individually. Building collective institutions at the village level, such as grain banks, seed banks, fodder banks can ensure food security in times of drought (failure of rainfall), etc. At the same time, marketing could also be a collective effort.

- Women can purchase land jointly while owning it individually and farming it collectively.
- Women can lease land and cultivate it as a group.
- Rural poor women can hold group rights over land distributed by government or acquired from other sources.

5.8 KEY INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS ON WOMEN'S LAND, PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE RIGHTS

At the International level, the scale and energy of efforts focused on women land, property and inheritance rights for women have grown in recent years.

Fundamental aspects of equality and the guarantee of rights and freedoms to all persons, regardless of sex, incorporated are in the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*. The document is germane to women's property and inheritance rights as it guarantees equal rights for women and men before and during marriage and at its dissolution (Article 16); recognizes every person's right to own property and to be protected from arbitrary deprivation of property (Article 17); and confirms the right to an adequate standard of living, including housing (Article 25). Subsequently, the paired international covenants on civil and political rights and economic, social, and cultural rights adopted in 1966 conferred the force of law on various provisions relevant to rights concerning property, housing, and inheritance.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantees equality of persons before the courts (Article 14); prohibits arbitrary or unlawful interference with one's privacy, family, or home (Article 17); addresses equality of spousal rights during marriage and at its dissolution (Article 23); and confirms equal protection of the law for all without discrimination (Article 26).

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights further underscores the principle of non-discrimination with regard to sex and recognizes the equal rights of women and men to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights including the right to adequate housing (Articles 3 and 11). The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights sought to elaborate the content of the right to adequate housing when it issued General Comment No. 4 in 1991, emphasizing that the right includes not only reference to the specific shelter in which one dwells but also embraces the right to live somewhere in security, peace, and dignity and embodies the notion of legal security of tenure (United Nations 1991).

Women's human rights and their basis in principles of gender equality and non-discrimination are the focus of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) adopted in 1979. Among other things, CEDAW obliges States Parties to embody the principle of equality of women and men in their national constitutions and "take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women" (Article 2). CEDAW specifies the particular rights of rural women including the right to have access to agricultural credit and loans, the right to equal treatment in land and agrarian reform, and the right to enjoy adequate living conditions (Article 14), and obliges State Parties to grant women legal capacity in civil matters equal to that of men including equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and equal treatment in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals (Article 15). In the context of marriage and family relations, the Convention requires State Parties to uphold equal rights and responsibilities for women and men during marriage and at its dissolution and to ensure "the same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration" (Article 16).

5.9 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

Policies and actions by governments and civil society organizations concerning women's *de jure* property rights are influenced by key declarations and platforms for action resulting from landmark international conferences such as the **Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995**. *The Beijing Declaration* reiterated principles of gender equality and women's empowerment and recognized the importance of equal rights, opportunities, and access to economic resources and productive assets, including land. *The Beijing Platform for Action* further articulated needs and proposed actions relevant to the goals defined by the declaration, including several actions to be taken by governments relevant to women's property and inheritance concerns:

- Enable women to obtain affordable housing and access to land by, among other things, removing all obstacles to access, with special emphasis on meeting the needs of women, especially those living in poverty and female heads of household [(Para. 58(m))].
- Undertake legislative and administrative reforms to give women full and equal access to economic resources, including the right to inheritance and to ownership and control over land and other property, credit, natural resources and appropriate technologies[(Paras. 61(b) and 165(e))].
- Review national laws, including customary laws and legal practices in the areas of family, civil, penal, labour and commercial law in order to ensure the implementation of the principles and procedures of all relevant international human rights instruments by means of national legislation, revoke any remaining laws that discriminate on the basis of

sex, and remove gender bias in the administration of justice [(Para. 232(d))].

- Disseminate information on national legislation and its impact on women, including easily accessible guidelines on how to use a justice system to exercise one’s rights [(Para. 233(c))].
- Eliminate the injustice and obstacles in relation to inheritance faced by the girl-child so that all children may enjoy their rights without discrimination, by, *inter alia*, enacting, as appropriate, and enforcing legislation that guarantees equal right to succession and ensures equal right to inherit, regardless of the sex of the child [(Para. 274(d))].

At the 1996 U.N. Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), the ***Istanbul Declaration 1996*** highlighted government obligations to principles of gender equality in policies and programmes related to shelter, non-discrimination and equal access to affordable housing, and access to land and credit. Like the Beijing Platform for Action, the ***Habitat Agenda*** spelled out a variety of recommended actions and strategies for governments to address the constraints women encounter in obtaining access to secure and adequate shelter, including awareness and education campaigns concerning women’s legal rights to land ownership and inheritance [(Para. 78(b)); reviews of legal and regulatory frameworks to ensure that women’s equal rights are specified and enforced [(Para. 78(c)); mechanisms for the protection of women who risk losing their homes and properties when their husbands die [(Para. 78(g)). During the five-year review of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda in 2001, the **U.N. General Assembly** reiterated a number of the same concerns and strategies spelled out in 1996 and, among other things, called for continued legislative, administrative, and social reforms to ensure women have full and equal access to economic resources including the right to inherit and own land and other property and the right to security of tenure.

The Huairou Commission, the UN Centre for Human Settlements (UN-HABITAT), the Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) jointly worked in Sub-Saharan Africa to strengthen advocacy for law and policy reform, including dissemination of tools and strategies used by women’s organizations in the region.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- Note: i. Use this space given below to answer the question.
 ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Define „Land Titling.“

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5.10 LET US SUM UP

This Unit started discussing the relationship between land entitlements and women and how land entitlements are matter to the women. In that section we have discussed the role of women's organization in getting land entitlements for women and the discussion carried out in international conferences. We have also deliberated the limitations for accessing land by women. Finally the role of international organizations to sensitize nations on the significance of bringing policies, programmes and appropriate legislation to ensure women's access to land.

5.11 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the measures taken at the international level with regard to women and land rights.
2. Explain what barriers exist in women inheriting land?

5.12 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1. The CSWI also identified land reforms was as key measure to improve condition of rural women. Through the 1980s-1990s and later, the focus of analysis shifted to the large majority of poor women and men from developing countries that are rural and dependent on agriculture. However, women are denied rights in access, ownership and control of the land and few have direct ownership of land in their own right.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1. Land titling reflects gender disparities in ownership of land. Joint titling can help guard against men selling off the land, protect against dispossession of women through separation, desertion, divorce and also increase women's bargaining power in the household and farm decision making, including cropping pattern. Mandatory joint titling for legally married couples provides the most secure land rights for women. However, some countries have voluntary joint titling, which while less secure, can also provide women significant benefits. Voluntary joint titling also requires significant support, including education of women on the issue, women's increased access to legal services and male sensitization at the family, community levels, sensitization of male members of households and community, sensitization of land administration officials including land registration personnel.

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