

Public Abstract

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This thesis examines what affects whether men and women in rural Bangladesh inherit land and, if they do inherit land, what affects the amount of land inherited. The data is collected from Matlab, Bangladesh, a small-scale agricultural society that has only recently become engaged in industrialization. Land inheritance has traditionally played a key role in a person's social status and economic security, but changes in the amount of land and in demographics have altered the importance of land and who does the inheriting.

Based on a survey of 944 women in rural Bangladesh, this study provides strong support for the predictions that women in Bangladesh are less likely to inherit land and (if they do inherit) to inherit less land than men, that a woman's likelihood of having inherited land increases when her mother has inherited land, that whether a man or a woman works in agriculture increases their chances of having inherited land, that men's chances of having inherited land are increased when their parents own land, that women are significantly more likely to inherit land post-mortem than are men, that the amount of land a woman inherits increases as the amount of land her mother inherited increases, and that the amount of land a man inherits increases as his education increases.