WOMEN’S AND MEN’S PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS UNMARRIED WOMEN INHERITING PROPERTY IN GATUNDU SOUTH CONSTITUENCY IN KIAMBU COUNTY

Gitangu Beth Kibui - M.A.

Department: Gender and Development Studies

Supervisors:
1. Dr. Grace Wamue Ngare
2. Prof. Elishiba Kimani

Women have continued to suffer discrimination despite legislations aimed at placing them at an equal footing with men. It is now an appreciated fact that women and men need to be held as equal in all aspects of life. However, issues surrounding the insubordination of women by men are deeply ingrained in the socialization process and the societal perception. Although all women tend to be discriminated in this aspect, unmarried women are disproportionally affected as they are seen as a burden by their parents and especially brothers. Thus, this study was set to investigate the perceptions that women and men had towards unmarried women’s inheritance rights. The study was done in Ng’enda Location, Gatundu South Constituency, Kiambu County. Systematic random sampling was used to select 113 households. The respondents were the household heads. The Chief, Ng’enda Location, Sub-chief, Ituru Sub-location, a Paralegal and two opinion leaders (a female and a male) were purposively selected as Key Informants, giving a total number of 118 respondents. Data collection tools were semi-structured interview schedule and interview guides for the household respondents and for the Key Informants. Findings from qualitative data were analyzed according to the emerging themes based on research objectives and presented in a narrative form. Analysis of the structured questions was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) application software. Findings from the quantitative data were presented in form of tables, graphs and figures. The study established that women suffer discrimination as far as property inheritance is concerned. The negative perceptions were deeply embedded in the socio-cultural, economic and legal factors. Men in particular saw Kenya Constitution as a legal imposition of western concepts of property inheritance. Further, the socialization process was found to entrench the forces of patriarchy, making men to dominate in the households as well as in property inheritance rights. The men’s privileged position, was viewed as inevitable and natural, a fact that was held by both men and women respondents in the study. Based on these findings, it was recommended that strategies be put in place to enhance gender equity in property
inheritance. Specific strategies that emanated from the study included: gender sensitive civic education for men and women to re-socialize them towards gender responsive property inheritance rights in the households and educate women on existing legislations, Constitution and human rights, gender sensitization and awareness to foster gender equality and women’s rights, involvement of women in decision-making at the households, community and national levels to advance equality between daughters and sons in property inheritance, economic empowerment for women to enable them own property where inheritance was not forthcoming and education for the girl child and illiterate adult women.