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## Widow inheritance and the welfare of women in EKPEYE ethnic nationality in rivers state, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The study looked at the role of widow inheritance on women's welfare in Epkeye ethnic nationality in Rivers State Nigeria. The study was informed by the devaluation women go through in marriage in Epkeye, yet they still accept remarriage after the death of their husband. When in this, husband's death would have been seen as a natural liberation. Three research questions, objectives and three hypotheses were used to guide the study. The study adopted Socio-Cultural approach as its theoretical framework. The work is a survey research. Four hundred persons were selected as the sample size. The multi stage sampling technique was used as the sampling technique. Data were collected through primary and secondary sources. The collected data were analyzed using simple percentages and T-test. At the end of the analysis, it discovered that widow inheritance improved the welfare of widows among other findings. Based on this the work recommended free educated empowerment programme for girl child among others.

**Keywords:** widow inheritance, women welfare, socio-cultural

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### Introduction

Widow inheritance also called bride inheritance or levirate marriage is not limited to Nigeria, but is practiced in virtually all African society. The practice entails a young widow re-marrying her late husband's relative (Bamgbose, 2002) [7]. Given its prevalence, levirate marriage has become a unique feature of African society and Nigeria in particular. In this practice, the inherited wife can bear children for the new husband and is treated and given full benefits of a married woman. Levirate marriage does not give room for the widow to make choice; the culture automatically makes the choice for her. By implication, death of husband may not significantly change the material circumstance of the women. As a full wife, she is entitled to and is equally important and protected like any other married woman.

Apart from this one beauty of widow inherence is that there is continuity in family lineage especially where the late husband did not have a child from the widow. Through this process, the late husband's family name and wealth is preserved and perhaps, properly managed. Generally, widow inheritance is intended to provide a number of support: physical, financial psychological, sexual and material supports to the widow and her children (where children exist). Of interest in the cultural practice, is the lingering devaluation and dehumanization widow's face at the death of their husband. Most African societies are agrarian, thus are largely rural farmers and herders. So land owner for farm or for any other activity is reserved for man, possibly the husband. This means that women's access to land in agrarian society for her economic well-being is predicated on access to land. So access to land for agriculture is vital for her wellbeing. In some circumstances, a widow only has access to farm land only if it is for agriculture, not for any other business. If she must, she has to buy the land. Where she is given access to land for farm work, it means every other person has been given. Often times, such land is mere ruminant or marginal area that may not sustain her economically. This therefore, makes her vulnerable to men. The above scenarios are what sustain the practice, as the welfare of widow is critical to their social life.

### Statement of the Problem

The existence of widow Inheritance across societies is not in doubt. Okeyo and Allen, (1994); Agot, Tracy, Obara, Bukusi, Ndinya-Achola, Moses and Weiss (2010) in their studies confirmed this. Okeyo and Allen (1994) in their study of the influence of widow inheritance on the epidemiology of Aids in Africa confirm that the practice exist in Luo group in Uganda, Tanzania, Zaire and Sudan. In this study it was revealed that widow inheritance has a relationship with the health of widows. In fact, it revealed that widow inheritance truncates the spreads of Aids.

Agot, Tracy, Obara, Bukusi, Ndinya-Achola, Moses and Weiss (2010) in their study of *the phenomena in Bondo District of Kenya* revealed that widows who accept widow inheritance practice had less case of HIV than those do not accept the practice. In a similar study by Sidany (2019), it was revealed that the practice exist in Nivotic group like Dinka, Nuer, Atuot and Anywank of South Sudan and Ethiopia. This study further observed that the

practice also exist in Bantu tribes in East Africa and Abagusii of Kenya and Bagwere people of Uganda. Other studies revealed that the practice equally is common in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malaw. Sidan (2019) study clearly establishes that the prime force behind the practice of widow inheritance is widow social protection. It serves as a source of comfort. Eunice (2017) claim that the practice apart from providing comfort from the widow it keeps her from feeling lonely. It also increases the strong bond, between the family and the woman.

In Nigeria, Anele (1998) in a study titled sexuality and the valuation of woman in Nigeria observed that widows are shaded and inherited like any other property and that it is a means of protecting women from unholy traditional practices like denial of farmland and husband property, stigmatization and lack of respect in the society.

Canada Immigration and Refugee Board in 2000 in their study of *Nigeria; Igbo levirate marriage practice* acknowledge that levirate marriage exist in traditional Ibo society. That levirate practice is informed aside protection of widow, is propelled by the need to protect and properly manage the late widow's husband's property where the children are minors. By this, the levirate and her children are protected, yet, she still enjoys her marriage status.

Bamgbose (2002) <sup>[7]</sup> established that levirate marriage exists in Hausa rural areas. Among the Yorubas, levirate marriage is used to protect the woman from spiritual harm from her late husband's spirit. It is also a means to prove the innocence of the woman in the death of her husband especially if the woman is pregnant before the death of her late husband. Also, Fasonranti and Aruna (2007) <sup>[12]</sup> carried out a study on *a cross cultural comparison of practices relating to widowhood and widow inheritance among Igbo and Yoruba in Nigeria* reported the agony most women faced. A widow is expected to eat from broken plates and cook with broken pots, and on the seventh day, her hair is shaved to sever the bond between she and the dead husband. She is also expected to keep vigils and appears very sorrowful by wailing and crying profusely. If she fails to mourn, it is believed that she may become mentally deranged or forfeit the right to her husband's property. After this, she goes into mourning proper, which could be for a period of three or four months (120 days) during which she is to be of impeccable behavior so that her late husband's spirit may gain quick entry into the community of his ancestral spirit.

In Ekpeye ethnic nationality widow inheritance is strongly practiced just like in other societies cited above. In Ekpeye, the practices are for younger widows who are still at the reproductive age. Like other societies, not just the woman is inherited, but the late husband's property. By this status, the woman is given the status of a married woman, thus is saved from the social stigmatization associated with unmarried people. From the studies cited above, it is clear that the practice of widow inheritance exists and it has some implications on the welfare of widows, but none so cited dwelled in Ekpeye ethnic nationality.

**This therefore is the gap which this study intends to fill. The study therefore, was guided by the following research questions:**

1. Can widow inheritance improve the welfare of women in Ekpeye ethnic nationality?
2. Can one establish the role of illiteracy in widow inheritance and widow's welfare in Ekpeye ethnic nationality?
3. What are the solutions that can be proffered to improve the welfare of widows in Ekpeye ethnic nationality through widow inheritance?

**The main objective of this study was to examine widowhood inheritance and the welfare of women in Ekpeye ethnic nationality. Other specific objectives were thus stated**

1. To identify if widowhood inheritance can improve the welfare of women in Ekpeye ethnic nationality.
2. To identify the role of illiteracy in widow inheritance and widow's welfare in Ekpeye ethnic nationality,
3. To provide solutions that will improve the welfare of widows in Ekpeye ethnic nationality.

**The hypotheses include the following:**

1. The more widowhood inheritance, the more improved welfare of widows in Ekpeye ethnic nationality,
2. The more illiteracy exist among widows, the more the practice of widow inheritance that affect the welfare of widow in Ekpeye ethnic nationality,
3. The more vocational skills and enlightenment programmes are given to widows, the more it improve widows welfare and widows inheritance in Ekpeye ethnic nationality

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study is anchored on Socio-Cultural Approach. The major proponent of this socio-cultural approach includes Ann Oakley, Bruno Bettchem, Enestine Friend and Sherry B Ortner. Among these schoars, Ann Oakley was a major advocate of the approach. In this Oakley believe that the mainstream culture, beliefs and practice of a particular society which in most cases, is patriarchal, is the major drawback for women as regards to their participation in developing their communities and also been empowered. This approach deals majorly on the tradition, beliefs, values, norms and practices system of the people living in the same society (Oakley, 1974).

The socio-cultural viewpoints assume that human behaviour and conduct are largely directed and determined by culture that is learned recipes for behaviours shared by members of a society (Onua, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>. The approach

suggests that the disempowerment of women or poor performance of women in various sectors, institutions and sections of the society is as a result of culture. They opined that biological factors, as stated by Murdock (1949) in Haralambos & Holbom (2008) <sup>[13]</sup> and reinforced by Parsons (1959) <sup>[25]</sup> cited in Haralambos & Holbom (2008) <sup>[13]</sup> are not the reason for women non-participation in development rather is the cultural life that is implicated as the major culprit. The theory can be used or likened to issue to widow suffering in the study area. The culture of the people makes women welfare to be stagnated, not just nature. If women inheritance right are structured, new change will emerge which will be women liberation and welfare improvement because their suffering after the death of their husbands will reduce.

### Literature Review

Welfare encompasses efforts to provide a basic level of well-being through free or subsidized social services such as food, healthcare, education, vocational training and public housing, etc.(en.m.wikipedia.org). Welfare which is also referred to as social welfare can come from the government and from a widows family members to improve the wellbeing of a widow so as to support her for the loss of her husband and move on to contribute her quota to the society. This is 'why some society acknowledges levirate marriage system that allows a widow to be inherited by the late husband's brothers in other to improve her conditions. Widow's welfare therefore simply means providing welfare packages that promote widows well-being or happiness. Kagan (2021) study on *widow's allowance*, opined that widows' welfare can come through allowance, inheriting the dead husband's property amongst others. That such allowance includes funds or personal properties received by a widow after her husband death to meet her immediate requirement and needs.

There exist plethora of studies on widow inheritance and welfare of women. Thus, on the inheritance right, study by Olaniyi (2010) <sup>[21]</sup> which adopted a quantitative approach using both primary and secondary sources revealed that when a man dies, the widow's husband's property is shared among his children. But if the family is a polygamous one, the property is shared among the number of wives he had, and in a case where the man left a will; his property will be shared in accordance with his will. He added that a widow in most Southern area of Nigeria does not have rights to inherit the husband's property.

A widow is a woman whose husband is dead. As for inheritance, it means property transferred to someone's relations. The term inheritance is a cultural practice that is found in the entire globe. By conceptualization, inheritance involves a critical mode of property transfer (UN Habitat, 2006 cited in Ayodele, 2016). More recently, Ayodele (2016) in an attempt to explain widow inheritance opined that it involves the practice that allows the widows to be in possession or control of her husband properties. Although there exist scanty literatures on the concept, the paper defines it as the right of a widow to be in full control or possess the properties of her deceased husband without abuse of such right in a patriarchy dominated society. Hence, the issue of widow inheritance gain more prominence currently in academic discuss due to customs that denied widows access to properties enjoyed during the lifetime of their husband (Bird & Shinyekwa, 2004 cited in Ayodele, 2016).

Widow inheritance represent's a violent traditional way of providing a widow and her households a little economic and social protection (Mwangi, Kiai, & Eric, 2002) <sup>[7]</sup> cited in (Bamgbose, 2016). Equally, bestowing or leaving inheritable items such as real property, financial assets, and sometimes, the wives of the deceased, to younger members of the family, is one form of concrete African expression of cultural bond. Related to this was the study of Bamgbose (2010) <sup>[8]</sup> on transporting traditional concepts into legislation and practice: The Nigerian women focus, narrated that women are considered as part of the estate of their husband who is to be inherited by relatives of the husband. This brings in the issue of leverage in which a widow is handed over in marriage to her deceased younger brother, particularly if the widow is still young. An older brother, by custom, is never allowed the right of levitation of the demise of a younger brother. A widow who refused to cooperate with the family on this ground may be disowned together with her children and left alone to fend for themselves. It does not matter whether the union is blessed with children or not, a widow in Yoruba land is expected to go through these rites upon the death of her husband.

Countries differ on the political structure and policy options that govern the transfer of wealth and welfare. Although, customary rules governing widows inheritance may share some commonalities, they are essentially ethnic group specific (Musyoka, 2006) cited in (Agot *et al.* 2019). Widow inheritance correlates or is in tandem with widow welfare. Study by Strickland (2004) in the sub-Sahara region, revealed that women are still being denied property inheritance. This denial affects them (widows) physically, mentally and emotionally. Some widows are sent away to their natural families by in-law or other immediate members of the deceased's family without sustenance. Therefore, when such inheritance is denied from her, the widow may not be able to take care of herself and children, and may be faced with poverty, insecurity, suffering and may be involve in crime. This perhaps, prompted the India nation in 2015 to provide a bill, aimed at protection of the suffering, abandonment, destitute, old or inform widows, by providing welfare measures for such widows at federal and state levels (Shiri, 2015) cited in (Agot *et al.* 2019). Thus, when a widow is allowed to inherit her husband properties, it will enable her protect herself and survive from financial hardship (Kanga, 2021). It was at the point of considering the wellbeing of widows that most reform and bills are presented on the need for welfare improvement of widows.

Evidence exists that outright denial of property from widows is a serious problem in most African countries such as Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, etc. Wakhweya *et al.*, (2002) cited in Agot *et al.* (2019) in a survey study on this in

Uganda, revealed at 22 percent experienced property denial or mismanagement of their property by relatives after their spouses had died.

In the eastern part of Nigeria and elsewhere, all property goes to the eldest male child. Conversely, in some systems, everything is left to the youngest child. This practice historically prevailed among some peoples like the Ibibio, the Edo or Bini (Ajayi, 2012). However, in a survey across 18 states of Nigeria, 37 percent of the people practiced inheritance by the eldest son, while 51 percent divided the inheritance between all sons or children.

Studies by Ogundipe (2009) <sup>[17]</sup> and Olaniyi (2010) <sup>[21]</sup> provides overwhelming evidences on widowhood practices in Igbo culture of the South-Eastern part of Nigeria and the violence perpetuated against widows from relatives and family members. There, widows are kept in dark rooms for days and are sometimes deprived of access to food, they are forced to weep daily, sleeping on mats or old banana leaves, eating from broken pots, forced to drink the water used in bathing their husbands' corpse, they are compelled to mourn the husband with black clothes and also expected to allow the married daughter (Umuada) of the community to shave the hair on their head and pubic with razor blades, to prove their innocence in relation to their husband's death. Widows in this part of the country have to undergo certain traditional rites and practices which forms part of the deceased husband's funeral ceremony in other to show respect to the dead husband.

Ewelukwa (2002) revealed in a study in South-South Nigeria, particularly Delta State, that after the initial seven days confinement, additional 30 days is made mandatory for widows in a tinning hut. This is done to ensure isolation, restriction of movement and association with people.

Okoye (1995) <sup>[20]</sup> carried out a quantitative study titled *widowhood: a natural or cultural tragedy in Nigeria* revealed that in the culture of Birom in Plateau State, when a husband dies, he is buried within one week, the widow observes the Takaba, a four-month, ten-day mourning period in seclusion talking to no one and sitting in a place. She wears a sack and has a grass frond round her head, the sack or simple tarred clothe forms all the dressing of the widow. She remains in the house mourning until the male members of the family take a decision as to who will remarry the widow. From the works cited above, non discussed this phenomenon in Ekpeye ethnic nationality, this thus form the gap in knowledge

### Methodology

The study was carried out in Ekpeye ethnic nationality in Ahoada East and Ahoada West Local Government Areas. Therefore, the study adopted survey design. The population of Ekpeye ethnic nationality which is divided into Ahoada East and Ahoada West Local Government Areas (excluding Engenni Kingdom) is 386,357 (NPC, 2020). The work used Taro Yamane formula to determine the sample size of 400 respondents. Hence, the multi-Stage sampling technique was adopted. In stage one; the cluster sampling was used to group all the 5 clans and all communities under it in the two LGAs that make up Ekpeye ethnic nationality. In stage two, simple random sampling technique was used to select two clans and in each clan, the selection of five communities having a total of ten communities across the study area. This is represented as thus;

**Table 1**

S/N	Communities in Ubie Clan in Ahoada West	No.	Communities in Akoh Clan in Ahoada East	No.
1	Ubeto community	40	Ogbo community	40
2	Odiokwu community	40	Abarikpo community	40
3	Ubio community	40	Ekpena community	40
4	Anwunugbokor community	40	Ihuajecomtnunity	40
5	Odiereke community	40	Ihagbogo community	40
Total		200		200

**Source:** Researcher's computation

In stage three was the use of quota sampling to allocate 40 samples to each community for fairness and equity which helped to arrive at the 400 sample size. Stage four was the use of purposive sampling technique to reach the sampled respondents. Data were collected through primary and secondary sources. The data was analyzed through simple percentage for research questions while hypotheses tested with T-test statistical tool.

### Data Analysis and Findings

**Research Question 1:** Can widow inheritance improve the welfare of women in Ekpeye ethnic nationality?

**Table 2:** Showing if widowhood inheritance can improve the welfare of women in Ekpeye ethnic nationality

S/N	ITEMS	SA%	A%	D%	SD%	Total
1	Widows can have access to their husbands properties	200 50%	110 27%	50 12.5%	40 10%	400 (100%)
2	Land inherited can be used for more - agricultural production	225 56.25%	120 30%	40 10%	15 3.75%	400 (100%)
3	It can give them peace of mind as their rights are respected	210 52.5%	180 45%	- -	10 2.5%	400 (100%)

4	Widows can sell some properties of their husband to assist the family	190 47.5%	150 (37.5%)	20 (5%)	30 (7.5%)	400 (100%)
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Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2022.

The table above presents if widowhood inheritance improve the welfare of widows/women in Ekpeye ethnic nationality. Item 1 on widows can have access to their husbands properties had a percentage score of (SA=50%, A=27.5%, D=12.5%, and SD=10%) Item 2 on Land inherited can be used for more agricultural production had a percentage score of (SA=56.25%, A = 30% D= 10% and SD= 3.75%). Item 3 on It can give them peace of mind as their rights are respected had a percentage score of (SA=52.5%, A = 45 %, SD= 2.5%). Also, item 4 on Widows can sell some properties of their husband to assist the family had the following percentage score such as (SA= 47.5%, A - 37.5%, D= 5% and SD= 7.5%). This implies that all the items support that widowhood inheritance improves the welfare of women.

**Research Question 2:** Can one establish the role of illiteracy in widow inheritance and widow's welfare in Ekpeye ethnic nationality?

**Table 3:** Showing the role of illiteracy in widowhood inheritance and widow's welfare

S/N	ITEMS	SA%	A%	D%	SD%	Total
1	It will reduce the educational inferiority on the widows/women folks.	200 (50%)	150 (37.5%)	40 (10%)	10 (2.5%)	400 (100%)
2	Low education widows are rendered socially vulnerable	250 (62.25%)	140 (35%)	10 (2.5%)	-	400 (100%)
3	Illiterate widows are rendered economically exposed	180 (45%)	150 (37.5%)	20 (5%)	30 (7.5%)	400 (100%)
4	Do you think that widowhood rites and practices meted on educated widows that have a means of livelihood are not the same as those who are less educated	225 (56.25%)	100 (25%)	40 (10%)	35 (8.75%)	400 (100%)

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2022.

The table below shows the role of illiteracy in widowhood inheritance and widow's welfare. Item 1 on It will reduce the educational inferiority on the widows/women folks had the percentage score of (SA=50%, A= 37.5%, D=10% and SD=2.5%). Again, item 2 on Low education widows are rendered socially vulnerable had a score of (SA=62.25%, A=35%, D -2.5%, SD = 0%). Item 3 on Illiterate widows are rendered economically exposed had a percentage score of (SA=45%, A = 37.5%, D = 5 % and SD =7.5%). Item 4 on widowhood rites and practices meted on educated widows that have a means of livelihood are not the same as those who are less educated had a score of (SA=56.25%, A = 25%, D = 10 % and SD =8.75%). By this, it means that all the items constitutes role of illiteracy in widowhood inheritance and widow's welfare in Ekpeye ethnic nationality

**Research Question 3: What are the solutions that can be proffered to improve the welfare of widows in Ekpeye ethnic nationality through widow inheritance?**

**Table 4:** Showing the solutions that can improve the welfare of widows in nationality Ekpeye ethnic

S/N	ITEMS	SA%	A%	D%	SD%	Total
1	Educational improvement of women and men.	220 (55%)	160 (40%)	-	20 (5%)	400 (100%)
2	Ideal sensitization and enlightenment campaign to the male and women gender on the need for improving women inheritance	140 (35%)	230 (57.5%)	30 (7.5%)	-	400 (100%)
3	Need for more women vocational skills	200 (50%)	150 (37.5%)	20 (5%)	30 (7.5%)	400 (100%)
4	Need for more economic empowerment of women	180 (35%)	200 (50%)	15 (3.75%)	5 (1.25%)	400 (100%)

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2022.

The table below shows solutions that can improve the welfare of widows in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality. Item 1 on Educational improvement of women and men had the percentage score of (SA=55%, A= 40%, D =0% and SD=0%). Again, item 2 on sensitization and enlightenment campaign had a score of (SA=35%, A=57.5%, D =7.5%, SD = 0%). Item 3 on need for more women vocational skills had a percentage score of (SA=50%, A = 37.5%, D = 5 % and SD -7.5%). Item 4 on need for more economic empowerment of women had a score of (SA=35%, A - 50%, D = 3.75 % and SD =1.25%). The result given below shows that all the items given, are solutions that can improve the welfare of widows in Ekpeye Ethnic Nationality.

### Test of Hypotheses

**H<sub>01</sub>:** The more widow inheritance, the more improved welfare of widows in Ekpeye ethnic nationality.

**Table 5:** T-test analysis of widow inheritance and improving of widow welfare in Ekpeye Ethnic nationality.

Variable	Mean	SD	Standard error	DF	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value	Remark
Widows can have access to their husbands properties	3.45	.05851	0.0600	398	3.860	1.523	Sig.
Widows can sell some properties of their husband to assist the family	3.36	.42304	0.3265				

**Source:** Fieldwork (2022).

The table shows that the calculated t-value is 3.860; while the critical t-value is 1.523 at 0.05 level of significant and at 398 degree of freedom. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, it means that the more women inheritance is improved the more welfare of women is also improving in Ekpeye Clan.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** The more illiteracy exist among widows, the more the practice of widowhood inheritance that affect the welfare of widow in Ekpeye ethnic nationality.

**Table 6:** T-test analysis of more illiteracy among widows inheritance and welfare of women in Ekpeye ethnic nationality

Variable	Mean	SD	Standard error	DF	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value	Remark
Low education widows are rendered socially vulnerable	3.53	.17818	01957	398	11.857	07.611	Sig.
Illiterate widows are rendered economically exposed	3.23	.26301	02131				

**Source:** Research Fieldwork (2022).

The table shows that the calculated t-value is 11.857 while the critical t-value is 07. 611 at 0.05 level of significant and at 398 degree of freedom. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value at 0.05 level of significant, the hypothesis that the more illiteracy exist among widows, the more the practice of widowhood inheritance that affect the welfare of widow in Ekpeye ethnic nationality, is hereby accepted.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** The more vocational skills and enlightenment programmes are given to widows, the more it improve widows welfare and widows inheritance in Ekpeye ethnic nationality

**Table 7:** T-test analysis of vocational skills and enlightenment programmes of widows

Variable	Mean	SD	Standard error	DF	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value	Remark
Low education widows are rendered socially vulnerable	3.4682	.12233	.00825	398	12.467	10.632	Sig.
Illiterate widows are rendered economically exposed	3.1285	.30858	.02300				

**Source:** Research Fieldwork (2022).

The table shows that the calculate t-value is 12.467, while the critical t-value is 10.632 at 0.05 level of significant and at 398 degree of freedom. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value at 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis that “The more vocational skills and enlightening programmes are given to widows, the more it improve widows welfare and inheritance in Ekpeye ethnic nationality is accepted.

### Discussion of Findings

From the findings, it is obvious that widow inheritance helps to improve the welfares of widows. This is demonstrated in the protection given to the widows who accept to remarry to the late husband relative. The findings are in line with the finding of Luke (2001) <sup>[14]</sup> on Luo widows in Kenya. In this work the scholar reveal that a widow who re-marry to her late husband’s relation usually enjoy all the protection of due the any married woman in Luo. This protection according to the scholar in collecting part of this protection comes inform of finance and labour which are given to the widow by the relatives of the deceased husband. These weigh the widows down who refuse to remarry. This excludes ill-treatments she will be exposed to.

On the role of illiteracy of widows in widow inheritance and widow’s welfare, the work reviewed that illiteracy level of widows helps in the practice of widow’s inheritance and the promotion of their welfare. This finding is in line with the work/findings of Adeyemo (2016) <sup>[1]</sup> on widowhood and harmful practices. The study revealed

that illiteracy, poverty, socio-elements status of women, religious beliefs etc are the factors that promote widow inheritance.

Similar relevance is in the findings on the same phenomenon in Nigeria. In this study, the scholar observe that the practice exist and is sustained by the level of education of the people, thus recommended that education is the only patent therapy to the practice of widow inheritance.

Finally, the work discovered that the more women are empowered the more they will not give into widow inheritance. This finding is related to the findings of Adeyemo (2016) <sup>[1]</sup>, Udo & Njoku (2017) <sup>[26]</sup> and Dube (2015) <sup>[9]</sup> in this work empowerment of women is seen as the driving force to end all form of discrimination against women including widow inheritance. This empowerment can come in diverse form, skill acquisition and education empowerment

### Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, it has been well-known that among the implications of widowhood are the pathetic, degrading and dehumanizing rites that widows are subjected to as well as denied of inheritance. In conclusion, for widows and women to be fully liberated and enjoy more welfare, awareness programmes should be given to them to sensitize them to some facts, particularly on what widowhood entails. Therefore, it is a challenge to the society, i.e., the government, parents, women leaders, religious and opinion leader to sensitize widows and the generality of women about the negative impacts of widowhood. Women are humans, but culture hypnotized their rights. This has brought to more agony and pains to the women folk. Thus, considering the need for widowhood inheritance and welfare of women, the following recommendations are put forth;

1. It will be ideal for Women to encourage their husband's to write wills and also to formally concede properties to them while the man is still alive.
2. Imperative for Widows to be adequately educated; to achieve this, Governments and Non-governmental organizations, as well as religious bodies should be proactive and take up the responsibility of educating women so as to resist them from those who want to subject them to traumatizing widowhood rites.

Another way is that all stakeholders should embark on programmes that would empower widows through various skills acquisition programmes, for them to become self-reliant and take care of their immediate families as well as to contribute to the growth and development of the nation.

- Also, Governments and all other stake holders should embark on programmes that would enhance periodic information through enlightenment programmes for widows and the generality of women, particularly on the issue of widowhood.

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