

Paternity Fraud in Nigeria: Examining the Legal Framework and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

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Abstract: Paternity fraud is a surreptitious threat silently ravages families in Nigeria, leaving scars of emotional wreckage, financial devastation and socio-cultural upheaval. As DNA evaluation becomes increasingly accessible, shocking unmasking of infidelity and deception shatters the façade of unsuspecting families and communities. This study examines legal framework and dispute resolution mechanisms addressing paternity fraud in Nigeria, revealing the gaps and limitations in paternity fraud handling. The theoretical framework for this study are: Social exchange theory, deception theory and legal pluralism theory. The study embraced the qualitative designed approach as it focused on analyzing secondary data sourced from articles, journals, documents and relevant texts. The study findings reveal that Nigeria's legal framework lacks specific provisions addressing paternity deception, relying on civil laws and DNA evaluation, it identifies various challenges in dispute resolution, to include: limited access to DNA analysis, cultural and social pressures, inadequate legal representation, issues of emotional complexities, lack of awareness of parties rights in the resolutions, issue of power inequality. The study recommends need for legal reforms to explicitly recognize paternity fraud, introduce financial restitution provisions, religious advocacy, and community-led ethical initiatives can shift cultural attitudes and prevent dubious paternity claims, the need to strengthen dispute resolution mechanisms such as arbitration, to address paternity disputes, ensure children rights are protected and their right to know their biological parents, regulate assisted reproductive technology geared towards preventing paternity falsification, and the establishment of mental health support systems and mediation services will help mitigate the emotional and social consequences of paternity fraud.

Keywords: Paternity Fraud, Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA), Legal Framework, Dispute Resolution.



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Introduction

In Nigeria, the issue of paternity fraud has garnered increasing attention due to its rising prevalence and far-reaching consequences for the product of the fraud (child), families, legal institutions, ethical, cultural and societal norms. At present, one of the leading Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) evaluation firm in Lagos, showed a report which indicates that approximately 27% of paternity tests conducted in Nigeria yielded negative results, meaning that more than one out of four (1:4) tested men are not the biological fathers of the children they believe to be theirs (Metuon, 2025, p. 101). This statistical data underscores the urgent need to investigate the causes and consequences of paternity deception as well as the legal and dispute resolution mechanisms to address these challenge.

The consequences of paternity fraud are multifaceted in nature. The affected men often suffer psychologically, financially, economically, betrayed or let down by their loved ones, become object of societal caricature, and social stigma when they discover that they were not the biological fathers of children they have raised so far. On the other hand, the women implicated in paternity deception may face legal consequences, family breakdowns, become object of societal caricature, stigmatized and societal ostracization in most communities in Nigeria (Ojuroungbe, 2024). The most affected, however, are the children, who may experience identity crises, psychological trauma, and inheritance disputes upon discovering the truth (Metoun, 2025; Oblong Media Unlimited, 2024).

The thesis statement to study is that, it is presumed that a woman is in the best position to identify the father of her child. On the other hand, a man is assumed to be a father of a child once the child is born within the institution of marriage, or once he acknowledges being responsible for the child outside wedlock. Nevertheless, paternity fraud happens when a mother falsely attributes the biological father of her child to another for some reasons best known to her (Metoun, 2025; Asangausung, 2024; Chiagoziem & Efut, 2021).

Studies reveal that there have been several paternity disputes in Nigeria lately. That Nigeria now ranks second (2nd), only behind Jamaica in global index of countries with highest paternity fraud (Ogunipe et al, 2021; The Guardian, 2021). Experts have attributed the increasing paternity deception to several factors including: increased absorption of western cultures, which liberalizes causal sexual relationship, issues of uncontrolled radical feminist rights among others. It is believed that in the past strong African morals and lack of exposure discouraged indiscriminate sex, which was seen as a taboo and punishable.

The precedence of paternity disputes has been a global phenomenon with significant social, economic, legal, and psychological implications. Across different geo-political zones of the country, these disputes arise due to issues such as infidelity, paternity fraud, reproductive technologies, and legal battles over child custody and support. The negative consequences of disputed paternity often extend beyond the family circle, affecting children's identity, emotional well-being, and socio-economic stability (Metoun, 2025; Smart DNA, 2025; Asangausung, 2024; Efut and Chiagoziem, 2021; Nduna & Jewkes, 2012).

In advanced countries, paternity disputes are frequently addressed through legal and scientific means, with DNA testing playing a crucial role in resolving uncertainties, but this is not so with developing countries which relies heavily on cultural or traditional means. More so, developing countries face additional challenges in handling paternity disputes due to limited access to legal resources, social stigma, and cultural perceptions of fatherhood.

Generally, in African and Asian societies, paternity is often linked to marital legitimacy rather than biological proof. As a result, disputes over paternity can lead to the rejection of children,

family breakdowns, and in some cases, it can lead to the victimization of the women accused of infidelity (Asangausung et al, 2025; Metoun, 2025). For Nigeria in particular, paternity disputes are a growing concern, where some men unknowingly raise children who are not biologically theirs, only to discover the truth later through DNA evaluation. The implications of such discoveries often lead to divorce, social stigma, violence against the accused woman, disinheritance, and legal battles (Asangausung, 2024; Anyogu & Ozioko, 2019).

On the contrary, many nations, including the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, have well-established legal frameworks that mandate paternity testing in cases involving child custody, support, and inheritance rights. The court of law often intervenes to ensure that children receive financial and emotional support from their biological fathers, thus reducing the long-term negative impact of such disputes. Nevertheless, despite the availability of advanced technology, contested paternity can still lead to complex legal battles, emotional distress, and strained family relationships (Asangausung, et al, 2015; Hartshorne, 2012).

For instance, Smart DNA Nigeria's 2025 annual DNA testing report revealed, First, that one in four (1:4) men tested aren't the biological father. Second, that the firstborn sons or daughters are disproportionately affected, accounting to about sixty-four percent (64%) of negative results as reported. The report highlights concern about societal decay, betrayal, trust deficits and emotional trauma emanating from paternity fraud related issues. Last, that Nigeria lacks specific laws addressing paternity fraud, leaving victims with limited recourse (Smart DNA, 2025).

Some documented high-profile cases of paternity fraud include: First, Mohbad's paternity dispute, where the late singer's father Pa Joseph Aloba, demanded a DNA evaluation to confirm whether his grandson by name (Liam) belongs to his late son Mohbad. Second, Davido Adeleke popular known as "OBO" paternity controversy, the Afro beats artists has faced several paternity disputes, including allegations from one Ayotomide Labinjo, who claimed the Davido fathered her daughter. Third, Femi Kuti's DNA epignosis, where it was documented that the Afro beat legend publicly confirmed in 2006 that two of his children weren't his biologically. Fourth, Nedu Wazobia's encounter, where the media personality discovered also that two of his children weren't his after a DNA evaluation was conducted. Last, the High Court Judge Saga, in 2023 a Delta State Judge named Anthony Okorodas publicly announced that DNA evaluation confirmed that three of his children from his former wife weren't biologically his.

The essence of paternity cannot be overemphasized as it gives a child a legal father with rights and responsibilities relating to upbringing of the child. Notably, a child born within marriage has legitimacy and rights of inheritance in the family (Motoun, 2025; Chiagoziem & Efut, 2021; Ajonumah & Dublin-Green, 2019). In contemporary time of forensic science, paternity can be established through Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) or genetic testing when there is a dispute about the identity of the child's father.

Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is based on the assumption that we inherit half of our father and half of our mother. Thus, persons who are biologically related must share similar DNA profile. In contrast, the absence of similarities in the DNA profiles of the child and the alleged father is used as a proof that no biological relationship existed. Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is the generic material transferred from both mother and father to their child. The DNA paternity test uses samples from man and this offspring, to determine whether the child belongs to the biological father (Ebimiebo & Enock-Etimighan, 2024; Umansky & Tomei, 2024).

Therefore, this study is targeted to answer the following questions: What are the existing legal provisions addressing paternity fraud in Nigeria? What are the challenges facing dispute resolution mechanism in paternity fraud cases? How can Nigeria's legal framework be reformed to adequately address the issue of paternity fraud?

Study Objectives

The study aim is to achieve the following:

1. Examine legal framework of paternity fraud in Nigeria,
2. Identify challenges in the dispute resolution mechanisms,
3. Propose reforms for adequate dispute resolution.

Methodology

The study embraced the qualitative designed approach as it focused on analyzing secondary data sourced from articles, journals, documents and relevant texts. The data collected is analysed using descriptive and content analysis to draw inferences.

Conceptual Discourse: Literature Review

Paternity Fraud

The concept of paternity fraud otherwise known also as “*paternity deception or falsification*” is broadly defined as the deliberate misrepresentation of a child’s biological father, often leading to emotional, financial, social and legal consequences. While the phenomenon exists globally, its prevalence varies significantly across countries due to differences in legal frameworks, cultural norms, and accessibility to paternity evaluation. In Nigeria, recent reports indicate that twenty-seven (27%) of men who undergo paternity testing discover they are not the biological fathers of their children (Ojuroungbe, 2024).

This figure is notably higher in the United Kingdom, where studies suggest that around 2% to 5% of tested paternities turn out to be false too (Turner & White, 2021). Similarly, in the United States, estimates range from 4% to 10%, depending on demographic factors and study methodologies (Anderson & Ross, 2020). Comparatively, several western countries have structured legal mechanisms to address paternity fraud, often allowing men to seek compensation or legally challenge child support obligations (Miller & Johnson, 2022). In contrast, Nigeria lacks specific legislation criminalizing paternity fraud, making legal redress difficult for affected individuals. Furthermore, socio-cultural barriers discourage DNA evaluation, limiting efforts to establish biological truths in disputed cases (Oblong Media Unlimited, 2024).

Legal Resolution

Legal resolution has to do with the process of resolving a dispute or conflict through the legal system. This adjudication typically involves the court or tribunal. It also has to do with using legal mechanisms such as litigation, mediation, or arbitration, to resolve disputes and provide a binding decision on parties involved.

Paternity Disputes

Paternity disputes can be seen as conflicts or disagreements regarding the identity of a child’s biological father, and this disagreement can arise in the context of marital disputes, child support claims, inheritance, assisted reproduction among others. Paternity disputes create emotional, psychological, and economic instability, leading to family breakdown and neglect, which in turn push many children into the streets. It is often involving a complex emotional, social, economic, cultural and legal issues, in view of this it may require DNA analysis, mediation, or court proceedings to resolve the matter.

Affordability of DNA Evaluation in Nigeria

Studies further shows that one of the biggest barriers to resolving paternity fraud issues is the high cost of DNA evaluation, which in most cases ranges from #100,000 to #200,000 per analysis, this

is equivalent to (\$120–\$240 USD), as at 2021; making it unaffordable for many Nigerians (Metoun, 2025; Ogunleye & Adebajo, 2021).

According to a Directory of DNA testing center, it is reported that the cost varies depending on the type. For instance, as at November 3, 2025: Personal Paternity (Peace of Mind) evaluation costs between #250,000 - #350,000 equivalent of (\$171.71-\$240.40 USD); Legal Paternity DNA Evaluation #350,000 - #600,000 equivalent of (\$240.40 -\$411.99 USD); Prenatal Paternity Evaluation #2,300,000 - #2,900,000 equivalent of (\$1,579.41 -\$1,991.80 USD); Immigration DNA Evaluation #350,000 - #600,000 equivalent of (\$240.40-\$411.99 USD); and, Maternity DNA Evaluation #250,000 equivalent of (\$171.71) (FindADNA.org, 2025).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework in the study shall be examined in an eclectic form: (a) Social Exchange Theory (SET), (b) Deception Theory (DT) and, (c) Legal Pluralism Theory.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is associated with the works of George Homan, Peter Blau, Richard Emerson, John Thibaut and Harold Kelly. The theory provides a framework for the understanding of paternity fraud as a calculated decision made by individuals often women, to maximize benefits and cost (Blau, 1964; Homan, 1961).

Applying this theory to paternity fraud is that: First, the individual decision is targeted at financial gain, the notion is that financial advantage is the reason most women commit paternity fraud to secure monetary gain from their male victims. Second, women prioritize emotional connection and intimacy over biological paternity (Social satisfaction). Third, women engage in these act for the maintenance of class status, relationship, or family ties (Emerson, 1976; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959).

Scholars believes that this theory is relevant reason being that one would better comprehend the motivations and decision-making process underlying paternity fraud, by informing strategies for control and intervention. However, this theory has been criticized for oversimplification as it overlooks complex emotional and psychological factors, and for neglecting socio-cultural dynamics (Cook & Rice, 2003).

Deception Theory (DT) is associated with the works of Paul Ekman, David Buller, Judee Burgoon, Aldert Virj and Mark Frank. The theory provides a framework for the understanding of the strategies and perceived criminal intents behind deception in paternity disputes (Levine, 2014; Virj, 2008).

The major assumption of this theory on concealment of paternity identity, falsification, misdirection, targeted at financial gain, emotional protection (to avoid conflict), and maintenance of social relationships or class status (Adeyemi & Olowookere, 2019; Oladapo & Fawole, 2017; Ekwochi, 2015; Levine, 2014; Ekman, 2009).

For this study, applying the deception theory (DT), one can have an understanding of the strategies and propelling factors behind paternity deception, it shall aid inform strategies for detection and prevention (Levine, 2014; Ekman, 2009; Buller & Burgoon, 1996).

However, this theory has been criticized for relying heavily on assumptions, that it fails to account for context, it overlooks power dynamics, the application of several methodologies at the same time, the issue of ethical consideration, and overemphasis on verbal cues (Virj, 2008; Bond & DePaulo, 2006; Ekman, & O'Sullivan, 2006; Masip & Garrido, 2001).

The Legal Pluralism Theory (LPT), was adopted in for the study. This theory has its roots in the early 20th century scholarship. Major proponents are: Santi Romano, Otto von Gierke, Sally Engle Merry, John Griffiths and Brain Tamanaha. The Legal Pluralism Theory (LPT) evolved over time, addressing complex legal systems in post-colonial and diverse societies from the 1970s -1980s.

This theory holds that law is not solely the domain of the state, but rather a complex web of norms, rules and institutions that governs social behaviour. Key features of legal pluralism theory are: Multiple sources of law, be it customary, religious, state and international can be applied to deal with paternity fraud.

Applying the relevance of this theory to the study, it is believed that in Nigeria, the sharia law, customary law, state law may intersect and conflict in resolving disputes related to paternity and child maintenance. The understanding of these theory can help policymakers and legal practitioners navigate these complexities and develop more effective solutions in addressing paternity fraud in Nigeria.

Results and Discussion

Legal Framework on Paternity Fraud in Nigeria

Paternity deception of a child's biological father poses grave legal, social, financial and emotional consequences. Global index varies, the issue is inequitably prevalent in Nigeria, where reports suggests that over 27% of men who undergo DNA testing, to their surprise discover they are not the biological father of such children. This figure is startlingly high compared to figures in the UK (2-5%), and US (4-10%) (Oyetayo, 2025).

In western economies, the law provides for certain remedies against paternity deception on victims, from disputing child support orders to seeking damages, Nigeria's legal system lacks direct legislation criminalizing paternity fraud. Instead, affected individuals must navigate general fraud laws, child custody regulations, and family law provision. The nations law does not recognize paternity fraud as a distinct legal offense. While sections of the Matrimonial Causes Act (2004) and the Child Rights Act (2003) govern child custody and parental responsibilities, these acts do not explicitly provide remedies for paternity fraud cases (Metuonu, 2025). Traditional laws in most culture specify the manner in which parentage is established, the Evidence Act only admits DNA results as proof for use in the law court.

Paternity Determination in Nigeria

Fatherhood confirmation can be determined through the following:

1. **Spousal Paternity Assumption:** A child born in wedlock is presumed to be legitimate child of the husband, but such assumption can be negated through DNA evaluation.
2. **Consent Declaration:** Biological fathers of non-marital children may establish paternity by self-declaration, usually upon birth registration.
3. **Contested Fatherhood:** A competent court of law may order a DNA test to confirm biological parentage where there exists questioned paternity.
4. **Adjudication:** A family court may make a binding declaration of paternity upon consideration of DNA report and other conditions.

Documented DNA Evaluation in Court: The Processes.

The court may direct DNA evaluation in situations where child welfare is under consideration. For instance, the case between: (a) Peace Izontimi v. Steven Izontimi, (b) Tony Anozia v. Patricia Nnani. The process involves:

- ✓ Filing motion supported by a backed affidavit,
- ✓ Court consideration and order,
- ✓ Authorized laboratory collection of sample,
- ✓ Results directly submitted to the court for verdicts.

It is interesting to note that consent remains key, adult assent in their own right, parents'/guardians approval on behalf of children unless overridden by the court order.

Hurdles of DNA Evaluation in Nigeria

In spite of the credibility of DNA evaluation in Nigeria, there are still some obstacles namely:

- There is no legislation on paternity fraud compared to advanced economies where Human Tissue Act covers the use of DNA,
- There are concerns regarding approval and privacy as unauthorized testing may jeopardize fundamental human rights,
- Financial barriers where certified testing remains expensive and not accessible in the rural location,
- Issue of cultural stigma or repeated victimization which dissuades evaluation and encouraging secrecy, and,
- Issue of procedural disparity as risks around evidence integrity and chain of custody.

On the nutshell, it is crucial to note that DNA evaluation has transformed the resolution of paternity disputes with empirical accuracy. Sadly, Nigeria's legal structure, however, remains underdeveloped and victims of paternity deception enjoys in extreme limited recourse. The country need better legislation to guide DNA evaluation, protect privacy and approval, and promote the child's best advantage, public sensitization is crucial in surmounting cultural resistance and encouraging responsible option. Experts counsel that DNA evaluation is to be employed not only as an instrument of determining biological reality, but as an instrument of dispersing justice, for the safeguard of families, and for the preservation of all parties concerned (Oyetayo, 2015). Possible remedies should include: monetary compensation through civil lawsuits, dissolution of marriage on grounds of adultery.

Factors Responsible for Paternity Fraud in Nigeria

Several factors are responsible for paternity fraud in Nigeria. These includes:

- **Economic Strain:** Financial dependence on male partners alone has a significant impact or influence on paternity fraud. Adegoke (2020) found that about sixty-four percent (64%) of surveyed Nigerian women cited financial insecurity as a key reason for falsifying paternity. Similarly, women in low-income communities were more likely to engage in paternity misrepresentation to secure financial support for their children. Moreover, in situations where men are responsible for child upkeep under customary marriage laws, women may falsely claim paternity to access financial stability (Metuon, 2025; Ogunleye & Adebajo, 2021).
- **Legal Flaws:** Nigeria as a country lacks specific legal provisions addressing paternity fraud. For instance, The Matrimonial Causes Act (2004) provides a basis for dissolution of marriage due to adultery, regrettably, it does not highlight the penalties or compensation for men deceived into assuming paternity. Studies revealed that in a review of 50 paternity fraud-related cases from 2015 to 2023 the findings revealed inconsistent judicial outcomes, with courts either dismissing cases for lack of direct legal backing or ruling based on subjective interpretations of family law (Ajayi, 2023). Example of these legal flaws can be seen in the significant variations in judicial decisions on paternity fraud. For Example, in Uche v. Uche (2018), the court ruled in favor of the husband, allowing him to cease financial support for non-biological children. On the other hand, in Olawale v. Olawale (2020), the court ruled against the plaintiff, citing that the welfare of the children was paramount, and the father remained financially responsible despite fraudulent paternity claims. These inconsistencies

underscore the need for statutory clarity on financial obligations in paternity fraud cases (Metoun, 2025; Ajayi, 2023; Eze & Okoro, 2021).

- **Psychological Distress and Trust Issues for Men:** Research findings indicate that paternity falsification leads to severe psychological distress among affected men. Ogunyemi et al. (2022) found that men who discovered misattributed paternity exhibited symptoms of depression (45%), anxiety (38%), and post-traumatic stress disorder (29%). Studies further revealed that many of such men reported losing trust in relationships and marriage, with some choosing to be divorced or resorting to permanent separation (Meteon, 2025; Ebimiebo, & Enock-Etimighan, 2024; Chiagoziem & Efut, 2021).
- **Social Stigma and Family Disintegration:** Paternity deception also collapse family structures, leading to high rates of divorce, estrangement and high rate of delinquent behaviour among affected children (Asangausang, et al, 2025). In a study carried out by Balogun and Adeyemi (2023), sixty-seven percent (67%) of men who discovered paternity fraud opted for marital dissolution, while seventy-five percent (75%) refused further financial responsibility for the affected children. This rejection often leads to socioeconomic hardship for the children and their mothers, increasing the risk of juvenile delinquency and social instability (Asangausang, 2024; Okonjo, 2021).
- **Identity Crises of the Affected Children:** It has been established that children who discover much late in life that who they have had all through their life is a legal father rather than a biological parent experience identity crises and emotional turmoil. In view of this, Nwachukwu (2022), buttress that adolescents in such situations often struggle with self-esteem issues, loss of trust in their parents, and feelings of betrayal. In most cases, these children develop psychological disorders, including depression and anxiety.
- **Cultural Influence:** Traditional Nigerian society places immense pressure on women to bear children, especially male offspring, to sustain lineage. Similarly, most ethnic nationalities place social and spiritual significance on male heirs, further incentivizing paternity misrepresentation. (Etimiebo & Enock-Etimighan, 2024; Okonkwo, 2019). Also, in patriarchal communities, women facing infertility stigma may resort to secret extramarital relationships while maintaining their marriage (Metoun, 2025; Ibekwe & Nwosu, 2022).
- **Promiscuity among married women:** According to Agbonkhese (2015), a survey conducted by Durex, condom manufacturers claimed that Nigerian women were the most unfaithful globally, accounting to 62% prevalence of infidelity. This assertion is collaborated by Etimiebo & Enock-Etimighan, (2024, p. 272).
- **Influence of Petrodollar:** Studies reveal that young girls especially in the oil-rich region of Niger Delta do come under extreme pressure from oil company workers with deep pocket to entice them into causal sex for pleasure. These acts constitute for the rising incidence of female prostitution, teenage pregnancies, and broken homes (Etimiebo & Enock-Etimighan, 2024; Salami, 2015).
- **Erosion of Religious and Moral Values:** Nigeria is a very religious nation. However, the moral fabrics of the nation has become feeble and compromised that young individuals no longer take moral values serious due to the invasion of negative foreign values seen on screen and weak parental upbringing.
- **Lack of Sex Education and Guidance:** The existence of inadequate knowledge about sexual changes during adolescent stage and the mere absence of comprehensive sex education has become one of the factors that is responsible for paternity fraud.

Challenges of Dispute Resolution Mechanism on Paternity Falsification

The Legal proceedings of dispute resolution mechanism on paternity fraud cases often lead to hostile family breakdowns (Okonjo, 2021). Paternity deception is a complex issue thereby hindering dispute resolution challenging in nature. The following are the key challenges associated with dispute resolution mechanism on paternity falsification:

- Issues of emotional complexities, where strong emotions hinder parties to negotiate or mediate effectively.
- Lack of awareness is one of the issues where parties involved seems to comprehend their rights and legal implications to paternity deception, thus hindering resolution.
- DNA evidence in most cases may not be permissible or might be contested in the court.
- The challenge of legal deficiency; as paternity falsification varies and unclear or inconsistent legislation can hinder dispute resolution.
- The issue of power inequality may hinder disputing parties to negotiate fairly.
- The assumption of the child's best interest in resolving paternity disputes may add to the existing complexities.
- Religious, cultural and socio-economic factors may affect dispute resolution.

As an alternative to adversarial court cases, government agencies and family law practitioners should: Establish family mediation centers to handle paternity disputes amicably; Develop alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms, reducing the legal burden on affected parties, encourage pre-marital counseling sessions where partners discuss issues of trust, fidelity, and paternity verification before entering into marriage.

Conclusion

The study has examined paternity fraud in Nigeria with the aim of exploring legal framework and dispute resolution mechanisms; it also explored the prevalence, causes, legal challenges, and social consequences of paternity fraud in Nigeria. Findings indicated a rising trend, driven by economic dependencies, societal expectations, and the absence of clear legal provisions addressing the issue. The lack of legal recognition and compensation mechanisms for affected individuals further exacerbates the situation, leaving many with limited avenues for redress. At contemporary time, paternity fraud has garnered increasing attention due to its rising prevalence and far-reaching consequences for the victim, product of the fraud (child), families, communities, legal institutions, technological solutions, ethical, cultural and societal norms. In Nigeria for instance, it requires a multifaceted approach, by establishing a clear legal framework, improving access to DNA evaluation, strengthening dispute resolution mechanisms, awareness as well as providing support for victims.

Recommendations

Based on the above line of discussion, it is crucial to note that paternity fraud has social, economic, emotional, and legal consequences. To address this problem, the following recommendations are made:

1. The legal reforms should explicitly recognize paternity fraud, introduce financial restitution provisions, and expand access to DNA evaluation through government subsidies.
2. Public awareness campaigns, religious advocacy, and community-led ethical initiatives can shift cultural attitudes and prevent dubious paternity claims.
3. The need to strengthen dispute resolution mechanisms such as arbitration, to address paternity disputes.

4. The need to provide support services to victims financially.
5. Ensure children rights are protected, as well as their right to know their biological parents.
6. Regulate assisted reproductive technology which is aimed at preventing paternity falsification at all cost.
7. The need of establishing mental health support systems and mediation services will help mitigate the emotional and social consequences of paternity fraud, fostering more ethical and transparent family structures in Nigerian society.

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