



## **THE CULTURAL FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO PROPERTY INHERITANCE: A STUDY OF THE NJIKOKA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE**

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### Abstract

Women's experiences in acquiring or inheriting properties such as land are filled with narratives of denials and marginalization orchestrated by numerous cultural practices designed in line with patriarchal society amidst existing legislation and policies that prohibit inequality on the grounds of sex and gender in Africa, most especially Nigeria. This has regrettably posed a strong threat to the development of women, thus giving rise to the feminization of poverty. Therefore, this study examined the cultural factors affecting women's rights to property inheritance in the Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State. The study adopted cultural feminist theory as its theoretical base. It also employed a cross-sectional survey design and multi-stage sampling technique, where a total of 204 respondents aged 18 and older were randomly sampled using a structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The collected data were presented and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency distribution tables. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed with the thematic method of data analysis. The study hypothesis was tested using the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of statistics. The study findings revealed that women having access to properties such as land are only considered if they have a male child in the course of marriage with their deceased partner. It was also found out that despite the high level of awareness among educated women about their legal rights to property inheritance, factors like traditional beliefs still hinder women from inheriting properties. It was recommended that there is a need for government intervention for widows in courts seeking to regain properties of their late husbands', amongst others.

Key Words: Land, Cultural Practices, Property Inheritance, Marginalization, Women

### Introduction

Property, in all its forms, is valued and recognised in all societies as the principal asset or key factor influencing and enhancing an individual's socio-economic status (Udoh, Folarin, & Isumonah, 2020). Globally, property inheritance is essential for the economic empowerment of women across different cultural contexts. According to Kivaria (2020), property such as land is a pillar for household livelihood and supports poverty reduction. To Ericco (2021), property is a crucial asset for cultural identity and spirituality and an important source of political power and participation in decision-making. Hence, equitable and secure access, use, and control of property by male and female people are essential for socio-economic development.

Among developing regions, Latin America, South Asia, the Middle East, and North America, there are significant inequalities in property matters across diverse ethnic and religious divides,  
for women's rights throughout the region (Naz et al., 2014). In

despite extensive mobilization