

Role of Indigenous Grazing Land Management System for Sustainable Grazing Resource Management in Sodo Zuria District of Wolaita Zone, SNNPRS, Ethiopia

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Abstract: Indigenous institutions are important mechanisms for addressing the challenges in Communal Grazing Land (CGL) management in developing countries. The role of institutions such as rules, norms, and regulations to address challenges in communal resources management has been a research debate for several decades. This article analyzes the role of indigenous institutions for Sustainable Grazing Resource Management in Sodo Zuria District, Wollaita Zone, SNNPRS. Indigenously managed communal grazing areas were selected from the study area purposively. A total sample size of 102 respondents were selected purposively from the total of 665 households. Questionnaire, semi-structured interview schedule and focus group discussion were the tools employed to collect data. The result of the survey indicates that the indigenous institutions play a crucial role in the sustainable usage of the grazing resources. However, the informal institutions were not performing their functions properly due to the poor rule enforcement that was resulted from negligence of users who have got better access to off-farm employment opportunities. The results of the study show that indigenous institutions while managing the grazing resources face problem of squatter settlement which is one of the vital problems in the study area. The study suggests that efforts needs to be taken to strengthen the linkage between the formal and informal institutions with a view to ensure sustainable grazing management in the study area.

Key Words: *Indigenous Institutions, Grazing Land, Sustainable Grazing Resource Management*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Common Property Resources form a main thrust of the rural economies and the absence of these resources could mean the difference between life and death to members of the rural communities. The Common Property Resources (CPRs) contribute a lot to the village economies, the rural poor, particularly survive on these resources to a greater extent (Olubukola, 1996). CPRs are important sources of timber, fuelwood and grazing lands in developing countries. Under unrestricted access by community members or ineffective use regulations, the resources are exploited on a first-come, first served basis. Each individual user of the resource will tend to continue to utilize the resource until their average revenue is equal to the marginal cost of utilizing the resource (Gordon, 1954). This results in over exploitation of the resource and the scarcity rent of the resource becomes dissipated. The solution to the problem of resource degradation in developing countries depends not only on appropriate technologies and efficient market prices, but also on local level institutions of resource management and the organizations to enforce them. (Baland, 1996)

In Ethiopia, property rights in rural areas are often very weak and this is particularly true for common grazing and forest areas. People therefore typically use the land as they want with very limited management; as rural populations and demands on common lands have increased, it is perhaps not surprising that forest cover has declined and grazing areas too. Pankhurst (2001) describes; communal grazing areas are often in highland valleys with streams or small rivers running through them. Water logging during the rains tends to restrict ploughing at least in valley bottoms, although there has been growing pressure from agriculture and settlement moving down from slopes. There have also been increasing external threats to these grazing areas particularly to those closer to urban areas. He notes, such threats have included forestry projects, expansion of towns with construction of houses and religious buildings, competition from urban residents and private investors raising livestock.

Like in many countries in Africa, communal resource management is not considered as viable way of ensuring their productivity in Ethiopia. The indigenous management system of common resources collapsed during the nationalization of land and resources decrease and as a result the resource turned to open access,

though the management system of the resources held as it was in some areas. There have been increasing external threats to communal grazing areas such as state forest development, expansion of towns, and provision to private investment which are restricting peasant areas (Pannkhurst, 2001).

Hence, this, study tried to explore the major problems of grazing land management in study area and the factors contributing to the decline of grazing lands. The study also tried to assess the impacts of increasing Population growth, environmental degradation, increasing the amount of livestock and urbanization on the grazing areas.

1.1 The Legal Regime Governing Common Grazing Lands in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the legal frame work in relation to common grazing lands is not provided with its own law in the level of proclamations (statute). But we can refer to various provisions found in various hierarchical laws of the country starting with the constitutional provision on the right to property.

The right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all natural resources, is exclusively vested in the state and the people of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of the nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of exchange. {Article 40(3), the constitution of the federal democratic republic of Ethiopia, hereafter called FDRE constitution}. Common grazing lands, being part of rural land, are the property of the state and the people of Ethiopia (the common property of the Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of Ethiopia). {Emphasis added}

Administration of land and other natural resources is vested in the regional states of the FDRE. Regional states are expected to administer land and natural resources by enacting laws which are expected to be consistent with federal laws of land administration. {Ibid, article 52(2) (d)}

It is the economic objective of the country for the government of Ethiopia to discharge the duty of holding, on behalf of the people, land and other natural resources and deploy them for their common benefit and development. {Ibid, article 89(5)}

The federal law maker i.e. the house of people's representatives enacted a proclamation in order to provide for the administration of land use which is used as a bench mark for the states in the enactment of laws for rural land administration. It is called Federal democratic republic of Ethiopia Rural land administration and use proclamation number 456/2005. This proclamation uses the term common holding to denote rural land which is given by the government to local residents for common grazing, forestry and other social services {Article 2(12), Proclamation n^o 456/2005}.

Generally, common grazing land being part of rural land in the regional state where the research is undertaken, is administered by the constitution, Federal democratic republic of Ethiopia Rural land administration and use proclamation number 456/2005, The southern nations nationalities and peoples region rural land administration and utilization proclamation number 110/2007 and The southern nations nationalities and peoples region rural land administration and use regulation number 66/2007. Therefore, the writer will be dealing with the legal provision in relation to common grazing land from the aforementioned laws.

Peasants (Farmers), semi-pastoralists and pastoralists have the right to get land for communal use like for grazing, social and cultural affairs and religion {Article 5(10), Proclamation n^o 110/2007}.

Communal land holding certificate shall be given to the beneficiary community being prepared in their name and shall be kept at kebele administration office. The communal land holding certificate shall be prepared by the competent authority and it must indicate size of the land, borders of the land and rights and obligations the holders among others {Ibid, Article 6(12)}.

The use right of peasants (Farmers), semi-pastoralists and pastoralists on the communal grazing land are without time limit {Article 7(1), Proclamation n^o 456/2005}. But since there is no ownership right on the common grazing land, the government can change communal grazing lands into private holdings {Ibid, Article 5(3)}. Privately unoccupied land as well as land under the possession of the community and government which have potential for agriculture shall be re- allocated to landless youths and peasants with less farm lands {Article 9(4), Proclamation n^o 110/2007}.

On the other hand, the holder community has the duty to protect and rehabilitate communal grazing lands when the same gets affected by degradation {Ibid, Article 13(15)}. When the holders fail to protect the common grazing land and as a result if the land gets damaged, the users shall lose the use right over the land {Article 10(1), Proclamation n^o 456/2005}.

When any dispute arises over common grazing land utilization, efforts shall be made to resolve the dispute through discussion and agreement of the concerned parties. Where the dispute could not be resolved through agreement, it shall be decided by arbitral body to be elected by the parties or be decided in accordance with rural land administration laws of the region (Article12, Ibid).

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. The Study Area

This study was conducted in Sodo Zuria Wereda which is one of 12 Woredas in Wollaita Zone, SNNPRS. It is found at the distance of 393 Kms from Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. As BOFED (2011) indicated, Astronomically, Soddo zuria woreda is located between 6.72 to 6.99 to the East and 37.59 to 37.86 to the North. It is bordered by Damot Woyde and Damot Gale Woredas in the East, Damot Sore and Kindo Koysha woredas in the West, Boloso Sore woreda in the North, Humbo and Ofa woredas in the South. The total area of the Woreda is 404.3 square kilometer and the total population size is 176743, out of this 86912 male and 89831 female. The house hold size is 35964, out of this 17685 are males and 18279 are females respectively. Population density of the woreda is 437 per square kilometer and it is one of the densely populated woreda in Wollaita Zone (CSA, 2007). Currently the Woreda is divided into 31 rural community dwellings or kebeles and one reform town or city and four non-reform small towns.

2.2. The Sampling Procedure

The study was conducted on three selected grazing areas in three Kebeles of Soddo Zuria Wereda in Wollaita Zone. Indigenously managed communal grazing areas were taken from the study area purposively. The communal grazing areas taken in this way were; *Pundune* from Humbo larena kebele, *Sorfela* from Waja kero kebele, and *Gandaba* from Ofa gandaba kebele. A total sample size of 102 (15.3 %) was selected from the total of 665 households by using proportionate sampling method from each selected user groups. Sample households were taken randomly from each selected grazing areas. The table below shows the way of selection.

Table 1: Sampling Frame

Community	Total Households	Sample Size	Sampling Procedure
Pundune	220	34	Proportionate to Populations Size (PPS)
Gandaba	200	32	PPS
Sorfela	245	36	PPS
Total	665	102	Random sampling (15.3% of the households)

Source: Computed

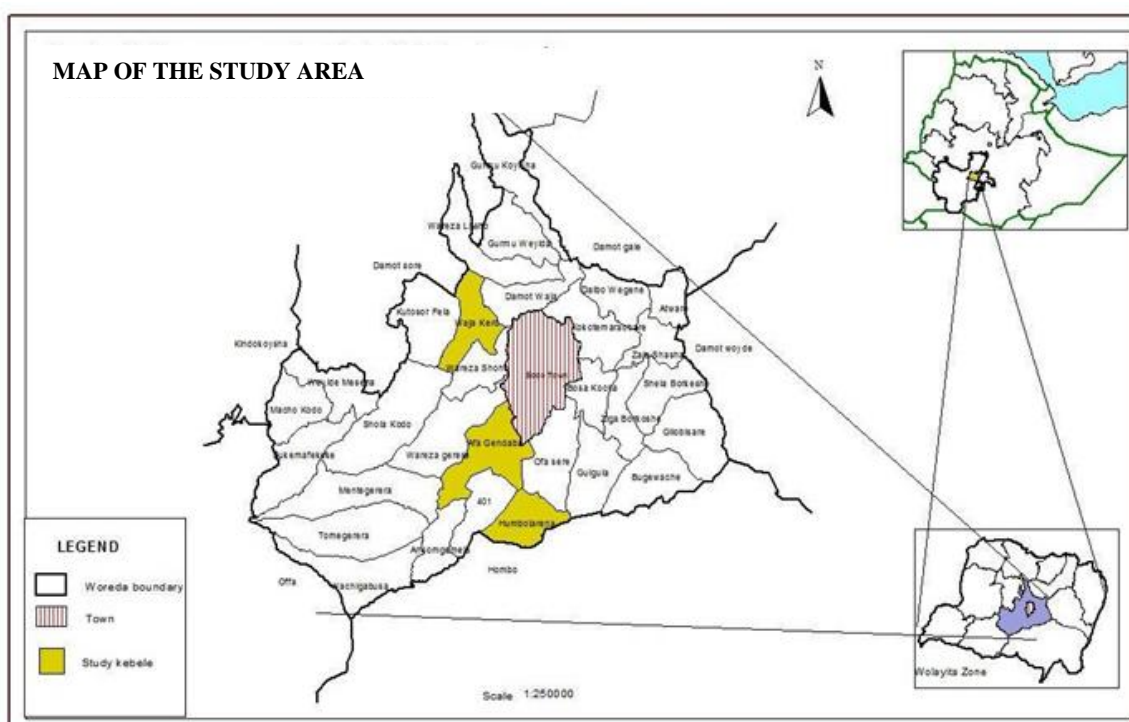


Figure-I: Study Area Map

Source: Bureau of Finance and Economic Development, Wolaita Zone

2.3. Data Sources and Types of Data

The data sources are qualitative and quantitative in type, both primary and secondary data were collected from available sources to address the objectives of the study. Primary data was collected from respondents of selected community user groups, key informants and participants of key informant interview. Secondary data was collected from the sources like published and unpublished materials, research works, books websites, researches and other relevant literatures.

2.4. Sources of Data

2.4.1. Primary Data

Primary data was collected from 102 households from the user groups and 15 peasant association committee leaders (5 members from each study sites) were selected for the study using survey method as a tool. 15 Local elders and knowledgeable persons were selected as key informants and are interviewed. The information obtained from them is used for qualitative analysis. 12 Experts from Agriculture and Rural Development Office of the Woreda and Development Agents were also interviewed. Three groups comprising 12 members from each grazing areas were selected for Focus Group Discussions.

2.4.2. Secondary data

In addition to the information obtained from the primary sources (interviews), secondary sources were also referred from different sources. Secondary data is collected through direct access to different records and official documents from the relevant collections. In addition to this other secondary materials like journal articles, books, bulletins, magazines and websites were used for the study.

2.5. Method of Data Analysis

After the data collection, each questionnaire is tallied, organized and cleared using a summary sheet. The quantitative data is analyzed basically using the descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage. The data presentation was made by the aid of frequency tables. Qualitative data is analyzed through interpretation and conceptual generalization.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Communal Grazing Land and the Rural Community

Common properties include a right to use something in common with other users; or a right not to be excluded from the use of something but have the right to exclude outsiders. They are also referred to as local community properties and shortly, commons. It also includes some expression of equality in the allocation of rights and may signify a situation in which people have user rights but not exchange rights. Collective management by communities who have the sense of ownership safeguards common goods and their user group membership may be by ascription or residence Shepherd (1998).

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Perception towards CGL Ownership

Perception on Ownership	Pundune		Gandaba		Sorfela		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Community	27	79	21	66	26	72	74	73
Private	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
State	7	21	11	34	10	28	28	27
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	34	100	32	100	36	100	102	100

Source: Field Survey

Regarding their perception on ownership of CGLs, most of the respondents (73%) have replied that it belongs to the community or is communal resource. Some of them (27%) of the respondents have replied that it is the holding of the state or the government. This response may be due to their view of control of the land by the government. The government is taking from the grazing lands to the construction of different projects and when they see that it made them believe that the state is the owner of the grazing land.

Table- 3: Distribution of Respondents by Access to Communal Grazing Land

Access to CGL	Pundune		Gandaba		Sorfela		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	29	85	29	91	33	92	91	89
No	5	5	3	9	3	8	11	11
Total	34	100	32	100	36	100	102	100

Source: Field Survey

As shown in the table above, most of the respondents (89) percent replied that communal grazing lands are equally accessible to all members of the community. The remaining 11 percent said that it is not accessible equally to all community. They further mentioned that the difference in access to the grazing land is due to the distance factor. They say those people nearer to the grazing land has better access to use it than those who live far from it. It can be assumed as households located to in nearby can appropriate more benefit than those located distantly.

3.2. Contributing factors for Collective Action

All members of the community contribute in one way or the other to the effectiveness of traditional management system. No wrong case is tolerated but easily detected by members and finally would be presented to traditional office holders. Special involvement could be expected from the elected traditional leaders. Regarding the contribution of local community in maintenance of the grazing land, respondent's participation is as follows.

Table- 4: Contribution of the Community in Maintaining the Grazing Lands

Contribution for the Maintenance of Grazing Land	Pundune		Gandaba		Sorfela		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	32	94	32	100	35	97	99	97
No	2	6	-	-	1	3	3	3
Total	34	100	32	100	36	100	102	100

Source: Field Survey

As shown in the table above, almost all of the respondents contribute to the maintenance of the communal grazing lands. Those who do not contribute to the maintenance of the grazing land are only 3 percent of the total 102 households. Their participation in the maintenance of the grazing lands is hindered by personal problems like, illness, and ageing. The type of contribution is different among respondents. Some may contribute in the form of money while others give their contribution in other forms like by providing information to the appropriate bodies and by their own labor. Most of the respondents' contribution is in the form of labor and information rather than monetary contribution. This is because most of the respondents have no enough money to contribute to the maintenance. For this reason they are not asked to contribute in the form of money.

3.3. Rules of indigenous institutions on the management of grazing lands

Communal grazing lands are managed by rules and regulations set by the indigenous grazing land management institutions in the study area. This institutions have set certain rules (which are well known by the local communities. Then the institutions will follow the functioning of the rules and whether they are being violated or not. The management system is very effective because the resource itself has a demarcated boundary and also organized by group jurisdiction. A group that is entitled to use the resource is an entity that existed having interaction with the environment as one cohesive community for long time. The people set aside the area as common and control its illegal appropriations through sanctions. Every community protects its communal grazing area from external and internal intruders. There are ranges of marks/signs as rules to permit or to prohibit access to communal grazing land. Some of the rules of prohibition against communal grazing land are:

- Individuals should not take the communal grazing land for personal use only, as they are for all.
- Fencing by crossing the boundaries of communal grazing lands boundary is prohibited.
- Damping household wastes and other waste materials to the grazing lands is prohibited.
- Grabbing the grazing land for personal ploughing is prohibited.
- Herding of the animals which are the property of other far communities is not allowed since the grazing land belongs to the community in command.

3.4. Contribution of Grazing Lands and Livestock to the Economy

Cattles are the dominant livestock type owned by members of the community in the study areas. The community also owns a good amount of goat and sheep. But the amount of equine (*gama kebt*) is very low. The reason for this is that the community favors to have cattle than equines. This is due to the multi faceted use of cattle resource and the main use of equines is for carrying and transporting materials. The average number of cattle owned by the community is 6 cattle's per household. The average number of sheep and goat population owned by the communities is two per household which is very low compared to the amount of cattle the community owns.

On the other hand there is very less amount of equine population on the three study areas. It is rare situation to find equine on those areas and the members of the community borrow it from their neighbors if they need it rather than buying it. This is due to the reason that equines are used only for transportation purpose and they consume a lot more feed than cattle. The community members who own equine are the petty merchants who transport local products to the neighboring towns. The evidence from the questionnaire points out that the communities have more amounts of cattle than other livestock types but when compared with their possession of cattle resource before five years it was very low.

Table- 5: The Size of Livestock

Size of Livestock Population	Pundune		Gandaba		Sorfela		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Increased	5	15	4	13	3	8	12	12
Decreased	27	79	28	87	27	75	82	80
Remains as the Same	2	6	-	-	6	17	8	8
Total	34	100	32	100	36	100	102	100

Source: Field Survey

As shown in the table above, most of the respondents (80%) have replied that the amount of livestock they own is declining in the last five years. only 12 % of the total respondents believe that the amount of livestock population they had before five years has increased. The remaining 8 % of the total respondents replied that the amount of livestock resource they have had neither grown nor declined in number in the last five years. The main reasons for the decline in size of the livestock population are, climate change, cattle disease, shrinking of the communal grazing land, lack of water, and the encroachment of the grazing lands. Climate change is one of the dominant factors that contribute to the decline in quality of the grazing lands. When the quality of the grazing land declines, the amount of feed that people obtain from the grazing lands also tends to decline which results in the shrinking in size of livestock population. The main source of feed to the livestock population is communal grazing areas on the study areas. That means the amount of grazing land and the size of livestock people own are positively related. When the amount of grazing land shrinks, the size of livestock population also decreases.

3.4.1 Sources of Animal Feed

Although the livestock are so attached with the life of rural people either providing direct or indirect benefits, it is seen in the above sections that sources of livestock feed are declining from time to time due to the land use change. But even within this situation it would be very logical to think about the exact sources of grazing in all communities.

Table-6: Main Sources of Animal Feed

Sources of Animal Feed	Pundune		Gandaba		Sorfela		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
CGL	21	62	26	82	24	67	71	69
Stable	2	6	-	-	4	11	6	6
Hay	3	9	-	-	3	8	6	6
Individual pasture field	5	14	3	9	-	-	8	8
Other	3	9	3	9	5	14	11	11
Total	34	100	32	100	36	100	102	100

Source: Field Survey

Note: CGL- Common Grazing Land

The first source of green fodder is CGL (69 percent) followed by other types feed sources (11%) percents of the respondents. Next to these main feed sources are individual pasture fields. 8 percent of the

respondents replied that they use individual pasture fields as their main source of feed for their livestock. The individual pasture lands became main source of feed for only rich farmers who have farm lands in more than one place. Such farmers may use some portion of their land as a pasture land. The rest of the respondents have confirmed that they use either hay or stable as the main source of feed for their livestock. Other sources of feed for livestock as mentioned by 11 percent of respondents include indoor feed of the livestock like *Enset* leaves, crop residue and residues from local beverages. But these feeds concentrate on draught animals and milking cows to keep them in good condition. Those who have their own fodder field cut grasses and feed their cattle as supplement to other sources. In some households women go to distant places in search for fodder from inside of natural forest and rugged lands.

IV. CONCLUSION

Indigenous institutions operate and co-exist with the formal institutions throughout Ethiopia. However, the interplay between formal and informal institutions is complex in the country. For instance, when conflicts arise among residents, conflict resolution processes are managed by both formal and informal institutions. In such instances, the adjudication process could be done by the village judicial or the district administrative bodies and forwarded to the village elders for review or consultation before final decisions are made. The indigenous institutions play a crucial role in the sustainable usage of the grazing resources. However, the informal institutions were not performing well due to the poor rule enforcement that resulted from negligence by users with better access to off-farm employment opportunities. In the three villages, the informal institutions failed to play a key role in limiting the number of oxen that villagers could let into the communal grazing land at a time. Reducing grazing pressure could have enhanced the grass production and then reversed the shortage of grazing land. In managing the grazing resources, the indigenous institutions face a lot of problems among them urbanization is the dominant one.

Despite the existence of strong rules framed by the indigenous management bodies, there are people who try to take advantage of the community by taking the communal grazing lands to their own personal use. When such things happen, the indigenous institution has set sanctions to pose against the violators. One of the most popular sanctions posed by the council is money fine. Fines played an important role in preventing the violators and resolving conflicts that arose in using communal grazing lands. Other important sanction that has discouraged the community members from violating the rules is imprisonment in the *kebele* for 24 hours. The imprisonment of the violators can be with extra money fining in some occasions.

Livestock plays an important role within the agricultural sector, in contributing to rural livelihoods, particularly to the poor. There are many benefits the livestock provide to the local community. The majority of cattle owning households had milking cows, and majority of them consumed all milk produced, with small quantities given away for free or sold to neighbors. The values of milk and meat consumed directly by cattle owners were very important to the community. Cattle owning households used dung as manure, and also shared with neighbors in enormous quantities. Majority of cattle owning households used their animals to plough their own arable land and intermittently to transport goods, and a few others lending their animals to neighbors for the same services. Animals were sold and/or slaughtered for payment of school fees, purchasing of household items, capital for trading and housing construction, and less often for ceremonies/celebrations.

The source of feed for the livestock is from different sources. The sources of feed include, CGL, hay, stables, individual pasture fields, and Other sources of feed ,indoor feed of the livestock like *Enset* leaves, crop residue and residues from local beverages. But these feeds concentrate on draught animals and milking cows to keep them in good condition. Those who have their own fodder field cut grasses and feed their cattle as supplement to other sources. In some households women go to distant places in search for fodder from inside of natural forest and rugged lands.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following key points are extended as possible suggestions with a view to improve the management system of communal grazing lands in the study areas.

1. Indigenous grazing resource management system is contributing for sustainable common grazing land management. The indigenous institutions work with formal institutions in this regard but the linkage between the two is unclear. So there has to be efforts to strengthen the linkage between the two institutions in order to make the CGL management system successful.
2. With regard to access to resources, there are ranges of marks/signs as rules to permit or to prohibit access to communal grazing land. There are also sanctions framed by the management committee when the rules are violated. But the sanctions are not strong enough to prevent the violators from acting. Therefore, the sanctions should have to be strengthened to discourage the violators from making mistakes repeatedly.
3. Livestock plays an important role within the agricultural sector, in contributing to rural livelihoods, particularly to the poor. There are many benefits the livestock provide to the local community. but the role

of this resource to the economy is declining due to the decline in the size of the GL. In order to keep the role of livestock to the economy, efforts should be made to make this resource supportive to the growth in economy.

4. The CGLs offer a lot of benefit to the community in the form of feed for the cattle and other benefits. And a loss of this resource means a huge blow in the livelihood of the local community. Therefore, efforts should have to be made to keep the resource alive. And there should be strict control both by the government and the local community to reserve this resource.
5. To make the usage of communal grazing land sustainable, the management system of the resource has to be participatory. Members of the community should be included in the management of the resource and the role of women in the decision-making process need to be addressed.

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