

Do inheritance reforms increase women's access and control over land? Evidence from Punjab, Pakistan

By: Hana Zahir (LUMS)

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Executive Summary

- Gender friendly inheritance reforms have varying impacts on women's access and control over land
- This is due to pre-existing familial, kinship, political, institutional and historical relationships with land rights
- Thinking/evaluation around women's decision-making dynamics and their inter-play with land rights needs to be reshaped
- Inheritance reforms are a necessary first step BUT they need to be accompanied by complementary interventions to have a meaningful impact on women's land outcomes

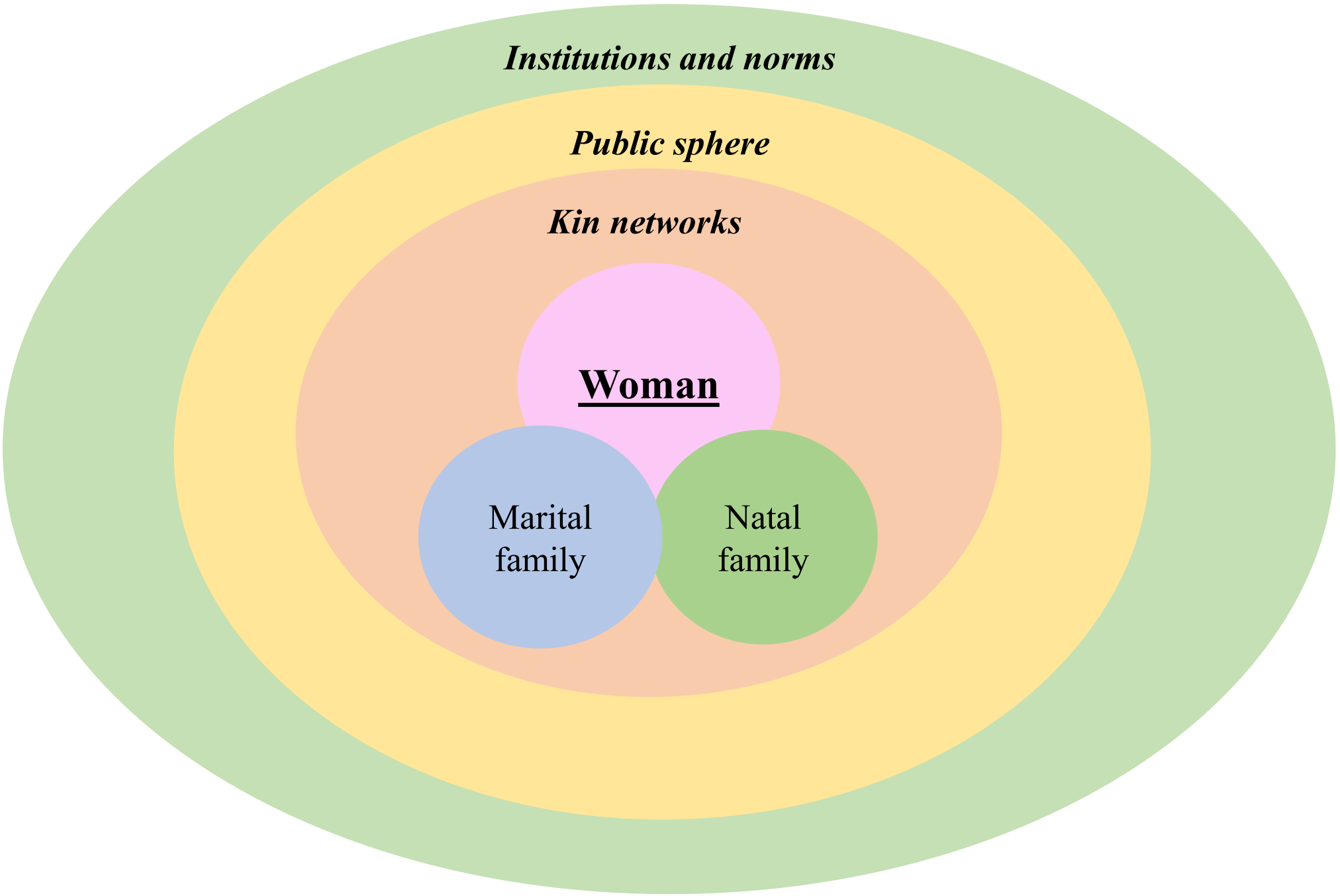
Motivation

- Focus by policy makers on gender friendly inheritance reforms in most parts of South Asia
- Evaluations of these reforms show mixed direct and indirect impacts on women (Roy, 2015; Rosenblum, 2013; Hariri, 2019; Bhalotra et. al., 2016)

Motivation

- Focus by policy makers on gender friendly inheritance reforms
- Impact evaluations of these reforms show mixed direct and indirect impacts on women (Roy, 2015; Rosenblum, 2013; Hariri, 2019; Bhalotra et. al., 2016)

The low impact of such reforms is attributed to pre-existing relationships of individuals, households and families within the larger political economy but no initiative to try and empirically measure the impact of such relationships



Institutions and norms

Public sphere

Kin networks

Woman

Marital
family

Natal
family

Research Questions

- Which pathways/relationships in my expanded decision-making model help women gain access and control over their land rights?
- What are the policy implications of these findings?

What is access and control?

- Access: woman has land legally transferred in to her name on paper through a legal authority (village council, court, state etc.)
- Control: woman can use or sell land without the permission of household or family

Methodology

- Mixed Methods
 1. Data Sources
 2. Key Informant Interviews

Data Sources

- Land Record Management Information System (2015)
 - Agriculture Census of Pakistan (2010)
 - Population Census (2008)
 - Pakistan Health and Demographic Survey (2012-2013)
 - Election Commission Data (2013 Provincial Election)
- Emphasis on data pre-reform to determine relationships/norms prior to the reforms

Key Informant Interviews

- Two kinds: landed families and key respondents with knowledge about inheritance matters (revenue officials, women political reps, lawyers, women's rights organizations)
- Landed families had to own 150 acres + (definition of large landed estates)
- Why these families, these women? Historically landed, longer timeline to discern patterns, hypothetically greater bargaining power of these women to IRL gain access and control over their rights

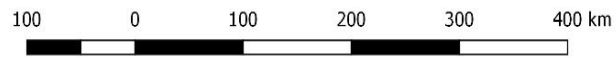
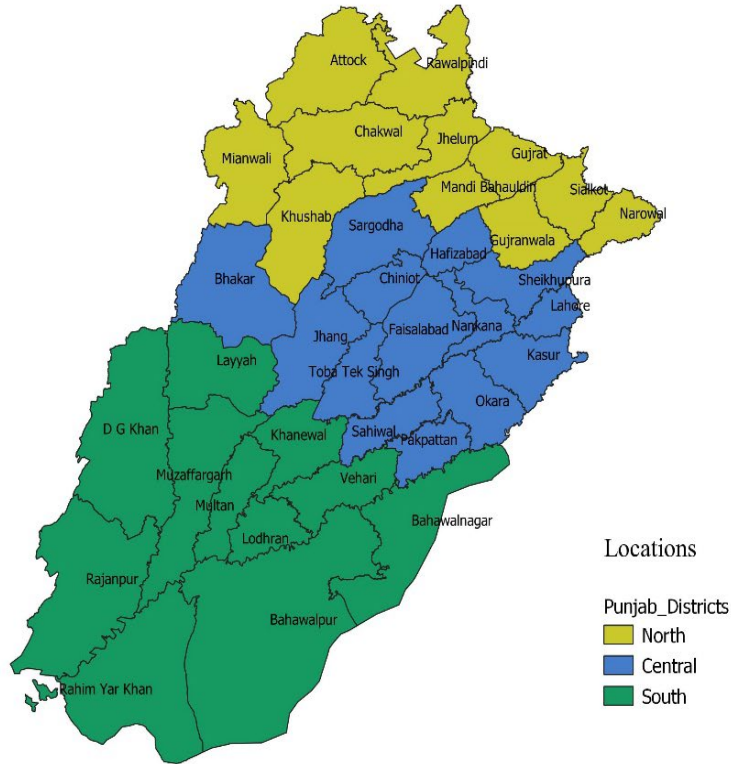
Background of land rights in Punjab (Pakistan)

- Religious rights always existed
- Historically women were excluded from inheritance process (customary + colonial)
- Post 1947, legal rights were established but not implemented
- Until 2015 when enforcement mechanism for women were introduced by the state
- Historically land rights differed between the 3 regions on Punjab
- Historically North and South Punjab were under indirect colonial rule
- Central Punjab was site of large-scale irrigation project which led to the commercialization of agriculture in Punjab
- Some parts of South Punjab also received canal irrigation after Independence

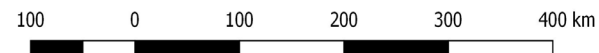
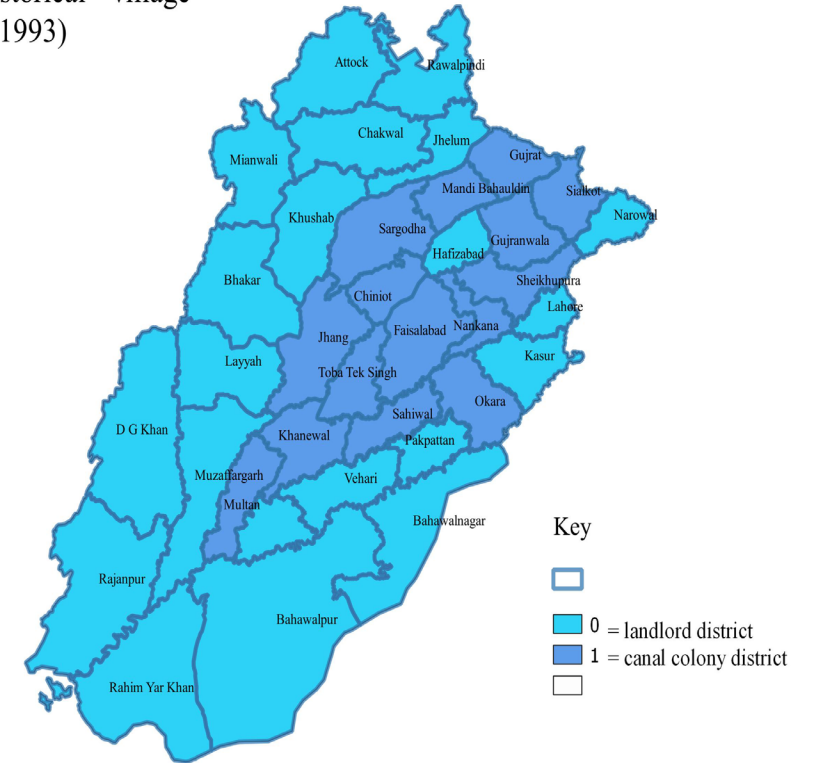
Divisions of Punjab

Administrative divisions

Historical village structures



Distribution of historical village structure in Punjab (1993)




Factor Analysis of main variables in multi dimension decision making process of women

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Communality	Alpha
	(North Punjab)	(South Punjab)	(Central Punjab)		
% literate females in district (1998)	0.93	0.03	0.05	0.9	0.46
% of women in formal employment in district (2012-2013)	-0.1	0.13	0.38	0.23	0.55
% literate males in district (1998)	0.86	0.28	0.05	0.11	0.49
Average no. of household members (1998)	-0.16	-0.72	-0.04	0.35	0.56
% of brick houses in district (1998)	0.88	-0.06	0.02	0.19	0.43
% of HHs not involved in agriculture (2010)	0.41	-0.15	-0.62	0.39	0.55
% of women married to paternal first cousin in district (2012-2013)	0.37	0	0.64	0.4	0.55
% of women married to maternal first cousin in district (2012-2013)	-0.17	0.1	0.02	0.23	0.55
% of landed estates 150+ acres in district (2010)	-0.03	0.86	0.03	0.18	0.46
% of tenants employed in large estates in district (2010)	-0.41	-0.31	-0.31	0.31	0.58
% of estate under cultivation in district (2010)	-0.19	0.46	0.41	0.31	0.62
Average no. of fragments of large landed estates in district (2010)	0.35	0.69	-0.25	0.25	0.54
Cash crops grown in district (2010)	-0.61	-0.21	0.26	0.33	0.55
Dynastic political families in district (2013)	-0.17	0.12	0.04	0.27	0.55
Female political candidate in 2013 election (0/1)	0.34	-0.36	-0.06	0.44	0.55
% of land under canal irrigation in district (2010)	-0.09	-0.2	-0.18	0.31	0.56
% of land under tubewell irrigation in district (2010)	0.38	-0.44	-0.19	0.15	0.48
Canal colony classification (0/1)	0.33	-0.44	0.64	0.28	0.55
Eigenvalues	4.4	2.89	2.28		
Variance	4.38	2.86	1.84		

This led to different patterns of familial, kin, patronage and historical relationships across North, South and Central Punjab which can be used for the purpose of analysis.

Possible Outcomes for Women

	Household/Family Characteristics	
	Weak 	Strong
Individual Characteristics	Neither access nor control	Control but not access
	Access but not control	Access and control

Enforcement of existing inheritance reforms

Should woman be given access over land?

Literacy, employment, marriage choice + Familial choices + Household and family's position in existing networks + Women in public sphere + Women's historical role in HH, family, community

Yes No

Should woman be given control over land?

Should woman be given control over land?

Role of woman in HH and family + Marriage choice + Household and family's position in existing networks + Women's historical role in HH, family, community

Yes

No

Yes

No

Women gain both

Women gain only access

Women gain only control

Women gain neither

Literacy makes a difference: Case study of North Punjab

- Emphasis on individual power/characteristics
- High literacy
- Diversification of income streams; lack of dependence on agriculture/land as main source of income
- Out-marriages
- Movement away from historical economic and political networks
- Increase in women's public representation
- Changes in gender norms/sanctions is mixed – only when it suits the family

Enforcement of existing inheritance reforms in North Punjab

Should woman be given access over land?

High literacy levels of woman + **High** literacy levels of household + **Low** ties with family, kin and larger community + **Some** women in public positions + **Limited** role of women in historical male-dominated positions

Yes

No

Should woman be given control over land?

Should woman be given control over land?

High literacy of women + Marriage choice is **individual decision** + Household and family's **low** position in existing networks + **Lack** of women's historical role

Yes

No

Yes

No

Women gain both

Women gain only access

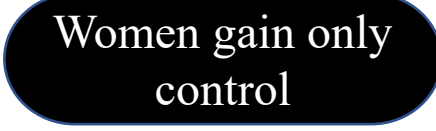
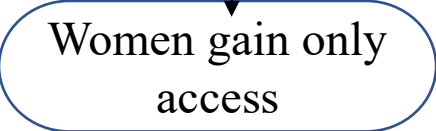
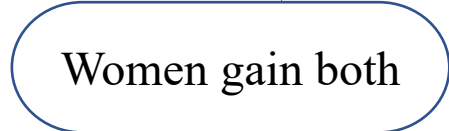
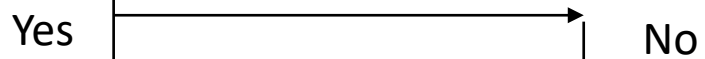
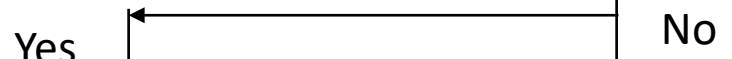
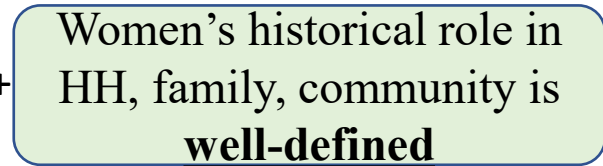
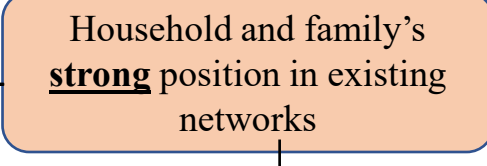
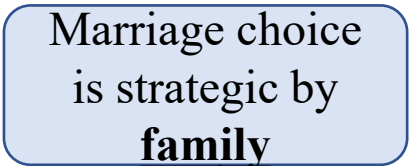
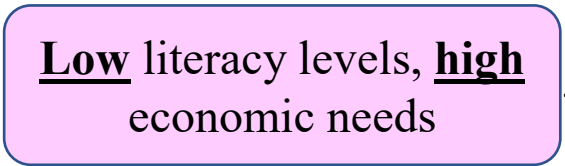
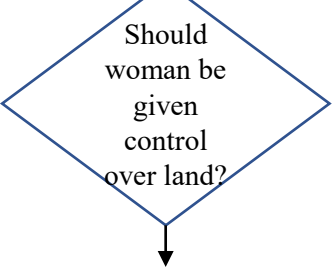
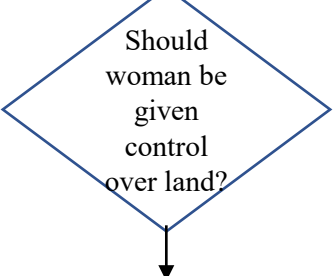
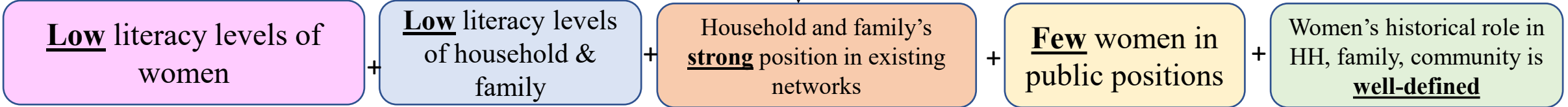
Women gain only control

Women gain neither

Women's role within familial interests: Case study of South Punjab

- Emphasis on family power and characteristics
- Low literacy
- Dependence on agriculture/land as main source of income
- In-marriages largely within kin group
- Intra-gender differences – based on age, natal family
- Entrenchment of old networks
- Low involvement of women with formal institutions
- Emphasis on gender-based social sanctions

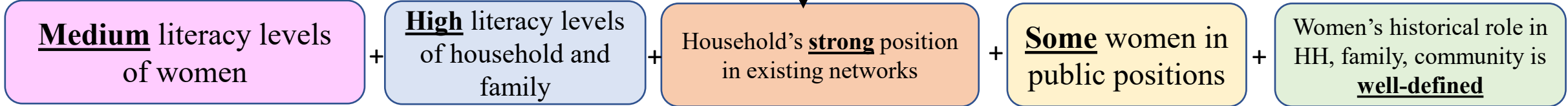
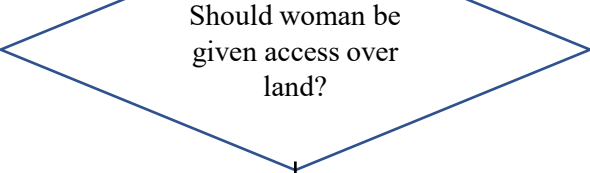
Enforcement of existing inheritance reforms in South Punjab



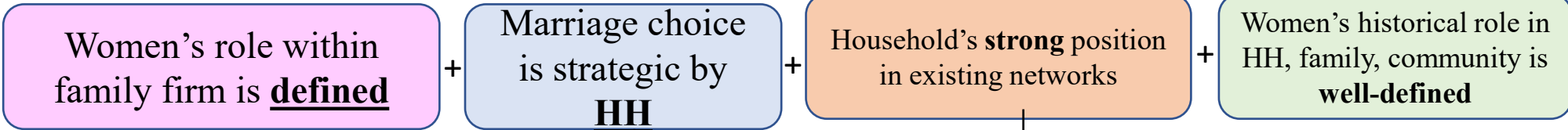
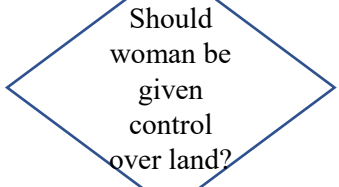
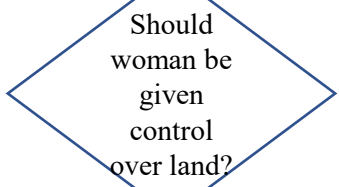
Reward for entrepreneurial behaviour: Case study of Central Punjab

- Emphasis on household-level family unit
- Emphasis on commercial and diversification
- Women play a pivotal role in economic and political networks albeit informally
- In-marriages but within immediate family
- Out-marriages only to develop new connections
- Political reserved women seats highly coveted
- Much public appreciation for women of the household
- No gender bias in norms/sanctions but women still shy away from public sphere due to public perceptions

Enforcement of existing inheritance reforms in Central Punjab



Yes No

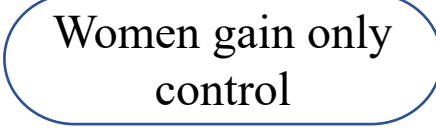
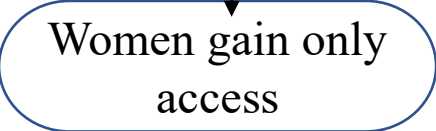
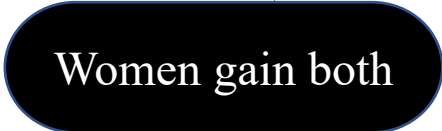


Yes

No

Yes

No



What factors help women gain access and/or control over land?

- Higher literacy of individuals, households and families
- Household and familial positions within existing economic and political networks
- Change in economic/political circumstances (individual/familial) can create opportunities for women to gain pivotal positions within the decision-making process especially through marriage choice
- Current and historical role of women within households, families and larger political economy of land rights

What factors help women gain access and/or control over land?

- Higher literacy of individuals, households and families
- Household and familial positions within existing economic and political networks
- Change in economic/political circumstances (individual/familial) can create opportunities for women to gain pivotal positions within the decision-making process especially through marriage choice
- Historical role of women within households, families and larger political economy of land rights

Inheritance reforms targeting women create leverage for them to start the process BUT needs to be accompanied with other channels to have a more significant impact.

Policy implications

- One size does not fit all in the context of Punjab; policy makers need to be aware of local context while designing reform
- Women's threat utility needs to be strengthened. Reforms are a good first step in this direction but they need to be strengthened by other social safety nets for women such as labour market opportunities, opportunities within family firms etc.
- Engagement of women (from all walks of life) with the public sphere needs to be encouraged and social sanctions for doing so reduced

Future interventions to investigate

- Literacy is good but not only school education; awareness of resources, facilities available; how to avail them; finding a way to get women to engage with the land rights system
- Articulating women's developing role within leadership positions; at the village-level as well as political positions
- Training women from landed families on agricultural markets, resources and how to engage more women from the community in land activities (enhancing women's role)
- Providing incentives for women to be involved in family business activities (tax breaks, subsidies etc.)

Thank you

For further questions and comments, please contact:

Email: hana_zahir@lums.edu.pk

Twitter: @HanaZahirEcon