

## Impact of Patriarchal Norms on Economic Security of Women in North Central Nigeria

Becky Ade Aliegba, Yahaya Adadu & Usman Yusuf Alhaji

Department of Public Administration

Nasarawa State University

*Corresponding author:* beckyaliegba@nsuk.edu.ng

### Abstract

This study examines the impact of patriarchal norms on the economic security of women in North Central Nigeria. The main objective is to analyze the different theoretical perspectives and findings of studies conducted by various scholars to ascertain the impact of patriarchal norms on women's economic security in North Central Nigeria. This study employs a thematic literature review and analysis of existing research reports from reputable sources to identify the key findings and recommendations related to the impact of patriarchal norms on women's economic security in North Central Nigeria. The study finds out that patriarchal norms in North Central Nigeria reinforce traditional gender roles that limit women's access to education, employment opportunities, and economic resources. Also, that women in North Central Nigeria face systemic barriers to inheritance rights, and access to financial credit systems due to discriminatory cultural practices. Based on the findings, the study suggested that the federal and state ministries of women affairs in collaboration with civil societies should push for legal reforms to eliminate discriminatory practices and ensure gender equality in land ownership, inheritance laws, and access to financial services traditional gender roles and stereotypes, and promote policies and programmes that encourage women's participation in diverse economic sectors. Relevant non-governmental organisations should undertake legal reforms to eliminate discriminatory practices and ensure gender equality in inheritance laws, and access to financial services, complemented by public awareness campaigns and capacity-building initiatives to educate women about their rights.

**Keyword:** Patriarchal norms, Women's economic security, Traditional gender roles, Inheritance rights, Gender-based discrimination.

### Introduction

Globally, patriarchal norms and attitudes significantly affect women's security, leading to gender-based violence, restricted access to resources, and limited participation in public and political life. The United Nations, recognizing the pervasive nature of gender inequalities through documents like the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), highlights these issues and has undertaken numerous initiatives and established various programs to address and combat gender inequality globally. The World Health Organization reports that about 1 in 3 women globally have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, emphasizing the severe impact of patriarchal systems (WHO, 2021).

In Africa, patriarchal norms are deeply embedded in public institutions and social practices, affecting women's security across the continent. The African Union's Maputo Protocol (2003) and subsequent studies (African Union, 2016) acknowledge the influence of patriarchal values in perpetuating discrimination and violence against women. These norms vary regionally, with practices like female genital mutilation

and forced marriages prevalent in certain areas, highlighting the extreme manifestations of patriarchal control (UNICEF, 2013).

Though there exist dearth in literature focusing on North Central Nigeria on the impact of patriarchal norms on women's security, research by Akinlade (2020) in states like Benue, Plateau, and Kogi shows high rates of domestic violence, economic discrimination, and political disenfranchisement of women, directly linking these challenges to patriarchal attitudes. This is particularly related to the fact that these regions comprise a diverse ethnic mix influenced by traditional customs and religious practices that reinforce patriarchal values. Patriarchal norms not only dictate the role and status of women in society but also significantly influence their access to resources, participation in decision-making processes, and overall security. A study by Smith and Umezulike (2020) revealed that patriarchal societies, often subject women to high rates of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and economic discrimination.

Traditional gender roles in patriarchal societies dictate that girls prioritize domestic responsibilities over education, expecting them to take care of household chores, siblings, or elderly family members, thereby limiting their opportunities for personal and economic empowerment and increasing their vulnerability to poverty and exploitation. Additionally, unequal access to financial resources, such as inheritance rights, restricts women's economic independence, trapping them in cycles of abuse and insecurity. In North Central Nigeria, women's security is further compromised by communal conflicts and insurgencies, which exploit and exacerbate gender vulnerabilities, often resulting in sexual violence and exploitation during conflicts (Chukwuemeka, 2019). Aside conflict situations, UNICEF (2013) confirms that, cultural practices such as inheritance laws that favour men and the stigmatisation of widows contribute to economic insecurity and social exclusion for women, further diminishing their ability to participate fully and safely in society.

Efforts to eliminating this menace by international commitments to gender equality and elimination of violence against women abound, these include but not limited to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW1979) which recognizes that discrimination against women exists in many forms, including legal, social, economic, and cultural spheres which leads to violation of women's rights. It calls for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women to ensure their equal rights. Measures to prevent, investigate, and punish acts of violence against women are encouraged while emphasis is placed on education and public awareness programs to promote gender equality and combat stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination and violence against women.

The Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China, in September 1995 stressed the importance of participating governments to work towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination, sexual harassment, exploitation, trafficking in women, gender bias in the administration of justice, cultural prejudices, harmful traditional and customary practices, and rape (United Nations, 1996; Okwuobi, 2012; Uji, 2021). In Africa, The Maputo Protocol also known as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, a legal instrument that addresses various forms of discrimination against women was adopted in 2003 by the African

Union condemns all forms of discrimination against women and promotes gender equality. The major objective of this paper therefore is to analyse the different theoretical perspectives on the relationship between gender based discrimination occasioned by patriarchy and womens economic security in North Central Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

This conceptual clarification aims to dissect key concepts central to the topic: patriarchal norms and economic security, while situating their intersection within the socio-cultural and economic dynamics of North Central Nigeria. By providing a clear understanding of these concepts and their interrelation, the study offers a foundation for examining how entrenched gender norms perpetuate economic inequities and proposes pathways to address these challenges for achieving women security and gender equality.

### ***Patriarchal Norms***

Patriarchal norms refer to the societal expectations, beliefs, and practices that reinforce and perpetuate male dominance and authority over women in various aspects of life, including within families, communities, and institutions (Sultana, 2011). These norms are deeply rooted in traditional gender roles and power dynamics that prioritize men's power and privilege while subordinating women (Rani & Bonu, 2009).

The concept connotes a system of social structures and cultural expectations that uphold male dominance and privilege while subordinating women in various aspects of life. These norms are deeply entrenched in many societies, shaping behaviors, relationships, and access to resources. In the context of North Central Nigeria, patriarchal norms manifest in forms such as discriminatory inheritance practices, limited access to education and economic opportunities such as, controlling women's access to financial resources, restricting their economic participation, and relegating them to unpaid domestic roles and societal expectations that prioritize women's domestic roles over their economic ambitions. These norms sustain gender power imbalances, often reinforced by cultural and religious practices significantly affecting women's ability to achieve economic security, defined as the capacity to sustainably meet financial needs, access resources, and participate in economic decision-making processes. For instance, studies have highlighted how patriarchal expectations restrict women's ability to control income or loans, as male family members often assume control, undermining women's empowerment and reinforcing economic dependency (PLOS ONE, 2023).

Furthermore, patriarchal systems create barriers to gender equality by embedding discriminatory beliefs into institutions, limiting women's representation in decision-making roles, and undervaluing their economic contributions. This phenomenon is also reflected in global contexts where interventions, such as microfinance programs, fail to fully empower women because they do not address underlying gender norms that marginalize women's financial agency (International Alert, 2023).

### ***Economic Security***

Economic security is a multidimensional concept that is closely linked to individual and societal well-being, as well as sustainable economic development (Stiglitz et al., 2009). Economic security encompasses concepts such as financial stability, economic

independence, and resilience to economic shocks or vulnerabilities. The concept refers to the degree of confidence and ability individuals, households, or communities have in securing their basic needs and maintaining a certain standard of living over time (Hacker et al., 2014). It encompasses various aspects, including stable income, access to employment opportunities, protection from economic risks and shocks, the availability of social safety nets and the ability to withstand financial setbacks or unexpected events that could lead to a significant decline in living standards (Osberg & Sharpe, 2005).

This definition highlights the idea of protection against economic risks. This refers to having a stable and sufficient source of income, whether from employment, self-employment, or other sources, to cover basic needs and maintain a decent standard of living (Bohnke, 2008; Osberg & Sharpe, 2005). This can be made possible when women in particular have access to and control over productive assets, such as land and property, or financial assets as well as social protection programs, education, skills development, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. Economic security for women is therefore seen as a critical determinant of broader societal welfare, influencing not only individual well-being but also the economic development of communities. However, in patriarchal settings, women often face structural barriers such as inheritance disparities, restricted access to credit, and exclusion from key economic activities. These limitations hinder their ability to build wealth, achieve financial independence, and contribute fully to societal progress. In North Central Nigeria, where traditional values and cultural practices often reinforce gender inequalities, the impact of patriarchal norms on women's economic security is particularly pronounced, exacerbating cycles of poverty and limiting opportunities for empowerment.

### ***Inheritance rights***

Inheritance rights refer to the legal provisions and cultural norms that govern the transfer of property, assets, and wealth from one generation to the next (Cooper, 2008). These rights determine who is eligible to inherit and the process by which inheritance occurs, typically upon the death of the owner or testator (Hirsch, 2012). Most societies have established legal frameworks that outline the rules and procedures for inheritance, including intestate succession (when no valid will exists) and testate succession (when a valid will is present) (Brashier, 2018). These laws may specify the order of priority among potential heirs, the division of assets, and the limitations or restrictions on inheritance based on factors such as marital status, adoption, or illegitimacy (Hirsch, 2012). It must be noted however that, the right to inheritance is often influenced by cultural and religious norms, which can shape the attitudes, expectations, and practices surrounding inheritance (Cooper, 2008). These norms may prioritize certain heirs over others, dictate the distribution of specific types of assets, or impose additional conditions on inheritance (Deininger et al., 2013).

Historically, many societies have exhibited gender-based discrimination in inheritance rights, favoring male heirs over female heirs or imposing stricter conditions on women's ability to inherit property or assets (Roy, 2015). This bias has been linked to patriarchal societies and is seen to perpetuating gender inequalities in wealth accumulation, economic empowerment, and social status (Deininger et al., 2013). This is not the same with societies that practice patriarchy.

The conceptualization and implementation of inheritance rights have significant implications for economic development, social cohesion, and gender equality (Deininger et al., 2013; Roy, 2015). This is to the extent that, inequitable inheritance practices can perpetuate disparities in wealth accumulation, limit the opportunities that women in particular have to achieving economic freedom thereby reinforcing gender inequality and violence. Conversely, equitable and inclusive inheritance rights can contribute to poverty reduction, promote economic empowerment, and foster social mobility (Boserup et al., 2007; Deininger et al., 2013).

Many countries have undertaken legal reforms to address discriminatory inheritance practices and promote more equitable distribution of assets, particularly for women and marginalized groups (Deininger et al., 2013; Roy, 2015). However, the effective implementation of these reforms has yielded minimal changes requiring that attention has to be focused on addressing deeply rooted cultural norms and attitudes that promote discriminatory inheritance practices as well as strengthen enforcement mechanisms.

### **Empirical Review**

The impact of patriarchal norms on the economic security of women has been widely studied, particularly in contexts where entrenched gender inequalities limit women's access to economic resources and opportunities. Patriarchal systems, characterized by male dominance in social, economic, and political spheres, often perpetuate gender disparities in income, employment, and property ownership. In North Central Nigeria, these norms and attitude are embeded in culture that create systemic barriers to women's economic independence. This is further reinforced by religious practices promoting the idea of women as property and denying them the right to inheritance. Empirical studies highlight the multifaceted effects of patriarchal norms on women's economic security. For instance, studies in North Central Nigeria reveal that patriarchal practices, including discriminatory inheritance laws and restricted mobility, exacerbate economic vulnerabilities for women. For example, findings from the African Development Bank (2023) suggest that women in the region face systemic exclusion from land ownership and financial credit systems, both of which are critical for sustainable economic security.

Jayachandran, (2015), examined the underlying causes of gender inequality in developing countries, including the role of patriarchal norms and their impact on women's economic security. The study draws on various economic theories, including the unitary household model, collective household models, and theories of discrimination and social norms. The review synthesizes empirical evidence from various studies, including experimental and non-experimental research, to analyze the impact of patriarchal norms on women's economic outcomes. The review highlights those patriarchal norms, which prioritize men's decision-making authority and restrict women's autonomy, contribute to gender gaps in education, employment, and control over resources. These norms limit women's economic security by reducing their access to income, assets, and opportunities for economic empowerment. The study recommends policies that promote women's education, increase their access to economic opportunities, and challenge discriminatory social norms through legal reforms and awareness campaigns.

Duflo, (2012), examine the relationship between women's empowerment and economic development, with a focus on the role of patriarchal norms in influencing women's economic security. The study draws on theories of intra-household bargaining power, social norms, and their impact on resource allocation and economic outcomes. The review synthesizes evidence from various empirical studies, including randomized controlled trials and natural experiments, to analyze the impact of patriarchal norms on women's economic outcomes. The review highlights that patriarchal norms, which prioritize men's control over resources and decision-making, contribute to gender inequalities in access to education, employment, and control over income and assets. These norms undermine women's economic security by limiting their economic opportunities and bargaining power. The study recommends policies that promote women's economic empowerment, such as increasing access to education, financial services, and productive resources, while also challenging discriminatory social norms through legal reforms and community-based interventions.

Basu, (2013), examine the impact of patriarchal norms on women's education and economic security in developing countries. The study draws on sociological and feminist theories of gender inequality, patriarchy, and their impact on educational opportunities and economic outcomes. The review synthesizes empirical evidence from various studies, including qualitative and quantitative research, to analyze the impact of patriarchal norms on women's educational attainment and economic security. The review highlights those patriarchal norms, which prioritize son preference and restrict women's mobility and autonomy, contribute to gender gaps in educational attainment. These norms undermine women's economic security by limiting their access to education, skills development, and economic opportunities. The study recommends policies that promote gender-equitable access to education, challenge discriminatory social norms through community engagement, and provide economic opportunities and support for women's economic empowerment.

Roy, (2015), examines the impact of patriarchal norms and inheritance rights on women's economic security in India. The study draws on theories of intrahousehold bargaining power, property rights, and their impact on women's economic outcomes. The study uses a quasi-experimental research design, exploiting variations in inheritance legislation across Indian states, to analyze the impact of inheritance rights on women's educational attainment, dowry payments, and economic security. The study finds that reforms granting women equal inheritance rights led to increased educational attainment for women, reduced dowry payments, and increased their economic security by increasing their bargaining power within households. The study recommends strengthening and enforcing legal reforms that promote women's inheritance rights, as well as addressing discriminatory social norms that undermine women's economic security.

Jewkes, Flood, and Lang, (2015), examine the role of patriarchal norms in perpetuating violence against women and girls, and its impact on their economic security. The study draws on feminist and sociological theories of patriarchy, gender inequality, and their impact on violence and economic outcomes. The reviews examine empirical evidence from various studies, including qualitative and quantitative research, to analyze the impact of patriarchal norms on violence against women and their economic security. The review highlights that patriarchal norms,

which promote male dominance and control over women, contribute to the prevalence of violence against women and girls. This violence undermines their economic security by limiting their mobility, access to education and employment, and control over resources. The study recommends addressing patriarchal norms and promoting gender equality through community-based interventions, educational programs, and legal reforms that challenge discriminatory attitudes and behaviors, and empower women economically and socially.

Panda and Agarwal's (2015) examines the intersections of domestic violence, human development, and women's property rights within the Indian context. The authors employ a multidisciplinary approach, integrating perspectives from economics, sociology, and gender studies to understand how women's ownership of property influences their vulnerability to marital violence. Drawing on extensive survey data, the study reveals a significant inverse relationship between women's property ownership and the incidence of domestic violence. Women who own property are found to be less likely to experience physical and emotional abuse from their spouses, underscoring the critical role of economic independence in enhancing women's agency and security.

Additionally, the research highlights the broader implications for human development, suggesting that empowering women through property rights not only mitigates violence but also contributes to improved health, education, and economic outcomes for families. This study advocates for policy interventions that support women's property ownership as a means to promote gender equality and human development. By situating the issue within the larger framework of human rights and socio-economic development, Panda and Agarwal provide compelling evidence for the transformative potential of property rights in addressing marital violence and advancing women's status in society.

Kevane (2021) examines the complex interplay between gender and development within African societies. Kevane's work delves into the multifaceted ways gender norms and roles shape the economic, social, and political landscapes of the continent. Through a comprehensive analysis, Kevane highlights how traditional gender roles often limit women's access to resources, education, and economic opportunities, thus impeding overall development. The book employs case studies from various African countries to illustrate the persistent inequalities and the structural barriers women face. Furthermore, Kevane explores the impact of development policies and programs on women's lives, critically assessing their effectiveness in promoting gender equality. He argues that for sustainable development to be achieved there must be a concerted effort to dismantle patriarchal structures and promote gender-inclusive policies. Kevane's work is a significant contribution to the field of gender and development studies, providing valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities for empowering women in Africa. The book serves as a crucial resource for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners committed to fostering equitable development across the continent.

Peterman (2021) delves into the critical subject of women's property rights and the impact of gendered policies on women's long-term welfare in rural Tanzania. The study examines how the lack of property rights for women perpetuates gender inequality, affecting their economic stability and social standing. Through a

comprehensive analysis of legal frameworks and their enforcement, Peterman highlights the barriers women face in owning and inheriting property. The research employs both qualitative and quantitative methods, drawing from a rich dataset that includes household surveys and in-depth interviews with rural women. Findings reveal that women's property rights are often compromised by customary laws and patriarchal norms, which prioritize male ownership and control.

This dynamic not only limits women's access to economic resources but also undermines their ability to invest in health, education, and entrepreneurial activities, thereby affecting their long-term welfare. Peterman argues that reforming property rights legislation and ensuring its effective implementation are crucial for enhancing women's economic empowerment and overall well-being. The study's insights are pivotal for policymakers aiming to address gender disparities and promote equitable development in rural settings. By advocating for stronger legal protections and gender-sensitive policies, Peterman's work contributes significantly to the discourse on gender equality and sustainable development in Tanzania and similar contexts.

Roy and Venkatraman (2021) explore the intricate relationship between inheritance rights and women's economic independence in South Asia. Despite legal reforms aimed at granting women equal inheritance rights, traditional patriarchal norms continue to impede their effective implementation. The authors employ a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both qualitative interviews and quantitative data to assess the extent of women's economic empowerment resulting from inheritance rights. The findings reveal a significant disparity between the legal frameworks and their practical application, with cultural and social barriers playing a critical role in this gap. The study concludes that while inheritance rights are a crucial step towards women's economic independence, there is a need for broader societal change and policy enforcement to ensure these rights translate into tangible benefits. The research underscores the importance of community-level interventions and education to challenge and transform entrenched patriarchal attitudes. This work contributes to the growing body of literature on gender and economic development in South Asia, offering insights for policymakers, activists, and scholars interested in promoting gender equality and economic empowerment.

Deininger, Goyal, and Nagarajan (2019) explored the impact of women's inheritance rights on the intergenerational transmission of resources in India. Utilizing a comprehensive dataset and robust empirical methodologies, the authors examine how legal reforms enhancing women's inheritance rights influence asset ownership and economic outcomes across generations. The study finds that these reforms lead to a significant increase in women's access to inherited assets, particularly land, which in turn boosts their economic security and bargaining power within households. The enhanced asset ownership among women not only improves their welfare but also has broader implications for the next generation, including better educational and health outcomes for children. The authors underscore the importance of legal frameworks in shaping gender dynamics and resource distribution, demonstrating that strengthening women's inheritance rights can serve as a pivotal strategy for promoting gender equity and economic development. This research contributes to the broader discourse on property rights and gender equality, offering critical insights for policymakers aiming to foster inclusive growth in patriarchal societies.



Grabe (2017) examines the critical intersection between gender, land ownership, and social transformation within the Tanzanian context. This study highlights how secure land rights for women can serve as a powerful tool for achieving broader social change. Grabe's research is grounded in an extensive ethnographic fieldwork in northern Tanzania, where she explores the lived experiences of women navigating patriarchal structures to claim their land rights. The findings reveal that women's access to land is not merely an economic issue but deeply intertwined with social and cultural dimensions, affecting their agency and status within the community.

By analyzing case studies, Grabe demonstrates that land ownership empowers women, enabling them to participate more actively in decision-making processes and community governance. This empowerment, in turn, challenges and gradually transforms entrenched gender norms and power relations. The study underscores the importance of legal frameworks and community-based initiatives in supporting women's land rights, advocating for policies that recognize and protect these rights as fundamental to fostering gender equality and sustainable development. Grabe's work contributes to the broader discourse on women's rights and development, providing valuable insights for policymakers, activists, and scholars interested in gender equity and social justice in Sub-Saharan Africa.

### ***Gap from the reviews***

Based on the reviews provided, there appears to be a gap in empirical research specifically focused on the impact of patriarchal norms on women's economic security in the North Central region of Nigeria. Most of the studies mentioned have a broader geographical focus on developing countries or specific countries like India, Tanzania, and South Asia in general. The reviewed studies collectively emphasize patriarchal norms' impact on women's economic security, focusing on education, employment, resource control, inheritance rights, and violence against women. However, a notable gap exists in contextualizing these findings within the specific socio-cultural and economic conditions of North Central Nigeria, a region with unique cultural dynamics, economic challenges, and gendered social structures.

However, what makes studying this intersection particularly unique is that, India, Tanzania, and Nigeria share several socio-legal and cultural similarities when it comes to inheritance rights and patriarchal structures thus the application of studies from India, Tanzania and Asia. In these countries, customary and religious laws (such as Islamic law, Hindu succession laws, and tribal customary laws) often override statutory laws, limiting women's inheritance rights just as customary law is followed in most communities in North Central Nigeria. Statutory laws granting equal inheritance rights to women coexist with customary and religious laws that often discriminate against them. This results in inconsistent enforcement and a gap between legal provisions and actual practice. Inheritance of land is a major issue in these regions, as land ownership is directly linked to economic security, particularly in rural communities. Also traditional inheritance customs favour male heirs, either by completely excluding daughters and widows or by granting them lesser shares. This cultural bias is deeply rooted and continues to perpetuate inequality and insecurity. By drawing parallels between these regions, you can justify using research from India and Tanzania to understand the challenges and potential solutions for women's inheritance rights in North Central Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study analyses three theories, namely, the Social Norm Theory, Gender Inequality Theory and Intersectional Feminism Theory. But basically, the Gender Inequality Theory was adopted.

***Social Norm Theory:*** The theory was developed by Cristina Bicchieri (1990s). Social Norm Theory suggests that individuals' behaviors are influenced by their beliefs about what others in their social group consider appropriate or desirable behavior, and the expected consequences of adhering to or deviating from those norms. This theory could be relevant to understanding how patriarchal norms and gender roles are socially constructed and reinforced within specific cultural contexts, influencing women's economic opportunities and decision-making power. While Social Norm Theory provides insights into the social and cultural factors that shape norms, it may not fully capture the structural and systemic factors that contribute to gender inequality and economic insecurity for women.

***Intersectional Feminism Theory:*** The theory was postulated by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989). Intersectional Feminism Theory recognizes that individuals experience multiple and intersecting forms of oppression based on their gender, race, class, ethnicity, and other identities. It argues that these intersecting identities shape individuals' lived experiences and the unique challenges they face. This theory could be relevant to the study by acknowledging that women's economic security in North Central Nigeria may be influenced not only by patriarchal norms but also by their intersecting identities, such as ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic status, which can compound the impact of gender inequality. However, in Nigeria, especially in the North Central region, gender discrimination is often deeply rooted in customary and religious laws. While factors like class and ethnicity matter, patriarchy tends to be the most defining factor in women's experiences, making intersectional less applicable in analysing the relationship.

While Intersectional Feminism Theory provides a valuable lens for understanding the complexities of women's experiences, it may not offer a comprehensive framework for analyzing the specific economic implications of patriarchal norms in the North Central region of Nigeria.

***Gender Inequality Theory:*** Various feminist scholars, including Judith Lorber (1994), Raewyn Connell (1987), and Sandra Lipsitz Bem (1993) have made contributions to the Gender Inequality Theory which posits that gender is a socially constructed concept that shapes the distribution of power, resources, and opportunities in society. It argues that patriarchal structures and gender norms perpetuate inequalities between men and women, leading to the subordination and marginalization of women in various spheres, including the economic realm. While Gender Inequality Theory offers valuable insights into the systemic and structural factors contributing to gender disparities, it is criticised for not fully capturing the intersections between gender and other dimensions of identity, such as ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic status, which can further exacerbate economic insecurity for women.

However, the theory is highly relevant to the study on the impact of patriarchal norms on women's economic security in North Central Nigeria. It provides a framework for understanding how deeply entrenched gender norms and power imbalances contribute

to the economic disempowerment of women, limiting their access to education, employment, and control over resources. Gender Inequality Theory recognizes that gender disparities are not merely individual or cultural phenomena but are embedded in systemic and structural factors that perpetuate inequalities. This aligns with the study's goal of understanding the broader societal, cultural, and economic factors influencing women's economic security in North Central Nigeria.

Gender Inequality Theory specifically addresses the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and power between men and women, which directly impacts women's economic empowerment and security. This theoretical lens is well-suited for analyzing the economic implications of patriarchal norms in the region.

The study's objectives of exploring the impact of patriarchal norms on women's access to education, employment, control over economic resources, and overall financial independence align closely with the key tenets of Gender Inequality Theory, which examines how gender norms and power dynamics shape these aspects of women's lives.

### **Findings**

An analysis of the contextual expositions on the topic: Impact of patriarchal norms on economic security of women in north central Nigeria has thrown overboard the following;

- i. Patriarchal norms in North Central Nigeria reinforce traditional gender roles that limit women's access to education, employment opportunities, and economic resources.
- ii. Women in North Central Nigeria face systemic barriers to land ownership, inheritance rights, and access to financial credit systems due to discriminatory cultural practices and legal frameworks.
- iii. The high prevalence of domestic violence and sexual abuse against women in North Central Nigeria is directly linked to entrenched patriarchal norms and attitudes.
- iv. Patriarchal norms and attitudes restrict women's mobility, autonomy, and participation in decision-making processes, undermining their economic independence and security.
- v. Patriarchal norms continue to inhibit women inheritance rights and even where there are legal reforms and policies traditional patriarchal norms continue to impede their effective implementation.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study highlight the pervasive impact of patriarchal norms and attitudes on the economic security of women in North Central Nigeria. Deeply rooted gender inequalities and discriminatory cultural practices perpetuate systemic barriers that limit women's access to education, employment, and control over economic resources. Patriarchal attitudes and traditional gender roles restrict women's autonomy, decision-making power, and overall economic independence, leaving them vulnerable to poverty, exploitation, and violence. The intersectionality of gender with other identities, such as ethnicity and religion, further exacerbates these challenges, creating unique obstacles for women in the region. Addressing patriarchal norms and their economic implications is crucial for promoting gender equality, empowering women, and fostering inclusive and sustainable development in North Central Nigeria.

## Recommendations

- i. The paper recommends for the ministry of information through her relevant agencies to introduce and embark on awareness campaigns to challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes. These initiatives should target both formal and informal educational settings.
- ii. The federal and state ministries of women affairs in collaboration with civil societies should push for legal reforms to eliminate discriminatory practices and ensure gender equality in land ownership, inheritance laws, and access to financial services. These reforms should be complemented by public awareness campaigns and capacity-building initiatives to educate women about their rights and empower them to exercise those rights effectively.
- iii. Strategic women non-governmental organisations such International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) and National Council for Women Societies should combine efforts to implement comprehensive strategies to combat gender-based violence, including strengthening legal frameworks, improving access to support services for survivors, and promoting community-based interventions to challenge patriarchal norms and attitudes and foster a culture of respect and equality.
- iv. Women political office holders should initiate projects that will empower women to participate actively in decision-making processes and politics at various levels. These efforts should be accompanied by programs that promote women's leadership skills and confidence.
- v. Gender activists should adopt an intersectional approach to address the effects of gender, ethnicity and religion on women's economic security. This may involve targeted interventions tailored to the specific needs and challenges faced by diverse groups of women, with a focus on collaborating with relevant local stakeholders, including traditional and religious leaders in order to develop relevant and sustainable solutions.

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