

Seeking Justice for Women in Num 27:1-11: A Paradigm for Challenging Socio-Cultural Gender Bias among Christians in Africa

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Abstract

This study explores the narrative of Num 27:1-11 and focuses on Moses' response to the daughters of Zelophehad, as a paradigm for addressing socio-cultural biases against the girl child. In ancient Israel, patriarchal inheritance laws excluded women from property ownership, which reflects broader societal marginalization. The petition by Zelophehad's daughters, however, challenged these norms, which led Moses to seek divine guidance. God's affirmative response resulted in legal reforms granting daughters inheritance rights, setting a groundbreaking precedent for justice and equity. The study uses a multidimensional approach, including exegetical, gender and sociocultural analysis, to explore the historical, cultural, and theological viewpoints of the text. It emphasizes the transformative leadership of Moses, the role of advocacy, and the adaptability of divine law to promote inclusivity. Additionally, it draws parallels between ancient patriarchal systems and modern African contexts, where women and girls face systemic exclusion from inheritance, education, and leadership opportunities. Thus, as a conclusion, the article positions Num 27:1-11 as a valuable resource for confronting gender biases even as it advocates for societal change by suggesting a biblical foundation for the emancipation of women and especially girls. To ensure this, the present paper recommends that there is need for educational reforms and implementation, policy and legal framework development, research and documentation, community engagement and awareness, cross-stakeholder collaboration among a few others.

Key words: Gender Bias, Patriarchal Cultures, Inheritance Rights, Justice for women, Women Emancipation

Introduction

Gender bias remains a prevalent issue that is embedded in cultural, social, and religious structures, which accounts for different unfair treatments against women and girls across societies. In this regard, patriarchal systems often perpetuate the marginalization of women through restrictive inheritance laws, exclusion from leadership roles, and limited access to education and economic resources (Ibrahim, 2014). These realities are especially pronounced in African

contexts, where socio-cultural norms continue to prioritize male dominance in governance, property ownership, and familial authority (Tamale, 2005). Despite the global progress made through initiatives such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to promote gender equality and empower women, the girl child in many societies remains trapped in cycles of systemic discrimination and socio-economic disempowerment (United Nations, 2015). Addressing these challenges requires innovative approaches that not only critique existing norms but also draw on historical and ethical paradigms for advocacy and reform.

From the viewpoint of this paper, the biblical narrative of Num 27:1-11 provides an apt source for confronting systemic gender inequality. The story itself recounts the petition of Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah – the daughters of Zelophehad – who courageously challenged the patriarchal inheritance laws of ancient Israel that excluded women from property ownership (Shectman, 2009). Their legal plea brought before Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the assembly, represents a bold act of advocacy within a patriarchal framework. Moses' response, powered by consultation with God and subsequent legal reforms, illustrates an openness to reimagining societal norms in pursuit of justice and equity. This event, which triggers a transformative moment, not only affirms the dignity and agency of women but also establishes a theological model for addressing systemic biases through inclusive and just leadership.

The relevance of this narrative to contemporary African contexts cannot be overstated. Many African cultures retain practices that mirror the exclusion faced by the daughters of Zelophehad, particularly in matters of inheritance and property rights (Nyamu-Musembi, 2002). The marginalization of women is compounded by societal norms that limit their access to education, leadership, and decision-making opportunities. Accordingly, this study positions Num 27:1-11 as a paradigm for contemporary female emancipation, demonstrating how scripture can serve as a liberative tool for challenging harmful cultural practices and advocate for the rights of the girl child. Through a multidimensional methodological approach that integrates exegetical, gender, and sociocultural analysis, this study explores the historical and theological significance of the narrative while drawing practical lessons for addressing gender inequality in modern African societies.

By and large, by analyzing Moses' response to the daughters' petition and the broader implications of the legal reforms enacted in the biblical text, this paper highlights the transformative power of leadership that is open to advocacy and dialogue. It underscores the enduring relevance of biblical texts in promoting justice and equity and calls for the reinterpretation of scripture to inspire social transformation (Dube, 1996). This study argues that the narrative of the daughters of Zelophehad not only challenges patriarchal structures but also provides a framework for empowering women and girls to advocate for their

rights. Moreover, it highlights the critical role of faith communities, religious leaders, and policymakers in leveraging scriptural principles to promote gender justice and address the systemic challenges faced by the girl child. The paper concludes by preferring valuable recommendations as remedies for religious and socio-cultural biases against females from diverse backgrounds, but particularly in Africa.

Methodology

This study uses a multidimensional approach to analyze the narrative of Num 27:1-11, focusing on its textual, cultural, and theological implications. The exegetical approach examines the structure, language, and flow of the text to understand its theological message and implications (Sakenfeld, 1999). Key elements of the daughters of Zelophehad's petition, Moses' response, and God's judgment are critically analyzed to identify how the narrative challenges patriarchal structures and articulates a vision of justice. The historical and cultural dimensions of the passage are explored to situate it within the broader Mosaic legal tradition and the patriarchal context of ancient Israel (Milgrom, 1990). This includes examining legal practices surrounding inheritance rights, the role of women in the socio-economic order, and the significance of Moses consulting God as a model for ethical leadership (Kanu & Paul, 2024).

The study also integrates insights from other disciplines, including gender studies and African sociocultural analysis, contextual and liberationist hermeneutics to provide a comprehensive exploration of the text (Fiorenza, 1984). Gender studies contribute a critical understanding of how patriarchal systems operate and are maintained in societies (Oyèwùmí, 1997). African sociocultural analysis situates the study within the lived realities of many African women and girls who continue to face discrimination due to inheritance laws, cultural practices, and societal norms (Oduyoye, 1995). Contextual and liberationist hermeneutics are employed to interpret Num 27:1-11 and focuses on the relevance of the text to the specific cultural, social, and political realities of the contemporary African context. Liberationist hermeneutics pay attention to the voices and experiences of the marginalized, aligning with the daughters of Zelophehad's advocacy for their rights (West, 2021). Through the combination of these methodological tools, the study provides a nuanced and transformative reading of Num 27:1-11, positioning it as a valuable resource for addressing systemic gender biases and advocating for the rights of the girl child in African societies and beyond.

Exegesis of Num 27:1-11

i. Historical and Cultural Context of the Narrative

The narrative of Num 27:1-11 is situated within the patriarchal societal framework of ancient Israel, where inheritance laws and social structures were predominantly male-centered. Understanding the historical and cultural context of this passage sheds light on its transformative significance and its implications for addressing systemic gender biases (Meyers, 1983). Inheritance

laws in ancient Israel reflected the patriarchal nature of the society. Property and wealth were typically passed through male lineage, with sons as the primary heirs. This system not only ensured the economic stability of male descendants but also preserved family names and land ownership within the patrilineal structure (Schloen, 2001)). Women, particularly daughters, were generally excluded from inheritance unless no male heirs were available. Their economic security was tied to marriage, and their dowry was often considered their share of the family's wealth.

This practice was deeply entrenched in the cultural and legal traditions of ancient Israel and was consistent with broader ancient Near Eastern norms (Westbrook, 1991). The exclusion of daughters from inheritance was not only a legal reality but also a reflection of the socio-economic marginalization of women. Women were often regarded as dependents of male relatives – first their fathers, then their husbands, and later their sons – highlighting their subordinate status within the patriarchal framework (Frymer-Kensky, 2004). The daughters of Zelophehad directly confronted this systemic exclusion, challenging the prevailing norms that denied them inheritance rights. Their petition was unprecedented in a legal system where daughters were not seen as legitimate heirs (Steinberg, 2004). The narrative thus becomes a remarkable case of advocacy for gender equity, highlighting how bold actions can lead to the transformation of unjust systems. The Mosaic legal tradition, as recorded in the Torah, often reflects the patriarchal values of its time but also contains moments of progressive inclusion and protection for vulnerable groups, including women. While women's roles were largely defined by their domestic and reproductive functions, the Mosaic law also recognized their rights in certain areas, such as protection from abuse (Deut 22:25–27), provisions for widows (Deuteronomy 10:18; 24:19–21), and rights to sustenance (Exodus 21:10). However, these protections often did not translate into full equality, particularly regarding economic and legal autonomy (Bird, 1997).

ii. Literary structure of Num 27:1-11

This study proposes a simple linear literary structure for Num 27:1-11. In the said structure vv. 1-2 serves as the introduction (A), while “B” constituted of vv. 3-4 captures the section on legal petition by the daughters of Zelophehad. This gives rise to a Divine Adjudication (C, vv. 5-7). The final part is designated as “Legal Implementation” under “D” which includes vv. 8-11. All these would imply that the literary structure can be spelt out as below:

- A. Introduction (vv. 1-2)
- B. The Legal Petition (vv. 3-4)
- C. Divine Adjudication (vv. 5-7)
- D. Legal Implementation (vv. 8-11)

iii. Content Analysis of Num 27:1-11

A. Introduction (v. 1-2)

In Num 27:1-2, the narrative begins with the introduction of five women: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. Their inclusion in the text is significant, as women were often excluded from genealogical records in the ancient Near East (Brenner, 2014). By identifying the women by name and lineage, the text emphasizes their individuality and their rightful place in Israel's covenant community. They are described as daughters of Zelophehad, son of Hopher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh, anchoring their claim within the heritage of the tribe of Joseph (Olson, 2012). The use of the Hebrew term "*benōt*", meaning "daughters," highlights the deliberate focus on their identity as women, drawing attention to their prominent role in this narrative – something extraordinary in a patriarchal society (Pardes, 2004).

The setting and context of the narrative further underline the boldness of the daughters' actions. They approach the public assembly (*hā'ēdāh*), a formal gathering of the Israelite community that included Moses, Eleazar the priest, the chiefs, and the congregation. Here, the women demonstrate remarkable courage and agency by stepping into this male-dominated space, taking the initiative to advocate for their legal rights. Their presence before multiple layers of Israelite leadership reflects the gravity of their case and its implications for the entire community (Knierim & Coats, 2005). Their challenge to social norms highlights their determination to confront the exclusion of women from inheritance rights within Israelite law.

B. The Legal Petition (v. 3-4)

In verses 3-4, the daughters present their legal petition, beginning with a statement of facts. They explain that their father died in the wilderness (*bammidbār*), situating their family's situation within the larger narrative of Israel's journey to the Promised Land (Dozeman, 1998). Importantly, they clarify that their father "was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah" (v. 3), distancing their family from rebellious factions. This distinction strengthens their moral and legal case, as it establishes that their father was neither guilty of rebellion nor a violator of divine law (Levine, 2000). The central issue is emphasized with the phrase "had no sons" (*bānim lō hāyū lo*), pointing to the systemic problem of inheritance laws that only recognized male heirs.

The central question posed by the daughters is framed as follows: "Why should the name of our father be taken away from his clan because he had no son?" (v. 4). The term "*shem*" meaning "name," is critical here, as the preservation of a family's name and legacy was a vital concern in Israelite society, often tied to property ownership and covenantal promises (Hamilton, 2005). Their appeal directly challenges patriarchal norms by suggesting that daughters should inherit property when no sons exist. This request is revolutionary in the legal and social structures of the ancient Near East, as it introduces the idea of women's inclusion in inheritance (Fuchs, 1989).

C. *Divine Adjudication (v. 5–7)*

The narrative shifts to divine adjudication in verses 5–7. Moses, as the intermediary leader, brings the case before YHWH (Lord), seeking divine guidance for a matter of such legal and theological importance. The Hebrew phrase “*wayaqrēb Mosheh et-mishpātan lifnē YHWH,*” translated as “Moses brought their case before the Lord,” frames the petition as a legal matter requiring divine resolution (Martin, 1979). This act underscores the theocratic nature of Israel's governance, where ultimate justice rests with God. YHWH's response is unequivocal: “The daughters of Zelophehad speak right.” The use of the term “*kēn,*” meaning “right” or “correct,” signifies divine approval of their argument. God instructs Moses to grant them an inheritance, thereby endorsing their challenge to the status quo. This divine judgment validates not only the daughters' claim but also establishes a new legal precedent for inheritance laws. The resolution of their case demonstrates that the law is dynamic and responsive to new challenges, highlighting the adaptability of God's covenantal justice to human needs (Cross, 1997).

D. *Legal Implementation (v. 8–11)*

Verses 8–11 outline the legal implementation of YHWH's decision, expanding the daughters' case into a universal application. God commands Moses to establish a new law: “If a man dies and has no son, then you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter” (v. 8). This extension of inheritance rights to daughters in the absence of sons represents a significant shift in Israelite legal tradition (Carmichael, 1996). The Hebrew phrase “*weha'abartem et-naḥalātō,*” meaning “you shall transfer his inheritance,” uses the verb “*'ābar*” (“transfer”), indicating the legal act of passing on property. The law further establishes a hierarchical order of inheritance: first to sons, then to daughters if no sons exist, followed by brothers, the father's brothers, and finally the nearest kinsman within the clan. This structured order ensures that property remains within the extended family and tribal boundaries, preserving the integrity of Israel's tribal system while safeguarding the rights of women. The hierarchy reflects a balance between societal norms and the acknowledgment of women's rights, demonstrating a nuanced approach to legal reform (Frymer-Kensky, 1981).

A Theological Synthesis of Num 27:1-11

Theologically, the divine endorsement of the daughters' claim underscores the principle that fairness and justice are central to God's law. This ruling demonstrates the responsiveness of divine laws to human circumstances, affirming the covenantal value of preserving family and communal integrity. The repeated use of terms like “*naḥalah*” (“inheritance”) and “*shem*” (“name”) highlights the deep interconnection between property rights and family identity in Israelite thought. In this way, Num 27:1–11 addresses systemic inequities while embedding the concept of justice in Israel's legal tradition. The narrative not only affirms the value and agency of women in society but also provides a biblical foundation for opposing religious and socio-cultural biases against the girl child and, by extension, the female gender as a whole.

Socio-Cultural, Ethical and Theological Implications of Num 27:1-11

By and large, the passage offers important and useful insights into the social-cultural, ethical, and theological developments in ancient Israel, which implies profound ethical and theological implications, particularly in its affirmation of justice, equity, and the dignity of the marginalized (Frymer-Kensky, 2018). In this connection, socio-legally, the text reflects a transitional phase in Israel's lawmaking, where legal statutes were adapted to address changing realities. The inclusion of daughters in inheritance laws indicates a move toward greater equity and justice within the covenant community (Meyers, 2014). Culturally, women in the ancient Near East were typically excluded from inheritance, as property passed through male lineage. The daughters' petition challenges these norms and marks a groundbreaking moment in Israelite society.

From an ethical viewpoint, the decision to grant inheritance rights to the daughters of Zelophehad represents a divine endorsement of fairness and justice that transcend the patriarchal norms of ancient Israel (Phyllis, 1984). YHWH's response, "The daughters of Zelophehad speak right," is a theological declaration that justice is not limited by gender and that laws can evolve to accommodate the needs of those who are marginalized. This demonstrates that divine law is not static but adaptable to ensure equity and inclusion. The narrative also affirms the inherent dignity of women, challenging cultural constructs that deny them agency (Cohn, 2023). By granting the daughters the right to inherit, the text emphasizes the ethical imperative to uphold the rights of all members of society, regardless of their status or gender, which resonates with contemporary calls for social justice.

Num 27:1-11 as a Paradigm for Contemporary Female Emancipation

The story of the daughters of Zelophehad serves as a powerful paradigm for contemporary efforts to promote female emancipation, particularly in contexts where gender inequality persists. The patriarchal system depicted in Numbers 27 mirrors many cultural and societal constraints faced by women in modern African contexts (Elsa, 2016). In both settings, women have often been excluded from legal and social structures, with inheritance laws and other societal norms favoring male heirs. For instance, in numerous African cultures, the exclusion of women from property ownership and decision-making remains a deeply entrenched issue, much like the challenges faced by the daughters of Zelophehad. The marginalization of female voices, whether in legal frameworks, political systems, or religious institutions, demonstrates a historical continuity of systemic discriminations that have stifled the agency of women. Thus, the passage invites a reflection on how ancient struggles for justice can illuminate and challenge ongoing patterns of oppression, by drawing attention to these parallels.

The story also provides key lessons for addressing gender inequality in Africa. The daughters of Zelophehad demonstrate the transformative potential of bold female agency and advocacy in bringing about systemic change. Their

willingness to confront the prevailing norms of their time, in a public and authoritative setting, challenges women today to assert their rights and advocate for justice. This example underscores the importance of empowering women to take active roles in shaping legal and societal structures. Furthermore, the role of Moses and other leaders in seeking divine guidance and implementing reforms highlights the importance of leadership in fostering justice and gender equity (Madipoane, 2021; Onukwuba et al., 2023). Leaders in Africa, both political and religious, can play a pivotal role in dismantling discriminatory practices and ensuring that laws and policies promote inclusivity and fairness.

Furthermore, the passage underscores the need for a liberative reading of scripture that promotes social transformation. Traditional interpretations of religious texts have often been used to perpetuate patriarchy and gender inequality. However, Num 27:1-11 provides a compelling example of how scripture can be reinterpreted to affirm the rights and dignity of women (Dube, 2019). This liberative approach to biblical narratives can inspire advocacy and policy reforms that challenge harmful cultural practices. By emphasizing the justice-oriented message of the text, religious leaders and educators can use scripture to advocate for gender equality and encourage a more inclusive understanding of God's will for humanity (Pilani, 2023).

Num 27:1-11 and its Implications for Gender Biases in Africa

The implications of Num 27:1-11 for African societies are obvious and many, a few of which are particularly in the areas of religion, education, and advocacy for the empowerment of the girl child. First, the study affirms that religious texts such as the Bible, has the potential to serve as a powerful tool for advocacy and emancipation in African societies (Dube, 2022). The principles of justice and equity evident in this passage can be leveraged to challenge harmful cultural norms that marginalize women. For instance, by emphasizing that YHWH validated the daughters' claim to inheritance, religious leaders can encourage communities to rethink traditional practices that exclude women from accessing resources or participating in decision-making (Musimbi, 2019). Moreover, promoting religious education that highlights themes of justice and gender equity can equip faith communities with the theological resources to combat systemic inequalities. Biblical narratives like that of the daughters of Zelophehad can be used as moral frameworks to advocate for reforms that uplift women and affirm their full humanity.

Moreover, advocacy for the empowerment of the girl child emerges as a central implication of this narrative in Numbers 27. The story demonstrates the importance of advocating equal opportunities, particularly in areas such as education and leadership in Africa (Amba, 2020). The daughters' knowledge of inheritance laws and their ability to articulate their case before Israelite leaders suggest that education played a role in their empowerment. This highlights the need to prioritize female education in contemporary African societies as a means of promoting confidence, independence, and the ability to challenge

discriminatory structures (Nyambura, 2017). Thus, addressing systemic barriers to the rights and agency of the girl child – such as child marriage, denial of education, and gender-based violence – can transform societies by ensuring that girls have the resources and opportunities to realize their full potential (Okonkwo, et al., 2025).

In addition, the text underlines the crucial role faith communities can play in driving gender justice. Churches, mosques, and other religious institutions are uniquely positioned to mobilize support for equality and justice, given their influence on social norms and values (Apawo, 2004). Faith communities, by drawing on examples like Num 27:1-11, can challenge cultural practices that devalue women and advocate for inclusive policies that promote gender equity. Religious leaders, in particular, can serve as allies in the fight for equality by using their platforms to preach messages of justice and inclusion. Furthermore, faith-based organizations can collaborate with government and civil society to implement programs that empower women and girls, ensuring that they are active participants in shaping their communities and societies (Sarojini, 2009). Again, the narrative of the daughters of Zelophehad is a profound example of how scripture can affirm justice, equity, and the dignity of the marginalized. Its implications for African societies are particularly significant, offering a model for addressing gender inequality and empowering women to challenge discriminatory norms. By drawing parallels between ancient patriarchal systems and modern contexts, and by reinterpreting religious texts for liberative purposes, this passage inspires advocacy and social transformation. Faith communities and leaders have a unique opportunity to leverage these biblical principles to promote gender justice and empower the girl child, ensuring that all members of society are treated with dignity and fairness.

To sum up then, the narrative of the daughters of Zelophehad is indeed an example of how scripture can affirm justice, equity, and the dignity of the marginalized. Its implications for African societies are particularly significant, offering a model for addressing gender inequality and empowering women to challenge discriminatory norms (Okonkwo et al., 2025). This passage then inspires advocacy and social transformation by drawing parallels between ancient patriarchal systems and modern contexts, and by reinterpreting religious texts for liberative purposes. Faith communities and leaders have a unique opportunity to leverage these biblical principles to promote gender justice and empower the girl child, ensuring that all members of society are treated with dignity and fairness.

Recommendations

Based on this scholarly analysis of Num 27:1-11 and its implications for addressing gender bias, particularly in African contexts, several key recommendations emerge for advancing gender justice and women's empowerment.

- i. *Educational Reforms and Implementation:* In terms of educational reforms and implementation, religious institutions must prioritize the integration of gender-inclusive biblical interpretations into their theological curricula. This should be accompanied by comprehensive training programs for religious leaders that equip them to use biblical narratives like Num 27:1-11 effectively in advocating for women's rights. The development of educational resources highlighting examples of female empowerment in religious texts is also crucial for transforming perspectives and practices.
- ii. *Policy and legal framework development:* Policy and legal framework development represents another critical area for action. Governments need to undertake systematic reviews and reforms of inheritance laws to ensure equal rights for women and girls. This should be supported by the establishment of robust legal aid systems that can assist women in pursuing inheritance and property rights cases. Additionally, mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing gender-equitable policies must be developed in both religious and secular contexts.
- iii. *Research and Documentation:* Research and documentation efforts are essential for building an evidence base for change. This includes conducting comparative studies of traditional inheritance practices across different African cultures, documenting successful cases of religious-based advocacy for women's rights, and researching the long-term impact of religious teachings on gender attitudes in African societies. Such research will provide valuable insights for policy development and program implementation.
- iv. *Community Engagement and Awareness:* Community engagement and awareness represent crucial components of any comprehensive strategy. This involves organizing structured dialogues between religious leaders and women's rights advocates, developing culturally sensitive awareness programs about women's inheritance rights, and creating platforms where women can share their experiences with inheritance and property rights issues. These initiatives should be designed to foster meaningful dialogue and understanding across different stakeholders.
- v. *Religious Leadership Development:* Religious leadership development requires focused attention through the establishment of mentorship programs for female religious leaders and the creation of networks of religious leaders committed to gender justice. Resources must be developed to support religious leaders in addressing gender bias within their communities effectively.
- vi. *Cross-Stakeholder Collaboration:* Cross-stakeholder collaboration is vital for achieving sustainable change. This includes promoting partnerships between religious institutions, civil society organizations, and government agencies. Interfaith initiatives focused on women's empowerment should be encouraged, along with joint programs between academic institutions

and religious organizations. Such collaborations can leverage diverse expertise and resources for greater impact.

- vii. *Resource Mobilization*: Finally, resource mobilization strategies must be developed to ensure the sustainability of gender justice initiatives in religious institutions. This includes creating sustainable funding mechanisms for women's rights advocacy programs and establishing partnerships with development organizations for resource support. These funding strategies should be designed to provide long-term support for transformative change efforts across Africa, especially among cultures with strong gender-bias tendencies.

Through the implementation of these comprehensive recommendations, religious institutions and their partners can work effectively toward addressing gender bias and promoting women's empowerment in African contexts, using the powerful example of the daughters of Zelophehad as a foundation for change.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the narrative of Num 27:1-11 serves as a powerful paradigm for addressing contemporary gender inequities, particularly within African contexts where patriarchal systems continue to marginalize women and girls. Through exegetical analysis, the study has shown how the daughters of Zelophehad's successful petition for inheritance rights represents a transformative moment in biblical history that challenged existing patriarchal structures and established new legal precedents for women's rights. The divine endorsement of their claim, coupled with Moses' responsive leadership, provides a theological foundation for gender justice that remains relevant in modern contexts. The multidimensional methodology employed in this study has revealed several significant findings. First, the narrative demonstrates that religious texts can serve as powerful tools for advocacy and social transformation when interpreted through a liberative hermeneutical lens. Second, the study highlights the remarkable parallels between the systemic challenges faced by women in ancient Israel and those confronting women in contemporary African societies, particularly regarding inheritance rights and economic empowerment. Third, the research underscores the crucial role of religious leadership in facilitating social change, as exemplified by Moses' willingness to seek divine guidance and implement reforms that promoted greater equity.

The implications of this research extend beyond theoretical understanding to practical application in African contexts. Religious institutions, as influential shapers of social norms and values, are uniquely positioned to challenge discriminatory practices and promote gender justice. The study's recommendations for educational reforms, policy development, and community engagement provide a comprehensive framework for implementing change. Furthermore, the emphasis on cross-sectoral

collaboration and sustainable resource mobilization offers practical pathways for translating biblical principles into concrete actions that advance women's rights and empowerment. This research contributes to the broader scholarly discourse on gender justice in religious contexts by demonstrating how ancient biblical narratives can inform contemporary efforts to address systemic inequities. Future research might explore how other biblical texts can be similarly leveraged to promote gender justice, examine the effectiveness of religious-based advocacy programs in different African contexts, and investigate the intersection of religious teaching and cultural transformation in promoting women's rights.

By and large then, Num 27:1-11 serves a powerful testament to the possibility of transforming patriarchal systems through courageous advocacy, responsive leadership, and divine endorsement of justice. As African societies continue to grapple with gender inequality, this narrative offers both inspiration and practical guidance for promoting the rights and dignity of women and girls. The success of the daughters of Zelophehad in securing their inheritance rights serves as an enduring model for how religious texts and institutions can contribute to the broader struggle for gender justice and social transformation.

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