

Special Issue on Widowhood in Sub-Saharan Africa

Theme: Navigating the Shadows: Rights and Resilience of Widows and Widowers in Sub-Saharan Africa

Background

Widowhood remains a significant social issue, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, where cultural, legal, and economic factors converge to create unique challenges for widows and widowers. The experience of losing a spouse is often compounded by systemic discrimination and socio-economic vulnerabilities (Nwanko, 2025). Research suggests that widows face heightened risks of gender-based violence, economic instability, and social isolation (Shafiq, Ullah & Ayub, 2024; Zafar, Yasin & Khan, 2023). Also, widowhood is not experienced equally, it is gendered with men and women having different experiences. Moreover, cultural practices surrounding widowhood can exacerbate these challenges, with many women subjected to harmful traditions that limit their rights to property, mobility, and personal autonomy (Gupta, Madabushi & Gupta, 2023).

The right to life, movement, religion, culture, and other fundamental rights are often neglected in the aftermath of bereavement (Matlabe-Danke, 2025), leaving widows and widowers to navigate complex legal and social landscapes. For instance, the intersection of cultural norms and legal frameworks often complicates the inheritance rights of widows, leading to further marginalisation (Dube, 2023; Choguya, 2024; Julius, 2025). The psychological toll of widowhood, characterised by profound loneliness and grief, can also hinder the ability to seek help or assert one's rights (Makanga, 2022; Senyah, 2021).

This special issue creates a platform for scholarly dialogue on the multifaceted experiences of widows and widowers. By addressing the diverse challenges they face, we aim to propose actionable recommendations that can enhance their rights and improve their living conditions.

Scope of the Special Issue

This special issue particularly focuses on topics related to the multifaceted issues faced by widows and widowers within Indigenous communities. Relevant topics include, but are not limited to:

- Bosadi Theorisation and Widowhood

- Cultural Practices and Widowhood
- Finances and Widowhood
- Gender-Based Violence
- Gendered Experience of Widowhood
- Loneliness and Widowhood
- Methodologies Used to Study Widowhood Issues
- Parenting and Widowhood
- Psychological Well-Being and Widowhood
- Social Change and Empowerment
- Theorisation of Widowhood Studies
- Theology/Religion and Widowhood
- Widowhood and Health
- Widowhood and Human Rights

Submission Guidelines

We invite contributions from scholars, practitioners, and intellectual activists who are engaged in research related to issues of widowhood. Submissions should adhere to the following guidelines:

Manuscripts **MUST**:

- be original, unpublished, and not under consideration elsewhere.
- have a similarity index of up to 15% maximum.
- free of technical errors and properly edited.
- limited to 6 000 words, including references.
- **STRICTLY** be prepared according to the journal's formatting guidelines.
- include an abstract of a maximum of 250 words and a list of 4-6 keywords.
- Include the DOIs in the references for the sources that have DOIs.

Any manuscript that does not satisfy the above points and guidelines will be rejected before it can be sent out for review.

Important Dates

Submission Deadline: 30 March 2026

Feedback: 30 May 2026

Deadline for Submission of Revised Manuscripts: 30 June 2026

Acceptance: 30 August 2026

Publication Date: 30 October 2026

How to Submit Your Manuscript

Please submit your manuscripts through the journal's online submission system at <https://ojs.sabinet.co.za/index.php/indilinga>. The manuscript must not include the authors' names or any information that may easily identify them to ensure a double-blind peer review. An author or authors may not submit more than one manuscript to this special issue. For inquiries, contact the editorial team. at **Editorial Email Address:**

Main Editor: Prof Sizakele, M Matlabe

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GENERAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

LENGTH

Articles should not normally exceed 15 pages in length (4000–4500 words); shorter articles such as research reports or comments are welcome.

TEXTS

Articles should be sent via email attachment. Articles sent as attachments should be in Microsoft Word.

EDITORIAL

All contributions are refereed or reviewed, and all are edited or revised for publication. The editors reserve the right to make alterations that do not result in substantive changes without consulting the author(s). Proofs will be returned to authors if time permits; they must be returned within four days and no substantial changes can be made at that stage. The editors' decisions about acceptance are final.

COPYRIGHT

Publication is conditional upon authors giving copyright to the *Indilinga: African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems*. Requests to copy all or substantial parts of an article must be made to the Editor-in-Chief.

LAYOUT

Text should be double line spaced on one side of A4 paper with at least 30mm margins on all edges.

WRITING STYLE

The journal encourages various and different styles of writing. The main criteria for publishable texts are academic rigour as well as dialogic qualities that open up conversations with readers. Different kinds of narratives, as well as the more traditional academic accounts, are welcome.

DIAGRAMS AND TABLES

Must be supplied to print in ONE colour only.

LANGUAGE MEDIUM

English or an African language. All articles will be submitted to referees. If an article is submitted in a language for which it is difficult to find suitable referees, the author may be requested to submit a translated version of the article (in English) for the purposes of refereeing.

NOTES

These should be avoided where possible; when they have to be used, list them at the end of the manuscript.

LIST OF REFERENCES

All sources cited in the text should be listed in the A7 reference style. Bibliographic information should be in the language of the source (therefore not necessarily in the language of the manuscript). Capital letters are used only where they are necessary for linguistic reasons. Entries are in alphabetical order.

Source references are given by surnames and initials of all authors, followed by year, title of article, unabbreviated title of journal, volume, number and applicable pages, e.g. Brown, P. and Brown, T.B. (1993). Early Childhood Education, *Educational Psychology*, 28(6)L: 23-24.

In book references, give the surnames and initials of all the authors, followed by the year of publication, as well as the title, volume, edition, place of publication and publisher, e.g. Luthuli, P.C. (1998). *Philosophical Foundations of Education*. Durban: Kagiso Publishers. In the case of official reports and those of corporate authors, the references must be as detailed as possible, e.g. Department of National Education 1991. *Report of Teacher Education*. Pretoria: Government Printer, RP 173/1991: 122.

For unpublished theses and dissertations, follow this example: Mtetwa, D. (2001). *From Policy to Practice: The South African Schools Act*. MEd Disserta-tion. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Anonymous references from newspapers are indicated thus: *Sunday Times*, 25 March 2001: 11. Leadership in Education.

Personal communications are not included in the reference list as they are not retrievable.

References to websites should be in *italics* e.g. Available at:

<http://www.iicd.org/projects/articles/iicdprojects>. Accessed on: 25 March 2009

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We look forward to your contributions!