# Empowering Women Through Education: Asserting Inheritance Rights in Nigeria

**Helen Obiageli Obi***

## Abstract

*In the context of contemporary reality, the area of inheritance is still one in which women are discriminated against based on sex. Matters relating to inheritance of Land and property of economic and customary value were almost always devolved to the extended family levels. This meant that women were to a large extent, denied access to wealth and the means of making it and for all or most of their lives they had to contend with being treated as appendages either to their fathers, husbands or brothers. In extreme situations, they were little more than chattels and merchandise. This work examines the role of education in empowering women to assert their inheritance rights which patriarchal norms and discriminatory laws often deny them. Through doctrinal method it x-rays how education influences women's knowledge, attitudes, and actions regarding inheritance rights. Findings show that educated women are more likely to be aware of their rights, challenge discriminatory practices and assert their claims to inheritance. Education also enhances women's economic independence, social status, and negotiation skills enabling them to navigate complex family dynamics and legal system. The work therefore recommends gender-sensitive education and legal reforms in Nigeria.*

**Keywords: Education, Empowerment, Women, Inheritance Rights**

## 1. Introduction

The family remains the place where women face barriers and discrimination especially in area of inheritance. It is important to state that concerns for women's inheritance rights in Nigeria did not develop as much as it did in the Western world until the 1995 Beijing Conference. According to Ezeilo, 'the state is male jurisprudentially, meaning that it adopts the standpoint of male power on the relation between law and society. Until the women's right advocates and organizations realize this, they may not understand how the conceptualized dichotomy of the public and private spheres undermines women's right especially in the realms of inheritance and educational role to salvage the situation.'[1]

Although modernization and development processes in Nigeria have resulted in changing roles for women in addition to their traditional procreative role, these new roles demand adequate and effective knowledge. Such characteristics are required through education and adequate related training. Despite the high priority and well-laid out measures and implementation given to education in Nigeria, various constraints continue to militate against the opportunity and access of women to education. These constraints include the following: relevance of school curriculum to everyday life of girls and women; sex stereotyping in occupational choice, schools' proximity and access, cultural and religious factor such as early marriage and practice of purdah; and economic factor such as cost of acquiring education. These constraints are responsible for the low female enrolment rates at all educational level and educational performance or achievement[2].

One of the indicators of human capital development is the level of educational attainment of all citizens of a country irrespective of gender. Thus, the National Millennium Development Goals report on Nigeria in 2004 aimed at eliminating gender disparity at all levels of education by 2015 amongst other objectives. It is on this premise that education is cited as the main tool for imparting skills and attitudes relevant to the contribution of individuals to the development of the society.

* **Helen Obiageli Obi, PhD, BL**, Lecturer; Faculty of Law, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Email: oh.obi.@unizik.edu.ng, Phone: 08034721460.

[1] JN Ezeilo, *Women, Law and Human Rights, Global and National Perspectives* (Enugu: ACENA PUBLISHERS, 2011) 31

[2] A O Obilade, *Women in Law* (Lagos: Southern University Law Centre and Faculty of Law, University of Lagos)

According to Imogie[3], the prosperity of a country depends not only on the abundance of its revenue, nor on the strength of its fortification, but on the number of its citizens that are enlightened through education. It is therefore right to agree that education is an instrument par excellence in achieving the developmental goals of the nation. This paper examined principally the role of education in asserting inheritance rights of women, barriers to inheritance, and legal frameworks to rights of education in Nigeria.

## 2. Conceptual Framework:

### 2.1 Empowerment

Empowerment refers to the process of giving individual or group the authority, confidence, and skills to take control of their lives, make informed decisions, and exercise their rights. It involves creating an environment that supports and encourage people to become more self-sufficient, autonomous, and confident in their abilities. Empowerment can occur in various contexts, such as personal empowerment: building self-esteem, self-awareness and self-confidence.

Social Empowerment: Enhancing Community Participation, social inclusion and collective action.

Economic Empowerment: Improving access to resources, education, and employment opportunities.

Political Empowerment: Increasing participation in decision-making processes and leadership roles. Thus, empowerment leads to increased self-reliance, improved decision-making, enhanced problem-solving skills, greater sense of control and confidence and more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. In essence, empowerment is about unlocking human potential and creating a more just and equitable society.

### 2.2 Women

Women are adult human females, marked by biological and physiological characteristics. Women are a socially constructed group, shaped by culture, historical and political contexts. Women are diverse in their experiences, perspectives and identities. They are capable of various roles, they are caregivers, leaders, innovators and change-makers.[4]

### 2.3 Inheritance Rights

Inheritance rights refers to the legal entitlement of individuals to receive a portion of a deceased persons property, assets, or wealth[5]. These rights vary depending on the jurisdiction, cultural, traditions and family dynamics. Inheritance rights can include succession to property and assets, distribution of wealth and estate; transfer of titles, deeds, or ownership, receipt of inheritances, legacies or bequests; Rights to continue family businesses or enterprise. Inheritance rights can be governed by Laws of intestacy (when there is no will) wills or testaments, Trusts and estates, family agreements or settlements, cultural or religious traditions. Inheritance rights are essential for ensuring security and stability, preserving family wealth and legacy protecting the interests of beneficiaries, resolving disputes and conflicts and upholding social and economic justice. The concept of inheritance rights raises important questions about: Equality and fairness, gender and generational dynamics, cultural and social norms, economic and social mobility.

[3] Abraham Imogie, Nigerian Scholar and Former Secretary for Education in Short Lived Interim Administration of Ernest ShonekonWikipedia:https://en.wikipedia.or>accessed 30th July, 2024

[4] See 'Woman' https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/woman, accessed 19 August 2024.

[5] 'Inheritance Rights', <https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/inheritance-rights-29607.html>31 July, 2024

### 2.4 Education

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes through various forms of learning such as: Formal Education: Institutionalized Learning in Schools, College and Universities. Informal Education: Learning through experience, Social Interactions and Cultural transmission. Non-formal Education: Structured Learning outside traditional institutions, like workshops, training programs, and online courses.

Education aims to: develop cognitive abilities, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, foster personal growth, creativity, and emotional intelligence; prepare individuals for citizenship, work, and life-long learning. Transmit cultural heritage, values and social norms; promotes social mobility, equality and economic development. Effective education empowers individuals to: acquire knowledge and skills, develop their potential, make informed decision, participate in society and adopt to changing environments. In essence, education is a powerful tool for personal, social and economic transformation[6].

## 3. Barriers to Women's Inheritance Rights in Nigeria

### 3.1 Patriarchal Cultural Norms:

This is traditional practices and beliefs that prioritize male inheritance. It is a social system in which position of dominance and privilege are held by men. It is a social structure and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. A Greek word that means the rule of the father."[7] Patriarchy has long worked to oppress all people who lack the social position or necessary requirements to become patriarch (such as being a first-born son or having independent means) But the rule of father is not something just asserted it depends on specific social customs regarding the shape of our families. Patriarchy is partially rooted in the cultural and legal traditions of patrilineality (paternal descent) and Patrilocality (where wives leave their natal kin to join their husband's family). These twin forces still operate in the daily lives of billions of people and maintain a distinct lingering influence even in contemporary cultures that see themselves as more 'enlightened' with regards to the traditional family.[8]

From time immemorial, Nigerian society has been a patriarchal society. Patriarch structure has been a major feature of the traditional society. It is a social stratification and differentiation based on sex, which provides material advantages to male while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of females. There are clearly defined sex roles, while various taboos ensure conformity with specific gender roles.

Under Igbo customary marriage law, inheritance is predominantly patrilineal and is governed by the principles of primogeniture in the sense that on the death of an intestate man, his eldest son succeeds to his estate.[9] Consequently, the eldest son assumes his deceased father's status as the head of the family, and is thus entitled to rights his deceased father exercised as the head of the family.[10] According to Obilade, under the Igbo customary law of succession, females cannot administer the dead man's estate.[11] The rule originates from the custom which forbids property

---

[6] Concept and Aims of Education, Bidyapati Bd, https://bidyapatibed study.wordpress.com> accessed 1st August, 2024

[7] Kristen R. Ghodsee, 'To Smash Patriarchy, We need to Get Specific about What it Means', <https://jacobin.com/2023/06/patriarchy-traditional-multigenerational-wealth-privilege-feminism> accessed 1st August, 2024.

[8] Ibid

[9] The Igbos of the Eastern Part of Nigeria

[10] MC Onokah, *Family Law* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd) P348

[11] AO Obilade, *Women in Law* (Lagos: Southern University Law Center and Faculty of Law, University of Lagos)

inheritance by women. If, therefore, women cannot inherit the estate, they obviously cannot administer it. The practice is entrenched in patrilineal societies which accord the rights and privilege to inherit to sons alone and exclude daughters and wives from inheritance. Although for cultivation purposes a married rural woman is apportioned a piece of land every planting season, this gesture does not presage her right to inherit it on her husband's death[12]. Indeed, the interest or right she returns in that or other lands depends on a number of factors such as whether she has sons or is childless, and also her character and behavior.

Under the Yoruba pristine native law and custom as practiced in the past, women were deprived of any rights in family property. Hence in Lopez v Lopeze[13], Combe C. J. confirmed that originally the rights of the daughters in Yoruba land were not the same as those of the sons with regard to their father's property. The discriminatory practice could not be justified on any ground but mere prejudice. However, the Yorubas have early enough responded to the wave of change in the social and economic attitudes and needs in their society and have modified the custom although to a limited extent. Under the present Yoruba customary law, daughters have the same inalienable rights as sons over their father's property. The wife is still treated like a stranger in her husband's family. The custom is that a wife can neither inherit her husband's property nor take a share in his estate[14]; The same rule does not apply to the husband. Thus, in *Idehen v Idehen,* [15]

Karibi – White J.S.C said:

> There are still recognized status which at customary law affect the capacity to make a will. For instance, wife cannot by the exercise of testamentary disposition deprive her husband of his succession right in her estate.[16]

The question then as posed by the write is "where lies the justice and economic value of these discriminatory customary law which prohibit a woman from inhering from her husband but enables the husband to inherit from her. These laws which suited the social and economic environment of the period when they developed, now clearly offend the repugnancy doctrine under present social and economic circumstances.

A Muslim female is entitled to inherit from her husband, parents, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters on the same basis as a male but the only difference is that her share should normally be half of whatever a male gets.[17] If she is married and widowed without children she is entitled to a quarter of her husband's estate and if there are children she would get only one eight.

Patriarchy's impact on inheritance can be summarized thus:

- Bias: Patriarchal norms influence inheritance decisions, favouring male relatives.
- Disinheritance: Women may be disinherited or receive smaller shares due to patriarchal biases.
- Lack of Control: Women may have limited control over inherited property or assets.
- Economic Dependence: Patriarchy perpetuates women's economic dependence on men, limiting their autonomy.

[12]Nezianya V. Okagbue (1963) IAII N.L.R. NzekwuV.Nzekwu (1989) 2 N.W.L.R.Pt 104. P.373
[13](1934) 5 N.L.R. 50
[14]Suberu V. Sunmonu (1957) 2 F.S.C 33
[15](1991) 6 N.W.L.R. Pt 198 P.382 SC.
[16] *Ibid*
[17] *Sidi v Aha' Aban* (1992) 4 N.W.L.R. pt 233 p.113

- Cultural Perpetuation: Patriarchal norms are passed down through generations, maintaining gender inequality.
- Social Stigma: Women face stigma and discrimination when challenging patriarchal inheritance norms.
- Intergenerational inequality: Patriarchy perpetuates inequality affecting future generations.

### 3.2 Existing Laws

Apart from patriarchy some legal provisions limit women's inheritance. Sharia law restricted women's inheritance rights. In some interpretations of Sharia law, women's rights to inheritance are restricted compared to men's rights. Key restrictions include the following.

Half-share rule: In many cases, women inherit half the share of their male counterparts (Quran 4:11-12).

Exclusion from inheritance: In some cases, women are excluded from inheriting property, especially if there are male heirs (Quran 4:33).

Priority to male relatives: Male relatives, even distant ones, may inherit before female relatives (Quran 4:34).

Limited rights for widows: Widows may only inherit a limited portion (usually 1/8) of their husband's property (Quran 4:12).

### 3.3 Lack of Awareness

Lack of awareness is another barrier that limits women's inheritance rights. This occurs through several ways:

- Unfamiliarity with laws and regulations: Women may not know their legal rights, leading to exploitation.
- Limited knowledge of inheritance; Women may not understand procedures, timeliness, and documentation required.
- Unaware of their entitlements; Women may not know what they are eligible to inherit or how to claim it.
- Misconceptions and myths, women may believe they are not entitled to inherit due to cultural or religious misconceptions.
- Lack of access to information, women may face barriers in accessing information, legal and or support services.
- Power dynamics, women may be intimidated or coerced by male relatives or authorities, limiting their ability to claim their rights.
- Limited literacy and education, women with lower literacy levels may struggle to navigate legal documents and procedures.
- Fear of stigma and backlash, women may avoid claiming their rights due to fear of being ostracized or penalized.
- Limited support network, women may lack support from family, community or authorities, making it harder to assert their rights.[18]

## 4. Impact of Education in Asserting Inheritance Rights

One of the most significant tools to empower women within their family and community is education. Education aims at developing cognitive abilities, critical thinking, and problem- solving

[18] 'Inheritance Rights of Women: How to protect them', the Economic times. https://m.economic times.com accessed 1 August 2024.

skills. It fosters personal growth, creativity, and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, it prepares individuals for citizenship, work and lifelong learning. Equally, it transmits cultural heritage, values and social norms; promote social mobility, equality and economic development.[19]

Education can help assert women's inheritance rights in several ways, such as, legal literacy which enables women to understand laws and regulations governing inheritance. It can further women's inheritance rights in the following ways.

- Confidence Building: It helps women build confidence to claim their rights and challenge discriminatory practices.
- Awareness: Education creates awareness about inheritance rights, procedures, and entitlements. It enables access to the resources and means for challenging stereotypes, biases and cultural misconceptions. It also enables access to the means of overcoming gender biases. It helps a woman know where to seek help, support, and legal aid.
- Critical Thinking: Education equips with critical thinking necessary for analyzing cultural and social norms limiting women's rights.
- Economic Literacy: Education gives women the knowledge for managing and controlling inherited assets.
- Negotiation Skills: Education equips a woman with the effective communication skill for engaging family members and authorities on women's inheritance rights.
- Network Building: Education helps a woman to connect with other women, organizations, and support groups.
- Leadership development. It prepares women for leadership in advocating for their rights and those of others.[20]

## 5. Legal Framework that Enhances Educational Empowerment of Inheritance Rights of Women

If violations are one side of human right practices, protection is the other. The laws promoting gender equality often fail to improve women's inheritance experiences. This failure is particularly acute for the experience of social-economically marginalized women. Understanding why legislated equality as prescribed in laws often does not lead to the equality of outcomes is an ongoing puzzle in the study of gender and politics. However, a few national and international laws have protected the inheritance rights of women and educational role in asserting such rights. More education is associated with a higher likelihood of claiming an equal inheritance. This provides some optimism for improving the socio-economic status of women as providing educational opportunities can be relatively easier than providing financial independence.

### 5.1 The Universal Declaration of Human Right (UDHR) 1948

Article 26 emphasizes equal access to education.

26(1) - Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages Elementary education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basic of merit.

26(2)- Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

[19] See Centre for African Justice, <https://centre for African justice.org> accessed 1st August, 2024.
[20] Ibid

### 5.2 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 1979

This is a culmination of the standard setting work of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the burgeoning forward of the women's right movement. The CEDAW provisions are meant to respect, protect, and promote women's rights. The convention unequivocally prohibits discrimination against women based on their sex and enjoins state parties to take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs, and practices which constitute discrimination against women.

Article 14 guarantees equal rights to inheritance. Article 14 (2) (9) provides for access to agricultural credit and loan, marketing facility, appropriate technology and equal treatment in Land and agrarian reform as well as in Land resettlement schemes. Article 10 ensures equal access to education and vocational training while article 10 (9) eliminates discrimination in access to education. Article 10 (c) encourages women's participation in science technology, and academic careers. Article 10 (d) reduces female dropout rates and promotes retention. Article 10 (e) eliminates stereotyping in educational material and article 10 (g) promotes education on human rights and gender equality. CEDAW'S protections have led to significant advancements in women's educational rights worldwide, including increased access to education, reduced gender gaps, and improved educational outcomes for women and girls[21]. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is an international treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979. Nigeria ratified CEDAW in 1985 but it has not been domesticated into national law. The non-domestication of CEDAW in Nigeria means that its lack judicial enforceability.

### 5.3 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1986)

The African Charter on Human and People Rights (ACHPR) is a regional human rights instrument adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1981. It aims to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in Africa. Key provisions relevant to women's educational inheritance include article 2 (Equality and non-discrimination), article 14 (Right to property and inheritance), article 17 (Right to education), and article 28 (Protection of women's rights). In terms of women's education and inheritance rights ACHPR prohibits discrimination in access to education and property, ensures equal rights to inheritance and property ownership, promotes women's empowerment through education, and protects women's rights to equality and non-discrimination. By ratifying the ACHPR Nigeria commits to upholding these provisions and promoting women's education and inheritance rights.[22]

### 5.4 The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol, 2003).

The Charter inserts women's rights to education and inheritance in the following articles.

Article 12 - Right to education, ensures equal access to education, prohibits discrimination in education, and promotes women's empowerment through education.

Article 13 - Right to participate in education, encourages women's participation in science, technology and academic careers.

[21] O Nwankwo, *Human Rights of Women: A Compilation of International Human Rights Treaties and Instruments* (Nigeria: CIRDDOC, 2005) 81

[22] *Ibid.*

Article 12 - Right to inheritance, ensures equal rights to inheritance, prohibits discrimination in inheritance, protects women's rights to inherit property.

Article 5 - Elimination of harmful practices. Article 6, equality in marriage and family life.

By ratifying the Maputo protocol, Nigeria commits to upholding these provisions and promoting women's education and inheritance.[23]

### 5.5 Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also known as Global Goals were born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. The objective was to produce a set of universal goals that meet the urgent environmental, political and economic challenges facing our world.

The Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". Specifically, SDG4 targets are: 4(1) - free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education for all girls and boys.

4(2) - Access to quality early childhood education for all girls and boys.

4(3)- Equal access to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and higher education for all women and men.

4(5)- Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education for vulnerable populations, including women and girls.

4(7)- Ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skill needed to promote sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights.

Additionally, SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) targets to end discrimination against women and girls, eliminate violence against women and girls, eliminate harmful practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation. It targets also to ensure women's full participation in leadership and decision-making.

SDG 4 and SDG5 are interconnected, recognizing that access to education is essential for achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls.[24]

### 5.6 The Beijing Declaration and Platforms for Action (1995)

The BDPFA is an outcome of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on women in Beijing, which was held to ensure the full implementation of the human rights of the girl child as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and to advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women.[25]

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Asserts Women's rights to education and inheritance in the following articles.

Article 68: Ensure equal access to education for women and girls.

Article 69: Eliminate gender stereotype and biases in education.

---

[23] JN Ezeilo, *Women, Law and Human Rights* ……

[24] 'The 17 Goals – Sustainable Development Goals', https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/, accessed 19 August 2024.

[25] JN Ezeilo, *Women, Law and Human Rights* …..

Article 70: Promote women's participation in science, technology, and academic careers.

Article 71: Improve women's literacy and numeracy skills.

Article 72: Ensure equal opportunities for women in vocational training and lifelong learning on inheritance:

Article 134: Ensure women's equal rights to inheritance and property ownership.

Article 135: Eliminate discrimination against women in inheritance laws and practices.

Article 136: Promotes women's access to credit and other economic resources.

Additional provisions are: article 13, women's economic empowerment; article 15, women's right to equality in law and policy, and article 16, elimination of violence against women. This landmark document has guided global efforts to advance women's rights and gender equality, including education and inheritance rights, since its adoption in 1995.[26]

### 5.7 The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999)

The Constitution contains provisions that promote equality in education. These provisions include the following. Section 18(1) states that 'Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels.' For section 18 (2), 'Government shall promote science and technology', and for section 18 (3), 'Government shall eradicate illiteracy and provide free, compulsory, and universal primary education.' Section 42 (1) provides that 'A citizen of Nigeria of a particular community ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not by reason only of that connection be subjected to disabilities or restrictions.' According to section 42 (2), 'No citizen of Nigeria shall be subjected to any disability or deprivation merely by reason of the circumstances of his birth.' The Constitution's Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy (Chapter 11) emphasize the importance of education in promoting national development and social justice.

The provisions aim at ensuring equal access to education; adequate educational opportunities; promotion of science and technology; eradication and non-discrimination based on sex, ethnicity and other factors.

### 5.8 The Child Rights Act 2003

This enactment contains several sections that are key to education and inheritance rights. On education, Section 8, 'Every child has the right to free, compulsory, and universal basic education". Section 9 says, "Every child has the right to equal opportunities in education". According to section 10, "A child has the right to inherit property from his parents or relatives. For section 29, "A child has the right to protection from discrimination in matters of inheritance. Section 30 states, "A child has the right to equal rights in inheritance, regardless or sex or age." Other relevant sections worthy of mention allied to the key issues are section 2 which guarantees the best interests of the child, section 3 which ensures the survival and development of the child, and section 14 which protects children from economic exploitation. These sections aim to ensure children's rights to education and inheritance, while also protecting them from discrimination, exploitation, and harm.

### 5.9 Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015

This Act contains several sections that assert women's educational and inheritance rights. On Education, section 2 defines violence to include denial of the rights of education. Section 3 (1) prohibits violence against persons, including denial of education. Section 14 protects women from

[26] *Ibid.*

forced marriage, which can limit access to education. On inheritance, section 15 protects women from forced or coerced inheritance practices. Section 4 prohibits harmful traditional practices, including those that limits women's educational and inheritance rights. Section 5 protects survivors of violence, including those denied education or inheritance. Section 16 ensures access to justice for survivors of violence, including those denied education or inheritance.

These sections aim at protecting women from violence, including denial of education and inheritance rights and promote their overall well-being and empowerment.

### 5.10 The Nigerian National Policy on Education (2004)

This policy addresses women's educational empowerment through these key issues:[27] gender equality; and equal access to education for girls and women to participate in education, particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The policy covers other issues such as women's literacy (emphasizing literacy programs for women especially in rural areas), gender-sensitive curriculum (developing curricular that promote gender equality and challenge stereotypes), female teachers (Increasing the number of female teachers, especially in rural areas), safe learning environment (ensuring schools are safe and conducive for girls' learning), and affirmative action (implementing affirmative action policies to address historical disparities).

Other issues covered by the policy are community involvement (Engaging Communities in promoting girls' education), addressing socio-cultural factors (addressing socio-cultural factors hindering women's education), and monitoring and evaluation (regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure policy implementation). These key issues aim to address the educational disparities faced by women in Nigeria and promote gender equality in education.

### 5.11 The Nigerian National Gender Policy 2006.

The Policy promotes education and inheritance rights of women addressing these important issues.

On Education, it promotes gender parity in education as it promotes equal access to education for girls and boys. The policy increased enrolment and retention. This encourages girls' participation in education. For gender-sensitive curriculum, it advocates for inclusive and gender-sensitive educational materials. Concerning women's literacy, it aims to reduce illiteracy among women and girls. On education and economic empowerment, it links education to economic opportunities for women.

On inheritance, the policy advocates for equal inheritance rights for women and men while on protection from discriminatory practices that deny women inheritance rights, it promotes women's access to land and property ownership. For economic empowerment, the policy actually links inheritance to economic empowerment for women. It equally aims to change societal attitudes and cultural practices that limit women's rights. Regarding women's political participation, it encourages women's participation in decision-making processes. It addresses gender-based violence against women, including denial of education and inheritance. These issues demonstrate the Nigerian National Gender Policy's Commitment to promoting education and inheritance right for women, as well as addressing broader gender equality concerns.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Empowering women through education is crucial for asserting their inheritance rights in Nigeria. Inheritance is crucial to women for several reasons. It empowers women economically by providing them access to assets, property and resources thereby enabling them to support

[27] 'National Policy on Education, World Bank', http://wbgrilles.world.bank.org> accessed 3 August 2024

themselves and their families. Inheritance rights of women ensures financial security for them as it guarantees a safety net thereby reducing their dependence on others and vulnerability to poverty. Inheritance can enhance women's social status or standing, as owning property and assets is often associated with respect and prestige. Inheritance makes women to be independent and thus they can make choices about their lives free from coercion or control by others.

Inheritance helps in the promotion of gender equality, and it challenge patriarchal norms, and discriminatory practices. Education is also crucial for asserting women's inheritance rights. Women's acquisition of knowledge and using it to do exploits is at the core of education. These effects of education on women inspire the sayings, 'educate a woman, and you educate a nation' and 'education of women is the best way to save the world', 'when you educate a woman, you educate a family', and 'when you educate a girl, you educate a community'. Education is the most powerful tool that can be used to change the world, and women are the most powerful change makers.

To achieve success in empowering women to assert their inheritance rights through education, the following recommendations are made.

(a) Increasing access to quality education for women and girls. Education on human rights and the dissemination of proper information, both theoretical and practical, play an important role in the promotion and respect of human rights and this should be integrated in the education policies at the national as well as international levels.

(b) Integrating gender- sensitive curriculum and pedagogies; provide vocational training and economic empowerment programs. Strengthen legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms for inheritance rights.

(c) Raising awareness and challenging societal norms and stereotypes.

(d) Encouraging male involvement and support for women's empowerment.

(e) Supporting women's organizations and advocacy groups.

(f) Monitoring and evaluating progress towards gender equality and inheritance rights.

These recommendations will lead to a more just and equitable society.