

Legal Feminism, Modernity and Their Impact on Some African Countries

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Abstract : The origin of legal feminism can be attributed to an attempt to provide a safe space for women such as voting, parental, and inheritance rights, among others. It was also a rebellion against male supremacy. However, with the development of technology and especially in the era of the internet, it appears that both legal feminism and the modernism are losing their luster. While these movements had their origin either in the United States of America or western Europe, their impacts have been felt as far as Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In Africa, different countries have different levels of penetration of these movements. This study, therefore, had its focus on how legal feminism and modernism have influenced legal developments in Kenya and Rwanda. The study adopted a qualitative approach with the respondents being asked about their feelings and perceptions on how the two movements had affected legal developments in their countries. In order to gauge the opinion of different categories of people such as the youth, middle-aged and the elderly people as well as being gender-sensitive, the study adopted a purpose method of sampling. The questionnaires and the focus group discussions were employed as the main tools for data gathering. From the questionnaires, the focus group discussions, and the data analysis that followed, the study concluded that both legal feminism and modernity had penetrated the legal systems of both Kenya and Rwanda so deeply. The study further found that the proponents of the two movements were mostly urban based and educated women. The men were generally opposed to the movements.

Keywords : legal development, legal feminsim, modernism, voting, parental and inheritance rights

Conference Title : ICFLTGL 2020 : International Conference on Feminist Legal Theory, Gender and Law

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : July 20-21, 2020