

This publication brings together various articles that shed light from different angles on the relationship between customary law and practice, and the concept of human rights and gender equality.

The insights into customs that are of specific relevance for the role and status accorded to women – such as polygyny, lobola, and rules of inheritance – and which are still a living reality in many traditional communities in Namibia, provide the basis for legal and socio-economic considerations. These legal considerations address the gap between customary and statutory law in Namibia, recent relevant developments in the process of law reform, and judicial reflections on women and custom in Namibia. The presentation of various research findings reflects that education and the promotion of women's rights still have to be put very high on the agenda in order to actually achieve the constitutionally guaranteed equality between women and men. For this purpose, the publication gives a short introduction into the existing legal framework in terms of women and custom in Namibia.

The publication of these articles intends to promote a discourse and offer inspiration to the various stakeholders in the legal fraternity, academia, government, traditional authorities, civil society, and the 'enlightened' citizen (male and female) at large, to promote and secure the protection of women's rights and gender equality, and – wherever possible – preserve valuable cultural practices at the same time.