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RT: Cultural Globalisation and Judicial Intervention in Female Inheritance Rights in South East Nigeria

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AB: Family inheritance in many societies is usually distributed to surviving off-springs without regard to gender. The status of females has, through the ages, been a cause for concern especially in many African societies where the female is seen as the property of her husband, negating female inheritance rights. Cultural globalisation has resulted in the modification of cultural beliefs across different societies, as the world is continually turning into a global village. In South East, Nigeria, the continual denial of female inheritance rights has resulted in several legal disputes with consequent judicial interventions aimed at positive adjustments and reviews of some cultures. Studies have focused primarily on the incidences, moral and economic implications of the denial of female inheritance rights. At the same time, there is paucity of literature on the relationship between cultural globalisation and female inheritance rights. Therefore, this study examined the cultural globalisation and judicial intervention in female inheritance rights in South East Nigeria.

The research adopted the phenomenology research design. The population of the study comprised five South East states: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States. Abia and Anambra States were purposively selected because of the high incidence of female inheritance rights cases in various courts originating from both states. Key informant interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were the methods of data collection. The key informant interviews

were conducted with 25 traditional rulers, chiefs, community leaders, Ndi-ichie (Elders), customary court personnel, women leaders and pastors. Three FGDs were conducted in both states. Data were content analysed and presented narratively.

The finding revealed that the cause of female inheritance is traceable to the fact that in the 'Amala' (kindred) and all decision meetings where identification and implementation of customs are decided including inheritance are mostly male-only meetings. The impact of cultural globalisation has not been felt in the South East because of the resistance of the traditional rulers and Ndi Ichie (Elders) who are custodians of the culture. The study found that discrimination against female inheritance is dominant because several people in the South East die intestate (without making Wills) which precipitates the prevalence and application of customary law. Consequentially, the implementation of judicial interventions that target female inheritance rights has been slow, especially regarding property in rural areas. Furthermore, cultural globalisation has made women's groups more vocal and visible in the advocacy for female inheritance rights. The study also found that money generated from the objects inherited from parents can greatly improve females' economic and political status in South East, Nigeria.

The study concluded that cultural globalisation is gradually contributing to the acceptance of female inheritance rights in South East Nigeria, due to several judicial interventions. It, thus, recommended that people in the South East should embrace writing wills to enhance female inheritance rights.

Keywords: Cultural beliefs, Cultural globalisation, Discrimination against females, Female inheritance, Judicial intervention

Word Count: 459

Abbreviations: RFN: Researcher's Full Name, RD: Researcher's Department, RS: Researcher's School, RE: Researcher's Email, RAE: Researcher's Alternate Email, RP: Researcher's Phone Contact, RT: Registered Title, MS: Main Supervisor, ME: Main Supervisor's E-mail Address, SP: Main Supervisor's Phone Contact, CS: Co-Supervisor, CE: Co-Supervisor's E-mail Address, CP: Co-Supervisor's Phone Contact, AB: Abstract

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