

The Impact of Land Rights Interventions in Myanmar



In Myanmar, a large proportion of the population is rural and their main livelihood is agriculture. However, according to a survey conducted by IPA, more than half of rural families are landless and women particularly face many obstacles to accessing land. Researchers partnered with Landesa, a nonprofit, and the Government of Myanmar, to measure the impact of a land allocation program on food security, decision making, land ownership, and women's land rights. The evaluation will include both a qualitative and quantitative component.

Policy Issue

About 45 percent^[1] of the global world population lives in rural areas and roughly 26 percent^[2] of the world population derive their livelihoods from agriculture. Agriculture is a key source of income and employment for the poor and vulnerable populations, especially in Africa and South Asia where 51 percent and 42 percent of the population is employed in the sector.^[3] However, in several countries, a significant percentage of the population does not own land, which may contribute to poverty, debt and powerlessness of the majority of rural households. Landlessness could be linked to insufficient land, rapid population growth, low productivity in agriculture, ineffective government policies and colonial heritage. This research will shed light on the impact of land rights interventions on poverty-related outcomes.

Evaluation Context

In Myanmar, a large proportion of the population is rural and their main livelihood is agriculture. Since 2016, the government, as the official owner of all land, has implemented a number of measures to promote rural development, including the revision of land laws, the establishment of institutions to improve the land management system, and the introduction of a land-sharing program.

However, despite having a large representation in the agricultural labor force, women continue to face many obstacles to land access and land decision-making. According to limited data on certification of farmland in Myanmar, 80 percent of farmland records are under a man's name.^[4] A recent study in the Ayeyarwady region revealed that women are less aware of their rights and less able to enforce their land rights compared with men. This situation is reinforced by cultural norms that perceived men as the rightful authorities within the household.^[5]

RESEARCHERS

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COUNTRY

Myanmar

PARTNER

Landesa

PROGRAM AREA

Agriculture

TOPICS

Food Security, Livelihoods, Women &
Girls

TIMELINE

2019-2023

Details of the Intervention

The Government of Myanmar has announced a policy of land allocation of vacant or unused land to landless households. Researchers will work with Landesa, a non-governmental organization working to secure land rights the world's poorest, to evaluate the impact of this land allocation program on food security, decision making, land ownership, and women's land rights.

Landesa has been advising and working with the Government of Myanmar for several years. Landesa's support for the land allocation program will be guided by a randomized selection of village tracts from among the sites where land is available for such allocation. A pre-intervention baseline survey was conducted between November 2019 and January 2020. Researchers will conduct follow-up surveys and qualitative interviews in 2021 and 2022 to monitor the progress of the intervention and measure changes in the outcomes of interest. The final survey is scheduled for 2022.

Results and Policy Lessons

Project ongoing; results forthcoming.

Sources

^[1] _ Food and Agriculture Organization. "Statistical Pocketbook 2019".

^[2] _ Ibid.

^[3] _ Ibid.

^[4] _ Namati. "Gendered Aspects of Land Rights in Myanmar: Evidence from Paralegal Casework".

^[5] _ Landesa (2019). Landlessness in Ayeyarwady. Landesa Publication