

**PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES' RESPONSE TO THE PLIGHT OF WIDOWS IN  
FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, ABUJA**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled “Pentecostal Churches’ Response to the Plight of Widows in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja”, has been done by me in the Department of Arts and Social Science Education, under the supervision of Dr. J.N. Kwasau and Dr. S. Mijah. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this thesis was presented for another degree or diploma in any University.

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.....

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**CERTIFICATION**

This thesis entitled **PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES’ RESPONSE TO THE PLIGHT OF WIDOWS IN FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, ABUJA** by Solomon Jeruma Dennis Zhiya meets the regulations governing the award of degree of M. Ed Christian Religious Studies of Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my beloved Father and Sister (Elder Paul Zhiya Kaura and Mrs. Duniya Ashana Mercy) who have gone to be with the Lord. May their souls rest in peace as we all shall meet again in Heaven (Amen).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study titled Pentecostal churches' response to the plight of widows in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja set out to investigate how Pentecostal churches understand the Biblical teaching concerning; identify the plight of widows in Pentecostal churches; find out the response of Pentecostal churches to the plight of widows and give suggestion on how the Pentecostal churches can respond to the plight of widows. Four research questions were raised and four null hypotheses formulated to guide the study. A survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of five hundred (500) Pentecostal Church members (Comprising of Ministers, Widows and other members) were randomly sampled and stratified for the study. The questionnaires were distributed to Forty two (42) sampled Pentecostal Churches in the six Area Councils of Abuja. One minister and a widow in each of the sampled churches were interviewed. Therefore, the research instruments used for the study were structured questionnaire and structured interview schedule. Six hundred and thirty (630) copies of questionnaires were distributed in the field. Five hundred and forty-three (543) copies were retrieved. Five hundred (500) were found valid for use due to their proper filling as opposed to the remaining forty three (43) copies which were not properly filled. The data collected from the respondents in the Forty-two (42) churches were statistically analyzed using the SPSS Software. The four null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance as well as frequencies, percentages; means and standard deviation were employed to answer research questions. Statistical tests of t-test and ANOVA were used for the test of the null

hypotheses. The major findings of this study were that: the Pentecostal Church members have an understanding of Biblical teaching concerning widows; Pentecostal Church Widows are suffering from different kinds of Plight, and in recognition of these, the Pentecostal Churches show concern by giving scholarship to widows' children in order to alleviate their plight; Pentecostal Churches Positively respond to the Plight of Widows by designing a special programme for widows; organizing seminars and counseling widows; providing welfare package like skill acquisition programme and financial assistance to widows; and having Bible Study on topics having to do with widows' Plight periodically. It was also found out that Pentecostal Churches assist and encourage widows in terms of regular financial assistance; material support/supply of food items to widows; raising educational funds to assist widows' children; regular visitation to widows and gainful employment for widows. Therefore, it was recommended that Pentecostal Ministers should keep educating their congregations on the Biblical teaching concerning the plight of widows and encourage them to care for widows; Other recommendations were that Pentecostal ministers should encourage widows among them to re-marry if they still have the grace in order to alleviate the plight they go through; also, widows of Pentecostal churches should make efforts to find solutions to their problems by embracing entrepreneurship and self employment ventures. This will go a long way to make them self reliant.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

FCT	=	Federal Capital Territory
AMAC	=	Abuja Municipal Area Council
PFN	=	Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria
SPSS	=	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Widowhood is often associated with pain, grief and depression, especially for women who are not educated, have no skill or business to fall back on. Upon realisation of this ugly societal trend, more than few non-government organisations have emerged to ensure that these women survive despite their situation. In different parts of Nigeria, the state of widows varies, depending on ethnicity and culture. In some cultures, the moment a man dies, his belongings are taken away from the widow by his relatives, and thereby leaving her with little, or in most cases, nothing to survive on. It is more pathetic when the poor widow has nothing to fall back on; she is left alone, rejected and abandoned to wallow in abject poverty with her children. This ugly situation has forced many widows to resort to various means of survival such as: Prostitution and begging. Most times, many of them find themselves at the mercy of their dead husbands' relatives, many of whom may want them as second wives.

In most African cultural settings, women are regarded as second class citizens. This explains why women have little or no say on the issue concerning the family affairs in most African societies. Women in most cultures are deprived of the bride price of their children. In Nigeria today, a good number of young and old women who have lost their spouses find it difficult to cope with life. Death is an inevitable phenomenon that causes a compulsory separation of couples and this is prevalent in every society. Widows, both young and old, are faced with challenges in their daily living by feeling lonely, dejected, isolated and abandoned; thereby leading some of them to become weary and end up

backsliding in the Christian faith. The question at this juncture is, what does the Bible teach concerning widows, or what is God's mind towards widows?

In Old Testament, there were three sets of people apart from the Levites whom God warned not to be neglected or maltreated: they were widows, orphans and aliens or strangers. Sometimes the society or people exhibit social injustices against widows and this is against God's plan for widows. God absolutely hates and punishes those who oppress and suppress widows socially, economically, emotionally and physically. Concerning unjust rulers and judges, God explicitly pronounces punishment on them. The word of God states, "Curse is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan and widow..." (Deut. 27: 19). God continues, "Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves, they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widows' case does not come before them" (Isa. 1:23). Then God denounces and passes his righteous judgment on the wicked rulers. "Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and rob my oppressed people of justice, making widows their prey..." (Isa.10:1-3).

God in his love hates deprivation of the people from their properties, specially the underprivileged such as widows. The word of God States, "In you they have treated fathers and mothers with contempt; in you they oppressed the alien and mistreated the fatherless and the widows...they devour people, take their treasures precious things and many widows" (Eze. 22: 7, 25). But since people (relations) refuse to listen to God, He said, "So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against... those who oppress the widows" (Mal. 3: 5). On the other hand, God commands rulers, judges, a community and church leaders to defend the rights and welfare of widows. It is stated in

the word of God: “Speak up for those who cannot for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Prov. 31: 8-9). God continues, “Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other” (Zech. 7: 9-10). Furthermore, God requires that widows are shown kindness by supplying them with their needs. God instructed: “When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches the second time; leave what remains for the...widow. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyards, do not go over the vines again; leave what remains for the...widow” (Deut. 24: 17, 20, 21). Similarly, God directed the Israelites thus: “At the end of every three years, bring all your tithes of that your produce and store it in your barns, so that the...widows who live in your towns may eat and be satisfied, and so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands” (Deut.14: 26-29).

In the New Testament, widows were given special support as found in Acts 6:1-6, and some criteria were observed. The criteria were: a widow must not be below the age of sixty (60), she must be a wife of one man, meaning she must have married once and that she had lived a useful and charitable life. Individual churches have been commanded to “Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need... (1 Tim. 5:3-4). It is required that Christians show love and support to widows. The Bible says, “Religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress...” (James 1: 27). The early church did so much that they never had a needy person among them, because all who had property sold them and brought the money to the apostle and it was distributed to anyone who was in need” (Acts 4: 34-37). The

apostles, in the early church, planned and distributed food to the needy Christian widows. As a result, the church increased in number because the apostles concentrated in teaching, preaching and prayers while seven spiritually responsible people were in charge of the church social needs. A disciple in Joppa named Tabitha (Dorcas) was very generous to widows; she was doing good and helping the poor. She became sick and died and all the widows stood crying and showing the robes and other clothing Dorcas had made while she was still with them. Peter prayed and she came back to life (Acts 9: 34-41). This shows that God really has abundant love and compassion toward the afflicted—widows in our society.

Pentecostals are notorious for love and evangelism, their emphasis on love and evangelism is meant to go out and reach the ‘lost’ for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and the less privilege especially people widows and orphans; this they do charity opportunity where they bless the people spiritually, materially and financially. Paker (2011) in search of the characteristics of Pentecostalism made a discovery of twelve (12) positive characteristics of Pentecostalism. He discovered that Pentecostals are known to be Bible-based, spirit-respondent, emotional, prayerful, joyful, worshipful, ministry-minded, evangelistic, empowering, dynamic in programmes, community-minded in relationship, and generous in giving. From the foregoing, it is very clear that the Bible clearly teaches how widows are to be treated. Even with this teaching, people nowadays do not follow the plan of God for the widows. Therefore, there is need to investigate the Pentecostal churches’ response to the plight of widows in FCT, Abuja.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The Holy Bible is the word of God which is to Christians, a guide for their daily living. The same Bible addresses the issue of widowhood, both in the Old and New Testaments. It therefore means that God has widows in mind by giving instruction on how they should be treated. Even though the Holy Bible talks of widows' welfare, they still pass through some challenges in their widowhood such as deprivation of their husbands' inheritance and abandonment due to traditional practices among others. It has been observed that, widows are not getting the deserved love and concern that is due to them. In his invitation to humanity to consider the care of widows, James proposes that: "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress" (James 1:27). The author immediately observes that there are some religions which God does not accept as pure and faultless. These are the types which do not care for the widows and orphans. On this note, it becomes evident that the care for the widows constitutes God's heartbeat. Millions of the world's widows endure extreme poverty, ostracism, homelessness, ill health and discrimination in law and custom. Widows in many countries are often confronted with denial of inheritance and land rights, degrading and life-threatening mourning and burial rites and other forms of widow abuse.

Widows are often evicted from their homes and physically abused – some are even killed by members of their own families. In some instances, a woman's social status is inextricably linked to her husband's, so that when her husband dies, the woman no longer has a place in the society. To regain social status, widows are expected to marry one of their husband's male relatives, sometimes being forced to the marriage. For many,

the loss of a husband is only the first trauma in a long-term ordeal. In many cultures, widowhood is stigmatized and seen as a source of shame. Widows are considered as cursed people in some cultures and are even associated with witchcraft. Such misconceptions can lead to widows being ostracized, abused and dehumanised.

The children of widows are often negatively affected, both emotionally and economically. Widowed mothers, supporting their families alone, are forced to withdraw their children from school. Moreover, the daughters of widows may suffer multiple deprivations, which may increase their vulnerability to abuse. Such deprivation is often seen as justified in terms of cultural practice. Impunity for abuses of the rights of widows is rife, with few perpetrators ever successfully brought to justice. Even in places where legal protection is more inclusive, widows can suffer social marginalization. In the midst of this ordeal, the woman is left destitute when her husband dies. Poverty becomes well pronounced on widows with little or no access to credit or other economic resources, most especially when the widows are uneducated. Without education and training, widows cannot support themselves or their families. Many widows in traditional societies have no rights, or have very limited rights to inheritance or land ownership under customary and religious law. Without inheritance rights, in addition to lack of rights to the property of their birth family, widows find themselves financially insecure and totally dependent on the charity of their husbands' relatives. In Nigeria, where widowhood constitutes a low status in social institution as well as a personal condition, thousands of widows are disowned by relatives and made homeless, forcing many women to seek informal work as domestic labourers, or turn to begging or prostitution. The difficulties of widows range from loss of insurance coverage to difficulties in accessing credit to

becoming solely responsible for childcare. In some cases, widows can become liable for the debts of a deceased spouse. Poor nutrition, inadequate shelter and vulnerability to violence, combined with lack of access to health care, can impact the physical and mental well-being of widows.

In fact, some of the plights of widows are: emotional, social, psychological, economical and spiritual. Some of their challenges are sometimes caused or compounded by the relatives and other people in the community. Other kinds of problems that widows face are lack of companionship and financial difficulties which lead to drastic change of life style. It has been observed that some widows are deprived of the basic necessities of life such as food, shelter and some have faced serious disgrace by the members of the deceased family. Most widows especially in most Pentecostal churches have suffered deprivation of their husbands' property as the brothers and uncles of their late husband's claim the ownership of all the property, all in the name of tradition, thereby living the widow and children in abject poverty. As soon as this happens, the widow is disorganized, leading to many problems and would have to start with the children all over again. Some have suffered abandonment from the members of the society as well. This mostly happens when the widow is alleged to be responsible for her husband's death. In such a case, she is left alone to suffer with the children. The main focus of this study therefore, is to find out the Pentecostal churches' response to the plight of widows in FCT, Abuja.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of this study is to find out the Pentecostal churches' response to the plight of widows in FCT, Abuja, while the specific objectives are to:

- i. investigate how Pentecostal churches understand the Biblical teaching concerning widows;
- ii. identify the plight of widows in Pentecostal churches;
- iii. find out the response of Pentecostal churches to the plight of widows; and
- iv. give suggestion on possible ways the Pentecostal churches can respond to the plight of widows.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The following questions were formulated to guide the study:

- i. What is the understanding of Pentecostal churches on the Biblical teaching concerning widows in FCT?
- ii. What is the plight of widows in the Pentecostal churches in FCT?
- iii. In what ways do the Pentecostal churches respond to the plight of widows?
- iv. What possible ways can Pentecostal churches assist and encourage widows in FCT?

## **1.5 Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

- i. There is no significant difference between male and female respondents in their understanding of the Biblical teachings concerning widows.
- ii. There is no significant difference among the opinions of widows non widows of Pentecostal churches concerning the plight of widows.
- iii. There is no significant difference in the response of ministers and laity on how the Pentecostal churches respond to the plight of widows.
- iv. There is no significant difference between the response of married and single respondents concerning the possible ways the Pentecostal churches can respond to the plight of widows among them.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study will be significant to widows as it will provide some recommendations and suggestions that would be of benefit and value to them. It will help them to realize that the problems they pass through are not peculiar to them only. This study will also be of benefit to the Pentecostal church leaders because it will help them have more understanding of the plight of widows, and what they can do to help reduce the plight of widows by giving priority to widows in their planning. The social workers will also benefit from this study as they will understand generally the challenges widows are facing. By this, they will be able to make reasonable suggestions to the government on ways that the widows' plight can be alleviated. Also, future researchers of similar topics

will benefit from this study as it will help them gather more ideas for their study when consulted.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The study covers all the Pentecostal churches in FCT, Abuja. Abuja was selected for the study because apart from being the Headquarters of the Nation, there were several Pentecostal churches with large membership. All the Pentecostal churches could not be reached within the approved limited duration of this research. Therefore, the study made a cluster of the registered Pentecostal churches in each of the Area Council of FCT and drew a sample from them. The concentration of the study was on Pentecostal widows, non widows (members) and Ministers. The choice of the scope was for efficient analysis and better understanding of the subject matter. The researcher had easy access to the population as well as quick response that helped in controlling the influence of intervening variables that might make the findings unreliable.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the review of related literature regarding widowhood. The literature was reviewed under the following sub-headings; the review starts with the concept of widowhood, the Biblical teaching on widows with specification on the Old and New Testaments, the place of widows in the society, some common traditional widowhood practices and the plight of widows, widows' plight in the family, empirical studies and summary.

#### **2.2 Concept of Widowhood.**

Widow, according to Longman Active Study Dictionary (2000), is a woman whose husband has died and who has not remarried another man. This agrees with the Advanced Learners' Dictionary (1999) which defines 'widow' as a woman who has not married again after her husband's death. In other words, a widow is a woman who remains without a husband after the death of her husband. The state of being a widow is called widowhood. Many issues exist in reference to widowhood or being a widow. Such issues mostly deal with the economic and social consequences of being a widow. However, all these issues are dependent upon the culture in which the widow is subject to.

Taida (2002) defines widow as a "woman who has lost her half that does not make her a whole and complete person again." She further states that "a widow is always

lonely, hurt, weak, and afraid of the unknown, discouraged always, and depressed, always in crises, always weeping and in most cases quiet. Nobody goes near to offer her help”. In as much as Taida’s definition of a widow might be true, it cannot be in all cases, because there are widows who do well in some cases, even better than some men. Example of those kinds of widows is the working class women. Kore (2002) states that the widow experiences much grief and mourning during the rest of her life on earth as a result of the death of her husband. He further adds that widows are at the Mercy of God. Afaaknuzna (2009) observes that there are two categories of widows namely: Young and elderly widows. Young widows are those whose age is below 60 years, while the elderly widows are those whose age is from 60 years and above. He explains that the feeling of the young widow is quite different from that of the elderly widow. He says the sense of sex of the young widows cannot be compared to that of the elderly widows, because the young widows have more worries about sex due to their age, while the elderly widows are likely to be more concerned about their children than sex. A widow, according to Owasanoye (2007) is a woman who has lost her husband through death. Such a woman feels an ominous ring of finality, especially when there was no child in the marriage.

### **2.3 Concept of Pentecostalism**

Gray (1978) asserts that Pentecostalism is a movement within Christianity that places more emphasis on a direct personal experience of God through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He traces the origin of the term “Pentecostal” to have been derived from Pentecost which was the Jewish feast of weeks on which day the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples of Jesus as seen in Acts 2. Gray further explains that Pentecostals take a look at their movement as showing the same kind of spiritual power of worship, style of

worship and teaching that were found in the early church. According to Engelsma (2004) the movement that has a powerful and popular force in Christendom today is Pentecostalism. He asserts this because, to him, it claims to be a “second Pentecost.” It is also known as the charismatic movement because it claims to recover and practice the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit that are mentioned in Acts 2 and 1Corinthians 12-14.

According to Stephens (2008), Pentecostalism grew out of the Holiness revival during the second half of the nineteenth century. This revival was an expression of both social and theological discontent among individuals and groups in the nations of the world. Holiness advocates disapproval of the impiety in mainline denominations and were alienated by the growing wealth and elaborateness of their churches. Such individuals and groups were not contented to remain in mainline churches; hence, they formed new religious communities committed to theological doctrine of perfectionism. The Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists then believed they were experiencing a renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit much like the early church experienced in the book of Acts. The holiness spawned zeal for “Spirit Baptism” (a divine empowerment of believers) and for other gifts of the New Testament church such as healing and prophecy. Holiness leaders such as Charles Cullis, John Alexander Dowie and Albert B. Simpson established healing missions across the USA. They, like other holiness advocates, believed in a new miraculous era of the Spirit.

Pentecostalism as a movement, according to Anderson (2000) started in January, 1901 with the holiness minister Charles Fox Parham in USA. This first wave of Pentecostalism spread in the revival that followed, but remained regional, moving into Kansas, Missouri, Texas and Arkansas. He equally states that the 1906 revival at Azusa

Street, Los Angeles marks the second phase of the Pentecostal's origin, as William Seymour, who studied under Parham in Houston, Texas, carried the message of Pentecost to Los Angeles where he began a revival meeting in one of the poorer sections of the city. The Azusa Street revival gathered the "ethnic minority of Los Angeles" who discovered a "sense of dignity which the community denied them within the larger urban culture." From Azusa Street, Stephens maintains that the revival spread throughout the USA. Holiness leaders from the Church of God in Christ, the Church of God and several Churches were present at Azusa; they carried the message back to their churches. In a short while, Pentecostalism became the most important mass religious movement.

### **2.3.1 Pentecostalism in Nigeria**

Tracing when Pentecostalism started in Nigeria is quite a hard task to do. However, it is evident that certain traces of Pentecostalism were in practice in Nigeria as far back as 1916. Folarin ( as cited in Kwasau, 2000) argues that in 1916, one Bishop James Johnson of the Apostolic Church conducted a revival service in St Paul African Church, Breadfruit, Lagos. Throughout the period of the revival service, he stressed again and again, the need for Christians to be baptised in the Holy Spirit. Beyer (1998) argues that Pentecostalism in Nigeria can be traced as far back as the first quarter of the twentieth century. It is quite evident that the impact of Pentecostalism today started to be felt in Nigeria around the late 1960s cum the early 1970s when several churches sprang up with serious revival. Some of these churches are: God's Mission International, Incorporated in 1972 under the leadership of Archbishop Benson Idahosa; the Deeper Life Bible Church, founded in 1983 under the leadership of Pastor William F. Kumuyi; the Living Faith Church, founded in 1983 under the leadership of Bishop David O.

Oyedepo; the Redeemed Christian Church of God under the leadership of Pastor Enoch A. Adeboye, and a host of others. A careful analysis of the historical development of Pentecostalism in Nigeria has shown that Pentecostalism came in full force in the 1970s.

Gaiya, as cited in Okegbile (2005) opines that the Pentecostal movement started in Nigeria around 1970s among students in few tertiary institutions and secondary schools. The universities of Ibadan and Ife became the hotbeds of Pentecostalism. Later in the 1980s, these youths became eager to read charismatic literature from Europe and America. For example, they read books written by ministers such as Kenneth E. Hagin, Oral Roberts, Robert Tilton, Kenneth Copeland and others. This new religious movement graduated into the establishment of evangelistic ministry. This was helpful to the growth of Christianity because these youths, being young, strong, agile and zealous, could be found everywhere in the country preaching the Pentecostal gospel. A few of such were William F. Kumuyi, Enoch A. Adeboye and Benson Idahosa. Today, churches are spreading almost every day across the country and everywhere in the world. This could be linked to the spirit of Pentecostalism and their commitment in evangelism, also their emphasis on prosperity, healing miracles and deliverance power through the Holy Spirit.

Anderson (2000) observes that Pentecostals are notorious for rather aggressive form of evangelism and proselytism. From its beginning, the Pentecostal movement was characterised by an emphasis on evangelism meant to go out and reach the 'lost' for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Paker (2009) in search of the characteristics of Pentecostalism made a discovery of twelve (12) positive characteristics of Pentecostalism. He discovers that Pentecostals are known to be Bible-based, spirit-respondent, emotional, prayerful, joyful, worshipful, ministry-minded, evangelistic,

empowering, dynamic in programmes, community based relationship, and generous in giving.

### **2.3.2 Pentecostals Concern on Giving to Widows**

Pentecostals like the early Christians shared their possessions to help one another and the wider community. As the Bible has it: “All who believed were together and had all things in common. They would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:44). In Christianity, the commitment to giving, to helping others and being concerned about the poor, the weak, the widows and the orphans, was rooted both in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ (Mukarji, 2000). He again stresses that over the years, Christians have carried forward the desire to serve and help one another through giving. They have been involved in running hospitals, orphanages and schools. This continues today as churches in many countries still provide excellent services, reaching out to the community and being involved with relief and development work. Ivins (2010) writing in one of the Pentecostal churches’ gathering, maintains that as far as giving is concerned, God expects us to give whatever we can give, especially to the widows and orphans. When Jesus says in Luke 12:48 that, “For unto whom much is given, much is required,” He meant it; He meant the very act of giving – that we are to give according to what we have received. It has nothing to do with what our neighbour gives. Ivins (2010) further stresses that we are to give out of our own blessings that God has given to us. For this is part of our responsibility as God’s managers in the world. It is in giving that God will increase us financially and spiritually. According to him, most often when the issue of giving is mentioned, most people limit it to ‘giving money’. It is in the light of this that Odeyemi (2007) stresses that giving goes

beyond money, it could be in a form of hospitality to strangers, widows, timely advice, listening ear, giving of food, clothes, land, houses and others.

A member of Nigeria Pentecostal Fellowship, Igho (2010) wrote in his book titled “Channels of Favour” that the fastest way to get favour is to show kindness to one who asks for favour. He agrees with Odeyemi (2007) by stating that, truly when people hear of giving, the first thing that comes to their mind is money. This explains why many people, including church members, do not give as they should. One must understand that the first thing God requires from a man is love for one another. One of the most exciting decisions one can make is to be on the lookout for opportunities to show kindness on others. He that is committed to doing well to others gets more blessings from God just like Jesus states: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Matt 5:8).

## **2.4 Biblical Teaching on Widows**

Both Old and New Testaments have something to say on the plight of widows. Kore (2002) states that the Biblical teaching about widows concerns all Christians and gospel ministers, judges, social workers, Bible teachers, students, church leaders, community leaders and of course, every individual. Dufour (1978) has rightly observed that, the situation is an object of social protection from the law and from God, who listens to their complaints and makes Himself their defender.

### **2.4.1 Old Testament Teaching about Widows**

According to the International Bible Commentary, Widows in the Old Testament were part of God’s family. Widowhood is viewed as a special form of poverty which divinely needs to be taken care of. Damap (2007) explains that in the Jewish Society

widows were particularly the needy and the dependent. The Old Testament singles them out with orphans as the primary objects of charitable deeds. Widows found joy in fellowship with other people of God. They were part of the worship that went on in the tabernacle and at feast times. The feast of weeks was observed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> month, 50<sup>th</sup> day after the offering of barley sheaf at the feast of unleavened bread. It included a holy convocation with restriction on manual labour and was observed with joy (Deut. 16:9-12). The feast was also known as the 'feast of harvest' or 'Pentecost'. Another feast shared with widows was the feast of Tabernacles. That was a feast to commemorate the wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness. The Israelites offered animal sacrifices and lived in booths, made of palm trees to remember their period of wandering in the wilderness when they lived in shelters. This feast was conducted in joy and it included widows and orphans.

Damap (2007) further explains that widows were categorized along such people as the Levites (who had no inheritance), servants, strangers and the fatherless. These categories of God's people ate from the tithes that were brought into the temple. It was when they benefited from it that the Lord would bless the people of Israel in their work (Deut. 14:29). The widows did not only wait to be fed, but engaged in hard work such as gleaning. One had to be diligent to be able to see an ear of grain that had been left by the harvesters. Neither grains nor grapes were to be completely harvested by the owner of the farm. Some were to be left for the widows and the poor (Deut. 24:19-20). This meant that individuals actively took care of widows. King David also took good care of widows (2 Sam. 20:3). Widows did not only receive help, but they in turn helped other people. We see the widow of Zarephath in (1 Kings 17:18) sharing her meager meal with the Prophet.

This must have been a trying time for her since she had to share even in her abject poverty. But God rewarded her willingness to share her last resources (1 King 17:9-20). The Lord required a special “third year” tithe for the Levites, the orphans, the widows and the aliens. The Bible states that:

At the end of every third year, bring the entire tithe of that year’s harvest and store it in the nearest town. Give it to the Levites, who will receive no allotment of land among you, as well as the aliens living among you, the orphans and the widows in your towns, so they can eat and be satisfied. Then the Lord your God will bless you in all your work” (Deut 14:28-29). Then you shall say before the Lord your God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the aliens, to the fatherless, and to the widows, according to all your commandments which you have commanded me: I have not transgressed your commandments, neither have I forgotten them” (Deut 26:13).

Because widows are close to God’s heart, He will always stand in for them. Widows must not be oppressed. God’s judgment was imminent upon those who oppressed and exploited widows (Mal. 3:5). God’s wrath will fall on those who perpetuate injustice against the widows. Their situation was already bad enough for anyone to add to their bitterness by perverting justice against them. It was regarded as apostasy on the part of the Israelites when they failed to encourage the oppressed, defend the fatherless and to plead the cause of the widows. So the care of the widow was a divine obligation God Himself gave to His people.

#### **2.4.2 New Testament Teachings about Widows**

According to Kore (2002), Old Testament provides the theological framework upon which the treatment of the widows in the New Testament is based. In the New Testament, there are two major chapters that deal mainly with the story of the Church and

the widows. These are Acts 6 and 1Timothy 5: 1Timothy 5 gives us the principles of work among widows, while Acts 6 gives us an example of widows' project which was run by the early Church. In Acts 6:1-7, the project for widows arose as a result of increase in the number of widows and also the desire to share with those in need. There was growth in the early Church as a result of the apostles' preaching, teaching and healing ministry. Many became followers of Christ and the Church increased in number. In the early Church there were the needy and the widows. The apostles were in-charge of the needy in the early Church. The Church contributed towards caring for the needy by selling their possessions and giving to the apostles for onward distribution to this group (Acts 4:32-35). The increase in population of believers probably made management or distribution of resources difficult for the apostles. As a result, there was a complaint concerning the administration of food to be given to the widows. Since it was an informal project without proper co-ordination, problems naturally arose with the distribution of food.

The early Church consisted of three categories of audiences: The Proselytes (Gentile converts). Hellinists (Greek-speaking Jews and Hebrews (Aramaic speaking Jews).The Hellinist Jews complained against the Hebrew Jews that their widows were neglected in the daily distribution of resources. This problem was immediately arrested by setting up a committee of seven men to look into the sharing of food among the widows. Their qualification was that they must be "full of the Holy Spirit". Damap (2007) interprets this to mean, "They were to have manifested a special degree of allowing the Holy Spirit to work in them". New International Version Application Commentary interprets this to mean "their spirit were completely under the control of the

Holy Spirit, their words were His words”. Another pre-requisite for the election of the Seven was “Wisdom” Polhill again interprets this to mean practical know-how which was necessary for the proper management of the charitable funds. Above all, they must be men filled with the Holy Spirit. The idea here is that the seven chosen were men with ability to administer the daily material needs and as well as men who were God-fearing and faithful. It implies that the physical and spiritual needs of the widows were considered by men who were spirit-filled.

These seven men were chosen and presented to the apostles who then prayed and laid their hands on them. In the Old Testament, laying of hands was used to commission a person for a new responsibility (Num. 27:23). It is used in the New Testament for blessing (Mark 10:16) and ordination (Acts 6:6). The area of interest here is that the apostles laid hands on them to commission them to perform a practical duty of sharing among the widows. One may ask: What has sharing of food got to do with laying of hands? The Church was aware that, for any church-work to be done very well, be it social or spiritual in nature, the officers entrusted with such tasks must be filled with the Holy Spirit. Widows were so important that an election had to be conducted into the office for the practical duty of sharing food among them. It was not left to any single leader or a volunteer to decide, but the officers were screened by the apostles who prayed and ordained them. This solution in turn gave room to the Church to grow because the problem of widows seemed to be a hindrance for the early Church (Acts 6: 7).

Paul teaches in 1 Timothy 5:3 on the issue of widows to: “Give proper recognition”. In other words “give honour”. This implies that it is not optional to honour widows but it is a command and he adds, “honour widows that are widows indeed”. This

suggests that there were widows among widows. He recommended widows as deserving honour. But how can someone honour widows? This can be done by recognizing them, appreciating their situation, sharing with them, encouraging them and visiting them. Do not look down on them, but give them hope and allay their fears.

Kore (2002) while explaining Paul's teaching, states that the children of the widows must not take religion just as a matter of "out of home" activities. They must know that charity begins at home, especially in the care of their mothers that are widows. If the children provide for their parents that are widows, God will be more pleased with them than when they are doing so many work in the Church without caring for their mothers who are widows. They are to put their religion into practice, or show their piety toward their own household (1 Tim. 5: 4). James 1:27 says caring for widows is a religious duty. We cannot claim that we love God if we neglect widows, especially widows in our family. Damap (2007) in her research discusses with a Christian who told her his experience about widows thus: "Until this was explained to me, I had never included my own widowed sister among widows that I believed deserved my attention. Since then I redressed this neglect immediately". 1 Timothy 5:16 suggests that a believing woman should take care of any widow in her own family. The Church will then make provision for widows who have nobody to help them.

Also, the Church which is a congregation of God's people should see the widows as part of the family of God and will have the responsibility of helping them. The Church is to keep a register of widows. Not all the widows should be registered according to Paul. The age limit for registering a widow to enjoy Church support was 60 years. Widows that were younger were not allowed to register as true widows. Paul in Timothy

5:9 says “No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over 60”. Paul says the Church should reject or refuse to register any widow who was below 60 because they may be overpowered by their feelings and decide to marry.

The age limit is a concern to the present Church because many widows qualify for registration, but are not yet 60. They are qualified to receive help from the Church and to be recognized by the Church. They are young and needy and are Christians; they are part of the household of God. In response to the age limit imposed by Paul, we may say that the average life span in Paul’s day may have warranted a higher age limit for the registration of widows. An average life span of today is, however not up to life span of Paul’s days when he set the age limit for widows, especially in Africa. It has also been discovered that those that are worse hit by poverty among widows are those of them that are younger. The elderly widows tend to have means of livelihood, coming from their many years of savings and from their children. On the other hand, younger widows who had just started life with their spouses and had no time to make any saving and their children being too young to help are the neediest. Going by the age limit imposed by Paul, the Church will not be able to reach out to the poorest amongst the widows (Dufour, 1978).

It has also been observed, according to Damap (2007) that the needs of the widows vary. The needs range from economic, social, moral to emotional. One of the widows (at the age of 60 years old) at the occasion of fund- raising for widows said, “I am seeking for financial help for other widows and not for myself”. She had enough to care for herself. There were other widows in the Congregation who though younger were very poor and who needed help. She however admitted that since the death of her

husband, the going had not been easy, as she had often felt lonely. For the widow and many others who might at the age of 60 years and above, their need was not economic, but social, emotional, and needed encouragement from God's people to assure her of God's care in her position. It therefore means that some widows in serious need will be left out, or uncared for if the Church's registration of Widows is based on age limit of 60 years. But age was not the only reason for non-registration. She must be a true widow: a Christian widow in good faith before God and before the Church, and is known for good work. She must have been a wife to one man. She must not have been a woman who had been divorced and remarried to another man. What is good works? Good work includes bringing up children properly; showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good activities (1Timothy 5:9-10). Hence, the Church should work towards meeting the needs of such widows.

Anna in the temple was privileged to see Jesus and spoke to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem (Lk.2:36-38). Today, widows can be like Anna. They can be in the temple or in the presence of God, praying, telling God about their needs and making supplication and petitions on behalf of God's people. They should be seen making effort to be in the presence of God in prayer. God will bless widows who frequently be in His presence with spiritual and material blessings. Anna was in the presence of God and that was why she was able to prophesy concerning the long awaited Messiah to all that were gathered in the temple. God will never turn down the request of any widow who is always in His presence. Widows must make sure that their requests are made known to God. "Phil. 4:9 says. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God."

The widow has a role to play in her upkeep. Paul mentions the basic roles of the widow in 1 Timothy 5:5. The first is that she must put her hope in God. Hope means to trust, rely on, or look expectantly to God. Trust means firm reliance, confidence, belief, and faith in God. The widow who is alone is expected to rely firmly in God, not man. She should look up to God for any assistance. God will surely cover any widow who takes refuge in Him. The second role of a widow, according to Paul, is continuous prayer night and day in order to seek God's face for help. The widow who is left alone should not stop praying. She should worship God in prayer and make her requests known to Him. Widows who are left alone should devote themselves to worshipping and showing reverence to God. They must participate in the process of meeting their own needs, and this they can do by telling God about their problems in prayers.

A good example of a praying widow is Anna, the widow and Prophetess. Her husband died just after 7 years of marriage, but she chose to remain in the temple from where she never departed. She worshipped night and day, fasting and praying, and as a result, when baby Jesus was brought into the temple, she was privileged to see Him and spoke to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Israel. Widows today can be like Anna. In addition, a widow should also know that she has a responsibility to the Church. Jesus commended a widow for her generosity and faith as she willingly offered out of her poverty "all that she had to live on" (Lk. 21:1-4). No wonder, Paul echoes this in his instruction to Timothy when he speaks, including "washing the feet of the Saints" (1 Timothy 5:9-10). When a widow gives to God's people and serves them, she is also contributing to the growth of the Church; acknowledging God as a giver of what she has and using her spiritual gift to promote God's work. In this way, she is opening herself to

more blessings, rather than being in a state of self-pity which will make her to be a mere receiver of gifts without enjoying the blessings of giving. Being a widow does not exclude her from being a Christian in her service (Dufour, 1978).

While widows' qualification is a basis for showing care to them, according to Paul, the grace of God apart from qualification should be another condition for helping widows. Without grace, which is the basis for helping widows, the Church can be legalistic and judgmental in their screening of widow and may end up doing nothing as it is today. All widows whether in the Church or outside the Church deserve Church assistance in different ways and at different levels of their needs. This should be encouraged because caring for all kinds of widows is a means of witnessing Christ to them, and showing God's love and care for all He created in his image.

## **2.5. Treatment of Widows in the Society**

Widows are a class of the most vulnerable people in the society. They are exposed to indiscriminate abuses in all aspects of their lives, and they bear the scars of their stigmatisation in a society whose sensibility has been lost to a jaded conscience. Such anonymous oddity captures the plight of widowhood in Nigeria. Nigerian widows like other widows across the world, belong to the downtrodden class, whose voices are mostly represented by Non-Governmental Organisations, civil society and human rights groups, who raise concern over the sordid conditions to which widows are subjected (Ananimous, 2013). In most societies, the treatment of a widow by the extended family of the late spouse will depend on the circumstances that surrounded them when they were together, especially how she was received during the lifetime of the late "husband". The family

may insist on the woman undergoing the odious widowhood practices because there are issues to settle in the marriage. Similarly, the family may deny the woman of all her widowhood rights on the excuse that she was not legally married to the man. The point is whether legally married and recognized or illegally married, the woman suffers similar degradation in practical terms. The emotional agony is not likely to be less traumatic than that of a legally married woman who is ultimately disposed of everything. Widows are essentially married women with or without children who lose their husbands as a result of death. In a similar vein, widowhood refers to the loss of a husband, companion, breadwinner and supporter. One of the painful events of life which many women go through is widowhood. For most widows, the death of the husband is not only a time for emotional grief, but also a time that severe torture and humiliation would be meted out to them by their in-laws. It is a time for scores to be settled with the deceased's extended family (George, 2012).

Under normal circumstances, a widow is to be pitied, and helped out of the psychological valley into which the unexpected has plunged her. Unfortunately, this is never the case. In most African societies, a widow is sometimes stigmatized as the killer of her husband, oppressed, suppressed, afflicted, neglected, accused, openly insulted and consequently made to succumb to widowhood rites on account of customs and traditions. Usually, the widow's ordeal begins from the very moment her husband or spouse breathes his last breath as revealed by Dei (1995). Promises and assurances are made at the graveside. But as soon as the earth swallows the dead, the widow becomes a victim of neglect, accusation, and bizarre cultural practices. In most cases, the in-laws use the

mourning period as an avenue to show their anger and ensure that the widow's life is made more miserable.

Consequently, the death of a husband dramatically alters a woman's status and leaves her at the mercy of her husband's relations who are customarily empowered to take decisions concerning her and the property left behind by the deceased not minding her welfare and that of her children if any. The Women's Rights Wake Up Call Assessment Report observed in the FGN/UNICEF (2001) that the plight of widows is made worse by various widowhood rites though not uniform in all societies, but existing in one form or another from almost everywhere. While it is more entrenched in the rural areas, the practice affects many urban women in African societies especially as it is common with those who die in the cities, but are buried in rural areas (hometown burial). "As the prime suspect of her husband's death, the widow is usually compelled to go through an ordeal to prove her innocence. In some cases, she is made to drink the water used to wash the corpse" (Kantiyok, 2000). He further states: "To express their grief, widows are sometimes required to sleep on the floor, abstain from taking baths, shave their hair, and wear dirty rags as clothes for as long as mourning lasts". In a similar vein, "She is made to cook with broken pots and eat with unwashed hands" (Akumadu, 1998). For instance, Nna and Nyeke (2007) note that:

Widows all over the world face varying degrees of difficulties and untold hardship. Even though they tend to suffer in silence in most cases, the problems range from obnoxious legislation, which subsumes women under male dominance, of cultural practices such as widowhood practices and disinheritance which aggravates the poverty and social disempowerment of women.

These practices which stem from societal traditions and family perception are no doubt, harmful to the health of the widow in question, besides being extraordinarily harsh. Moreover, most of these rituals erode the dignity of the widows and also traumatize them. Besides exposure to diseases such as cholera, diarrhea, etc, occasioned by eating with unwashed hands, drinking water used to bathe the corpse is also poisonous. Worst still, any attempt to contest such practices is met with stiff resistance and sanctions. The confined widows, in the wake of these treatments no doubt, suffer from social degradation, inferiority complex and low self-esteem.

In the general outlook, widows in the traditional society seem to suffer most and it is quite true that widows are still passing through series of plights in most traditional societies. According to Ahonsi (2009), what constitutes tradition is the ideology of the dominant group in a society as it is used to maintain existing relations of inequality and to make the subordinate groups to believe and accept the tradition as normal, the prevailing structure of inequality. Thus, the typical widow's heartening grief is almost incomparable to any other type. Unlike a "loss" through divorce, separation, abandonment or polygamy, situations in which husband and wife may still meet though they are not on good terms, death imposes a condition of final separation.

Undoubtedly, several widowhood practices in many parts of the world according to Owasanoye (2007) are violating the rights of women. Some of the more violent practices against widows include making a widow to drink the water with which her husband's corpse was washed, or specifically the water used to wash his anus, shaving her hair, depriving her of all of her late husband's property, inheriting her as a chattel by her late husband's brothers, confining her to one place for a specific period, making her

swear an Oath that she had no hand in her late husband's death, confining her to the same room with her dead husband's body for a time and so on. The effects of widowhood practices on the woman are total subjugation to human treatment apart from the lost of the husband.

The plight of widows in Nigerian has over the years been a cause for concern to marry people. It is obvious that the customary law does not protect women when they face a personal crisis such as divorce or widowhood. The obnoxious widowhood practices that cut across sections of our society has left many widows in perpetual sorrow, unpredictable future, defection, loneliness, intimidation and so on in the hand of relations and in-laws. It is enshrined in Nigerian Customary Law that widows have no right to inherit their late husbands' properties. One of this is that there is no co-ownership of property by couples in traditional culture. The presumption is that all substantial property belongs to the husband. Indeed the woman herself is virtually considered as a form of property. Therefore, when a man dies, his male relatives claim the ownership of all the (properties) he left behind; this includes land and the widow. To support the above, the FGN/UNICEF (2001) observes that:

At the death of a man, his male relatives descend on the household to take Possession of as many valuables as possible. The widow, who is in the midst of mourning, is usually powerless to resist, although she may end up with a few left over. The leftover she gets is what is due to her children. There are instances where the husband has not even been buried; the family descends on the widow to share his property, sometimes rendering her destitute.

The plight of widows is made worse by various humiliating widowhood rites. These rites exist in one form or another everywhere. The practices affect many urban women too. For instance, in some areas when a wife loses her husband, she is out rightly accused of being responsible for his death. According to the report of the National Commission for Women (2000);

The widow is continuously tortured both physically and mentally and she is subjected to very degrading and inhuman treatments. Acts which are impossible to imagine are carried out on these widows. Their heads are shaved. They are made to drink water used to wash the corpse of the deceased and are sometimes forced to eat from the broken plates, fail to wash for several days on end, sleep in ashes and sun.

To provide a form of social security in some areas, widows are traditionally inherited by male relatives of the deceased. This is more or less automatic procedure, seen as an obligation on the part of the in-laws to keep the woman within the family. There is no question of seeking for her consent. She is compelled to obey, even when it is against her wish. The National Commission for Women (2000) continues that the treatment of widows all over the federation is not in accordance with the customary tenets, that the fundamental human rights of widows are abused, although statutory laws like the administration of Estate Laws that consist in some states provide for inheritance matters of widows. These laws are however restricted to the people who marry under the Marriage Act. The administration of Estate Laws of the several states prescribed the portion of property which a widow could inherit from her deceased husband's Estate. The portion varies depending on whether there are children in the marriage. However, as the case with other laws in Nigeria, these laws are largely ignored in application. The widows are more often than not, in a psychological state of mind claim her rights against her in-laws. Damap (2007) observes that women in traditional society are not assigned any share in their parents' wealth as inheritance as in the case of men; their husbands are their inheritance. In the traditional society, the widow therefore has nothing to depend on when her husband is no longer alive. Parents bequeath to their sons, houses, money, animals and so on, and nothing left for their daughters. Destitution therefore sets in when women become widowed. In most traditions, relatives make every effort to clear all valuable(s)

from the house as soon as the husband dies. The widow is left with the children's clothes and few pots and pans. Bank books are taken away without any consultation with the widow. This is done under the guise that, "this is our custom; this is the way things were done in the olden days and that is how they must continue". But no one cares to bother the husband about any of these things, if his wife dies. It is evident that these women are not only deprived of their parental heritage, but are themselves turned or made inheritance to the brothers of their husbands. A widow is expected to marry her brother in-law in most cases under duress according to some traditions.

Damap (2007) continues, when one looks at widowhood in most traditional societies, it would be possible to give an immediate verdict on the matter. Human greed exists in many families as the death of a male member of the family offers an opportunity to the other males of the family to increase their holding of the scarce and inelastic commodity (land). The commodity in question can expand to other items of property. "It is acquisitiveness", writes Aguwa (2007), which basically controls the treatment of widows, dehumanized and humiliated by the traditional rituals and other practices. Aguwa continues, the widow became more amenable to keep silent over other forms of oppression which end up ultimately as economic disposition. Akpan (2000) and Kore (2002) observe that widowhood is another traditional burden that may not be stopped from being practised soon. A widow is subjected to a number of cultural practices and taboos, which are oppressive and dehumanizing. In some cultures, especially among the Igbos; the widow is made to sleep on bare floor and wear rags throughout the period she mourns her husband. In some ethnic groups, the widow is forced to drink the water or take an Oath publicly to prove she was not responsible for the man's death, her male

children automatically lose the right to their father's property. Kore (2002) further states that in some parts of Nigeria, the widow is forced to shave her hair while in the mourning period to demonstrate an exaggerated show of grief for several days or weeks. Akpan (2000) again states that in Imo State, particularly in Owerri, a widow mourns her husband's death for one year and throughout the period, she must wear black dresses. She is not allowed to step out of the house for the first 40 days or to cook or touch any food meant for other members of the family. The widow is seen as unclean until she has undergone all the relevant traditional rites. The above impositions of barbarism and cruelty on widows are totally condemned by God and also by all thoughtful and humane persons. Those who act thus show their weakness and brutality on innocent widows. Such persons or tribes stand condemned before God unless they repent and stop these social vices against widows.

Aguwa (2007) in view of the maltreatment of widows in the hands of in-laws due to traditional practices, reports the experience of a 75 years old widow thus: "I was ordered home from Lagos to explain the cause of my husband's death. After I had narrated everything to them (In-laws) they asked of his Passbook (Bank Savings) and other valuable items which I gave them". Another widow, a 35 years old widow, a mother of 4 children notes; our entire property was confiscated. A lorry was sent from home to come and pack all the merchandise in my late husband's supermarket. All his electronics were also packed away. For the past years the house has been like a battleground between me and them". Another widow among the Mbaise notes; "They wanted to force me to perform the widowhood rituals which I refused. They asked me if I was ready to face the consequences of my action. I accepted, they ordered that nobody should

communicate in any way with me”. Another widow among the Igbos states; “In fact several kinds of dehumanizing treatment were meted out to me. Before my husband was buried, I was locked up with his corpse for three hours with the belief that I killed him, believing that I would die there. I was then forced to sleep in the grave yard for two days after his burial to finally convince them I did not kill my husband”.

In the case of Esther Bako, a 35-year-old widow who resides in Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Iherjirika (2014) reports that she had a grinding machine, which was the only means of survival for her and her four children, until sometime last year when armed robbers came visiting and took it away. Bako, who cried bitterly while narrating her ordeal, revealed that for her, widowhood had become a register of misery. “Since the death of my husband in 2005, I and my four children have been trying to survive with the little money I make from the machine. After the robbers took it away, it has not been easy. Most times, when I need to pay my rent, I have to visit the farm, so that I can raise the money.” These are just a few cases revealing the plight of women who have lost their husband. It is out of compassion and concern for the almost endless plight of a widow without any skill that the Aids for Women, Adolescents, and Children International Organisation (AWACIO) in collaboration with oil giants Total, have empowered 50 widows in five areas of encouraging a living, namely: baking, bead-making, soap-making, fashion designing and hair-dressing within the area. The organisation, set up to empower women, youth, and children, is committed to providing widows with skills that will enable them live healthy, independent and happy life and, in turn, can help them to take care of themselves. “When a man dies, his wife is perceived as a stranger, one for who provisions were not made. Her late husband’s properties are

taken from her forcefully without regard for her or her children's welfare. This ugly situation makes the widow to wallow in abject poverty, thereafter, especially if she has no proper education or skill. In some cases, these women resort to prostitution," (Ihejirika, 2014).

According to Okeke (2014), the empowerment programme is one which has been put in play as a tool to teach widows the benefits of sound financial knowledge and available investment opportunities. "The women will be given N20, 000 each, as start-up capital. We can also call it a loan; this is because if we give it to them just like that, they may not really value it or be serious about it. Now that it has been given in form of a loan, they will start thinking of paying back and also have their minds set on making something out of it," she said while presenting the sewing machines, hair-dryers, ovens, soap and bead-making tools to the widows. Okeke further reports the following; "Two years ago, we were in Bwari with the same programme. It was well received and we had over 200 women. We are happy that this time, Total is ready to support us. Also, I am particularly glad that these women are happy. By the time we returned, some of the widows we trained two years ago were already making money out of their acquired skills. Seeing that, we decided to expand on the training. Instead of yam cake-making, we opted for cake-making and instead of bead-making, we decided to include tailoring and hair-dressing,". The representative of Total, Vincent Nnadi, explained that the oil company deemed it fit to partner with the NGO, as part of efforts to give back to the society and build capacity for individuals, especially women. "A good example is this; what we are doing with AWACIO for the widows. We can even introduce these widows to micro-credit schemes, but we have to see the zeal in them, first of all," he said.

One of the beneficiaries, Sarah Obaje, thought it was a great opportunity, “because if we are to learn these skills outside, we will spend a lot of money. Like this bead-making, [if you wish to learn it] you will have to spend up to N30, 000 but here they are teaching us free. Also, I learnt bead-making. Though I am a tailor, bead-making is part of my work because there are some designs that may require beading. Now that I have learnt it, this skill is going to be really helpful in my work. My husband died in 2011, leaving me with three children, but I have been able to survive so far, with the money I make from tailoring.”

The ordeals of widowhood seen from the experiences recounted above by different widows’ shows beyond reasonable doubt that widowhood hardship and maltreatment is mostly associated with the way a society views women. Damap (2007) observes that the hardship associated with widowhood is so excruciating that it is equivalent to poverty. Poverty in this sense should not be restricted to material needs, but must be seen as encompassing other aspects of human needs such as the physical, emotional and psychological. No matter how rich a widow is, she still remains poor because she lacks her spouse who would give her fulfillment in other areas of human needs and the intimate relationship that only the spouse can give. She was bereaved of the one who cared for her, made her sexually fulfilled or shared her deep feelings or secrets or affirmed her worth.

## **2.6 Widows' Plight Associated with Some Common Traditional Widowhood Practices.**

When death occurs, there are several people affected. And he further maintains that, in the process of death, a new category of members of the community emerges. They are the widows or widowers and orphans who assume a new dimension of life which they are not prepared for. In all cases, the people are thrown into a state of permanent grief, distress situation and plight that need to be solved (Abaya, 2000). Anderson (2008) therefore notes that, the challenges of widows' range from emotional, physical, and social/psychological and spiritual challenges. These plights vary, depending on the time and situation. George, (2010) and Nwoga (1989) defines widowhood practices as a set of expectations, action and behaviour by the widow, actions by others towards the widow, and rituals performed by, or on behalf of the widow from the time of the death of her husband. Similarly, Nwaogugu (1989) considers widowhood practices as one manifestation of the ritual cleansing which tradition prescribed for all members of the community following any death event or other influences regarded as corrupting. Discussions in the subsequent paragraphs show widows' plight and some common traditional widowhood practices in the society:

### **2.6.1 Confinement**

Essentially, confinement refers to total restriction of the widow's movement within a particular place throughout the mourning period. This implies that the widow is denied freedom of movement except around the compound and sometimes within the four walls of a room in which she is confined (Kantiyok, 2000). Confinement of the widow has been found to be the commonest widowhood practice. The practice is such

that, on receipt of the news confirming the husband's death, staying indoors within the confines of the family house or the matrimonial home depending on the residential pattern in place, is mandatory for the widow in question. This is regarded as the greatest honour and mark of respect accorded to the dead. All forms of outings, business or social engagements are automatically suspended, outlawed and forbidden for as long as the mourning period lasts (Olapegba & Chovwen, 2007). According to George (2012), confinement of a widow indoors has several socio-cultural implications as widows are confined to a room for specified periods to ascertain if the widow is pregnant. If the widow is confirmed pregnant within the period, arrangements are made for her up keep and that of the unborn baby by the deceased family. Another explanation given for a widow's confinement is to ensure proper guidance, monitoring and supervision throughout the mourning period in order to avoid the negative consequences such as the abortion of the unborn baby and eventual death often associated with non-strict adherence to widowhood rites. It is believed that refusal of the widow to remain indoors during widowhood and exposure to sunlight or rainfall will amount to her untimely death.

### **2.6.2 Sitting on a Mat**

This is another common widowhood practice in most traditions. Oke (2001) notes that, on receipt of the news of spouse death, the widow is expected to replace chairs and foams in the living room with a mat, where she is expected to sit to receive visitors and sympathisers that come to condole with her. At night she is expected to sleep on the same mat to further express her mourning. Non-widows are not expected to sit on the mat used by the widow. Only fellow widows are permitted to sit on such mats.

### **2.6.3 Observance of Vigil**

According to George (2012), after the burial of the dead man (husband) the widow is forbidden to sleep. She is expected to keep vigil as a sign of honour to the spouse. Family members, friends, fellow widows, preferably old and experienced ones, and other sympathisers make it a point of duty to keep her company with traditional songs, storytelling, games and jokes. The night is programmed with these activities to ensure that no dull moment is experienced by the widow or widows as the case may be. If on the other hand, the widow refuses to co-operate and gives herself to sleep, it is believed that she may not live to tell the story.

### **2.6.4 Taking of Special Bath**

This is another unique and symbolic widowhood rite performed by most tradition widows. Aderinto (2000) states that taking of special baths in designated places such as in a river or at a particular place in the family house is carried out by the widow with the assistance of older and experienced widows. This practice marks the end of confinement and widowhood rites. In addition, special bath is accompanied by some rituals which mark the end of the mourning period and these include: exchange of mourning clothes with new sets of bright clothing or materials, disposal of all items used, preparation of special meals for the widow and sympathisers, prayers are offered for protection of the widow, the children and other family members of the deceased.

### **2.6.5 Wearing of Dark Clothing and Accessories**

One of the first signs of mourning, besides weeping, wailing, staying indoors for a specified period and disengagement from all forms of social activities and gatherings is reflected in the dress pattern of the bereaved. The widow is expected to openly display

her sorrow by the wearing of dark coloured clothing material or apparel. A study conducted by George (2012) shows that there is no hard and fast rule as to the exact colour of clothing to be worn by widows during the mourning period. One thing that is paramount is that, the clothing, apparels and accessories worn by the widows are usually dark coloured.

The description of widowhood as a state of loss, bereavement and mourning of a spouse with whom the widow or widower is assumed to have shared the most memorable part of her life is largely reflected in the widow's sense of dressing as revealed by this finding. This view is corroborated by Olapegba and Chovwen (2007) in their assertion that widowhood is not a thing of joy, yet nature has made it a necessary evil consequent upon the death of a spouse. Indeed, the state of widowhood can be considered as one of personal loss, encompassing everything from the immediate psychological impact of the loss of a partner to the material deprivation of an income, a home or of contributions to domestic economy.

#### **2.6.6 Usage of Separate Utensils and Items**

George (2010) finds that the period of widowhood is one that involves a total separation of the widow from other members of the family. Besides confinement in a secluded place while mourning lasts, all utensils utilized including cutleries, plates, mats, and clothes are not to be shared with anyone except her fellow widows. This separation is extended to her food which must be prepared by fellow widows and is not to be shared with other family members including her children. Should the need arise for the widow to plait her hair or beautify herself within the period, only her fellow widows are permitted to perform these assignments. Anything contrary to this will attract the wrath of the land.

The enforcement of these widowhood rites are by the fellow women. This finding brings to the fore, the fact that women are the custodians of widowhood in the tradition societies. They not only dictate expected widowhood practices to fellow women, they also ensure that the practices are carried out religiously. The use of separate utensils is perceived to perform some significant roles for widows. Widowhood is considered as a period of physical total separation of the living from the dead. Thus, all items used by the widows must of necessity not be shared with anyone including the widows children except fellow widows who have experienced widowhood practices.

### **2.6.7 Disposal of all Items Used**

This is carried out at the expiration of the mourning period. All material items used throughout the confinement period are neatly packaged and distributed to older widows, specifically relatives within or outside the community. In conclusion, a key informant had this to say: “if a widow refuses to mourn her husband by not performing the stated widowhood rites, she will be perceived as the killer of her husband. To avoid name-calling and stigmatization, a widow has to mourn either genuinely or pretentiously” (Lasebikan, 2001).

### **2.6.8 Emotional Plight**

One of the plights that widows face is the emotional plight. The emotional plights therefore include the need for love, security, support and self-esteem. Here also Ezekiel (2002) adds that widows feel lonely and dejected as security and care are less assured. Kore (2002) also notes that widows are by far; the saddest, helpless and pathetic set of people that should be pitied cared for and encouraged by everyone in the society.

### **2.6.9 Physical Challenges**

The physical challenges here include food, shelter, clothes and health care. It is clear that most widows lack. This is because some widows are left by their late husbands without any structure for the widow and children and as such, the widow will have to struggle to make life comfortable for the children, especially in the provision of food and shelter. Furthermore, looking at the economic hardship of these days, one will be easily convinced that widows really suffer in so many ways, especially lack of food, clothing, medical care and others. It is in the light of the above that Kore (2002) emphasizes that the people who need care and support most in the society are the widows due to their plights; rather, they are the set of people most maltreated in the society.

### **2.6.10 Social/Psychological Plight**

Another area of concern as observed by Abaya (2000) is the social plight that involves the need for companionship, family cooperation, interaction and friendship as well as family structure. Since human beings are social beings, the lack of needs as mentioned above can lead to psychological defects. Another major plight that widows face is abandonment by the family of the deceased and the society. Kore (2002) states, “nobody in the family of the deceased had ever cared for the well being of the widow and the children”. Kore adds “all the closest friends of my deceased husband who used to come for weekend to borrow money, none comes near us now”. It is obvious that any widow who faces these kinds of experiences is bound to suffer psychological trauma.

### **2.6.11 Spiritual Plight**

It is clear that not all the challenges have been identified and discussed. Abaya (2000) expresses strongly that, among the entire plight identified, spiritual plight is the most vital because widows are at the mercies of God. This is to say that one's knowledge of God is important in the realization of other challenges named above. The spiritual plight is so important because some in-laws sometimes met evil on the widows due to their lack of understanding of the mind of God toward the widow. Therefore, the spiritual plight has to be properly taken care of.

## **2.7 Common Plight Widows Suffer in the Family**

The absence of the father (a prominent figure in the home) compels the widow to assume the responsibilities which hitherto had been undertaken by her spouse. The responsibilities serve as great plight in the home. Damap (2007) therefore notes that, the plight a widow faces as soon as she loses her husband includes full responsibility for the children's education, health bills, feeding, clothing, and work that require physical energy. These challenges vary, depending on the situation and the status of the widow involved. The family plights as shouldered on a widow are also discussed in the following paragraphs:

### **2.7.1 Children's Education**

The widow who has had the children's school fees paid by the husband would toil more to pay the fees along. Widows always find it difficult to pay their children's fees especially widows who earn meager salaries which may not take care of the family. Mostly such widows make a choice between going hungry, or paying school fees. The

problem is further compounded for such widows when in a year; she has to pay both the school fees and the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) fees. Non-payment of the SSCE would automatically ban the children from writing the final Senior School Certificate Examination. The women keeps thinking of this and the tough times she is encountering after her husband's death and burst into tears. When widows are not able to pay their children's school fees, it is an indication that the family may continue to live in poverty since such children will not be educated to face the socio-economic plight of their times. This is a great plight because education is the bed-rock for development; therefore denying children of education leads to reducing them to utterly hopeless citizens (Kore, 2002).

### **2.7.2 Health Bills**

The death of a spouse, according to Lasebikan (2001) results in a problem of re-adjustment. Most times, widows suffer from wants, especially with regard to the maintenance of the house and children's wellbeing. Kore, (2002) therefore notes that, some organizations pay their workers' medical bills and those of their spouses and children as a matter of policy. While the husband is an employee, the medical bill of the family will be taken care of by his employer. When he is dead, the responsibility falls back to the widow who may not be in a working class. Medical expenses are on the rise, and the common illness found among the households of many widows is nutrition-related. The value of the food they give their children often lacks essential nutrients. They eat whatever is available only to fill up their stomachs. It is a matter of survival, not of the fittest, but of the poorest. Many widows have watched their loved ones die when they could have been saved, if they had the resources to go to the right clinics or hospitals at

the right time. This could mean that by the time a husband dies, the family resources would have been exhausted or taken away by In-laws, leaving the widow with nothing to feed the family.

### **2.7.3 Feeding**

Little children tend to eat more food than those who have reached the stage of maturity. That means a widow who has little children will need more food to be able to feed the children. If she cannot cope, the children do not stay indoors; instead, they become social nuisance to the public. They may go out scavenging, stealing, pilfering, or indulging in activities that would further break the heart of the widow. Lack of proper feeding also exposes the children to malnutrition and diseases. The desire to provide enough food for the family has put many widows under diverse pressure. Some become restless; others go to the extent of engaging themselves in prostitution in order to meet the needs of the family. This is true of those widows who do little or no work to help in providing for the children (Kore, 2002).

### **2.7.4 Clothing**

Kore (2002) is of the view that we live in a society where people place value on others due to the quality of clothes worn. This has far-reaching implications for the widow, who prior to the death of her husband, might have been adequately provided with clothes as done for children. With the demise of the husband however, she is faced with the problem of provision of dresses for herself, and the children. The widow is usually in distress when it comes to high demand for provision of medical-care and payment for education and other demands of the family.

### **2.7.5 Discipline of Children**

An aspect of family life most widows find most challenging is discipline of their children. Generally, in every society, widows most complain that the children are stubborn and do not regard their discipline. They do not respect their admonitions or family norms. One of the widows said, “When our father (husband) was alive, the children were always doing well doing what they were asked to do. But now that he is no more, they do not listen to me.” It must be pointed out here that men are generally more assertive in discipline than women. This is why widows run into problem with their children in terms of discipline (Kore, 2002). Abayomi (2007) states that the family formed the starting point of socialization especially in the area of discipline. No doubt, discipline is a demanding task in the family that one person can do alone.

### **2.7.6 Work**

These days, women believe that what a man can do, a woman can do, even better. There are some domestic tasks that need more energy. Agreed, women can do them, but this could be very exerting on the woman, and exhausts her out too quickly. A man handles them better. Apart from domestic chores of cleaning the house, cooking the meals and washing the dishes, the widow finds herself also doing all the other jobs that the man was doing. She digs the garden alone, fetches the wood, climbs the ladder, rakes the field, tills the land, disciplines the children and settles disputes within the family. All these she does without the normal advice that she used to enjoy. Sometimes she may not know what the right time to do this or that. She may not know whether an action she is about to take is the right one or not (Kore, 2002). In line with the above, Omololu (1972)

strongly advised that women should be given quality education. He further states that, an educated woman can get a good paid job, fare better in business and be in a better position to contribute toward the up-keep and education of her children, thereby raising their standards. Thus, even when she loses her husband, she can contribute immensely toward the economic development of her family instead of engaging in hard labour to keep the family.

## **2.8 Review of Empirical Studies**

From the reviewed literature, some psychological plights Widows suffer were discovered. Brown (1994) carried out a study on “apology to women: Christian image of female sex”. Data was collected from a large sample size of 800 participants using the questionnaire method in a survey design and was analysed by using frequency and percentage, and mean response. The researcher found out that 85% of widows suffer poverty. Brown also reported that the reason why widows suffer poverty is due to neglect by in-laws and members of the society. The relationship between Brown’s finding and this research work is that both lay emphasis on the fact that widows are suffering neglect in the society. However, the difference is while Brown is silent about what the church is doing concerning the plight of widows, the present study is set to uncover what the church is doing concerning the plight of widows.

Similarly, Stephen (2000) in his survey of “widows in the church and the society” involving 400 respondents in New York, discovered that in our world today 90% of widows feel psychologically imbalance due to the shock of their husbands’ death. Stephen equally found out that church leadership and members hardly assist widows as expected. In the study, it was recommended that widows in churches should come

together and form their group and cry out to the church for awareness of their challenges. The finding made in this work on the psychological imbalance of widows is similar to the present study. The gap that exists between the former study and the present study is that the former study found out that church leaders and members do not assist widows as expected of them, while the present study focus to uncover whether widows, especially of Pentecostal churches are given due assisted.

Clements (2009) in his study titled “all women,” collected data from a large sample size of 1000 respondents using the questionnaire method in a survey design and was analysed using frequency and percentage, and mean score. The researcher discovered that 72% of widows suffer serious sexual harassment from men who feel that they should be given sex before rendering financial assistance to them (widows). Challenge due to their joblessness. Clement further found out that some of these men as discovered in the study include brothers’ in-law, friends of their deceased husbands, and even some of the so called church members. There is a difference in the finding made by the former study and the present one as the former uncovered the sexual harassment widows’ face from men. The gap in the work is no suggestion is given to address this temptation. This is what the present study is about to fill.

Furthermore, Deen (2008) carried out a survey on “the Christian widow,” involving a large sample size of 750 participants, reported from analysis of collected data that, 62% of widows all over the world go through spiritual and emotional plight. He found out that widows are emotionally devastated as they don’t get the deserved love, security support and self esteem from in-laws. This kind of negligence could lead some widows to backslide in the faith or commit suicide. As humans, it is very difficult to cope

with such situation, except by the grace and help of God. In his research, he suggested that Christians should fight for the right of Christian widows and come to their assistance where necessary. To him, it is a very serious challenge for the church as the number of widows' increases day-by-day. This study is similar to the present research as the study equally revealed the obvious state of widows' plight. However, the difference between the finding made by Deen and the present study is, Deen only concentrated on the spiritual and emotional challenges widows go through and nothing was said concerning other challenges. The present study is set to find out other challenges widows suffer such as social, psychological and physical plights.

Also, Stag (2011) in his study on "women in the world of Jesus" made use of survey method and collected data using questionnaire with 580 respondents comprising both members and pastors were involved in the study. The collected data was analysed using SPSS. The test was at, 0.05 level of significance. The researcher discovered that 54% of widows live with their relatives and rented apartment as a result of confiscation of the deceased man's property including the house they suffered to build together. This is worrisome as innocent widows and orphans are made to suffer from what they lawfully have. Stag's discovery is similar to this present study which equally revealed that when a man dies, his relatives immediately confiscate all the property of their deceased brother in the name of tradition and thereby leaving the widows and orphans in perpetual poverty. The former study is silent about what should be done to alleviate widows of the above identified plights, which is what the present study is about to fill.

## **2.9 Summary**

The discussion in this chapter has focused on the review of literature related to this study. This discussed the concept of widowhood. The review indicates that many issues exist in the state of widowhood, such issues include emotional, physical, social, psychological and spiritual plight. These plights are due to some dehumanizing traditional practices widows are exposed to in their societies. However, the review indicates that the treatment of widows in the traditional society is far different from what the Bible teaches. In the Bible, both Old and New Testaments sees widows as special people who needs to be taken care of in a divine way. The findings made from the empirical studies as research carried out by different researchers in other parts of the world and even within Nigeria are to a great extent similar to what the present study uncovered on the plight of widows.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter explains the research methodology and procedures that was used for the study. The other focal areas in this chapter include the research design, the population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instrumentation, validity of instrument, pilot study, reliability of the instrument, administration and collection of data and method of data analysis.

#### **3.2 Design**

According to Kerlinger (1973), design is the overall plan of scheme of programme of the research. Research design therefore is a procedure of solving research problems (Moser & Kalton, 1971). The research design the researcher used in the study is survey design. Survey design study is a method usually adopted when handling a large population especially on issues of the moment that involves systematic collection of data from population of study through the use of questionnaire, interview and observation (Kerlinger1973). Therefore, survey research is considered fit for the study because it is descriptive in nature. And in descriptive research, data are usually collected, organized and analyzed and then described as they exist without interfering with them. The survey research therefore, fits into this work because it is neither historical research which is based on past events nor experimental research which involves controlled observation.

### **3.3 Population**

Population has been defined by Best and Kohn (1989) as any group of individuals that have one or more characters in common that are of interest to the researcher. This means that the group a researcher uses is desirable as having a unique property or character to him. The population of this study included all the Pentecostal church leaders, widows and other members of Pentecostal churches in all the six (6) Area Councils of FCT, Abuja. There were 129 Pentecostal churches that were registered with the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (P.F.N) in the FCT. Therefore, based on the registered Pentecostal churches, the population for the study was 38,115 adults as at 2014. That was made available by the P.F.N Chairmen of the six Area Councils in FCT. This can be seen in appendix V. It was out of the above that the sample size was selected and used for this study.

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedures**

The population (38,115) of this study was relatively large for the research to cover. Therefore, a small, but carefully chosen portion was used to represent the whole population. Webster (1985); and Lynn and Lie Vesley (1991) define sample as a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole. This is necessary because in almost all instances of educational research, it is virtually impossible to study a whole population (Olomolaiye, 1986). The researcher made use of stratified sampling method in the study to determine the sample size for each Area Council of the FCT. In line with this, Denga and Ali (1986) state that, stratified sampling is appropriate as the population is of sub-groups which need to be represented

in the sample. It was wise to have sample selection done in such a way that sub-groups are represented.

### 3.4.1 Sample of Churches

In selecting the churches to be used for the study, the researcher selected based on one third of each of the total number of registered Pentecostal churches in the Area Councils. In doing that, the researcher wrote out the names of all the churches per Area Council on pieces of paper, folded them and dropped in a container. The assistance of another person was sought to pick the stated number of churches, as seen in the table below:

**TABLE 3.1 Cluster of Registered Pentecostal Churches and the sample drawn from each of the Area Councils.**

<b>S/NO</b>	<b>Area Councils</b>	<b>No. of Registered Pentecostal churches</b>	<b>One Third of the Number of Churches</b>
1.	Gwagwalada	30	10
2.	Kwali	28	9
3.	Kuje	24	8
4.	Amac	17	5
5.	Bwari	16	5
6.	Abaji	14	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>129</b>	<b>42</b>

Following the table above, the number of registered Pentecostal churches was 129 while the overall total of one third numbers of registered Pentecostal churches per Area Council was 42. Therefore, a total of 42 churches were served with the questionnaire to be fill.

### 3.4.2 Sample of Respondents

In sampling the respondents, the researcher made sure that the respondents were drawn according to the estimated population of adult worshippers in each of the sampled churches as in Appendix V, this was done in all the six Area Councils in order to avoid bias and maintain equal representation, as seen in the tables below:

**TABLE 3.2: Sample of Respondents drawn from each of the Sampled Churches in all the Area Councils.**

#### Gwagwalada Area Council

S/N	Name of church	No. of Respondents	No. of Ministers Interviewed.	No. of Widows Interviewed.
1	Living Faith Church	25	1	-
2	Redeemed Christian Church of God	22	1	1
3	Elohim Christian Centre	20	1	1
4	Faith Alive Church	16	1	-
5	Word Dominion Church	15	1	1
6	Maranatha Christian Church	14	1	-
7	Four Square Gospel Church	12	1	1
8	Glorious Overcomers Int'l Church	11	1	1
9	All Saints Church	9	1	1
10	God's Elect Ministry	6	1	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>150</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

### **Kwali Area Council**

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<b>S/N</b>	<b>Name of church</b>	<b>No. of Respondents.</b>	<b>No. of Ministers Interviewed.</b>	<b>No. of Widows Interviewed.</b>
1	Assemblies of God Church	25	1	1
2	Deeper Life Bible Church	25	1	-
3	Redeemed Christian Church of God	20	1	-
4	Word Assembly Int'l	18	1	1
5	Christ Apostolic Church	13	1	-
6	Christian Assembly	11	1	1
7	Know God Christian Mission	11	1	-
8	The Source Church	7	1	1
9	Victory Life Chapel	5	1	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>135</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>

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### **Kuje Area Council**

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<b>S/N</b>	<b>Name of church</b>	<b>No. of Respondents.</b>	<b>No. of Ministers Interviewed.</b>	<b>No. of Widows Interviewed.</b>
1	The Redeemed Evangelical Mission	24	1	1
2	Deeper Life Bible Church	21	1	1
3	Assemblies of God Church	20	1	-
4	The Life Giving Ministry	18	1	1
5	Prevailer Global Ministry	14	1	-
6	Christ Power Assembly	10	1	1
7	Victory House Mega Church	7	1	-
8	Kingdom of God Gospel Church	6	1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>120</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>

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### Municipal Area Council

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S/N	Name of church	No. of Respondents.	No. of Ministers Interviewed.	No. of Widows Interviewed.
1	Redeemed Christian Church of God	25	1	-
2	Dunamis Gospel Centre Int'l	20	1	1
3	Charismatic Renewal Ministries	15	1	-
4	Word Dominion Church	10	1	1
5	Overcomers Chapel	5	1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>

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### Bwari Area Council

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S/N	Name of church	No. of Respondents.	No. of Ministers Interviewed.	No. of Widows Interviewed.
1	Living Faith Church	25	1	1
2	Deeper Life Bible Church	20	1	1
3	Lord's Chosen	15	1	-
4	Christ Apostolic Faith	10	1	1
5	Four Square Gospel Church	5	1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>

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## Abaji Area Council

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S/N	Name of church	No. of Respondents.	No. of Ministers Interviewed.	No. of Widows Interviewed.
1	All Christian Fellowship	26	1	1
2	Dominion Chapel	23	1	-
3	Living Faith Foundation	16	1	1
4	Christ Apostolic Church	5	1	1
5	The Apostolic Church	5	1	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>		<b>630</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>25</b>

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From the table above, the total number of respondents that participated in the study in all the six Area Councils was 630, while the total number of the ministers that participated in the interview was 42. On the interview of widows, availability sampling technique was employed in the choice of the respondents. Wimer and Dominick (1987) define available sample as a collection of readily accessible subjects for study. Therefore the interview of widows was based on availability of widows in each church visited because there could be cases a widow might not be found in a church. In all the churches visited, any widow used for interview was excluded in the filling the questionnaire.

The choice of that sample size was informed by sampling technique advocated by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Krejcie and Morgan suggest census sample for 200, 50% of 400, 20% of 1000, and 380 of 1 million populations as in Appendix VI. Similarly, Roscoe (1975) suggests a minimum sample size of 500. For Roscoe, the number should

not be less. That means about 700 must be sampled because of mortality of the instrument. Denga and Ali (1986) suggest 384 minimum samples for a population of 1 million. Therefore, the researcher had the conviction that 630 sampled respondents was a good representation of 38,115 target population.

### **3.5 Instrumentation**

In research, the medium of eliciting data for a study is very important. For this reason, the researcher made use of structured questionnaire and structured interview schedule as a means of eliciting data for the study.

#### **3.5.1 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire reveals what a person knows, likes or dislikes (values and preferences), thinks (attitudes and beliefs) and the experiences and personal data about a person (biography) (Afolabi, 1993). Therefore, in order to collect data for this study, questionnaire titled “Questionnaire on Widows’ Plight in Pentecostal Churches” (QWPPC) was used. QWPPC items were divided into two parts. Part A required respondents’ background information such as gender, age, marital status, position in church and period of membership in church. Part B covered four marked sections. Section one investigated the understanding of Biblical teaching concerning widows, and that comprised of 9 items, while section two examined the plight of widows in Pentecostal churches using 10 items. Section three sought out the Pentecostal churches’ response to the plight of widows, and that comprised 9 items. Section four which consisted of 4 items solicited for possible ways Pentecostal churches could assist and encourage widows among them”.

Umaru (2002) states that, the type of summated scale most frequently used in the study of social attitudes follows the pattern devised by Likert type scale. This is because in the Likert type scales, the respondent was asked to respond to each item in the degree of agreement or disagreement. Therefore, items on part B of the questionnaire were on a modified Likert scale that required the respondents to indicate their level of agreement as indicated below:

Strongly Agree	(SA)
Agree	(A)
Disagree	(D)
Strongly Disagree	(SD)

### **3.5.2 Interview**

In addition to the QWPPC, a structured interview schedule was used to obtain more data for the study. Questions for that were open ended which encouraged respondents to freely express their feelings when answering questions. Information was elicited or drawn out through verbal interaction between the researcher and the person interviewed. The reason for the Interview was to supplement the information that was gathered from the questionnaire. The researcher interviewed one minister in charge of each sampled church and one widow respectively during their meeting days.

### **3.6 Validity of Instrument**

Validity as the name implies, has been defined by Gray (1987) as the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure, it is therefore important to make sure that a research instrument establishes and produces the desired results. After

developing the instrument based on the observations and the literature review, they were submitted to the thesis supervisors and a statistician who made necessary inputs in order to make them valid and acceptable. Their observations and suggestions were used to upgrade the items in the questionnaire before the pilot test was carried out in order to ensure both face and content validity.

### **3.7 Pilot Study**

To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study of the instrument (PCQWP) was carried out by the researcher using one Pentecostal church which was similar in all respect to the target churches where samples were to be drawn. The pilot study was carried out with the intension of finding out the expected problems of handling and distribution of questionnaire, interpretation of the items and their ambiguities, and misunderstanding if there was any. The pilot study was also to test the adequacy, and effectiveness of the instrument, all in preparation for the main study. The permission of the church leader of where the pilot study was carried out in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja was sought before administering the questionnaire with the evidence of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Postgraduate I.D card. Twenty five (25) copies of questionnaire were administered but twenty (20) were retrieved and used for the pilot study. The respondents were part of the population, but were excluded when conducting the main study.

The data elicited from the respondents in the pilot study were subjected to a reliability test in order to have an accurate result. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software was used to compute the correlation coefficient using Pearson Product

Moment Correlation Statistics (PPMC). The result is presented clearly in the reliability of instrument.

### **3.8 Reliability of the Instrument**

The data collected from the pilot study survey were subjected to statistical analysis. The aim of the exercise was to establish the reliability co-efficient of the instrument as well as the internal consistency of the items within the instrument. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis. The method of reliability chosen was the split-half method of reliability which yielded an index of 0.794. That co-efficient implied that the items within the instrument were internally consistent and that the instrument would be considered highly reliable for the study.

### **3.9 Administration of Instruments**

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the department which was given to the leaders in charge of the sampled churches. The administration of the research instruments was done by the researcher and with the help of research assistant that was hired and instructed on what to do and what not to do in the administration of the questionnaire. The research covered the six (6) Area Councils of FCT, Abuja. The research was carried out in all the sampled churches. The researcher pre-informed all the leaders of the sampled churches for proper arrangement for the study. The researcher arranged to meet with the respondents on their days of worship for easy administration and collection of the questionnaire. Having collected the questionnaire; the researcher separated them according to the category of the respondents (widow, minister and members) who filled them, for easy analysis. A structured interview schedule was used to

obtain more data for the study. The researcher interviewed one leader in charge of each sampled church and one widow respectively during their meeting days.

### **3.10 Method of Data Analysis**

The researcher used both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques for the analysis of data. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, mean scores and percentages was used to analyze data on bio-data of respondents. t-Test for independent sample was also used to test the differences between two independent groups and the level of significance used was 0.05 (5%). t-Test was used because it was the most suitable parametric test of significance which was used in determining whether significance existed between the means of the two independent samples at the probability level of 0.05 level of significance that had been mentioned above. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test all the Null hypotheses, because it compared more than two groups' opinions and experiences. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter is structured into Seven (7) Sections: the demographic characteristics of the respondents, which are Tabulated and graphically presented in frequencies and percentages; the understanding of Biblical teaching concerning widows; the Plight of widows in the Pentecostal Churches; the response of Pentecostal Churches to the Plight of widows; Possible ways Pentecostal Churches can assist and encourage widows among them; the test of Null hypotheses; summary of the unique findings; and discussions based on the five hundred (500) copies of the questionnaire filled and considered valid out of the five hundred and forty three (543) copies of the questionnaire retrieved from the six hundred and thirty (630) copies of the questionnaire used in the field. The remaining forty-three (43) copies of the questionnaire were not properly filled, thus, they were invalid. To achieve the stated objectives of this study, two instruments were employed, namely: questionnaire and interview. The data collected from the respondents was statistically analyzed using the SPSS Software for the questionnaire. The item scores were computed by adding the columns of strongly agree (SA) and agree (A) for positive response and strongly disagree (SD) and disagree (D) for negative response. The responses from the interview were used to give more detail explanations. It (interview) helped to enrich and supplement the items of questionnaire.

## 4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic variables of respondents considered were gender, age, marital status, position in the Church, and period of membership in the Church as presented in tables and figures 1 – 5 below:

**Table 4.1 Classification of Respondents by Gender**

S/NO	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	193	38.6
2.	Female	307	61.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.1 above, reveals that 193 (38.6) of the respondents were male while 307 (61.4) were female. This indicates that majority of the respondents were female.

**Table 4.2 Classification of Respondents by Age**

S/N	Age range	Frequency	Percentage
1.	18 – 27 years	173	34.6
2.	28 – 37 years	154	30.8
3.	38 -57 years	78	16.5
4.	58 years and above	95	19.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.2 above shows that majority of the respondents were still in their youthful ages of between eighteen (18) and twenty seven (27). In the table 173 (34.6) respondents were between the ages of 18 and 27 years, while 154 (30.8) of the respondents were between the ages of 28 and 37. Those respondents between ages 38 and 57 were 78 (15.6). Those within 58 years and above,

just as indicated in the table, were 95 (19.0). This reveals that most of the respondents involved in this study were still in their active years.

**Table 4.3 Classification of Respondents by Marital Status**

S/N	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Married	233	46.6
2.	Single	163	32.6
3.	Widow	90	18.0
4.	Divorce	14	2.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 4.3 above, those respondents who were married as shown above has the highest number of 233 (46.6). The single respondents were 163 (32.6). Those respondents who were widows were 90 (18.0). The respondents who were divorce were relatively few with the number of 14 (2.8). This shows that majority of the respondents in the area under study were married.

**Table 4.4: Classification of Respondents by Position in the Church**

S/N	Position in Church	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Pastor	39	7.8
2.	Deacon /Elder	139	27.8
3.	Others	322	64.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.4 above shows that the total number of Pastors who filled the questionnaire was 39 (7.8). The respondents who were Deacons/Elders that filled the questionnaire were 139 (27.8), while other members of the Churches who filled the questionnaire were 322 (64.4) (the highest in number). This reveals that majority of the respondents were Church members who were tagged as others.

**Table 4.5 Classification of Respondents by Period of Membership in the Church**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Below 5 years	107	21.4
2.	6 – 10 years	133	26.6
3.	11 – 15 years	93	18.6
4.	16 years and above	167	33.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.5 above shows that the respondents who were members of their Churches below 5 years were 107 (21.4), while those that falls between 6 -10 years were 133 (26.6). Those respondents who were members of their churches between the ages of 11 and 15 years were 93 (18.6), and the respondents who had identified with the churches for about 16 years and above were 167 (33.4). Therefore, this indicates that majority of the respondents had full knowledge and understanding of the subject matter due to their membership in the church.

### **4.3 The Understanding of Biblical teaching concerning Widows in FCT**

This section investigated the understanding of Biblical teaching concerning widows in the Pentecostal Churches in FCT. It tried to ascertain the understanding of the Old and New Testaments teaching concerning the subject matter.

**Table 4.6 The Understanding of Biblical Teaching Concerning Widows.**

S/No	Item	SA (%)	A(%)	D(%)	SD(%)	TOTAL
1	I have some knowledge on the Biblical teaching concerning Widows	284 (56.8)	159 (31.8)	29 (5.8)	28 (5.6)	500 (100)
2	The Old Testament does not Teach on the Plight of Widows	142 (28.4)	83 (16.6)	144 (28.8)	131 (26.2)	500 (100)
3	The Old Testament society adequately cared for the Widows of their time.	246 (49.2)	184 (36.8)	48 (9.6)	22 (4.4)	500 (100)
4	The Old Testament Concept of Widow is not significantly different from that of the New Testament.	242 (48.4)	170 (34.0)	57 (11.4)	31 (6.2)	500 (100)
5.	The Forms of Old Testament's teaching on the care for widows are the same with that of the New Testament.	261 (52.2)	158 (31.6)	71 (14.2)	10 (2.0)	500 (100)
6.	Both Old and New Testaments teach on the blessing of those who care for widows.	340 (68.0)	142 (28.4)	16 (3.2)	2 (0.4)	500 (100)
7.	Both Old and New Testaments teach that widows are special people to God.	331 (66.2)	145 (29.0)	22 (4.4)	2 (0.4)	500 (100)
8.	The New Testament emphasizes on the care for widows.	334 (67)	136 (27.2)	23 (4.6)	7 (1.4)	500 (100)
9.	The New Testament frowns at the neglect of widows.	340 (68.0)	110 (22.0)	35 (7.0)	15 (3.0)	500 (100)

In Table 4.6, the respondents' opinions reveal the extent of Pentecostal Churches' understanding of Biblical teaching concerning widows. In item 1 in the table above, 284 (56.8) and 159 (31.8) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, that they had some knowledge of the Biblical teaching concerning widows. Only 29 (5.8) and 28 (5.6) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to have some knowledge of the Biblical teaching concerning widows. Therefore, 88.6% of the respondents agreed while 11.4% disagreed. However, item 2 has a different observation, where 142 (28.4) and 83 (16.6) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, that the Old Testament does not teach on the Plight of Widows, while 144 (28.8) and 131(26.2) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Therefore, 45% of the respondents on item 2 agreed while 55% disagreed. On item 3, 246 (49.2) and 184 (36.8) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the Old Testament society adequately cared for the widows of their time. Only 48 (9.6) and 22 (4.4) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Therefore, 86% of the respondents agreed, while only 14 % disagreed. On whether the Old Testament concept of widows is not significantly different from that of the New Testament concerning item 4, 242 (48.4) and 170 (34) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed, while only 57 (11.4) and 31 (6.2) disagreed and strongly disagreed. From the result, 82.4% of the respondents agreed, while only 17.6% disagreed. In item 5, 261 (52.2) and 158 (31.6) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the forms of Old Testament's teaching on the care for widows were the same with that of the New Testament. Only 71 (14.2) and 10 (2.0) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Therefore, 83.8% of the respondents agreed while only 16.2 disagreed.

Also in item 6, 340 (68.0) and 142 (28.4) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that both Old and New Testaments teach on the blessing of those who care for widows. Only 16

(3.2) and 2 (0.4) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. The result shows that 96.4% of the respondents agreed while only 3.6% disagreed. On whether both Old and New Testaments teach that widows are special people to God, in item 7, 331 (66.2) and 145 (29.0) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed while 22 (4.4) and 2 (0.4) disagreed and strongly disagreed. Therefore, 95.2% of the entire respondents agreed while only 8.4% disagreed. In item 8, 334 (67) and 136 (27.2) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, that the New Testament emphasizes on the care for widows. Only 23 (4.6) and 7 (1.7) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Therefore, 94.2% of the respondents agreed while only 6% disagreed. On whether the New Testament frowns at the neglect of widows, in item 9, 340 (68.0) and 110 (22.0) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed while 35 (7.0) and 15 (3.0) of the respondents disagreed strongly disagreed. Therefore, 90% of the respondents agreed while only 10% disagreed. From the foregoing, The Pentecostal Churches had a clear understanding of Biblical teaching concerning widows. Notable in their understanding is that of the blessing that follows those who care for widows and how the Bible frowns at the neglect of widows.

#### **4.4 The Plight of Widows in the Pentecostal Churches in FCT**

This section examined the Plight of Widows. It sought for the loneliness and dehumanizing challenges widows were exposed, to even in Churches, lack of love and attention accorded to them and neglect of their plight in the Pentecostal Churches. In line with the objective, the views and experiences of Church Ministers, Widows and other Church members in Pentecostal Churches on the plight of widows in their Churches were sought.

**Table 4.7 The Plight of Widows in the Pentecostal Churches in FCT**

<b>S/No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>SA(%)</b>	<b>A(%)</b>	<b>D(%)</b>	<b>SD(%)</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1	Widows of my Church suffer loneliness for lack of visitation by Church leaders.	137 (27.4)	184 (36.8)	104 (20.8)	75 (15.0)	500 (100)
2	Widows of my Church feel discriminated from other women in the Church	66 (13.2)	110 (22.0)	170 (34.0)	154 (30.8)	500 (100)
3	Widows of my Church are sexually harassed by members of my Church in response to financial assistance.	41 (8.2)	83 (16.6)	127 (25.4)	249 (49.8)	500 (100)
4	Widows do not get the deserved love and attention in my Church.	46 (9.2)	176 (34.2)	123 (24.6)	155 (31.0)	500 (100)
5	Widows feel neglected in my Church	35 (7.0)	146 (29.3)	147 (29.4)	172 (34.4)	500 (100)
6	Widows are looked down upon in my Church.	40 (8.0)	100 (20.0)	179 (35.8)	181 (36.2)	500 (100)
7	My Church does not care for widows' need.	32 (6.4)	157 (31.4)	155 (31.0)	156 (31.2)	500 (100)
8	Widows of my Church hardly cope with financial demands of my Church.	87 (17.4)	182 (36.4)	139 (27.8)	92 (18.4)	500 (100)
9.	Widows are not given spiritual leadership positions in my Church.	64 (12.8)	147 (29.4)	152 (30.4)	137 (27.4)	500 (100)
10.	Widows hardly contribute (Financially and materially) in their women fellowship Programmes.	78 (15.6)	181 (36.2)	169 (33.8)	72 (14.4)	500 (100)

In Table 4.7 above, item 1 from the table has 137 (27.4) and 184 (36.8) as the respondents who strongly agreed and agreed respectively, that widows of their Church suffered loneliness for lack of visitation by Church leaders while 104 (20.8) and 75 (15.0) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Item 2 shows that 66 (13.3) and 110 (22.0) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, that widows of their Church felt discriminated among other women while 170 (34.0) and 154 (30.8) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. In item 3, only 41 (8.2) and 83 (16.6) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that widows of their church were sexually harassed by the by members of their churches in response to financial assistance, while 127 (25.4) and 249 (49.8) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Therefore, only 24.8% of the respondents agreed while 75.2% disagreed. On whether widows do not get the deserved love and attention in the respondents' churches, concerning item 4, it shows that 46 (9.2) and 176 (34.2) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed while 123 (24.6) and 155 (31.0) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. The result shows that 43.4% of the respondent agreed while 55.6% disagreed. Item 5 from the table above reveals that 35 (7.0) and 146 (29.3) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that widows felt neglected in their churches while, 147 (29.4) and 172 (34.4) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Therefore, 36.3% of the respondents agreed while 63.8% disagreed.

Furthermore, item 6 from the table above reveals that 40 (8.0) and 100 (20.0) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that widows were looked down upon in their churches, while 179 (35.8) and 181 (36.2) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. From the result, 36% of the respondents agreed, while 72% disagreed. Item 7 shows that 32 (6.4) and 157 (31.4) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that their churches did not care for widows'

need while 155 (31.0) and 156 (31.2) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Therefore, 37.8% of the respondents agreed while 62.2% disagreed. On whether widows in the respondents' churches hardly cope with financial demands of their churches, item 8 shows that 87 (17.4) and 182 (36.4) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed while 139 (27.8) and 92 (18.4) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. The result reveals that 53.8% of the respondents agreed while 46.2% disagreed. In item 9, 64 (12.8) and 147 (29.4) of the respondents strongly agreed that widows are not given spiritual leadership positions in their churches, while 152 (30.4) and 137 (27.4) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Therefore, 42.2% of the respondents agreed while 57.8% disagreed. Item 10, reveals that 78 (15.6) and 181 (36.2) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that widows hardly contributed (financially and materially) in their women fellowship programmes, while 169 (33.8) and 72 (14.4) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Therefore, 51.8% of the respondents agreed, while 48.2% disagreed. The responses reveal that Pentecostal Churches recognize the plight of widows and were showing some level of concern to their Plight. Worthy of note among the Plight of widows is the loneliness they go through and their financial challenge due to family demands, and could probably be the cause for finding it difficult to contribute in their women fellowship programmes.

#### **4.5 The Responses of Pentecostal Churches to the Plight of Widows in FCT**

This section examined the efforts of the Pentecostal Churches in alleviating the Plight of widows among them. It sought for the response of Pentecostal Churches in addressing the Plight of Widows in FCT, Abuja. In line with this objective, the views and experiences of Church Ministers, widows and other Church members on the subject matter were sought.

**Table 4.8 The Responses of Pentecostal Churches to the Plight of Widows in FCT**

<b>S/No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>SA(%)</b>	<b>A(%)</b>	<b>D(%)</b>	<b>SD(%)</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
1	My Church has a special programme for widows.	118 (23.6)	150 (30.0)	198 (39.6)	34 (6.8)	500 (100)
2	My Church organizes seminars for widows	73 (14.6)	186 (37.2)	184 (36.8)	57 (11.4)	500 (100)
3	Workshops are periodically organized for widows in my Church.	87 (17.4)	166 (33.2)	190 (38)	57 (11.4)	500 (100)
4	The leadership of my Church organizes Counseling for widows	77 (15.4)	183 (36.6)	168 (33.6)	72 (124.4)	500 (100)
5	My Church has special Sundays for assisting widows.	48 (9.6)	167 (33.4)	201 (40.2)	84 (16.8)	500 (100)
6	My Church does not show concern about the welfare of widows.	61 (12.2)	119 (23.8)	206 (41.2)	114 (22.8)	500 (100)
7	Caring for widows is compulsory in my Church	70 (14.0)	200 (40.0)	171 (34.2)	59 (11.8)	500 (100)
8	My Church leaders always organize Bible Study on topics that concern the care for widows.	74 (14.0)	200 (40.0)	171 (34.2)	59 (11.8)	500 (100)
9	The teaching of the word of God on how to show concern for widows in my Church is not encouraging.	142 (28.4)	109 (21.8)	155 (31.00)	94 (18.8)	500 (100)

In Table 4.8, item 1, indicates that 118 (23.6) and 150 (30.0) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, that their Church had a special programme for widows, while 198 (39.6) and 34 (6.8) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the assertion that their Churches had a special programme for widows. Therefore, 53% of the respondents agreed, while 47% respondents disagreed. In item 2, 73 (14.6) and 186 (37.2) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that their churches did organize seminar for widows while 184 (36.8) and 57 (11.4) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Therefore, 51.8% of the respondents agreed while 48.2% disagreed. On whether workshops were periodically organized for widows in the respondents' churches, item 3 shows that 87 (17.4) and 166 (33.2) strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 190 (38) and 57 (11.4) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. From the result, 50% of the respondents agreed, while 49.4% disagreed. In item 4, 77 (15.4) and 183 (36.6) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the leadership of the respondents' churches was organizing counseling for widows, while 168 (33.6) and 72 (14.4) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Therefore, 52% of the respondents agreed, while 48% disagreed. Item 5 reveals that 48 (9.6) and 167 (33.4) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that their churches had special Sundays for assisting widows, while 201 (40.2) and 84 (16.8) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. The result indicates that 43% of the respondents agreed while 57% disagreed.

Furthermore, from the table, item 6 reveals that 61 (12.2) and 119 (23.8) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that their churches did not show concern about the welfare of widows, while 206 (41.2) and 114 (22.8) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Therefore, 36% of the respondents agreed, while 64% disagreed. On whether caring for widows was compulsory in the respondents' churches, item 7 shows that 70 (14.0) and 200

(40.0) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, 171 (34.2) and 59 (11.8) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. The result indicates that 54% of the respondents agreed while 46% disagreed. In item 8, 70 (14.0) and 200 (40.0) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that their church leaders always organized Bible Studies on topics that concern the care for widows while 171 (34.2) and 59 (11.8) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Therefore, 54% of the respondents agreed while 46% disagreed. In item 9, 142 (28.4) and 109 (21.8) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the teaching of the word of God on how to show concern for widows in their churches was not encouraging, while 155 (31.0) and 94 (18.8) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. The result reveals that 50.2% of the respondents agreed, while 48.8% disagreed. From the foregoing, it is clear that the Pentecostal Churches' responded to the Plight of widows, and by doing so, they had special programme, organized workshops and seminars, counseling and Bible study for the widows.

#### 4.6 Possible ways Pentecostal Churches can assist and encourage Widows in FCT

This section deals with the means by which widows can be assisted and encouraged to enhance their good living. It examined the strategies for prevention and control of the Plight of widows.

**Table 4.9 Possible ways Pentecostal Churches can assist and encourage Widows in FCT.**

S/No	Item	SA(%)	A(%)	D(%)	SD(%)	TOTAL
1	Regular financial assistance to Widows.	288 (57.6)	152 (30.4)	43 (8.6)	17 (3.4)	500 (100)
2	Giving of material support to Widows.	303 (60.6)	174 (34.8)	16 (3.2)	7 (1.4)	500 (100)
3	Regular supply of food items to Widows.	312 (62.4)	149 (29.8)	36 (7.2)	3 (.6)	500 (100)
4	Raising educational funds to Assist widows' children.	316 (63.2)	150 (30.0)	32 (6.4)	2 (.4)	500 (100)
5	Regular visitation to widows.	320 (64.0)	127 (25.4)	48 (9.6)	5 (1.0)	500 (100)
6	Church leadership to involve Widows in Spiritual positions.	307 (61.4)	147 (29.4)	31 (6.2)	15 (3.0)	500 (100)
7	Church members to assist Widows in gainful employment	379 (75.8)	101 (20.2)	12 (2.4)	8 (1.6)	500 (100)

In Table 4.9 above, item 1 in the table shows that 288(57.6) and 152 (30.4) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, that regular financial assistance to widows was one of the possible ways Pentecostal Churches could assist and encourage widows among them, while only 43(8.6) and 17(3.4) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Therefore, 88% of the respondents agreed, while only 12% of the respondents

disagreed. In item 2, 303 (60.6) and 174 (34.8) of the respondents strongly agreed and disagreed that giving of material support to widows was one of the possible ways Pentecostal churches could assist and encourage widows among them while only 43 (8.6) and 17 (3.4) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. From the result, it shows that 95.4% of the respondents agreed while only 4.6% disagreed. Item 3 reveals that 312 (62.4) and 149 (29.8) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that regular supply of food items to widows was another way Pentecostal churches could assist and encourage widows among them while only 36 (7.2) and 3 (0.6) of the respondents disagreed strongly disagreed. Therefore, 92.2% of the respondents agreed while 7.8% of the respondents disagreed. In item 4, 316 (63.2) and 150 (30.0) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that one of the ways to assist and encourage was by raising educational funds to assist widows' children while only 32 (6.4) and 2 (0.4) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Therefore, 93.2% of the respondents agreed while only 6.8% disagreed.

Also, table 4.9 above shows in item 5 that 320 (64.0) and 127 (25.4) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that regular visitation to widows was one of the ways to assist and encourage widows, while only 48 (9.6) and 5 (1.0) of the respondents disagreed. From the result, it shows that 89.4% of the respondents agreed while only 10.6% disagreed. In item 6, 307 (61.4) and 147 (29.4) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that another way to assist and encourage widows was the involvement of widows in leadership positions while 31 (6.2) and 15 (3.0) of the respondents disagreed. Therefore, 90.0% of the respondents agreed, while only 9.2% of the respondents disagreed. In item 6, 379 (75.8) and 101 (20.2) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that one way to assist and encourage widows was by assisting widows in gainful employment while only 12 (2.4) and 8 (1.6) of the respondents disagreed. The result

shows that 96% of the respondents agreed while only 4% of the respondents disagreed. From the ongoing, it was observed that the respondents seemed to strongly agree with all the suggestions raised in table 4.9 as possible ways to assist and encourage widows.

#### 4.7 Test of Null Hypotheses

Four Null Hypotheses were also framed for this study. T-test was used in testing the first hypothesis, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the remaining three hypotheses. The results of the analyses are hereby presented in the tables below:

##### Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis one states that: “There is no significant difference between male and female respondents in their understanding of Biblical teaching concerning widows”. The result is presented in table 4.10 below.

**Table 4.10 Summary Analysis of T-test on the Understanding of Biblical Teaching Concerning Widows.**

Gender	N	Mean	S Deviation	T	DF	Sig.(2 tailed)
Male	193	19.30	10.78	5.95	9	.000
Female	307	30.70	17.15			

The result of Table 4.10 above shows that the T-calculated is 5.95, which is higher than the critical value. Meanwhile, the observed level of significance (two-tailed) that determines the acceptability or otherwise of hypothesis is .000. This observed value is less than P value ( $P < 0.05$ ), meaning that the females’ understanding of biblical teaching differ from those of males. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

## Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis two posits that: “There is no significant difference among the opinions of widows and non widows of Pentecostal Churches concerning the Plight of widows”. The result is presented in Table 4.11 below:

**Table 4.11 One –Way- Analysis of Variance on the view of Respondents on the Plight of Widows in the Pentecostal Churches.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sum of Square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MeansSquare</b>	<b>F Observed</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>F Critical</b>
Between Groups	51950.600	3	17316.867	11.774	0.000	2.61
Within Groups	52949.400	36	1470.817			
<b>Total</b>	<b>104900.00</b>	<b>39</b>				

The hypothesis above was designed to test the variation if any, in the Plight of widows by both widows and non widows alike. The result of the one way variance shows  $(F, 3, 36) = \text{alike}$ . The result of the one way Variance shows  $(F, 3,36) = 2.61, P < 0.05$ . That is F observed (11.77) is greater than F critical, hence at 5% level of significance the Null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference between the opinions of widows and non-widows of Pentecostal Churches concerning the Plight of widows.

**Table 4.12 Mean- Scores of the Plight of Widows in the Pentecostal Churches by Marital Status.**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S Deviation</b>	<b>S Error</b>
Married	233	23.30	13.02	4.12
Single	163	16.30	9.11	2.88
Widow	90	8.99	5.91	1.87
Divorce	14	1.40	0.99	0.31

The mean scores on the Plight of Widows in the Pentecostal Churches by Marital Status is presented above. As revealed, 47.6% were married with the highest mean-scores while the divorced with a mean-score of 1.40 has 2.9% which is the least mean-score. From the table, showing the mean-score of the plight of widows in Pentecostal Churches, a Scheffes post-hoc comparison of means was done in order to know where the significance really existed and which pairs produced the difference.

**Table 4.13 Scheffe’s post-hoc test on the Marital Status of Respondents on the Plight of Widows in Pentecostal Churches.**

<b>(1) Factors</b>	<b>J (Factors)</b>	<b>Mean Difference (I-J)</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Married	Single	7.00000	3.81845	.354
	Widow	14.30000**	3.81845	.007
	Divorce	-21.80000	3.81845	.000
Single	Married	-7.00000	“	.354
	Widow	7.30000	“	.317
	Divorce	14.80000**	“	.005
Widow	Married	-14.30000**	“	.007
	Single	-7.30000	“	.317
	Divorce	7.50000	“	.294
Divorce	Married	-21.80000**	“	.000
	Single	-14.80000**	“	.005
	Widow	-7.50000	“	.294

The result of Scheffe post-hoc-test in the table above reveals that the major differences in opinions were between widows and divorce on the one hand, and married and single on the other hand. Suffice to say, however, that they all agreed on most of the items on the questionnaire. This result validates earlier ones, particularly, the ANOVA that there exist no significant difference between the Plight of Widows in Pentecostal Churches by Marital Status.

### Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis three says: “There is no significant difference in the response of Ministers and Laity on how the Pentecostal Churches respond to the Plight of Widows. The result is presented in Table 4.14 below:

**Table 4.14: One Way-Analysis of Variance on the views of Respondents on the response of Pentecostal Churches to the Plight of Widows.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sum of Square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F Observed</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>F Critical</b>
Between Group	88537.556	3	29512.519	44.068	.000	2.92
Within Group	21430.444	32	669.701			
<b>Total</b>	<b>109968.000</b>	<b>35</b>				

As indicated earlier, forty-two (42) Churches (Appendix 11) were involved in the study. This hypothesis was designed to assess the variation in the responses of ministers and Laity on how Pentecostal Churches respond to the Plight of Widows. The result of the One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) used in testing the hypothesis is presented in Table 4.14 above. From the table  $(CV, 3,36) = 2.92; P < 0.05$ . That is F observed (44.07) is greater than F critical, hence at 5% level of significance, therefore, the Null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference among Ministers and laity as to how Pentecostal Churches respond to the Plight of Widows.

**Table 4.15 Mean-Score of the response of Pentecostal Churches to the Plight of Widows by Position in the Church.**

Position	N	Mean	S Deviation	S Error
Pastor	39	3.90	2.18	0.69
Deacon/Elder	139	13.90	60.29	2.46
Others	322	32.20	17.99	5.69

The mean-scores of responses of Pentecostal Churches to the Plight of Widows indicate a difference between the Church hierarchy – represented by Pastors and Deacons – and the laity. The leadership has a combined mean-score of 17.8, while the Laity has 32.20. Further analysis was done from the above table to further ascertain where the difference lies. A Scheffes post hoc multiple comparisons of means showed where the significance really existed and which pairs produced the difference.

**Table 4.16 Schedffe’s Post-hoc-test on the position of respondents on the Response of Pentecostal Churches to the Plight of Widows**

(1) Factors	(J) Factors	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Pastor	Deacon/Elder	-10.10000	5.09124	.159
	Others	-28.50000	“	.000
Deacon/Elder	Pastor	10.10000	“	.159
	Others	-18.40000	“	.005
Others	Pastor	28.50000	“	.000
	Deacon/Elder	18.40000	“	.005

**\*\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level**

The result of Scheffe post-hoc-test in the table above revealed that the major differences in opinion was between the experiences and views of the pastor and Laity (Others); and the Deacon and Laity. To this end, computation of item by item analysis did not change the overall

result of the instrument, meaning there is a significant difference in the opinion of the two key variables, that is, Church leadership and the Laity.

#### **Hypothesis 4**

Hypothesis four reads: “There is no significant difference between the responses of married and single respondents concerning the possible ways the Pentecostal Churches can respond to the Plight of widows among them. The result is presented in Table 4.17 below:

**Table 4.17 One Way Analysis of Variance on the Views of respondents on the Possible ways Pentecostal Churches can assist and encourage Widows in FCT.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sum of Square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F Observed</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>F Critical</b>
Between Group	419842.571	3	139947.524	356.576	.000	3.01
Within Group	9419.429	24	392.476			
<b>Total</b>	<b>429262.00</b>	<b>27</b>				

This hypothesis was designed to evaluate if there existed any difference between the married and single respondents’ opinions on the possible ways Pentecostal churches could assist and encourage widows. The ANOVA Values show  $(f, 3, 24) = 3.01$ ;  $P < 0.05$ . That is F Observed (356.6) is greater than F critical, hence at 5% level of significance; therefore, the Null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference between the response of married and single respondents concerning the possible ways the Pentecostal Churches can respond to the Plight of Widows among them.

**Table 4.18 Mean-Score of Possible Ways Pentecostal Churches can assist and encourage widows among them by period of membership in the Church**

Period of Membership	N	Mean	S Deviation	Std Error
Below 5 years	107	10.70	5.98	1.89
6 – 10 years	133	13.30	7.43	2.35
11 – 15 years	93	9.30	5.20	1.64
16 years & above	167	16.70	9.33	2.95

The mean-scores of possible ways Pentecostal Churches could assist and encourage widows among them indicate a difference among the sampled respondents by period of membership in the Church. Thus, it is not surprising that those with 16 years and above have a mean score of 16.70 which makes up 33.4% of the total scores. From the table above a Scheffes post-hoc comparison of mean was done in order to know better which pair made for the difference.

**Table 4.19 One-Way Analysis of Variance on the Views of respondents on the concerning The possible ways the Pentecostal churches can respond to the plight of Widows in FCT.**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	329.475	3	109.825	2.128	.114
Within Groups	1858.300	36	51.619		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2187.775</b>	<b>39</b>			

The result of the ANOVA reveals that the observed value of .114 is greater than the alpha (< 05). This means that the null hypothesis is accepted. It implies that there are differences in the opinions of married and single respondents concerning the possible ways the Pentecostal

churches can respond to the Plight of Widows among them. Furthermore, the post-hoc tests validate the acceptance of the null hypothesis as there were no statistically significant values among the variables included in the instrument.

#### **4.8 Summary of Major Findings**

The major findings of the study are as follows:

- i. The Pentecostal Church members have an understanding of Biblical teaching concerning widows. Notable among their understanding are the plight of widows, the blessing that follows those who care for widows and how the Bible frowns at the neglect of widows.
- ii. Pentecostal Church Widows are suffering from different kinds of Plight, and in recognition of these, the Pentecostal Churches show concern by giving scholarship to widows' children in order to alleviate their plight.
- iii. Pentecostal Churches Positively respond to the Plight of Widows by designing a special programme for widows; organizing seminars and counseling widows; providing welfare package like skill acquisition programme and financial assistance to widows; and having Bible Study on topics having to do with widows' Plight periodically.
- iv. Pentecostal Churches assist and encourage widows in terms of regular financial assistance; material support/supply of food items to widows; raising educational funds to assist widows' children; regular visitation to widows and gainful employment for widows.

#### **4.9 Discussions**

This study examined the Pentecostal Churches response to the Plight of widows in FCT, Abuja. The results of all the Null hypotheses show  $P < 0.05$ , which makes them statistically significant; hence, leading to the rejection of the Null hypotheses earlier stated. From the data collected and analyzed for this study, the understanding of Biblical teaching concerning widows was seriously investigated. From table 4.1, the percentages show beyond reasonable doubt that the Pentecostal Church members who made the respondents of the study really had better understanding of the Biblical teaching concerning widows. Their understandings of the subject matter include the Old Testament teaching on the Plight of widows. Also the table shows that the respondents are equally familiar with the same teaching as contained in the New Testament. Worthy of note is their agreement of the fact that both New and Old Testaments teach almost the same way of treating widows. This is in agreement with what Kore (2002) said on the treatment of widows. His view was that both Old and New Testaments have teaching on the challenges and treatment of widows. He further ascertains that the Biblical teaching about widows concern all Christians and Gospel Ministers, Judges, Social Workers, Bible teachers, students, Church leaders, Community leaders and of course every individual. From the result, the reason for the indebt knowledge of the Bible among the Pentecostal Church Members could probably be that the Ministers of Pentecostal Churches have proper knowledge and understandings of the word of God and also teach their members well.

The Plight of widows in the Pentecostal Churches was tested in hypothesis two. The result revealed that there was a significant difference among the opinions of widows

and non widows of Pentecostal Churches concerning the Plight of widows. From table 4.2 which bordered on the Plight of widows in the society, the percentages revealed beyond reasonable doubt that widows were suffering different kinds of Plight in the Pentecostal Churches. Prominent among other Plights was that widows suffered loneliness as a result of lack of visitation by Church leaders; widows also lacked resources to contribute to their women fellowship programmes. The reason for widows finding it difficult to contribute, either financially or materially could be as a result of the family demands which they (Widows) shoulder alone after the death of their husbands; thereby making them bread-winners. This ascertainment is in agreement with Damap (2007) who noted that, the Plight a widow faces as soon as she loses her husband include full responsibility of the children's education, health bills, feeding, clothing, discipline of children and physical work. From the ongoing, it is obvious that widows need to be helped in gainful employment so as to enable them feel relieved in taking up these responsibilities. To compliment to the above, Omololu (1972) strongly advised that women should be given quality education. He further states that an educated woman can get a good job with higher salary and assist the woman to contribute toward the up-keep of the children. Thus, even when she loses her husband, she can contribute immensely toward the economic development of her family instead of engaging in hard labour to keep the family.

Also, the response of Pentecostal Churches to the Plight of widows was investigated in hypothesis four. It was observed from table 4.3 that the majority of the respondents agreed that Pentecostal Churches responded positively to the Plight of widows; to achieve this, the Pentecostal Churches designed special programmes for

widows; organized seminars and counseling programmes for widows; providing welfare packages and financial assistance to widows and having Bible Study on topics having to do with widows' Plight. The reason for majority of the respondents agreed on the positive response of the church to the Plight of widows could probably be as a result of their understanding of the word of God and the effectiveness of their Church leadership. Dufour (1978) earlier observed that widows are objects of social protection from the law of God, who listens to their complaints and makes Himself their defender. This is in line with Kore (2002) as he pointed out that the Biblical teaching on widows concerns all Christians irrespective of their position and bearing in the Church. This is supported by Galadima (1990) as he rightly advises that the church should always attend to the cry of Widows when it is necessary as widows are looking up to the church for help.

On the possible ways Pentecostal Churches can assist and encourage widows among them, it was discovered that majority of the respondents agreed in table 4.4 that the Possible Ways of assisting and encouraging widows could be in areas like providing gainful employment, regular financial assistance, material support, regular food supply, visitation and raising of educational funds for widows' children. The reason why they agreed could probably be as a result of their understanding of the painful events of life which widows go through in the course of widowhood. This could be a reflection of George (2012) where it was argued that, "for most widows, the death of the husband is not only a time for emotional grief, but also a time that severe torture and humiliation is meted out to them by their in-laws". The Bible rightly teaches in James 1:27 that "The religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to care for orphans and

widows in their distress...".Therefore, widows are not to be maltreated by anybody as this will attract the anger of God.

On the interview schedule, one of the interviewee (widow) made a serious commendation of her church which is worthy of mention. She (widow) said when her husband died, the husband's relatives came and carried away all the belongings of the husband, as soon as she cried to the Church to help, the church quickly took up the matter upon her and went to court on her behalf. The good news according to her was "I later regained all our property"

Another widow narrated her story that, as soon as her in-laws heard of her husband's death, the next was a big bus from the village coming to carry both herself, the children and the belongings back to the. According to the in-laws, "you have succeeded in killing our brother and son so as to inherit his property, it will not work, you must appear before the elders to prove your innocence" she cried out to her pastor who stood by her till she was out of the mess. Another widow said she was asked to drink from the water that was used in washing the husband's dead body, according to her, "my brethren stood by me in prayer at my refusal to carry out such evil traditional practice as a Christian", she was later left alone only that she and her children were abandoned. She added, "Yet, the church assisted me with cash to start the business I'm doing now to cater for my family. A widow was grateful to her church leadership for placing one of her children on scholarship and this was also reported by another widow in the same church. She said, "at least even if I can't train the younger ones, he will be able to train them he is up to the task". From the ongoing, it is obvious that there is a great challenge for the Church in attending to the challenges of widows as they are going through a lot of

troubles in several areas, especially as the number of widows increases day by day and with different challenges. Some Ministers (interviewees) during the interview exercise complained bitterly of their experiences with some of their widows' in-laws, as they mostly believe that the cause every death is a woman which is very wrong. A pastor said one of his members died and before the burial, his younger brother was already assigned to the woman for marriage. They said, "Our brother's name must not be forgotten and as tradition demands, our widow must marry her brother in-law". He (the pastor) stood by her firmly, brought their marriage certificate and defeated them on the reason that they did not have the right to force her into remarriage. Another minister told his own story of how he gave money to all the widows in his church to enable them to take care of their family needs; that he does this every quarter of the year. In a certain church, four widows were found there, and the pastor placed four children: one from each of them (the widows) on scholarship and those families were happy. It was also discovered in the interview that a pastor used to share gifts among widows and orphans every month, and he said he got challenged when he read in James 1: 27, where the Bible says, "Religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress...". Since then, he had been on it. Also, a minister was interviewed and it was discovered that he shared greater part of the church tithe among widows and orphans so as to encourage them, and also, he organized entrepreneurship programmes for widows to learn and acquire skills; and that has helped many widows to be self reliant.

In the questionnaire, it was demanded of the respondents to suggest others ways in their own understanding, which the Church could assist widows. Going through the questionnaire, the unique or special suggestions included the establishment of widows'

fellowship in the Church where they could come together to share their challenges among them; thus, the Church was made to create a separate account to cater for widows; the Church also engaged widows in spiritual mentorship.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Summary**

The broad objective of this study was to find out the Pentecostal Churches' response to the Plight of Widows in FCT, Abuja, while the specific objectives were to investigate how Pentecostal Churches understand the Biblical teaching concerning widows; examine the Plight of widows in Pentecostal Churches; find out the response of Pentecostal Churches to the Plight of widows; and examine the possible ways the Church could respond to the Plight of Widows. That was born out of the emotional, social, psychological, economical and spiritual challenges that widows are exposed to. Four null hypotheses were raised in line with the objectives.

Literary work on widowhood; literal and Biblical Perspectives of Widowhood were discussed. The reviewed literature served as theoretical frame work for this study. The research instruments used for the study were questionnaire and interview. Questionnaire was meant for all members of Pentecostal Churches while interview was conducted with the Church Ministers and Widows. The data collected from the respondents in the Forty-two (42) Churches were statistically analyzed with computer using the SPSS Software for the questionnaire in respect to the four null hypotheses. Five hundred and forty-three (543) copies of questionnaires were retrieved from the field out of which five hundred copies (500) were found valid for use due to their proper filling as opposed to the remaining forty-three (43) copies which were not properly filled

In Chapter Four, the demographic characteristics of gender, age, marital status, position occupied in Church, and period of membership in the Church by the respondents

were tabulated and graphically presented in figures, frequencies and percentages. Statistical tests of t.test and ANOVA were used for the test of the null hypotheses base on the five hundred (500) valid questionnaires at 0.05 level of significance. All the four null hypotheses showed some level of significance and therefore rejecting the hypotheses. Additionally, the responses from the interview were used for corroboration and detail explanations of the findings.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

Based on the study, it could be concluded that:

- i. Pentecostal Church members have clear understanding of Old and New Testaments' teaching concerning widows. This being the case, the Ministers who have the responsibility to educate the laity are committed to giving sound Biblical education to their respective congregations or members.
- ii. Both Old and New Testaments are consistent in their teaching regarding the Plight.
- iii. Widows are going through challenges.
- iv. Pentecostal Churches respond positively to the Plight of Widows in doing this, they design programmes and other channels of assistance capable of alleviating the Plight of widows.
- v. Regular financial assistance to widows; giving material support regular supply of food items; raising educational fund for widows' children; involvement of widows in spiritual leadership, and gainful employment of widows could go a long way in assisting and encouraging widows.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The recommendations here are specifically made for Pentecostal Church members though may apply to other Christian Denominations. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Pentecostal Ministers should keep on educating their congregations on the Biblical teaching concerning the plight of widows and encourage them to care for widows.
- ii. Pentecostal ministers should encourage widows among them to re-marry if they still have the grace in order to alleviate the plight they go through.
- iii. Widows of Pentecostal churches should make efforts to find solutions to their financial problems by embracing entrepreneurship and self employment ventures. This will go a long way to make them self reliant.

### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

It is recommended that a similar study be undertaken in different geographic location of the country in order to get the message across all Pentecostal Churches and different Christian denominations to address the Plight of widows in our society.

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## APPENDIX I

Faculty of Education,  
Department of Arts and Social  
Science,  
Christian Religious Studies Section,  
Ahmadu Bello University,  
Zaria.

Dear Respondent,

The researcher is carrying out a study on “Pentecostal Churches’ Response to the Plight of Widows in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja”. The researcher requests your kind assistance in filling in this questionnaire as honestly as possible.

Do not write your name on the paper. Your responses shall be used purely for academic purpose and will be treated confidentially.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

ZHIYA, Jeruma Dennis Solomon.  
Med. Edu/15852/2010-2011

**APPENDIX II**

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON WIDOWS’ PLIGHT IN PENTACOSTAL CHURCHES**

**PART A: BIODATA**

**Instruction:** please tick [] or fill the gap as appropriate to you.

1. Name of your church:-----
2. Your gender: Male [] Female []
3. Your age: 18-27 yrs [], 28-37 yrs [], 38-57 yrs [], 58 yrs and above [].
4. Marital status: married [] Single [] Widow [] Divorce []
5. Your present position in the Church: Pastor [], Deacon/Elder [], others []
6. Period of membership in the Church:
  - a. Below 5 yrs [],
  - b. 6-10 yrs []
  - c. 11-15 yrs []
  - d. 16 yrs and above [].

**PART B:**

**Instruction:** Please tick [] the appropriate column that suits your assessment. The key to the columns are as follows:

Strongly agree: SA; Agree: A; Disagree: D; strongly disagree: SD

**Section 1: The understanding of Biblical teaching concerning widows.**

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
1.	I have some knowledge on the Biblical teaching about widows.				
2.	The Old Testament does not teach on the plight of widows.				
3.	The Old Testament society adequately cared for the widows of their time.				
4.	The Old Testament concept of widows is not significantly different from that of new Testament.				
5.	The forms of Old and New Testaments’ teaching on the care for widows are the same with that of the New Testament.				
6.	Both Old and New testaments teach on the blessing of those who care for widows.				

7.	Both Old and New Testaments teach that widows are special people to God.				
8.	The New Testament emphasizes on the care for widows.				
9.	The New Testament frowns at the neglect of widows.				

**Section 2: The plight of widows in the Pentecostal churches in FCT.**

S/NO	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Widows of my church suffer loneliness for of lack visitation by church leaders.				
2.	Widows of my church feel discriminated from other women in the church.				
3.	Widows of my church are sexually harassed by members of my church in response to financial assistance.				
4.	Widows do not get the deserved love and attention in my church				
5.	Widows feel neglected in my church.				
6.	Widows are looked down upon in my church.				
7.	My church does not care for widows' needs.				
8.	Widows of my church hardly cope with financial demands of my church.				
9.	Widows are not given spiritual leadership positions in my church.				
10.	Widows hardly contribute (financially and materially) in their women fellowship programmes.				

**Section 3: The response of Pentecostal Churches to the plight of widows.**

S/NO	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
1.	My church has a special programme for widows.				
2.	My church organizes seminars for widows.				
3.	Workshops are periodically organized for widows in my church.				
4.	The leadership of my church organizes counseling for widows.				
5.	My church has special Sundays for assisting widows.				
6.	My church does not show concern about the welfare of widows.				
7.	Caring for widows is compulsory in my church.				
8.	My church leaders always organize Bible study on topics that concern the care for widows.				
9.	The teaching of the word of God on how to show concern for widows in my church is not encouraging.				

**Section 4: Possible ways Pentecostal Churches can assist and encourage widows in FCT.**

S/NO	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Regular financial assistance to widows.				
2.	Giving of material support to widows.				
3.	Regular supply of food items to widows.				
4.	Raising educational funds to assist widows' children.				
5.	Regular visitation to widows.				
6.	Church leadership to involve widows in spiritual leadership positions.				
7.	Church members to assist widows in gainful employment.				

Suggest other ways your church could assist widows.

- i.....
- ii.....
- iii.....
- iv.....
- v.....

**APPENDIX III**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHURCH LEADERS**

**SECTION A: Biodata**

- a. Name-----
- b. Name of your church-----
- c. Age -----
- d. Highest qualification-----
- e. Period of membership in the church-----
- f. present position in the church-----
- g. Your occupation-----
- h. Date-----

**SECTION B: Interview for church leaders**

- 1a. Are there widows in your church? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- 1b. If yes, how many are they?-----
- 2. What are the challenges commonly found among widows of your church?-----
- 3a. Do you assist widows in your church? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- 3b. If yes, what does the church do for them as regards welfare?.....  
.....
- 4a. Do you organize programmes for widows in your church? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- 4b. If yes, what are the programmes?.....  
.....
- 5a. Do widows in your church attend programmes organize for them? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- 5b. If No, what could be their reasons for not attending?.....
- 6. How do you assess widows commitment to programmes in your church?.....

**APPENDIX IV**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR WIDOWS**

**SECTION A: Biodata**

- a. Name-----
- b. Name of your church-----
- c. Age -----
- d. Highest qualification-----
- e. Period of membership in the church-----
- f. present position in the church-----
- g. Your occupation-----
- h. Date-----

**SECTION B: Interview for widows**

- 1. For how long have you lost your husband? -----
- 2a. As a widow, do you receive assistance? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- 2b. If yes, who assists you most? -----
- 3a. Does the leadership of your church assist you? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- 3b. If yes, in what ways do your church leaders assist you?-----
- 4a Do your church organize programmes for widows? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- 4b. If yes, what types of programmes do your church organize for widows?-----
- 5. How often do they organize programmes for widows in your church? -----
- 6a. Do you attend those programmes organized for widows in your church? Yes[ ]No[ ]
- 6b. If No, why don't you attend the programmes?-----
- 7a. Do your church members show care to widows? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- 7b. If yes, how often do your church members show care to you?-----

- 8a. Do you suffer in the hands of your in-laws? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- 8b. If yes, what are those things you suffer most in the hands of your in-laws?-----
- 9a. Do you get the deserved attention and love by your in-laws? Yes [ ] No [ ].
- 9b. If yes, how do your in-laws show attention and love for you?-----
- 10a. Are you deprived of your husband's property? Yes [ ] No [ ].
- 10b. If yes, who among your in-laws deprive you of your husband's property?-----
11. As a widow, what are your most difficult challenges?-----

## APPENDIX V

### NAMES OF REGISTERED PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES WITH PENTECOSTAL FELLOWSHIP OF NIGERIA (PFN) IN FCT, ABUJA.

#### Gwagwalada Area Council

S/N	NAME OF CHURCH	ESTIMATED POPULATION
1	Royal Spring Church Int'l	100
2	Steps of Christ Ministries Int'l	81
3	Excellence Evangelism Ministries	130
4	Christian Pentecostal Mission	100
5	Royal Faith Assembly	98
6	Faith and Glory Int'l	58
7	All Christian Fellowship Mission	133
8	Deeper Life Bible Church	300
9	I am that I am Bible Church	120
10	Greater Evangelism Word Outreach	90
11	Faith Alive Church	350
12	Rock of Salvation Church	170
13	Word Dominion Church	310
14	Redeemed Christian Church of God	1500
15	Assemblies of God's Church	500
16	Dunamis Int'l Gospel Church	490
17	Elohim Christian Centre Int'l	1300
18	Maranatha Christian Centre	200
19	All Saints Church	80
20	Living Faith Church	2000
21	Christ Image Assembly	40
22	Four Square Gospel Church	140
23	Dominion Courage Gospel Church	42
24	Christ Apostolic Church	320
25	God's Elect Ministries	43
26	Blazing Faith Assembly	50
27	Glorious Over comers Int'l Church	101
28	Christ the Light Institute	98
29	Act of God Gospel Church	100
30	Greater Light Revival Church	41
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,085</b>

**Kwali Area Council**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>NAME OF CHURCH</b>	<b>ESTIMATED POPULATION</b>
1	Assemblies of God Church	400
2	Royal House of Mercy	69
3	Anointed Glorious Church	74
4	Christ Apostolic Light Church	162
5	Holy Ghost Power Assembly	54
6	Deliverance Church of God	40
7	Know God Christian Mission	80
8	Christian Assembly	97
9	Redeemed Christian Church of God	350
10	Word Assembly Int'l	220
11	All Christian Fellowship	310
12	Christ Apostolic Fellowship	40
13	Be Strong and Courageous Ministry	60
14	Christ Apostolic Church	110
15	Four Square Church	200
16	Deeper Life Bible Church	400
17	Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries	300
18	Living Faith Chapel	500
19	Church of God Mission	480
20	Dunamis Int'l Gospel Church	320
21	Victory Life Chapel	24
22	Charismatic Renewal Ministries	66
23	Rock of Ages Ministries	80
24	Christ the Word Ministry	31
25	Teenagers Outreach Ministry	61
26	Teenagers for All Nation	50
27	The Source Church	33
28	House of Kindness Ministry	7
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,681</b>

**Abaji Area Council**

S/N	NAME OF CHURCH	ESTIMATED POPULATION
1	Living Faith Church	600
2	Living Faith Foundation	120
3	Faith Evangelical Gospel Ministry Int'l	69
4	Assemblies of God's Church	400
5	Dunamis Int'l Gospel Church	333
6	Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries	410
7	All Christian Fellowship	309
8	Dominion Chapel	200
9	Deeper Life Bible Church	350
10	Redeemed Christian Church of God	480
11	The Lord's Chosen	270
12	The Apostolic Church	59
13	Christ Apostolic Church	53
14	Evangelic Christ Apostolic Church	70
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,723</b>

**Kuje Area Council**

S/N	NAME OF CHURCH	ESTIMATED POPULATION
1	Christ Power Assembly	100
2	Divine Power Christian Assembly	108
3	Prevailer Global Ministry	200
4	Deeper Life Bible Church	400
5	Everlasting Blood Covenant Ministry	210
6	Supreme Releasing Supernatural Church	198
7	Total Salvation Restoration Ministry	103
8	Redeemed Christian Church of God	370
9	Holy Ghost End Times Fire Revival Ministry	223
10	The Life Giving Ministry	240
11	Rod of Power Evangelistic Ministry	209
12	Assemblies of God's Church	370
13	The redeemed Evangelical Mission	463
14	Christ for the World Mission	89
15	Church of God Mission	400
16	Dunamis Int'l Gospel Church	420
17	Victory House Mega Church	61
18	Kingdom of God Gospel Church	53
19	All Christian Fellowship Mission	71
20	Four Square Gospel Church	410
21	Living Faith Church	500
22	Chosen Generation Bible Church	70

23	Mount Zion Calvary Redemption Ministries	52
24	Redemption Army OF THE Lord	38
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,379</b>

**Municipal Area Council**

S/N	NAME OF CHURCH	ESTIMATED POPULATION
1	Dunamis Int'l Gospel Church	1000
2	Redeemed Christian Church of God	1470
3	Four Square Gospel Church	560
4	Truth and Life Gospel Ministry	81
5	The Lord's Chosen	181
6	All Christian Fellowship	200
7	Christ Apostolic Faith	174
8	Word Dominion Church	210
9	Assemblies of God's Church	380
10	Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries	400
11	Church of God Mission	390
12	Living Faith Church	1350
13	Deeper Life Church	600
14	Charismatic Renewal Ministries	580
15	Dominion Chapel	62
16	Faith Alive Church	100
17	Overcomers Chapel	59
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,797</b>

**Bwari Area Council**

S/N	NAME OF CHURCH	ESTIMATED POPULATION
1	Deeper Life Bible Church	1021
2	Word Dominion Church	502
3	Redeemed Christian Church of God	700
4	Assemblies of God's Church	510
5	Living Faith Church	1043
6	Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries	310
7	Charismatic Renewal Ministries	420
8	Four Square Gospel Church	103
9	Truth and Life Gospel Ministry	50
10	Church of God Mission	403
11	Dunamis Int'l Gospel Church	527
12	All Christian Fellowship Mission	408
13	Dominion Chapel	250
14	Lord's Chosen	600
15	Christ Apostolic Faith	510

16	Truth and Life Gospel Ministry	93
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,450</b>
	<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>38,115</b>

## APPENDIX VI

KREJCIE & MORGAN TABLE FOR DETERMINING NEEDED SIZES OF A RANDOMLY CHOSEN SAMPLE FROM A GIVEN FINITE POPULATION OF  $N$  CASES SUCH THAT THE SAMPLE PROPORTION  $p$  WILL BE WITHIN  $\pm .05$  OF THE POPULATION PROPORTION  $p$  WITH A 95 PERCENT LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE.

Population Size	Sample Size	Population Size	Sample Size	Population Size	Sample Size
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384