

## FROM CARE TO HUMAN RIGHT: THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND SBCC IN MANAGING WIDOWHOOD CRISES IN NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *Issues surrounding experiences of widows across most third-world countries have fluctuated around care, either as an issue of human right or as privilege of culture. The issue urgently requires attention in areas of education as well as Social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) in order to manage with the aim of eliminating the injustices suffered by widows, particularly, in Nigeria. The propensity driving us to embark on this paper arises from the situation in which we have observed with regret, the statistics which reveals that globally about “115 million widows live in poverty, and 81 million have suffered physical abuse. The worldwide incidents of human rights violation of widows, such as disinheritance, denial of right to land and property of their dead spouses, absence of social safety nets and outright denial of sources of livelihood have been on the increase in Nigeria, whereas, indeed, No woman should lose her rights when she loses her husband.” ([www.naijaryders.com](http://www.naijaryders.com)). In order therefore, to eliminate the injustices suffered by widows globally in general and Nigeria in particular, we propose that if education as well as social and behavior change communication (SBCC) are adequately directed to the appropriate audience, they could become panacea to the problem under investigation. We have employed as theoretical background, the social Connection Model as well as global care concept as approach in examining the role of education and Behaviour Change Communication in the elimination of harmful practices against widows in Nigeria. To provide empirical framework to the paper, a limited study was carried out in Utugwang, a small town in Nigeria. This quantitative and qualitative study explored the phenomenon of widowhood in its natural setting among the people of Utugwang, an ethnic group that form a part of Obudu Local Government Area in Nigeria. The aim is to interpret, understand and explain as well as bring meaning to the issue under discussion. An open-ended interview questionnaire and a focused group discussion were employed as research instruments to elicit responses and information from key informants. Seven basic questions were raised and responses from subjects were examined and analyzed by describing the conditions prior to and after intervention using the instruments of education and communication for social and behavior change brought about, mainly by the teachings of Christianity and conscious social awareness of global care concept of modern society. We believe that this could provide an opportunity to make comparisons using the baseline study and determine where regarding the issue of the condition of widows in Nigeria, there have been progress or lack of social and behavior change on the issue. A total of one hundred respondents representing the very senior age grades were interviewed. The result of the finding revealed that education and SBCC carried out mostly by churches, non-governmental organization and the media of communication in the area have impacted positively on some efforts to eliminate the injustices suffered by widows in Nigeria. Consequently, among others, we recommend that government should make concerted effort to protect the rights of widows; while the danger of harmful treatment of widows should be introduced as civic education in Nigerian institutions of learning.*

**KEYWORDS:** Education, Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) Social Connection Model, Care and Widowhood Crises.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

According to Bartholomew Madukwe in a comment in the Nigerian Vanguard Newspaper of June 27, 2013 to mark that year's World Widow's day, Widows in Nigeria and in other parts of the world face discriminatory customary practices that constitute violations of their human rights. According to Madukwe, these practices violate their right to health, right to life, right to human dignity and right to freedom from discrimination.

He observes that, "Nigeria has signed and ratified different regional and international human rights instruments that seek to protect the rights of women including widows from discriminatory practices. This is why we believe in this paper that the governments of various countries of the world should without delay, initiate necessary education and communication strategies towards implementation of these regional and global instruments for the emancipation of widows confronted with dangerous global and regional harmful practices. By this advocacy, we are convinced that education and communication can play very important role in societal effort to eliminate the injustices against widows, not only in Nigeria, but globally.

It is a truism that harmful practices against widows are not limited to Nigeria, but has a global dimension, particularly, in the third-world societies. For instance, Jaguar argues that globalization has promised many things that are crucial to caring for women including widows: peace, prosperity, social justice, environmental protection, the elimination of racism and ethnocentrism, and, of course, an increase in the status of women in general, and widows in particular. However, as Jaguar observes, the situation today is that of "a system hostile or antagonistic to women (particularly, widows in third-world societies)." (Jaguar 2001, p. 301). With widows in Nigeria in particular and in the third-world scene caught in the mine-field of conflict of perception about care concept, this, therefore, becomes a problem, not only to this paper, but among various groups of people concerned with the condition of widows; on how to find solution to the problem. The question then, is on how the society can employ education and behavior change communication to eliminate the plight of widows. The search for an answer to this puzzle will preoccupy us, in this paper.

## **EDUCATION AND MAN**

Of all the creatures created by God, man is set apart. There are so many distinctive features that separate him from other lower beings. One of such distinctive features is what anthropologists described as *Homo erectus* and *Homo sapiens*. He is called "Homo Erectus" because of his upward position and "Homo Sapiens" because of the presence and development of his brain and dexterity of his fingers. (Agba and Brown, (2012: pp. 35-40). Through those special features, he is able to effectively carry out certain functions and is able to communicate and translate into concrete reality his ideas. These ideas do not remain with him, but he is able to transfer such to either his offspring or members of his communities. He is also able to interpret events around him through different means. One of such means is what in modern parlance is referred to as Education.

Education is replete with a lot of meanings. There is what is called Western Education classified into many categories including liberal education.

The Latin word “liber” means “free” and the plural “liberi” means “free man” as distinct from “servi” or slaves. Moreover, the verb “liberare” means “to free” and the abstract noun “libertas” referring to freedom. Consequently, there is no possible interpretation of the “liberal” which means nothing other than something to do with freedom. This is why most philosophers of education have opined that education is a potent tool that can untie the fortune of any nation.

Plato cited by Agba and Brown, (2012) once said that all societal ills would cease, or at least be minimized, only when pliers become rulers or rulers become pliers. In his Republic, he also stated that a perfect society would be on a more general note, it means the state of growth from its original state. There is also either a yardstick or parameter to measure its success or rate.

In psychology, education refers to change in attitude, self reliance and self-help, for man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. This is created by destroying selfishness and ignorance.

The historical preview of the emergence of liberal education will reveal that concern was that human personality should develop freely, guided by reason rather than limited by artificial constraint. This is in terms of individual rights, responsibilities, morality a moral freedom. Moral freedom should not be tied down by legal obligations. Man should also be free from dogma and indoctrination. Thus, liberal education is a potent tool in the emancipation of widows in Nigeria.

The concept of the educated man is therefore, one whose behavior has been modified as a result of what he has learnt.

It also has to do with approved behavior

According to Bertrand Russell cited by Agba and Brown, (2012), education should involve Altruism and enlightened self interest, Moral obligations, and inter-subjectivism.

**Education is sometimes equated with development.**

**Behaviour Change Communication (BCC)**

**According to McCall, (2011: p. 8), Communication for behaviour change such as positive attitude being advocated in this paper to emancipate widows in Nigeria from harmful practices,** involves four major approaches to stimulate positive and measurable behaviour and social change:

McCall, (2011: p. 8) remarks that Behavior **change communication (BCC)** is a communication process that addresses the knowledge, attitudes and practices of individuals by providing them with relevant information and motivation. One example of “BCC” is a billboard that uses lung cancer statistics to try to motivate people to stop smoking.

McCall, (2011: p. 8) observes that **Social mobilization:** is a process of bringing together multiple partners and allies to support a particular development objective. An example of social mobilization is when government agencies, non-profits, and community members collaborate in a mass effort (thousands of people) to go house by house to vaccinate children against polio. Regarding the plight of widows in

Nigeria, religious organizations, non-governmental organizations and government agencies may form bodies that can move from community to community to denounce the harmful treatment of widows. Another example is an organized “March on Abuja for instance,” with thousands of people supporting a cause, or a charity 5k run raising money for a cause (lots of people doing something together for a cause).

**Advocacy:** according to McCall, (2011: p. 8), is a process of communicating with decision-makers to attempt to influence their decision towards raising resources or political and social leadership on a given issue. One example of advocacy might be inviting politicians to visit widows and talking to widows so you can rally the politician’s support for widows’ causes – Or organizing a mass email or letter campaign asking for a specific vote on a given social issue. You can mix strategies by doing social mobilization for advocacy purposes.

**Strengthening media capacity. According to** McCall, (2011: p. 8), A fourth strategy recently adopted by many United Nations agencies seeks to build “an enabling media and communication environment,” by increasing the capacity of communicators and media professionals and through content-specific training and by strengthening institutional infrastructure through better media products or new/improved equipment. An “enabling environment” has been described as a “prerequisite” for effective Communication for Development.

It includes:

“...legal and regulatory systems that protect freedom of expression, enhance access to information for the poor (among whom widows in Nigeria are a part), promote the public’s right to official information, and facilitate non-discriminatory licensing of community radio as well as free and pluralist media. **Strengthening media capacity according to** McCall, (2011: p. 8), **can facilitate each of the strategies above.**

## **BCC and SBCC**

Social and Behaviour change communication strategies according to Adeyanju, (2008) have become necessary in many societies today; it is a relatively new concept which have evolved from the commonly adopted Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) approach. The difference between BCC and SBCC Adeyanju, (2008) lies in the fact that whereas BCC is a collection of communication tools, messages and techniques to motivate individuals to change their own behaviour, social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) involves on the other hand, changing norms in society about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The common denominator between the two is that both utilize the tools of education and communication to function.

However, social and behaviours change is presently being viewed as a necessary action in many deliberate steps to bring about change. There is a growing consensus among stakeholders and scholars in communication for change that BCC strategies must be complemented by more participatory approaches located in SBCC that work through and address social and economic problems such as those currently presented by the plight of widows in Nigeria. SBCC is

therefore, viewed in the domain of positive planned change as a research – based, consultative process that uses communication to promote, facilitate behaviour change, and support the necessary social change for the purpose of improving conditions of widows in Nigeria.

SBCC is also defined as “The systematic application of interactive” theory – based and research driven communication processes and strategies to address tipping points for change at the individual, community and social levels, (C. Change 2013).

There is also a growing understanding that behaviours are grounded in a particular social-ecological context and change usually requires support from multiple levels of influence.

### **Harmful Widowhood Practices in Nigeria**

According to Madukwe, (2013), though widowhood problem is universal; but of particular concerns are horrifying practices in some Southern parts of Nigeria.

In Igboland, widow’s’ problem is still being compounded by the “Umuada” (daughters of the land) who are often accused of making laws that make life horrible for widows. ([www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)).

Widowhood practices differ from place to place in Nigeria. As observed by Madukwe, (2013), in some societies, the widow is locked up with the corpse. While in other climes, the widow is whipped by terrifying poison-carrying masquerades. She cannot hug or be hugged. She can’t shake hands or go to the market.

After the one-year mourning period, the widow is taken to the river for the “Aja-ani” ritual during which the aja-ani priest ‘rapes’ her.

In some societies, the widow is raped by 10 men, which serves as a means of cleansing her and making her available for other men.

As Madukwe, (2013) further observes, a common practice in some parts of Nigeria is that when the man of the home passes on as a result of illness or accident, his wife is usually accused of being responsible for his death.

In other to prove her innocence in her husband’s death, he states that the widow would be made to drink the water used in washing her husband’s corpse.

The consequences of her refusal to carry out the ritual include physical assault, banishment from the family or denying her access to her husband’s property, including the children.

It would not matter if the widow contributed her money, sweat and initiative to the acquisition of the property. ([www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)).

At such times, when the widow goes to lodge complaint at the police station, the common thing she would be told is “this matter is domestic and outside our area of authority”.

In some cases, the widow is compelled to take oath with kola nut placed on her dead husband’s forehead and complete the swearing with 2 broom sticks.

But the story, even among the Yoruba, is not better because the widow is often seen as a chattel. Her late husband's property is then shared, along with farmlands and furniture. Virtually in all communities in Nigeria, often, a widow is the first suspect when the cause of her husband's death is being investigated.

Children of women in this category have dropped out of schools due to poverty or lack of care from the husband's relations. The widow and her children bear the double tragedy of losing their family head and facing unimaginable hardship.

Madukwe, (2013) points out that Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW, described Human Rights violations against widows as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."

Arising from this scenario, one may ask, should the issue of widowhood practice in Nigeria be considered to have existed due to lack of care as human issue or as misplacement of privilege of culture. At this point, we decided to take a look at the concept of care.

### **Concept of Care**

Concept of care in most societies according to Haslanger, Tuana and O'Connor, (2014, usually ranges from caring for the young, old, sick, and disabled, and the everyday maintenance of households—and the moral ideal of care in which the care for widows is a part.

In recent times, care appears to be professionalized. For instance, the care for persons with disabilities is most likely to be managed by special educators in conjunction with voluntary organizations. Similarly, it is often common to find feminists working with NGO's on women issues managing the plight of widows and so on. In the same vein, Haslanger, et al, in ([plato.stanford.edu](http://plato.stanford.edu)) in the same vein observes that professional economists have often participated in the economic care for the poor globally. According to them, the role of care work in the economy of the world cannot be over emphasized. According to Haslanger, et al, in ([plato.stanford.edu](http://plato.stanford.edu)), "for example, Robinson develops a relational moral ontology that sheds lights on the features of globalization that are usually invisible: the global distribution of care work and the corresponding patterns of gender and racial inequality; the under-provision of public resources for care work in both developed and developing countries; and the ways in which unpaid or low-paid care work sustains cycles of exploitation and inequality on a global scale," (Robinson 2006). Similarly, as Held advocates for increased state support of various forms of care work and for policies designed to meet people's needs in caring ways (Held 2004, 2007).

It has been argued that care is given or not given to women particularly, widows, or any other person requiring it due to our fluid understanding of the concept. People, who speak in favour of women globally, use the language of human rights to address the challenges facing women in general and widows in particular. While they acknowledge that traditional understandings of human rights are implicitly male-biased, they contend that with feminist rearticulations, these norms can help to identify the gendered harms involved in sexual slavery, forced

domestic labor, and the systematic withholding of education, food, and healthcare from women and girls that follow from severe economic deprivation (Bunch 2006, Cudd 2005, Jaggar 2002a, Nussbaum 2001, Robinson 2004, Okin 1998, Reilly 2007).

Iris Marion Young in ([plato.stanford.edu](http://plato.stanford.edu)) condemns the traditional ideal theories of justice because they are unable to account for the unjust background conditions that contribute to the development of harmful practices against widow's third-world societies. She argues that a new relational model of responsibility, which she calls the social connection model, is needed to articulate the obligations that people in affluent northern countries have to workers in the global South. In the context of this paper, we believe that this model would refer to the responsibilities that the different ethnic cultures in Nigeria have towards widows often mistreated in the country. The social connection model holds that individuals bear responsibility for structural injustices, such as those suffered by widows due to the third-world harmful customs and traditions, because our attitude and actions toward cultural norms and values contribute to the institutional processes that produce such injustices. (Young 2011).

**No doubt, with proper education in the context of communication aimed at social and behavior change, based on the positive concept of care highlighted above, the harmful practices against widows in Nigeria in particular, and in other third-world countries in general, would be eliminated, or at least, reduced. However, with cases of harmful practices against widows still high in many parts of Nigeria, we therefore, considered it pertinent to undertake a study to determine the role of education and social and behavior change communication (SBCC) in eliminating injustices against widows in Nigeria.**

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This quantitative and qualitative study explored the role of education and communication in relation to the phenomenon of widowhood in its natural setting among the people of Utugwang, an ethnic group that forms a part of Obudu Local Government Area in Nigeria.

To interpret, understand and explain as well as bring meaning to the issue under investigation, an open-ended interview questionnaire and a focused group discussion were employed to elicit responses and information from key informants.

In conducting both the one to one personal interview and the focus group discussion, issues of interest included inheritance and or transfer of widows to relations of dead husbands, Rights to property of the dead partners, beliefs and accusation of widows over their husbands' death, rites to establish the guilt and/or innocence of the widows, treatments meted to the guilty and/or innocents, cases of widows with or without children with/for their dead husbands regarding assets and finally what issues surround widows with double burden—that is widows with disabilities.

These issues were raised and examined, describing the conditions prior to and after an intervention by way of education and behavior change communication effort; as well as the effect of Christianity and conscious social awareness brought about by the concept of care, not only as human right issue, but as social and cultural responsibilities to widows. This study is expected to provide an opportunity that may enable us to make necessary comparisons, that

may ultimately, help us in determining whether there is progress or not and whether there is any observable changes or lack of any behavior changes regarding the condition of widows.

The baseline study covered the seven villages of the Utugwang Nation made up of the current three political wards. They include Ukpadah and Ukworegung for the North, Ukpirinyi and Nkirira for the central, Kuwait, Ngbenegeh and Ukwortung for the South. Only socio-cultural groups otherwise known as age grades namely: "Eten" of the very senior ranks were involved in the study due to their experiences about the issue of widows.

A total of one hundred respondents representing the age grades comprising Eten-Itoro, Eten-Irobber, Eten-innumber, Eten-ishikor and Eten-Oboche were involved. Twenty respondents were derived from each of the five selected age grades.

However, two classes of Utugwang Chiefs that is four village heads and four clan heads were involved in a one hour focus group discussion. These by virtue of their duties as custodians of the Utugwang traditions and custom provided a veritable tool for the study.

## **Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion**

### **Questions by item responses**

1. Considering item one on whether widows in Utugwang are still being inherited by their husbands relations, no doubt, due to the role played by education and communication for behavior change, all respondents described the act as an archaic practice currently out of fashion and seriously frowned at by those who practice Christianity, those educated or well informed through the various media of communication. However three of the ten female respondents stated that they are aware of close relations who with their own consent remarried to their dead husband's relations. Also, the outcome of the focus group revealed that it was an optional and not forced and again depending on the age of the widow concerned.

Most contributors in the focus group stated that this act was practiced in the old to protect and continue an extension of the dead man's lineage.

2. On item two about rights to late husband's property.

All ten female respondents but two accepted that there are some levels of deprivation from the larger family members especially regarding farmland, economic trees and other investments. 70 percent of the male respondents stated that rights to property of a dead man are now solely the responsibility of the widow and her children to manage for their livelihood; noting that restoration of this right for widows in the area has been due to the role education and communication was playing in the society. On the part of the participants in the focus group talk, most agreed that although this was not to be so, the Utugwang custom regarding rights to property of a dead husband was seriously influenced by modernization brought about by globalization and behavior change communication largely, through Christianity. They agreed to the fact that it sometimes depends on who the widow is in terms of her conduct and relationship with other family members, noting that the personality of the widow involved can win for her the right of inheritance or not.

3. Responding to the question on whether education and behavior change communication has changed anything regarding widows accused of the death of their husbands, all 10 female respondents agreed to the fact that the accusation of widows from the area on this issue has not changed significantly as widows were still unjustly accused of being responsible for their husband's death. This they said made the situation very difficult for widows who become targets of their dead husband's relations who sometimes may want revenge or develop terrible hatred for the widow. The men were not very indifferent but reluctant to comment on this item. Contributing to this, discussants in the focus group held the views that a woman is outright accused of being responsible if she had married and lost a husband before remarrying the dead man. This they said is because it is believed that should a woman lose a husband to death, she stands a chance of losing two others before maybe getting out of it. This however was not proven scientifically; and education and communication for behavior change has not significantly done enough in this vein, to abolish this belief.
4. Rites of guilt or innocence : Respondents and contributors accepted that education and behavior change communication has drastically reduced this practice, but when there is any accusation, most widows still subject themselves to the fact that to declare a widow either guilty or innocent, she has to go through rituals of oath taking usually administered by unmarried and most aged woman of the dead man, including swearing before the gods of the land of her innocence.  
  
Depending on the outcome of the period of rights, the widow is expected to feast her dead husband by feeding an enlarged family members, men and women, married and unmarried, using her age grade associates and her friends and family members.
5. If found guilty, she is asked to quit and go back to her people and can only be return by her children after quite some time maybe years with some sacrifices of readmission to the family. If found not guilty, she is free to choose whether to stay or go back to her parent's home and free to visit at any time as desired.
6. For widows who have children particularly male ones or at least one male one among others, she is better treated; knowing too well that the son or sons represents their father. This was not so with those who have only female children and worst still if no child at all. The right to inheritance is not for a widow without a child on the ground that she and her female may not remain to take care but may be given out in marriage; implying that, regarding some treatment, situations rather than education or communication takes precedence.
7. When the study sought to know the situation of widows with double burden of disability, The result showed that Widows who are disabled experience more burden in addition to the widowhood with no one showing concern or caring about her predicament. This result reflects the general prejudices epitomized in the discrimination against persons with disability in the general Nigerian society.

### **Implications of the Study and Discussion**

As we have seen in the result of the study above, while education and SBCC have played significant role in the elimination of harmful practices against widows in Nigeria in some areas, a lot of effort through education and communication for social and behavior change

still need to be done, particularly in areas of rites of innocence and cleansing which directly or indirectly affect other rights of widows. In Igbo land, as we have pointed out, widows' problems are still being compounded by what Madukwe, (2013 in [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)) refers to as the Umuada (daughters of the land) who are often accused of making laws that make life horrible for the widow. Education and communication for social and behaviour change are yet to effectively employ to reverse the treatment of widows in some parts of Nigeria, in which widows according to shocking revelations are still forced to go through rituals ranging from a situation that the widow is locked up with the corpse, whipping of widows by terrifying poison-carrying masquerades, widows cannot hug or be hugged, She can't shake hands or go to the market, and after the one-year mourning period, In Some communities, the widow is still taken to the river for the Aja-ani ritual during which the aja-ani priest 'rapes' her. ([www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)).

Education and communication for social and behaviour change are yet to be harnessed to change the behaviour of Nigerians towards widows in some communities that the widows are raped by 10 men as a means of cleansing them and making them available for other men.

It is still a common practice in many parts of Nigeria that when the man of the home passes on as a result of illness or accident, his wife who is likely to inherit his belongings is one of the persons usually accused of being responsible for his death. This is based on the general believed that someone somewhere is always responsible for the death of a diseased person. In other to prove her innocence in her husband's death, the widow would be made to drink the water used in washing her husband's corpse.

The consequences of her refusal to carry out the ritual include physical assault, banishment from the family or denying her access to her husband's property, including the children.

It would not matter if the widow contributed her money, sweat and initiative to the acquisition of the property.

Sometimes when widows who are aware of their rights, go to lodge complaint at the police station, the common thing they are told by the police is "this matter is domestic and outside our area of authority." We believe that if education and behaviour change communication (BCC) are adequately planned and directed, this practice could give way to care being embraced by all in Nigeria, as societal right for widows and can additionally, be cultivated as a norm of our culture.

No doubt, education and SBCC can reverse the trends in some Nigerian society that the widow is still often seen as a chattel. Her late husband's property can no longer be shared, along with farmlands and furniture. With concerted education and communication for social and behaviour change, children of widows in this category would no longer in the future, dropped out of schools due to poverty or lack of care from the husband's relations. The widow and her children can no longer, bear the double tragedy of losing their family head and facing unimaginable hardship.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

We have pointed out in this paper that Issues surrounding experiences of widows across the globe have fluctuated around confusion regarding the perception of care sometimes conceived

as human right issue and sometimes as privilege of culture with certain cultures being free to carry on harmful practices against widows with impunity. This, of course, calls for more attention in areas of education and social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) in order to manage and eliminate the injustices suffered by widows, particularly, in Nigeria. We also frowned at the statistics which reveals that globally about 115 million widows live in poverty, and 81 million have suffered physical abuse. From the study, we have shown how a significant percent of the worldwide incidents of human rights violation of widows, such as disinheritance, denial of right to land and property of their dead spouses, absence of social safety nets and outright denial of sources of livelihood have been on the increase in Nigeria, whereas, indeed, No woman should lose her rights when she loses her husband. In order therefore, to eliminate the injustices suffered by widows globally in general and Nigeria in particular, we demonstrated how proper education and the social and behavior change of the global audience through effective communication could prove useful if vigorously pursued. We utilized as theoretical background, the social Connection Model as well as the concept of care to examine the role of education and social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) in the elimination of harmful practices against widows in Nigeria. In order to provide empirical framework to the paper, we carried out limited study in Utugwang, a small town in Nigeria. This quantitative and qualitative study explored the phenomenon of widowhood in its natural setting among the people of Utugwang an ethnic group that form a part of Obudu Local Government Area in Nigeria. Open-ended interview questionnaire and a focused group discussion were employed as research instruments to elicit responses and information from key informants. Seven basic questions were raised and responses from subjects were examined and analyzed by describing the conditions prior to and after intervention using the instruments of education and communication for social and behavior change brought about, mainly by the teachings of Christianity and conscious social awareness of care. This provided an opportunity to make comparisons using the baseline study; consequently, we were therefore, able to determine where there has been progress or lack of any behavior changes on the issue. The result of the finding revealed that education and Behaviour Change Communication carried out mostly by churches, non-governmental organization and the media of communication in the area have impacted positively on some efforts to eliminate the injustices suffered by widows in Nigeria. Consequently, we make the following recommendations:

1. The federal and state governments in Nigeria should take the necessary steps including re-education and designing of new strategies of social and behaviour change communication to fulfill these commitments.
2. Governments at all levels in Nigeria should put in place a mechanism for implementing international, regional and national human rights commitments to women in general and widows in particular.
3. The government should domesticate relevant human rights conventions and the African Women Protocol, particularly, as it affects widows in Nigeria.
4. States where harmful practices are still rampant against widows should pass laws against widowhood right violation, introduce the need to protect the rights of widows into the school curricula at all levels of education and Create awareness through the various media of communication about the damaging effects of these practices.
5. The government should encourage widows to be financially independent.

6. More importantly men should be encouraged to write their wills stating how their belongings should be shared when they die.

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