

# Equality in Property Inheritance Rights: Addressing The Policies and Practice

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## Abstract

Inheritance rights are crucial for women's economic empowerment, autonomy, and access to healthcare. Without them, women may be dependent on men and vulnerable to gender-based violence, forced marriage, and early pregnancy. Furthermore, inheritance rights can impact women's ability to pass on property and assets to their children, perpetuating inter-generational poverty and inequality. Addressing inheritance rights promotes gender equality, challenges patriarchal norms, and ensures women's access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare. This paper aims to analyze how customs and traditional beliefs contribute to the unequal treatment of women in terms of property inheritance, impacting their economic empowerment and access to healthcare. The paper will also analyze the legislative efforts and judicial decisions to address these disparities. Studies have shown that despite the legislative and judicial efforts, widows, daughters, and wives often face obstacles in inheriting property under most customary laws. The paper suggests customary law reforms and involving community leaders in law reforms, promoting will-making and continuous judicial activism, and conducting sensitization programs to enhance awareness of inheritance laws among women. Overall, while there has been progress, continued efforts and vigilance are essential to ensure equal inheritance rights for women to promote their autonomy and general well-being.

**Keywords:** Activism, Customs, Empowerment, Equality, Healthcare, Reforms