



# Relating body to land: *adivasi* women and the question of land rights in Gujarat

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**Abstract:** *This research seeks to address issues of land ownership and the gendered dimension of struggle over land in the context of Adivasi women in Gujarat. This paper provides a brief account of Adivasi women's battles over land in Gujarat, which have been neglected, harassed, and abused. This paper would walk away from a simple characterisation of Adivasi women as merely victims of oppression; instead, it provides a reading of Adivasi women's efforts to secure land rights, highlighting their strong attachment to land.*

*The study aims to demonstrate that socio-cultural traditions and legal institutions hinder Adivasi women's land rights claims. This paper explores the relationship between Adivasi women's bodies in relation to land, based on the experiences of Adivasi women. The researcher demonstrates that Adivasi women's land rights, both in traditional practices and formal legal systems, are unable to accurately represent the relationship between an Adivasi woman's body and land. The data for this paper has been gathered through the researcher's observation, conversations, and interviews conducted with Adivasi women in the village of Degam Dhodiyawad, located in the Navsari district of Gujarat. The researcher asserts that Adivasi women are strong and proud farmers, having personally witnessed their struggle for and commitment to land.*

**Key Words:** *Adivasi women, land rights struggle, inequality, marginalization.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION :

Land rights are a necessary precondition for women's rural empowerment, and they have been gradually gaining visibility in women's movements (Rao and Rana 1307). To understand the value of land rights for Adivasi women, it is also important to know the land and property relations and vice versa. It is crucial to understand land and its relationship to women's entitlements as it is related to kinship and family structure, not just looking at it as an object—land—per se. Land rights for Adivasi women do not simply imply control over an object, such as land, but also have social, cultural, and economic implications, such as higher status, security from absolute poverty, the ability to challenge male operation, or domestic violence (Rao and Rana, 1308). The subject of property and land rights, which is fundamentally a social construct, is influenced by gender dynamics and illustrates the power relation that exist between different classes and genders. The issue of property and land rights, a social construct, is gendered and reflects the balance of power between classes and genders. It involves improving resource distribution, access to credit, technology, and information, and nurturing the environment, thereby fostering symbolic identity. Land ownership can take several forms, including individual rights through inheritance, joint rights, usufructuary rights to communal land, tenancy rights, and so on. The majority of groups have patrilineal access to land through inheritance. In India, the majority of Hindus believe that while women can inherit land, they cannot bequeath it (Rana and Rao 1308).

The wider gap in the control and ownership of agricultural land exists through laws governing inheritance. The most common means for women to acquire land are largely gender-based today. The Hindu Succession Act (HSA) was amended in 2005 to ensure equal rights for both genders. It grants females the same rights as sons in ancestral property and agricultural land, allowing daughters to claim property rights and share in their family property. It also grants widowed women the right to own their husband's property following his death. However, Section 2(2) of the HSA does not apply to Schedule Tribes under this section; hence, tribal women are excluded. Property rights in tribal groups are



handled by customary law, which is not codified. As a result, Adivasi women have limited property rights. Rare occurrences of tribal women gaining inheritance rights (Kashyup Seema and Chhodan Nawang 164).

These customary laws can be defined as a set of rules and standards that are considered inherent to the tribal people. Customary rules are considered a set of individual and group behaviours that can be passed down from generation to generation. It depends on the consistent compliance of community members. Traditional legal theories, along with established norms and practices, have historically favoured male-centric and patrilineal inheritance interests. Traditional customs vary across tribes, but Adivasi women's inheritance rights are often limited by customary laws, resulting in a lack of control over land and resources. Tribal women, under an archaic customary law system, lack succession and position rights, resulting in no ownership rights over their land (Kashyup and Chhodan 164-166).

However, because of Adivasi customary history, a woman retains the right to maintenance from her father's movable property if she does not marry for any reason. Adivasi women, therefore, can access maintenance rights from their father's property as well as equal ownership rights in their husband's property (Kumar 2023).

Daughters, on the other hand, are commonly overlooked from consideration in family land titles, and few women have sought their rights; moreover, rural households are unwilling to include married women on property titles (Menon et al. 2020). Despite the HSA in 2005, a huge percentage of rural women are only formally accorded these rights upon widowhood. If this is the case, how can we place Adivasi women and their land rights in Gujarat?

Adivasi women in India face challenges such as limited economic activity, social backwardness, low literacy, and poor health. But education plays an essential role in Adivasi women's development, modifying cultural norms, living patterns, and economic independence while enabling self-organisation and understanding rights (Chatterjee 56-57).

The study of Adivasi women's land rights and distribution in India suggests that their continued dependence on land could be a tool for empowerment and upliftment, adding a new dimension to gender studies. Adivasi women have been perceived as being more connected to land and natural resources. They face significant challenges in meeting their basic needs. In discussions about land rights, their presence is often overlooked. In Adivasi community, land ownership is based on traditional or customary laws enacted by the family's elders (often men). Because of the predominance of customary land rights and kinship, many Adivasi women are excluded from land ownership and decision-making. In the specific instance of Santhali women in south Bihar, women are viewed as objects or property to be passed down from father to son (male). As a result, women have no claim to the father's or husband's property, whether movable or immovable. If a daughter marries a *ghar jamai*, the son-in-law will inherit the land, and if this does not happen, the man's property will go to his other male members. In another instance, Adivasi women in Tripura have been prevented from holding property, facing a reduction in their income and social standing (Rao and Rana 1308).

In order to acquire land rights, Adivasi women in Gujarat often go through torture, humiliation, and mental and physical violence (Johari, 2021). For example, Nayak women from the Bhil Adivasi community in southern Gujarat were allegedly beaten by forest officials for shielding their husbands and accused of claiming land ownership without documentary evidence (Marandi, 2022). A woman from Charada village in Mahisagar district is facing a lengthy dispute with forest officials who refuse to allow her to farm on her family's property. Following the death of her husband in 2019, a woman in Sagatara village claimed ownership of 2 acres of land. She alleges a neighbour bribed an official to scuttle her land claim, focusing on providing food, housing, and a secure future (Marandi, 2022). The ongoing conflict between the state's forest department and Adivasi forest dwellers, particularly women, has resulted in physical and mental abuse from government officials and land-squandering relatives (Marandi 2022).

Adivasi women who belonged to Particular Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG), who reside in forest areas, are deprived of their lives as forest communities are labelled as anti-national and anti-development, despite their efforts to maintain their livelihoods in forests. Adivasi women's survival is at risk due to increasing violence and being referred to as encroachers for their traditional activities. Through development projects, land has been diverted, which directly affects Adivasi women's lives, specifically a situation where their rights are being threatened as their land has been allocated on lease, displacing vulnerable groups, and denying the traditional dwellers their rights (Behanbox, 2020).

Adivasi women in Gujarat are currently victims of forced relocation due to the development of dams and factories. Development initiatives exacerbated the plight of Adivasi women in Gujarat, pushing them into poverty and increasing



their workload. For example, women faced difficulties after the Kelia Dam Project in 1983 led to their family's relocation to Mandav Khadak. A canal connects to Kelia, improving agricultural productivity despite only owning 7 acres in Mandav Khadak (Behanbox, 2021). As time has passed, Adivasi women of Gujarat, often with the help of NGOs awareness programs, have become more aware of their land rights, especially legal rights.

Research had been explored on how modernisation affects Adivasi women in Gujarat, the challenges faced by Adivasi widows, the role of self-help groups in empowering Adivasi women, the influence of Panchayati Raj on rural Adivasi widows, and the overall study of Adivasi women. The *Pragati Mahila Van Samiti* of Narmada district, led by a Bhil Adivasi Vasava Adivasi woman, has provided community forest rights to 50 hectares of land in Navgaon village, empowering women to manage woods directly, sell produce, and create infrastructure (Marandi, 2021).

A widow Gavit woman in Vandsa district Navsari successfully added to her husband's land after his death in 2018 with the help of WGLO and now assists other women in gaining access to their land rights (Behanbox, 2021). Despite the fact that many schemes (particularly the *Ganga Sahay Yojana* (2019) and *Sakhi Mandal Yojna* (2010) were launched in Gujarat to provide financial assistance to girls, women, and widows, these schemes have been somewhat insufficient to reduce the workload and improve the status of women in society, especially in rural areas. Gender discrimination is one of the many problems that Adivasi women confront when it comes to land ownership and distribution. Between 2017 and 2019, WGLO assisted 842 beneficiaries in obtaining land ownership in Gujarat's eastern and southern Adivasi areas (Behanbox, 2021).

While research has been conducted on Adivasi women's socio-economic position and identity in Gujarat, little research has been conducted on the land rights and challenges encountered by Adivasi women in the region. The study is the result of the author's personal experiences in her village; the data has been gathered through personal interviews with Adivasi women in the Navsari district. The interviews were conducted on March 7th and 8th, 2022, with a few more on May 11th and 12th, 2023. This study analyses secondary data and interview-based material available on the problem of Adivasi women and land rights struggles in Gujarat to provide insight into their situation. This report attempts to depict the conditions of Adivasi women in Gujarat with regard to land from a gendered viewpoint. Education, occupation, jobs, and family rights became tools for women's empowerment; however, the scope of this study is limited to land negotiations and the women's struggle for land rights in Gujarat.

The interviews focused on the women who have benefitted from their land rights, highlighting how it has provided security and empowerment in their lives. This article analyses different positions of women in order to comprehend land rights and hardships from a gendered perspective. It incorporates the perspectives and sufferings of Adivasi women who are widows and do not have land, as well as married women who do not have land and must work hard for a living. This article shows that if women own land, they may make more independent decisions about household concerns and could function as household heads. It is significant that this research covers the experiences of widow women, single mothers, daughter heirs, and married women in general, with an emphasis on how land ownership directly and indirectly offers Adivasi women the power to contribute to and make decisions in the family (Shil and Jangir 335). The gathered data has been kept confidential and used only for research purposes.<sup>1</sup>

## **2. BACKGROUND**

As Bina Agrawal discusses in her book titled *A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia* (2003), she emphasises that land ownership in South Asia significantly impacts economic well-being and social status, particularly for women, as it serves as a powerful economic resource for livelihoods. One who owns the land has the ability to dominate others and has complete control over social and economic relations. Women's land rights in India are undervalued due to ambiguity among Adivasi women and conservative views, potentially hindering their empowerment in a society dominated by economic status (Agrwal 186). India's agrarian transition stage, where agriculture remains the primary income source, particularly for women, has been overlooked due to insufficient focus on land property access. Working on land without rights meant being extremely vulnerable to poverty. This is a larger picture that justifies prioritising land access for women (Agrawal 187).

In patriarchal Indian society, men own land in families, with husbands ascendant over wives and children and holding all rights to land and cultivation decisions. Women often hesitate, due to social concerns, to seek land rights due to family disputes, preventing them from claiming their rights. Joint title plans may appear male-centric, but where are



daughters, single women, widows, and divorced women in this scheme of things? (Velayudhan 2008).

Agrawal argues that women need independent land rights for better family survival, as they are most deprived of household and factory work (Agrawal 2008). Joint titling often favours men, disregarding women's efficiency for livelihood. Women had been doubly sidelined due to their unfamiliarity with their rights and ability to express themselves in society. Women's inefficiency in acquiring land titles and rights is largely due to factors such as education, sexuality, gender, marriage class, and caste, as well as family kinship. Land ownership could improve women's independent identity and provide a long-needed identity for centuries (Agrawal, 2008). Agrawal advocates for women's land rights as well as independent rights for gender equality and societal power dynamics. If this is the case for South Asian women, how do we situate Adivasi women in India, particularly in Gujarat?

With regards to Adivasi women and land in Gujarat, the lack of education, employment, and poor health care pushes them into poverty, which is the main monster of Adivasi women's deprivation, marginalisation, vulnerability, abandonment, lack of access to decision-making, and empowerment. Adivasi women are primarily engaged in household work, farming, animal husbandry, and work in the field, as many of these women face many challenges. Women, displaced from traditional land, face vulnerability due to the rigorous nature of work in brick kilns and construction sites, exploitation by contractors and middlemen, in addition to the burden of family care.

Adivasi women in Gujarat are most affected by displacement, leading to increased labour and economic changes. Adivasis in Gujarat were primarily deprived of land for development, leading to increased labour and daily hardships for women. The construction of the Statue of Unity in Kevadia, Gujarat's Narmada district, highlighted the loss of land to six villages near Garudeshwar (Outlook India, 2023), neglecting women's survival during resettlement and displacement.

The limited existing research on the 2006 Forest Act's implementation in Adivasi lives, especially in Gujarat, focuses on Adivasi women and gender-specific challenges during prohibition (Bijoy 2008). In Gujarat, Adivasi women are gaining land rights through government schemes and non-governmental organisations, but the process is slow and tedious. For example, the Working Group for Women and Land Ownership (WGWLO), or *Mahila Jamin Maliki nu Karyakari Juth*, is a network of 20 non-governmental organisations that assists women in obtaining land titles in 17 of Gujarat's 33 districts. A survey of 20 people in six Adivasi regions in South Gujarat has suggested that women's land rights would be easier to obtain if they held power or led networks (Village Square, n.d.).

### **3. LOCATING ADIVASI WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS STRUGGLES IN GUJARAT**

To comprehend Adivasi women's connection to land, we must first define who owns land. How many Adivasi women are recognised to have land rights? How many Adivasi women are victims of the land rights struggle? What obstacles did they experience in obtaining land rights? Are they subjected to gender discrimination in the acknowledgement of their land rights? Adivasi women in Gujarat face double marginalisation due to lack of education, unawareness of land norms and rights, and economic dependency on male members.

Customary norms are the unwritten or uncodified Adivasi laws that have existed since the pre-colonial past; customary laws established women's land rights. However, Adivasi women commonly encounter difficulties or are unable to claim land rights despite the existence of customary law in their society. Adivasi women in Gujarat have a prominent position in the community as they are considered the backbone of the family, taking care of housework, rearing and caring for children, and working in the field to support their spouse. Further, Adivasi women play an important role in each function in the Adivasi community, such as childbirth or marriage rituals, as women are taking care of everything and are a part of the function. There is no gender discrimination in the Adivasi community, given that boys and girls receive equal treatment when it comes to their upbringing, specifically education. The Adivasi community prohibits child marriage; moreover, women have the freedom to choose their own grooms. If the marriage is not satisfactory, the bride has the right to divorce the groom and remarry. Adivasi women receive financial assistance from the bride's side, which is distinct from other societies and is not considered dowry.

The Adivasi community in Gujarat adheres to customary regulations for land ownership, typically dividing it among family members, with land normally in the male's name. Adivasi women are often invisible in land matters, with their roles shifting from siblings before marriage to spouses or sisters-in-law post-marriage. Unmarried women rely on family



members, while widows face increasing health issues, ageing, and complete reliance on others.

Adivasi women in Gujarat have very limited property rights due to the importance of ancestral land succession for family ties and community relations. The *panch*, the village headmen, are the decision-making bodies in Adivasi areas responsible for determining the ownership of land in Adivasi families. In the *panch*, too, we can find gender bias because they are a predominantly male-dominated group in Gujarat. Adivasi women, therefore, experience gender bias, resulting in their being denied land rights or shares.

The study indicates that Adivasi women are subjected to societal norms and practices that label them as inferior members of society. One example is when widows are labelled as witches if they seek their rights (Raut 2016). The land is equally distributed to unmarried daughters and daughters-in-law under customary rights, but daughters decline their rights owing to love and family kinship. In such cases, what is the scenario in which the father dies before the daughter marries? Women in her maternal house are denied access to land because of her brother and are not permitted to obtain land while the brother is alive. They negotiate her land rights by stating, “This is your maternal house; after marriage you will go to your husband’s house, so don’t demand land, and what will you do if this property becomes available?” (Rao 2022).

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The researcher conducted interviews in the village of Degam, situated in the Navsari district, with a primary emphasis on the women belonging to the Dhodiya Adivasi Community and their connection to land. This community, predominantly found in South Gujarat’s regions of Surat, Navsari, Chikhli, and Valsad, advocates for equal property rights for women; however, it does not extend actual entitlements to them. Daughters in the Dhodiya community were the sole heirs of family inheritance when they married a *Gharjamai* house husband, allowing land distribution in their names. Married daughters received a share of the land but did not gain ownership. Married daughters receive land shares but lack ownership until their spouse is alive. After death, widows inherit land from preceding sons or daughters. This account demonstrates how land rights have been perceived and acquired through relationships with men.

Land ownership offers numerous benefits, but a lack leads to increased labour work and difficulties for Adivasi women, who are forced to work in various occupations. Adivasi women in the community often work in their fields or other jobs, often neglecting their well-being and returning home to do chores and prepare meals. The majority of the women in Degam village own livestock, and they would collect grass or leaves for their cattle on their walk home from work in the field. However, they are confronted with the fact that new technology and the use of inorganic fertilisers in farming have led to a growing concern over animal food. They also voiced their regret that it is difficult to find grass during the wet season due to harmful insects or deadly snakes in sugarcane fields, providing adequate nutrition for animals due to water scarcity, and high market prices. Women often rely on their animals for sustenance but struggle to obtain grass and feed them, believing that land would improve their situation.

The community is surrounded by major stone mining factories, providing employment for both men and women, with women often working as sweeper and providing meals for mining personnel. A widow (Respondent A) shared her experiences of working as a labourer in agricultural fields to repay a debt incurred for family obligations. She is now employed as a cook at a stone mining factory, which serves as her primary source of livelihood. Despite this, she endures long working hours and low wages, which are barely sufficient for survival.<sup>ii</sup>

In a conversation with a married woman (Respondent B), who worked as an agricultural labourer, she stressed, “If I could have land, I would have sent my children for higher education, and I would not send my son to work in a stone mining factory.” She also expressed her gratitude that her widowed mother has land on her own name and is helping her with rice and other edibles to run her house. She mentioned, “What would I have done without my mother’s help during these challenging times, particularly during the COVID pandemic?”. She reflected, “The rice she provided was essential for my family to secure basic food during the lockdown.”<sup>iii</sup>

The life of a woman (Respondent C) who lost her spouse during the pandemic is one of immense struggle. She faces severe challenges, particularly due to a lack of land to support herself and her children. A significant portion of the family-owned assets has been acquired by her brother-in-law, as he has taken on the responsibility of caring for her mother-in-law. She works in the flower garden from sunrise to dusk, watering the plants throughout the year. She lacks formal education, which compels her to exert greater efforts in her work, as she does not have any family members to



assist her or supply nourishment for her children.

She expressed a desire for additional land, stating that it would enable her to enrol her children in an English-medium school, which she views as essential for their future. She also conveyed her difficulty in asserting her land rights in the presence of her in-laws. She acutely senses the burden of her circumstances, fully aware that seeking her rights would probably result in a lack of social or economic support from her husband's family.

Her story emphasises an important concern: the ownership of land by women can greatly change their social standing and overall well-being. However, education plays an equally essential role, as it empowers women to assert their rights to land. This scenario represents a pivotal moment for numerous uneducated women, especially widows, who find themselves compelled to labour diligently for their survival, thereby necessitating independent decision-making regarding the future of their offspring.<sup>iv</sup>

Adivasi widows are often perceived as a liability, especially as they grow older and do not possess property. When they do own land, their relatives tend to treat them favourably, primarily due to the ownership of the land; however, all significant decisions are typically made by their sons or daughters. An old woman (Respondent D), received considerable support for her family due to her ownership of land that was overseen by a relative. The existence of this land ownership was instrumental in securing her comfort and welfare.<sup>v</sup> In the Adivasi community, daughters are considered equal heirs to land only after the death of the family head or father; the land is distributed among both sons and daughters. Individuals who keep widows or parents in their households receive a greater share than others.

In the case of an unmarried woman (Respondent E), the land was allocated among her siblings, yet it is solely registered on her name, with her share exceeding that of her brothers. She articulated that her father, who demonstrated considerable kindness towards her, designated the land in her name. Conversely, her brothers expressed dissatisfaction with this arrangement and failed to provide her with support. She conveyed that possessing the land has been a fortunate opportunity for her; otherwise, her brothers would not have allocated any land to her, nor permitted her to engage in farming, nor would they have shared any portion of the family estate with her. The land has enabled her to financially assist her married sisters with both money and grains. She believes that without land, she would have struggled to cope with her health issues, but the revenue generated from farming has allowed her to sustain her well-being and experience joy in her life.

Traditionally, unmarried women have relied on their brothers or fathers for financial support, often requesting funds from them. However, land ownership empowers a woman to cultivate and manage her own livelihood, granting her independence, social status, and respect from her family. She recognised that managing the land poses challenges for her due to health issues, yet the income derived from farming has given her the ability to live according to her own preferences. She stated that "without land, she could not imagine herself happy in her paternal home."<sup>vi</sup>

A widow (Respondent F), who shouldered all household responsibilities, including culinary tasks and the care of livestock, exhibited remarkable strength and resilience amidst numerous adversities. From early morning until late evening, her time was entirely consumed by household work, leaving less time for personal respite. Balancing her children's education, meal preparation, community obligations, and rice farming proved to be a formidable challenge as a single parent. Nevertheless, her economic reliance on the land she possesses enabled her to meet her children's educational and basic needs. She did not consider land a property but a resource for her survival. She spent hours in the field, worked hard, and took care of the land.<sup>vii</sup>

She shared her experiences of taking care of a large family while cultivating and farming. She is a self-sufficient farmer, previously cultivating sugar cane and paddy on a modest plot of land, which she tended to biannually. Her responsibilities include overseeing the paddy fields, ensuring they receive adequate care and mineral supplements, harvesting, and facilitating market sales. She is happy with whatever money she has earned.

She faces challenges in cultivating crops due to water scarcity, insufficient rainfall, or danger of wild animals, with rainfall causing crop destruction before harvest and affecting market access. She mentioned that during the times of illness she would still visit the field, spending hours walking back and forth. She expressed that "Time spent with the land allows me to forget my troubles." She stated that because of the land, she is able to provide her children with schooling, and therefore her children are now enrolled in university.



There are occasions when she is subjected to trouble by other members of the community. No one is willing to assist her because she is managing her own farming activities. When water flows into the canal, others are quick to take it, leaving her to access it last. Although she possesses the land according to customary law, her mother-in-law is recognised as the formal owner, while her brother-in-law effectively governs decisions related to the land. In her maternal home, she has a single plot of land, which she has given to her brother for agricultural purposes due to distance from her home. The researcher asked her, “What significance does land hold for you?” She responded, “Land encompasses all aspects of my life.”

These studies of Adivasi women from the Dhodiya community demonstrate that there are numerous approaches to Adivasi that uplift or change the lives of Adivasi women and provide them with economic support. Land and ownership, in particular, can result in beneficial outcomes that may reduce forced labour, economic necessities, their position in the family, freedom of choice, autonomy, and more opportunities for economic advantages in the community.

However, in the Adivasi community, women are often deprived of land rights due to their lack of understanding of legal rights and customary laws. However, landless women manage to make ends meet by working in fields or stone mining. And those who are widows struggle for their land rights and put in more work to survive after the demise of their spouses. In spite of having land ownership, in some instances women faced gender-based discrimination and many other challenges.

The difficulties faced by Adivasi women highlight that their struggle for land rights transcends the legal and property dimensions typically associated with such issues. It involves a complex confrontation with their own families and communities, presenting significant challenges for these women. Despite these obstacles, Adivasi women manage to fulfil their family’s needs by engaging in labour within factories and agricultural fields. Nevertheless, the dynamics of land ownership have significantly altered the economic landscape of the Adivasi community. The relationship that Adivasi women maintain with land is intricate, evolving beyond the concept of land as mere property. They perceive land as a vital source of income, and their bond with it encompasses far more than simple ownership.

To summarise, the insights gathered from the verbal interviews highlight that women who possess land are able to thrive and live according to their preferences, while those lacking land or land rights face greater challenges and must exert more effort to sustain themselves. Adivasi women, despite possessing traditional land rights and being influenced by kinship structure, frequently encounter challenges in asserting their rights and are often unable to seek assistance from family members. This study provides insights into the experiences of Dhodiya Adivasi women regarding their land rights, illustrating how land ownership can significantly enhance the lives of Adivasi women. To foster greater opportunities and promote equal rights for Adivasi women, the researcher’s opinion is that land ownership serves as a crucial mechanism for transforming their circumstances in multiple dimensions; this not only advantages the women involved but also positively impacts future generations. Enhancing access to land rights for Adivasi women represents a vital strategy for advancing gender equality and reducing poverty within the community.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

For Adivasi women, land is their primary means of livelihood. The loss of land would not only jeopardise their survival but also significantly exacerbate their hardships. It is essential for Adivasi women to possess their own land rights to secure their autonomy within society. The insights and experiences of the researcher promoted the creation of this article and motivated a study on the impact of land rights on the lives of Adivasi women, highlighting the positive transformation that can occur. Understanding the significance of land is vital for comprehending the status of Adivasi women in Gujarat. The empowerment of rural Adivasi women cannot be envisioned without the recognition of land rights. Furthermore, improved access to education and healthcare services will contribute to raising awareness about the lives of Adivasi women in Gujarat. It can be inferred from this example that Adivasi women have the potential to enhance their circumstances by prioritising land and land rights.

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<sup>i</sup> This study collected data through verbal consent from participants, who were informed of the research's purpose, scope, and intended use. Due to cultural or practical constraints, written consent was not obtained. The study adhered to ethical principles of respect, autonomy, and confidentiality, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality among participants.

<sup>ii</sup> The A respondent was interviewed on March 7, 2022, in the village of Dhodiyawad, located in Degam, Navsari District, Gujarat.

<sup>iii</sup> The B respondent was interviewed on March 7, 2022, in the village of Dhodiyawad, located in Degam, Navsari District, Gujarat.

<sup>iv</sup> The C respondent was interviewed on March 8, 2022, in the village of Dhodiyawad, located in Degam, Navsari District, Gujarat.

<sup>v</sup> The D respondent was interviewed on March 8, 2022, in the village of Dhodiyawad, located in Degam, Navsari District, Gujarat.

<sup>vi</sup> The E respondent was interviewed on March 8, 2022, in the village of Dhodiyawad, located in Degam, Navsari District, Gujarat.

<sup>vii</sup> The F respondent was interviewed on March 8, 2022, in the village of Dhodiyawad, located in Degam, Navsari District, Gujarat.

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