A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CULTURAL WIDOWHOOD PRACTICES AMONG THE IGBOS AND THE HAUSAS: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

BY

JOSEPH CHUKS ATADO

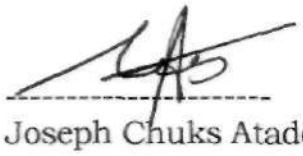
A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is a record of my own research work. It has not been presented partially or wholly anywhere in any previous application for a higher degree. All quotations and sources of information have been acknowledged by means of references.



Joseph Chuks Atado

12/12/2007

Date

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my widowed mother, Mrs. Theresa Atado.

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled "A Comparative Study of Cultural Widowhood Practices Among the Igbos and the Hausas: Implications for Counselling by Joseph Chuks Atado meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Guidance and Counselling) of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to compare cultural widowhood practices among the Igbos and the Hausas. This was informed by the fact that many widows in Nigeria today have been subjected to discrimination, dehumanization and destitution as a result of cultural widowhood practices. The researcher considered the problem to be significant because the population of widows is increasing daily in the Nigerian society. Polygamy also compounds the problems of widows because when a polygamist dies, he makes several women widows at the same time. Furthermore, the plight of widows would affect adversely the academic performance as well as the moral development of their children. Besides, the plight of widows poses a serious challenge to educators and counsellors who may have to contend with pupils and students with family related problems emanating from female-headed homes.

The research therefore examined the major problems encountered by Igbo and Hausa widows as a result of cultural widowhood practices, the overriding factors responsible for these widowhood rites, the psychological, social and economic effects of widowhood on Igbo and Hausa widows, the efforts of government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) towards preventing and alleviating the plight of widows in Igbo and Hausa states. The study further considered the coping strategies adopted by Igbo and Hausa widows.

Survey research method was used for the study. A sample size of seven hundred Igbo and Hausa widows was selected using available sampling technique. Also a population of one hundred Igbo and Hausa community leaders was sampled with a view to ascertaining the cultural

interpretation given to these widowhood practices by the two cultures.

Data was obtained by means of questionnaire developed by the researcher and validated by experts in the fields of educational research and statistics and in the area of guidance and counselling. Two sets of questionnaire designed along a 5-point Likert Type Scale were administered to the widows and the community leaders of both ethnic groups. The first set of questionnaire, namely, Widowhood Profile Questionnaire (WPQ) was administered to Igbo and Hausa widows; the second set which is, Cultural Interpretations of Widowhood Practices was administered to community leaders of both cultures.

Seven null hypotheses were formulated to guide this investigation. A t-test for independent sample was used for analysing the data collected. All the tests were carried out at the 0.05 probability level of significance.

The study revealed the following:

1) **That financial difficulty was the main problem of Igbo and Hausa widows.**
2) **That culture represented a major factor responsible for widowhood traditional practices in Igbo and Hausa communities.**
3) **That cultural widowhood practices did not make Igbo and Hausa widows have low self-image, feel rejected, insecure, sleepless and depressed.**
4) **That Igbo and Hausa widows did not lose societal respect, suffer isolation, loneliness, role confusion or reduced social status as a result of traditional widowhood practices.**
5) **That Igbo widows suffered more economically than their Hausa counterparts.**

6) That the opinions of Igbo and Hausa community leaders did not differ significantly in the interpretation of the widowhood practices except for the interpretations given to the practices of:

   i) ritual bath, (ii) levirate, (iii) inheritance of deceased's property, (iv) scraping the hair or bearing unkept hair.

7) That both Igbo and Hausa widows did not feel the impact of government efforts towards alleviating the plight of widows in Igbo and Hausa states.

8) That non-governmental organisations have not taken systematic measures towards rehabilitating widows in Igbo and Hausa states.

9) That Igbo and Hausa widows differed significantly in their coping strategies.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were therefore made:

i) The government, church and Muslim Umar, traditional rulers, and women associations should join hands together to ameliorate the conditions of widows in Igbo and Hausa states,

ii) While counselling Igbo and Hausa widows, the counsellor should take cognizance of the developmental stage of each widow as this affects their ability to cope with the effects of widowhood.

Finally, it was suggested that further comparative study be carried out on the plight of Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa widows. In addition it was suggested that the impact of religion, family size, and education on the effects of widowhood on widows should also be examined.

Definition of Terms

Widow: The term 'widow' is used in this study to mean a woman whose husband is dead and has not remarried.

Widowhood practices: These refer to some specific behavioural patterns and rituals which the society requires a woman whose husband is dead to perform.

Catechists: They are trained lay men and women who assist Catholic clergymen in the work of preaching and conversion of souls.

Non-Governmental Organisation: A non-profit making Organisation formed for the promotion of human interest. In this study it refers to Church, Mosque and Women Association.

Coping Strategies: They refer to the actions or measure taken by the widow to adjust to the discomforting situation arising from the loss of her husband.

Community leaders: The term refers to those people who are placed in charge of defined group of people. In this study it embraces only three categories of people: traditional rulers, village heads, and religious leaders.

Effect: The consequences of the death of the husband on the surviving wife.

Cultural Interpretations: These refer to the meaning and symbolism attached to widowhood practices by the Community leaders.

Igbos: This refers to all Igbo - speaking people including Imo, Anambra, Abia, Enugu and Ebonyi States.

Hausas: This refers to both Hausa-Fulani who are predominantly Moslems and Hausa-Maguzawa who are mostly Christians. The two groups reside in Kaduna, Kebbi, Jigawa, Kano, Zamfara, Katsina and Sokoto State of Nigeria.

Research Assistants: These are some selected men and women trained by the researcher to help in the administration of questionnaires.

Counsellor: The term refers to the person who has the innate and acquired skills for helping people who have problems to have deep insight into their own abilities and capabilities vis-à-vis their problems and thus be able to self-solve their problems now and in the future.

Traditional Ruler: He is the person who acts as the custodian of culture, customs and tradition in a given community.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

A wide variety of social configurations in many parts of the world have concluded that societies are formed by the bonding of families, a union which is accomplished by the betrothal of women in marriage (Levi-Strauss, 1971).

The position of women has been extensively analysed in terms of this social necessity. Women have been placed in certain roles and occupations and assigned specific social roles designed to assure that the exchange will take place. Rubin (1975), a modern feminist writer, has criticised this system of creating a false sex/gender distinction which results in the exploitation of women but she does not deny the existence of the system itself. To ensure that women will supply the offspring to continue the lineage of husband or father and to provide all eligible men with their necessary services, elaborate family arrangements have developed, sometimes extending to polygamy and even modified forms of polyandry.

According to McNamara (1976) both Jews and Romans assumed that women will spend their lives as married persons who, if widowed or divorced, would marry again with as little delay as possible. A woman who failed to enter a new union would remain under the authority and protection of her father, her in-laws, her sons or a guardian designated by one of them according to the customs of the area. Unless she was one of the rare women who inherited substantial property of her own, her lot would be hard indeed if she lacked male protection. Only the support of voluntary charity stood between her and starvation. Danby (1933) observed that the

world had no place for a childless widow or a single woman. Indeed, the Jewish widow who preferred her father's house to that of her husband's family forfeited her claim to be supported by her sons. Her children belonged to their father's family and so did she. Hitherto this has been the social status of women.

Interestingly, as the 20th century draws to a close, a growing sensitivity to women's issues is noticeable all over the world. Workshops, seminars and conferences aimed at improving the lot of the womenfolk are organised. For instance, the fourth world conference on women in Beijing, in September 1995, addressed the economic and political emancipation of women. Remarkably also the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 1996, "was established as an innovative and catalytic fund for women's empowerment and gender equality" (Heyzer, 1997:B9). Besides international efforts, successive Nigerian governments also have established programmes and ministries to see to the betterment of the womenfolk. Among such government activities are: Better life Programme for Rural Women; Family Support Programme and Ministry for Women Affairs.

It is this global concern for the empowerment of women as well as for the eradication of discrimination against women in our contemporary society that prompted this researcher to examine the widowhood status in Nigeria, with particular reference to the plight of Igbo and Hausa widows.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the traditional African society, marriage is a contract between two

families. African marriages have a strong communitarian character. In patrilineal societies, a woman upon marriage enters into the family community of her husband as a worker and bearer of children for the whole social group. She is married not only to her husband, but in a very real sense to the group itself. According to Kisembo et al (1977), she is the `wife' of the whole family - "our wife". The death of her husband does not terminate the union; her marriage in the family is still regarded as being in existence and the family members of the deceased husband take care of the widow and her children. This view is also confirmed by Otite and Ogionwo (1979) who observed that among the Urhobos and Kanuris of Nigeria the widows and their children live with the deceased's younger brother who takes care of them. Following the communitarian nature of African marriages, it is expected that the deceased's relatives and friends should rally round their widow and assist her to adjust to the new life of widowhood.

Unfortunately, many widows in Nigeria today are being treated as parasites or strangers by the same family members who once accepted them as an integral part of their family community. Some have been subjected to the inhuman treatment of drinking the water used in bathing their dead husband (Ezekwesili, 1996) not minding "the toxic effect of the putrefying corpse" (p.11), all as a testimony that they were innocent of the deceased's death. Others had the movable properties of their husbands such as vehicles and furniture carted away by their in-laws; immovable property such as land, houses, economic trees have been confiscated and the deceased's bank's account frozen by the same in-laws. Consequently, the

widow becomes a destitute soon after the burial of her husband. Agomoh (1987) noted pathetically that "when a woman becomes a wife, she receives encouragements, support and plenty of guidance from relations, friends and well-wishers". But "when she becomes a widow, she enters into a no man's world through which too often she is left to make her way alone in a world where kindness and goodwill are often in short supply" (p.5).

One wonders why the loss of a beloved spouse should necessitate oppression and deprivation instead of sympathy and support. Is it because the communitarian character of our traditional society is being rapidly replaced by the pervading spirit of individualism and greed? Or is it because the widow failed to take proper care of her husband while he was alive?

Whatever be the case, the researcher considers the problem to be significant in a number of ways. First, the population of widows is increasing daily in the Nigerian society. This is so because females seem to have greater longevity than men; and also because many men are reluctant to marry previously married women (Encyclopedia Americana, 1979). Secondly, widowhood is the event which constitutes the greatest change in the family status of older people. It comes to these elderly women at an age when it is very hard for them to adjust because their mental and physical powers have waned. Thirdly, polygamy compounds the problems of widows. When a polygamist dies, he makes several women widows at the same time. Fourthly, the plight of many widows will affect adversely the academic performance as well as the moral development of their children. Lastly, the plight of widows poses a serious challenge to educators and counsellors who may have to contend with pupils and students with family-related problems

emanating from one parent home.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research seeks to answer the following questions:

1) Is there any significant difference in the problems encountered by Igbo and Hausa widows?
2) Is there any significant difference in the perceptions of Igbo and Hausa widows regarding factors that influence widowhood practices?
3) Is there any significant difference in the effects of widowhood on Igbo and Hausa widows?
4) Is there any significant difference in the cultural interpretations given to widowhood practices by Igbos and Hausas?
5) Is there any significant difference between Igbo and Hausa widows in their perception of government efforts towards alleviating the problems of widows?
6) Is there any significant difference between Igbo and Hausa widows in their perception of non-governmental organisations' efforts towards alleviating the plight of widows?
7) Is there any significant difference in the strategies adopted by Igbo and Hausa widows in coping with the effects of widowhood?

1.4 HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses are advanced to guide this investigation:

1. There is no significant difference between Igbo and Hausa widows in their perception of problems associated with widowhood.

2. There is no significant difference between Igbo and Hausa widows in their perception of factors influencing widowhood practices in Igbo and Hausa States.
3. There is no significant difference between Igbo and Hausa widows in their perception of effects of widowhood.
4. There is no significant difference in the cultural interpretations given to widowhood practices by Igbos and Hausas as perceived by the community leaders of both cultures.
5. There is no significant difference between Igbo and Hausa widows in their perception of government efforts towards alleviating their plight.
6. There is no significant difference between Igbo and Hausa widows in their perception of non-governmental organisations' efforts towards remediating their plight.
7. There is no significant difference in the coping strategies adopted by Igbo and Hausa widows.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

1) To investigate cultural widowhood practices among the Igbos and Hausas and the major problems encountered by Igbo and Hausa widows as a result of these practices so as to determine whether uniform or different solutions can be proffered towards alleviating their plight.
2) To find out the cultural interpretations given to these widowhood practices by Igbos and Hausas so as to ascertain the underlying

attitudes of Igbos and Hausas towards widows.

3) To identify the effects of widowhood on Igbo and Hausa widows with a view to determining how they cope with their new state of life.

4) To evaluate the effectiveness of government and non-governmental organisations efforts towards preventing harmful widowhood practices in Igbo and Hausa States.

5) To evaluate the effectiveness of government and non-governmental organisations efforts towards the rehabilitation of Igbo and Hausa widows.

6. To suggest approaches towards preventing and remediating the problems of Igbo and Hausa widows.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is particularly important because it is aimed at identifying the problems of a cross-section of Nigerian widows. Such an identification is geared towards providing useful and factual information to the Federal Ministry for Women Affairs, Family Support Agencies, Church and Mosque on the deplorable conditions of widows in Nigeria so as to challenge them to create rehabilitating programmes aimed at improving the lot of this marginalised group of the Nigerian society.

On the part of the married men, the findings of this study will intimate them on the type of debasing treatment that may be meted out to their wives and children upon their death. This hopefully will propel them to make adequate provision for the safety and welfare of their wives and children while they are alive.

Similarly, the reports of this study will be of immense benefit to all married women. They will be exposed and sensitized to the harrowing experiences of their counterparts whose husbands have died so as to organise themselves as a group to fight the dehumanising aspects of widowhood practices in the society.

On the educational front, it is hoped that the study will stimulate Nigerian counsellors to develop appropriate counselling techniques and centres whereby Nigerian widows can be helped to adjust properly and promptly to their new state of life. Moreover, due to the paucity of literature on this topic this investigation is significant in contributing to the existing knowledge on the matter.

There is a dearth of empirical literature available in Nigeria about offering professional counselling services to widows. Yet, the experience of working or interacting with widows in the community who are suffering due to the death of their beloved husbands is not an uncommon event for religious ministers and Nigerian counsellors. The provision of counselling services to these widows would be enhanced and effective if there were a body of scientific knowledge to draw upon when helping such bereaved persons. This study attempted to add to such a knowledge base by proposing developmental counselling approach to Igbo and Hausa widows.

1.7 BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

In the study the researcher made the following assumptions concerning Igbo and Hausa widows:

1) That the problems encountered by Igbo and Hausa widows as a result

of cultural widowhood practices can be measured.

2) That factors influencing widowhood practices in predominantly Igbo and Hausa speaking states can be identified.

3) That the effects of widowhood on Igbo and Hausa widows can be measured.

4). That basic counselling services are provided for Igbo and Hausa widows in places of worship in Igbo and Hausa states.

1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is concerned with only Igbo and Hausa widows. The delimitation of the study to these two ethnic groups is borne out of the fact that Igbos and Hausas represent two of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria (Yorubas, being the third group). Apart from being two of the three largest ethnic groups, Igbos reside in the southern part of the country while Hausas live in the northern section. The geographical location of these two ethnic groups affords the researcher the opportunity of having a good picture of the conditions of a cross-section of Nigerian widows. In addition, Igbos and Hausas have different cultural, religious, economic and social backgrounds. This indeed provides the researcher with the kind of heterogeneous population needed and suitable for this comparative study. Hence the delimitation of the study to Igbo and Hausa widows.

1.9 SUMMARY

It is a truism that many Nigerian widows suffer economically, socially and psychologically due to the negative cultural widowhood practices to

which they are subjected. Some of these negative cultural widowhood practices include: asking the widow to drink the water used in washing her dead husband's body; asking her to remain in seclusion for twenty-eight days (among Igbos), or for four months and ten days (among the Hausa-Fulani), or for forty days (among Hausa Maguzawa), wearing black dress during the duration of mourning, not allowed to apply scent or pomade, and so on. It is with the intention of finding out to what extent these negative cultural widowhood practices have affected Nigerian widows that Igbo and Hausa widows have been selected for the study.

In this regard, the chapter has defined the problem of the study namely, the negative cultural widowhood practices and the debilitating effects of these widowhood practices on the Igbo and Hausa widows; it has also outlined the guiding objectives of the inquiry, stated the research questions and the null hypotheses that will assist the researcher arrive at useful results and draw constructive conclusions. In addition the significance of the study was highlighted and some basic assumptions regarding the study were made.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature related to the problem under investigation. The chapter is organised into two main headings, namely, conceptual framework and review of previous studies.

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.2 The Concept of Widowhood

The word widow derives from the latin vidua (widow) and dividere, meaning to divide or separate. According to Wiebe (1981), from early times, a widow was not only separated from her husband through death, but separated from the society because of her new role. She became a member of a group set apart.

This separatist bias is still prevalent in the present day treatment of widows. Little wonder then Agomoh (1987) described widowhood as a social stigma, while Nwafor (1989) called it slavery. According to Nwafor (1989) tradition in many parts of this country has placed the widow in a state worse than the eighteenth century slave. Ezekwesili (1988), herself a widow, had compared widowhood to a sore on the palm of one's hands. "It is always there and it hurts" (p.39). In her own judgement, Okoye (1995) defined widowhood as a cultural tragedy. She opined that the death of a husband is

a devastating natural tragedy. But societies have turned this natural phenomenon into "an agonisingly dehumanising cultural tragedy for the widow" (p.245).

The death of a husband produces a critical situation, a reorganisation of roles and relationships suitable to the new status. This is even more critical for elderly widows. Specifically, Arling (1976) perceived widowhood as an event which constituted the greatest change in the family status of older people. He contended that it may have deleterious consequences, not only because of the loss of the central role partner, but also because of the lack of cultural expectations regarding the proper role of the widow. The researcher believes that this role confusion is responsible, to a large extent, for the withdrawal of the widow from public activities.

Widowhood involves both social and personal disorganisation, especially for the aged widow. This is because old statuses and roles are lost and new relationships must be substituted in order to effect a satisfactory adjustment to a changed situation. Berardo (1968) argued that transition to widowhood is made difficult not only by the lack of clearly defined cultural expectations but also by the lack of missing supportive relationships. In other words, the loss of a husband tends to strain and dissolve other relationships of the widow.

The image of widowhood that emerged from the Old Testament is that of a group of women isolated in their poverty, subject to oppression and injustice, whose cries were often not heard, and who in their loneliness and abject need became a symbol of all oppressed and needy (Lamentation 1:1; Numbers 31:9; Isaiah 54:1-5; 2 Kings 4:1-7). In contrast to this image, the

New Testament presented a more wholesome picture of widowhood. Widowhood was no longer seen as a shame or a reproach. Instead, widows were accepted as hurting persons in need of healing and assistance. Besides providing economic support for them (Acts of the Apostles 6:1-5), the early church also established an ecclesiastical order of widows who carried some significant responsibilities in the church, e.g., ministry of prayer, (Wiebe, 1987).

Islam too had a positive image of widowhood. According to Abdalati (1982) widows were "the trusts of muslims and had to be kept jointly" (p.200). Perhaps this concern for widows is the reason why prophet Mohammed married a widow who was fifteen years older than himself as his first wife and remained only with her until her death. He also took part in the rehabilitation of widows (Abdalati, 1982).

Despite the recognition and respect accorded widows by Christianity and Islam, widows today still bear an image of poverty and discrimination. In a society becoming increasingly concerned with sexual relationship or coupling, to this image may be added a third element: the widow is one left over after pairs have been made (Wiebe, 1987). Gains made during the time of Christ and Mohammed have been lost.

Having looked at some of the interpretations of widowhood by various authors, the researcher sees widowhood as a journey from being single to getting married and then returning to the single state again. But this time with some additional responsibilities of taking care of herself and her children (and perhaps other dependants are added). This painful transition from being a married woman to becoming a widow is inexpressible.

2.3 Factors Influencing Widowhood Practices

Various authors (Ike, 1994; Nwadinobi, 1994) have suggested differing factors that are responsible for the continuation of obnoxious widowhood practices in Nigeria. However, only Okoye (1995) has carefully articulated these factors as follows: Cosmology, religion, illiteracy, low concept of women, Umuokpu (daughters of the lineage), female passivity, inheritance and marriage laws of the land, the extended family system, and poverty. Conspicuously, Okoye (1995) omitted culture which the researcher considers an important variable in the practice of widowhood rites and rituals. It is important to examine each of these variables to see how they influence widowhood practices.

2.3.1 Cosmology

To know how a people view the world around them is to understand how they interprete life, both temporal and spiritual. A people's interpretation of life guides their behaviour. It is this quest for the meaning of life, for the explanation of the relationship between man and his world that is termed cosmology. Kalu (1978) defines cosmology as "a unified picture of the cosmos explained by a system of concepts which order the natural and social rhythms and the place of the individual and communities in them" (p.39). The physical ordering of the universe is more than a matter for scientific investigation. It is the unifying principle of the cosmos by which man delineates order and finds his place in it, and as such, varies tremendously among societies. Okoye (1995) affirms that the way a group of

people understands and interprets the cosmos is a key determinant in their basic attitudes, beliefs, ideas, ethos or values. According to Izuakor (1992):

> African world-view, like any other, is the sum total of systems of thought and belief which have, over millionnia, crystallised as a result of man's interaction with his physical environment. It is a manifestation of his conception of reality based on his actual experiences and his imagination. Eventually these enter into his thought processes and are handed down from generation to generation. Some aspects of the world view are preserved in myths, legends, wise sayings, folklores, proverbs and songs (pp.122-123).

In line with this, Okoye (1995) noted that the core aspects of the African world view are transmitted and preserved in their death rites, rituals and widowhood practices. This view is also shared by Oguejiofor (1996) who opined that "a people's world view is generally discernible from their rituals, festivals, folklore, and myth" (p.47). Writing on Igbo world, Uchendu (1965) divided African cosmology into three categories: explanatory, prescriptive, and action. According to him, cosmology as an explanatory device theorizes about the origin and character of the universe; as prescriptive ethics, it defines what the African ought to do and what they ought to avoid; as an action system it reveals what Africans actually do as manifested in their overt and covert behaviour. The latter is important in understanding the dynamic forces that govern the African widowhood practices.

Essentially, the African see the universe as consisting of two components: the world of man and the world of spirits (Uchendu, 1965), or as Okoye (1995) called them "the world of matter and the spirit world"

(p.129). According to Uchendu (1965) the world of man is peopled by all created beings and things, both animate and inanimate. The spirit world, on the other hand, is inhabited by God, the Supreme Being, the deities, evil spirits, and ancestral spirits. These two worlds belong to an inseparable continuum (Okoye, 1995). There is constant interaction between the living, the dead, the ancestral spirits, the various deities as well as God.

In the same vein, Gaiya (1994) stated that African world view is cyclical. In other words, there is a constant movement from the physical to the non-physical below the earth through death. The dead especially the aged becomes an ancestor (living dead); he interacts with the physical, at times, is reborn (reincarnation). But after a while he is forgotten, he travels to the other spiritual world, above the sky, he becomes a deity (long dead). However, there is a constant interaction of the deities with the solid earth. These deities, some Africans believe, give a vitality to life-they bring blessings and curses. It is for this reason that in the African cosmology there is no clear dichotomy between the visible and the invisible world. All are fused together in cosmic unity and constantly interact.

From the foregoing discussion the authors tend to suggest that majority of African societies have the same structure of world view. The following exceptions belie that assumption. The Bantu speaking people of East and Central Africa do not have deities or nature gods. They have the Supreme Being, spirit forces, ancestors and magical forces. For most West African societies there are the Supreme Being, deities, spirit forces, ancestors and magical powers. However, the Tiv of Benue State have three supernatural forces: the Supreme Being (Aondo), collection of magic rites

(Akombo) and magic (Tsav). Also the traditional Maguzawa in Katsina State have no deities, ancestors and magical forces.

> Though they believe in Allah as the Supreme Being, they neither worship Him, nor seek His help, nor invoke Him in prayers, except in times of drought. The Maguzawa believe in iskookii (spirits) whom they consult for help. These iskookii are said to be immortal; they never grow old and their nature never changes. (Goriawala, 1986:49).

With the African cosmology as a datum, it is easy for one to appreciate the network of rites, rituals, fetish ceremonies, purifications and cleansing that punctuate widowhood practices among the Igbos and Hausas. Given also the fact that majority of Igbos and Hausas are christians and moslems respectively one may wonder why the above described widowhood practices still survive. In trying to provide an explanation to this puzzle, Ejizu (1989) stated that "the indigenous cosmology which sustains the traditional beliefs and practices remains a potent factor in the life of most contemporary Africans, Christians and others alike" (p.178). In other words, the answer lies in an examination of the people's world view. Hence Okoye (1995) averred:

> Those miserable days of seclusion or absolute confinement, those eerie night trips to the river and their attendant cleansing rites, those dehumanising and hair-raising oath-taking activities, the humiliating public confessions of sexual aberrations and other forms of social transgressions that the widow is put through, all stem from the cosmic fundamentals, as held by the people in traditional African culture (p.134).

2.3.2 Religion

There is no generally accepted definition of religion in the social sciences. However, sociologists agree generally that all societies, except perhaps some individuals or categories of people with their so-called godless materialism, believe in supernatural beings, some kind of supernatural life, as having effect on the living. In the view of Metuh (1987) religion "comprises an institutionalised system of symbols, beliefs, values and practices which focus on the question of ultimate meaning' (p.96). By `ultimate meaning" he refers to what is relevant and purposeful in man's life in his relationship to the Supreme Being.

Religion is a cultural institution and, like other institutions, it is a means, an instrument for the satisfaction of needs. On this basis, Spiro as cited in Otite and Ogionwo (1979) defined religion as "an institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings" (p.151). Religion belongs to the central belief system of man. Otite and Ogionwo (1979) pointed out that sociologists are interested in the study of religion principally because of the significance of its roles, movements, and organisational strategies associated with it. In line with this reasoning, Malinowski (1944) postulated that religion provides a patterned and a familiar way of overcoming life and environmental crises and of the preparation and hope for a comfortable future.

Other authors have a different view. Brown (1952), for instance, presented a counter argument and stated that "... if it were not for the existence of the rite and the beliefs associated with religion the individual

would feel no anxiety, and that the psychological effect of the rite is to create in him a sense of insecurity or danger" (pp.148-149). This statement says that religion and its rites actually produce fear in their processes rather than become a solution to man's fears and anxieties.

The researcher does not share the view of Brown that religion produces fear in its adherents. It is important to qualify the fear it generates. Religion does not generate physical fear; rather it produces reverential fear, that is, respect and a sense of awe for the Supreme Being and the sacred.

Religion can also be interpreted as having solidarity and integration aspects. According to Durkheim (1912), religion contributes to order in society by creating conditions for social well-being, self-discipline, social cohesion and the continuity of culture and traditions. Coser as cited in Otite and Ogionwo (1979) countered Durkheim by asserting that Durkheim's solidarity theory of religion ignores "the historical evidence that indicates that religion, although it may draw men together may also separate them and set them against each other" (p.156). This means therefore that religion can be divisive in an atmosphere of competition between religious groups or segments of a group.

Remarkably, it is believed by Africans that widowhood practices have their root in the traditional religion of the people. Thus, it can be argued along the line of Brown that religion via the traditional mourning rites has been used by the society to produce fear and anxiety in its followers, namely, the widows; also it has been used as a divisive technique as espoused by Coser to set widows apart from the rest of the society as if they were outcasts or infidels.

As Marx cited in Otite and Ogionwo (1979) pointed out, religion functions as an "opiate of the masses". It is an instrument for maintaining stratification systems and keeping the masses under subjection. Typically the society uses religion as a diversionary technique of shifting the attention of widows away from their deplorable living conditions while protecting the privileged male-dominated society. In the final analysis, religion makes the widow look to heaven for comfort while accepting the exploitative order of the society. Under these conditions, religion still serves to maintain cultural and structural stability (of a different nature from Durkheim's stability in solidarity) by discouraging rebellion and opposition to the existing socio-economic discrimination against widows.

It can be stated categorically that religion is a key influence on world widowhood practices. Okoye (1995) averred that "whether people are given to monotheism, polytheism, henotheism or atheism, their beliefs or various religions govern their behaviour, values and outlook of life" (p.135). Her view is shared by Chuta (1992) who stated that, "in Africa, all the principles, prescriptions and sanctions that controlled and regulated human conduct were all derived from religions" (p.155). Little wonder then that the Umuada (daughters of deceased lineage) who once wined and dined with the bereaved before they became widowed should now turn against them with the conviction that they are fulfilling a religious obligation.

Of all the three major religions practised in Nigeria, traditional religion has had the greatest impact in shaping widowhood practices in Nigeria. This is so because Islam and Christianity are imported religions. Every Nigerian is born into the traditional religion and he or she is in one way or the other

influenced by it. The central thesis of the indigenous traditional religion is the worship of a Supreme Being, gods and ancestral spirits. Parrinder (1967) stated that:

> African religion can roughly be depicted as a triangle. At the top, head of all powers, is God. On the two sides of the triangle are the next greatest powers, gods and ancestors. At the base are lower forces, with which magic and medicine are concerned. Man is in the middle, and must live in harmony with all the powers that affect his life, family and work (p.75-76).

Communalism is the governing principle of traditional African societies. This means that "nobody is anybody except in the context of everybody" (Okoye, 1995:139). Group solidarity is optimum in the minds of members of traditional society. There is corporate existence. No one exists alone. The religious implication of this is that individual guilt is capable of breeding communal contamination. This is why the widow is closely monitored to see that she diligently observes all the mourning rites and rituals. Failure of one individual, in this case, the widow, may spell doom for the entire kindred, both the living and the unborn.

Interestingly, not everybody supports the notion that religion plays a key role in widowhood practices in Nigeria. Sawaba (1993), a Zaria-based female political activist, dismissed claims that religion should be blamed for women's woes. She argued,

> I don't think the cultural values of the people and religion say you should oppress women. God created Eve to be Adam's companion, not his slave. So where is the truth behind giving spiritual interpretation to this supposed

> superhuman nature of man? It is a bogus claim by men to continue to tie down women (p.8).

Be that as it may, religion, like any other powerful weapon, can and has been used for good and evil. It has always been a very potent factor in human life. Religion has inspired wars, heroism, martyrdom, and creativity. No doubt, it can be used to perpetuate dehumanising widowhood practices. On the other hand, it can also be used to improve the lot of widows.

2.3.3 Culture

The concept of culture is used in various ways with different meanings. These usages are either colloquial or scientific. In colloquial terms, "the cultured person is thought to be one who is well educated, well mannered, and refined in behaviour" (Brown, 1963:3).

In scientific usage, culture is often defined in blanket terms as the total way of life of a people (Gaiya, 1994; Oyeronke, 1996). More specifically, Tylor cited in Otite and Ogionwo (1979) defined culture as "the complex whole of man's acquisition of knowledge, morals, belief, art, custom, technology, etc. which are shared and transmitted from generation to generation" (p.44). Brown (1963) had earlier defined culture as "the sum total and the organisation or arrangement of all the groups ways of thinking, feeling, and acting" (p.3). According to her, it included "the physical manifestations of the group as exhibited in the objects they make - the clothing, shelter, tools, weapons, implements, utensils, and so on". For Kato (1975) culture means "the totality of knowledge and behaviour, ideas and objects that constitute the common heritage of a society" (p.8).

These definitions emphasize that culture is not a personal item; it is used in reference to a society or a group of societies. Otite and Ogionwo (1979) classified culture into material and non-material categories. The material aspects of culture consist of the objects which people have learned to make and use to satisfy their needs in society, namely, bridges, pots, cutlasses, hoes, dresses, houses, handicrafts, etc. The non-material aspects consist of the knowledge, philosophy, religion, morals, language, attitudes, values, etc. shared and transmitted in a society.

Both of these aspects of culture combine to form the culture of a people. It is worthy to note that culture is not a "thing" but an abstraction, a process, and an instrument. Thus, Brown (1963) postulated that the most profitable way to look at culture is to see it as an adaptive mechanism, that is, to see what it does.

What culture does is expressed vividly in widowhood practices. Ezekwesili (1996), herself a widow, lamented in these words:

> I have come to realise that it is not really the death of her husband that distinguishes a woman as a widow and subsequently an object of shame and ridicule but the native laws and customs which stipulate that a woman be subjected to harrowing ordeals following the death of her husband (p.V).

According to Okoye (1995) culture pegs the grief of a widow to one or two years. Apparently culture is oblivious to the fact that death is an irreparable loss. Some people never really get over the loss of their beloved ones. A lot depends on the psychological make-up of the individual as well .

Recently, concerned men and women are beginning to question the relevance and usefulness of the culture that oppress women. According to Kanyoro (1996), "culture has silenced many women in Africa". But she warned against assuming that "what is culture is natural, good and unavoidable". She said:

> For generations, African women have unquestioningly obeyed all that society prescribes for them in the name of culture. Child marriages, female circumcision and the rites of passage from birth to death, whether useful or harmful, are imposed on African women simply because it is `our culture' (p.22).

In the same vein, Ike (1994) observed that "not all cultural practices are right, although they are in practice". He argues that though culture is seen as a way of life, its being a way of life does not make it right. Ike stressed that "what is right must be human-serving, rationally acceptable and universally seen to be so, and transcending time and space"(p.4).

Obviously some of the cultural practices associated with widowhood mourning rites are irrational, talk less being of service to humanity. No wonder Meena (1992) reported that:

> Culture has been used to justify the subordinate position of women in the household, a factor which discriminates against women, as regards property ownership. Culture has been used to justify the existing unequal division of labour. Some cultural norms, with regard to age at marriage and marriage rights have also limited women's participation in formal

> schooling. And yet African states have claimed that African culture is dynamic and change oriented. When it comes to issues of gender inequity, African culture seems to be protecting the culture of oppression (p.10)

It is worthy to note that culture guides the behaviour of people in a given society. The culture of the African cannot be separated from his or her orientation, mission and vision in life. The African is inalienably bound to and by his or her culture. However, as Kraft (1984) rightly noted "cultural structures are best regarded as a vehicle or milieu, neutral in essence, though warped by the pervasive influence of human sinfulness" (p.104).

Culture therefore is not to be seen as an enemy or friend but rather as something that can be employed by human beings for the growth and development of humanity. Conversely, it can also be employed by the privileged to oppress the masses or downtrodden.

2.3.4 Illiteracy

Illiteracy on the part of the womenfolk in particular and the larger society in general is another significant factor that influences widowhood practices in Nigeria. Illiteracy, it is said, is a disease; but it is a curable disease. In the words of a veteran educationist and an erstwhile Federal Minister of Education, Babs Fafunwa as cited in Okoye (1995) "An illiterate individual is invariably a poor consumer of goods, a pawn in the hands of the unscrupulous politician, and a victim of superstition and magic" (p.166). No doubt, illiteracy breeds superstition, lack of self-confidence, fear of change and incompetence in handling one's environment. Moreover, it limits our human capacities.

Significantly, the bulk of Nigerian women are illiterate. Two principal reasons are advanced for this: the negative traditional attitude of men to female education (Okoye, 1995) and the colonialist, gender-based educational policies (Acholonu, 1995). Okoye (1995) remarked that the popular belief in the traditional Nigerian society is that women education is a bad investment. This is because it is not her natal family that will reap the fruits of her education but her marital family. In addition it is traditionally believed that a woman finds self-actualization in marriage, and not in education. Hence the Igbos have a popular dictum, Mma nwanyi bu di, which means transliterally, `the beauty of a woman is husband'. In other words, `the fulfilment of womanhood is marriage'. It is worthy to note that this negative attitude towards women education is beginning to change drastically. Infact, in some southern states of Nigeria more girls go to school than boys. This is because boys have abandoned education for trading. Also parents, clergymen and social commentators have begun to emphasize the multifarious benefits inherent in female education.

Decades ago, Acholonu (1995) has stated that the colonial masters excluded women from higher education in their educational policies. Instead, they built special schools for women, such as domestic science schools, nursing and midwifery schools, secretarial studies centres. She noted that exceptions to this rule were the women who were related to people in powerful positions in the government or in the community.

The resultant effect of this mass female illiteracy is the retardation of women progress, coupled with the fact that women are incapacitated to fight for their rights. It is a truism that one cannot assert his or her rights unless

one first knows what these rights are. Ignorance of one's rights hinders one from even recognising them, much less fighting for them. Ultimately one is bound to remain under the yoke of oppression.

In her view, Boma Jack, a law lecturer and chairman of the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Rivers State, as cited in Thomas (1993) declared that the "Low level of literacy among women prepares the ground for the oppression of women in rural areas" (p.8). Relating the issue of illiteracy to widowhood, Okoye (1995) observed that the widow's situation is compounded by her own illiteracy and the mass illiteracy of the Nigeria populace. She opined that ignorance and superstition predisposed people to the strong adherence to eerie rituals that make up our widowhood rites. For instance, the illiterate community believes that shaving the hair of the widow or not allowing the widow to bath for a prescribed number of days is a symbol of grief for the dead husband. Emotion is a personal thing, yet our illiterate community insists on certain outward manifestations of the personal distress of the widow, and deviants face stringent social sanctions. There is no gainsaying the fact that illiteracy renders the woman economically impotent. Widowhood exposes the reality of this hopelessness and financial helplessness of the Nigerian woman.

2.3.5 Low Concept of Women

Traditionally and globally, women have been perceived as the weaker, the inferior and the subordinate sex. Apparently, this low concept of women has influenced world widowhood practices. This poor image of women dated far back in world history and has permeated the crucial spheres of life, such

as religion, politics and economics. Writing about gender and history, Nicholson (1986) stated:

> The fundamental attitude of the Greeks toward women remained misogynistic... The misogyny of the Greeks sprang originally from the association of women with the world of instincts and passions, which was hostile to civilised life (p.76).

In the Graeco-Roman world, particularly among the Israelites, women were despised as inferior. Umeagudosu (1990) has quoted a very scornful prayer that was common among the Israelites,

Blessed be God that He has not made me a gentile

Blessed be God that He has not made me a woman

Blessed be God that He has not made me a boor (p.28)

Obviously, the woman is equated with the gentile and the boor. Among the Hebrews who consider themselves `the chosen people of God', the gentile and the woman signify `rejects' and `infidels'. The boor conjures up the image of the brutish, the rustic, the primitive, and the ill-bred. Thus the woman is abhorred as much as the boor.

Judaism also showed contempt for the woman. Women are so despised that the Jews count themselves unfortunate when they beget female children: "Happy is he whose children are males, and woe to him whose children are females" (Orpke, 1964:781-783).

In India the status of women is revoltingly low. Women are so discriminated against that female infanticides are practised in India. This perhaps may be one of their population control strategies. Jacobson (1991)

reported that one sixth of the infant deaths in India are believed to be caused by a preference for sons. Also commenting on female infanticide and abuse against girls in India, Burnette and Hosni (1993) reported that "a female that is not aborted during pregnancy is not out of danger" (p.2).

On the African scene, the story is much the same. Okoye (1995) observed that a woman is valued in Africa only in her child-bearing capacities, that is, reproduction, not in the production sector. The researcher agrees with this assertion. This is because a childless marriage in Africa is regarded as null and void. This means that the man is free to marry another wife. Childlessness is one of the commonest causes of marital instability in Africa.

In Nigeria, the low concept of women is manifested in many ways. For example, among the Moslems in the Northern part of Nigeria, married women are shut off from the world of men and indeed the modern world due to the muslim tradition of purdah or women's seclusion. Commenting on the concept of purdah, Acholonu (1995) pointed out that originally purdah was intended to afford the woman a life of comfort and dignity. Unfortunately, she said, "men have bastardized it and seem to use it as a weapon against their wives" (p.53).

Obviously when a group of women are culturally proscribed from all public life, members of such a group will have a very low social status. Furthermore, this may cause them to develop a negative self-concept of themselves. Also in the same North, Okoye (1995) pointed out the popular tradition of `gift wife'. What this means is that a father can make a present of his daughter to another man for marriage. This could be a sign of

friendship or a mark of honour and respect for a noble man. Okoye (1995) also observed that in some cultures a man can offer the sexual services of his wife for the night to his male visitor as a sign of hospitality. All these show in what low esteem women are held in our society.

In the predominantly christian South of Nigeria, women are no less marginalised. Anyanwu (1993) noted that in Igboland only men could be Ọfọ holder. The Ofo is the Igbo ancestral symbol of authority, right conduct, justice and continuing union between the living and the dead (Afigbo, 1990). The overall picture in popular literature on Igbo people is that the Igbo world is the man's world, politically and otherwise, no more, no less. This view is confirmed by Dine (1983), while supporting Ubesie (1978) as he (Dine) wrote:

> Women's position of `inferiority' in relation to men seems obvious... Women do not take part with men in social deliberations unless the latter consider it opportune to hear the former in things that involve all in the community. Even when women are allowed to present themselves before men, there is normally lack of freedom of expression, either out of respect or inferiority complex or both (p.184).

Dine's summary view is more subtle in its admission of male domination. Ottenberg (1962) was more pervasive. Writing on the Afikpo people he stressed that the

> innate superiority of men over women is backed by men's control over lands and the supernatural as well as by sanctions of the men's village society one of whose purposes is `to keep women down' (p.127).

Society's very low concept of women has kept them in perpetual subjugation to men. This social situation, no doubt, gives force to the very mean treatment meted out to widows.

2.3.6 Female Passivity

Female passivism can be defined in various ways. Okoye (1995) defined female passivism with respect to widowhood practices as "women's inept acceptance and silent submission to the oppressive social, cultural and traditional status ascribed to women" (p.203). According to her, female passivity is women's greatest enemy in any effort to reform the world widowhood practices.

The Igbos have a saying: "Onye gba nkiti, chi ya agba", meaning if one remains mute one's god stays dumb too. `Cogito ergo sum' is a latin dictum which means that if you do not say you are, nobody will know you exist. In essence, it is women who wear the shoe and it is they who should know where it pinches. It is only when they cry out that others can come to help. This researcher believes that it is their failure to cry out, both as individuals and as groups, that has perpetuated the oppressive aspects of the widowhood rites. This stance is supported by many authors. In her contribution, Kitzinger (1993) opined that "raising one's personal awareness enables individuals to release their psychic energies towards creative social change" (p.494). Commenting on female passivity in Costa Rica in the face of female oppression, Germain (1993) stated that "many women in Costa Rica perceive discrimination against women, but because of Machismo, they

also see it as natural or explainable... (they) resign themselves to a lack of control over sexuality and reproduction" (p.124). This is the ugliest attitude to be adopted by women, who are themselves social victims.

Significantly, many modern writers are challenging women to shun passivism. Burnette and Hosni (1993) advised that "if women truly long for gender equality they must strive for it" (p.3). In the same vein, Kerr (1993) reiterates that

> unless women can take their fate into their own hands, all attempts will ultimately be controlled by political powers which already use both culture and religion as weapons (p.61).

To put a stop to dehumanising widowhood practices and other forms of female degradation cannot become a reality unless women are in the forefront of the campaign. They must first take the initiative. No wonder Meena (1992) stated in an unambiguous term that

> For culture to play that dynamic role, women themselves have to create an alternative culture that challenges the culture of oppression, which has been endorsed by African states (p.10).

In line with this, Higgins (1981) had opined that

> once people confront and question their feelings of powerlessness it is astonishing what they can achieve and indeed what hidden resources of skill, ingenuity and adaptability they can find within themselves and their partners (p.181).

It is true that women organisations are flourishing in Nigeria today. Jack as cited in Thomas (1993) pointed out that the question is not that women associations are not doing anything but that the problem "is the nonchalant attitude by women concerning their fate" (p.8).

Female passivity condones and indeed propagates all the mortifications and dehumanisation widows suffer under our traditional widowhood practices. Women themselves must push for change and insist on dignity and justice, especially in widowhood practices.

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2.3.7 The Extended Family System

The extended family, variously called the "grand family" or the "joint family", is a key factor influencing widowhood practices. According to Otite and Ogionwo (1979) an extended family consists of two or more nuclear families. For example, a man's conjugal family is joined to his father's conjugal family through him to form one extended family. This is a narrow definition of the extended family system. Brown (1963) gave a broader description of the extended family. For her, the extended family consists of several generations held together through the male line (patrilineal) or through the female line (matrilineal). Such a family may occupy a common residence, which may be a large compound with separate apartments for each of the smaller family units, or it may be simply individual huts grouped together. In her contribution, Okoye (1995) stressed that economically, extended family is an insurance company. It functions as a sort of economic unit. Hence, in Igboland it is believed that 'Ogalanya ofu onye bu ubiam', which means, 'The wealth of a single individual is poverty'. In other words,

an individual is truly wealthy only when all other members of the extended family are seen to be rich.

Socially, the members of the extended family do not intermarry (Brown, 1963). On account of the close relationship between individuals in this family structure, one person's fate affects and is also governed by the common fate. This is why, according to Okoye (1995), widowhood is a public concern. Thus the members of the extended family do not take it kindly with any woman who contravenes traditional widowhood practices.

Given this unique togetherness, one can categorically state that the many rites and rituals and indeed most of the widowhood practices in traditional society stem from its extended family structure. For instance, the remarrying of a widow is the collective decision of the extended family members. Also wife's transgressions are adjudged by members of the extended family.

2.3.8 Inheritance and Marriage Laws of Nigeria

To a large extent, the second half of this century - the 20th century - may be called an era of mobilization for the emancipation of the African women. The 1979 and 1989 constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, both in almost identical terms establish a solid legal framework for non-discriminatory laws and administrative actions against women.

Despite these constitutional provisions, Ilegbune (1992) pointed out that the inferior legal status of Nigerian women is most evident in the area of property rights. In line with this view, Okoye (1995) stated categorically that the traditional Nigerian inheritance system discriminates against women by

the exclusion of daughters as heirs to the property of their natal families. She further observed that as widows too, Nigerian women are precluded from inheriting their husband's property.

These two views are countered by Sodiq et al (1997) who stressed that under Hausa custom, a woman has a right to inherit from any of her parents' estate. They noted that this is very similar to the Islamic law of inheritance. According to them, the Islamic law allows both the female and male children to inherit from their parents' property; also a widow is allowed to inherit a certain legally defined percentage from her late husband's property.

These conflicting opinions can be explained by the fact that Igbo and Hausa cultures have differing inheritance system as earlier stated in the previous section. Apparently Ilegbune and Okoye were referring to Igbo inheritance system. However, they faulted by generalizing what is obtainable in Igboland to the whole country.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that inheritance laws in Nigerian society are certainly sex discriminatory. This is testified by Okagbue (1997):

> One rule of customary law which all the traditional African societies are unanimous about is that in the customary law of intestate succession the widow has no place in the sense that she can never inherit from her husband on intestacy. It is remarkable to find such uniformity in the customary laws of so many people with different origins, histories and customs (p.36).

In trying to explain the reason for this obvious uniformity, Okagbue (1997)

said that this was due to the patriarchal nature of African societies which developed patterns of property rights designed to perpetuate male dominance. According to her, in pre-colonial times access to land was the key to power and prestige and was a vigorously defended patriarchal privilege. In order to retain this power, women were denied inheritance rights over land.

In general a woman in Igboland has no title to land, whether married or single. Okoye (1995) contended that the Nigerian traditional society does not recognise wills, especially where such wills give the right of inheritance of landed property to women. This observation is corroborated by Meena (1992) who, while lashing out on African States, wrote,

> land tenure systems, for instance, are based on discriminatory policies... the ability of women to get loans and other credit facilities to improve agriculture has been constrained by their inability to own land (p.7).

Remarkably, the dominant principle of customary law of succession upon death intestate of a man in Igboland is that all his undisposed self-acquired landed property devolve upon his male children as family property. Ilegbune (1992) explained that the word `family' does not include the widow of the intestate husband. Accordingly, neither the daughters or widow or widows of the intestate father or husband have any beneficial or permanent right in respect of his real estate.

This, however, is not the case in Hausaland. Among the Hausas a

widow is allowed to inherit some share of the real estate of her deceased husband. As reported by Sodiq et al. (1997)

> After all these have been done, you then classify the property into various groups, according to their value like house and land; electronics and clothes; cattle, sheep and farm produce; raw cash; shares in companies and factories and so on and their total value determined and then shared among the surviving heirs (p.12).

However, to salvage the oppressive cultural measures against widows in Igboland, Ilegbune (1992) states that customary law imposes on the heir of a late husband's estates the duty to maintain the widow out of the income from such estates. Commenting on this subtle customary arrangement, Nwogugu (1990) wrote:

> The duty of the male heir to maintain the widow is often neglected with the result that the male heir takes the benefit without the burden. This may be particularly hard on the widow where she has contributed significantly to the acquisition of the property in question. It has been the case that in some cases, widows are left destitute inspite of the fact that their late husband left substantial estate behind which by customary law is inherited by some male heir who is not her son (p.408).

Closely allied to the inheritance system are the marriage laws of the land. Okoye (1995) remarked that the country's marriage laws also

discriminate against women. Commenting further, she pointed out that Nigerian marriage laws contain rather curious complexities calculated to maltreat women in general and widows particularly. In support of this view, Okagbue (1997) stated that the rights of the widow depends to a large extent on the type of marriage which was entered into. According to her, three types of marriages are recognised in Nigeria, namely, statutory marriage, customary law marriage and Islamic law marriage. She observed that under Islamic marriage a widow is entitled to one quarter of the deceased's estate if the man died intestate without children; but if he had children, the widow's share is reduced to one eight.

Generally, widows of statutory marriage do have some legal rights in respect of their husband's estate. Agreeing with this view, Okagbue (1997) noted that the widow and her children as the next of kin are entitled to inherit the deceased property. However, she pointed out that the widow's statutory rights are completely ignored by the deceased relatives who regard the deceased estate as their birthright. Furthermore, she contended that the customary law position of widows is in violation of section 39 of the 1979 constitution which provides for freedom from discrimination. Consequent upon these three legally accepted marriage arrangements in Nigeria, it can now be concluded that the fate of a widow is a direct consequence of the nature of the marriage she contracted and the rights that accrued to her thereof.

2.3.9 Umuokpu (Daughters of the Lineage)

The terms Umuokpu, Umuada, or Umumgboto are used

interchangeably to denote a female association of the daughters of the lineage. This female association is peculiar to Igbo socio-politico structure. The researcher is informed by a host of Hausa interviewees that there is no Hausa counterpart of Umuokpu.

By its very nature of constitution, the Umuokpu operates within an Umunna, that is, a kindred. Thus, with every kinship, in every town, there is an Umuokpu. In other words, a single town possesses a number of Umuokpu groups. According to Okoye (1995) all the married daughters of a place qualify to belong to this group. Membership of this powerful traditional institution can be regarded as the most exalted position enjoyed by a woman, as an individual, in traditional society. This is because it is the only recognised female decision-making group in Igbo traditional social structure.

Writing about the statuses of women in Igboland, Okonjo (1987) states:

> Other women's political institutions existed in the traditional Igbo system. Among these were the Umuada and the Inyemedi, which operated at the village or lineal level. Women came to have two homes. In their natal village they were Umuada, or daughters of the lineage and/or village; in the village of their marriage they were inyemedi (co-wives), that is, co-wives of the village or lineage. The Otu Umuada included all the married, unmarried, widowed and divorced daughters of a lineage or village group, these women acted as political pressure groups in their natal villages in order to achieve desired objectives. They stopped quarrels and prevented wars. So powerful was their

> reputation that their natal villages had to reckon with them and their possible reaction to every major decision (pp.104-110).

The composition of the Umuokpu as seen by Okonjo (1987) is broader than that of Okoye (1995). While Okoye limited the membership of the group to only married daughters of the lineage, Okonjo (1987) extended the membership to all the daughters of the lineage - married, unmarried, widowed and divorced. The latter view is supported by Olisa (1971) and Acholonu (1995).

In respect of the roles and functions the Umuokpu group perform in Igbo society it is worthy to note that the Umuokpu exercises some judicial power. Supporting this view, Oguejiofor (1996) stated that occasionally the Umuokpu steps in to settle long-standing kindred disputes which the men are unable to settle. Olisa (1971) had earlier indicated that the Umuokpu could also impose collective penalties on the male members and could compel them, for example, to conform with any measures decided on the town level which measures they might have opposed.

There is no gainsaying the fact that this group of women wielded a lot of power as they are dreaded by both men and women. Meek (1937) reported that,

> anyone repudiating their authority would be regarded as guilty of sacrilege, and would be punished by the priests and titled officials to whom the Umuada would report the offense (p.102).

Acholonu (1995) observed that there are no areas of the life of the

patrilineage to which these daughters of the village or family may not stretch their power. According to her, they are the guardians of the patrilineage and the wives.

> Always, their eyes and ears are open to seek out the faults, mistakes and wrong doings of their brothers and the latter's wives and punish accordingly, demand redress and appeasement for the mother ancestors of the lineage (p.29).

With regard to widowhood practices, it can be declared that the notoriety of this group has become proverbial. Because they are the sisters of the widow's deceased husband, the Umuokpu assumes the role of overseer in ensuring that all the traditional widowhood practices, rites and rituals are observed to the letter. Olisa (1971) disclosed that part of their customary function is to form strong teams of mourners on the funeral of every deceased member of the kindred. On such occasions they have to wash the dead body and prepare it in state, and pass several nights with the bereaved family before they finally disperse.

Specifically, there are some inhuman treatments meted out to widows by the Umuokpu. According to Okoye (1995) these include accusations of all sorts, ranging from adultery, not crying loud enough as a mark of grief, speaking in low tones when she is forbidden to talk during the early mourning period; the scraping of the hair on the woman's body - the head, the brows and the pubic area; monitoring every movement of the widow after the seclusion period for one year; forcing the widow to sleep with or kiss the corpse of the husband or to drink the water used in bathing the

body of the dead husband; humiliating the widow to sit on the bare floor, and so on.

From the foregoing discussion, it can be seen that traditionally the Umuokpu are the sole arbiters of the fate of the widow. Interestingly, this type of women association which assists in aggravating the widow's condition under the guise of culture and tradition is non existent among the Hausas.

2.3.10 Poverty

Poverty on the part of the society as well as on the part of the relations of the deceased man is another powerful factor influencing most punitive widowhood practices. There is no gainsaying the fact that financial constraints have far reaching consequences in shaping the social outlook of any people. It is Okoye's (1995) contention that a selfish consideration for self-aggrandisement often informs the hostile, aggressive and unfeeling behaviour of some relations towards their brother's widow. She declares that poverty gives rise to the scandalous scramble for a dead man's property. This view was first espoused by Arhin (1994) when he observed that "... the installation of money at the centre of social relations proceeds at an increasing pace, so that funeral rites have become opportunities for money-making" (p.313).

Furthermore, greed, envy and hatred on the part of the relations of the deceased man are responsible for the manner they try to dispossess the widow soon after her husband's death. This assertion is buttressed by an Igbo proverb which says `Umunna nwe zuo aku, ilo anaa', meaning, `If all

the members of the kindred become wealthy, hatred disappears'" In other words, if all the brothers of a deceased man are well-to-do, the chances of their disinheriting the widow of her husband's property will be minimal.

It is the customary assumption that the male successor within the late husband's family who inherits the deceased's property will fend for the widow and her children. This popular traditional belief is questioned by Nwafor (1989) as he wrote:

> Let us face it. Uncles hardly have enough to maintain their own children and wives let alone extend care and concern to the children and widows of their deceased brothers. Such widows should be treated humanely. After all they toiled with their husbands to generate property in preparation for a rainy day. It is meaningless, as soon as the husband dies, people who had no contribution whatsoever see the death as an opportunity to grab goods and property (p.6).

Okoye (1995) reported that among the Shanti in Ghana those who share the funeral debt, 'a-yi ase ka', have rights in the estate of the deceased. This means that one of the qualifications for having rights to a dead man's property includes financial involvement in according him a befitting burial. However, "what is emphasised today is the claim to a share in the state of a dying man who has, or is believed to have, property" (Arhin, 1994 :317). In other words, people think of how to dispossess and not how to donate to the widow.

The other side of the coin is the poverty of the members of the society

who supposedly come to sympathize with the widow. As Arhin (1994) rightly opined, "The scale of the funeral is determined by the resources of the bereaved's kin, children or patrickin or matrikin" (p.308). However, the society insists on lavish cooking and drinking as part of widowhood rites in most places of Nigeria, perhaps excepting the Hausas.

Significantly, the poor and the hungry see this as a golden opportunity to feast themselves at someone else's expense, namely, the widow. In recent times sympathizers particularly the Umuokpu visits the bereaved families with polythene bags, spoons and empty bottles hidden in their bags or pockets. It is evident that there is a correlation between poverty and villainous widowhood practices. On both the part of men and women, money and poverty constitute forceful constraints in the elimination of obnoxious widowhood practices.

2.4 Widowhood and Social-Psychological Theories

In this section social-psychological theories of self and of roles are discussed. These theoretical formulations are summarised and related specifically to widowhood.

2.4.1 Self-Theory

Self-theory has received most attention in the last quarter-century. As with psychoanalytic theory, there are many interpretations of self-theory, including those of Snyqq and Combs, Sarbin, Mead, and Koffka. No theorist, however, has had as much influence on self-theory and its relations to counselling as Carl Rogers. Roger's concepts and their extensions by

theorists like Truax and Carkhuff are the most fully developed and most extensively researched positions on self-theory (Hansen, 1982).

Self-theorists are concerned with what people think of themselves, how a conception of self emerges from social interaction, and how it in turn guides or influences individual behaviour. Postulates basic to self-theory include:

(1) the individual's self-concept is based on his perception of the way *others respond to him*;

(2) the individual's self-concept functions to direct his behaviour;

(3) the individual's perception of the responses of others toward him reflects the actual responses of others toward him (Kinch, 1967:233).

Notably, the self develops out of the organism's interaction within the environment. As it develops, it tends to integrate as well as distort some of the values of other people. Erikson (1959) maintains that some people are more important than others in forming the self. These people are called the "significant others". Typically these significant others are involved with the self in an intimate relationship. Significant others, in various combinations, comprise reference groups, whose norms are used as anchoring points in structuring the perceptual and behavioural fields (Sherif and Sherif, 1964). Usually a spouse is a significant other, perhaps the most important significant other. Similarly, one's family tends to be a most salient reference group.

Previous studies have demonstrated that damage to the self often accompanies widowhood: some of the widowed commit suicide (Bock and Webber, 1972); others are in mental hospitals (Carter and Webber, 1966)

and others express anomie feelings, unhappiness, low morale, and personal isolation (Harvey and Bahr, 1974; Okoye, 1995). If the spouse was a significant other, damage to self is likely to follow widowhood. Among the variables affecting the extent and duration of this damage are the intensity of involvement with the departed spouse and the availability of alternative significant others.

Among the research findings relevant to the present study is the work of Townsend (1957) who reported that loss of a marital partner was less traumatic for women than for men, and that widowed people were less likely to express feelings of loneliness if they had been widowed a long time than if the widowhood was recent. While it may be true that the death of a spouse is more traumatic for the man than for the woman in some western cultures, generally, in African situation the reverse is the case. The African woman sees her husband as both her provider and protector. Thus his death is a tragic experience for her. To confirm this assertion is the confession of one aged Igbo widow: "I have buried my child. My own parents are dead. In all my experience of death, none was as painful as the death of my husband" (Okoye, 1995:3).

That widows are likely to be more negative in their outlook is reported by Bradburn (1969) who found them lower than married persons in expressed positive affect and higher in negative affect. Also relevant is the finding (Kutner et al, 1956) that there appears to be no positive correlation between widowhood and anomie, although persons widowed recently have higher anomie scores than those widowed longer in the past. Gurin et al (1960) observed too that widowed persons were the most likely of all marital

statuses to report of themselves as "not too happy".

2.4.2 Role Theory

The term `role' has been borrowed from the theatre in which an actor plays the roles of different characters. Some philosophers believe that the world is a stage and human beings are actors who play their role in this drama of the Almighty. Sociologists have been concerned with roles for a number of years. Linton (1936) defined roles in terms of actions that are performed by an individual to validate his occupancy of a position. Miller (1963) also pointed out that roles have a certain normative effect on social behaviour. He stated: "The mutual responses of two people can be explained more readily by their shared conceptions of the behaviour appropriate to their two roles than by their psychological characteristics or the unique qualities of the social interaction" (p.655).

On the basis of inherited and social differences that exist among human beings, people are then grouped into role categories. Thus, all males, who are married occupy the role of husband and all females who are married assume the position of wife. The grouping of people into a role category is most commonly based on the fact that they occupy the same position in a social relation and are subject to certain broad expectations for their behaviour. All adult females or males, who are married and have children, occupy the same position of "mother' or "father" respectively and are subjected to certain broad expectations of behaviour. Certain role categories are defined, shared and recognised by all members of a society. For instance, in African society, a man who occupies the position of a

husband is expected to provide for the family. Although wives do help in the provision of livelihood in the family, Otite and Ogionwo (1979) remarked that the expectation that wives should do this is not widely held belief among Africans.

From the above, three points can be made of all role players:

1) they exist in social locations,
2) they behave in some particular manner and
3) this behaviour takes into account the expectations of others (Gross et al. 1958).

Coser (1966) says that role requirements "refer to a set of expected behaviours that are geared toward maintaining or strengthening one or more patterned relationships" (p.180). Nearly all authors talk about the normative component, the "ought to", of roles.

Remarkably, role analysis has not been used systematically by family sociologists. However, Nye (1970) has hypothesized that marital partners play at least eight distinctive roles: First, the housekeeper role, that is, care of the household. Second, the provider role. This means obtaining goods and services required by the family either by earning money or by producing the goods and services. Third, the therapeutic role. This entails listening to family members' problems, providing reassurance, affection, and tension release. Fourth, the sexual role. That is, serving as a sexual partner, with appropriate timing and affectional response. Fifth, the recreational role. This means taking responsibility for recreation needs of spouse and children. Sixth, the child socialization and care role. That is, teaching proper social responses and providing for children's physical needs. Seventh, the

community liaison role. This entails maintaining the community ties necessary by virtue of the fact that one is a spouse or parent. Eight, the kinship role. That is, maintaining ties with the extended family.

If these distinct family roles exist, it follows that certain role changes have to be made following the death of a spouse. Most widowed persons will experience a loss of a sexual role, and changes in therapeutic, recreation, community liaison, and kinship roles. For parents, changes will occur in the child care and socialization roles; most men will lose a housekeeper, and many women will lose a provider. Thus, role changes in the family will be necessary for most surviving spouses. According to Harvey and Bahr (1974) these changes can be made either by substitution or adaptation. For example, children may play more of a therapeutic role than they did when the spouse was alive (substitution), or the surviving spouse may go without sex (adaptation).

Relating these ideas to widowhood, it will be discovered that a number of necessary changes in family role definition and performance will occur, and the greater the number of role changes necessary the more difficult the adjustment to widowhood. Harvey and Bahr (1974) observed that one reaction to the difficulties of adjustment to widowhood is accepting a constricted set of family roles, that is, not establishing new relationships to replace those lost via the death of a spouse. The greater the frequency of this type of adjustment, the greater would be the agony of the widow.

2.5 Widowhood Cultural Practices

Almost all societies have some culturally channelled expression of

grief and some period of mourning for the dead. Usually the more important the individual, such as a spouse, or a titled person, the greater the ritual surrounding his or her death. Differing rites and rituals are observed during the interval between death and burial as well as during the entire mourning period. Wide variations in such practices exist even among peoples from the same ethnic group.

In some societies the widows may be expected to shave their hair or even cut their bodies. They may be expected to leave their hair uncombed and their bodies-unwashed for about 28 days. They may tear their garments, paint the body, or smear it with ashes or clay. They may be required to stay in waiting or to go into seclusion (Brown, 1963).

Certainly, in Nigeria, widowhood cultural practices vary from one ethnic group to another. No two ethnic groups have identical practices. Consequent upon this, the researcher intends to examine previous studies related to widowhood practices in Igboland and Hausaland, with a view to comparing both practices; effects of widowhood; and efforts of government and non-governmental organisations towards preventing and remedying the plight of Igbo and Hausa widows.

2.5.1 Widowhood Practices in Igboland

Widowhood cultural practices in Igboland assume diverse perspectives. Varieties exist among the five core Igbo States, namely, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. And within each State, from one Local Government Area to another, differences and subtle varieties are noticeable in widowhood practices.

Apart from these variations, however, there are certain common

patterns of behaviour prescribed by the society for the widow. These include duration of mourning, colour of mourning dress, ritual seclusion, hair scrapping, ritual purification, routinised crying, outing ceremony, and Levirate. Closely allied to widowhood practices is the customary legislation regarding widow's inheritance rights. For a comprehensive understanding of these constitutive elements of widowhood practices in Igboland, each of these items shall be examined:

i) Mourning Period

An Igbo widow undergoes two types of mourning: intensive mourning and protracted ordinary mourning. Generally, the intensive mourning period consists of seven "native" weeks, that is, 28 days (Basden, 1966; Okoye, 1995; Nwadinobi, 1994). According to Basden (1966) "for seven native weeks she neither works or cooks; her sole occupation is to sit in the hut, mourning for her dead" (p.279).

Following this intensive period of mourning is the long term period of mourning which lasts for years (Onah, 1994). However, due to the influence of and pressure from town unions and christian women organisations, many communities in Igboland have reduced the period to one year. (Okoye (1995). Some have even shortened it to six months (Okoye 1995) states that "the christian mothers union as well as the various towns unions insist on strict compliance with this new regulation" (p.117). She also notes that any widow who contravenes this law is heavily fined by both unions and the punishment is even extended to the kindred and the particular village from which the widow comes.

ii Mourning Dress

Traditionally, the mourning dress in Igboland is black (Basden, 1966; Nwadinobi, 1994) as in many other parts of the world. However, Okoye (1995) noticed that the Igbos in Abakiliki zone in Ishielu Local government Area of Ebonyi State, do not wear black dress for mourning. Any colour is acceptable. Trying to explain the reason for this, Okoye (1995) stated that women are sparsely dressed in this area as in some other interior parts of Nigeria.

In many parts of Igboland widows now wear white instead of black. According to Onah (1994) this is due to christian influence. She stated that the wearing of black or white is a symbol of grief and that this is worn for one year by most women. However, she noted that recently, a few remove mourning clothes after six months. In addition she stated that the removal of mourning clothes is celebrated because it is a joyous occasion mostly because the widow did not die in widowhood. Thus, she is exonerated from wrong doing against her late husband.

iii Ritual Seclusion

This is a period of twenty eight days after the death of the husband when the widow is in confinement. Ubesie (1978) calls this period "Ino na nso". Explaining this phrase, Onah (1994) says it is a period when a widow observes very strict rituals in seclusion because she is in a state of "impurity". She notes that her conduct during this period is not only prescribed by the Umuada (daughters of the lineage) but also supervised by

them.

Throughout this nso period, the widow will only be dressed in one particular cloth, and she is not allowed to wash it throughout the period. According to Okoye (1995) the widow is not allowed a bath at this period, her menstruation period not withstanding. For these twenty-eight days, she is confined to a room, and the only movement she is permitted to make is going to ease herself. Okoye (1995) further notes that whenever she wants to ease herself she must be accompanied. She carries at all times a small cane or knife in her hand. The reason for this according to Basden (1966) is to ward off the spirit of her husband.

In line with this, Onah (1994) remarked that the widow is made to sit on the bare floor. Nwadinobi (1994) noted a recent development whereby the more fortunate widows are provided with mats or mattresses. The significance of the sitting on the floor is social dethronement. Onah (1994) explained that in Igbo traditional society ugwu nwanyi bu di ya, meaning the dignity of a woman lies in marriage. That is why a woman's total life is wrapped around a man. Thus, by making the widow to sit on the floor the widow who had hitherto been enthroned to a position of respect by virtue of her marriage is dethroned. Okoye (1995) states that old utensils and plates are used by the widow to eat and are not washed throughout the twenty-eight days of seclusion. In addition, the widow is not allowed to wash her hands after eating for the duration of the period.

Analysing the implications of this seclusion period, Nwadinobi (1994) argues that psychologically the widows suffer numbness and then

depression. Physically also, they are prone to a variety of skin diseases from lack of bathing and food poisoning from eating out of dirty plates. According to her, they are also prone to stress and stress related diseases, such as ulcers and hypertension.

iv Hair Scraping (Cropping)

At the end of the nso period, the hair of the widow is shaved as a symbol of grief and bereavement. According to Okoye (1995) the barber must be another widow. Onah (1994) had earlier indicated that the ritual of hair shaving connotes defacement. In her explanation, Igbo people believe that the beauty of a woman lies in her hair. So shaving her hair is a symbol of respect for the dead husband and also for the purpose of being attracted to no other men for similar reason. Supporting this view, Nwadinobi (1994) observed that in extreme cases even the hair of the pubic areas and in the armpits is removed. She pointed out that more recently the hair scraping ceremony has been carried out by women church leaders, supposedly to give the practice more credibility. Significantly, the practice of hair shaving is the only ritual that widowers are supposed to observe for their dead wives (Obinwa, 1992).

v. Routinised Wailing

This is a common practice in Igboland. Basden (1966) observed that on the announcement of the death of her husband, the widow wails for several hours. After this initial outburst, she cries loudly for about half an hour for four or five days, beginning each day just before daybreak. In

support of this Okoye (1995) remarked that every morning the widow, especially in Imo State, is made to cry loud and long as a routine. She explained that the rationale behind it is respect for the deceased husband. Also it is done to convince the relations of the late husband that she is deeply aggrieved by the loss and that she has no hand in the death of her husband.

Generally, it is the duty of the Umuada (Daughters of the Lineage) to assess the quality of the widow's lamentations. Low quality wailing will earn her a fine (Obinwa, 1992). Focusing on African communities, Wasike reported that:

> In some communities the widow has to shave her head in weeping and wailing rituals, the widow wails twice a day, morning and evening from eight days to six months. She must accompany anyone who comes wailing: even if she is eating she must stop eating and wail (cited in Obinwa 1992:49).

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vi Ritual Purification

In Igboland a widow is generally regarded as impure or defiled following her husband's death. As Afigbo (1989) put it: "The very widespread practice is that of treating a widow as being in state of ritual contamination or impurity following the death of her husband" (p.12). It is worthy to note that this idea of defilement is not peculiar to Igbo culture. Writing on the Islamised people of Western Sudan, Trimmingham as cited in Obinwa (1992) stated that "the death of her husband involves a woman in a state of

taboo" (p.44).

On account of her impure state, people distance themselves from the widow for fear of contamination. As a consequence she cannot talk or hold conversations with people (Okoye, 1995). Nobody touches whatever is touched by a widow, including food. Citing a special study done on Owerri diocese, Obinwa (1992) reported that,

> Being considered impure and untouchable, the widow's food is cooked separately from that meant for other members of the household. She is not allowed to feed herself but is fed by another widow and out of disused utensils. She would not be allowed to scratch any part of her body with her fingers, lest she spreads her alleged contamination. Instead she is given a piece of stick or enjoined to use the crucifix of her rosary (p.45).

Generally, the ritual uncleanness of the widow comes to an end with the expiration of the seclusion period. Then she undergoes cleansing rituals. According to Onah (1994) she is either taken to a make-shift bathroom, normal bathroom inside her own room where she observed the nsọ or taken to a stream or before an idol. She is either bathed in private or publicly before the gaze of many women. If she is to be taken out in the bush, she will be accompanied either by fellow widows, her husband's or her relations. After the ritual bath, she throws away the cloth used during nsọ and a new mourning cloth black or white put on her. It is important to note that the practices are similar in some communities and different in others.

vii Outing Ceremony

At the end of the mourning period the widow performs the final cleansing ceremony, or outing ceremony. This is called Afia ajadu, that is, the widow's market outing. According to Okoye (1995) the purpose of this ceremony is to enable the widow to integrate fully back into society at large.

The format of conducting the widow's market differs in many localities. In Abia State, Okoye (1995) reports that the widow is escorted to the market by somebody. She is forbidden to look back for whatever reason or talk to any person. In the market she performs semblance of shopping. Upon her return from the market she is free to speak and eat with people. Okoye (1995) notes that the performance of this rite marks the widow's freedom to move about, that is, to public places.

viii Levirate

Levirate is a system whereby the widow is inherited by one of the relations of the deceased husband. In his comparative study of the marriage customs of the Israelites and the Igbos, Basden (1966) reported that among the Israelites and the Igbos widows are inherited as part of a deceased man's property. According to him, this is based on the belief that a man would be expected to perform a husband's part on behalf of the widow of his deceased brother.

Disagreeing with this view, Ezekwesili (1996), herself a widow, stressed that "one of the worst plights of widowhood is the desire by the in-laws to have the young widow as a concubine" (p.14). She called it the

worst plight because of the age disparity between the young widow and the proposed new husband coupled with the fact that refusal to accept the marriage will bring the widow untold hardship ranging from confiscating her farmland, economic trees such as palm-trees, coconut trees, banana trees to being driven away from her matrimonial home.

In her contribution, Okagbue (1997) observed that the widow generally has the right to choose whether to remain single in her late husband's house or to be taken over as a wife. But in some areas she has no such choice or the choice is only open to her if she has a male child. In other areas, she said, if the widow has no surviving child and refuses to be taken over as wife by a member of her late husband's family, she may be expelled from her matrimonial home.

Remarkably, the principal reason why a widow is inherited in Igboland is because a married woman is seen as being paid for as any other item of property that a man has acquired (Akpala, 1996). Consequently, upon the death of a husband, his wife is considered part of his property and can be inherited by the deceased husband's brother or son by another wife alongside his property. In line with this, Okagbue (1997) gave a second reason for widow inheritance in Igboland. According to her, since in traditional times a woman could not inherit any part of her husband's estate, the custom of widow inheritance served as a protective device through which women could retain their resident's rights in her husband's compound and right to maintenance and support.

While this may have been an effective way of providing in a traditionally cohesive society, it is the researcher's contention that it is no

longer appropriate in modern society. Difficulties may arise, for example, where the heir is already monogamously married or where he is unable or unwilling to assume his traditional responsibilities. Other measures must therefore be found which sufficiently safeguard the rights and interests of customary law widows.

ix Succession and Inheritance Rights

A very salient feature or adjunct of widowhood practices in Igboland is succession and inheritance rights. Generally, women have no inheritance rights in Igboland. They can neither inherit from their parents' home nor from their husbands' family. Ilegbune (1993) states that the dominant principle of customary law of succession in Igboland upon death "intestate" of a man is that all his undisposed self-acquired landed property devolve upon his children and family. She further explains that the word 'children' in Igboland in respect of inheritance does not include daughters, nor does the word 'family' include the widow of the "intestate" husband. Thus, neither the daughters nor the widow or widows of the intestate father or husband have any beneficial or permanent right in respect of his real estate.

In support of this, Akpala (1996) emphasizes that an Igbo woman is not entitled to any allocation of family land, neither is she allowed to live on it or farm on it for a period of her life. Inheritance of immovable property such as land, house or economic trees is by the sons of the family. Where the man died without a male child, the daughters or his widow have no right to inherit his compound or any of his parcels of land or houses. Such property is inherited by the brother or uncle of the deceased.

Commenting on the right of the dispossessed widow who is married

under the Marriage Act to apply to the court for justice, Ilegbune (1993) states that even if the widow goes to court and obtains justice "the victorious widow may soon find that she would not have a peaceful enjoyment of the patrimony" (p.65). This is because the relatives of her deceased husband would treat her as a usurper; and consequently she would be taunted, terrorised and ostracised.

Customary law imposes on the heir to the deceased husband's property the duty to maintain the widow and children. This, Okoye (1995) observed, is honoured more in breaches than in compliance. Commenting on the situation, Nwogugu (1990) states,

> The duty of the male heir to maintain the widow is often neglected with the result that the male heir takes the benefit without the burden. This may be particularly hard on the widow where she has contributed significantly to the acquisition of the property in question. It has been the case that in some cases widows are left destitute inspite of the fact that their late husband left substantial estate behind by which through customary law is inherited by some male heir who is not her son. (p. 408).

Although the widow has no right to the property of her deceased husband except that which he gave her as an outright gift in his lifetime, Okagbue (1997) avers that the few rights which a widow has is the right to continue living in her matrimonial home after the death of her husband. However, she quickly added that in some places this right is dependent on whether or not the widow has a son. If she has not, the husband's heir has

the power to expel her from the husband's compound. She may also be expelled for persistent bad conduct. Apart from living in her husband's compound, Okagbue (1997) also states that the widow has the right to be given portions of her late husband's land for farming purposes until she remarries or dies. Further, she discloses that where a woman who has no son is given a piece of land or an economic tree by her husband in his life-time for her exclusive use she has a right to continue to enjoy such land or tree until she remarries or dies. But she has no right to sell or make an outright gift of any of them.

It is important to note that in Igboland if a woman who is married under customary law dies before the husband, any landed property which she might have acquired during the marriage and any cash or other monetary benefits such as life policy or pension, go to her husband. In other words, the husband succeeds to the wife's estate if she predeceases him. Now why should the widowed wife not succeed to the late husband's estate? Is what is good for the goose not good as well for the gander? Why should the widow be treated differently?

Obviously the practice herein described exhibits the worst aspect of discrimination against women in succession and inheritance matters. As Osuafor (1994) rightly opined: "There can be no lasting peace in families with culture where women are virtually ignored in the scheme of things, such as inheritance of family resources and some other privileges simply because of the accident of sex" (p.30).

2.5.2 Widowhood Practices in Hausaland

In considering widowhood practices in Hausaland, it is important to point out that there are two distinct groups of people that make up the Hausa race in Nigeria. These are the Hausa - Maguzawa and the Hausa-Fulani.

2.5.3 Widowhood Practices Among the Hausa-Fulani

The Hausa-Fulani are guided by the injunctions of the Koran in their widowhood practices because they are predominantly Moslems. According to the Koranic instructions as soon as the deceased husband is buried, the wife or wives begin a period of mourning for the dead. The duration of the mourning is four months and ten days for the wives while the concubines mourn for two months and five days (Madauci et al. 1982). This mourning period is known as Takaba or Istibra'l. Madauci et al. (1982) state that the wife or wives are forbidden to bath with soap, to wear jewely, to apply perfume, scent, cosmetics, powder, or pomade - during this period. Also they cannot plait their hair, adorn their body, or dress gorgeously. In short, they are prohibited from all finery. In addition, the wives are not allowed during this time to go out to public places such as the market, mosque, stream, farm, etc.; nor are they allowed to see off their visitors. Whatever will bring them closer to men is strictly banned.

This is in compliance with the teaching of the Koran which declares: "Widows shall wait keeping themselves apart from men for four months and ten days after their husband's death" (2:234). Emphasizing the same issue,

Rattray (1913) notes that during this time a man does not hold conversation with them, and they too do not converse with a man until the mourning is over. However, the Koran permits men to openly propose marriage to them even during this mourning period. It states"

> It shall be no offence for you openly to propose marriage to such women or to cherish them in your hearts, Allah knows that you will remember them. (2.235).

But then the Koran cautions that the proposed marriage "should not be consummated before the termination of the Takaba" (2:235).

At the expiration of the Takaba, the widows can take frequent baths with soap, dress gorgeously and make themselves attractive to men. Suitors can now ask for their hands in marriage. While waiting to be remarried the Koran enjoins the relations of the deceased thus:

> You shall bequeath your widows a year's maintenance without causing them to leave their homes; but if they leave of their own accord, no blame shall be attached to you for any course they may deem fit to pursue (2:240).

Worthy of note are two other characteristics of widowhood practices among the Hausa-Fulani: Levirate and inheritance. These are discussed separately in this section because of their importance in Islamic religion.

i) Levirate

Islamic scholars (Ajijola, 1981; Abdalati, 1982) noted that Islam permits any of the brothers of the deceased husband to remarry his widow or widows. According to Abdalati (1982) in pre-Islamic Arabia widows were

inherited like property by the heirs of their deceased husbands. If an heir wished to marry the widow, he could do so for the very same dowry paid by the deceased husband. In other words, he did not have to pay another bridewealth to the parents of the widow or give another dower to the widow. This is because, according to Kirwen (1979), "the relationships entwining a woman and her children with her husband's lineage do not cease automatically with his physical death" (P.10).

Abdalati (1982) further stated that the deceased's heir could also contract the widow's marriage to another man and receive the bridewealth himself. From the point of view of my interviewee, the muslim widow has the right to remarry to whomever she likes whether within or outside the deceased husband's family. This position is confirmed by another elderly muslim interviewee who stated that a divorcee or a widow can marry independently of the deceased husband's relations. Apparently, there is no compulsion on the part of the widow to remarry one of the brothers of her late husband. Under Islamic rule, she has the freedom to remain single or get remarried to whomever she wishes.

ii) Inheritance

Another distinguishing characteristic of widowhood customs among the Hausa-Fulani is the distribution of the deceased's property. Sodiq et al. (1997) stated that Islamic inheritance system is based on Koranic principles. Specifically it is based on Koran 4:11-12 which states, among others that:

> In what your wives leave, your share is a half, if they have no child; but if they leave a child, you get a fourth,

> after payment of legacies and debts. In what you leave, their share is a fourth, if you leave no child; but if you leave a child, they get an eighth, after payment of legacies and debts.

From this Koranic injunction it is evident that a widow has a right to inherit some defined share of her late husband's property. Sodiq et al (1997) state that the property to be shared include house and land; cattle, sheep and farm produce; electronics and clothes; shares in companies and factories and so on. They opine that the total value of these items will be computed and then shared among the surviving heirs. Accordingly, the widow is given one fourth of the deceased's property if he had no child with her; but if he had a child with her she receives one eighth of his property. But if there is more than one widow left by the man and each of them has children, the one-eighth will be shared equally among themselves.

It is interesting to note that not only does Islam recognise the right of a widow to inherit some portion of her late husband's property, but it also makes provision for a childless widow who in other cultures would have been sent back to her parents empty handed. Gurin (1985) cautions that not all widows are eligible to inherit their deceased husband's property. He states that certain impediments such as homicide, apostasy and difference in religion bar a widow from inheritance.

It is a common belief among Moslems that homicide absolutely excludes a widow from inheritance. In other words, if a wife intentionally causes the death of her husband the law prevents her from inheriting her husband's property. Supporting this view, Ajijola (1981) added that in Hanafi law where the heir causes the death of another person whether

intentionally or unintentionally the murderer cannot inherit from the deceased.

Difference in religion also constitutes a bar to inheritance. Most muslim jurists (Ajijola, 1981; Abdalati, 1982; Gurin, 1985) agreed that a non-muslim cannot inherit from a muslim. They base their argument on what the Holy Qu'ran said in chapter 4, verse 141: "... never will God grant to the unbelievers a way (to triumph) over the believers". Similarly, a Muslim cannot inherit from a non-muslim (Gurin, 1985). This means that if a Muslim man contracted marriage with a Christian woman, upon his death his Christian widow cannot inherit his property. However, Abdalati (1982) remarks that it is lawful, at least for the Muslim party, to make wills in favour of his non-Muslim spouse or close relatives within the one-third limit of his estate.

Another factor that bars a person from inheritance is apostasy. According to Gurin (1985), a person who renounces his or her Muslim faith also renounces his or her right to inheritance. Thus, a wife who apostasized and refused to return to the Islamic faith before the death of her husband will not inherit the deceased property.

2.5.4 Widowhood Practices Among the Maguzawa

The Maguzawa are Hausa who refused to embrace Islam (Goriawala, 1986). Today majority of them are Christians. Due to the dearth of literature on widowhood practices among this group of Hausas, the researcher relied on information obtained from Maguzawa elders, both men and women, church leaders and traditional heads.

i) Mourning Period

The stipulated period of mourning among Maguzawa Christians is five months. Within these five months, the widow spends forty days in seclusion. This is a period of intensive mourning. She is not allowed to go to public places, such as church, market, stream, farm and so on. However, sympathizers, both male and female, are allowed to visit her.

Throughout the mourning period she wears black; and if she is a Catholic she wears rosary around her neck. She can bathe with soap, rub pomade, but she is not to put on scent or perfume, or jewelry. In short, no adornment of any type is permitted. For the forty days of intensive mourning she is made to sit on a mat.

Before the advent of Christianity a widow was supposed to carry about a kettle, a knife and a stick. According to the interviewees, the stick and the knife were meant to drive away the late husband's spirit which might come back to torment her. The water in the kettle was meant to quench the thirst of the late husband. The Maguzawa Christian widow now uses the Bible, the crucifix, or holy water to protect herself against the spirit of her deceased husband.

ii) Ritual Purification

The interviewees state that Maguzawa widows are not regarded as unclean people; rather they are considered as people to be pitied, sympathized with and helped. They are looked upon as people serving God. That is why when people want to visit them they say let us go and greet

"bayin Allah", meaning, servants of God.

At the end of the forty days of seclusion, the widow is accompanied to the market. She will carry a calabash containing grains of guinea corn. In the market, she will do "sadaka", that is, give out the grains and the calabash to the needy. Upon her return from the market, old christian women will bathe her. Thereafter christians will gather and pray, marking the month's mind. At the end of the prayer, there is moderate celebration involving eating and drinking of "kunu" and "burukutu" that is, local Hausa drinks.

The ritual bath marks the end of her seclusion. This means that she can now attend public functions such as going to church, farm, stream, market, meetings and so on. However, she is still required to wear black until the expiration of the five-month mourning period.

iii) Levirate

As reported by the interviewees, the Maguzawa widow is free to marry another man after the expiry of her five-month-mourning period. She is not obliged or compelled to marry from within the late husband's family. However, she needs the explicit consent of her parents in-law before she can contract a new marriage. If she has children with her late husband, she can decide to remain in the deceased's compound with the consent of her new husband who will then be visiting her there. She, in turn, can visit him in his house.

The interviewees indicated that it is difficult for the Maguzawa widow to remarry. Part of the reason being that the Christian religion prohibits

polygamy, as a result no married christian man will approach her for marriage. In addition, bachelors do not want to begin their married life with a widow. Also Muslims will not want to marry her because of the difference in religion, unless the widow agrees to denounce her Christian faith.

iv) Inheritance

The interviewees explained that the widow has no right of inheritance to deceased's property, only his male children. In the event the deceased had no children, the widow gets nothing. In some cases, she goes back to her natal family.

Where the widow has young children, the relatives of the deceased will look after the property of their brother until the children become adults to manage their late father's property. However, the widow has access to the deceased husband's property, such as land. She is allowed to farm on it so as to feed herself and her children. Notably, whatever property the late husband gave her as dower and any other gifts she received from him after marriage or before his death become her absolute property. She owns them and can dispose of them at will.

2.6 A Comparative Analysis of Widowhood Practices Among the Igbos and Hausas

Having examined individually the widowhood practices in Igboland and Hausaland, the researcher shall now attempt to bring out the similarities and differences existing between them. Such a comparative analysis will give some insight into the peculiar problems that are associated with the widow in each ethnic group.

2.6.1 Areas of Similarities in Igbo and Hausa Widowhood Practices

In a lecture delivered at a workshop on widowhood practices in Imo State, Nzewi (1989) observed that widowhood practices in Imo State like those in other parts of the continent are closely tied to traditional beliefs about death, inheritance, feminine roles, family structure and relationships. This observation indicates that certain similarities are discernable in the widowhood practices of ethnic groups in Africa. Thus, in Igbo and Hausa widowhood practices similarities can be seen in the following areas:
Mourning dress, seclusion, and outing ceremony

i) Mourning Dress:

In Igbo and Hausa cultures, black is the colour of the mourning dress that is generally used by the widow. The choice of this colour by the traditional society is to show sorrow and the `ugliness' of death. Hence, the Igbos bear the name "Onwudinjo", meaning death is bad. According to Okoye (1995), black makes mourning too dismal and gloomy. It conjures up the dark recesses of inferno.

ii) Seclusion:

The custom of seclusion is practised both in Igboland and Hausaland.

Following the death of her husband, the Igbo or Hausa widow is confined to a particular room for a certain number of weeks as shown in the previous sections. However, the reason adduced by the two ethnic groups for the seclusion rite differs. According to the Igbos, the widow is kept in confinement because she is unclean. Her husband's death has defiled her.

On the contrary, the Hausa widow is secluded from the public to protect her from being distracted by men who may be interested in marrying her so that she can have time to mourn and pray for her deceased husband. It is worthy to note that both Igbo and Hausa widows sit on the floor during the seclusion period. They also avoid all finery, such as gorgeous dressing, use of cosmetics, jewelry, scent and perfume, and so on.

iii) Outing Ceremony

Igbo and Hausa (particularly Maguzawa) widows perform outing ceremony at the expiration of the seclusion period. Significantly, both sets of widows go to the market for the ceremony. As earlier indicated the purpose of this ceremony in both cases is to integrate the widow once more into the society. It must be noticed that prior to this time, the widow is not allowed to go to public places or to interact freely with other human beings.

2.6.2 Areas of Differences in Igbo and Hausa Widowhood Practices

Despite the above observed similarities, there are also areas of differences in the widowhood practices of the Igbo and Hausa peoples. These include, mourning duration, defacement, routinised crying, ritual purification, Levirate and inheritance.

(i) Duration of Mourning:

Unlike in Igboland where widows generally are required to mourn their deceased husband for at least a period of one year, among the Hausa-Fulani a widow mourns her late husband for four months and ten days whereas a Maguzawa widow mourns for five months. The discrepancy in the mourning duration among these three groups is attributable to two factors: culture and religion. For the Igbo widow, culture sets the time limit for her. But for the Hausa-Fulani and Maguzawa, it is their respective religions. Islam prescribed four months and ten days while Maguzawa christians stipulated five months for their widows. During the seclusion period also the Igbo widow is not allowed to take bath, or wash her hands after eating. In contrast, the Hausa widow can wash her hands after eating, take her bath, but not with soap.

(ii) Defacement

Hair scraping is a common phenomenon in Igboland. It is observed by both husband and wife following the death of either spouse. On the contrary, the Hausa widow does not shave her hair; rather she leaves it bushy and unkept. She is not allowed to plait it. Remarkably, the rationale behind these two contradictory practices of one group shaving and the other not shaving is the same, namely, to make the widow look ugly and unattractive to men until the mourning period is concluded.

(iii) Routinised Wailing

Whereas the Igbo widow is expected to cry profusely and at specified times of the day or night, the Hausa widow is forbidden to engage in

protracted wailing. The reason for the routinised wailing by the Igbo widow is to show her sorrow and to demonstrate to the daughters of the lineage (Umuokpu) as well as to the relatives of the deceased husband that she is touched deeply by the death of her husband. In contrast, the Hausa widow is prohibited from much crying on the belief that each time she cries tears running down her cheeks torment her late husband in the world beyond.

(iv) Ritual Purification

Unlike the Hausa widow, the Igbo widow is considered to be unclean. That is why she is secluded to avoid contaminating other normal human beings. At the end of this seclusion, she undergoes the purification ceremony in order to cleanse her and reintegrate herself into the society. The Hausas, on their part, do not subject their widows to the ritual of purification because they do not regard them as impure, but as special servants of God.

(v) Levirate

The custom of widow inheritance is a universal phenomenon in Africa. However, there is a slight variation in the practice between the Igbos and the Hausas. While the Igbos required the widow to be inherited by one of the deceased's brothers, the Hausa widow is free either to marry within or outside her late husband's family. However, it must be pointed out that nowadays with the depressed economic situation and the influence of education, many Igbo men are reluctant to inherit their late brother's widow. In addition, many widows, particularly educated ones, resist any offer to be inherited by their brothers in-law.

(vi) Inheritance

A marked difference exists between the Igbos and Hausas with respect to the rights of a widow to inheritance. Generally, among the Igbos, a woman has no right to inherit either from her natal family or from her husband. She can only inherit through her male children. The same is true of the Maguzawa widow. She cannot directly inherit any of her late husband's property. It must be through the agency of her male children. Like the Igbo widow, if she has no male child, she is dispossessed.

On the contrary, the Hausa-Fulani widow has a legal right to inherit some portion of her deceased husband's property. Islamic law has stipulated some percentage of the man's property that will go to his wife upon his death. This has already been discussed in the previous section.

From the above discussions, it is evident that the Hausa widow is better treated and respected as a human being than the Igbo widow. The Igbo widow is subjected to a lot of dehumanising cultural practices. Moreover, the possibility of her getting some share of her late husband's property depends on the quality of her relationship with the deceased's relatives while he was alive. However, if she has grown up children, she may be saved from the peril of total dispossession.

2.7 Effects of Widowhood

Any time a home is broken, either by separation, desertion, divorce, or death, the effects are many and varied. Specifically, the death of a husband robs a family of its hopes and dreams for tomorrow and leaves in their place only memories. To a woman who has been dependent on her husband for financial and emotional support as well as for moral and

spiritual leadership or companionship, the demise of her husband has devastating effects on her. According to Yaroson (1991) "the effect of death of husband to women is very serious as she alone is compelled to take serious responsibilities that would ordinarily be the husband's or shared, and making fundamental decisions all by herself" (p.30) In this section, the researcher examined the social, economic and psychological effects of widowhood.

2.7.1 Social Effects

In our sex-dominated society, coupling is the acceptable standard of life. Single women are often looked upon with suspicion; at times they are treated with disrespect and contempt. This view is buttressed by Yaroson (1991) who stated that "the general public view in Africa especially in Nigeria about ladies without a husband, or men without a wife is that of `irresponsibility" (p.28). Wiebe (1987) observed that such women are thus subjected to live on the periphery of society, "out of the mainstream" - a kind of substitute living.

Evidence from several studies (Booth, 1972; Pihlblad and Adams, 1972; Harvey and Bahr, 1974) suggests that the death of a husband constrains the social relationships of the bereaved wife. This results in increased social deprivation of the widowed as compared to their married counterparts. According to Wiebe (1987), most married women become incomplete social unit upon the death of their spouse. They experience silent ostracism. Using herself as an example, she reported that when she was invited to the homes of women of her own age it was usually when their husbands were away for business trips or other reasons. Obviously, the

reason for such invitations in the absence of their husbands, she said, is fear of seducing or being seduced by their husbands.

This view has been supported by others. Ezekwesili (1996), for example, averred: "other women are afraid to visit her lest she take their husbands'. Not only do her fellow women isolate her "men also keep their distance from her for the fear of being accused of having an illicit affair with her". On the other hand, it is important to note that some men cannot but think of widows as sexual objects to be used. Every widow is a merry widow to them, a potential partner for pleasure, rather than a person with integrity.

Focusing on literature relevant to friendship interaction of the widowed, Berardo (1967) revealed that the widowed are more isolated than married individuals. In line with this, Booth (1972) opined that married individuals express more close friendly relationships than widowed. The impact of sex in influencing friendly interaction is also brought out by Townsend (1957) and Pihlblad and Adams (1972) who suggested that widowhood decreases friendly interaction for men but not for women. In other words, widowed women are more likely to have regular friendship interaction than widowed men.

With respect to Africa, it is the researcher's contention that widowers have more friendly interaction than widows. Widows in Africa have a societal stigma; consequently they prefer or more accurately the society pushes them to a life of seclusion. "Harrassed, bruised and broken by the harsh treatments given to her, the widow withdraws to herself" (Ezekwesili, 1996:18). This view was held earlier by Petrowsky (1976) when he rejected the assertion that the friendship interaction of widows is greater than that of

widowers. He pointed out that there is no significant difference in the friendship interaction of the two.

Age has a role to play in the interaction rate of widows. Berardo (1967), Pihlblad and Adams (1972) contended that aged widows are more likely to interact in religious organisations than are either aged widowers or aged married individuals. The reason advanced by Berardo for this is that women have traditionally maintained the liaison between the family and the religious institution. He argued that this role is not significantly diminished with the death of the husband. Additionally, Berardo averred that widows can interact on the same level as married individuals because they are not discriminated against due to their single status. Thus "religious organisations provide a viable outlet for the social proclivities of widows" (Petrowsky, 1976:750).

The assumption that widows are not discriminated against in the church is countered by Wiebe (1987) and Ezekwesili (1996). Wiebe (1987) pointed out that "widows, particularly older ones, are not considered a highly productive group in the church. They are people you do things for, not with" (p.71). Continuing, she said that they have no particular assignment in the church though many are obviously healthy and wise. She remarked that their most serious problem is that they are without a husband, which somehow incapacitates them to be part of the "with" group. On her part Ezekwesili (1996) noted with amazement that "the widow is treated as an outcast, segregated and humiliated even in the church!" (p.20). She opined that that is the reason why many widows hardly wait for the last amen before they rush out of the church.

Besides the issue of discrimination against widows in the church, the

researcher agrees with Berardo (1967) that there is virtually no difference in rates of interaction in religious organisations between married and widowed females. The researcher's position is informed by the fact that he is a religious minister. Against this background he has been able to witness free and regular interaction of widows in religious organisations. Apparently they find warmth, acceptance, recognition and a cure for loneliness in religious societies.

It is worthy to note that the discriminatory language of some social invitation cards disclose the non-acceptance of the widow by the society. According to Wiebe (1987) statements such as "while coming to the party, bring your spouse", or "bring your husband", make widows feel that a 'husbandless woman' has no place in the social life of the society. Ezekwesili (1996) remarked that many widows have become compulsive television watchers in order to hide from the prying eyes of the public. According to Okoye (1995) every movement of the widow is watched in order to detect faults that may attract community sanctions.

As noted in the previous section, during the mourning period the widow is confined to a specific place for some months depending on the custom of the ethnic group. At this time she is prohibited from appearing in public. She does not go to the market, the farm or to the stream. She is cut off from all social aspects of life. Okoye (1995) states that the reason is the fear and belief that she will contaminate such places and the repercussion for the whole community will be great.

2.7.2 Economic Effects

The consequences of loss of spouse are, quite naturally, somewhere differentiated between males and females due to gender roles and the sex-based division of labour in marriage (Atchley, 1975). Women, within the traditional division of labour, have relied upon husbands as providers of numerous services and of the major part of household income. Aside from the problems of bereavement and subjective adaptation in widowhood, there are numerous objective changes and consequences which occur following loss of spouse and to which the widowed must respond.

One of the most frequently mentioned consequences for females is a serious decrease in family income, precipitated by death of the major earner. Confirming this, Wiebe (1987) states that many widows become destitute soon after the death of their husbands. Money is collected on their behalf; foodstuff and old clothings are donated to them. Debts incurred by their husbands now rebounce on them for repayment. In the same vein, Ezekwesili (1996) declares that abject poverty is one of the major consequences of widowhood. She says that with the husband's property all carted away by his relations, majority of widows are left with nothing to sustain themselves since a good number of them had no basic education. This, she observes, has led many widows to sell their personal effects, such as clothes, shoes, necklaces, etc. in order to keep body and soul together.

Evidence from many studies has shown that lack of adequate income is responsible for added difficulties in adapting to widowhood. For example, Arling (1976) observed that financial stress could aggravate the psychological stress of bereavement as well as inhibit the widow's ability to undertake new social or recreational activities. Morgan (1979), on his part,

contended that financial crisis compel the widow to look for paid employment or to relocate her residence.

The traditional division of labour, leaving wives financially dependent on their husbands' earnings, implied that the wife was subject to a dramatic alteration of lifestyle upon the death of the spouse in the event that he had inadequately prepared for her security. Morgan et al. (1974) noted that although the situation is changing as increasing numbers of women are employed and become more active in the financial life of the family, males still remain the major family earners. Information on the economic status of widows suggests a consistent pattern of poverty and deprivation.

The economic effect of widowhood on Nigerian widows in general and Igbo and Hausa widows particularly is most crushing mainly because they had become feminine appendage to their husbands' endeavours while they were alive. In addition, many of them had no formal education to earn them decent employment; neither had they learned any trade to help them sustain themselves and their children. Hitherto, they had basked on the economic warmth of their husbands. Suddenly, upon the man's death, the widow has to struggle to take care of herself and her children.

2.7.3 Psychological Effects

When death strikes, the usual response is feelings of psychological numbness and shock mixed with feelings of unreality - of being in a nightmare. The mind cannot yet accept the overwhelming pain, the reality that the person is really gone. Little wonder then Clinebell (1984) called the loss of someone who has been a significant part of one's world of meanings and satisfactions "a psychological amputation". How traumatic it is depends

on the nature and importance of the relationship in one's life. Obviously, no relationship can be as important and enriching to a woman as that with her husband.

As a result, one can say that part of one's identity dies with the loved one. Weibe (1987) defined identity as "knowing who you are, where you are going, and what you are doing with your life" (p.61). Traditionally, people discovered their identity in their vocation or in their relationship with significant others, for instance, marriage. That is why when a married African woman is asked who she is, the usual response is "I am Mrs X". In other words, she finds her identity in her husband. Consequently, as soon as the husband dies the widow experiences identity crisis. She loses some part of her identity. According to Yaroson (1991) this loss of one's identity can at times lend to self-blame and low self-esteem and concept, among others.

Loneliness has been rated as the most crushing emotion a widow has to battle with on daily basis. Weibe (1987) observed that after the mourning period, the funeral visitors and sympathizers depart to their homes while the widow retires to the cold shell of her home to fight the new enemy of loneliness and social stigma. For months, at times, a year, sympathy cards, letters, telephone calls keep reminding the widow that he is gone and that she has to face the world all by herself. Memories of good time she had together with her husband keep surfacing and constitute a source of mental anguish for the widow. Wiebe (1987) also referred to loneliness as constituting a devastating problem for the widow. According to her, the pain of having to sort through the husband's property and giving some away, the horror of having to drive his car or live in the same house, the agony of

having no one say to you, "You look nice today", or to chat with late at night after the children have gone to bed make the life of widowhood miserable and lonely.

Intensive grief is another significant psychological effect of widowhood. Clinebell (1984) opined that many psychophysiological (psychosomatic) illnesses are related to unhealed grief. He contended that the longer the healing is delayed, the more costly the protracted grief is to the person's wholeness. Graman as cited in Yaroson (1991) remarked that such intensive grief can lead the widow to see life as bleak, disappointing, threatening; or she may even contemplate suicide. In line with this view, Bock and Webber (1972) noted earlier that the temptation to commit suicide is more common among the elderly widowed, especially males, are more likely than their married counterparts to commit suicide not just because they have lost a significant role partner but also because they are isolated in many other ways, from kin, friends, neighbours and formal organisations.

In a study conducted on the psychological well-being of the widowed by Bradburn and Caplovitz as cited in Harvey and Bahr (1974), the following findings were reported by Harvey and Bahr: Irrespective of their age and economic status:-

1) Widows were much more likely than the married to state they are "not too happy";
2) Widows were more likely than the married to describe the past as happier than the present;
3) Widows were low in positive feeling than the married;
4) Widows were higher than the married in negative feelings index comprising uneasiness, restlessness, boredom, loneliness and

unhappiness.

From the above discussions it is evident that there is a correlation between widowhood and low morale. Widows, especially the aged or those with very low incomes, express negative feelings more often and positive feelings less often than married persons.

2.8 Prevention of Harmful Widowhood Practices in Igbo and Hausa States

In this section, the researcher shall examine the various efforts made by the government and non-governmental organisations (NGO's) towards the prevention of obnoxious widowhood practices in Nigeria, with particular reference to Igbo and Hausa States. The section is subdivided into two parts:

(a) Evaluation of Government Efforts and

(b) Evaluation of Non-Governmental Organisations Efforts.

2.8.1 Evaluation of Government Efforts

Usually, it is the duty of any responsible government to protect the life and rights of her citizenry, both male and female. To this effect, the Federal and State Governments enacted Laws prohibiting discrimination against any Nigerian citizen on the ground of sex. Some of these laws are germane to the plight of widows in Nigeria.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1979 and 1989 both in almost identical terms establish a solid legal framework for non-discriminatory laws and administrative actions against women. Section 39 of the 1979 Constitution is very relevant to our discussion and deals with the right to freedom from discrimination. Section 39(1) clearly stipulates:

A citizen of Nigeria of a particular sex shall not by reason only that he is such a person,

(a) Be subjected either expressly by or in the practical application of any law in force in Nigeria or any executive or administrative action of the government to disabilities or restrictions to which citizens of Nigeria or other sex are not made subject or

(b) be accorded either expressly by or in the practical application of any law in force in Nigeria, or any executive or administrative action, any privilege or advantage that is not accorded to citizens of Nigeria of the other sex.

In her interpretation of this section of the Constitution, Augie (1990), a high court judge in Sokoto State, stated this is a far-reaching section which guarantees to women and men alike, the same treatment, the same privileges, the same disabilities, the same restrictions, where these are legally or socially considered desirable. She concluded that if any law, any executive or administrative action discriminates against women and even men, the Courts will hold such law inconsistent with both the spirit and the letter of the 1979 Constitution (Section 1 (3)) and thus unconstitutional, null and void.

The researcher observes with regret that despite these Constitutional provisions, the Federal and State Governments of Nigeria continue to pay lip service to issues of equal rights and opportunities to the female sex. Relating the Constitution to the plight of widows in Nigeria, Okagbue (1997) remarked that widowhood practices in many parts of Nigeria are in clear

violation of section 39 of the 1979 Constitution which provides that every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person and prohibits inhuman or degrading treatment. Earlier on, Augie (1990) had pointed out that the problem of the Nigerian women, today, is not the absence of constitutional or legal provisions as to her rights. No, it is more the question of effective implementation. In this vein, Okoye (1995) remarked that the existing legal systems have woefully failed to protect women against various abuses of their basic human rights.

To arrest the incessant problems arising from the widow's succession and inheritance rights, the Old Anambra State (Now Anambra and Enugu States) enacted legislation on succession in 1987. Under its terms where the deceased dies intestate ("without leaving a will) with no issue and no close relatives, the residuary estate is held on trust for the wife absolutely. Where there are children, the widow is entitled to one-third of the estate for her life or until re-marriage while the rest is held in equal shares for the children. Where the deceased leaves a wife and close relatives but no children (that is, a parent or a brother or sister of the whole blood or their children) two-thirds of the residuary estate is held in trust for the wife for life or until her re-marriage while one-third will be held for the brothers of the whole blood. In the absence of brothers, the portion will be for the parents absolutely.

This is a welcome innovation because it recognises the right of the widow to inherit some portion of her deceased husband's property. But as Ezeilo (1995) rightly put it: "the written law is one thing and the practical application of it is quite a different matter" (p.5). To buttress this point, Okagbue (1997) stated that it has been noted that very often the widow's statutory rights of inheritance are completely ignored by the deceased's

relatives who regard the deceased's estate as their birthright. Therefore making the law is not enough, it behooves the government to see that the law is enforced. On this note, Nwoga (1989) had earlier called on the Federal and State governments to reinforce the laws which make the wife and children of a deceased man legal heirs to his property.

Apart from statutory laws, Nigerians are also guided by customary laws. According to Akpala (1996) a customary law refers to the native law and customs of the people. Most customary laws in Nigeria deny the widow the right to inherit her deceased husband's property. This is particularly applicable to the Igbos and partially true of the Hausas who allow the widow to inherit only some defined portion of the deceased's property. Okagbue (1997) contends that the customary law position of the widow clearly violates section 39 of the 1979 Constitution which provides for freedom from discrimination. According to her it also violates the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (the Women's convention) to which Nigeria is a party. Article 16(1)(h) of this Convention provides that both spouses should enjoy equality of rights in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property. The women's Convention also provides that State parties must take all measures to modify or abolish existing laws or customs which constitute discrimination and eliminate customary practices which are based on the idea of the superiority or inferiority of either sex.

Ilegbune (1993) observed that the Nigerian courts have been empowered to reject any rules of customary law which are repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience. Unfortunately the Courts have

consistently refused to do so in respect of the customary law of succession as they affect the rights of widows.

Against the backdrop of the 1979 constitution and the 1979 Women's Convention, the researcher is of the opinion that the Federal and State Governments have not done much to protect the rights of Nigerian widows vis a vis the existing discriminatory laws and practices against these widows. In addition, the courts have failed to declare as unconstitutional and repugnant to natural justice all cultural widowhood inhibitions as well as the exclusion of widows from succession.

2.8.2 Evaluation of Non-Governmental Organisations Efforts

In this section, the researcher shall examine the meaning of non-governmental organisation (NGO), and the efforts of some non-governmental organisations, particularly women associations, the mosque, and the church.

(i) The Meaning of An NGO

In her study of law and Women in Nigeria, Ezeilo (1995:7) defined non-governmental organisation as "a non-profit making organisation usually formed for promotion of human interest which may cover the area of art, science, religion, sports, culture, education, research, charity or other similar objects". According to her, NGO can limit its interest to concerns of women, or that of children or unlimit its scope of operation by dealing with generality of men and women.

From the above definition, it is evident that an NGO is independent of the government and non-profit oriented. Its major function is the promotion of human development and growth. According to Ezeilo (1995), there are well over fifty NGO's today in Nigeria. Some of them are vibrant and in the mainstream of women affairs while the majority are not so noticeable or effective.

(ii) Efforts of Women Associations

The post-independence period saw the growth of several women's organisations with political interest. The Nigerian Women's Union (NWU), the Federation of Nigerian Women's Societies (FNWS), the Women's Movement, and the National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS) are good examples. Toyo (1995) observed that the period following the rise of these strong women's organisations, witnessed the growth of other women's groups which were primarily social or voluntary organisations. Significantly, many of these women's organisations are making women issues, for instance, widowhood practices, their area of concern today. Akpala (1996) pointed out that the aims and objectives of these women groups are similar, that is, to work for the enhancement of the position of women in the society.

While a few of these women organisations have made in roads into the rural areas where the majority of the poor women who are the victims of the obnoxious customary law practices live, others have concentrated their activities in the urban areas. Akpala (1996) observed that the Development Education Centre (DEC) Enugu; the Legal Research and Resource Centre, Lagos; Society for the welfare of Women Prisoners (SWEWP), Enugu; Medical Women Association and Federation of Female Lawyers (branches) have been

doing their best to reach out to the rural women by organising human rights seminars and workshops for such women.

Specifically, Medical Women Association of Nigeria held a workshop on the plight of widows in 1994 (Nwadinobi, 1994); Nigeria Widows Association formed in 1983 have been organising periodically seminars and workshops on the evils of some of the widowhood practices in the society (Agomoh, 1987); Constitutional Rights Project (CRP) have held series of workshops on the rights of widows (Ezeilo, 1995). It is the place of these women groups to challenge all women and men to the problem of widows.

(iii) Efforts of the Church

By the term `Church' the researcher refers to the various Christian denominations in Nigeria. The researcher is interested in evaluating what they have done either collectively or individually to prevent the perpetuation of harmful widowhood cultural practices in Igbo and Hausa states.

(a) **Joint Efforts By Local Churches**

In his study of the plight of widows and the challenge it poses to the Catholic Church in Igboland, Obinwa (1992) reported that in 1939 a joint attempt was made by the Catholic and Anglican Churches to put to rest the lingering and burning issue of dispossessing widows who have no male child. According to customary law, a widow who has no male issue cannot inherit her deceased husband's property, that is, via the male child. This customary regulation contradicted the provision of the English Marriage Ordinance adopted by Christianity, an Act which gave spouses the legal right to inherit from each other.

In the wake of this conflict, a conference of both the Catholic and

Anglican Churches was held on December 22nd, 1939 at Onitsha at the instance of the then local government. At the meeting, a joint memorandum was drawn up with the title "Conflict of Marriage Ordinance with Native Law and Custom". The memorandum contained, among others, the following clauses:

1. Where the deceased husband leaves a son of adult age, no difficulty arises in such cases.

2.(a) The person of the widow is not the property of any other person so long as she remains a widow.

(b) The widow is to be free with her children to carry out hers and her children's Christian obligations.

3. Where a man dies leaving premises, the widow shall be entitled to remain and use the said premises, or part thereof, while she remains a widow (cited by Nwosu, 1990:48).

This proposal was vehemently rejected by Onitsha people. Consequent upon this, the then traditional ruler of Onitsha, Obi Okosi II wrote to the District Officer (D.O.) in Onitsha to register the protest of his people saying: "Unanimous opinion has now been reached by all the community of Onitsha, namely, that the suggestions put forward by the missions are not acceptable to them" (cited by Nwosu, 1990:49).

Interestingly, traditionalists from other districts joined in the protest. In keeping with the colonial policy of non-confrontation with the local people, the Resident in Onitsha wrote to the District Officers in Onitsha, Udi, Agwu, Nsukka and Awka to advise on the non-enforcement of the proposal. Part of the letter reads:

> Replies show that it is not yet possible to adopt the compromise between the religious and social aspects of a Christian marriage, as suggested by the conference of the two principal Missions (cited by Nwosu, 1990:49).

With this, joint efforts of the two churches to stop the dispossession of widows particularly those with no male issues, collapsed. Regrettably since then no other recorded joint effort has been made by the christian denominations in Igboland towards this end. In Hausaland, information gathered from interviewees indicate that there has never been any collective effort by christians to end harmful widowhood cultural practices. Rather attempts were made by individual local churches.

(b) Efforts of Individual Churches

Various local churches in Igboland have mounted programmes, organised seminars and workshops to educate their church members on the evils of some of the widowhood practices. Some have gone to the extent of enacting legislations banning their members from participating in any widowhood ritual that is inimical to christian faith and morals.

For instance, the Catholic Diocese of Awka published a directory in 1996 titled Death, Burial, Funeral and Widowhood. In this directory, the following instructions were given to Catholics in the Catholic diocese of Awka concerning the state of widowhood:

> i) The widow/widower is legitimately entitled to the goods and property of his or her partner, whether they have children or not. Each individual is exhorted to make a will to guarantee this right.
>
> ii) Where no will is left to settle issues, sharing of the assets and liabilities of the departed should be

amicably discussed between the immediate relations.

iii) The shaving of hair is to be done by anybody on any day of the week, and the hair is to be burnt or discarded. No ritual or religious importance is to be attached to the hair or its shaving (p.41).

In another development, Okoye (1995) reported that the Christian Diocesan Conference called on the people of Enugu Agidi in Njikoka local government area, to remove some of the dehumanising widowhood rites, such as, the practice of going to the aja ani (earth goddess) naked, with only a string round the widow's waist, which is humiliating and dehumanising.

Of particular significance is the effort of the Catholic Women Organisation (C.W.O) of various Catholic dioceses and parishes in Igboland towards the eradication of harmful widowhood practices. Okoye (1995) noted that the various women's church groups during their annual congresses, popularly referred to as 'Home and Abroad meetings', handle such issues as widowhood rites. Often the women agree that some of the widowhood practices have become outmoded and unnecessary. For instance, Obinwa (1992) reported that the Catholic Women Organisation of Amichi in Anambra State passed a law stating, among other things:

- that the Catholic widows will no more observe the ritual of going to sit on the floor of Eke Amichi (a market dedicated to Eke deity), rather they should attend Sunday Mass.
- that they can sit on a fairly comfortable chair on the burial day rather than the usual sitting on the

floor for the whole day.

- that they should begin going to Sunday Mass within one month of the burial rather than the usual six months (p.65).

Along the same line, the Owerri Diocesan council of the Catholic Women Organisation conducted a thorough study on Widowhood Practices in the diocese. A special study committee was set up in 1989 which in its terms of reference was required to

i) document obvious widowhood practices in Owerri diocese;

ii) identify the superstitious and debasing practices tied up with widowhood in the diocese;

iii) suggest and report how these conflict with Catholic Christian Faith;

iv) suggest better alternatives that are acceptable to the Catholic Church in general (Osuji, 1989: ii).

The report of the committee came out in 1990 with the title: "Widowhood Practices among Catholics in Owerri Diocese: A Critical Analysis", and it was presented to the Archbishop of Owerri to "issue directives for implementing necessary corrective education" (Osuji, 1989:15). Unfortunately, up to this date no diocesan directive has been issued to that effect.

In Hausaland also individual christian churches took specific measures to stop some obnoxious widowhood practices among the Maguzawa. Prior to the advent of Christianity, the Maguzawa widow was subjected to lots of dehumanising widowhood rites and rituals. For instance, no bathing for a period of forty days; no washing of her eating plates for

forty days; she was required to carry a knife, a kettle and a stick about in her hand throughout the five months of mourning; and she had no right to inherit her deceased husband's property unless she had a male child. With the advent of Christianity, individual Maguzawa christian communities (ECWA, Baptist, Catholic, Anglican) changed some of the irritating or nauseating widowhood customs and each church laid down some guidelines that govern the conduct of widows in their respective ecclesial communities. Unfortunately, none of the churches contacted by the researcher had any document to this effect.

(iv) Efforts By the Muslim Umar

The pre-Islamic customary law of inheritance excluded women from inheriting their parents or husbands' property. In particular, the widows were excluded because they were placed in the same category as chattels. In other words, they constituted part of the property of the husband's family and they were included in the estate after the death of their husband (Abdalati, 1982).

Remarkably, these inequalities and deprivations of women's rights to inheritance, thereby reducing them to the position of chattels, have been removed by Islam. Hence, Ajijola (1981) observed that with the advent of Islam "The moral and social position of women was raised giving the widow, the mother, the sisters and the daughters heritable rights" (p.219). Besides recognising the inalienable rights of females to inheritance, Islam went further to legislate the specific share of the man's property that will accrue to his wife in case he predeceased her. This has been discussed earlier in the chapter.

It is worthy to note that Islam also protects the barren widow. According to Sodiq et al. (1997) Islamic law of inheritance allows the childless widow a share that is equivalent to the portion of two women bearing children. In other words, the portion to be given to her should double those given to widows who have children. The reason being that it was never her wish or desire to bear no child for the deceased, it was the making of Allah.

Another step taken by Islam to protect widows against dispossession was to establish the institution of dower. Abdalati (1982) explains that according to Islamic law, a valid marriage confers on the wife the right to dower (Mahr), maintenance and residence. A dower is a gift in form of cash or property which the husband gives to his wife as a mark of love and respect after their marriage (Ajijola, 1981). According to Ajijola (1981), it is a safeguard against the husband's arbitrary power of divorce or the malicious dispossession of the wife by his relatives upon his death. The dower becomes confirmed by consummation of the marriage, valid retirement or by death of either spouse. Abdalati (1982) notes that the dower may be paid promptly, deferred, or divided depending on the agreement of the spouses. The first payment which is called Mah-ul-Muajjal or prompt dower is paid during the life time of the marriage and whenever the wife demands it. The second one called Mahr-ul-Muwajjal or differed dower, is paid after the dissolution of the marriage, either by divorce or death.

Ajijola (1981) explained that a dower debt is a simple debt payable before the distribution of assets of the husband and it gives a lien over the property in favour of the widow. According to him, Islamic law has given the widow special right to retain property lawfully under her possession till the

payment of dower debt. These are some of the major measures undertaken by Islam to protect widows from unnecessary sufferings following the death of their husbands.

Assessing the efforts of the various women groups in relation to the plight of widows in Igbo and Hausa States, one can say without hesitation that little or nothing has been done by these groups to forestall the perpetuation of harmful widowhood cultural practices. Scanty efforts made by these women groups to educate the rural women on their basic human rights do not touch the substance of the matter. As potential victims of these terrible cultural practices, a more comprehensive and concerted effort on their part should have been expected.

With regard to the church, their efforts so far, particularly from the women wing, are commendable but not enough. It is regrettable to note that since the failed joint attempt of 1939 by Catholic and Anglican Missions no further joint action has been taken by especially Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) which is the umbrella organisation for all christian churches in Nigeria, to dialogue with traditionalists in Igboland with a view to modifying the obnoxious widowhood practices. Also, out of the eleven Catholic dioceses in Igboland, only two, Awka and Owerri dioceses, have done something substantial in the area of stopping unnecessary and harmful widowhood practices. In the Hausa States only Kaduna Catholic Archdiocese has organised workshops and seminars aimed at educating widows on their rights.

Concerning the efforts of Mosque, it is worthy of note that inheritance under Islamic law is assumed to be based on the principle of supporting persons who were entitled to be catered for by the deceased during his

lifetime, and who would suffer greatly at his death. However, the discriminatory aspect of the law is observable where the widow inherits only one quarter of the estate of her deceased husband whereas the widower takes half of the net estate of the deceased wife. Such Islamic stance may lead to the conclusion that Islam still regards the female as inferior to male.

Commenting on the alleged discriminatory element of the law, Abdalati (1982) explained:

> The full implication of this provision must be seen in the light of the fact that the husband and the wife hold their property and their possessions independently of each other. The muslim husband usually owns more than his wife and is therefore likely to leave more behind than she would, if he were to survive her. If he survives her, which is less likely from a demographic standpoint, his arithmetically larger share of inheritance, the one-half of his independently held and owned property may in fact be equal to or even less than her arithmetically smaller share, the one-fourth of his independently held and owned property (p.268).

Still in defense of the apparent unequal distribution of property accruing to widows and widowers in Islam, Sodiq et al. (1997) averred: "This variation in inheritance rights is only consistent with the variations in financial responsibilities of man and woman according to Islamic law" (p.14).

Be that as it may, the researcher agrees with Okoye (1995) in her positive appraisal of this Islamic provision when she observed that of the three major religions in Nigeria (Traditional, Christianity, Islam) "only Islam has categorically alloted a share, no matter how unfair the ratio, to women and widows" (p.165).

In sum, it is important to point out that non-governmental

organisations have major roles to play to prevent the continuation of harmful and dehumanising widowhood practices. It is true that some non-governmental organisations are already directly involved in human rights education. But that is not enough. It is the joint responsibility of these organisations to challenge all women and men to the problem of widows. More importantly, it is the function of non-governmental organisations to bring pressure on the government to legislate against customs and traditions that grossly violate women's enjoyment of their fundamental human rights.

2.9 Rehabilitation of Widows in Igbo and Hausa States

"Rehabilitation" simply means to put back in good condition, or to make a person able to live a healthy, useful or active life again. Widowhood rehabilitation, therefore, implies helping the widow to adjust to new life or environment. Against this backdrop, the researcher wants to evaluate the efforts of the government (Federal, State and Local) and non-governmental organisations to assist Igbo and Hausa widows learn new life skills, vocations or trades that will enable them live successfully in the society.

2.9.1 Evaluation of Government Efforts Towards Rehabilitation of Igbo and Hausa Widows

It is worthy of note that efforts by the government to rehabilitate Nigerian widows revolve around programmes initiated by wives of Heads of State of Nigeria. Such programmes include Better Life Programme and Family Support Programme. According to Nwadinobi (1994) both

programmes included widows in their plan for social welfare. Closely allied to these two programmes is the Ministry for Women Affairs. An examination of each of these institutions will reveal government efforts at the Federal, State and Local levels towards the rehabilitation of widows in Igbo and Hausa States.

i) Better Life Programme of 1989

Organised government efforts to rehabilitate widows in Nigeria started in 1989 under the leadership of Mrs. Maryam Babangida, the wife of the former Head of State of Nigeria. According to Acholonu (1995) she gained national recognition through instituting the monumental project known as "Better Life for Rural Women" (later changed to 'Better Life for rural dwellers', or simply called, the 'Better Life Programme' (BLP) which was set up in the late 1980s.

At a meeting with women leaders in Lagos in 1989, wives of state governors and chairpersons of the Better Life Programme were charged by the wife of the then Head of State, Mrs. Maryam Babangida, to conduct an extensive and intensive research into the scale and magnitude of widowhood practices, with a view to formulating a national policy on the matter. Consequently, workshops and seminars were held in most of the States of the Federation, especially states that had practical widowhood problems. Strategies were evolved to bring about panoramic awareness of the inhuman aspects of some of the widowhood rites and to seek the support of traditional and opinion leaders in an effort to eradicate them.

In an address at the commissioning of phase 1 of widows Training Centre, Mangu, Plateau State, Mrs Maryam Babangida, wife of the then Head of State, General Babangida (1993) enumerated the various

achievements of the Better Life Programme towards rehabilitating Nigerian widows: First, the building of houses for widows by some States in each of their local government areas. [Madunta (1989) had earlier reported that the Rural Housing Scheme for widows and indigent families by the Better Life Programme, Imo State chapter has been widely acclaimed because of the area it touches the widows]. Second, the establishment of a Widows Trust fund in Benue State from which training programmes for widows are sponsored and the education of their children funded. Third, the erection of Widow's Vocational Training Centre in Mangu, Plateau State. According to Mrs. Roselyn Tapgun, the wife of the former civilian governor of Plateau State cited by Adamu (1993) the centre is "to provide training to widows to acquire vocational skills and some level of literacy, with which they can be self-reliant and able to maintain themselves and their children. The Day Care Nursery Service of the Centre, will serve the children while their mothers are in training" (p.3).

ii) The Family Support Programme of 1994

Due to lack of continuity in government policies, when Babangida's administration was replaced by the government of General Sani Abacha, the Better Life Programme ceased to be. In its place, the wife of the Head of State, Mrs. Maryam Abacha, set up a new programme known as "The Family Support Programme" which was first launched at Abuja, the seat of the government in late 1994 and subsequently at the State levels.

The emphasis of the programme is the preservation of the values of the Nigerian family. Acholonu (1995) stated that its activities and projects range from health care to domestic support for women, illiteracy eradication,

child care, women's education and women's legal and cultural emancipation. Between 24th and 26th of July 1997, the Kaduna State Family Support organised a three - day workshop aimed at helping widows learn self-help skills.

iii) The New Ministry for Women Affairs

Another landmark of the Abacha administration is the establishment of the Ministry for Women Affairs which is an innovation in Nigeria and in Africa (Acholonu, 1995). Acholonu (1995) observed that the idea of the Women Affairs Ministry was first muted during the Babangida administration. However, the idea did not quite catch on with that administration. Rather the Women commission was established to cater for women matters at the federal and state government levels.

With the scrapping of the Better Life Programme and the subsequent introduction of the Family Support Programme the Abacha administration established the Women Ministry in January 1995 as a boost to the Family Support Programme. Like the women commission, the Women Affairs Ministry is created to cater for all women matters in the country, including widowhood issues.

From the discussion above, it is evident that government efforts towards rehabilitation of widows lacked continuity. Each successive government established its own programme thereby wasting resources, time and money which would have accrued into greater dividends for the Nigerian widow in particular and for the Nigerian women in general.

Evaluating the above three organs of government designed to cater for women matters, one notices that only the Better Life Programme made

significant impact on the life of widows in Nigeria. However, its effect was short-lived. The present administration did not build on its achievements. That notwithstanding, it is discouraging to observe that out of the thirty States of the Federation at that time, only three states erected structures designed for the rehabilitation of widows (Imo, Benue and Plateau States). In the then four Igbo States only Imo State was reported to have constructed houses for widows. And in the Hausa States, no report was given concerning the activities of the Better Life Programme towards ameliorating the condition of widows in the states.

Generally, it can be concluded that the Better Life Programme failed to do much to improve the lot of widows in Nigeria. Acholonu (1995) attributed the failure of the Better Life Programme in this regard to the fact that many of the wives of the State Governors were not psychologically, intellectually and/or mentally disposed to the leadership demands of such a programme.

With respect to the Family Support Programme and the Ministry for Women Affairs, little or nothing has been done by these two organs of government towards the rehabilitation of Nigerian widows. Perhaps the reason for this inactivity may be that they have not yet settled down to be able to address some burning women matters such as the rehabilitation of widows in Nigeria. Be that as it may, this researcher contends that if they had followed the footsteps of the Better Life Programme and built on its achievements, especially in the area of looking after widows, remarkable progress would have been made by now.

2.9.2 Evaluation of Efforts of Non-Governmental Organisations to rehabilitate Igbo and Hausa Widows

There is a dearth of literature on the efforts of non-governmental organisations to rehabilitate widows in Igbo and Hausa States. The only available literature treat of the efforts of some churches and individuals towards the rehabilitation of widows. Nwoke (1994) reported that the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) has set up a Widows' Training School at Zabolo, Plateau State. Another one was also established in Samaru, Southern Kaduna, Kaduna State, by the same church. According to Nwoke (1994) the aims and objectives of the schools include: offering spiritual counselling to the widows, training them in vocational subjects and crafts, cooperating with government and non-governmental organisations in finding solutions to problems confronting widows and offering information through various channels, to different sectors of the population on the plight of widows.

In Igboland some Catholic communities have taken some measures to rehabilitate widows. Obinwa (1992) pointed out that church members from Mbato in Imo State, Nnewi and Ozubulu in Anambra State make regular contributions of cash, foodstuff and clothings to assist very poor widows. In the same vein, responses received from widows interviewed by the researcher during a dinner party organised at St. Saviour's Anglican church, kaduna by the Ministry for the Hurt, kaduna, on March 22nd, 1997 indicate that many churches in Kaduna town hold annual get-together for widows and orphans at the end of which some monetary and material gifts are made to them.

Besides churches, some individuals have also established ministries for widows. Ezekwesili (1996) reported on the activities of Ministry for the Hurt, a non-governmental organisation she founded by herself in Kaduna to cater for the hurting people in the society. Among the objectives are:

i) To gather information about and minister to all classes of hurting humanity such as widows, orphans, the fatherless, prisoners, prostitutes, the unemployed, the sick, etc.

ii) To inspire and initiate the building of rehabilitation, vocational, medical and educational centres for the poor and the needy and to initiate and sponsor viable community and self-help projects.

iii) To organise awareness campaigns on the neglect, dehumanization, oppression and plight of widows, orphans and the fatherless in the society and to engage individual, corporate, religious and philanthropic organisations and government to care, support and develop programmes that would meet the needs of the hurt, especially the widow, orphan and the fatherless (pp.79-80).

From the responses obtained from Ezekwesili by the researcher, the Ministry for the Hurt also assists widows to get job, learn self-help skills, start small-scale business through the provision of small grants, and sponsor some of their children in school. In Kaduna also, the Nigeria Widows Association, Kaduna State Council, organises dinners and luncheons for widows periodically. Kaallmasih (1997) reported that this council recently organised a two-day workshop on "Empowering of Widows Towards Self-Reliance". According to Mrs. Margaret Gwani, the Chairperson of the State Council cited by Kaalmasih, the workshop would help widows develop their potentials, learn to be self-reliant so as to sustain their

families.

It is evident from the above reports that non-governmental organisations have not paid much attention to the rehabilitation of widows in Igbo and Hausa States. One would expect that women associations and churches in Igboland should have committed themselves to the task of rehabilitating widows since the condition of widows seem to be worse there than in Hausaland. This, they can do by establishing vocational centres for teaching widows self-help skills, housing scheme for accommodating homeless widows, trust fund for sponsoring children of indigent widows in schools, and counselling centres for pastoral counselling of hurting widows. There is no gainsaying the fact that widows place more hope on receiving prompt assistance from non-governmental organisations than from the government due to governmental bureaucratic procedures.

2.10 SUMMARY

The literature review has revealed what other writers have said about the concept of widowhood; it is a cultural tragedy. The death of a husband produces a critical situation, a reorganisation of roles and relationships suitable to the new status. The transition to widowhood is made difficult not only by the lack of clearly defined cultural expectations but also by the lack of missing supportive relationships.

This chapter has also reviewed factors that influence widowhood practices in Igbo and Hausa states. These include: cosmology, religion, illiteracy, low-concept of women, daughters of the deceased lineage, female passivity, inheritance and marriage laws of the land, the extended family system, poverty and culture. Not only do these factors influence the

existence of widowhood practices but they also contribute to promoting obnoxious and oppressive widowhood rites in Hausa and Igbo communities.

Furthermore, an examination of the various aspects of cultural practices in Igbo and Hausa states was carried out. These practices include duration of mourning, colour of mourning dress, ritual seclusion, hair scraping or bushy hair, routinized wailing, ritual purification, outing ceremony, Levirate, succession and inheritance rights. Areas of similarities and differences in Igbo and Hausa widowhood practices were also highlighted. The literature review showed that the Hausa widow is better treated and respected as a human being than the Igbo widow.

As a result of these cultural widowhood practices Igbo and Hausa widows encounter psychological, social and economic problems. Invariably, a woman who has been dependent on her husband for financial and emotional support as well as for moral and spiritual leadership or companionship, the demise of her husband would have devastating effects on her. Socially, she experiences silent ostracism. Psychologically, she suffers depression, low self-concept, restlessness and unhappiness. Economically, the widow experiences serious decrease in family income.

The literature review also evaluated the efforts of government and non-governmental organisations towards eradicating harmful cultural widowhood practices in Igbo and Hausa communities. It further evaluated their efforts towards rehabilitating Igbo and Hausa widows. The review indicated that no substantial measures have been taken by government and non-governmental organisations to ameliorate the conditions of widows in Igbo and Hausa states.

Chapter 3

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher described the research methods, the population, the sample size and sampling procedures, the instruments for data collection, pilot study, the procedures for gathering data, and the statistical tools employed for data analysis.

3.2 RESEARCH METHOD

In the course of this inquiry the researcher employed the survey research method. This entails gathering of data about a target population from a sample and generalizing the findings obtained from an analysis of the sample to the entire population. Survey research usually focuses on people, the vital aspects of people, their beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behaviours.

The researcher decided to use this method because its efficacy in drawing out information, feelings and views from subjects made it perhaps the most appropriate method for the study. Significantly, what the researcher focused on were the beliefs, opinions, attitudes, feelings and behaviours of the respondents concerning cultural widowhood practices. In addition, some "element of comparison almost inevitably enters into survey work, if it is to be of value" (Nisbet and Entwistle, 1970:9). This comparative character of survey research strategy also attracted the researcher to choose it because this study primarily aims at comparing two groups of subjects:

Igbo and Hausa widows.

3.3 *THE POPULATION*

The target population for this study consisted of all Igbo and Hausa widows in the predominantly Igbo - speaking and Hausa - speaking states and all community leaders, namely religious leaders, village heads and traditional rulers in these states. The Igbo states comprise Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo while the Hausa states embrace Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Kaduna, Zamfara, Sokoto and Kebbi. In the predominantly Igbo-speaking states, widows wre sampled and questionnaire administered in the following local government areas:

(1) Abia: Isikwuato, Isuochi, Okigwe, Umuahia Central

(2) Anambra: Awka North, Orumba, Ihiala, Aguta

(3) Imo Orlu, Ideato, Mbano

(4) Enugu: Awgu, Oji River, Nsukka, Udi

(5) Ebonyi: Abakiliki North, Afikpo, Ezzangbo

The same was done to Hausa widows in the following local government areas of the predominantly Hausa-speaking states:

(1) Kano: Birnin Kudu, Nassarawa, Gwarzo

(2) Kaduna: Zaria, Giwa, Makarfi, Soba

(3) Katsina: Safana, Malumfashi, Kafur, Dutsinma

(4) Zamfara: Chafe, Zamfara, Shinkafi

(5) Kebi: Argungu, Jega, Bunza

(6) Jigawa: Dutse, Hadeja

(7) Sokoto: Akila, Wurno, Dange.

The predominantly Igbo-speaking states are located in the southern

part of Nigeria whereas the predominantly Hausa-speaking states are located in the northern part of Nigeria.

3.4 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Owing to the near impossibility of ascertaining the exact population of Igbo and Hausa widows, the researcher chose seven hundred and sixty eight subjects as constituting the sample size for the inquiry. The choice of this sample size is informed by the sampling technique advocated by Krejcie (1970:608). According to them, three hundred and eighty-four subjects form the minimum sample size for a population of one million people. Consequent upon this, the selection of seven hundred and sixty eight subjects constitute the minimum sample size for the study. A sample of one hundred community leaders from Igbo and Hausa states was purposively examined. The rationale for choosing only one hundred is because community leaders do not constitute the foci group for the study; their responses are needed only to answer one of the seven research questions. Secondly, the exact population size of Igbo and Hausa community leaders is unknown. Consequent upon these two factors, the researcher arbitrarily chose to sample one hundred community leaders with the assumption that their responses would provide the desired level of confidence in the results obtained from their cultural interpretations of the widowhood practices among Igbos and Hausas. It could be recalled that Ferguson (1966) cited a central limit theorem supporting the use of a minimum of thirty and above measurements from the respondents.

Available sample technique was employed for the study. Wimer and Dominick (1987) define available sample as "a collection of readily accessible

subjects for study" (p.71). Since there was no available authentic record of the exact population of Igbo and Hausa widows, the researcher found available sample procedure appropriate for the study. While adopting the available sample method, care was taken to ensure proportional representation of subjects/respondents from each ethnic group. Hence a sample of three hundred and eighty-four Igbo widows and three hundred and eighty-four Hausa widows was used.

3.5 INSTRUMENTATION

To gather data for this study the researcher adopted the questionnaire technique because according to Nisbet and Entwistle (1970) research interview and questionnaire represent a direct method of collecting information and are considered first. On his part, Afolabi (1993) explained that questionnaire is used by a researcher specifically to convert into research data the information provided by respondents in an investigation, to determine what a person knows, what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences), what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs) and the experiences and personal data about a person (biography). With the use of questionnaires the researcher was able to elicit what Igbo and Hausa widows know, like or dislike, think or experience concerning widowhood practices in Igbo and Hausa communities.

Two sets of questionnaire were used for gathering data for the study. These were:

i) Widowhood profile questionnaire (WPQ), and

ii) Cultural interpretations of Widowhood Practices (CIWP).

The questionnaires were designed by the researcher. They were cross-

checked by experts in the field of educational research and statistics.

i) Widowhood Profile Questionnaire - This comprised seven sections as follows:-

a) Personal information, e.g. age, type of marriage, duration of marriage, religion, etc.

b) Distribution of problem encountered by widows

c) Factors influencing widowhood practices

d) Effects of Widowhood

e) Government efforts to remediate the plight of widows.

f) Non-government organisation efforts to remediate the plight of widows

g) Coping strategies.

The WPQ was administered to Igbo and Hausa widows in order to elicit the extent of agreement or disagreement to the statements in the questionnaire.

ii) Cultural Interpretation of Widowhood Practices -

The CIWP was divided into two sections: personal data and cultural interpretations. It was administered to community leaders in Igbo and Hausa cultures with a view to ascertaining from them the cultural interpretations given to widowhood practices by Igbo and Hausa communities.

Respondents to the questionnaires answered in writing. Those who were unable to read and write were interviewed orally by research assistants and their responses recorded on questionnaires accordingly. A five - point Likert Scale ranging from strongly agree (SA) to strongly disagree (SD) was employed to score the responses of the subjects.

3.6 VALIDATION OF THE INSTRUMENTS

Ensuring the validity and reliability of an instrument is a major and vital responsibility of any researcher. This is because the objectivity of findings of a study is a function of the instrument used in meeting the criteria of validity and reliability. As a consequence, after developing the instruments, experts in the area of educational research and statistics and in the field of guidance and counselling were consulted to establish the content validity of the instruments. Their evaluation of the items in the instruments and of the clarity of their construction were sought. They critically examined each item in the questionnaires and interview guide and offered useful suggestions. Where the mean score of their responses on each item showed 4 or 5 on the Likert scale it meant there was positive agreement regarding the suitability of the said item, the item was retained; otherwise the item was dropped or subjected to modification.

3.7 PILOT STUDY

To test the reliability of the instruments used for the study, a pilot study was conducted. This is important because the data are only as good as the instrument which collects them; and the findings will be only as valid as the data on which they are based. The reliability of a test is the consistency with which it measures what is intended.

Two sets of questionnaire were pilot-tested: The first set was administered to thirty Igbo and Hausa widows and the second set was administered to twelve Igbo and Hausa community leaders. These are part of the population but not part of the sample for the study. The split - half

reliability technique was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaires. This involved comparing the responses on both even and odd number items-and a Pearson Correlation Coefficient between the two scores was calculated. Then the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula was used to compensate for the fact that the reliability was estimated from a test one-half the length of the final form. The correlation coefficient (r) is represented in the formula: $r = \frac{N\Sigma xy - (\Sigma x)(\Sigma y)}{[N\Sigma x^2 - (\Sigma x)^2][N\Sigma y^2 - (\Sigma y)^2]}$

Where N = total number of respondents

X = total score on even number items

Y = total score on odd number items

In respect of the first set of questionnaire which was administered to thirty widows, there are eight sections dealing with the hypotheses to be tested. Each section contains ten items, which means there are eighty items in all. To compute the reliability coefficient of the entire eighty items using split-half technique was not feasible due to the large numbers involved. Consequently, the reliability coefficient of each section was determined separately. Below is the reliability coefficient (r) of the sections:

Sections		r
K	=	0.89
L	=	0.89
M	=	0.89
N	=	0.88
O	=	0.88
P	=	0.86
Q	=	0.86

R = 0.86

To further determine the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire taking all the eight sections together the Spearman rank correlation coefficient was employed still using split-half reliability technique. The formula is $r_s = 1 - \sqrt{\frac{6\Sigma d^2}{n(n^2-1)}}$

Where D = the difference in the ranks

N = the total number of respondents.

The result showed a reliability coefficient of 0.87. From the results of the two reliability tests (Pearson and Spearman), it can be concluded that the value(s) obtained is high enough to accept the validity and reliability of the instrument.

To determine the reliability coefficient of the second set of questionnaire administered to community leaders, the split-half method was also employed using Pearson correlation coefficient procedure. The result showed a reliability coefficient of 0.99.

The result of the pilot study therefore showed that the two instruments have internal consistency.

3.8 ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTRUMENTS

Since the study depended, in a large measure, on the data from the survey of widows, care was taken in the administration of the instruments.

To effectively accomplish this, the researcher trained some research assistants who were engaged in contacting subjects in the sample. They were taught how to administer the questionnaires and score the responses.

Some of the administration of the questionnaires were carried out by research assistants. The first set of questionnaire was randomly distributed or administered to the subjects in predominantly Igbo - speaking and Hausa - speaking States. A total of eight hundred copies of this questionnaire were distributed. The second set of questionnaire was administered to a total of one hundred Igbo and Hausa community leaders with the intention of ascertaining the cultural interpretations given to widowhood practices by Igbos and Hausas.

3.9 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

To facilitate the organisation, analysis and interpretation of data, the researcher employed some statistical techniques. For convenience in the reading of the results, the demographic data was reported in frequency tables and percentages. The t-test for independent samples was used for evaluating the hypotheses. The rationale for selecting t-test statistic for independent samples lay in the increasing popularity which the use of t-test has gained in social research. Roscoe (1975) succinctly expressed this view when he declared "the t-test for independent samples is one of the most popular statistical tests" (p. 168). The t-distribution made possible a simultaneous comparison of the sample means of the selected variables to give us an idea whether statistical differences exist in the data gathered.

The use of the t-test for two independent samples assumes that the dependent variable is measured on at least an interval scale. The subjects of this study expressed their opinions of rating the responses in the

questionnaire on a five-point Likert Scale (1-5). The mean rating for each statement was calculated. A mean rating of 1.00 to 3.00 indicated disagreement, while the mean of 4.00 to 5.00 expressed agreement of the respondents with the statement.

The t-test also assumes the normality of the population from which the samples are drawn (Hayslett and Murphy, 1968). However, these authors argued that when the sample size is larger than 30, the population distribution approximates the normal. Hence a t-test can be used to compare differences between elements in the population. The subjects of this study comprise seven hundred (350 Igbo and 350 Hausa widows). Thus the population was considered sufficiently large to justify the use of the t-test.

Roscoe (1975) observed that when working with samples of the same size or nearly the same size, all assumptions concerning the use of the t-test may be ignored. The present research has equal sample size for the two independent populations under consideration. Consequently, the t-test statistic came in as a fitting tool in this endeavour.

3.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In any survey research that deals with human beings and their problems, one cannot rule out the possibility of encountering some demographic difficulties or obstacles. One of such obstacles is the inability to get the exact population of the subjects. Efforts by the researcher to get the correct population of Igbo and Hausa widows from the government proved abortive as local and state governments did not keep records of widows; also some non-governmental organisations (e.g., church, mosque,

state branches of Nigerian Widows Association) contacted stated that they had no comprehensive record of widows in their communities or associations. To counter this problem the researcher relied on information from religious ministers, local community leaders, and state branches of Nigeria widows Association in identifying the subjects.

Another limitation of the study is illiteracy. About sixty percent of the subjects are illiterate. As a result it was not possible to have all of them respond to the questionnaire in writing. This deficiency was compensated for by administering the questionnaire in the indigenous languages of the subjects, that is, in Igbo and Hausa languages.

Geographical distance also constituted a formidable impediment in the conduct of this investigation. Notably, Igbos and Hausas live predominantly in the Southern and Northern sections of Nigeria respectively. The distance between these two extreme sections of the country is at least one thousand kilometres. This made the data collection process tedious, time consuming and expensive. To arrest this problem the researcher employed the services of catechists who live and work among the respective subjects. They were trained as research assistants who covered *in situ* the necessary tasks.

Another factor which militated against the easy and smooth collection of data was the disposition and enthusiasm of some of the subjects. Grief is a personal phenomenon. Invariably, most of the items in the questionnaire relate to the personal life, feelings and values of the widows. As a result, some of the respondents were not enthusiastic or disposed to cooperate with the interviewers or to respond effectively to the questionnaire. To combat this problem the researcher first of all educated the respondents individually

on the objectives of the study before administering the instruments to them. Such education assisted in disposing them to participate as much as they could in the study.

3. 11 SUMMARY

This chapter carefully explained the reason for the use of survey as the research method for the study. Survey method focuses on people, their beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behaviours. The target population for the study consisted of all Igbo and Hausa widows in the predominantly Igbo - speaking and Hausa - speaking states of Nigeria. A sample size of seven hundred and sixty-eight (that is 384 Igbo widows, 384 Hausa widows) was chosen. Owing to the nonavailability of authentic record of the exact population of Igbo and Hausa widows available sample technique was used for selecting widows for the study.

To gather data for the study, the researcher developed two sets of questionnaire. They are: (a) Widowhood Profile Questionnaire (WPQ), and (b) Cultural Interpretations of Widowhood Practices (CIWP). The first set of questionnaire (WPQ) was administered to Igbo and Hausa widows, the second set (CIWP) was administered to one hundred community leaders in Igbo and Hausa states. Before administering the questionnaire, they were pilot-tested and validated. The reliability coefficients of this instrument were found to be reliable enough to be able to adequately answer the research questions and test the hypotheses.

To effectively administer the two sets of questionnaire, the researcher trained some research assistants who helped in the administration and collation of the questionnaires. Questionnaires were randomly distributed to

readily accessible Igbo anbd Hausa widows as well as community leaders in Igbo and Hausa states. Eight hundred copies of the widowhood Profile Questionnaire (WDQ) were distributed, seven hundred copies were returned. Also one hundred copies of Cultural Interpretations of Widowhood Practices (CIWP) were administered, all were returned.

To analyse the data, frequency tables and percentages were employed for reporting the demographic data. The t-test for independent samples was used for evaluating the hypotheses. In the course of this inquiry some obstacles were encountered. These included: inability to get the exact population of the subjects, illiteracy on the part of the subjects, geographical distance between Igbo and Hausa states as well as within the states themselves, disposition and enthusiasm of the subjects to cooperate with the interviewers and respond honestly to the questionnaire.

Chapter 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The findings of the study are presented in this chapter. This starts with the socio – demographic characteristics of the widows. In subsequent sections of the chapter, the socio – cultural factors that determine widowhood practices and the effects on widows are discussed. The coping strategies employed by widows and government and NGO's efforts to curb harmful widowhood practices are also presented.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Certain variables have direct bearing on the personal characteristics of the subjects and the hypotheses formulated to guide this study. These include: age, type of marriage, duration of marriage, family size, category of children, occupation, religion, education, and possibility of remarriage. The frequencies of these important variables in respect of the widows are included in the study.

4.2.1: AGE

Table 4.01 presents the ages of the respondents.

Table 4.01 : Distribution of widows by age

	Igbo (n_1 = 350)		Hausa (n_2 = 350)		Total (N = 700)	
Age Group	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Young Widow 29 yrs	71	20.3	94	26.9	165	23.6
Middle Aged 30-49yrs	213	60.3	174	46.8	387	55.3
Elderly 50 yrs and older	66	18.4	82	23.5	148	21.1
Total	350	100	350	100	700	100

The age distribution of the respondents ranged from below 20 to 50 and above. Respondents from below the age of 20 to 29 years old are categorised as young widows and they represented 23.6 percent. A 30 - 49 years old category of widows fell under the middle aged and consisted of 55.3percent, while 21.1 percent of the subjects represented widows 50 years or older are categorised as elderly.

Comparatively, Table 4.01 reveals that in the category of young widows, 26.9 percent (94 subjects) of Hausa widows and 20.3 percent (71

subjects) of Igbo widows participated. Almost forty eight percent (174 subjects) Hausa widows were middle aged as compared to 60.3 percent (213 subjects) Igbo widows. Only 23.4 percent (82 subjects) of the Hausa widows were between 50 years or older, while the Igbo widows in the same category recorded 18.4 percent (66 subjects).

4.2.2: TYPE OF MARRIAGE

The frequency distribution of the types of marriages contracted by all the widows is presented in Table 4.02.

Table 4.02: Distribution of widow by type of marriage

	Igbo (n_1 = 350)		Hausa (n_2 = 350)		Total (N = 700)	
Type of Marriage	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Monogamous	261	74.6	167	47.7	428	61.1
Polygamous	89	25.4	183	52.3	272	38.9
Total	350	100	350	100	700	100

Generally, the frequency distribution for the types of marriages indicated that 61.1 percent of all the widows had contracted monogamous marriage while 38.9 percent (272 subjects) were in polygamous union at the death of the husbands.

4.2.3: DURATION OF MARRIAGE

Table 4.03 presents the duration of marriage before the death of husband.

Table 4.03 Distribution of widows by duration of marriage

	Igbo (n_1 = 350)		Hausa (n_2 = 350)		Total (N = 700)	
Duration of Marriage(yrs)	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Below 5	30	8.6	20	5.7	50	7.1
6-9	60	17.2	49	14.0	109	15.7
10-14	61	17.4	59	16.9	120	17.1
15-19	75	21.4	74	21.1	149	21.3
20 and above	124	35.4	148	42.3	272	38.8
Total	350	100	350	100	700	100

Table 4.03 above reveals that 38.8 percent (272 subjects) of both Hausa and Igbo widows were married for more than twenty years before bereavement; 21.3 percent (149 subjects) were married for between 15 and 20 years, and only 7.1 percent (50 subjects) were married for below 5 years.

Specifically, 35.4 percent (124 subjects) Igbo widows were married for over twenty years before bereavement as compared to 42.3 percent

(148 subjects) Hausa widows; also only 5.7 percent (20 subjects) Hausa widows and 8.6 percent (30 subjects) Igbo widows were married for five or less before bereavement. This study showed that majority of the subjects (61.1 percent) did not live with their husbands beyond twenty years before they became widows. A possible explanation for this phenomenon is that most traditional Nigerian men marry girls who are much younger than themselves.

4.2.4: FAMILY SIZE

The number of children before bereavement is stated in the table below.

Table 4.04: Distribution of widowhood by family size

	Igbo (n_1 = 350)		Hausa (n_2 = 350)		Total (N = 700)	
Family Size	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
None	21	6.0	45	12.9	66	9.1
Small (1-5)	187	53.4	168	48.0	355	50.7
Large (6& above)	142	40.6	137	39.1	279	39.9
Total	350	100	350	100	700	100

The frequency distribution showed that of the seven hundred widows sampled for the study 9.4% had no children. Small-sized family comprising between one and five children represented 50.7 percent of the

subjects whereas large-sized family comprising six children or more consisted of 39.9 percent. The study revealed that Igbo widows have smaller families than Hausa widows.

4.2.5: CATEGORY OF CHILDREN

Below in the following Table, the ages of the children at the time of bereavement are presented

Table 4.05: Distribution of widows by category of children

	Igbo (n_1 = 350)		Hausa (n_2 = 350)		Total (N = 700)	
Category of Children	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
None	21	6.0	45	12.8	66	9.4
Young (under 20yrs)	174	49.7	155	44.3	329	47.0
Older (20yrs & above)	155	47.1	150	49.2	305	48.9
Total	329	100	305	100	634	100

Table 4.05 above showed three categories of children: "no children category", "young and older children categories" The no children category (66 subjects) represented 9.4 percent of Igbo and Hausa widows without children, while 47 percent of the widows (329) had children below the age

of twenty and 43.6 percent (305 subjects) had children who are twenty years and above.

In contrast to the 6 percent (21 subjects) of Igbo widows who had no children, 12.8 percent (45 subjects) of Hausa widows had none. Whereas 49.7 percent (174 subjects) of Igbo widows had young children (0-20 years) 44.3 percent (155 subjects) of Hausa widows had same; also Igbo widows had 44.3 percent (155 subjects) older children (20 years and above) as compared to 42.9 percent (150 subjects) of Hausa widows.

4.2.6: OCCUPATION

Table 4.06 presents the different kinds of occupation of the widows.

Table 4.06: The occupation of widows

	IGBO (n_1 = 350)		HAUSA (n_2 = 350)		TOTAL (N = 700)	
Occupation	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Farming	107	30.6	215	61.4	322	46.0
Trading	129	36.8	39	11.1	168	24.0
Civil Servant	98	28.0	18	5.1	116	16.6
Professional	7	2.0	3	0.9	10	1.4
Craftswoman	3	0.9	42	12.0	45	6.4
No Job	6	1.7	33	9.5	39	5.6

Total	350	100	350	100	700	100

Table 4.06 depicts that of the seven hundred respondents sampled, three hundred and twenty - two (46%) were farmers, one hundred and sixty-eight (24%) were traders, one hundred and sixteen (16.6%) were civil servants, ten (1.4%) were professionals, forty-five (6.4%) were craftswomen, and thirty-nine (5.6%) had no job.

This study has shown that six hundred and sixty-one widows (94.4%) had a job. However, noting that three hundred and twenty-two of the widows (46%) were peasant farmers and that three hundred and ninety-six (56.6%) had no formal education, the findings of the studies implies that many widows have difficulty sustaining themselves.

4.2.7: RELIGION

The different religious affiliations of the widows are presented in Table 45.07

Table 4.07: The Widows by Religion

	IGBO (n_1 = 350)		HAUSA (n_2 = 350)		TOTAL (N = 700)	
Religion	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Christianity	322	91.6	184	52.4	506	72.2
Islam	-	-	143	40.8	143	20.4
Traditional Religion	28	8.4	23	6.8	51	7.3

Total	350	100	350	100	700	100

It can be seen from Table 4.07 above that of the seven hundred subjects sampled, five hundred and six (72.3%) are Christians, one hundred and forty-three (20.4%) are Muslims, while fifty-one (7.3%) are traditional religionists.

Further analysis of the data indicated that three hundred and twenty-two (91.6%) of the Christians were Igbo widows while one hundred and eighty four (52.4%) of the Christians were Hausa widows. One hundred and forty-three (40.8%) of the Hausa widows were Muslims and no Igbo widow stated she was a Muslim. Whereas twenty-eight (8.4%) Igbo widows belonged to traditional religion, twenty-three (6.8%) Hausa widows practised same. The study revealed that there were more Christians than Muslim widows. This could be explained by the fact that some Hausa widows were also Christian whereas no Igbo widow was a Muslim.

4.2.8: EDUCATION

Table 4.08 presents the levels of formal education of the widows.

Table 4.08: Distribution of widows by education

Formal Ed.	Igbo (n_1 = 350)		Hausa (n_2 = 350)		Total (N = 700)	
Level	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
No formal Ed.	115	32.9	281	80.3	396	56.6
Primary	105	30.00	35	10.0	140	20.0
Secondary	55	15.7	17	4.9	72	10.3
Higher Education	75	21.4	17	4.8	92	13.1
Total	350	100	350	100	700	100

Table 4.08 above showed the distribution of the subjects by educational level. It disclosed that of the seven hundred subjects, sampled three hundred and ninety-six (56.6%) had no formal education at all, one hundred and forty (20%) attended primary school, seventy-two (10.3%) went to secondary school, while ninety-two (13.1%) had post secondary education.

This study revealed that more than half of the widows (56.6%) were illiterates. It also showed that there were more educated Igbo than Hausa widows. The phenomenon of mass illiteracy among the widows could be attributed to the fact that the traditional Nigerian society frowned at female education and regarded it as a waste of money since the woman would be married out of the family.

4.2.9: REMARRIAGE

The frequency distribution of the widows who would like to remarry is shown in Table 4.09

Table 4.09: Distribution of widows by possibility of remarriage

	Igbo (n_1 = 350)		Hausa (n_2 = 350)		Total (N = 700)	
Like to Remarry	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	23	6.6	75	21.4	98	14.0
No	291	83.1	179	51.2	470	67.1
Undecided	36	10. 3	96	27.4	132	18.9
Total	350	100	350	100	700	100

Table 4.09 above gave an analysis of the data regarding the subjects' intention to remarry. The result showed that of the seven hundred subjects sampled one hundred and thirty-two (18.9%) were still

undecided, four hundred and seventy (67.1%) had no intentions of remarrying, while ninety eight (14%) wanted to remarry.

4.3 HYPOTHESES TESTING

This section concerns itself with the testing of the seven hypotheses advanced widowhood practices among the Igbos and Hausas. The t-test for independent samples was used for the pair wise comparison of the opinions of the subjects. The .05 confidence level was set for evaluating the hypotheses.

4.3.1

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between Igbo and Hausa widows in their perception of problems associated with cultural widowhood practices.

Table 4.10: Identification of major problems of Igbo and Hausa widows
(N = 700, DF = 698)

Here the mean scores of the major problems encountered by the widows are presented

Problems	Composite score	Igbo (n=350)	Hausa (n = 350)	t-value	p-value
1. Parenting of children alone	x = 3.98;SD=1.31	x = 4.39;SD = 1.00	x = 3.57; SD = 1.45	8.69	.0001
2. In-laws	x = 3.08;SD=1.38	x = 3.21;SD = 1.41	x = 2.95; SD = 1.33	2.44	.0148
3. Financial difficulty	x = 4.06;SD=1.10	x = 4.39; SD = 8.71	x = 3.74; SD = 1.21	8.12	.0001
4. Unemployment	x = 3.28;SD=1.29	x = 3.31;SD = 1.32	x = 3.26; SD = 1.25	0.44	.6608
5. Lack of self help skills	x = 3.46;SD=1.27	x = 3.39; SD = 1.25	x = 3.53; SD = 1.28	1.43	.1545
6. Ill-health	x = 3.17;SD=1.37	x = 3.27;SD = 4.39	x =3. 07; SD = 1.35	1.93	.0541
7. Widowhood cultural practices	x = 3.62;SD=1.34	x = 4.09;SD = 1.07	x = 3.16; SD = 1.41	9.81	.0001
8. Forced remarriage	x = 2.60;SD=1.10	x = 2.82;SD = 1.14	x = 2.38; SD = 1.00	5.43	.0001
9. Loneliness	x = 3.02;SD=1.32	x = 3.35;SD = 1.29	x = 2.69; SD = 1.25	6.84	.0001
10. Men molesting her for sex	x = 3.07;SD=1.31	x = 3.35;SD = 1.26	x = 2.79; SD = 1.30	5.74	.0001

Table 4.10 shows statistically significant differences in the problems of Igbo and Hausa widows in respect of parenting of children (t = 8.691, p. 0.0001) in-law (t = 2.44, p. 0.0148); financial difficulty (t = 8.12, p. 0.0001); cultural practices of widowhood (t = 9.81, p. 0001); forced remarriage (t = 5.43, p = 0.0001); loneliness (t =6.84, p = 0.0001); and men molesting them for sex (t = 5.74, p = 0.0001); problems such as unemployment, lack of self-help skills and ill-health showed no statistically significant differences.

Generally, financial difficulty was the main problem of Igbo and Hausa widows. However, while parenting of children, finance and cultural widowhood practices constituted a major problem to Igbo widows, the Hausa widows experienced such problem on a lesser scale. The mean ratings for these problems for Igbo widows were above 4.0 (Table 4.10) where as the Hausa widows ratings for the same set of problem were less than 4.0 indicating that these were no major problems for them.

Table 4.11: Ages of Igbo and Hausa widows who agreed that the items (1-10) constituted major problems to them.

The ages of the widows and the perceived problem are presented in Table4.11 here.

		Age Category	Hausa %	Igbo %
(1)	Parenting of children alone	Young	63.8	83.1
		Middle	58.0	93.4
		Elderly	70.7	80.3
(2)	In - Laws	Young	44.7	50.7
		Middle	41.4	54.0
		Elderly	52.4	45.5
(3)	Financial difficulties (e.g inability to feed, clothe, pay school fees)	Young	64.9	92.9
		Middle	76.4	75.3
		Elderly	69.5	84.8
(4)	Unemployment	Young	59.6	57.7
		Middle	58.0	55.3
		Elderly	51.2	53.0
(5)	Lack of self help skills	Young	67.0	66.1
		Middle	61.4	61.9
		Elderly	60.9	42.4
(6)	Ill - health	Young	50.0	52.1
		Middle	43.1	53.9
		Elderly	47.6	63.6
(7)	Widowhood cultural practices (e.g. hair scraping, denial of inheritance right, ritual seclusion)	Young	53.1	85.9
		Middle	49.4	81.6
		Elderly	40.2	86.3
(8)	Forced remarriage into late husband=s family	Young	15.8	42.2
		Middle	10.0	30.5
		Elderly	24.3	12.1
(9)	Loneliness	Young	42.5	49.2
		Middle	27.0	52.1
		Elderly	24.4	57.5
(10)	Men Molesting her by asking for sex	Young	50.0	57.7
		Middle	28.7	55.8
		Elderly	17.0	24.2

The number of Hausa widows is: young = 94, middle = 174, elderly = 82; For the Igbo widows is: young = 71, middle = 213, elderly = 66

(1) Parenting of Children alone:

Table 4:11 above shows that parenting of children alone constituted a major problem for more Igbo widows than Hausa widows. For example, when asked whether her in-laws are helping her in training her children, one middle aged Igbo widow (aged 35) said "I sent one of my children to my late husband's elder brother to collect money for his school fees. The boy was not even allowed to enter the house. He was dismissed at the gate like a beggar". While 83.1% of young, 93.1% of the middle aged and 80.3% of the elderly considered it a serious problem, the corresponding proportions for the Hausa widows are 63%, 58% and 70.7% respectively.

The reason for the observed differences between these two ethnic groups is the fact that more Hausa widows (21.4%) like to remarry than Igbo widows (6.6%) (Table 4.09). When Hausa widows remarry, the responsibility of bringing up their children fall on the deceased husband's relatives.

(2) In - Laws:-

The result reveals that more Igbo widows had problems with their in-laws than Hausa widows. This is buttressed by the testimony of one of the Hausa widows. She stated thus;

"I had cordial relationship with my in-laws during the lifetime of my husband and I still

do. They respect me and occasionally they

come to visit me and my children".

However, study also showed that a larger proportion of elderly Hausa widows (52.4%) encountered problems with their in-laws than their Igbo counterparts (45.5%). One major reason why young and middle aged Igbo widows have problems with their in-laws is the issue of inheritance. Even though Igbo customary law does not allow a woman to inherit either from her parents or her husband, the Igbo widow is not happy with that legislation. Hence, the conflict between her and her in-laws over the distribution of the deceased husband's property.

For the Hausa muslim, the law provides that one eighth of a man's property be inheritd by his widow. This arrangement forestalls any possible conflict between the Hausa widow and her in-laws in matters of property sharing. The explanation for the 52.4% of elderly Hausa widows who indicated that they had problems with their in-laws could be attributed to neglect and lack of financial support by their in-laws. It must be stated that, in most cases the Hausa widow only gets a meager share that cannot sustain her for life. In the case of non-Muslim Hausa widows, there is little or no conflict between them and their in-laws because the in-laws normally allow them to continue to farm on the lands of their deceased husbands.

(3) Financial difficulties:-

Table 4.11 reveals that more Igbo widows (91%) suffered financial difficulties than Hausa widows (70.2%). Again, this is because, unlike the Hausa widows, Igbo widows are denied inheritance rights by customary law. To compound the problem the Igbo widow in most cases, has to feed, clothe, pay school fees and medical expenses for herself and her children all by herself.

(4) Unemployment:-

Remarkably, unemployment constituted a major problem for both Igbo and Hausa widows (55%). The reason for this similarity is that more than half (56.6%) of both Igbo and Hausa widows were non-literates (Table 4:08). Secondly, the traditional Nigerian mentality that a woman should not be allowed to work outside the home contributed to the unemployment status of most of the widows.

(5) Lack of self-help skills:-

In respect of this item, there is a marked similarity in the response pattern of both Igbo (56.8%) and Hausa (63.1%) widows. Both groups agreed that they suffered due to lack of self-help skills. However, a larger proportion of elderly Hausa widows (60.9%) regarded lack of self-help skills as a major problem than elderly Igbo widows (42.4%). The explanation for this variation is the fact that Igbos take adequate care of their elderly persons more than the Hausas. Punishments like abuses,

fines, ostracism by extended family members await an adult Igbo person who neglects the care of his or her elderly parents. On the contrary, such a collective reprimand of a defaulting adult child by members of his or her extended family is not common among the Hausas.

(6) Ill - health:-

A larger proportion of Igbo widows (56%) than the Hausa widows (43%) considered ill - health as a major problem. This difference can be explained by the fact that Igbo widows are more exposed to negative and harmful aspects of cultural widowhood practices (e.g. drinking the water used in bathing the husband's corpse, not being allowed to bathe for 28 days, etc) than Hausa widows. For example, a 35 year old Igbo widow who was nursing a baby when her husband died confessed that "I was not even allowed to bathe or change the single wrapper I was given for the confinement. Under this condition I had to breastfeed my baby". Furthermore, they are more exposed to the hazards of life as they try to fend for their children than their Hausa counterparts.

(7) Cultural widowhood practices:-

There is a significant difference in the response of Igbo and Hausa widows to their respective cultural widowhood observances.. While Igbo widows strongly agreed (84.6%) that these practices constituted a major problem to them, only 47.5% of their Hausa counterparts simply agreed. Understandably, these cultural practices would pose more problems to

Igbo widows because they have been subjected to more rigorous rituals than the Hausas. A typical example of such oppressive widowhood practices is the issue of inheritance. One elderly Igbo widow (70 years) exclaimed;

You can't believe it! I was dispossessed
of all I laboured for together with my husband
to accumulate simply because God prevented
me from having children.

In contrast to this, an Hausa widow (65 years) reported that she and her children retained the farmland allocated to them by her deceased husband while he was alive.

Among the Hausas, it is the younger widows who felt more affected than the middle aged and the elderly (53.1%, 49.4%, 40.2% respectively). The reason for this is that the trauma of these practices would still be fresh in the memory of younger Hausa widows than the elderly ones. Besides, it is the elderly widows who enforce the rituals and monitor the younger ones to ensure compliance.

(8) Forced remarriage:-

Table 4.11 above shows that more Igbo widows (28.2%) suffered as a result of forced remarriage into the late husband's family than Hausa widows (17.0%). The reason for this is that under customary law the Igbo widow is expected to be inherited by one of the relations of the

deceased husband. Refusal to accept the marriage brings the widow untold hardship. Such a widow usually has her farmland, palm tree, coconut trees, etc confiscated by her in-laws. Young widows tend to suffer this more than elderly widows.

Hausa widows, on the other hand are not compelled to remarry into the late husband=s family. However, 24.3% of elderly Hausa widows indicated that >forced= remarriage was a problem to them whereas 12.1% of their Igbo counterparts indicated the same. It is surprising that Hausa widows who are not forced to remarry should respond in this way. The reason for this discrepancy can be explained by the fact that economic hardships can force them into remarriage. If these elderly widows are not supported by their adult children, they may be forced to remarry.

(9) Loneliness:-

There is a marked difference in the response pattern of Igbo and Hausa widows to this item. Loneliness constituted a major problem to the Igbo widows (53%) while the corresponding proportion for the Hausa widows (31.3%). This is explained by the fact that most Hausa widows remarry soon after the mourning period (Takaba) whereas the Igbo widow waits for a longer time. Also, an Igbo widow is generally suspected to be responsible for the death of her husband. Hence, people tend to avoid her. Even her female friends would keep her at arms length for fear of snatching their husband from them.

(10) Men molesting the widow by asking for sex

The results shows that Igbo widows encountered problems from men harassing them for sexual intercourse than Hausa widows. This is particularly true of young and middle aged Igbo widows (55.7% and 55.8% respectively) as against 24.2% elderly Igbo widows. Worthy of note is the fact that a similar proportion of young Igbo and Hausa widows (57.7% and 50% respectively) had the same problem. It must be stated that generally Hausa culture prohibits close interaction between male and female. This explains the reason why fewer Hausa widows are molested for sex by men than Igbo widows. In respect of 50% of young Hausa widows who complained of harassment by men, the said harassment may not be for illicit sexual affair but for remarriage. This is

because the Koran allows men to propose marriage openly to Muslim widows while they are mourning their late husband.

In concluding this section, the study revealed that financial difficulty is severe and a common problem for both Hausa and Igbo widows. It also showed that more Igbo widows were subjected to negative and oppressive cultural widowhood practices than their Hausa counterparts. Furthermore, the section revealed that more Igbo widows had problems with parenting of children alone, in-laws, ill-health, forced remarriage, loneliness, and sexual molestation than the Hausa widows.

The implication of this result is that more Igbo widows need counselling than their Hausa contemporaries, counsellors should endeavour to identify the critical periods during the stage of widowhood so as to assist the widow in good time to adjust and behave in a more personally satisfying manner.

Hypothesis 11 There is no significant difference between Igbo and Hausa widows in their perception of factors influencing cultural widowhood practices in Igbo and Hausa States.

Table 4.12: Identification of major factors responsible for widowhood practices
(= 700, DF = 698)

Table 4.12 shows the mean scores of the major factors responsible for widowhood practices

Problems	Composite score	Igbo (n = 350)	Hausa (n = 350)	X Diff	t-value	P-value
1. Culture	x = 4.13;SD = 1.17	x = 4.29;SD = 1.06	x = 3.97;SD = 1.24	.31	3.56	.0004
2. Religion	x = 3.10;SD = 1.39	x = 3.23;SD = 1.34	x = 2.97;SD = 1.47	.27	2.53	.0113
3. Cosmology	x = 2.91;SD = 1.40	x = 2.96;SD = 1.43	x = 2.87;SD = 1.36	.09	0.90	.3726
4. Illiteracy	x = 3.42;SD = 1.36	x = 3.57;SD = 1.33	x = 3.48;SD = 1.38	.11	1.03	.3042
5. Poverty	x = 3.23;SD = 1.38	x = 3.49,SD = 1.32	x = 2.97;SD = 1.38	.52	5.05	.0001
6. Umuada (daughters of man's lineage)	x = 3.25;SD = 1.42	x = 3.85;SD = 1.26	x = 2.65;SD = 1.31	1.20	12.28	.0001
7. Male dominated society	x = 3.49;SD = 1.31	x = 3.10;SD = 1.36	x = 3.88;SD = 1.11	.78	8.30	.0001
8. Female passivity	x = 3.17;SD = 1.36	x = 2.79;SD = 1.35	x = 3.55;SD = 1.25	.76	7.71	.0001
9. Low concept of women	x = 3.25;SD = 1.32	x = 3.14;SD = 1.35	x = 3.35;SD = 1.27	.21	2.13	.0001
10. Extended family system	x = 3.19;SD = 1.35	x = 3.22;SD = 1.36	x = 3.17;SD = 1.32	.05	0.53	.0358

The results obtained in Table 4.12 show statistically significant differences in the opinions of Igbo and Hausa widows in respect of the following factors: - Culture, religion, poverty, daughters of the deceased's lineage, male dominated society, female passivity and low concept of womanhood. The t-values obtained for the above factors were 3.56, (p =0 .0004); 2.53 (p = 0.0113); 5.05 (p = 0.0001); 12.28 (p = 0.0001); 8.30 (p = 0.0001); 7.71 (p = 0.0001) and 2.13 (p = 0.0338) respectively. From the composite score culture represented the major factor responsible for widowhood traditional practices in Igbo and Hausa communities.

The perception of the widows regarding the influence of factors such as cosmology, illiteracy and extended family system did not differ significantly. The t - values obtained for these factors were 0.89 (p = 0.3726); 1.03 (p = 0.3042); and 0.53 (p = 0.5941) respectively.

Hypothesis 111 There is no significant difference between Igbo and Hausa widows in their perception of the effects of widowhood.

Specifically, the psychological, social, and economic effects of widowhood were examined. Hence, hypothesis three was divided into three sub-hypotheses as follows:-

Sub HO3a: There is no significant difference in the psychological effects of widowhood practices on Igbo and Hausa widows.

Table 4.13: Psychological effects of cultural widowhood practices.
Here the mean scores of the psychological effects of cultural widowhood practices on the widows are presented.

Psychological Effects	Composite score	Igbo (n = 350)	Hausa (n =350)	X Diff	t-value	P-value
1. Lack of a sense of belonging	x = 3.31;SD = 1.33	x = 3.25;SD = 1.29	x = 3.36;SD = 1.37	.10	1.05	.2942
2. A sense of low self-image	x = 3.36;SD = 1.29	x = 3.53;SD = 1.24	x = 3.20;SD = 1.32	.32	3.33	.0009
3. Sense of depression	x = 3.82;SD = 1.19	x = 3.76;SD = 1.18	x = 3.89;SD = 1.19	.13	1.46	.1442
4. Sense of rejection	x = 3.19;SD = 1.36	x = 3.45;SD = 1.33	x = 2.92;SD = 1.32	.54	5.34	.0001
5. A sense of insecurity	x = 3.33;SD = 1.35	x = 3.72;SD = 1.25	x = 2.94;SD = 1.32	.78	8.01	.0001
6. Sleeplessness	x = 3.46;SD = 1.37	x = 3.66;SD = 1.36	x = 3.26;SD = 1.34	.40	3.93	.0001
7. A sense of guilt	x = 2.89;SD = 1.27	x = 2.76;SD = 1.15	x = 3.03;SD = 1.36	.27	2.87	.0042
8. Illness	x = 3.08;SD = 1.35	x = 3.11;SD = 1.33	x = 3.06;SD = 1.36	.05	0.48	.06345
9. Regrets about ever marrying	x = 2.91;SD = 1.22	x = 2.97;SD = 1.19	x = 2.84;SD = 1.23	.13	1.46	.1440
10. Hatred for her in-law	x = 2.59;SD = 1.22	x = 2.80;SD = 1.29	x = 2.38;SD = 1.10	.42	4.62	.0001

The results in Table 4.13 above show that the perceptions of Igbo and Hausa widows differed significantly in respect of the following psychological factors: a sense of low self-image ($t = 5.34$, $p = 0.0001$), a sense of insecurity ($t = 8.01$, $p = 0.0001$); sleeplessness ($t = 3.93$, $p = 0.0001$); a sense of guilt ($t = 2.87$, $p = 0.0042$) hatred for in-laws ($t = 4.62$, $p = 0.0001$) and a sense of rejection ($t = 5.34$, $p = 0.0001$).

The widows showed no significant differences in their perception of the following psychological effects of cultural widowhood practices:- a sense of belonging ($t = 1.05$, $p = 0.2942$); a sense of depression ($t = 1.46$, $p = 0.1442$); illness ($t = 0.48$, $p = 0.6345$) and regrets about ever marrying ($t = 1.46$, $p = 1440$).

Table 4.14 Ages of Igbo and Hausa widows who agreed that they experienced the following psychological effects due to cultural widowhood practices.

This Table presents the psychological effects of cultural widowhood practices on the widows according to three age categories : Young, Middle-aged and Elderly.

		Category	Hausa %	Igbo %
(1)	Lack of sense of belonging	Young	60.6	46.4
		Middle	62.0	52.1
		Elderly	47.5	43.9
(2)	A sense of low self-image	Young	43.6	26.7
		Middle	30.3	34.7
		Elderly	69.5	36.3
(3)	A sense of depression	Young	12.7	23.9
		Middle	25.2	24.8
		Elderly	25.6	30.3
(4)	A sense of rejection	Young	52.1	64.7
		Middle	35.0	60.5
		Elderly	25.6	59.0
(5)	A sense of insecurity	Young	44.6	21.1
		Middle	60.9	25.8
		Elderly	74.9	34.9
(6)	Sleeplessness	Young	46.8	29.5
		Middle	42.5	26.7
		Elderly	48.7	56.0
(7)	A sense of guilt	Young	63.8	38.0
		Middle	43.5	30.9
		Elderly	42.6	15.1
(8)	Illness	Young	40.4	54.9
		Middle	48.8	49.7
		Elderly	48.7	39.3
(9)	Regrets about ever marrying	Young	29.7	53.5
		Middle	40.2	36.6
		Elderly	25.6	16.6
(10)	Hatred for her in-law by asking for sex	Young	18.0	49.2
		Middle	17.2	34.2
		Elderly	13.4	10.6

The n for Hausa widows is: young = 94, middle = 174, elderly = 82; The n for Igbo widows is: young = 71, middle = 213, elderly = 66

How the ages of the widows of the two ethnic communities influenced their responses to the items listed in the Table are discussed below.

(1) Lack of sense of belonging:-

Table 4.14 above shows that a larger proportion of Hausa widows (56.3%) experienced a lack of sense of belonging than their Igbo counterpart (47.4%). Part of the reason for this observed difference is the presence of Umuada and the long funeral ceremonies that accompany death among the Igbos. The Umuada (daughters of the deceased' slineage) provide support services to the Igbo widow during her seclusion period as well as during funeral activities. Also her relations and friends bring gifts to her and spend days and nights with her.

The Hausa widow, on the other hand does not enjoy such a support system from this type of women group. Furthermore, Hausa funeral activities are very brief. It is no wonder then that Hausa widows should lack a sense of belonging more than Igbo widows.

(2) A sense of low self-image:-

Generally, a small proportion of Igbo widows (32.5%) experienced low self-image as compared to Hausa widows (47.8%). However, there is a marked difference in the experience of elderly Hausa and Igbo widows.

While 69.5% of elderly Hausa widows suffered low self-image, 36.3% of elderly Igbo widows suffered same.

To explain these observed variations between Igbo and Hausa widows, it is important to point out that a lot of factors give rise to a feeling of low self-image, for example, isolation, poverty, low level of formal education, neglect, lack of sense of belonging, etc. Table 4.08 above indicates that more Igbo widows have formal education than Hausa widows. Furthermore, the extended family system is stronger is stronger among Igbos than Hausas. Through this system, joint efforts are made by the extended family members to cater for the needs of every bereaved member. Therefore, since more Hausa widows have lower levels of formal education and lacked a sense of belonging than Igbo widows, it follows that they experience more low self-image than their Igbo counterpart.

(3) A sense of depression:-

A small proportion of both Igbo and Hausa widows stated that they suffered depression, Hausa (21.1%) and Igbo (26.3%)as a result of traditional widowhood practices. The reason for this observed similarity could be attributed to cultural orientation. Both Igbo and Hausa widows regarded culture as the major factor responsible for widowhood practices(Table 4.12). By their not manifesting deep depression following

these cultural practices, it means that they have come to accept traditional widowhood practices as part and parcel of their culture.

This is supported by the statement of a 63 year old Igbo widow when she was asked whether she liked the widowhood practices. She replied: "What can I do? I was born into it; I cannot change it".

(4) A sense of rejection:-

A greater proportion of Igbo widows (61.4%) indicated that they suffered rejection as a result of widowhood practices while only 37.5% of Hausa widows reported the same. The reason for this disparity could be attributed to the fact that Igbo widows are subjected to more inhuman widowhood rites and rituals than their Hausa contemporaries. Such practices include routine wailing, cropping of hair, not bathing during seclusion, drinking of water used in bathing the deceased husband's body etc.

(5) A sense of insecurity:-

A greater proportion of Hausa widows (60.1%) experienced insecurity than their Igbo counterpart (27.2%). This was particularly true of elderly Hausa widows (74.9%). It must be explained that psychological insecurity arising out of widowhood practices can be generated by illiteracy, lack of sense of belonging, low self-image, fears and so on. From the foregoing discussion, it has been established that Igbo widows were more educated, experienced more sense of belonging

and had more positive self-image than Hausa widows. All these therefore account for the observed difference between Igbo and Hausa widows in respect of sense of insecurity.

(6) Sleeplessness:-

More Hausa widows (46%) experienced sleeplessness than their Igbo counterparts (34%). This result is significant because one would have expected Igbo widows to feel more sleeplessness than Hausa widows owing to the more hazardous widowhood practices to which they were subjected. The reason for this discrepancy is that Igbo widows have more support systems (e.g. Umuada, in-laws, relations, friends, Church organisations) than Hausa widows who assist them in diffusing feeling of sleeplessness. Significantly, among Igbo widows the elderly ones had problems with sleeping, 56% of them as compared to 29.5% young and 26.7% middle-aged Igbo widows experienced sleeplessness. Among the Hausa widows too more elderly widows (48.7%) suffered sleeplessness in comparison to young (46.8%) and middle aged widows (42.5%). The reason for this observed difference between elderly Igbo and Hausa widows and their young and middle aged counterparts is because naturally, elderly people sleep less hours than other age groups. In addition, elderly widows, particularly those above 80 years, always think and speak about their own death so as to rejoin their husbands.

(7) A sense of guilt:-

A greater proportion of Hausa widows (56.6%) felt a sense of guilt than Igbo widows (27.3%). It is not surprising that few Igbo widows expressed guilt because majority of them must have confessed their innocence regarding the death of their husband before the Umuada or relations of the deceased husband as required by Igbo culture.

(8) Illness:-

The percentage of Hausa widows (45.9%) who experienced illness is similar to Igbo widows (47.6%). The observed similarity is due to the fact that sickness transcends culture and ethnicity. In addition, both groups stated financial difficulty as their major problem as indicated in Table 4.11. Poverty can worsen a person=s health.

(9) Regrets about ever marrying:-

Both Igbo and Hausa widows expressed regrets about ever marrying. The observed difference is not significant, 31.8% of Hausa widows as compared to 35.5% of Igbo widows stated that they regretted ever marrying. In both ethnic groups, however, more young Igbo widows (53.5%) regretted ever marrying. The reason for the positions of the young Igbo widows is because of the traumatic effects of widowhood ceremonies they experienced.

(10) Hatred for her in-laws:-

A larger proportion of Igbo widows (31.3%) expressed hatred for in-laws than Hausa widows (16.2%). Among the Igbo widows more younger ones (49.2%) stated that they hated their in-laws than the middle aged (34.2%) and elderly (10.6%). The plausible reason for the significant difference between the responses of Igbo and Hausa widows is that in-laws dispossess Igbo women upon the demise of their husbands. Relating her experience with her deceased husband's relations, a middle aged Igbo widow (35 years) stated as follows;

The first shock I got as a soon as my husband died was that I was summoned before an assembly of my deceased husband's relations to disclose where all the property of my late husband was.

This kind of treatment is buttressed by the fact that Igbo customary law denies an Igbo woman the right to inheritance. In contrast, a middle aged Hausa widow (37 years) reported that she was living peacefully with her in-laws. She was still allowed to cultivate the farm given to her by her husband while he was alive. She did not suffer dispossession.

From the stated comparative analysis of psychological effects of cultural widowhood practices on Hausa and Igbo widows, it can be

concluded that, in general, a greater proportion of both sets of widows did not experience low self-image, rejection, depression, insecurity, regrets about marrying, sleeplessness, loss of sense of belonging, guilt, as a result of widowhood rituals. The section also revealed that out of the small proportion of Igbo and Hausa widows who said they experienced the aforementioned psychological factors, Hausa widows were worse affected as regards loss of sense of belonging, low self-image, insecurity, sleeplessness, guilt, while Igbo widows indicated hatred for their in-laws and rejection by the deceased relations.

The expressions of loss of sense of belonging, low self-image, insecurity, sleeplessness, guilt, hatred for in-laws, and rejection are manifestations of a person's feelings. Feelings affect a person's behaviour. It behooves the counsellor to focus on these identified feelings of Igbo and Hausa widows in such a way as to help them effect satisfactory adjustment to their new state of life.

Sub – Ho3 b: There is no significant difference in the social effects of widowhood practices on Igbo and Hausa widows.

Table 4.15: Social Effects of Cultural Widowhood Practices.
(N = 700, DF = 698)

The mean scores of the social effects of cultural widowhood practices on the widows are presented here.

Social Effects	Composite score	Igbo (n = 350)	Hausa (n = 350)	X Diff	t-value	P-value
1. Lose respect in the society	x = 3.43;SD = 1.29	x = 3.59;SD = 1.29	x = 3.27;SD = 1.37	.33	3.39	.0008
2. Live isolated life	x = 3.53;SD = 1.23	x = 3.37;SD = 1.23	x = 3.69;SD = 1.20	.32	3.44	.0006
3. A suspect	x = 2.70;SD = 1.21	x = 3.15;SD = 1.19	x = 2.26;SD = 1.04	.88	10.39	.0001
4. Lose protection	x = 3.10;SD = 1.34	x = 3.67;SD = 1.29	x = 2.65;SD = 1.18	1.03	10.97	.0001
5. More involved in religious activities	x = 3.77;SD = 1.27	x = 3.87;SD = 1.22	x = 3.67;SD = 1.31	.20	2.09	.0375
6. More integrated into deceased family	x = 3.59;SD = 1.27	x = 3.20;SD = 1.32	x = 3.98;SD = 1.06	.78	8.59	.0001
7. Closer to her own relatives than before	x = 4.06;SD = 1.17	x = 4.00;SD = 1.25	x = 4.12;SD = 1.05	.35	4.06	.0001
8. More attached to children	x = 4.19;SD = 1.09	x = 4.30;SD = 1.06	x = 4.09;SD = 1.11	.23	2.64	.0085
9. Reduced social status	x = 3.30;SD = 1.28	x = 3.61;SD = 1.23	x = 2.99;SD = 1.24	.62	6.61	.0001
10. Suffer role confusion	x = 3.06;SD = 1.38	x = 3.16;SD = 1.34	x = 2.95;SD = 1.40	.21	2.01	.0453

Table 4.15 above showed that Igbo and Hausa widows differed significantly in their perception of the social effects of cultural widowhood practices. All the t - values obtained were above the critical value of 1.96. Although Hausa and Igbo widows differed significantly in their rating of the social effects of widowhood practices, the observed differences were more in terms of the degree of importance attached to the factors rather than differences in opinion.

It could be observed from Table 4.15 that widowhood practices caused the widows in both cultures to be closer to their relatives. The widows also became more attached to their children as a consequence of cultural widowhood practices. Indeed following widowhood, frequency of interaction with their own relatives and their children increased. The mean ratings for these items by widows from both ethnic groups were above 4.00.

Table 4.16: Ages Of Igbo and Hausa Widows who agreed that they Experienced the Following Social Effects due to Cultural Widowhood Practices

The following Table shows the social effects of cultural widowhood practices on the widows according to age categories

		Category	Hausa %	Igbo %
(1)	Lose respect in the society	Young	37.2	36.6
		Middle	40.2	38.5
		Elderly	65.8	50.0
(2)	Live isolated life	Young	19.1	32.3
		Middle	26.4	46.4
		Elderly	46.3	53.0
(3)	Suspected of killing their husband	Young	17.0	45.0
		Middle	10.3	44.1
		Elderly	2.4	34.8
(4)	Loss of protection	Young	43.6	71.8
		Middle	25.8	68.5
		Elderly	19.5	63.6
(5)	Became more involved in religious activities	Young	72.3	80.2
		Middle	71.8	79.3
		Elderly	71.9	71.2
(6)	Became more integrated into the deceased family	Young	79.7	53.5
		Middle	87.3	55.3
		Elderly	87.8	45.4
(7)	Got closer to her own relatives than before	Young	81.8	90.1
		Middle	86.2	80.2
		Elderly	91.4	51.5
(8)	Got more attached to her children	Young	90.4	85.9
		Middle	82.7	44.1
		Elderly	90.2	92.4
(9)	Have reduced social status	Young	44.6	32.3
		Middle	55.1	30.5
		Elderly	68.2	39.2
(10)	Suffered role confusion	Young	46.8	35.2
		Middle	50.5	46.4
		Elderly	64.6	59.0

The n for Hausa widows is: young = 94, middle = 174, elderly = 82; The n for Igbo widows is: young = 71, middle = 213, elderly = 66

The items presented in the Table 4.16 are discussed individually in order to ascertain whether the ages of the widows in the two communities influenced the social effects of cultural widowhood practices on Igbo and Hausa widows.

(1) Loss of respect in society:-

There is a close similarity in the response pattern of both ethnic groups to this item. 41.7% of Igbo widows as compared to 47.4% of Hausa widows stated that they lost respect as a result of traditional widowhood practices. The reason for this observed similarity is because African culture frowns at single adult persons. The general view in Africa, especially in Nigeria, about ladies without husbands or men without a wives is that of irresponsibility.

(2) Live isolated life:-

Table 4.16 shows that a larger percentage of Igbo widows (43.5%) lived in isolation than Hausa widows (30.6%). The difference is more pronounced between middle aged Igbo and Hausa widows (46.4% and 26.4% respectively). Igbo widows suffer ostracism or isolation more than their Hausa counterpart is two-fold:-

First, other women are afraid to visit them lest they snatch their husbands; secondly, men keep their distance from widows for fear of being accused of having an illicit sexual affair with them. Unlike Igbo

culture, Hausa culture and particularly the Koran permits a widow to enter into marriage negotiations even during mourning.

(3) A suspect:-

More Igbo widows (39.6%) agreed that cultural widowhood practices made them look as if they were responsible for their husband=s death than their Hausa counterparts (9.9%). Widows are subjected to the inhuman treatment of either confessing before a shrine, a group of elders, or drinking the water used in bathing the deceased husband's body as a way of proving their innocence regarding the death of their husband. A 70 year old Igbo widow, the first out of five wives, reported that she was accuse of being a witch and of knowing something about the death of their husband by her co-wives and the in-laws. Consequently, she was compelled by the relatives of her deceased to swear in the presence of a group of elders of the clan. Hausa widows are not so suspected or maltreated.

(4) Loss of protection:-

A greater percentage of Igbo widows (67.9%) as compared to 29.7% of Hausa widows lost protection as a result of cultural widowhood practices. This is more pronounced among the young Igbo widows (71.8%). The marked difference can be explained by the fact that Hausa culture gives more protection to married women than Igbo culture. This explains why young Igbo widows are more vulnerable.

(5) Involvement in religious activities:-

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of Igbo widows as compared to 71.3% of Hausa widows became more involved in religious activities. The observed similarity between the two groups in their response to this item can be explained by the fact that they saw God or Allah as their source of strength and hope. According to them they turned to God for solution or comfort. In addition, they received support from different groups in the church. A Hausa Christian widow stated;

> " I must thank God for the material and psychologically support I got from members of zumunta mata (women wing of the church). Since the death of my husband, they have been visiting me on regularly. They usually make cash donations, foodstuff e.t.c".

Similarly, a middle aged Igbo widow also testified that she received foodstuffs from her local church twice every year.

(6) Become more integrated into the deceased family:-

There is a sharp difference in the response of Igbo and Hausa widows to this item. While 84.9% of Hausa widows said they became more integrated into their deceased family only 51.4% of Igbo widows said the same. Specifically, 45.4% of elderly Igbo widows as against 87.8% of their Hausa counterpart became integrated into the deceased family. Again the custom of dispossessing the Igbo widow by the

deceased family is responsible for the observed difference. Such a denial of inheritance rights always created friction and sour relationship between the Igbo

widows and the members of the deceased family.

(7) Get closer to her own relatives than before:-

A greater percentage of Hausa widows (86.5%) felt they got closer to their own relatives than Igbo widows (73.9%). Specifically, it is interesting to note that 91.4% of elderly Hausa widows as compared to only 51.5% of their Igbo counterpart stated that they were closer to their own relatives after the death of their husbands. One would have expected a larger proportion of Igbo widows to be closer to their own relatives than the result showed due to the maltreatment they suffered from in-laws (e.g. dispossession).

This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that, it is easier for Hausa widows to either remarry or to return to their natal home than it is for Igbo widows. For example, a middle aged Igbo widow complained that, two men promised to remarry her and both of them disappointed her.

(8) Get more attached to her children:

Table 4.16 showed that a large proportion of Hausa widows (87.7%) became more attached to their children than Igbo widows (74.1%). However, only 44.1% of middle aged Igbo widows as against

82.7% of their Hausa counterparts got more attached to their children. The other two age sets in both ethnic groups are similarly attached to their children.

The reason for the marked distinction between middle aged Igbo and Hausa widows is because the middle aged Igbo widow is busy looking for money to take care of the family needs.

(9) Have reduced social status:-

A larger proportion of Hausa widows (55.9%) stated that they experienced reduced social status than their Igbo counterpart (34.0%). This is particularly true of elderly Hausa widows (68.2%). The explanation for this difference is the Hausa culture, especially the Islamic system of Purdah, which restricts the movement or social interaction of married women. The effect would be worse for the elderly Hausa widows who would have the added problem of loneliness, illness and bodily weakness arising from old age.

(10) Suffer role confusion:-

More Hausa widows (53.9%) suffered role confusion than their Igbo counterpart (46.8%). The observed difference is not very significant. Thus, the apparent similarity between Igbo and Hausa widows in their expression of role confusion is as a result of reorganisation of roles and relationships which widowhood produces. There is also the general lack of cultural expectations regarding the proper role of the widows. This

role confusion is responsible, to a large extent, for the withdrawal of the widow from public activities.

In general, it can be concluded that a large proportion of Igbo and Hausa widows did not suffer societal disrespect, isolation, role confusion or reduced social status as a result of cultural widowhood practices. Those who said they experienced these problems were the elderly among both the Hausa and Igbo. Hausa widows were mostly affected. The implications of this finding for counselling is that counsellors should encourage elderly widows to interact with their significant others and social environment. The social environment should be in keeping with their interest and needs.

Sub – HO3 C: There is no significant difference in the economic effects of cultural widowhood practices suffered by widows in Igbo and Hausa communities

Table 4.17: Economic Effects of cultural Widowhood Practices
(n = 700, DF = 698)

Table 4.17 presents the mean scores of the economic effects of cultural widowhood practices on the widows

Economic Effects	Composite score	Igbo (n = 350)	Hausa (n = 350)	X Diff	t-value	P-value
1. The death of husband causes serious decrease in family income	x = 4.09;SD = 1.21	x = 4.38;SD = 1.06	x = 3.80;SD = 1.29	.58	6.50	.0001
2. Most widows depend on charity for survival	x = 3.45;SD = 1.33	x = 3.61;SD = 1.23	x = 3.29;SD = 1.40	.33	3.29	.0010
3. Economic hardship forces many widows to sexual promiscuity.	x = 3.40;SD = 1.33	x = 3.61;SD = 1.22	x = 3.18;SD = 1.41	.43	4.28	.0001
4. Lack of adequate income is the cause of poor health in widow headed families.	x = 3.89;SD = 1.12	x = 4.01;SD = 1.02	x = 3.78;SD = 1.16	.23	2.75	.0061
5. Financial distress aggravates the psychological stress of widows	x = 3.95;SD = 1.15	x = 3.98;SD = 1.18	x = 3.92;SD =1.12	.05	0.63	.5324
6. Most widows are unable to pay rent and medical bills	x = 3.79;SD = 1.31	x = 4.15;SD = 1.08	x = 3.43;SD = 1.31	.72	7.95	.0001
7. Most widows are supported economically by the deceased relatives.	x = 2.98;SD = 1.28	x = 3.05;SD = 1.19	x = 2.92;SD = 1.36	.13	1.33	.1829

Economic Effects	Composite score	Igbo (n = 350)	Hausa (n = 350)	X Diff	t-value	P-value
8. Unemployment and lack of self-help skills are the causes of economic woes of widows	x = 3.81;SD = 1.19	x = 3.78;SD = 1.20	x = 3.83;SD = 1.19	.05	0.54	.5909
9. Low income forces many widows to sell their personal effects, e.g. shoes, clothes, e.t.c.	x =3.80;SD = 1.23	x = 3.96;SD = 1.19	x = 3.64;SD = 1.26	.32	3.43	.0006
10. Widows suffer because they are not allowed to inherit the property of their deceased husband	x = 3.81;SD = 1.23	x = 4.00;SD = 1.17	x = 3.64;SD = 1.26	.36	3.82	.0001

From the results in Table 4.17 above it could be observed that there were significant differences in the economic effects suffered by Igbo and Hausa widows. While the death of a husband caused serious decrease in income among Igbo widows (mean = 4.38, SD = 1.06) this was not the case among the Hausa widows (mean 3.80, SD =1.29). Similarly, lack of adequate income caused poor health in widow-headed Igbo families (mean 4.01, SD = 1.07); most Igbo widows were unable to pay their rents and medical bills (mean = 4.15, SD = 1.08); Igbo widows also suffered because they were not allowed to inherit all the property of their deceased husbands (mean = 4.00, SD = 1.17). These economic problems were not as severe among Hausa widows as they were among Igbo widows. The mean ratings of these economic effects by Hausa widows were below 4.00.

Table 4.18: Ages of Igbo and Hausa Widows who Agreed that they Experienced the Following Economic Effects due to Cultural Widowhood Practices.

The economic effects of widowhood on the widows according to their ages are presented here.

		Category	Hausa %	Igbo %
(1)	The death of your husband caused serious decrease in your family income	Young	89.3	97.1
		Middle	71.2	90.6
		Elderly	51.2	75.7
(2)	Most widows depend on charity for survival	Young	47.8	25.3
		Middle	44.2	27.2
		Elderly	34.1	48.4
(3)	Economic hardship forces widows to sexual promiscuity	Young	32.9	30.9
		Middle	48.8	30.9
		Elderly	69.5	45,4
(4)	Lack of adequate income is the cause of poor health in widow - headed families	Young	82.9	85.9
		Middle	74.7	86.3
		Elderly	64.5	68.1
(5)	Financial distress aggravates the psychological stress of widows	Young	81.9	83.0
		Middle	80.4	78.8
		Elderly	80.7	69.6
(6)	Most widows are unable to pay house rent, medical bill, etc.	Young	72.3	90.1
		Middle	64.9	90.1
		Elderly	64.6	75.7
(7)	Most widows are supported economically by the deceased relatives	Young	44.6	40.8
		Middle	46.5	42.2
		Elderly	30.4	42.4
(8)	Unemployment and lack of self-help skills are the causes of the economic woes of widows	Young	79.7	85.9
		Middle	74.7	82.6
		Elderly	76.8	57.5
(9)	Low income forces many widows to sell their personal effects such as clothes, Jewelry, etc	Young	22.3	23.9
		Middle	29.8	15.9
		Elderly	43.9	27.2
(10)	Widows suffer because they are not allowed to inherit all the property of their deceased husbands	Young	70.2	78.8
		Middle	97.5	82.1
		Elderly	57.3	77.2

The n for Hausa widows is: young = 94, middle = 174, elderly = 82; The n for Igbo widows is: young = 71, middle = 213, elderly = 66

The results in Table 4.18 are discussed here.

(1) Serious decrease in family income:-

Table 4.18 shows that 87.8% of Igbo widows encountered serious decrease in family income as compared to 70.6% of Hausa widows. Specifically, while 75.7% of elderly Igbo widows suffered economically as a result of the death of their husband only 51.2% of their Hausa counterpart suffered same. The reason for this significant difference between the responses of the two ethnic groups is the fact that Igbo widows have no inheritance rights and the Hausa widows have.

(2) Dependence on charity for survival:-

Also, many Hausa widows depend on charity for survival, while the Igbo widows must work hard to survive. More Hausa widows (42.0%) expressed their dependence on charity for survival than Igbo widows (33.6%). Among the Hausa widows, the younger ones (47.8%) were more affected, but among the Igbo widows, it was the elderly ones (48.4%). One would have expected more Igbo widows than Hausa widows to depend on charity for survival because the Igbo widows have no right to inherit their late husband=s property while the Hausa widows do have a right. The explanation for this discrepancy is that Hausa culture encourages begging, while Igbo culture frowns at it. The Igbo widow would prefer to work than to depend on charity for survival.

(3) Sexual promiscuity:-

Table 4.18 shows that more Hausa widows (50.4%) agreed that economic hardship forces many widows to engage in sexual promiscuity than Igbo widows (35.7%). Specifically, 65% of elderly Hausa widows accepted this assertion as compared to 45.4% of their Igbo counterparts. The reason for this marked difference in the opinions of the two ethnic groups could be personal belief and upbringing rather than cultural or religious orientation since neither Islam, Christianity or traditional religion encourages sexual promiscuity as a means of providing for one=s livelihood.

(4) Poor health in widow-headed families:-

Both Igbo and Hausa widows agreed that lack of adequate income is the cause of poor health in widow-headed families. The percentages are 80.1% and 75.7% for Igbo and Hausa widows respectively. This observed similarity can be explained by the fact that sustenance of good health requires money. Both Igbo and Hausa widows regarded financial difficulty as one of their major problems (Table 4.11).

(5) Financial distress aggravates the psychological stress of widows:-

The percentage of Hausa widows (81.0%) who agreed that financial difficulty aggravates the psychological stress of widows is similar to that of Igbo widows (77.1%). Again, the observed similarity is attributable to

the fact that both parties perceived lack of adequate income as one of their major problems.

(6) Inability to pay house rent, medical bills etc by most widows:-

A larger percentage of Igbo widows (85.3%) stated that most widows are unable to pay house rent and medical bills than their Hausa counterparts (67.3%). However, there is a significant difference in the opinions of young Igbo and Hausa widows as well as middle aged Igbo and Hausa widows. Where as 90.1% of young Igbo widows and 90.1% of middle aged Igbo widows expressed the inability of most widows to pay these bills; 72.3% of young Hausa widows and 64.9% middle aged Hausa widows expressed same. The explanation for this variation in opinions is the fact that majority of Hausa widows are rural dwellers as shown in Table 4.06. Consequently, they would not perceive payments of house rent and medical bills as a big problem for widows.

(7) Most widows are supported economically by the deceased relatives:-

There is a close similarity in the percentages of Igbo (41.8%) and Hausa (40.5%) widows who agreed that most widows are supported economically by the deceased relatives. However, there is a significant difference in the proportion of the elderly Igbo and Hausa widows who agreed. Their percentages are 42.4% and 30.4% respectively. The reason for the observed difference in opinions of elderly Igbo and Hausa

widows is due to the fact that the elderly Hausa widow is apparently left by the deceased husband relatives to feed on what she inherited from her deceased husband.

(8) Unemployment is responsible for economic woes of widows:-

Table 4.18 shows close similarity in the response patterns of Igbo widows (75.3%) and Hausa widows (77%). However, more elderly Hausa widows (76.8%) are worse affected as compared to their Igbo counterparts (57.5%). The reason for this observed difference between elderly Igbo and Hausa widows is that most adult Igbo men and women look after their elderly ones better than their Hausa counterparts.

(9) Low income forces many widows to sell their personal effects:-

Whereas 22.3% of Igbo widows agreed that low income forces many widows to sell their personal effects, 32% of Hausa widows expressed same. Though the difference between the opinions of the two groups is not very significant, a greater proportion of elderly Hausa widows (43.9%) agreed as against 27.2% of their Igbo counterparts. It can be explained that the reason why a larger proportion of elderly Hausa widows are forced by poverty to sell their personal effects is because of neglect by their adult children. This is hardly the case among the Igbos.

(10) Widows suffer because they are not allowed to inherit all the property of their deceased husband:-

There is a close similarity in the responses of both Igbo and Hausa widows on the item. The percentages are 79.3% and 75.0% respectively. However, the percentage of middle aged Hausa widows 97.5% differed significantly from that of their Igbo (82.1%) contemporaries. One would have expected the percentage of middle aged Igbo widow to be higher because, unlike the Hausa widows, Igbo widows are not allowed to inherit any of the deceased=s property. Apparently, the reason for this marked difference is that Igbo widows have learnt not to depend on the deceased husband=s property for survival. Secondly, many Hausa widows do not inherit much property from their deceased husband.

In summary, it can be concluded that Igbo widows suffered more economically than their Hausa counterparts. However, the study revealed that elderly Hausa widows were worse affected financially than the elderly Igbo widows. What this means for counselling is that counsellors should help Igbo and Hausa widows acquire career skills. They should also assist the widows to undergo training in vocational subjects so that they can be self employed to sustain themselves and their dependants.

Hypothesis IV: There is no significant difference in the cultural interpretations given to widowhood practices by Igbos and Hausas as perceived by the community leaders of both cultures.

Table 4.19: Differences in the Interpretation of widowhood practices by Igbos and Hausas (n = 100; DF = 98)

In the following Table the differences in the interpretations of widowhood practices by Igbos and Hausas are presented.

Cultural interpretation	Composite score	Igbo leaders(n =50)	Hausa leaders (n =50)	X Diff	t-value	p-value
1. The specified number of weeks set aside for the widow to mourn her husband is a sign of respect for the deceased husband.	x = 4.10;SD = 1.28	x = 4.08;SD = 1.40	x = 4.12;SD = 1.17	0.04	0.15	0.8771
2. The wearing of black during Mourning is an expression of grief	x = 4.41;SD = 0.89	x = 4.48;SD = 0.79	x = 4.34;SD = 0.98	0.14	0.79	0.4337
3. Restricting the widow to a particular room for about 28 days is a sign that the widow is unclean	x = 3.10;SD = 1.33	x = 3.16;SD = 1.25	x = 3.04;SD = 1.41	0.12	0.45	0.6541
4. Making the widow sit on the floor is a sign of dethronement	x = 3.03;SD = 1.36	x = 3.24;SD = 1.22	x = 2.82;SD = 1.47	0.42	1.56	0.1229
5. Scrapping the hair or leaving the hair of the widow inkempt is a sign of defacement	x = 3.38;SD = 1.34	x = 3.08;SD = 1.17	x =3.66;SD = 1.44	0.58	2.21	0.0295
6. Making the widow cry as a routine is a sign of innocence regarding the death of the husband	x = 3.16;SD = 1.45	x = 3.42;SD = 1.23	x = 2.90;SD = 1.61	0.52	1.82	0.0723

Cultural interpretation	Composite score	Igbo leaders (n =50)	Hausa leaders (n =50)	X Diff	tvalue	p-value
7. Making the widow undergo ritual bath is a mark of the end of seclusion period and to make her clean again	x = 3.67;SD = 1.29	x = 3.20;SD = 1.37	x= 4.14;SD = 1.01	0.94	3.90	0.0002
8. The widow's outing ceremony is a sign of formally integrating her into the society	x = 4.15;SD = 0.99	x = 4.12;SD = 0.98	x = 4.18;SD = 1.00	0.06	0.30	0.7632
9. Levirate is a means of protecting and catering for the widow and her children	x = 3.28;SD = 1.34	x = 4.00;SD = 1.28	x = 2.66;SD = 1.58	1.24	5.19	0.0001
10. The widow is not allowed to inherit all of the husband's property because she is part of her husband's property to be inherited by his relations	x = 3.07;SD = 1.24	x = 3.34;SD = 1.21	x = 2.80;SD = 1.23	0.54	2.22	0.0289

The results in Table 4.19 shows no statistically significant differences in the interpretations of widowhood practices by Igbo and Hausa community leaders except for the interpretations given to the practices of:

i) Making the widow undergo a ritual bath (item 7).

ii) Levirate, that is remarrying the widow by one of the husbands' brothers or relatives (item 9).

iii) Not allowing the widow to inherit her husband's property (item 10).

iv) Scraping the hair or leaving unkempt hair as a sign of defacement.

It could be observed from the Table that in Hausa culture, making a widow undergo a ritual bath marks the end of the seclusion period and makes her clean again. The mean rating for this item by the Hausa community leaders was 4.14 (SD = 1.02). This, however, was not the case in the Igbo communities. The mean rating of the item by Igbo communities was 3.20 (*SD = 1.88) showing a disagreement of the leaders with the stated interpretations given to the practice of making the widows undergo a ritual bath ($t = 3.90$; $p = 0.0002$).

Similarly, the opinion leaders of the two communities on the practice of levirate as a mean of protecting and caring for the widows and her children differed significantly ($t = 5.19$; $p. = 0.0001$). While the Igbo community leaders agreed with the above interpretation given to the

practice of levirate (mean rating = 4.00; SD = 1.28), the Hausa leaders disagreed (mean = 2.66, SD = 1.58).

On the practice of not allowing the widows inherit her husband's property because she is a part of that property to be inherited by his relations (item 10), the leaders opinions differed significantly (t = 2.22; P = 0.0289). Though both the Igbo and Hausa community leaders disagreed with the above interpretation, the observed differences in opinion here were due rather to the extent of disagreement by the leaders. While the Igbo community leaders simply disagreed with the stated interpretation (mean = 3.34, SD = 1.45), the Hausa leaders strongly disagreed (mean 2.80; SD = 1.51).

Hypothesis 5 There is no significant difference between Igbo and Hausa widows in their perception of government efforts towards alleviating the plight of widows.

Table 4.20: Efforts of Government
(n = 700,DF = 698)

Table 4.20 presents the responses of Igbo and Hausa widows regarding the efforts of the government towards alleviating their problems.

forts of Government	Composite score	Igbo (n = 350)	Hausa (n = 350)	X-Diff	t-value	p-value
Enacted laws prohibiting humanizing practices.	x = 2.44;SD = 1.31	x = 2.69;SD = 1.30	x = 2.18;SD = 1.26	0.57	5.248	0.0001
Enacted laws stating how uch of the deceased property ould go to his widow	x = 2.53;SD = 1.29	x = 2.73;SD = 1.28	x = 2.33;SD = 1.28	0.40	4.144	0.0001
Authorised courts to prosecute -laws who dispossess widows	x = 2.42;SD = 1.30	x = 2.76;SD = 1.26	x = 2.09;SD = 1.25	0.67	7.069	0.0001
Instructed traditional rulers to eview widowhood practices	x = 2.44;SD = 1.27	x = 2.77;SD = 1.27	x = 2.11;SD = 1.19	0.66	7.130	0.0001
Established widows' complaint Commission	x = 2.46;SD = 1.26	x = 2.57;SD = 1.23	x = 2.36;SD = 1.28	0.21	2.203	.0279
6. Set-up rehabilitation center	x = 2.48;SD = 1.23	x = 2.74;SD = 1.20	x = 2.21;SD = 1.21	0.53	5.775	0.0001
7. Built houses for homeless widows	x = 2.48;SD = 1.13	x = 2.77;SD = 1.22	x = 2.19;SD = .96	0.57	6.930	0.0001
8. Established widows' trust fund	x = 2.58;SD = 1.14	x = 2.81;SD = 1.23	x = 2.36;SD = .99	0.45	5.259	0.0001
9. Established widows' allowances Scheme	x = 2.51;SD = 1.09	x = 2.77;SD = 1.18	x = 2.24;SD = .93	0.53	6.673	0.0001
10. Established free medical system	x = 2.61;SD = 1.10	x = 2.87;SD = 1.19	x = 2.34;SD = .93	0.53	6.578	0.0001

From the results above, it could be observed that Igbo and Hausa widows differed significantly in their perception of government's efforts towards alleviating their problems. All the t = values obtained were significantly below the 0.05 confidence level. However, the observed differences were merely differences in degree of disagreement rather than differences in opinion. This is because both Igbo and Hausa widows sampled disagreed with the suggestions that government has taken any of the measures stated in Table 4.20 to alleviate their plight. The mean ratings by widows in Igbo and Hausa states were below 4.0 (Table 4.20).

Hypothesis 6 There is no significant difference between Igbo and Hausa widows in their perception of non-governmental organisations efforts towards remediating the plight of widows.

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Table 4.21: Efforts of Non-governmental Organisations
(n = 700; DF = 698)

The responses of Igbo and Hausa widows in respect of non-governmental organizations' effort towards alleviating their problems are presented here.

Efforts of N.G.O.S.	Composite score	Igbo (n = 350)	Hausa (n=350)	x-Diff	t-value	p-value
Church has entered into ialogue with traditionalist with view to changing harmful idowhood practices	x=3.08; SD=1.49	x=3.24;SD=1.43	x=2.91;SD=1.54	.32	2.88	.0042
Church has promulgated ws banning their members om participating in unchristian idowhood practices	x=3.11;SD=1.52	x=3.41;SD=1.46	x=2.81;SD=1.52	.60	5.30	.0001
. Moslem Ulema has anned all dehumanizing ractices	x=2.28;SD=1.48	x=1.83;SD=1.23	x=2.73;SD=1.58	.90	8.38	.0001
4. Women Associations organizes seminars and workshops periodically on the evils of some widowhood practices	x=2.61;SD=1.32	x=2.90;SD=1.40	x=2.32;SD=1.14	.59	6.01	.0001
5.Women Association organize peaceful demonstration to traditional rulers to protest the plight of widows.	x=2.46;SD=1.19	x=2.57;SD1.24	x=2.35; SD=1.12	.23	2.56	.0107

Efforts of N.G.O.S.	Composite score	Igbo (n = 350)	Hausa (n=350)	x-Diff	t-value	p-value
Periodic contributions of oney, clothes, e.t.c by church	x = 3.06;SD = 1.45	x = 3.00;SD = 1.34	x = 3.13;SD = 1.55	.13	1.17	.2408
Periodic contributions of oney, clothes,etc by Ulema	x = 2.35;SD = 1.47	x = 2.08;SD = 1.33	x =2.63;SD = 1.56	.54	4.95	0.0001
Establishment of ehabilitation centers by church	x = 2.39;SD = 1.29	x = 2.62;SD = 1.29	x = 2.15;SD = 1.26	.47	4.84	0.0001
.Establishment of rehabilitation enters by Ulema	x = 2.02;SD = 1.23	x = 2.02;SD = 1.28	x = 2.04;SD = 1.18	.04	.43	.6671
0.Formation of Association of vidows where free counseling ervices are offered	x = 2.42;SD =1.27	x =2.61;SD = 1.38	x = 2.22;SD = 1.13	.39	4.14	.0001

The results obtained in Table 4.21 above showed statistically significant differences in the Igbo and Hausa widows perception of non-governmental organisations efforts towards rehabilitating widows. The t - values for all the suggested efforts were above 1.96 (Table 4.21) critical value except in the case of periodic contribution of money, food, clothes, etc by the church (t = 1.17, p 0.02408) and the establishment of widow rehabilitation centres by mosque (t = 0.43, P = 0.6671) where the opinion of the widow did not differ. Generally, the respondents hardly felt the impact of the non-governmental organisations efforts towards alleviating their plight. The mean ratings of all the items were below 4.0.

Hypothesis 7 There is no significant difference in the coping strategies adopted by Igbo and Hausa widows.

Table 4.22: Coping Strategies
(n = 700; DF = 698)

Table 4.22 presents the strategies adopted by the widows to cope with the effects of cultural widowhood practices

Coping Strategies	Composite score	Igbo (n = 350)	Hausa (n = 350)	X-Diff	t-value	P-value
1. Crying occasionally to reduce tension	x = 3.65;SD = 1.285	x = 3.73;SD = 1.22	x = 3.58;SD = 1.33	.14	1.48	.1387
2. Prayer and reading of Holy books	x = 4.09;SD = 1.11	x = 4.36;SD = 0.89	x =3.83;SD = 1.23	.53	6.54	.0001
3. Sought medical help/advice	x = 2.87;SD = 1.31	x = 3.07;SD = 1.35	x = 2.66;SD = 1.25	.41	4.16	.0001
4. Watching movies and reading	x = 2.72;SD = 1.15	x = 2.81;SD = 1.16	x = 2.64;SD = 1.14	.17	1.94	.0532
5. Getting involved in spiritual activities	x = 3.70;SD = 1.31	x = 3.87;SD = 1.20	x = 3.52;SD = 1.40	.35	3.60	.0003
6. Advice from old widows	x = 3.74;SD = 1.17	x = 3.91;SD = 1.12	x = 3.57;SD = 1.19	.34	3.89	.0001
7. Entered into loving relationship with others	x = 3.51;SD = 1.36	x = 3.19;SD = 1.33	x = 3.83;SD = 1.31	.37	6.44	.0001
8. Sought counseling from religious ministers	x = 3.48;SD = 1.27	x = 3.67;SD = 1.30	x = 3.29;SD = 1.23	.37	3.89	.0001
9. Used tranquilizers such as alcohol	x = 2.62;SD = .97	x = 2.61;SD = .838	x = 2.63;SD = 1.09	.01	.20	.8458
10. Consulted trained counsellor	x = 2.79;SD = 1.21	x = 2.76;SD = 1.22	x = 2.81;SD = 1.21	.05	.56	.5247

It could be observed from the results above that Igbo and Hausa widows differed significantly in coping strategies adopted. For instance, Igbo widows resorted mainly to prayer and reading Holy books, ($t = 6.54$, $p = 0.0001$), got involved in spiritual activities ($t = 3.60$, $p = 0.0003$) as well as sought advice from older widows ($t = 3.89$, $p = 0.0001$) while their Hausa counterpart did less of those. However, the respondents neither used tranquilizers such as alcohol, nor consulted trained counselors on how to cope with their problems. The mean ratings of these two items were below 4.0 (Table 4.22).

Table 4.23 Ages Of Igbo and Hausa Widows who agreed that they used the Following Coping Strategies

The coping strategies adopted by the widows vis a vis their ages are presented here

		Category	Hausa %	Igbo %
(1)	Crying occasionally to release tension	Young	70.2	69.0
		Middle	62.6	67.1
		Elderly	73.1	65.1
(2)	Prayer and reading the Holy Books (Bible & Koran)	Young	90.4	90.1
		Middle	74.1	93.4
		Elderly	65.8	81.8
(3)	Sought medical advice/help	Young	37.2	53.5
		Middle	32.1	50.2
		Elderly	12.1	45.4
(4)	Watching movies and reading	Young	29.7	36.6
		Middle	25.2	31.4
		Elderly	9.7	31.8
(5)	Getting involved in spiritual activities	Young	79.7	84.5
		Middle	65.5	78.4
		Elderly	69.5	65.1
(6)	Advice from old widows	Young	76.5	76.0
		Middle	69.5	85.4
		Elderly	47.5	74.2
(7)	Entered into loving relation-ship with other people	Young	82.9	54.9
		Middle	73.5	54.4
		Elderly	92.6	46.9
(8)	Sought counseling from religious ministers	Young	69.1	67.6
		Middle	60.3	78.8
		Elderly	35.3	57.5
(9)	Used tranquilizer, such as alcohol	Young	19.1	23.9
		Middle	18.9	8.4
		Elderly	12.1	7.5
(10)	Consulted trained Counselors	Young	37.2	35.2
		Middle	29.8	31.9
		Elderly	26.8	19.6

The n for Hausa widows is: young = 94, middle = 174, elderly = 82; the n for Igbo widows is: young = 71, middle = 213, elderly = 66

The various coping strategies used by the Igbo and Hausa widows as presented (Table 4.25) are discussed.

1 Crying occasionally to release tension: -

There is a significant similarity in the response patterns of Igbo and Hausa widows to this item. The average percentages of their responses are 67% for Igbo widows and 68.6% for Hausa widows. The reason for this similarity is that, naturally, women are prone to crying as a coping strategy.

(2) Prayer and reading the Holy Books: -

Whereas 88.4% of Igbo widows resorted to prayer and reading of Holy books as a means of coping with grief, 76.7% of Hausa widows employed same. However, it is important to note that the responses of young Hausa widows (90.4%) and young Igbo widows are similar (90.1%). Not only are they similar, they are highest in percentage as compared to other age groups. The reason for this could be that they are worst affected because of their age. Consequently, they have to take recourse in prayer and spiritual reading. Worthy of note also is the disparity in the opinions of middle-aged Igbo (93.4%) and Hausa (74.1%) widows. Apparently, a larger proportion of middle-aged Igbo widows resorted to prayer because they suffered more in parenting their children alone than

did their Hausa counterparts (table 4.11). It is through prayer and spiritual reading that they will be strengthened to bear the burden alone.

(3) Sought medical advice/help: -

There is a marked difference in the responses of Igbo widows (49.7%) and the Hausa widows (27.1%). The observed difference is more pronounced between the elderly widows of the two groups. While 45.4% of elderly Igbo widows sought medical help, only 12.1% of their Hausa counterparts did same. The reason for these significant variations lies in the fact that Igbo widows are more educated than Hausa widows (Table 4.08); secondly, medical facilities are more available to Igbo widows than to Hausa widows because a greater portion of Hausa widows are rural dwellers.

(4) Watching of movies and reading: -

A larger percentage of Igbo widows (33.2%) watched movies as a means of coping with grief than their Hausa counterparts (21.5%). Specifically, 31.8% of elderly Igbo widows used this coping strategy as compared to 9.7% of elderly Hausa widows. The disparity in the literacy level of the two ethnic groups accounts for these differences. As evidenced in Table 4.08 above, Igbo widows are more literate than Hausa widows.

(5) Getting involved in religious activities: -

There is a close similarity in the opinions of Igbo widows (76%) and Hausa widows (71.5%) in respect of their involvement in religious activities as a coping strategy. This observed similarity can be explained by the fact that religious organisations provide a viable outlet for the social and economic problems of widows. They help them to share with others and to get charity from their organisations.

(6) Advice from old widows: -

A smaller proportion of Hausa widows (64.5%) as compared to 78.5% of Igbo widows consulted older widows for advice. The difference is more pronounced in the elderly widows of the two groups. Whereas 74.2% of elderly Igbo widows consulted older widows for advice, only 47.5% of their Hausa counterparts did same. To explain these differences, the cultural understanding and reaction to death by each ethnic group plays a major role. The Hausa person adjusts much faster and more easily after the death of a beloved one than the Igbo person. This is because Igbo people regard death much more seriously than Hausa people. This accounts for the elaborate and expensive funeral ceremonies that accompany death in Igboland. Consequently, the Igbo widow will always seek a person who has gone through a similar experience for counseling.

(7) Entered into loving relationship with others: -

A larger percentage of Hausa widows (76.3%) entered into loving relationship with other men as compared to 52% of Igbo widows. The observed difference is more noticeable between elderly Hausa widows (93.6%) and their Igbo counterparts (46.9%). These differences can be explained by the fact that it is easier for the Hausa widow to remarry than for the Igbo widow. Furthermore, more Hausa widows (21.13%) indicated their willingness to remarry than Igbo widows (6.57%) (Table 4.09).

(8) Sought counseling from religious ministers: -

A smaller percentage of Hausa widows (54.9%) as compared to 65.9% of Igbo widows consulted religious ministers for counseling. Specifically, the observed difference is pronounced between middle aged Hausa widows (60.3%) and middle aged Igbo widows (78.8%) as well as elderly Hausa widows (35.3%) and elderly Igbo widows (51.5%). The difference in the religious upbringing of the two ethnic groups as well as cultural prohibitions do account for these differences. While Christianity to which a majority of the Igbo widows belong promotes counseling interaction between its minister and the followers, Islam to which a majority of the Hausa widows belong discourages such interactions so as to forestall promiscuity.

(9) Used tranquilizers such as alcohol: -

There is a close similarity in the opinions of Hausa widows (16.6%) and Igbo widows (13.2%) regarding the use of tranquilizers as a coping strategy. However, despite the observed similarity, there is significant difference in the responses of middle-aged Hausa widows (18.9%) and their Igbo counterparts (8.4%) as well as elderly Hausa widows (12.1%) and their Igbo contemporaries (7.5%). It is evident that middle aged and elderly Hausa widows used tranquilizers more than their Igbo counterparts despite the fact that Islam to which the majority of the Hausa widows belong banned its adherents from using tranquilizers, particularly alcohol. The explanation for this disparity would be frustration on the part of Hausa widows arising from their inability to interact freely with other people due to the purdah system. Consequently, they resorted to the use of tranquilizers.

(10) Consulted trained counselors: -

Almost an equal proportion of Hausa (31.2%) and Igbo (28.9%) widows agreed that they consulted professional counselors for assistance. The percentage of the widows of both ethnic groups who consulted trained counselors is much smaller than those who did not consult (for Hausa widows = 68.8%; for Igbo widows = 71.1%). The reason therefore for the observed similarity between Igbo and Hausa widows in their responses to this item is because the majority of them are ignorant of the existence and value of trained counselors.

To sum up, the ages of both Igbo and Hausa widows played a major role in the way they handled their grief. Significant differences were observed mainly between middle-aged Igbo and Hausa widows. While more middle aged Igbo widows resorted to crying occasionally to release tension, prayers and reading the Holy books, got involved in spiritual activities, sought advice from older widows, sought counseling from religious ministers, more middle aged Hausa widows entered into loving relationships with other people as coping strategies. The implications of these finding for counseling is that in order to help Hausa and Igbo widows to grieve and thus adjust to their new state of life, a counselor must understand the developmental influences and tasks at a particular stage of the widow=s life. Secondly, this study revealed that a small percentage of both Igbo and Hausa widows sought the help of trained counselors. What this implies is that a majority of the widows did not know about the existence and/or value of counseling services. Consequent upon this, it is imperative that counselors should mount public enlightenment programmes to educate the public, particularly Nigerian widows, on the functions of professional counselors.

4.4 DISCUSSIONS

HYPOTHESIS 1

The result of this study showed statistically significant differences in the problems of Igbo and Hausa widows in respect of: parenting of children and finance. The observed differences were more pronounced among middle-aged widows (aged 30-49). An analysis of the problem of widowhood based on age revealed that the problems of middle aged Igbo widows differed significantly from those of their Hausa contemporaries (Table 4.11), while the problems of the young (0-29 years) and elderly widows (aged 50 years and above) in the two cultures did not differ significantly.

Generally, women have no inheritance rights in Igboland. They can neither inherit from their parents nor from their husband's family (Akpala, 1996). Inheritance of land, houses, economic trees, money, etc is by the sons of the family. Where the man died without a male child, his property - movable and immovable - go to his brothers or uncles. Hence the Igbo widows could hardly cope with the problem of looking after their young children of school age.

On the other hand, the Holy Koran accords the Hausa Muslim widow one quarter of her late husband's property. This proportion could be higher or less depending on whether she has children, and/or whether she is the only wife of the deceased or not. The property a Hausa

Muslim widow could inherit range from houses, land, livestock, to electronics, farm produce, and shares in companies and factories, etc (Sodiq et al, 1997). In addition, Hausa Maguzawa widows live predominantly in the rural areas and engage mainly in farming, majority of their young children help them on the farm because they do not have access to schools, moreover, many of their children marry early between the ages of ten and 15 years thereby reducing financial burdens on their mothers. Remarkably too, the Hausa Maguzawa child starts buying clothes, shoes, and earrings and so on for himself or herself as early as ten years because the child is also allocated some farmland to cultivate. It is therefore not surprising that Hausa widows did not regard the parenting of children as serious a problem as the Igbo widows did.

Other problem areas where the opinions of Igbo and Hausa widows differed significantly are:

i) Widowhood cultural practices, such as hair scraping, ritual seclusion, etc.

ii) Forced remarriage into the late husband's family (levirate)

iii) Loneliness by the widows, and

iv) Men molesting the widows for sex

Religion and culture have been said to exert a powerful influence on widowhood cultural practices in Hausa and Igboland. For instance, culture sets the time limit for the Igbo widow to mourn her husband. But

for the Hausas (both Hausa Fulani and Hausa Maguzawa) it is their respective religions, Islam and Christianity respectively. While culture requires the Igbo widow to mourn for at least one year in most places, Islam stipulates that Hausa Muslim widows mourn her husband for four months and ten days and Maguzawa Christian communities decided their widows mourn their husbands for a period of five months. There is not yet such a general consensus among the Igbos who are predominantly Christians.

Also during ritual seclusion the Igbo widow is not allowed a bath, nor could she wash her hands before and after eating. In contrast, the Hausa widow can wash her hands before and after eating, and take her bath but without soap. The restrictions of these cultural widowhood practices on Igbo widows could create serious problems for them. Little then should one wonder why Igbo widows regarded cultural widowhood practices as a serious problem and their Hausa counterparts did not perceive them as their major problem.

On the problem of levirate, the Hausa widow is given a free hand in the decision to marry within or outside her late husband's family. Igbo widows on the other hand are required to marry within the husband's family except in an instance where no member of the late husband's family is interested in inheriting the widow as wife.

Culturally, the practice of levirate is regarded as a protective measure for the Igbo widow (Okagbue, 1997). This is based on the belief that the man would perform a husband's role on behalf of the widow of his deceased brother (Basden, 1966). This is far from the truth. In Ezekwesili (1996:14) words "one of the worst plights of widowhood is the desire by the in-laws to have the young widow as a concubine". Refusal could bring the widow untold hardship.

Finally, while Igbo widows regarded molestation by men for sex as a problem, the Hausa widows did not. It is common knowledge that most Hausa residences are inaccessible to male visitors particularly strangers to the family. This Purdah system is protective for the Hausa Muslim widow. Also even though Hausa Maguzawa Christians do not practice purdah system, their females are not allowed to mix freely with men, nor do their married women have the liberty to visit or be visited by men. The Igbo widow is not so protected. No wonder the Hausa widow did not state molestation by men as a major problem.

HYPOTHESIS 11

The results of this study identified culture as the overriding factor influencing widowhood practices in Hausa and Igbo cultures. The mean rating for this item were 4.29 and 4.00 for Igbo and Hausa widows respectively. This findings contradicts the results from earlier studies

which identified cosmology, religion, male-dominated society, illiteracy, female passivity, low concept of women, daughters of the lineage (Umuada), inheritance and marriage laws and extended family system as constituting major factors responsible for widowhood practices (Ike, 1994; Nwadinobi 1994; Okoye, 1995). The situation could be attributed to changes in women outlook in recent times.

It could be recalled that state and federal governments have increasingly paid attention to the lots of the Nigerian women over the years. Government programmes like Better Life Programme (BLP) and Family Support Programme (FSP) targeted the welfare of the Nigerian women in particular. The primary goal of these programmes is the individual fulfillment and the enlightenment campaigns and provision of self-help skills. The series of talks, workshops and seminars on women's rights at the national, state and local government levels as well as the growing population of active women groups in Nigeria seemed to have considerable impact on women's outlook. It is little wonder therefore that even widows' no longer considered factors such as poverty, illiteracy, low concept of women, female passivity, etc as being responsible for oppressive widowhood practices as evident in this study.

From the findings of this study also, Igbo and Hausa widows differed significantly in respect of the factors influencing widowhood rites and rituals in their societies (Table 4.11). Widowhood practices in

Igboland are closely tied to traditional beliefs about death (Nzewi, 1989). For instance, the traditional Igbo society regards death as evil and ugly. The dark recess of inferno associated with death is conjured by the black dress worn by the widow (Okoye, 1995). Following the death of her husband, the Igbo widow goes into seclusion because she is considered unclean having been defiled by her husband's death.

On the contrary, widowhood practices in Hausa community are heavily influenced by Koranic injunctions (Madauci, et al 1982) and by Christian instructions. Unlike the Igbo widow, the Hausa widow goes into seclusion not because she is unclean but to have time to reflect and pray for her deceased husband's soul as well as to be free from distractions from men who may want to remarry her. It is therefore not surprising that Igbo and Hausa should differ significantly in their opinions on the factors influencing widowhood practices.

HYPOTHESIS 111A

On the psychological effects of widowhood, Igbo and Hausa widows disagreed that traditional widowhood practices made them have low self - image, feel rejected, insecure, sleepless and hatred for their in-laws. The mean ratings for these psychological effects for both Igbo and Hausa widows were less than 4.00 indicating that they had positive self-image,

were accepted and protected by the community, the serious sleeping problem nor did they have hatred for their in-laws

In contrast to the findings of this study, previous researchers indicated that widows experience low self-image, rejection, insecurity, negative feelings such as boredom, uneasiness, restlessness, and unhappiness (Harvey and Bahr, 1974; Clinebell, 1984; Webe, 1987). A possible reason for the inconsistencies in the present study and earlier researchers could be the span of bereavement. According to Townsend (1975) widows were less likely to express feelings of depression, unhappiness, restlessness and sleeplessness if they had been widowed for a long time than if they widowed of recent. In addition to the impact of recency of widowhood on the morale of widows, their health, age, employment status, and educational background are all related to their morale. The employed, the healthy and educated widow will have higher morale than the unemployed, the sick, or the illiterate widow.

A further explanation of the discrepancy existing between the findings of this study and previous studies could be the target populations of each of these studies. While the previous researches focused on white subjects, the present study investigated black population. Among black communities, once a woman loses her husband she is given a lot of support by family members, relatives, friends, and neighbours, religious and social organisations to which she or her

husband belonged. All these support groups provide companionship and are able to share activities with the widow. These support systems encourage and strengthen Igbo and Hausa widows thereby mitigating feelings of low self-image, sleeplessness, rejection, insecurity and unhappiness. Also the extent and duration of these psychological effects on the widow depend on the intensity of involvement with the deceased husband and the availability of alternative significant others.

The results further showed that the age of the widows played a significant role in coping with the psychological effects of widowhood. It revealed that middle-aged Igbo widows suffered more psychologically as a result of cultural widowhood practices than middle-aged Hausa widows. The reason for this could be attributed to the fact that middle-aged Igbo widows experience more financial problems and are exposed more to oppressive and dehumanizing widowhood rituals than middle aged Hausa widows.

HYPOTHESIS 111B

The findings of this study indicated that Igbo and Hausa widows did not lose societal respect; suffer isolation or loneliness, role confusion or reduced social status. This revelation contradicts the result of previous studies. According to Ezekwesili (1996), "the widow is treated as an outcast, segregated and humiliated even in the church" (p. 20). Wiebe

(1987) observed that most married women become incomplete social unit upon the death of their spouse. They experience silent ostracism. That widows tend to express feelings of loneliness has also been reported by Lopata (1969) and Berardo (1967); but there is a contrary evidence in this study suggesting that Igbo and Hausa widows are not more lonely than their age peers who occupy other marital statuses.

The discrepancy between this study and previous researches is attributable to recency of bereavement. The more recent the bereavement, the more likely it is for the widow to gain societal sympathy and support as well as constant companionship from relations and friends. However, the older the widow becomes the more likely it is for her to suffer isolation, loneliness, reduced social status. A number of factors could be responsible for this: the traditional African spirit of communalism is fast disappearing and is being gradually replaced by the spirit of individualism; as the widow grows older she becomes socially irrelevant; also the departure of adult children from the home to form their own families contributes in making the widow feel lonely.

HYPOTHESIS 111C

The results of this study disclosed that Igbo widows suffered more economically than Hausa widows. The reason for this could be seen from the fact that the Igbo widow has no inheritance rights while her Hausa

counterpart has. Sodiq et al (1997) pointed out that an Hausa Muslim woman has a right to inherit from her parents' and her husbands' estate. Although the Hausa - Maguzawa woman has no inheritance rights, however, she is allowed to farm on her deceased husband's farmland as well as retain the farm given to her by her late spouse.

On the contrary the Igbo woman has no inheritance rights. Akpala (1996) noted that the Igbo woman is not entitled to any allocation of farmland, neither is she allowed to live or farm on it for a period of her life. The economic woe of the Igbo widow is further compounded by the fact that most Igbo men do not operate joint accounts with or open separate account for their wife; while many do not allow their wives to trade or work. Their wives depend financially on them for everything.

A further analysis of the economic effects of widowhood based on the age of the widows revealed that middle aged Igbo widows (30-49) differed significantly from those of their Hausa counterparts (Table 4.18) while the economic effects of widowhood on young and elderly Igbo and Hausa widows did not differ significantly. What this means therefore is that middle-aged Igbo widows suffer more economically than their Hausa counterparts? A possible explanation for this would be family size and category of children. The larger the size of the family and the younger the children, the more the economic problem of the middle aged Igbo widow who, in most cases, is left alone to provide for herself and her children.

This is not always the case with many middle aged Hausa widows who may not have to bother training their children in school or paying for them to learn one trade or the other.

HYPOTHESIS IV

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It was found in this study that Igbo and Hausa community leaders differed significantly in their interpretations of these items:

i) That making the widow undergo a ritual bath marks the end of the seclusion period and makes her clean again; and

ii) That levirate is a means of protecting and catering for the widow and her children

The Igbo and Hausa community leaders differed significantly in their interpretation of ritual bath as signaling the end of the seclusion period as well as a means of cleansing the widow. While the Hausa leaders agreed with that interpretation, the Igbo leaders disagreed. Their mean ratings were above 4.0 and below respectively (Table 4.15).

The findings of this study are at variance with the results of previous studies. In Igboland a widow is generally regarded as impure or defiled following her husband's death Afigbo (1989:12) stated that "The very widespread practices is that of treating a widow as being in a state of ritual contamination or impurity following the death of her husband". Similarly, the Igbo widow's ritual uncleanness comes to an end with the

expiration of the seclusion period. Then she undergoes cleansing rituals. According to

Onah (1994) she is either taken to a makeshift bathroom, normal bathroom, a stream, or before an idol for the cleansing ceremony. On the contrary, Hausa widows are not regarded as unclean, but as people to be pitied, sympathized with and helped. However, the ritual bath marks the end of seclusion.

The inconsistency in the present study and previous research works could therefore be due to the influence of religion. As many Igbo community leaders are converting to Christianity, undoubtedly, the impact of Christianity would influence their interpretation of many cultural practices. The descriptive statistics of the community leaders reveal that 82% of the Igbo community leaders in this study are Christians (Table 4.24).

According to the teachings of Christianity, the death of a man does not render his wife unclean or defiled. In addition, although the Hausa community leaders agreed with the stated interpretation that ritual bath terminates the seclusion period and makes the widow clean again, it could be concluded that their agreement is only in respect of the termination of the seclusion period and not of ritual bath cleansing the impure widow since they do not regard the widow as unclean.

Table 4.24: Distribution of community leaders by religion

This Table presents the religious affiliation of Igbo and Hausa community leaders.

	Hausa		Igbo	
Religion	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Christianity	27	54.0	41	82.0
Islam	21	42.0	--	0.0
Traditional African Religion	2	4.0	9	18.0
Total	50	100	50	100

HYPOTHESIS V

The findings of this study revealed that Igbo and Hausa widows unanimously disagreed that the government (Federal, State and Local) had taken systematic and comprehensive measures to alleviate the plight of widows in Igbo and Hausa States. The mean rating of their responses was below 4.0.

Although the government had enacted some laws aimed at ensuring respect for the dignity of the widow as well as prohibiting inhuman or degrading treatment (for instance section 39 of the 1979 constitution), Augie (1992) pointed out that the problem of the Nigerian widow today is not the absence of constitutional or legal provisions as to her rights, but that it is more the question of effective implementation. In the same vein, Okoye (1995) concluded that the existing legal systems have woefully failed to protect women against various abuses of their basic human rights.

Successive governments in Nigeria have initiated programmes, such as Better Life Programme and Family Support Programmes, which included rehabilitation of widows in their list of planned activities. Closely allied to these two programmes is the Ministry for Women Affairs which also included widows in its plan for social welfare. Despite these gigantic programmes established and operated at the three tiers of government (Federal, State, Local) the results of the study showed that Igbo and Hausa widows did not feel their impact.

HYPOTHESIS VI

The study revealed that Igbo and Hausa widows did not feel the impact of the efforts of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) towards rehabilitating widows in their states. One possible explanation to the

inability of the Igbo and Hausa widows to feel the efforts of non-governmental organisations is because these groups have not done much in the area of helping widows adjust to a new state of life. The Church has for years concentrated on the spiritual life of the widow to the neglect of her psychological and economic existence.

Although the Muslim Ulema, through its Islamic law of inheritance has made provision for the economic welfare of the widow, the chances of her portion of her deceased husband's property sustaining her for life are very slim more especially if her husband had other wives or limited assets to inherit. Apparently both the Church and the Muslim Ulema have no systematic plans of rehabilitating widows in Hausa and Igbo States. Nwoke (1994) reported that the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) has set up a widows' Training School at Zabolo, Plateau State. Another one was also established in Samaru, Southern Kaduna, Kaduna State, by the same church. And that was all.

Apart from organising workshops, seminars and dinners for widows, one would expect these non-governmental organisations (Church, Mosque, women associations etc) to commit themselves to establishing vocational centres for teaching widows self-help skills, housing scheme programmes for accommodating homeless widows, trust fund for sponsoring children of indigent widows in school, and counseling centres for helping hurting widows. It is by so doing that Igbo

and Hausa widows would feel the impact of the efforts of non-governmental organisations towards remediation the plight of widows.

HYPOTHESIS VII

The results of this study showed significant differences in the coping strategies of Igbo and Hausa widows. While the Igbo widows resorted to prayers and reading the Holy books as well as got involved in spiritual activities and sought advice from older widows, their Hausa counterparts did less of those, rather they entered more into loving relationships with other people (Table 4.22). The differences were more pronounced among the middle-aged widows.

The results in Table 4.23 showed that more middle aged Igbo widows resorted to prayers and reading the Holy Books (93.4%), crying occasionally to release tension (67.1%); got involved in spiritual activities (78.4%), sought advice from older widows (85.4%); and sought counseling from religious ministers (78.8%), while more middle aged Hausa widows entered into loving relationship with other people (73.5%) as coping strategies.

According to Petrowsky (1976:750) religious organisations provide a viable outlet for the social proclivities of widows. Thus the middle aged Igbo widow sees such a viable outlet for social and economic problems in personal and group prayers as well as in reading spiritual literature. The results of this study also revealed that a low percentage of both Igbo and

Hausa widows consulted trained counselors for assistance (Table 4.23). This could probably be attributed to ignorance on the part of the widows as to the value of trained counselors in helping them adjust to their situations.

Chapter 5

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The main focus of this study is the identification of cultural widowhood practices among the Igbo and Hausa communities of Nigeria. It further aimed at ascertaining the problems encountered by Igbo and Hausa widows as a result of these practices, the effects of these practices on Igbo and Hausa widows. Furthermore, it evaluated the efforts of government and non-governmental organizations towards the prevention and remediation of the plight of Igbo and Hausa widows; it also assessed the coping strategies adopted by Igbo and Hausa widows.

This chapter summarizes the findings of the research and draws conclusions based on the outcome of the study. It further makes recommendations following the findings of this study, and makes suggestions for further research in the area of widowhood as it relates to other ethnic groups in Nigeria.

5.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The major findings of this research are summarised and discussed under two headings:

Demographic data

Test of Hypotheses

5.2.1 Demographic Data

There were more middle-aged Igbo and Hausa widows (55.3%) in the study than the young (23.6%) and the elderly (21.1 %). Comparatively, 60.9% of the middle-aged widows were Igbos while 46.7 % were Hausas. In respect of type of marriage, Hausa widows (52.3%) contracted polygamous marriages more than Igbo widows (25.4 %). However, Igbo widows have more small-sized families (53.4%) than their Hausa counterparts (48%). The majority of the Igbo and Hausa widows were farmers (46%); only 16.6% were civil servants and 1.4% were professionals. Comparatively, there were more Hausa widow farmers (61.4%) than the Igbos (30.6%), while there were more Igbo widow civil servants (28%) than the Hausas (5.1%).

Furthermore, the demographic data revealed that there were more Christian widows (72.3%) than Muslim widows (20.1%). 63.6% of the Christian widows were Igbos while 36.5% were Hausas. More than half of the Igbo and Hausa widows (56.6%) were illiterates. Igbo widows were shown to be more educated (64.1%) than Hausa widows (19.7%). The majority of the Igbo and Hausa widows (67.1%) did not want to remarry, this was particularly true of the Igbo widows (83.1%).

5.2.2 Test of Hypotheses

In this section the results of the hypotheses testing are summarised as follows:

1) That the major problem confronting Igbo and Hausa widows was financial difficulty.
2) That Igbo widows were subjected to more harmful cultural widowhood practices than their Hausa counterparts.
3) That culture represented the major factor responsible for traditional widowhood practices in Igbo and Hausa communities.
4) That cultural widowhood practices did not make Igbo and Hausa widows have low self-image, or experience rejection, depression, insecurity, sleeplessness.
5) That Igbo and Hausa widows did not lose societal respect, suffer isolation, role confusion, loneliness, or reduced social status as a result of cultural widowhood practices.
6) That Igbo widows suffered more economically than Hausa widows.
7) That Igbo and Hausa community leaders differed significantly in their interpretations of ritual bath and levirate.
8) That the government (federal, state and local) did not take comprehensive measures to alleviate the plight of widows in Igbo and Hausa states.

9) That non-governmental organisations did not take any significant step towards preventing and alleviating the sufferings of widows in Igbo and Hausa cultures.

10) That Igbo and Hausa widows differed significantly in their coping strategies.

11) That middle-aged (30-49) Igbo and Hausa widows encountered more problems than their young and elderly counterparts. Comparatively, that middle-aged Igbo widows suffered more economically, psychologically and socially as a result of cultural widowhood practices than their Hausa counterparts.

5.3 CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study it can be deduced that Igbo and Hausa widows suffered discrimination, dehumanisation and destitution as a result of cultural widowhood practices. However, Hausa widows were better treated than their Igbo counterparts. It is pertinent to conclude also that cultural beliefs, customary laws, socio-economic status and religion contributed to aggravating the effects of widowhood on Igbo and Hausa widows. Another conclusion arrived at from this study is that widows in Igbo and Hausa states were grossly neglected by the government and non-governmental organisations, particularly church and mosque. Lastly, it can be concluded that Igbo and Hausa

widows lacked the basic awareness of the role of counsellors in helping them adjust to their new state of life.

5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

The difficult task of rebuilding one's life after the death of a loved one involves countless habitual responses, learning new behaviours to meet needs formerly met by the deceased, and making countless decisions about how to cope with problems the loss brings. Counseling aims at helping a troubled person (the client) to feel and behave in a more personally satisfying manner through interaction with a professional counselor whose duty is to provide information and reactions which will stimulate the client to develop behaviours that will enable him deal more effectively with himself and the environment.

The findings of this study revealed that more than half of Igbo and Hausa widows were illiterates (56.6%). Illiteracy is a disease. It breeds superstition, lack of self-confidence, fear of change and incompetence in handling one's problems and environment. Illiteracy limits human development and capacities. Counselors have responsibilities to assist Igbo and Hausa widows acquire academic skills. They need to provide the widows, who are adult learners, with current and relevant educational, occupational, personal, social information which will help them make wise choices. Counselors should help widows develop problem solving skills,

critically analyse printed materials, develop study skills and search and retrieve useful information from the numerous learning resources in the environment.

The study also showed that the major problem of Igbo and Hausa widows was financial difficulty. Occupationally, 46% of both Igbo and Hausa widows were peasant farmers. As a result they found it difficult to sustain themselves and their children. Counselors should help Igbo and Hausa widows acquire career skills. A basic assumption of the career development theories is that personality expression and implementation of self-concept is the main thrust in all vocational development activities. One implication of this assumption is that the central aim of any career guidance activity is to match people with intrinsically satisfying jobs. To facilitate Igbo and Hausa widows towards achieving this goal, counselors should ensure that complete occupational information containing career options and preparations needed for specific jobs are transmitted to the widows. Counselors should also lead Igbo and Hausa widows to undergo training in vocational subjects and crafts so that they can be gainfully employed to sustain themselves and their children.

The findings of the study further showed that some Igbo and Hausa widows expressed feelings of rejection, depression, anger, guilt, loneliness and reduced social status. Feelings are elements of emotion which accompany our various instincts. They prepare the background out of

which individuals act. Our feelings determine the rationality (sensibleness) or irrationality (non-sensibleness) of our thoughts and actions. Since feelings affect the individual's actions and behaviour and since guidance/counseling is concerned with the modification of an individual's behaviour and actions, it is clear that understanding the clients' feelings will assist the counselor to empathize with the clients.

The counselor should focus on those identified feelings of Igbo and Hausa widows in such a way as to help them effect satisfactory solution to their problems. Those feelings which lead to irrational behaviour in the widows should be addressed by restructuring their perceptual and cognitive processes so that situations are better perceived and viewed heading finally to reframed actions and behaviour. In this way the counselors help the widows not only to eliminate or minimize anxiety, depression, hostility, feelings of inferiority and inadequacy, unhappiness and other symptoms, but also to achieve happiness, effective living, rational behaviour, independence, responsibility and even self-actualization.

Furthermore, the study revealed that Igbo and Hausa widows lacked the basic awareness of the role of professional counselors in helping them adjust to their new state of life. For instance, only 37.2% of young Hausa widows as against 35.2% of young Igbo widows consulted trained counselors for professional assistance. Ignorance robs one of many

opportunities for self-advancement. But possession of information enables one to act responsibly; it enables one to make wise and right decisions. Counselors should mount public enlightenment campaigns aimed at educating the public on the importance and functions of professional counselors. Counselors should encourage Nigerian widows to embrace different counseling services as these will help lighten their burdens of single parenthood.

The findings of the study further showed that Igbo and Hausa widows were affected differently socially, psychologically, and economically by cultural widowhood practices. This is due to the religious and cultural differences that exist between them. Counselors should be oriented to a multi-cultural approach to working with widows. It is extremely important to know something about personality attributes, socio-historical perspectives, and lifestyle characteristics of widows who have different cultural backgrounds. Also counselors should be aware of how their attitudes and personality styles may influence how they behave with culturally different widows (clients). Without this personal awareness, counselors may unknowingly impose their values and standards on widows and, in fact, engage in cultural oppression themselves.

In sum, the implications of this study require counselors to help Igbo and Hausa widows develop a well-integrated personality and attain a balanced level of mental health. In playing this role, counselors should

help them understand themselves in terms of their attitudes, interests, resources and limitations. Through effective counseling services, Igbo and Hausa widows would be assisted to make right decisions and accept greater amount of responsibility for the direction of their lives.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is one of the objectives of this study to suggest ways of preventing and remediating the plight of Igbo and Hausa widows. To this end, a number of recommendations have been advanced based on the findings of the study.

These recommendations are multidimensional. They include:

(a) The role of government, church and mosque, traditional rulers, and women associations towards preventing and remediating the plight of widows in Igbo and Hausa communities.

(b) The role of counselors: Using a developmental approach in counseling Igbo and Hausa widows.

1 **The Role of Government.**

The three tiers of government (federal, state and local) have significant roles to play towards abolishing negative traditional widowhood rites in Igboland and Hausa land as well as in rehabilitating Igbo and Hausa widows. In respect of the offensive traditional widowhood practices, the researcher has identified some measures that the government should take to eliminate them. These include: -

a) To encourage and sponsor the study of cultural widowhood practices in each local government area of Igbo and Hausa states by a government appointed committee with a view to identifying the various factors that influence negative widowhood practices;

b) To enter into dialogue with traditional rulers, town improvement unions and women associations in each local government area in Igbo land and Hausa land and assist in the development of more adequate cultural widowhood practices;

c) To enforce provision 39 of the 1979 constitution which provides that every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his or her person and prohibits inhuman or degrading treatment;

d) To insist that the courts reject customary laws which are oppressive and discriminatory. In the alternative, if the courts are too timid or reluctant to take this route, the government should enact and

enforce a law that abrogates all customary laws and practices, which adversely affect the rights of widows as well as laws to introduce penalties for those who make widows undergo dehumanizing rites and / or dispossess them.

e) To establish Widows Causes Miscellaneous Provision of a Tribunal in each local government area to hear complaints of widows who are subjected to oppressive practices, widows who are dispossessed by greedy relatives or whose deceased husbands are owed by the government or someone else, and to arbitrate between parties to a will left by the deceased husband. Membership of the tribunal will consist of magistrate, religious ministers, traditional rulers, security agents, three women at least two of who should be widows.

In an attempt to rehabilitate Igbo and Hausa widow, the government can take the following steps: -

a) Establish a rehabilitation centre for widows in each Local Government Area in Igbo land and Hausa land where Igbo and Hausa widows can learn self-help skill and receive free counseling services;

b) Establish a social Security System or Social Services Allowance Scheme for widows in Igbo and Hausa States whereby widows are paid certain amount of money every month to take care of their family needs. Under this scheme, families are encouraged to prepare

for the rainy day through monetary contribution in the form of taxes and payment made to the state.

c) Set up marriage registry in each local government headquarter to enable people in the village register their marriages so as to avoid inheritance conflicts arising from customary and church marriages;

d) Enact and enforce a legislation specifying clearly the portion of the property to be given to the deceased relatives, thereafter the widow should be the sole administrator of her deceased husband's property;

e) Establish a general National Policy on letters of administration, which covers all the states of the federation so that a widow whose husband's estate extends to more than one state can use the national letter of administration.

11 The Role of the Church and Muslim Ulema

The influence of religion on the lives of the people as well as in effecting a cultural change cannot be underestimated. This is because religion either authenticates culture or purifies it, giving it direction, purpose and orientation. Consequent upon this, there are certain measures the church and ulema can take to alleviate the suffering of widows in Igbo and Hausa communities:

a) Identification: - Each local church and ulema should set up a committee to look into the cultural widowhood practices prevalent in

their own local community with a view to identifying those aspects of the community's widowhood rites that are offensive and dehumanizing in character.

b) Education: - Since most of the cultural widowhood practices are based on unexamined and superstitious world - views, a re-education of the minds of the people on such concepts as marriage, death and human rights is absolutely necessary. It is the responsibility of the church and ulema to educate their members through sermons, adult education programmes, dramas, posters, etc, on the plight of widows, and how they can help to modify or eliminate these oppressive practices.

c) Advocacy: - As respectable organisations in the society, church and Ulema have the opportunity to advance the cause of widows. This can be achieved by entering into dialogue or negotiation with traditional rulers and governments in Igbo and Hausa states with a view to eliminating negative cultural widowhood practices.

Besides embarking on the process of eliminating oppressive widowhood practices church and Ulema have an additional role to play in terms of rehabilitating Igbo and Hausa widows. They can help to ameliorate the condition of these widows by establishing rehabilitation centres for widows, where they can learn self help skills; forming congregational association for widows where they can get mutual support

and guidance in constructive coping; and by creating caring ministry for widows which will look after the various needs of the widows in their communities.

111 **The Role of Traditional Rulers**

As custodians of culture, lawmakers and judges in their community, they can contribute significantly towards the elimination of negative widowhood practices in these ways:

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a) Admit women into the traditional cabinet so that they become part of the town's (or village) decision-making body and influence issues that concern women in general and widows in particular;

b) Set up a committee comprising representatives of council of elders, town's improvement union, religious leaders and women associations (e.g. Umuada) to study the widowhood practices of the town or village with a view to removing any offensive aspect of the tradition;

c) Ban the traditional marriage practice of negotiating the price of a bride-to-be since such practice reinforces the low concept of women which is one of the factors that influences negative widowhood practices as explained in chapter two;

d) Institute a review of the customary law of inheritance which prohibits women (excluding Muslim women) from inheriting their

husband's property so that the widow will be accorded the right to inherit the deceased husband's property whether she has a child or not;

e) Condemn publicly those customs and practices that infringe upon the rights of women in the community.

1V **The Role of Women Associations**

As victims of these obnoxious practices women have a major role to play. These include: -

a) Promotion of female solidarity and friendship. It is women who monitor the widow and enforce strict observance of all the widowhood practices. That women have failed to make use of their superior numerical strength to initiate and institutionalise radical changes in widowhood practices is as a result of their lack of love and support for one another's cause.

b) Enlightening the men

Women should discuss the harmful widowhood practices with their husbands and sons, male friends and colleagues. The more men are aware of the plight of widows, the greater the chances of eliminating the negative cultural widowhood practices.

c) Public Enlightenment.

The mass media are a handy tool to tell the public the throes and woes of widows. Women should use the press, radio and television to sensitize the public to the suffering of widows.

d) Involvement in Politics

By participating in the political process women may find themselves in positions where they may have some impact on the adoption, implementation and enforcement of laws and policies.

B The role of counselors: Using Developmental Approach in Counseling Igbo and Hausa Widows

The capacity to mourn is, to a large extent, determined by developmental factors. If this is true, it follows that if counselors are to help the Hausa and Igbo widows to grieve and thus adjust to their new state of life they must understand the developmental influences and tasks at a particular stage of the widow's life.

The result of the study revealed that the age of the subjects influenced their ability to cope with the psychological, social and economic effects of widowhood. Based on the findings of the research therefore, the author has divided widowhood into three stages: young widowhood (below 20 to 29), midlife widowhood (30 to 49), and elderly widowhood (50 and above). What this means is that every widow should be counseled according to her level of development.

A Counseling Young Widow (below 20-29)

Young widowhood corresponds to Erikson's (1959) developmental stage of intimacy versus isolation. The period of young adult life from approximately twenty to thirty nine is a time of moving away from one's family of origin and forming close ties. According to Erikson (1959), the developmental crisis of this period is intimacy versus isolation, that is, how to establish intimate relationship and prevent isolation.

Given this developmental framework the counselor would be able to appreciate much easier the impact of the loss of a husband during the early adult years of the young widow.

Counselor's Role

The counselor can help the young widow adjust properly in these ways:

a) Assist her in making the loss real and concrete.

The tendency on the part of the young widow to deny the death of her husband is so powerful that without concrete manifestations and reminder of the death, the process of grieving can be inhibited. The counselor should encourage the young widow to visit the grave of her husband or talk about the funeral ceremonies in detailed manner with her.

b) Accompany the young widow as she identifies and expresses the painful emotions of grief.

The counselor should realise that recovering from bereavement does not mean helping the widow to return to the pre-loss state of functioning.

Rather, it means helping the widow learn to live with the loss and gradually become less preoccupied and able to focus on other things including building a new life.

Counseling the Midlife Widow (30-49)

Midlife widowhood corresponds to Erikson's (1959) developmental stage of generativity versus stagnation. This occurs during middle age. The crisis to be faced at this stage is that of personal stagnation and the psycho-social feeling that one does not indeed seem to count in the eyes of his/her community.

Counselor's Role

In counseling a middle aged widow, problems that middle aged people face such as depression, discomfort, raising of children, etc must be taken cognizance of as these also contribute to impeding quick adjustment to their new state of life. While counseling a middle aged widow, there is the need to ascertain, among other things, whether the death of the husband was sudden and unexpected, whether the widow had a conflicted relationship with the deceased, and whether there was an excessive dependent relationship with the deceased. These variables help in determining how the counseling session would be structured as well as which counseling techniques should be adopted.

Counseling the Elderly Widow (50 and above)

Erikson (1959) refers to the developmental crisis of this final stage of the life cycle as ego integrity versus despair and disgust. At this stage the individual reviews her life history and says "well done". This feeling of satisfaction and self-fulfillment prepares her to face the future, which in her case includes death. If, on the contrary, she wasted her life, she will experience despair and dissatisfaction. Other developmental tasks encountered by the elderly are isolation, ill health, worries, and thoughts of imminent death.

Counselor's Role.

The tasks of the counselor in helping the elderly widow to adjust include the following: -

a) Sensitivity to the wishes of the elderly widow.

At this final stage of the life cycle, the elderly widow (80 and above) always thinks and speaks about her own death so as to rejoin her husband. The counselor should respect the elderly widow's wishes to reunite with her husband by helping her prepare for her own death.

b) Encourage meaningful social involvement.

Data gathered from the questionnaires show that elderly widows spend a significant portion of their last years alone. To a feasible extent, given physical and health limitations, elderly widows should be encouraged to interact with their significant others and social environment. The social

environment will need to be in keeping with their true interests and needs (e.g. village square, public parks, churches, mosques, etc).

Finally, these recommendations have emerged from the findings of this study. No significant and lasting solution to the issue of negative cultural widowhood practices can take place without the cooperation of the government, traditional ruler, church and mosque, and women association. It is strongly suggested that practicing counselors should take into serious consideration the developmental stages and tasks of the widows. They should also be conversant with the cultural and religious orientations of the widow before engaging in any counseling relationship with her.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

It is highly hoped that this research will arouse interest and encourage further studies in the area of widowhood. It is specifically suggested that further research be carried out in the following areas:

1. The comparison of the plight of Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa widows.
2 The relative impact of religion, family size, and education on the effects of widowhood on widows could be carried out since the present study examined the influence of age on the widow's ability to cope with the effects of widowhood.

5.7 SUMMARY

The research findings have been summarised, some general conclusions have been drawn and appropriate recommendations, based on the findings, as well as suggestions for further studies were made.

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TITLE: WIDOWHOOD PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE (WPQ)

This questionnaire is intended to gather information concerning the problems of Igbo and Hausa widows, factors that influence widowhood practices, the effects of widowhood, the efforts of government and non-governmental organisations to alleviate the plight of widows, and coping strategies.

Please answer the questions as accurately as possible. Be assured that every information given will be treated with absolute confidentiality.

Section I Personal Data **Tick the one applicable to you**

A. **Age at the time of bereavement:**
- (1) below 20
- (2) 20-29
- (3) 30-39
- (4) 40-49
- (5) 50 and above

B. **Type of Marriage:**
- (6) Monogamy
- (7) Polygamy

C. **Duration of Marriage**
- (8) Below 5 years
- (9) 6-9
- (10) 10-14
- (11) 15-19
- (12) 20 and above

D. **Number of children:**
- (13) None
- (14) 1-5
- (15) 6-10
- (16) 11 and above

E. **Age range between the oldest and youngest:**
- (17) 1-5
- (18) 6-9
- (19) 10-14
- (20) 15-19
- (21) 20 and above

F. **Occupation of wife:**
- (22) Farming
- (23) Trading
- (24) Civil Servants and teachers
- (25) Professionals (medical doctor, lawyer, etc)
- (26) Craftsmen
- (27) No job

G. **Ethnicity:**
- (28) Igbo
- (29) Hausa-Maguzawa
- (30) Hausa-Fulani

H. **Religion:**
- (31) Christianity
- (32) Islam
- (33) Traditional
- (34) Other, please specify

I. **Educational Background:**
- (35) No school
- (36) Primary school

(37) Secondary school
(38) Higher Institution

J. Like to Remarry:

(39) Yes
(40) No
(41) Undecided

SECTION II

DISTRIBUTION OF PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY WIDOWS

Instructions Regarding the Completion of Items in the following Sections

Please tick the extent to which you agree or disagree with the items in the various sections.

Key: SA = Strongly agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided
D = Disagree; SD = Strongly disagree

	SA	A	U	D	SD
K. The major problem encountered by the widow is:					
(42) Parenting of children alone					
(43) In-laws					
(44) Financial difficulty(e.g inability to to feed,clothe, pay school fees)					
(45) Unemployment					
(46) Lack of self-help skills					
(47) Ill-health					
(48) Widowhood cultural practices(e.g. hair scrapping, denial of inheritance,ritual seclusion etc)					
(49) Forced remarriage into the late husband's family					
(50) Loneliness (being avoided by people)					
(51) Men molesting her by asking for sex					
Section III: Factors influencing widowhood Practices					
L. The major factor responsible for widowhood practices is:					
(52) Culture					
(53) Religion					
(54) Cosmology(people's world view)					
(55) Illiteracy					

SA A U D SD

(56) Poverty

(57) Umuada (daughters of the man's lineage)

(58) Male dominated society

(59) Female passivity

(60) Low concept of women

(61) Extended family system

SECTION IV EFFECTS OF WIDOWHOOD

M **Psychological effects of widowhood practices** make the widow have:

(62) Lack of a sense of belonging

(63) A sense of low self-image

(64) A sense of depression

(65) A sense of rejection

(66) A sense of insecurity

(67) Sleeplessness

(68) A sense of guilt

(69) Illness

(70) Regrets about ever marrying

(71) Hatred for her in-law

N SOCIAL EFFECTS: The loss of a husband makes the widow:

(72) lose respect in the society

(73) Live isolated life

(74) A suspect (that is, accused of killing her husband)

(75) Lose protection

(76) Become more involved in religious activities

(77) Become more integrated into the deceased's family

(78) Get closer to her own relatives than before

	SA A U D SD
(79) Get more attached to her children	
(80) Have reduced social status (people see you as incomplete)	
(81) Suffer role confusion (not knowing what the society expects of you)	
Economic Effects	
(82) The death of a husband causes serious decrease in family income	
(83) Most widows depend on charity for survival	
(84) Economic hardships force many widows to sexual promiscuity	
(85) Lack of adequate income is the cause of poor health in widow-headed families	
(86) Financial distress aggravates the psychological stress of widows	
(87) Most widows are unable to pay house rent and medical bills	
(88) Most widows are supported economically by the deceased relatives	
(89) Unemployment and lack of self-help skills are the causes of the economic woes of widows	
(90) Low income forces many widows to sell their personal effects such as shoes, clothes, jewelries, etc.	
(91) Widows suffer because they are not allowed to inherit all the property of their deceased husbands.	

SECTION V: EFFORTS OF GOVERNMENT

P. In Igbo and Hausa States, the government has taken the following measures to stop dehumanising widowhood practices and to alleviate the plight of widows:

(92) Enacted laws prohibiting dehumanising widowhood practices	
(93) Enacted laws stating how much of the deceased property should go to his widow	
(94) Authorised courts to prosecute in-laws who disposses widows	

	SA	A	U	D	SD
(95) Instructed traditional rulers to review widowhood practices in their territories with a view to removing harmful widowhood practices					
(96) Established widows' complaint commission					
(97) Set up rehabilitation Centres for training widows on self-help skills					
(98) Built houses for homeless widows					
(99) Established widows Trust Fund (whereby widows can obtain loan for business and scholarship for training their children)					
(100) Established widows' allowance schemes (whereby widows are paid monthly)					
(101) Established Free Medical System(whereby widows and their children receive free medical treatment)					

SECTION VI: EFFORTS OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS	SA	A	U	D	SD
Q. The NGOs have taken the following steps to stop harmful widowhood practices and to rehabilitate Igbo and Hausa widows:					
(102) Church has entered into dialogue with traditionalists with a view to changing harmful widowhood practices					
(103) Church has promulgated laws banning their members from participating in unchristian and dehumanising widow practices					
(104) Muslim Umar has banned all dehumaninsing widowhood practices					
(105) Women Associations (such as Medical Women Association) organise seminars and workshops periodically on the evils of some widowhood practices.					
(106) Women Associations have organised peaceful demonstrations to traditional rulers to protest the plight of widows					
(107) Periodic contribution of money, clothes and foodstuff by church					
(108) Periodic contribution of money, clothes and foodstuff by Muslim Umar					
(109) Establishment of rehabilitation centres by church					
(110) Establishment of rehabilitation centres by Muslim Umar					
(111) Formation of association of widows where free counselling services are offered to them.					
SECTION VI1: COPING STRATEGIES R. When my husband died I used the following strategies to cope with the loss:					
(112) Crying occasionally to release tension					
(113) Prayer and reading of Holy Books (Bible and Qu'ran)					
(114) Sought medical advice/help					
(115) Watching movies and reading					

	SA	A	U	D	SD
(116) Getting involved in spiritual activities					
(117) Advice from old widows					
(118) Entered into loving relationships with other people					
(119) Sought counselling from religious ministers					
(120) Used tranquilizers such as alcohol, valium, etc.					
(121) Consulted trained counsellor					

SUNA:- WASU TAMBAYOYI A GAME DA HALIN ZAMAN MATAN WADANDA MAZAJENSU SUKA MUTU

Wadannan tambayoyi an nufo su da su tara bayyanai a game da wasu matsaloli da matan Igbo da na Hausawa wadanda mazajn suka mutu ke fuskanta, da wasu abubuwa da suka shafi a abin da mata wadanda mazajensu suka mutu ke yi, da abubuwan da hakan ya kawo, da kuma irin kokarin da gwamnati da kungiyoyi masu zaman kansu ke yi don su kyautata wa matan akan wahalolin da suke sha, da hanyar da suka bi don jure wa halin da suke ciki, da kuma bayyana abubuwa da suke yi ko menene ma'anarsa bisa ga'adarsu. Don Allah a ba da amsa cikin halin da ake ciki yanzu. Ana tabbatar maku da cewa, amsoshinku abubuwa ne da za a tara a asirce, ba wanda zai ji balle ya gani.

SASHE NA 1:- Wasu Abubuwa a game da matar
Sai ki fadi abin da ya shafe ki.

A. YAWAN SHEKARUNKI A LOKACIN DA KIKA YI RASHIN

1 Ba ki kai shekara 20 ba
2 Kina tsakanin 20 zuwa 29
3 Tsakanin 30 zuwa 39
4 Tsakanin 40 zuwa 49
5 Daga 50 da 'yan kai

B. WANE IRIN AURE NE
6 Mace daya
7 Mata da dana

C TSAWON AURE
8 Bai Kai shekara 5 ba
9 Tsakanin shekara 6 zuwa 9
10 Tsakanin shekara 10 zuwa 14
11 Tsakanin shekara 15 zuwa 19
12 An fi shekara 20

D YAWAN YA'YA:-
13 Ba 'ya'ya
14 1 zuwa 5
15 6 zuwa 10
16 fiye da 10

E YAWAN SHEKARU TSAKANIN BABABAN DUKA DA AUTAN:
17 1 zuwa 5
18 6 zuwa 9
19 10 zuwa 14
20 15 zuwa 19
21 20 da 'yan kai

F AIKIN MATAR
22 Noma
23 Kasuwanci
24 Ma'aikatan gwamnati da malamai
25 Likita, koya

26 Sana'ar hannu
27 Ba wani aiki

G KABILA:
28 Igbo
29 Hausa - Maguzawa
30 Hausa - Fulani

H. ADDINI:-

31 Addinin Krista
32 Musulunci
33 Addinin Gargajiya
34 Ko wani addinin dabam

I ILIMI

35 Ban yi makaranta ba
36 Makaranta Finamare
37 Makaranta Sekondari
38 Makaranta Gaba da Sekondari

J KO KINA SO KI SAKE YIN AURE KUWA:

39 I
40 A'a
41 Ban tsaida shawara ba tukuna.

SASHIN NA II: IRIN MATSALOLIN DA MATA WADANDA MAZAJENSU SUKA RASU SUKE HADUWA DA SU. YADDA SUKA KASU:-

Ga yadda amsoshin tambayoyin za su bi da mu:

HK = Haka ne kwarai
H = Haka ne
BA = Ban sani ba
BH = Ba haka ba
BHK = Ba haka be ba kwarai

K Babbar matsalar da ke fuskantar

mace wadda mijinta ya mutu shi ne	HK	H	BA	BH	BHK
42. Kulawa da 'yayan ita kadai-					
43. Surukai					
44. Matsalar rashin kudi na abinci na makaranta, kaya -					
45. Rashin aiki					
46. Rashin iya wani aiki da zai ba da taimako -					
47. Rashin lafiya -					
48. Wasu abubuwa ne na al'adu da ake yi (kamar aske gashin kai, hana fita hana gado, da dai sauransu					
49. Tilasa wa matar ta auri wani daga dangin mijin					
50. Zaman kadaici (mutane ba su zuwa wurinta)					
51. Damuwa daga mazaje don kwana -					

da ita -

HK H BA BH BHK

SASHI NA 111 ABUBUWAN DA KE KAWO
ABABENDA MATA WADANDA MAZAJENSU
SUKAN YI BISA GA AL'ADA, KO WASU DALILAI

L Babban abin da 'ke ' kawo yin -
wadannan abubuwa shi ne

52 Al'ada -

53 Addini -

54 Yadda mutane ke duban duniya

55 Jahilci -

56 Talauci

57 Danji mata na sashin miji

58 Maza sune masu iko a cikin Kungiya

59 Mata sun zama yan ba ruwanmu

60 Ba a maida mata kome ba

61 Lura da wasu sauran dangi

SASHIN NA IV ABUBUWA DA RASHIN
MAZAJE KAN KAWO:

M. ABUBUWAN DA AKE JI A ZUCI
Abubuwan da mata wadanda mazajensu
suke rasu suke yi yana sa su ji cewa

62 Ana yi da su

63 Ba su kai sauran mutanen ba

64 Sukan ji bacin rai -

65 An nuna masu rashin so -

66 Ba su da wani tsari-

67 Yana hana su barci -

68 Suna jin su masu lafiya ne

69 Yana kawo musu rashin lafiya

70 Suna da na sani da ba su yi Aure ba

71 Ba kauna tsakanin da sarukanta

HK H BA BH BHK

N. A GAME DA ZAMA TARE
Mace wadda ta rasa mijinta ya kan kawo mata

72 Rashin girma a cikin jama'a -

73 Zaman Kadaici

74 A bar zargi (ana zarginta da-ita ta kashe mijin) -

75 Ba ta da kariya -

76 Ana ganinta a cikin ayyukan addini daban daban -

77 Za a karba ta cikin iyalin mamacin

78 Za ta kara matsowa kusa da iyalinta fiye da da -

79 Za ta kare kulawa da 'ya' yanta-

80 Darajarta ta ragu a cikin jama'a

81 Shan wahala akan ba ta san abin da Jama'a suke sa ran ta rika yi ba

O A GAME DA TATTALIN ARZIKI:-

82 Mutuwar mijin yana rage arzikin iyali kwarai

83 Yawancin mata kamar haka rayu - warsu ta danga ne ga taimako da suke samu ne -

84 Mawuyanci halin rayuwa yakan sa irin wadannan mata neman maza

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85 Rashin kudi shi ke kawo rashin

isasshiyar lafiya a gidan da irin wannan matar ke shugabanci

86 Damuwa akan kudi yakan kara bacin ran matar

87 Yawancin matan ba sa iya biyan gidan haya da kudi magani

88 Yawancin matan dangin mijin ne ke biya musu bukatansu -

89 Rashin aiki da rashin wata sana'a da aka koya shi ke kawo wa matan

wahaloli -

HK H BA BH BHK

90 Rashin abin zaman gari shi ke sa matan suna sayar da kayansu kamar, takalmi zanuwa, etc

---

91 Matan da mazansu suka mutu suna shan wahala, saboda hanasu gadon dukkan abinda mijinsu da ya mutu ya bari.

SASHE NA V: KOKARIN DA GWAMNATI KE YI
A cikin jihohin Igbo da na Hausa
Gwamnati ta dauki wadannan matakai don ta hana yin wasu abubuwa da ke kaskanta da irin wadannan matan, don kuma ta rage wahalolinsu.

---

92 Kafa dokoki da za su hana kyamar wasu abubuwa al'adu da matan ke yi

---

93 Kafa dokoki akan a bin da mata za ta samu daga dukiyar mijin

---

94 An ba kotuna inin da su hukunta Surukan da suka raba matan dakiyar miji

---

95 An umurci sarakuna su sake duban wasu abubuwa da matan ke yi don su hana yin wasu masu kawo wani lahani

---

96 Suka kafa wata hukuma mai sauraren karar matan

---

97 Suka kafa wasu wurare inda ake horon matan don koyon sana'o'i

---

98 Sun gina gidaje domin matan da ba su da shi

---

99 Sun kafa wani asusu sabili da matan inda matan za su karbi bashi domin wata sana'a ko ko domin kudin makarantar 'ya' yansu

---

100 Sun kafa wani asusu domin matan, inda ake ba su taimako a kowane wata

---

101 Wani asusu na ba da magani kyauta, inda matan da 'ya' yansu za su sami magani kyauta

---

SASHE NA VI:- KOKARIN DA KUNGIYOYI MASU ZAMAN KANSU KE YI WATI (KZK)

HK H BA BH BHK

Q. KZK Sun dauki wadannan matakai don su hana wasu abubawa masu kawo lahani da matan ke yi domin kuma su taimaka wa mata Hausawa da na Igbo da ke cikin wannan halin

102 Ikklisiya ta tattauna da masu bin al'adun gargaji ya don a canza wasu abubuwa da ba su da amfani da matan ke yi

103 Ikklisiya ta kafa wasu dokoki da suka hana membobi yin wasu abubuwa da Krista ba sa yi, wanda ya zama abin kyama a game da abin da ma tan ke yi

104 Musulunci ya hana yin wata al'ada da ke kaskantar da matan

105 Kungiyoyin mata, (Kamar Kungiyar mata masu jinya sukan yi taro don su tattauna a lokaci akan wasu abubuwan da ba su da kyau wadanda matan ke yi.

106 Kungiyoyin mata sun yi zanga-zanga ta humana zuwa ga sarakuna don rashin yardarsu akan yadda wadannan mata ke shan wahala

107 Coci-Coci sukan tara kudi tufafi, da abinci a lokaci lokaci

108 Masalatai sukan tara kudi, tufafi, da abinci a lokaci lokaci

109 Ikklisiya ta gina wasu wurare na horon irin wadannan matan.

110 Masalatai sun gina wasu wurare na horon irin wadan nan matan

111 Kafa wata kungiya da ta kunshi matan inda za a dinga ba su shawara kyauta.

SASHIN NA VII:- HANYOYIN DA AKE BI DON JURE WA WANNAN RASHIN

R.	Lokacin da na rasa mijina, ga abubuwan da na rika yi don in jure wa rashin	HK	H	BA	BH	BHK
112	Ina kuka a lokaci lokaci don in rabu da bakin cikin da ke cikina					
113	Ina yin addu'a da karanta littafai masu Tsarki (Baibul ko Koran)					
114	Ni kan nemi taimakon ko shawara daga likita					
115	Ina kallon sinima ko ina karatu					
116	Ina wasu ayyuka don kawo mutane kusa da Allah.					
117	Neman shawara daga wadanda suka dade a cikin wannan halin					
118	Na kara kulla zumunci da sauran mutane					
119	Na nemi shawarwari daga fadodi ko pastoci ko malaman addini					
120	Shan wasu kwayoyi masu kawo sauko ko giya da ke sa a manta da wata damuwa					
121	Neman shawara daga wani Kwararre mai ba da shawara daga wani kwararre mai ba da shawara.					

APPENDIX 11

Guidance and Counselling Section
Department of Education
Ahmadu Bello University
Zaria.

Dear Sir,

A Letter of Introduction

I am a doctoral student studying at the above address.
I am conducting a research on widowhood practices among the Igbos and Hausas. As a community leader, I believe you have a good knowledge of these practices among your own ethnic group. Consequently, I humbly ask for your assistance in completing the attached questionnaire.

Thanking you for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours Faithfully,

Joseph Chuks Atado

APPENDIX 111

CULTURAL INTERPRETATION OF WIDOWHOOD PRACTICES

This questionnaire is intended to gather information concerning the cultural interpretations of widowhood practices among Igbos and the Hausas.

Please answer the questions as accurately as possible. Be assured that every information given here will be treated with absolute confidentiality.

SECTION 1: Personal Data

A. Age
1. Below 20 [ ]
2. 20 - 29 [ ]
3. 30 - 39 [ ]
4. 40 - 49 [ ]
5. 50 and above [ ]

B. Community status
6. Village head [ ]
7. Trader [ ]
8. Religious Leader [ ]
9. Community leader [ ]

C. Ethnicity
10 Igbo [ ]
11. Hausa-Maguzawa [ ]
12. Hausa-Fulani [ ]

D. Religion
13. Christianity [ ]
14. Islam [ ]
15. Traditional Religion [ ]
16. Other, please specify.....

SECTION 11: Cultural Interpretations of Widowhood Practices among the Igbos and Hausas

Tick the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following cultural interpretations of widowhood practices among the Igbos and Hausas.

Key: SA = Strongly agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided;

D = Disagree; SD = Strongly disagree.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
17. The specified number of weeks set aside for the widow to mourn her husband is a sign of respect for the deceased husband					
18. The wearing of black dress during mourning is an expression of grief					
19. Restricting the widow to a particular room or compound for about 28 days is a sign that the widow is unclean					
20 Making the widow sit on the floor during the seclusion period of 28 days or thereabout is a sign of dethronement from her exalted position of being married to becoming single					
21. Scraping the hair or leaving the hair of the widow unkept is a sign of defacement, that is, to make the widow look ugly and unattractive to other men					
22. The practice of making the widow cry as a routine is a sign of sorrow and innocence regarding the death of the husband					
23. Making the widow undergo a ritual bath is a mark of the end of the seclusion period; and to make her clean again					
24. The widow's outing ceremony is a sign of formally integrating her into the society					
25. Levirate, that is, the practice of remarrying the widow by one of the husband's brothers is a means of protecting and catering for the widow and her children					

	SA	A	U	D	SD
26. The widow is not allowed to inherit all of the deceased husband's property because she is part of her husband's property to be inherited by his relations					

Sashen Shugabanci da Ba da
Shawara Ma'aikata Ilmi
Jami'ar Ahmadu Bello
Zaria.

Ranka Ya dade,

WASIKA TA GABATARWA

Ni dalibi ne mai neman digiri na dokta, a nan Jami'ar Ahmadu Bello da ke Zaria. Ina bincike ne a game da abubuwan da mata wadanda mazansu suka rasu ke yi a kasasshen Igbo da Kasashen Hausawa. Da ya ke kai Shugaban jama'a ne, na ba da gaskiyar cewa kana da masaniya a game da wadannan abubuwa da mutanenka ke yi. Akan haka ne ni ke neman taimakonka wajen bayar da amsoshin tambayoyin da na hada da wannan wasikar.

Godiyata akan wannan taimakon da kake shirin yi mani

Naka,

Joseph Chuks Atado.

WASU BAYANAI DA TAMBAYOYI A GAME DA MATA WADANDA MAZAJENSU SUKA RASU

An nufe wadannan tambayoyi ne da su tara bayyanai akan ma'anar wasu abubuwa na al' adu da mata wadanda mazajensu suka rasu ke yi a kasashen Igbo da kasashen Hausawa. Don Allah a ba amsar da aka sani sosai. Ana so a tabbatar maku da cewa, amsoshin da aka bayar abubuwa ne da za a tara a asirce. Ba wanda zai ji belle ya gani.

SASHE NA 1: Wasu Abubuwa a gane da matar. Sai ka fadi abin da ya shafe ka.

A. Yawan Shekaru
1. Ba ka kai shekara 20 ba [ ]
2. Kana tsakanin 20 zuwa 29 [ ]
3. Kana tsakanin 30 zuwa 39 [ ]
4. " " 40 zuwa 49 [ ]
5. 50 da yan kai [ ]

B Mukani
6. Dagaci [ ]
7. Kasuwanci [ ]
8. Pasto Ko Fada [ ]
9. Shugaban jama'a galadima sarki hakimi [ ]

C Kabila
10. Igbo [ ]
11. Hausa-Maguzawa [ ]
12. Hausa-Fulani [ ]

D Addini
13. Kiristanci [ ]
14. Musulunci [ ]
15. Addinin Gargajiya [ ]
16. Wani Addinin, don Allah fadi ko wane iri ne .....

SASHE NA 11: MA'ANAR ABUBUWA DA MATA WADANDA MAZAJENSU SUKA RASU KE YI BISA GA AL'ADUNSU'A GAME DA IGBO DA HAUSAWA.

Sai ka rubuta (√) wurin da ya kamata a game da ma'anar wadannan abubawa da matan ke yi a kasar Igbo da kasar Hausawa.

Abin da za a rubuta: NS = Na yarda sosai NY = Na yarda. BS = Ban sani ba BY = Ban Yarda ba. BYS = Ban yarda ba sam.

	NS	NY	BS	BY	BYS
17. Makwannin da aka kebe don matar ta yi zaman kukan miji alama ce ta ban girma ga mamacin					
18. Sa bakaken tufafi a lokacin zama makoki, alama ce ta bakin ciki -					
19. Sa matar a cikin wani daki na musamman har tsawon kwana 28 alama					

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ce ta kazanta-

NS NY BS BY BYS

20. Barin matar ta yi ta zama a kasa har kwana 28, alama ce ta rage girmanta

21. Aske gashin kanta ko barinsa buzu buzu har kwana 28, alama ce ta rage kyaunta ba a shaiawarta

22. Al'adar nan ta sa matar ta yi kuka a lokaci lokaci alama ce ta bakin ciki da nuna ba ta da wani laifi a game da rasuwar mijin

23. Wankan takaba yana nuna cewa ta kawo karshen lokacin nan da aka kebe mata, ta kuma zama da tsarki

24. Bikin fitar matar daga zaman makoki alama ce cewa yanzu ana iya karbarta a cikin jama'a-

25. Al'adar nan ta sake aurad da matar ga wani daga cikin ya'uwan mijin, wata alama ce ta lura da tsare matar ce da 'ya'yanta

26. Ba a yarda matar ta yi gadon dukkan abin da mijinta ya mallaka ba, domin ita ma dukiyar mijin ce wadda danginsa za su gada