

## Inheritance Dynamics and Women land Rights in Nigeria

This study examines the inheritance patterns over three generations of individuals in Nigeria. The existing literature shows that women's inheritance rights in general and women's land inheritance rights in particular are limited whether as a spouse, widow or a daughter as compared to men's inheritance rights as a widower or a son. This limitation on women's land inheritance right would be a formidable challenge in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as rights are ends of MDGs by themselves and means to achieve all other goals. The existing gender imbalance in inheritance rights has multifaceted implications that touch almost everything in the whole spectrum of social, political, and economic arenas. Land inheritance rights directly affect women access to and control of productive resources. Specially, in a country like Nigeria where the agrarian society is very large and men are mostly dominant.

However, there are no comprehensive rigorous studies that examined inheritance in disaggregated manner. Most of the existing quantitative literatures don't capture the intra-household differences and intergenerational dynamics that vary across different locations, legal systems and cultural settings. The main aim of the study is, thus, to assess determinants of household decisions about land transfers via inheritance, inter-generational dynamics of inheritance rights and its implication on gender-differentiated intra-household decision making and bargaining power .

For this purpose, sample size of approximately 3800 households were selected from two LGAs (Akure North and Akure South) in Ondo state in Nigeria. These households were selected along the boundaries of the treatment wards in Akure South (urban LGA) and Akure North (rural LGA). For comparability reasons, blocks of clusters were selected on both sides of the boundaries of the treatment wards on the basis of: Continuity of settlement on both sides of the boundaries, and comparability of subjects in terms of access to public services, infrastructural development, economic activities. Data consists both principal male, principal female and female spouses from 1962 urban and 1840 rural households.

Information on perceptions, legal knowledge, land rights, inheritance, demand and willingness to pay for certificates were collected separately from male and female respondents regarding the following groups:

|                   | Data clusters                     | # of Male | # of Female |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| First generation  | siblings of the head/spouse       | 9710      | 7791        |
| Second generation | Heads of households               | 3515      | 270         |
|                   | Spouses                           | 0         | 3373        |
| Third generation  | Direct descendants - resident     | 4990      | 3769        |
|                   | Direct descendants - non-resident | 4030      | 3971        |
|                   | Total observations                | 22,245    | 15,203      |

This is very unique dataset, and allow us to investigate inheritance rights from male and female respondents perspective to examine examines women's access to land in Nigeria using inheritance information to compare (i) male and female respondents, and their siblings (1<sup>st</sup> generation); (ii) wives and their husbands ( 2<sup>nd</sup> generation) ; and (iii) Daughters and sons of the respondents (3<sup>rd</sup> generation). For the analysis of the determinants of likelihood of inheritance, male and female respondents were asked "*Does [NAME] inherit the HH land if, God forbid, you die?*". To address potential estimation bias, the analysis is restricted to households that have a son and a daughter as resident members. This allows us to control for household fixed effects. Hence, a fixed effects linear probability model is estimated to examine daughters' likelihood of receiving land inheritance from their parents

Controlling for large number of factors including location, household demography, religion and tribe, the preliminary findings from the study found that women -both in the respondents (second generation) and their children (third generation) - are less likely to inherit land from their respective parents. Looking at the dynamics of inheritance, results show a slight improvement over time. Results also show that women are more likely to receive land inheritance from their mothers than their fathers. Mother's education is found to have a positive effect on the women of inheritance. Overall, magnitudes of inheritance and other additional correlates vary by location and type of respondent, implying the sensitivity of land rights and inheritance related issues in a predominantly customary system, and one needs to be extremely cautious in data collection and analysis.