

EVALUATING THE AWARENESS LEVEL AND IMPACT OF THE CUSTOMARY LAND RIGHTS ACT OF 2022 AMONG WOMEN IN SIERRA LEONE'S MINING COMMUNITIES

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A Study Report on

Evaluating the Awareness Level and Impact of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 Among Women in Sierra Leone's Mining Communities

This Study was commissioned by

Women on Mining and Extractives (WoME)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CLRA	Customary Land Rights Act
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EPA	Environment Protection Agency
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ME	Ministry of Environment
KII	Key Informant Interview
WoME	Women on Mining and Extractives

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A special thank you to all the study participants in the different study locations of Kono, Tonkolili, Port Loko, and Bonthe/Moyamba Districts who provided their informed consent and valuable time to complete survey questionnaires, participated in key informant interviews, and the various focus group discussions. Their opinions and comments throughout the data gathering process were crucial to the conclusions and suggestions made by this research.

Finally, the research enumerators who contributed towards ensuring that the data collection and inputting was completed.

- Research Team

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women on Mining and Extractives (WoME) is an organization dedicated to upholding the rights of women and girls in mining communities in Sierra Leone. As part of the project, "Enhancing Accountability and Transparency by Empowering Women through the Popularization of Sierra Leone's Customary Land Rights Act of 2022," this study was commissioned to assess the awareness level and impact of this law among women in mining districts across Sierra Leone. The study made possible with financial support from GIZ. It focused on Kono District from the Eastern Province, Tonkolili, and Port Loko in the Northern Province, and Bonthe/Moyamba in the Southern Province, which are all mining communities.

The study adopted a descriptive design, utilizing Mixed Methodology approach (Quantitative and Qualitative) research methods. The qualitative study utilized two open-ended data collection methods (focus group discussion and key informant interviews) and the quantitative approach used a structured questionnaire to gather the perspectives of women in these communities.

Findings indicate a concerning lack of awareness among women regarding the Act, with many not fully understanding its provisions. One prominent challenge identified is the traditional gender stereotypes that hinder women's leadership roles in households and community decisions, particularly concerning land ownership and transactions[1]. Despite legislative strides, women are often excluded from crucial discussions on land matters, reflecting ongoing societal biases.

Moving forward, addressing these challenges requires multifaceted strategies. There is need for awareness raising that seeks to reduce the negative perception and stereotypes of women owning lands through the popularization of the Act and its content within mining communities. Also providing targeted training for women to enhance their knowledge of the Act and capacity to advocate for their rights. Moreover, it is important for Government to contextualize the law to local practices through its domestication and the establishment of community-specific regulations. Strengthening local institutions' capacity to enforce the Act and establishing accessible mechanisms for reporting and addressing violations are vital steps towards empowering women, ensuring equitable land ownership, and fostering sustainable development in Sierra Leone's mining communities.

[1] See Figure 15 for detailed finding on “Barrier to women’s involvement in land-related decisions”

1.0 OVERVIEW

1.1 BACKGROUND: CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The mining sector in Sierra Leone has long been a cornerstone of its economy, contributing significantly to national revenue and employment. The country is endowed with abundant mineral resources including diamonds, gold, and bauxite, which have been extensively mined since the colonial era.[2] Despite these economic benefits, mining activities have often led to adverse socio-economic and environmental impacts on local communities, particularly affecting women.

Historically, women in these communities have had limited access to land and resources and often marginalized in decision-making processes related to mining activities[3]. This lack of land rights not only undermines women's economic security but also their social status and decision-making power within their communities. In the context of mining communities, where land is a valuable and contested resource, these gender disparities are particularly pronounced.

In 2022, Sierra Leone enacted the Customary Land Rights Act, aiming to address historical injustices and improve land governance. The Act seeks to recognize and formalize customary land tenure systems, which are predominant in rural areas where mining activities are concentrated. However, the success of such legal frameworks depends on the extent to which women are aware of and can leverage these rights. Studies have shown that legal reforms alone are insufficient if the target beneficiaries are not informed or empowered to assert their rights.

The mining communities in districts like Kono, Tonkolili, Port Loko, Moyamba and Bonthe are particularly relevant for this study due to their significant mining activities. These regions have seen substantial investment and development in the mining sector, often accompanied by disputes over land ownership and usage. Understanding the specific challenges and levels of awareness in these areas will provide valuable insights into the broader context of land rights and gender dynamics in Sierra Leone.

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[2] Sierra Leone Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (2019) https://eiti.org/countries/sierra-leone

[3] World Bank (2021) https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099020001132210146/pdf/P168863048653b01f0affd08025c943f527.pdf

1.2 CUSTOMARY LAND RIGHTS ACT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN

The Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 marks a significant shift in Sierra Leone's approach to land governance, particularly in how it recognizes and formalizes customary land tenure systems. This legislation aims to protect the land rights of local communities, promote equitable land distribution, and enhance land tenure security. For women in mining communities, the Act holds substantial potential to improve their access to and control over land, which is a critical resource for their economic and social well-being[4].

One of the key provisions of the Act is the formal recognition of customary land rights, which includes the rights of women to own, inherit, and manage land. This is a significant departure from traditional practices where land ownership and control were predominantly male dominated. By ensuring that women have legal rights to land, the Act aims to empower them economically and enhance their role in community decision-making processes[5]. This empowerment is crucial in mining communities, where land disputes and tenure insecurity have often marginalized women.

The Act also mandates the inclusion of women in land governance structures, such as land committees and dispute resolution bodies. This inclusion is intended to ensure that women's voices are heard in decisions affecting land use and management. By participating in these structures, women can advocate for their interests and contribute to more equitable and sustainable land management practices. This participatory approach is expected to lead to more inclusive and effective land governance, benefiting the entire community.

Despite these positive provisions, the actual impact of the Customary Land Rights Act on women depends largely on the level of awareness and understanding among the affected populations. If women are unaware of their rights under the new law, they are unlikely to benefit from its protections and opportunities. Therefore, raising awareness and providing education about the Act is essential for its successful implementation. Additionally, support mechanisms such as

[4] Grassroots Justice Network (2022) https://grassrootsjusticenetwork.org/resources/customary-land-rights-act-2022-sierra-leone/

[5] The Customary Land Rights Act, 2022 https://www.parliament.gov.sl/uploads/acts/THE%20CUSTOMARY%20LAND%20RIGHTS%20ACT,%202022.pdf

legal aid and capacity-building programs are necessary to help women navigate the legal system and assert their rights.

Furthermore, the Act's implications extend beyond individual land rights to broader socio-economic outcomes. By securing land tenure, women can invest more confidently in agriculture and other income-generating activities, contributing to their household's economic stability and food security. This security can also enhance women's social status and bargaining power within their communities, promoting gender equality and reducing poverty.

The Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 has the potential to transform the lives of women in Sierra Leone's mining communities by formalizing their land rights and promoting their participation in land governance.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The rationale for this study stems from the need to assess the awareness level and impact of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 among women in Sierra Leone's mining communities. Despite the Act's potential to enhance land tenure security and empower women, its effectiveness is contingent upon the extent to which the women are informed about their rights and the provisions of the law.

One primary reason for conducting this study is the historical marginalization of women in land ownership and governance in Sierra Leone. By assessing awareness of the new Act, this study seeks to understand whether these traditional barriers are being addressed and if women are beginning to see changes in their land security.

Also, the study is focus on mining communities, which face unique challenges due to the social, economic and environmental impacts of mining activities. Women in these communities are often disproportionately affected by land dispossession, environmental degradation, and socio-economic marginalization.[6] Understanding their awareness of the Customary Land Rights Act

[6] Jara, B. & Blanca, G. (2022). Gender Equality to Safeguard the Environment: How Women Can Improve the Environmental Performance of the Minerals Sector

can provide insights into how well the Act is addressing these specific challenges and what additional measures may be needed to support these women.

The study also aims to inform policy and advocacy efforts by providing empirical data on the awareness levels of the Act. Policymakers and organizations such as WoME can use this data to design targeted interventions that raise awareness and educate women about their rights under the new law. This approach can help ensure that the Act's benefits reach those who need them most and that women are empowered to participate actively in land).



Focus Group Discussion held in Tankoro Chiefdom, Kono District

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 STUDY DESIGN

The study adopted a descriptive design, utilizing Mixed Methodology approach[7] (Quantitative and Qualitative) research methods to evaluate the awareness level of the customary land rights Act of 2022 among women in Sierra Leone's mining communities. The qualitative study utilized two open-ended data collection methods (focus group discussion and key informant interviews) and the quantitative approach used a structured questionnaire.

2.2 STUDY AREA

The study areas chosen include the Bonthe/Moyamba Districts in the Southern Province of Sierra Leone, the Tonkolili and Port Loko Districts in the Northern Province, and the Kono District in the Eastern Province. These districts were chosen because they were relevant to the study's goals and had a substantial mining community.

2.3 STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE

2.3.1. STUDY POPULATION

The population of this study comprise Women in mining communities; Indigenous Landowners; local women staff of WoME in mining communities, Women's CSO Groups; Media, Community Leaders (traditional, religious and Political); Ministries Department and Agencies (EPA, ME; and Others) plus other categories deemed relevant by WoME or its donor partner.

2.3.2 SAMPLE AND SAMPLE PROCEDURE

A Stratified Random Sampling[8] of four hundred (400) respondents were drawn from the study population stated above. From the 400 respondents, 320 were interviewed for the survey questionnaire, 40 for the focus group discussion and 40 for key informant interview and divided equally across districts.

[7] Schoonenboom, J. (2023, January). The fundamental difference between qualitative and quantitative data in mixed methods research. In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 24, No. 1).

[8] Zaman, T., & Bulut, H. (2023). Robust calibration for estimating the population mean using stratified random sampling. *Scientia Iranica*.

2.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The following research instruments were used in collecting data for this study:

Structured Questionnaire: The primary data collection tool for this study was a questionnaire. Survey questions were created and distributed to the study population to efficiently collect data for the research.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): KIIs were also done through face-to-face interviews with Indigenous Land Owners, Women's CSO Groups, Media, Community Leaders (traditional, religious and Political), Ministries Department and Agencies (EPA, ME; and Others) in the study area.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD): This data collection instrument was used to engage and obtain data from women in mining community and community Awareness Level of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022.

Simple Observations: The researchers additionally made observations to qualify and match responses derived from selected respondents through thorough observation. The researchers prepared a basic observation checklist based on the study's research questions and objectives.

2.5 DATA MANAGEMENT

The standard that was followed for handling data during every phase of the study included organizing, cleaning, and storing data. Even more attention was given to the timeliness, completeness, accuracy, integrity, availability, and validity of the data.

2.6 DESK REVIEW

To assess the awareness level of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 among women in Sierra Leone's mining communities, the researcher employs the conceptual framework model to review a number of pertinent works pertaining to women in mining communities, policies, laws, as well as national and international regulations that govern the land sector.

3.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC RESULTS

The demographic results provide a detailed profile of the respondents, including their age, gender, education level, marital status, occupation, and land ownership status.

3.1.1 Age Range of Respondents

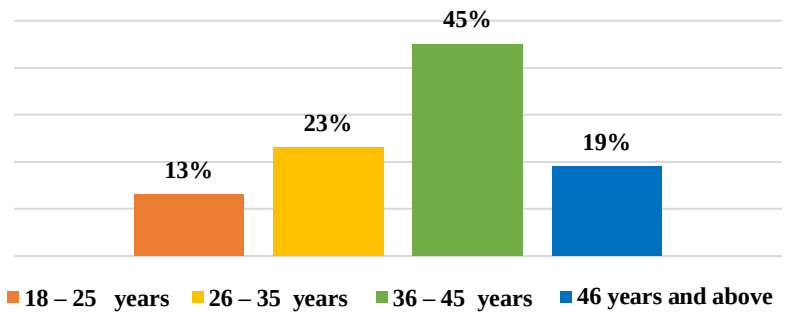

Figure 1: Age Range of Respondents

Respondents were required to choose from the list of age range categorization provided in the data collection instrument as follows: 18 – 25 Year; 26 – 35 Years; 36 – 45 years; 46 Years and above. The study revealed in figure 1 that the majority of respondents (45%) were between the ages of 36 and 45, with smaller percentages in the 18-25 (13%), 26-35 (23%), and 46 years and above (19%) age ranges.

3.1.2 Sex of Respondents

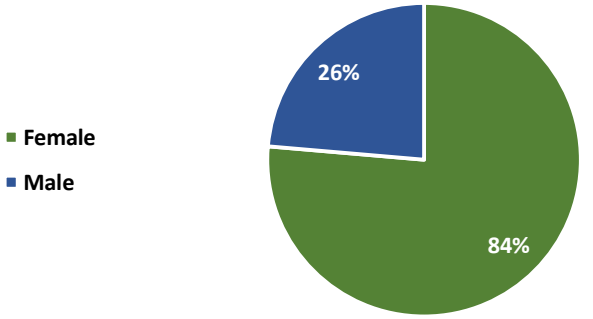

Figure 2: Sex of Participants

Figure 2 reveals that the respondents were predominantly female (84%), with a smaller male representation (26%). This gender distribution underscores the focus on women's awareness and experiences concerning land rights, aligning with the study's objective to evaluate the awareness among women specifically.

3.1.3 Respondents' level of Education

A significant portion of respondents (51%) had attended vocational school, while 23% had university education, 19% secondary education, 6% primary education, and 1% had never been to school as displayed in figure 3.

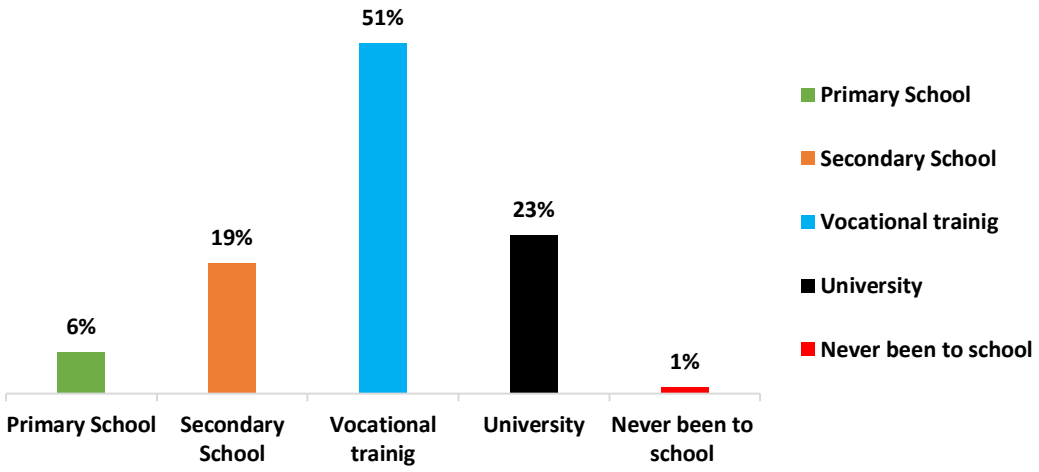

Figure 3: Respondents' level of Education

3.1.4 Marital Status of Respondents

The study also investigated the marital status of respondents, the list of options provided in the data collection instrument were: single, married, divorce, widow and widower. Most respondents were married (79%), followed by single (15%), divorced (4%), and widowed (2%). Marital status can influence land rights and property ownership, making it an important factor in assessing the awareness and enforcement of these rights among women.

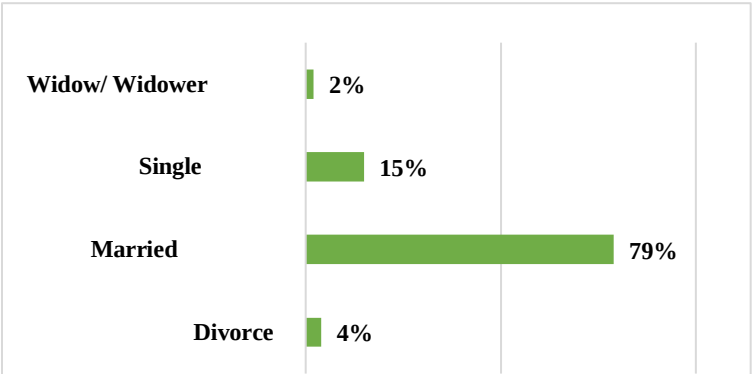

Figure 4: Marital Status of Respondents

3.1.5 Status / Occupation of Respondents

As shown in figure 5, the majority of respondents (46%) fell into the 'Others' category which was mostly traders' various informal occupations. NGO workers (14%), traditional leaders (15%), media (11%), and political/religious leaders (4% each) also participated. This diversity in occupation helps in understanding different perspectives and the influence of various roles on land rights awareness.

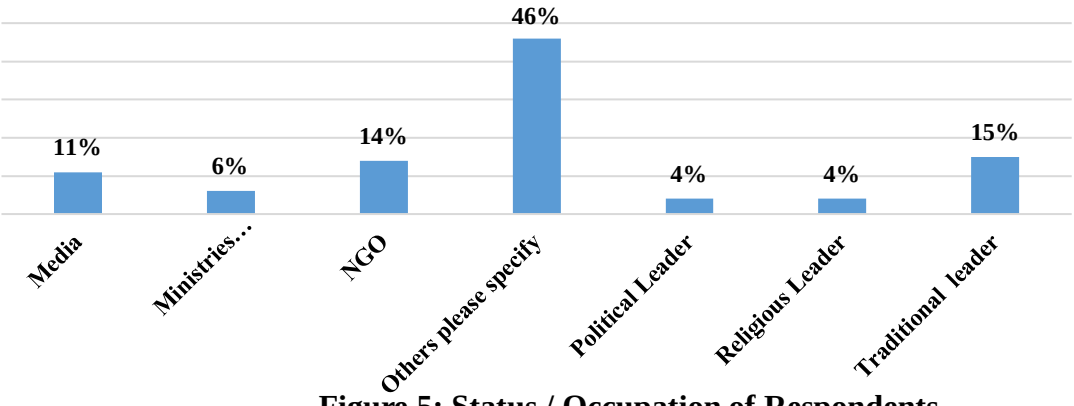

Figure 5: Status / Occupation of Respondents

3.1.6 Land Ownership Status

A slight majority of respondents (54%) reported owning land, while 46% did not. This result is significant in the context of the research as it indicates that just over half of the women in Sierra Leone's mining communities have direct experience with land ownership. This suggests that a considerable portion of the population could potentially benefit from the protections and rights established by the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022. However, the fact that nearly half do not own land highlights a substantial gap in land ownership among women, which may be influenced by various socio-economic and cultural barriers.

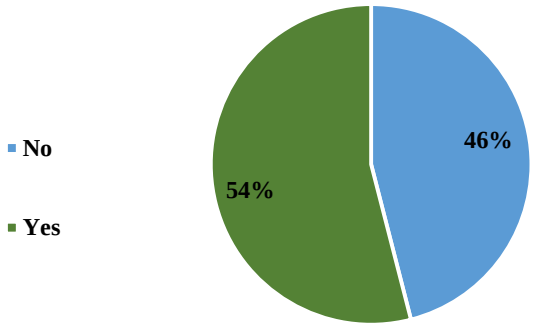

Figure 6: Land Ownership Status

3.2 AWARENESS OF CUSTOMARY LAND RIGHTS ACT OF 2022

Understanding the level of awareness and knowledge about the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 among women in Sierra Leone's mining communities is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of its implementation. This section explores whether respondents are aware of the Act, their sources of information, and how well they understand its provisions.

3.2.1 Awareness of Customary Lands Right Act of 2022

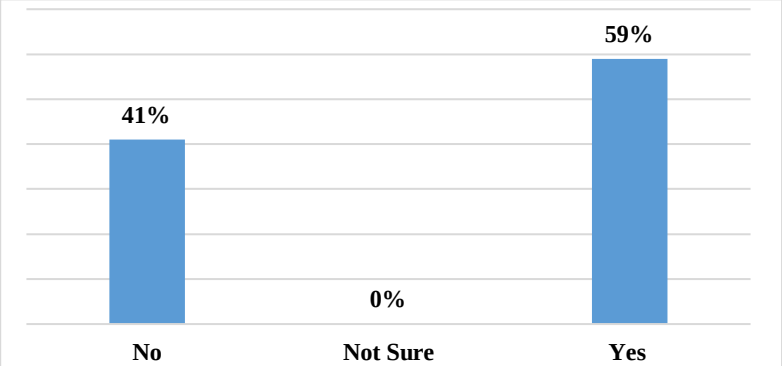

Figure 7: Awareness of Customary Lands Act

A slight majority of respondents (59%) are aware of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022, while 41% are not. This indicates that although more than half of the women in Sierra Leone's mining communities have some knowledge of the Act, a significant portion remains uninformed. The disparity highlights the need for enhanced outreach and educational efforts to ensure that all women are aware of their rights under the Act.

3.2.2 First Knowledge of the Act

About 58% of respondents first heard about the Act through radio, with other sources being community meetings (19%), TV (15%), word of mouth (6%), and print media (2%). The predominance of radio highlights the importance of this medium in disseminating information in these communities.

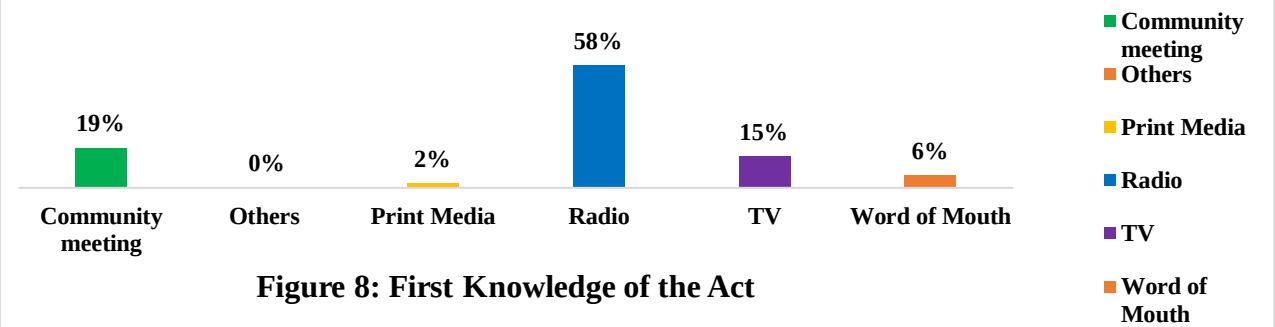

Figure 8: First Knowledge of the Act

3.2.3 Understanding level of the Act

About 44% of respondents had no understanding of the Act, 40% had some understanding, and only 16% understood it very well. This indicates a significant gap in knowledge and comprehension that needs to be addressed to ensure women can effectively exercise their land rights.

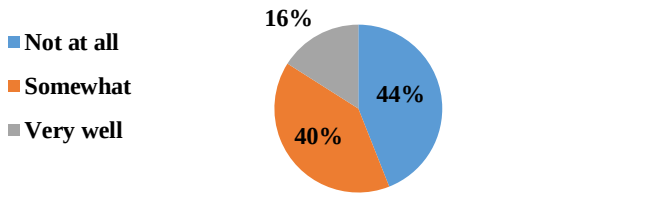

Figure 9: Understanding level of the Act

3.2.4 FGDs and KIIs awareness of Customary Land Rights Act of 2022

Around 45% of the participant of the FGDs and KIIs revealed that they have heard of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 through meetings, workshop or word of mouth but they have not read its content or familiarize themselves with the provisions of the law. They refer to lack of access to the law while the few with access say it is difficult to read, understand and rightfully interpret the law. This underscores a broader issue of limited accessibility and comprehension barriers that hinder effective implementation and utilization of the law's provisions among community members.



Focus Group Discussion, Lunsar Community, Port Loko District

3.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF CUSTOMARY LAND RIGHTS ACT OF 2022

This section focuses on the rights it affords to women, such as equal ownership, joint registration of land, inheritance rights, and management rights; exploring whether women have successfully asserted their land rights under its provisions.

3.3.1 Rights of women in your community

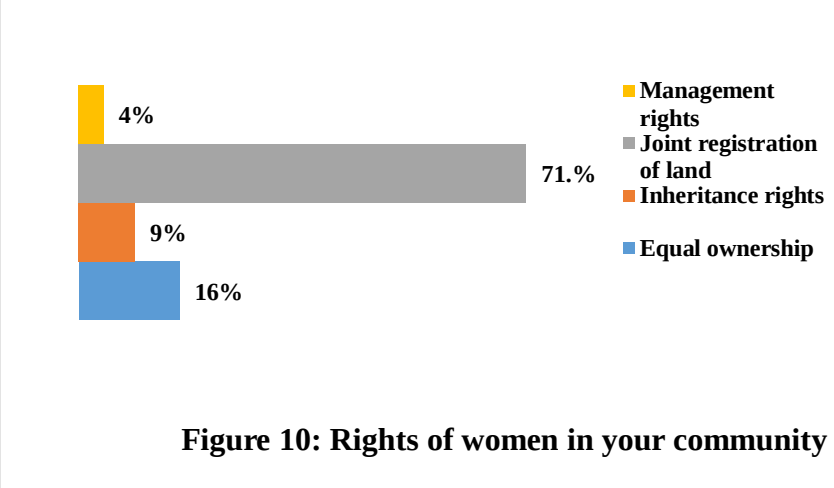

Figure 10: Rights of women in your community

The result reveals that within the communities, women under the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 most commonly enact the right to joint registration of land, with a substantial majority of 71%. The relatively lower percentages for equal ownership (16%), inheritance rights (9%), and management rights (4%) indicate varying degrees of implementation or utilization of these provisions. This distribution underscores the significance of joint registration as a mechanism for recognizing and securing women's land rights within the community, potentially reflecting evolving attitudes towards gender equality in property ownership.

3.3.2 Any knowledge of women to have asserted their land rights

Only 24% of respondents knew of women who had asserted their land rights, while 62% did not, and 14% were unsure. This low awareness of enforcement highlights the challenges women face in exercising their rights and the need for increased support and visibility for successful cases.

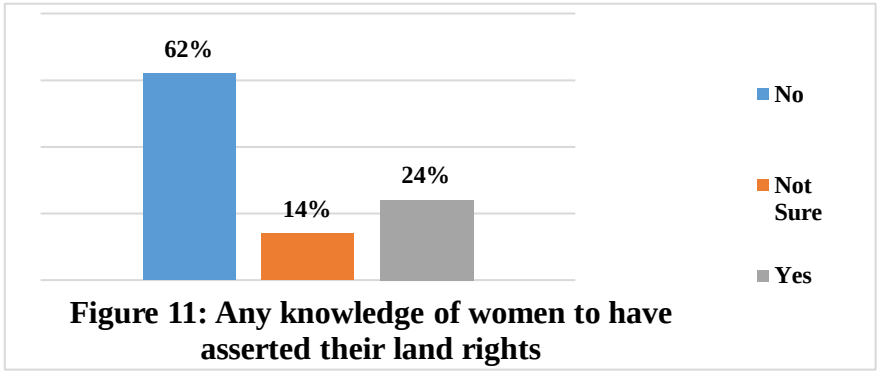

Figure 11: Any knowledge of women to have asserted their land rights

3.3.3 Effective Implementation of the Act

Nearly half of the respondents (49%) believed the Act is not effectively implemented, 28% found it somewhat effective, and 23% deemed it very effective. This mixed perception underscores the need for better implementation strategies and monitoring to ensure the Act's provisions are realized in practice.

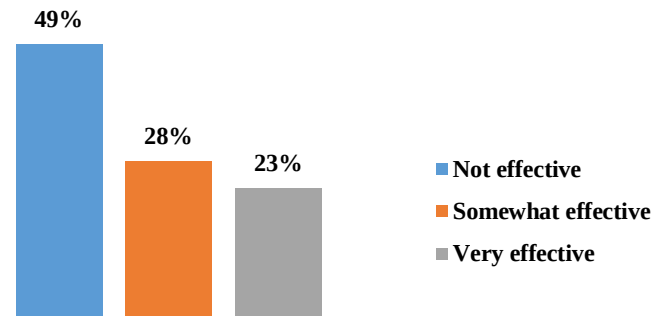

Figure 12: Effective Implementation of the Act

3.3.4 FGDs and KIIs view on the implementation of Customary Land Rights Act of 2022

The FGD and KII sessions revealed that, while the Act's enactment and implementation were not entirely successful, it did, with the help of local leaders, prevent families from confiscating properties from women following the death of their husbands, which was previously a common practice.

"One major challenge in implementing the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 is that men in our communities continue to struggle to see women as household leaders. That is why there are still stereotypes about being sold or rented land without a husband or male figure. They are sometimes excluded from family discussions about the sale of family land."

- Councilor Kumba Nyandemor, Tankoro Chiefdom, Kono District

3.4 WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LAND DECISIONS

This section shows the level of women's involvement in land-related decision-making within their communities. It explores perceptions of adequacy in participation, instances of women's land rights violations, and barriers hindering their engagement.

3.4.1 Women involvement in Land-related decisions

About 59% of respondents indicated that women were involved in land-related decisions, while 40% said they were not, and 1% were unsure. This significant involvement rate is promising but also points to a substantial minority who are still excluded, highlighting the need for inclusive decision-making processes.

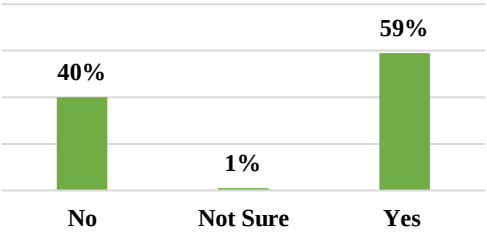

Figure 13: Women involvement in Land-related decisions

3.4.2 Instances of women's land right violations

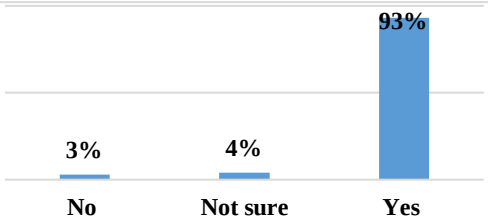

Figure 14: Instances of women's land right violations

A vast majority (93%) reported instances of women's land rights violations, with only 3% saying no and 4% unsure. This high incidence of violations indicates systemic issues that need to be addressed to protect women's rights effectively.

3.4.3 Barrier to women's involvement in land-related decisions

The most cited barriers were traditional gender roles (45%), lack of awareness of rights (22%), cultural practices (17%), and limited access to resources (16%). These findings are critical as they pinpoint specific areas where interventions can be targeted to enhance women's participation in land governance.

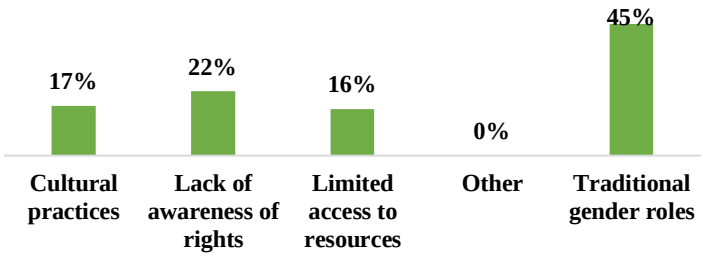

Figure 15: Barrier to women's involvement in land-related decisions

3.4.4 FGDs and KIIs view on women's participation in land decisions

Views towards women's participation in land related decisions was split. One party believed that women are still restricted from participating in land related decision despite the existence of laws

advocating of it. This is because the society and communities are still built on a rooted patriarchal system. While the other believes that there has been a growth as some women are now part of law committees because they are aware of their rights; although the number is minimal and there is long way to go, but it is better than before.

3.5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

Examining community engagement and education regarding the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022, this section assesses women's participation in awareness meetings or workshops related to Act.

3.5.1 Attendance of Land's right workshop

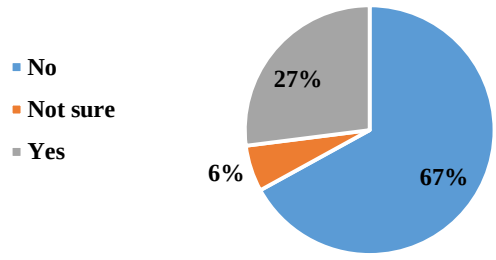

Figure 16: Attendance of Land's right workshop

Only 27% had attended a land rights workshop, while 67% had not, and 6% were unsure. This low attendance rate highlights a significant gap in community engagement and education efforts that need to be addressed to raise awareness.

3.5.2 Usefulness of Land's right workshop

Among those who attended, 78% found the workshops very useful, 17% somewhat useful, and 5% not useful. This positive feedback suggests that workshops are an effective means of increasing awareness and understanding of land rights.

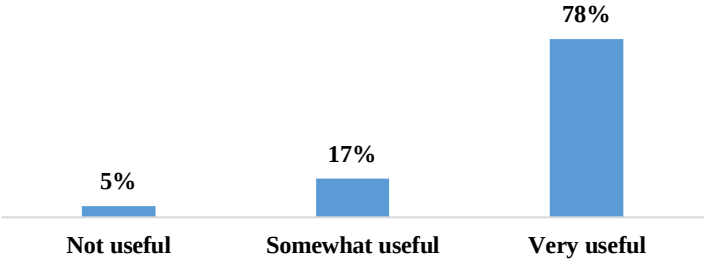

Figure 17: Usefulness of Land's right workshop

3.5.3 Participation in women's lands right

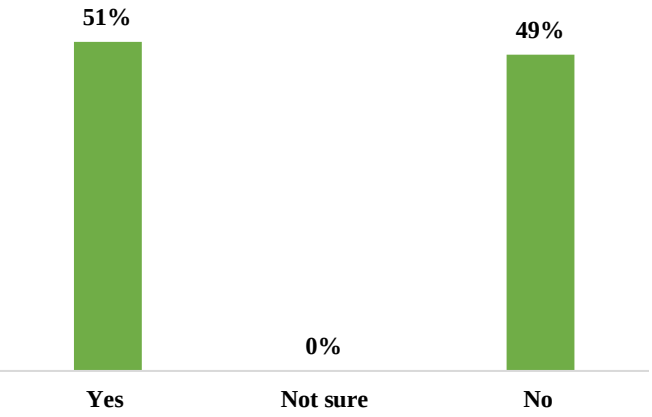

Figure 18: Participation in women's lands right

Half of the respondents (51%) participated in women's land rights activities, with 49% not participating. This balance indicates an active engagement but also room for increased participation to ensure broader community involvement.

3.5.4 FGDs and KIIs view on community engagement and education

The responses to the questions on community engagement and education regarding the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 highlight most of the efforts made to educate the community, especially through community meetings, radio broadcasts and collaborations were done by NGOs. However, the effectiveness of these efforts may vary, with some FGDs and KIIs indicating that awareness and understanding are still limited among certain segments of the population. Respondents suggest additional measures like more frequent and targeted community outreach, educational workshops, and improved access to informational materials in local languages to enhance awareness and understanding of the Act. This feedback underscores the ongoing need for comprehensive and inclusive educational strategies to ensure that all community members, particularly women, are fully informed about their land rights.

3.6 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Focusing on the Act's impact on accountability and transparency in land transactions especially for women, this section evaluates perceptions of its effectiveness and the specific mechanisms through which transparency has been enhanced.

3.6.1 Accountability and transparency in land transactions

Only 10% felt there was accountability and transparency, while 67% were unsure and 23% said no. This uncertainty and perceived lack of transparency indicate significant challenges in land governance that need to be addressed to build trust and ensure fair land transactions for women.

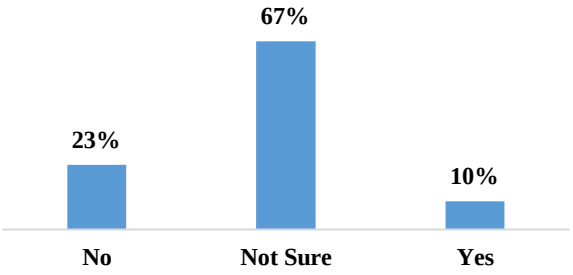

Figure 19: Accountability and transparency in land transactions

3.6.2 Pattern of increase in transparency in land transactions

For figure 20, the question "In what ways has it increased transparency?" The majority, comprising 86% of respondents, emphasized requiring documentation of land transactions has been the most increased form of transparency in formalizing and recording. Only 2% of respondents considered providing mechanisms for reporting and addressing violations, while 5% voted public disclosure of land ownership information, and 7% selected clear procedures for resolving land disputes.

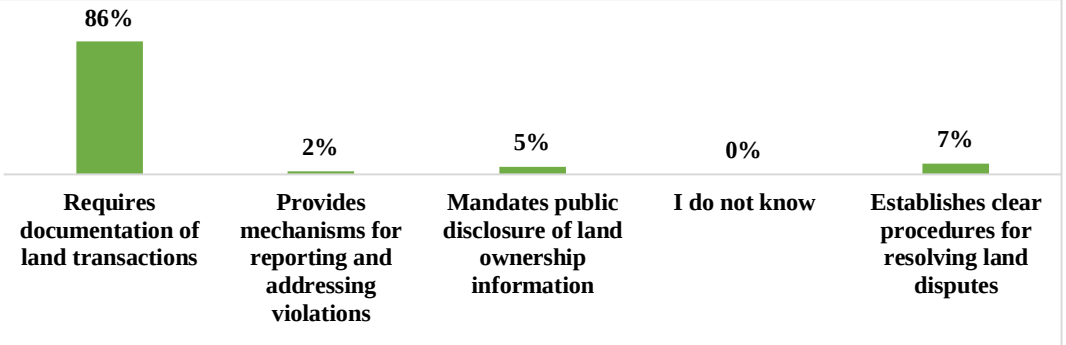

Figure 20: Pattern of increase in transparency in land transactions

3.6.3 Challenges to accountability and transparency in land transactions

The main challenges identified were corruption and bribery (34%), lack of enforcement (32%), resistance from traditional authorities (22%), and limited access to legal assistance (12%). These findings highlight critical areas where interventions are needed to improve accountability and transparency in land transactions.

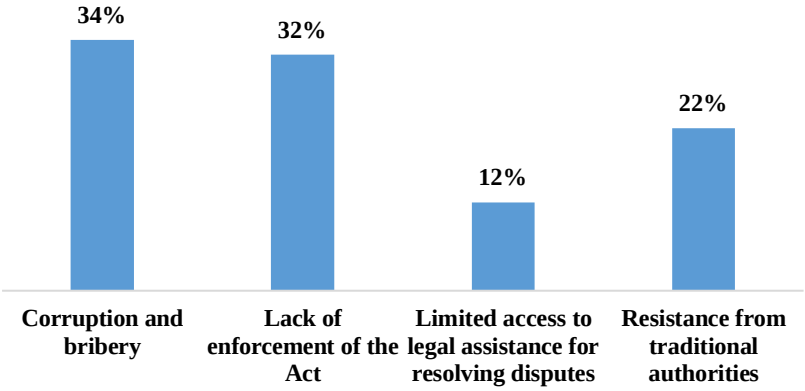

Figure 21: Challenges to accountability and transparency in land transactions

3.6.4 FGDs and KIIs view on accountability and transparency in land transactions ownership

The responses regarding accountability and transparency indicate that the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 has had a positive impact on these areas by mandating documentation of land transactions and public disclosure of ownership information. However, opinions vary on the effectiveness and enforcement of these provisions. Respondents note that while mechanisms such as community oversight committees and reporting channels exist to ensure compliance, their implementation and effectiveness can be inconsistent. Nevertheless, challenges such as cultural barriers and limited access to resources for women might still hinder their full involvement, pointing to the need for further empowerment and capacity-building initiatives.



KII interview with Mr. Sahr Borbor Gando, speaker of Tankoro Chiefdom, Kono District

3.7 RESPONDENTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

Concluding with recommendations, this section summarizes respondents' perspectives on potential strategies on increasing awareness and implementation of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 among women in Sierra Leone's mining communities.

3.7.1 Recommendation on how to increase women's role in land rights decision

The most recommended approach was conducting awareness campaigns (55%), followed by training and capacity-building programs (23%), establishing community forums (14%), and implementing policies for gender equality (8%). These recommendations provide a clear roadmap for increasing awareness and implementation of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 and the role of women in land related decisions among women in Sierra Leone's mining communities.

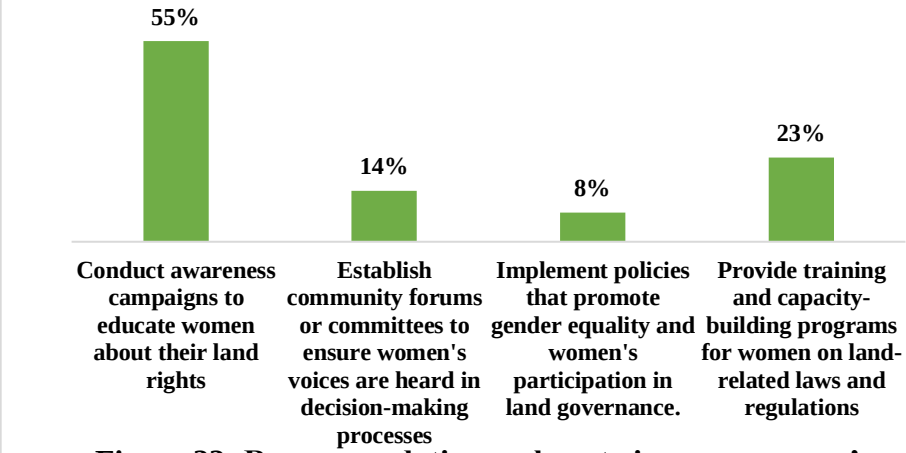

Figure 22: Recommendation on how to increase women's role in land rights decision

3.7.2 Recommendation on how to better understand land rights

Figure 23 shows that workshops or training sessions were the top recommendation (73%), followed by educational materials in local languages (16%), establishment of women's resource centers (7%), and access to legal assistance (4%). These suggestions emphasize the importance of education and support systems in enhancing understanding and exercising land rights.

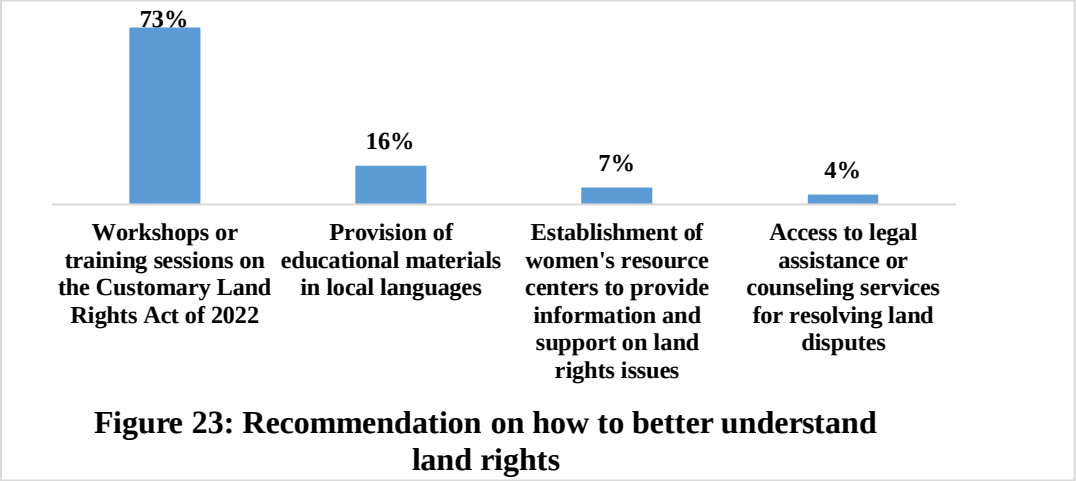

Figure 23: Recommendation on how to better understand land rights

3.7.4 FGDs and KIIs recommendations

The responses to the recommendations from FGDs and KIIs emphasize the need for continuous community education and awareness campaigns to ensure the effective implementation of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022. Participants also recommend enhancing the capacity of local institutions to enforce the Act and ensuring that mechanisms for reporting and addressing violations are robust and accessible. Also, to improve the participation of women in land-related decisions, respondents suggest targeted training programs to empower women, increasing their representation in decision-making bodies, and addressing cultural barriers that limit their involvement.

"To make the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 successful, especially in our patriarchal system, there is a crucial need for increased awareness-raising among locals, particularly women. Additionally, the law should be domesticated to ensure it is adapted to our local contexts

and fully integrated into community practices. This can be achieved through the formation of byelaws derived from the Act, which will help embed its principles more firmly within our traditional governance structures."

- Councilor Kumba Nyandemor, Tankoro Chiefdom, Kono District

4.0 CONCLUSION

The study on the awareness level and impact of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 among women in Sierra Leone's mining communities highlights significant insights into both the successes and ongoing challenges in implementing this critical legislation. The findings reveal that there is a low level of awareness of the Act among the women as there is also a substantial portion of the population who are not fully informed or do not understand its provisions. This gap underscores the need for continued and enhanced educational efforts to ensure that all women are aware of their rights and can fully benefit from the protections offered by the Act.

Moreover, the study indicates that requiring documentation of land transactions has been perceived as the most effective measure in increasing transparency and accountability in land management. However, the effectiveness of other mechanisms, such as public disclosure of land ownership information and procedures for resolving disputes, appears to be limited. This highlights the importance of strengthening these mechanisms and ensuring their consistent application to build trust and transparency in land transactions. The active participation of women in these processes is crucial, and the study points to both progress and barriers in achieving this goal.

Finally, to ensure the successful implementation of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022, it is essential to focus on raising awareness to reduce the negative perception of women owning lands through the popularization of the Act and its content within mining communities. Also providing targeted training for women to enhance their knowledge of the Act and capacity to advocate for their rights. Additionally, the domestication of the law to align with local contexts and the formation of bye-laws will facilitate its integration into community practices. Enhancing the capacity of local institutions to enforce the Act and ensuring robust, accessible mechanisms for reporting and addressing violations are also imperative. By addressing these areas, the Act

can more effectively empower women, promote equitable land ownership, and contribute to sustainable development in Sierra Leone's mining communities.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study highlight several areas where improvements are necessary to enhance the effectiveness of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 among women in Sierra Leone's mining communities. Based on the research, targeted recommendations have been developed for the government, civil society organizations, and women themselves. These recommendations aim to increase awareness, strengthen institutional support, and empower women to actively engage in land-related decisions and governance.

Recommendations to government:

- Government should implement comprehensive, continuous awareness campaigns about the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022, specifically targeting women in mining communities to ensure they understand their rights and the benefits of the Act.
- Build the capacity of local institutions to enforce the Act effectively, ensuring they have the resources and training needed to manage land transactions and disputes.
- Adapt and integrate the Customary Land Rights Act into local contexts by developing byelaws that align with traditional practices and community structures.
- Establish and maintain accessible, transparent mechanisms for expressing grievances, reporting and addressing violations of the Act to enhance accountability and trust. An adaptation of the GIZ's Grievance Redress Mechanism specifically for mining land related violations is suggested.
- Develop initiatives that encourage and support the active participation of women in land governance and decision-making processes at all levels.

Recommendation to Civil Society Organizations:

- CSOs like WoME should Provide regular training and workshops for women and community leaders on the provisions and benefits of the Customary Land Rights Act.
- Organize community dialogues and forums to discuss the Act, share experiences, and address concerns, fostering a deeper understanding and community support.

- Advocate for the government to implement and enforce policies that support the Act's objectives, focusing on gender equity in land ownership and management.
- Create and distribute educational materials, such as pamphlets, posters, and radio programs, in local languages to make the information about the Act more accessible.
- Establish monitoring systems to track the implementation of the Act and report on compliance and violations, working with local authorities to address issues.

Recommendation to women:

- Women should actively seek out information and training on the Customary Land Rights Act to understand their rights and how to exercise them.
- Engage in community meetings and forums discussing land rights and governance, voicing their concerns and suggestions.
- Create or join support networks with other women to share knowledge, resources, and strategies for advocating for their land rights.
- Utilize established mechanisms to report any violations of your land rights, ensuring that issues are documented and addressed.
- Advocate for their rights and those of other women in your community, working collectively to ensure the principles of the Act are upheld and enforced.

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7.0 APPENDICES

7.1 GENERAL SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Title of the Study: Evaluating the Awareness Level and Impact of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 Among Women in Sierra Leone's Mining Communities.

Purpose of the Study: Hello Sir/ Ma, you are invited to participate in an interview as part of a research study conducted by **Women on Mining and Extractives (WoME-SL)** with funding from **GIZ.** The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 on women's land rights and participation in land-related decisions in Sierra Leone's mining communities. The study will cover Kono, Tonkolili, Port Loko, and Bonthe/Moyamba Districts.

Procedures: If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed about your knowledge and opinions regarding the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 and its effects on women's rights. The interview will last approximately 30 minutes.

Confidentiality: All information provided will be kept confidential. Your responses will be anonymized and used solely for research purposes. Your participation is voluntary, and you can choose to withdraw at any time without penalty. You may also decline to answer any specific questions.

Benefits and Risks: There are no direct financial or benefits or risks to you from participating in this study. However, your insights will contribute to better understanding and potentially improving women's land rights in your community.

Contact Information: If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact the WoME at +23277886159 or wome22sierraleone@gmail.com .

Consent: By signing below, you indicate that you have read and understood this information and agree to participate in the interview.

Interviewer's Signature: _____ **Respondent's Signature: _____**

Interviewer's Name: _____ **Date: _____**

SECTION A: Socio-Demographic Profile Of Respondents		
1.	**Age Range of Respondents**	a. 18 – 25 years b. 26 – 35 years c. 36 – 45 years d. 46 years and above

2.	**Sex of Respondents**	a. Female b. Male
3.	**Academic Level of Respondents**	a. Primary School b. Secondary School c. College / Vocation School d. University e. Never been to school
4.	**Marital Status of Respondents**	a. Single b. Married c. Divorce d. Widow/ Widower
5.	**Status / Occupation of Respondents**	a. Traditional leader b. Religious Leader c. Political Leader d. Ministries Department/Agencies e. NGO f. Media g. Others please specify ___
6.	**Are You a Land Owner?**	a. Yes b. No
SECTION B: Awareness of Customary Land Rights Act of 2022		
7.	**Are you aware of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022?**	a. Yes b. No c. Not Sure
8.	**If yes, where did you first hear about it?**	a. Community meeting b. Radio c. TV d. Print Media e. Word of Mouth f. Others _____
9.	**How well do you understand the provisions of the Act?**	a. Very well b. Somewhat c. Not at all

SECTION C: Implementation of Customary Land Rights Act of 2022		
10.	**What rights do women in your community enacts more from the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022?**	a. Equal ownership ☐ b. Joint registration of land ☐ c. Inheritance rights ☐ d. Management rights ☐
11.	**Do you know any women who have successfully asserted their land rights under this Act?**	a. Yes b. No c. Not Sure
12.	**How effective do you think the implementation of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 has been in your community?**	a. Very effective b. Somewhat effective c. Not effective
SECTION D: Women's Participation in Land Decisions		
13.	**Do you think women are not adequately involved in land-related decisions in your community?**	a. Yes b. No c. Not sure
14.	**Have you witnessed any instances where women's land rights were violated in your community?**	a. Yes b. No c. Not sure
15.	**What barrier you think mainly prevents women from being adequately involved in land-related decisions in your community?**	a. Traditional gender roles b. Lack of awareness of rights c. Limited access to resources d. Cultural practices e. Other_____
SECTION E: Community Engagement and Education		
16.	**Have you attended any meetings or workshops about the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022?**	a. Yes b. No c. Not sure
17.	**How useful do you find these meetings or workshops?**	a. Very useful b. Somewhat useful c. Not useful
18.	**Have you participated in any community discussions or forums regarding women's land rights in your community?**	a. Yes b. No c. Not sure
SECTION F: Accountability and Transparency		

19.	**Do you think the Act has improved accountability and transparency in land transactions?**	d. Yes e. No Not sure
20.	**In what ways has it increased transparency?**	a. Requires documentation of land transactions b. Mandates public disclosure of land ownership information c. Establishes clear procedures for resolving land disputes d. Provides mechanisms for reporting and addressing violations e. I do not know
21.	**What do you think are the challenges to this transparency and accountability?**	a. Corruption and bribery b. Lack of enforcement of the Act c. Limited access to legal assistance for resolving disputes d. Resistance from traditional authorities
SECTION G: Recommendations		
22.	**What do you think should be done to ensure women have a more significant role in land-related decisions?**	a. Conduct awareness campaigns to educate women about their land rights b. Provide training and capacity-building programs for women on land-related laws and regulations c. Establish community forums or committees to ensure women's voices are heard in decision-making processes d. Implement policies that promote gender equality and women's participation in land governance.
23.	**What additional information or support would help you better understand your land rights?**	a. Workshops or training sessions on the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 b. Access to legal assistance or counseling services for resolving land disputes c. Provision of educational materials in local languages d. Establishment of women's resource centers to provide information and support on land rights issues

7.2 KEY INFORMAT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Title of the Study: Evaluating the Awareness Level and Impact of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 Among Women in Sierra Leone's Mining Communities.

Purpose of the Study: Hello Sir/ Ma, you are invited to participate in an interview as part of a research study conducted by **Women on Mining and Extractives (WoME-SL)** with funding from **GIZ.** The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 on women's land rights and participation in land-related decisions in Sierra Leone's mining communities. The study will cover Kono, Tonkolili, Port Loko, and Bonthe/Moyamba Districts.

Procedures: If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed about your knowledge and opinions regarding the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 and its effects on women's rights. The interview will last approximately 30 minutes.

Confidentiality: All information provided will be kept confidential. Your responses will be anonymized and used solely for research purposes. Your participation is voluntary, and you can choose to withdraw at any time without penalty. You may also decline to answer any specific questions.

Benefits and Risks: There are no direct financial or benefits or risks to you from participating in this study. However, your insights will contribute to better understanding and potentially improving women's land rights in your community.

Contact Information: If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact the WoME at +23277886159 or wome22sierraleone@gmail.com .

Consent: By signing below, you indicate that you have read and understood this information and agree to participate in the interview.

Respondent's Name: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

Interviewer's Name: _____
Signature: _____

Demographic Information

Name of Key Informant:	
Position/Role in the Community:	
District:	

Chiefdom:	

Awareness and Understanding of Customary Land Rights Act of 2022:

1. How familiar are you with the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022?
2. What are the main provisions of the Act that you are aware of?
3. In your opinion, how well are these provisions being implemented in your community?

Implementation and Impacts of Customary Land Rights Act of 2022:

4. How has the Act impacted women's land rights in your community?
5. Can you provide specific examples of women who have benefited from this Act?
6. What challenges do women still face in asserting their land rights despite the Act?

Participation in Land Decisions

7. How involved are women in land-related decisions in your community? Can you give examples of situations where women were either included or excluded from these decisions?
8. What barriers prevent women from participating more fully in these decisions?

Community Engagement and Education:

9. What efforts have been made to educate the community about the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022?
10. How effective have these efforts been in raising awareness and understanding?
11. What additional measures do you think are necessary to enhance awareness and understanding of the Act?

Accountability and Transparency:

12. How has the Act influenced the level of accountability and transparency in land transactions and management?
13. Are there mechanisms in place to ensure compliance with the Act's provisions?
14. What role do women play in these accountability and transparency mechanisms?

Recommendations:

15. What further actions do you recommend to ensure the effective implementation of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022?
16. How can the participation of women in land-related decisions be improved?

7.3 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONNAIRE

Facilitator:	
Note Taker:	
District:	
Chiefdoms:	
Date:	

Title of the Research: Evaluating the Awareness Level and Impact of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 Among Women in Sierra Leone's Mining Communities.

Purpose of the Study: Hello Sir/ Ma, you are all invited to participate in a focus group discussion as part of a research study conducted by Women on Mining and Extractives – Sierra Leone (WoME) with funding from GIZ. The purpose of this discussion is to understand the community's views on the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022 and its impact on women's land rights and participation. The study will cover Kono, Tonkolili, Port Loko, and Bonthe/Moyamba Districts.

Procedures: If you agree to participate, you will join the group discussion lasting approximately 1-2 hours. The discussion will focus on your knowledge and opinions about the Customary Land Rights Act and its effects on women in your community.

Confidentiality: All information shared during the discussion will be kept confidential. Your comments will be anonymized in any reports. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without any consequences. You may also choose not to answer specific questions or to leave the discussion early.

Benefits and Risks: There are no direct financial or benefits or risks to you from participating in this study. However, your insights will contribute to better understanding and potentially improving women's land rights in your community.

Contact Information: If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact the WoME at +23277886159 or wome22sierraleone@gmail.com .

Consent: Yes, everyone agrees to participate [……] or No, not everyone agrees to participate […..]

Code	Name of Participant	Sex	Occupation	Estimated age
R1				
R2				
R3				
R4				
R5				

Section A: Awareness and Understanding of the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022

1. How many of you have heard about the Customary Land Rights Act of 2022?

2. What do you know about the key provisions of this Act?

Section B: Implementation and Impacts of Customary Land Rights Act of 2022

3. How do you think this Act has changed women's rights to land in your community? Can you share any personal or observed experiences where the Act has helped women assert their land rights?

4. What challenges do women face when trying to assert their land rights, even with this Act in place?

5. Are there specific cultural or societal norms that make it difficult for women to claim land rights?

Section C: Participation in Land Decisions

6. How involved are women in land-related decisions in your community? Can you give examples of situations where women were either included or excluded from these decisions?

7. What barriers prevent women from participating more fully in these decisions?

Section D: Community Engagement and Education

8. How has information about the Customary Land Rights Act been communicated in your community?

9. Do you feel that these communication efforts have been effective? Why or why not?

Section E: Accountability and Transparency

10. Have you noticed any changes in the accountability and transparency of land transactions since the Act was introduced?

11. Are there any mechanisms in place to report and address violations of the Act?

Section F: Recommendations and Solutions

12. What do you think can be done to improve women's understanding and use of their land rights?

13. How can the community better support women in participating in land-related decisions?

14. Is there anything else you would like to add about the Customary Land Rights Act or women's land rights in general?