Film Representation of Igbo Cultural Widowhood Practices in Anambra State. An Audience Analysis of a Nollywood Movie: Glory of a Widow

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Abstract:
This study examines the representation of Igbo cultural widowhood practices in Anambra State through the lens of the Nollywood film "Glory of a Widow". Employing structural functionalist theory and feminist film theory, this qualitative research utilized focus group discussions to gather data from audiences. Findings reveal that Igbo cultural practices surrounding widowhood continue to be prevalent in contemporary society, perpetuating gender inequality and discrimination. The study identifies the need for amendments of existing laws and policies to protect the rights of widows. The film's portrayal of these practices sparks crucial conversations about cultural preservation, gender justice, and the role of the media in shaping societal attitudes. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex intersections between culture, gender, and media representation in Igbo society, highlighting the potential for film to inspire social change and promote gender equality.

Keywords: Igbo cultural practices, widowhood, Nollywood.

Introduction
In Nigeria and particularly in Igbo land, there are some slighting cultural or traditional practices that put many women in a state of helplessness before and after the death of their husband's. Women sometimes suffer discrimination in the family, society, religion, government, etc., they are being seen as fragile, weak, and defenseless.

"Discriminatory cultural practices are harmful traditional practices directed against women because of their sex. This is popular in South-east Nigeria. South-east Nigeria comprises of Abia, Imo, Enugu, Anambra, and Ebonyi state. One of such discriminatory cultural practices that affects the lives and standard of living of women is widowhood practices. When the husband of a woman dies, she automatically becomes vulnerable to suffering the humiliating transformation into being a widow" (Nwaoga, 2021). A woman's loss of her husband through death is emotional and burdening, especially in a matrimonial relationship that is characterized by filial and conjugal love. The sudden separation
of the couple is psychologically devastating and traumatic, […] yet in a widow’s situation of agony, emphasis is shifted to bizarre and expensive rituals and practices conceived to be customary and necessary for the deceased and his widow. Against this background, the death of a man becomes a crisis situation for his widow, especially if she is young or childless. This brings the widow to a state of hopelessness in life which many hardly survives. (Iheanacho, 2005, as cited in Ngozi, 2015).

Adeyemo (2016) stated that, the culture of widowhood has been in existence from time immemorial and transmitted from generation to generation. The issue of widowhood, particularly in Nigeria, appears to have gender implication as there are certain cultural imbalances in the practices of widowhood by widows and widowers. Traditions are particularly hard on widows because widowhood involves varying degrees of physical hardship, deprivation, ritual contaminations, emotional instability, socio – economic and psychological trauma.

It is these challenges that has brought about the need for an audience analysis of the Nollywood movie “Glory of a Widow” to expose some of these obnoxious and dehumanizing acts which has largely been masked and readily culturally acceptable to the people and to analyze these Igbo widowhood cultural practices and how they are been represented generally in Nollywood films. The study of film representation of Igbo cultural widowhood practices is a ripe area for research because there has been series of misrepresentation of these cultures in movies, sometimes it might be a case of exaggeration or the revers

Video films are a reflection of the human society. They encompass the language, rituals and beliefs of a given society (Rowland, 2013). The way contemporary video films are produced brings these films close to the dominant emotional and identity questions posed by the Igbos, Nigerians and Africans alike (Innocent, 2009). This study, therefore, engages in an audience analysis of how the Igbo cultural widowhood practices is represented in a Nollywood film called ‘The Glory of a widow.’ Film is not reality in itself but a presentation or representation of reality. This suggests it should be near reality and persuasive if people must believe it. Moreover, it deals with people and event and should reflect actions, behaviors that are true to the society or people it is portraying (Samuel, 2011).

“African film is not the arts for the art sake of Hollywood. It is functional, founded to right the wrong of the black race as smeared by the western media, including cinema. The truth of film is the truth of mediated reality, a reality that has been filtered and reshaped for a more fulfilling and richer viewing experience” (Samuel, 2011).

Nollywood films has taken up the role of depicting real life scenarios. Asogwa, Onoja, & Ojih (2015) wrote that Nigerian’s Nollywood remains the dominant film industry in Africa that is poised to championing the projection of the Nigerian cultural values through film. “The use of film for cultural projection is very important because the functioning of every human body is not molded by the culture within which the individual has been reared but also by the way he was born into society with a definite culture he has been fed and disciplined, fondled and put to sleep, punished and rewarded” (Asogwa et al., 2015, p.98). In Africa, Nollywood movies are a rare instance of self-representation. The continent has a rich tradition of storytelling that has been expressed abundantly through oral and written fiction. These movies tell stories that appeal to and reflect the lives of its public- the stars are local actors and the plots confront the viewer with familiar situations of romance, comedy, witchcraft, bribery and prostitution (Fedrica, 2016).

In contemporary Nigerian society, the home video has taken over the informal evening fireside school thus it is not surprising that the camera lenses of some film makers have lent their voices to the campaign against such discriminatory, dehumanizing, denigrating and obnoxious cultural practices against women (Eni, 2003). Despite civilization, widowhood practice in the present age is still very much in existence in Igboland. The embrace of religion, widowhood practice in the present age is still very much in existence in Igboland. The embrace of religion, education and modernization did not put a stop
to some of these social practices and Nigerian film makers have put in much effort to portray and bring to the limelight all the implication of these practices but has also deviated from the real story through excessive manipulations and story extensions in order to make money in the industry.

Umezinwa (2007) noted that although widowhood practice is a common phenomenon in Igbo land, the intensity is not the same in every town. Hence, the ritual observance, the duration, and its dehumanizing aspects vary from place to place. According to Dan, Sam & Iyamu (2011), death in Igboland is perceived as inevitable end like in all cultural areas of Nigeria, specifically the Igbo attributes death to man-made causes, spirits, witches and witchcraft machinations. The widespread belief is that someone must necessarily cause the death of a man and that person is likely to be his wife. This assertion is corroborated by a popular saying in many societies in Nigeria that “no man dies naturally, but at the hands of a bewitching wife” (George, 2010). In most cultures, death is usually regarded as a great loss not just to the family unit, but to the larger society.

As Nwogu (2015) rightly stated, the widowhood rites and practices are dehumanizing, degrading, barbaric, obnoxious, anachronistic and grossly immoral. The death of a woman’s husband heralds grave suffering, maltreatment and violation of her human rights by cultural agents of the community, including her spouse’s family.

Widowhood practices can be seen as socio-cultural practices encompassing burial rites, mourning rituals, inheritance rights of the widow, her expected behavior towards others and other people’s behavior towards her arising from the death of her husband (Oreh, 1998).

Widowhood practice is not common to all cultures, it is one cultural practice that has portrayed the Igbo of the south eastern Nigeria in a very bad light, particularly regarding the treatment of women who have lost their partners, breadwinner, confidante and husband, all rolled into one (Umezinwa, 2007).

Samuel (2011) lamented that these widowhood cultural practice involves a lot of anti-social treatment of such a woman aptly called the widow.

**Statement of the Problem**

Debates on how to reconcile the conflict between human rights and the harmful cultural practices have been evolving in the world for the last two decades (UN, 2001 p.8, Sossou, 2001 p.201, De Gaay, 2011 p.122-123, as cited in, Gbenga, 2011). “In the face of the massive support for numerous international human right instruments that seek to combat all forms of discrimination and harmful traditional practices against women, practices such as widowhood rites are still persisting” (Gbenga, 2011 p.2).

Nigeria is a patriarchal society, thus women are regarded as less, inferior beings, especially amongst the Igbo of south eastern Nigeria. Against this backdrop women are discriminated against, degraded and dehumanized despite the provisions of our local statutes such as the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria (Nwogu, 2015). According to IRBOC (2004) most widowhood practices in Igboland violates the fundamental human rights of women through culturally prescribed seclusion; this is a situation whereby a widow is isolated for a certain period from the rest of the community until after 28 days when she must have gone through some purifications.

In many parts of Nigeria, death is often attributed to some unnatural causes. When a woman dies, it is more often than not taken with fatalism; even when such a death is queried, the culprit is sought amongst her contenders (e.g. co-wives or neighbors), and rarely is her husband seen as being responsible. Instead of suspicion and accusations, the husband receives more sympathies and support. For instance, in some Yoruba communities, a woman is arranged to sleep with the man for a night so that he is not haunted by the spirit of the dead wife (George, 2010).

Based on the observation made during preliminary studies, the following problems were identified; widows face dis-inheritance from
their late husband’s property, stigmatization, some cultures prohibit them from getting remarried to someone of their choice, instead they are forced to remarry a brother-in-law, observation of mourning rites which in most cases results in foregoing of personal value and worth in order to carry out rituals which are made mandatory. It was also observed that there are certain cultural imbalances in the practice of widowhood between widows and widowers. “Ordinarily both the widow and the widower are supposed to experience basically equal pains for the death of the partner. However, in Nigeria, it appears the prevailing societal practice tends to be pro-men” (Okoroafor, 2011 p.9). Spring (2001) noted that the inheritance law of some communities deprives widows the right to their late husband’s property both moveable and immovable, widows are also exempted from participating in their late husband’s burial ceremonies or even making any contributions. These problems arise immediately a woman loses her husband to death and they all affect the widow first who is the direct victim of these cultural practices. Many scholars have advocated for change in these Igbo cultural widowhood practices and while some modifications have been made, there is need for more educational campaign against these dehumanizing practices. This work therefore intends to carry out an audience analysis of a Nollywood movie called “Glory of a widow” to show how these widowhood practices are being represented in films.

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To ascertain if the Igbo cultural widowhood practices in Anambra state are still being practiced in recent times.
2. To examine the representation of these Igbo widowhood practices in Nollywood films.
3. To find out how the negative effects of these cultural widowhood practices affects widows.
4. To explore and bring to limelight obtainable solutions to curtailing these Igbo cultural widowhood practices.

**Research Questions**

1. What are the Igbo cultural widowhood practices in Anambra state that are still in practice?
2. How does Nollywood films portray these Igbo widowhood practices?
3. What are the negative effects of these cultural widowhood practices?
4. What are the solutions and ways to curtailing these Igbo cultural widowhood practices?

**Review of Related Literature**

**Widowhood Practices**

Widowhood practices “have been long established religious and sociological practices observed in different societies by women who lost their husbands. Widowhood in most parts of the world especially in Africa are characterized by rituals and some of those rituals reveal social injustices” (Onyenucheya, 2012,).

Adeyemo (2016) noted that in Nigeria, like any other African country, traditional practices like the issue of widowhood is still consciously and unconsciously upheld by significant proportion of the population. Widowhood practice is an unjust cultural practice directed against women who lose their husbands. “Widowhood is a tragedy that befalls a married person as a result of the timely or untimely death of the spouse, either the husband or the wife, making the survival a widow or a widower. Widowhood practices are observed by almost all the ethnic groups in Nigeria, particularly amongst the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausas. The culture of widowhood has been in existence from time immemorial and transmitted from generation to generation.” (Adeyemo, 2016, p.380).

The Southwestern part of Nigeria, in some of the Yoruba communities precisely, the travail of a widow begins as soon as her husband dies. According to Gbenga (2011) widows may have to go into the thick forest at night and recite some incantations for the purpose of “cleansing.” Widows are also made to drink the
water used to bathe the corpses of their deceased spouses; and they are shaved and kept in seclusion for months while consultations are on as to the real cause of death of the man. A widow is expected to eat from broken plates and cook with broken pots, and on the seventh day, her hair is shaved to sever the bond between her and the dead husband. She is also expected to keep vigils and appears very sorrowful by wailing and crying profusely. If she fails to mourn, it is believed that she may become mentally deranged or forfeit the right to any benefit. After this, she goes into mourning proper.

Fasoranti (2007) explained that this mourning could be for a period of three or four months (120) days, the widow is expected to wear a pensive look and be clad in black attire to all public places. At this period, it will be ascertained whether or not the widow is pregnant. At the end of 40 days, three month or four months as the case may be, the final rites are performed for the widow after she is free to remarry.

On the inheritance right in Yoruba land, a widow does not have right to inherit the husband’s property, instead Bamgbose (2005) considers women as part of the estate of their husband who is to be inherited by relatives of the husband. This brings the issue of levirate marriage in which a widow is handed over in marriage to her deceased husband’s younger brother or other relatives, particularly if the widow is still young. An older brother, by custom is never allowed the right of levitation at the demise of the younger brother. A widow who refused to cooperate with the family on this ground may be disowned together with her children and left alone to fend for themselves.

In Zambia, Edward (2016) noted that these practices involve the act of torturing and dehumanizing the widow and making her to undergo series of rituals such as widow cleansing which demands that a widow should have sexual intercourse with another man, normally one of her brothers-in-law in order to let the spirit of the deceased rest in peace among the dead.

George (2010) narrates that among the people of Edo state in Southwestern Nigeria, their widowhood rites are in two stages. First, the widow is confined to a room outside the family house for seven days immediately after the internment of the deceased husband. She is dressed in black with her hair unkempt and she is not allowed to take her bath. She must look mournful and sober and must cry, morning and evening. On the seventh day, a wake keeping ceremony is held and the widow is forbidden (by custom) to sleep. On the same day, she performs the semi-purification rites by taking her bath around 4am at a road junction (all alone). Her safe return proves her innocence.

The second stage of mourning begins at the end of the seventh day. The widow smears herself and clothing with black charcoal and remains so for three months. At the end of the third month, the final purification, which admits her into the society, is performed. On inheritance, both the widow and property are inheritable objects. Among the Idoma speaking people of North central Nigeria, the mourning period is imposed with heavy restrictions on movement of the widow. The mourning however varies from community to community (George, 2010).

According to George (2013) the Tiv people of central Nigeria imposes one-year period of mourning and the widow is expected to dress in white rather than black as it used to be the practice until the 1980s. In addition, she would have her hair cut low and would further refrain from any form of sexual relationship during the period of mourning. These practices and persistence are explained by the desire for the woman to demonstrate considerable public grief over the death of her husband.

“Among the Hausa/Fulani community and tainted with Islamic religious element, mourning and purification rites are also imposed and adhered to. A Muslim widow in Kano undergoes a 4-month mourning period and observes reasonable number of days in seclusion which run concurrently” (Emery, 2003). Many cultures in Nigeria share similarities in widowhood practices. All are marked with excessive mourning rites which are imposed rather than by willingness of the widow to mourn her dead husband in her own chosen way.
Uche (2002) noted that Nigerian women who lose their husbands are not given the chance to grieve privately but are routinely subjected to painful, dehumanizing public treatment as a result of the continued application of patently discriminatory laws and practices. Men who lose their wives are usually not subjected to similar practices. In limited cases where certain rules are prescribed for men, choice of observance is often left to their discretion. By contrast, recalcitrant widows face punishments ranging from fines to excommunication and even banishment.

In the twenty first century, the clash of civilization in culture and modernity has given rise to observable form of deterioration in widowhood practices in all cultures in Nigeria. Economic demands of life have made seclusion and confinement difficult because there are widows who are at the helm of affairs in their places of business and so would not be able to keep up with the demands of culture.

“The practice of widowhood rites has widespread effect and deeply ingrained social, psychological, economic and health implications for womanhood in Nigeria” (George, 2013).

Igbo Cultural Widowhood Practices in Eastern Communities

To fully appreciate the Igbo way of life in relation to women in general and widows in particular, it will be necessary to outline briefly some of the features of the socio-political and economic system of the Igbo. The village is the basic political unit. Political authority is diffused among the heads of the lineage and was exercised in a democratic and informal way (Mba, 1992).

Oreh (2014) asserts that the Igbos prize their women folk, yet a woman in Igbo culture is not accorded full social recognition no matter her status in life unless she is married and bears children or at least a child. Igbo women remain women of substance as long as their husbands are alive. If an Igbo woman loses her husband to death, her story changes. Automatically she becomes a murder suspect in some places because death in most parts of Igbo land is never deemed a natural occurrence.

In Nigeria, traditional practices have ensured that men retain material, social and moral dominance over women that they are simply unwilling to voluntarily relinquish. The woman is regarded as chattel (property) and this dominate its customary laws on Marriage, inheritance, succession and property ownership. This consequently is manifested in the discriminatory and obnoxious traditional practices meted against widows in the south east of Nigeria, particularly the Igbos (Nwogu, 2015).

Odimmegwa (2010), submitted that in Igbo cosmology, community life embraces the living and the dead, and it is for these reasons that widowhood practices are put in place.

The Igbo culture makes it incumbent on the living to respect the wishes of the dead, while the dead are compelled to protect the living. Widowhood practices are therefore integral part of the funeral rites accorded to the dead. According to Oreh (2014), these funeral rites are aimed at guaranteeing the admittance of the dead people into the abode of the ancestors, who they believe will ultimately reincarnate into the community of the living.

The Igbo widowhood practices are immoral traditional practices, which include mourning rituals and food taboos that are enforced on widows, and which inevitably expose them to economic hardship, confinement and ill treatment (Anugwom, 2011, as cited in Afolaya, 2011). These rituals are enforced on widows because of the patriarchal nature of the Igbos in the South-east. “They are compelled by cultural practices to be and remain subservient to their husbands even in their death. This is done notwithstanding the provisions of our local statutes, such as the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria (CFRN) 1999 (as amended), and the Malpractices Against Widows and Widowers (Prohibited) Law of Anambra state 2005; and the International Instruments on Human Rights ratified by Nigeria, which guaranteed human rights to all citizens, such as right to life, equality of all men and women, dignity of all human persons, freedom from
discrimination etc. the above legislations are ad
rem and in place, but their enforcement and
actualization remain illusive and very farfetched”
(Nwogu, 2015).

Otaluka (1992) believed that the subjugation of
women is deeply rooted in our culture and
tradition emanating from the alleged inferior
status of women, unstable character and
impropriety of women in political and social
participation, stretching also to economic circles.
Predicated on these, women are also
depersonalized and regarded as objects of rights,
rather than subjects of rights.

There are several examples of abominable
cultural practices in Igboland. They are given as
follows:

**Widowhood Rituals – (Igba Mkpe)**

According to Korieh (1996) a woman becomes
a widow (Isi Mkpe) when her husband dies. It is
from this point of death of the husband that a
woman begins to go through the rituals
associated with widowhood. However, there are
a lot of similarities in the rituals undergone by
widows in the different parts of Igbo society.

In Igbo land, Igba Mkpe means a traditional rite
undone by a woman who has lost her
husband in order to show regret over the death
of the husband. In the olden days, the Igbo
people sees a woman who doesn’t observe this
rite as the sole suspect of the husband’s death
(“International widow’s day”, 2018). This ritual
involves early morning cries and in some cases
of suspicion, the widow is given the water used
to bath the corpse to drink. Some communities
do leave the widow in the same room with the
husband’s corpse for couple of days. Igba mkpe
also restrains the widow from taking her bath till
the day the corpse is buried (“International
widow’s day”, 2018).

“It is compulsory for the woman’s hair to be
shaved by her fellow women after the corpse of
her husband has been buried. This cultural
observance is a mark of respect to the dead and
its spiritual significance cannot be over
emphasized. Ndi Igbo who do not observe “Igba
Mkpe” (Traditional mourning) of their late
relations are attracting unwanted troubles to
themselves” (Ekechukwu, 2019). The woman
who undergoes this stage is called *Nwaanyi isi
mkpe* (a woman with a mourning head). She is
expected to follow the process of Igba Mkpe
religiously. Korieh (1996) asserts that the
*umukpu* (patrilineal daughters) administer the
Igba Mkpe rules and regulation with vengeance,
either out of spite for the widow, or to generate
fines or because they genuinely believe that it is
the only way to maintain the necessary ritual
balance for the good of the deceased and the
living.

**Rituals at Death and Funeral**

There are sets of expectations as to actions and
behavior of a widow, action by others towards
the widow, and rituals performed by, or on
behalf of the widow from the time of the death
of her husband. The rituals of widowhood differ
according to the level of civilization and the
social status of the man, while he was alive
(Okoro, Nwannennaya, Nkama, & Lilian, 2018).
Goldman & Lord, 1983 as cited in Okoro
*et al.* (2018) enunciate on this fact when they aver that
while the wife or wives of an ordinary man is
expected to go into traumatic wailing, beat her
chest, fling around her arms and go into falling
down immediately the husband takes his last
breath, with other women surrounding and
restraining her from hurting herself and force
her to sit down on the ground, where they sit
around her. The wife or wives of a titled person
in Igboland and particularly in Mbaise in Imo
state is not allowed to go into any loud crying till
appropriate arrangements have been made to
inform other titled persons, in-laws and relatives
who should know and confirm the death before
any lament takes place.

Mamah *et al.* (2016) disclosed that in Ezeagu
local government area of Enugu west
constituency, widows in the 70’s and 80’s were
subjected to mourn their spouses for a period of
one year on black dresses, black ear rings and
necklaces. They were usually compelled to stay
indoors for a period of two months, before
coming to any public gathering after observing
certain rights of the community. In Ezeagu
widows of the prestigious Ozo title holders
observe more strenuous tasks while mourning their spouses.

According to Korieh (1996) the people of Udenu, Uzo-Uwani, Awgu and Aninri, engages in this kind of bitter wailing until the remains of the man has been buried. After that, the wife or wives are expected to enact a wail or two every morning between the hours of 5.00am and 6.00am for upwards of four days or more. Thereafter, they have to wail every morning of a feast day and recount to the hearing of their neighbors what their husband used to do for them on such occasions. This is a Pan-Igbo custom which has been practiced from time, in Owerri area, ‘the widow is expected to shout and scream in tears on the death of her husband, otherwise she is fined or punished, the quality of the crying is judged by the umuokpu (patrilineal daughters).

Generally, the umuokpu or umnada is a sociopolitical setup in Igbo culture and acts as a functional forum for women (Maduagwu, 2012). They oversee the entire ritual period of a widow and always make sure that the process is followed accordingly.

Ritual Seclusion – (Ino na Nso)

Oreh (2014) described ritual seclusion as the practice that involves the widow being secluded in a most restricted manner because the widow is regarded as defiled and unclean. She does not enjoy the company of other ‘free’ human beings until she is purified.

In seclusion, the widow is culturally forbidden from touching any object, even herself. Therefore, she is given a piece of broken pot or stick to scratch herself with. In this period of seclusion occasioned by her impurity, her food is cooked differently with an old pot and served in broken or worn plates, while an older widow feeds her with left hand, using broken pieces of ceramic plate or out used enamel spoon (Okoro et al., 2018).

“Before the burial, and immediately after the burial, up to seven to fourteen weeks while funeral visits still take place, the widow is supposed to be secluded in a most restricted manner, this is described as ino na so. This is mostly practiced in Awka, in Anambra state, Mbaise, and in Nsukka. While some of these practices show genuine reaction to the loss of the husband, others help to clear suspicion of killing her husband” (Ubesie, 1995, p.30).

According to Okorie (1995) this is a period of deep mourning and it lasts for seven native weeks (izu asaa), totaling twenty-eight days. At this period the widow neither eats with nor talks to anybody except her fellow widows. She doesn’t greet or responds to any greeting but if she does, she is believed to have passed ill-luck to the greeter or responder.

Korieh (1996) narrates that in most parts of the Igbo society the early parts of this period are usually the most rigorous. During the first 28-days, the widow is not allowed to go to the stream or the market, or enter farmland or even attend any official occasion like work, parties, etc. certain rituals must be performed at the expiration of the twenty-eight days before the widow can perform normal activities. Widows were confined in Awgu for one year, while its 3 months in Uzo-uwani. In Mbaise as some widows recounted, the widow is to refrain from washing, she has to sit on the ground as a sign of dethronement of the widow who has lost her status and pride by the death of her husband, and her food is prepared separately and she is fed by another widow from either a broken or old plate.

Hair Shaving

Another important practice deserving of mention is the shaving of hair which is widespread throughout the Igbo communities irrespective of whether the society in question is attached to traditional religion or has embraced the Christian religious practice. “The husband’s eldest sister or one of the umnada is supposed to give an order for her hair to be shaved. This time the widow is taken to the backyard where she is kept naked and all parts of her body containing hair (head, armpit, eyebrows, and the privates) are shaved and sometimes buried and burnt ritually. After this, onions or some other concoctions will be used to rub at these shaved parts in order to dispel the spirit of the husband from disturbing her. The shaving of hair is generally believed to be a sign of mourning, love,
respect, and honor for the dead” (Okorie, 1995, p.81).

In this culture, who could be closer to a dead man than his wife? This fact is made necessary for many rituals to be performed to enable the man to hands-off his wife or wives. In this context it is reasonable to suggest that the unhygienic and appalling personal appearance of a widow was all part of an effort to make her no longer attractive to the dead husband who would otherwise be jealous. The shaving and bath symbolically represents the removal of all links between the widow and the deceased (Korieh, 1996).

Oath Ritual

The widow is subjected to this practice by being forced to drink the water used in bathing the corpse. It serves as a proof of innocence either of the widow killing her husband or hiding his property from the in-laws. The practice of oath taking serves as moral deterrent to other married women in anticipation of their own ordeal (Oreh, 2014).

Widow Inheritance (levirate)-Nkushi

According to Tirosh (2004) Levirate marriage can, at its most positive, serve as protection for the widow and her children, ensuring that they have a male provider and protector. Levirate marriage can be positive in a society where women must rely on men to provide for them, especially in societies where women are under the authority of, dependent on, in servitude to or regarded as possessions of their husbands, and to ensure the survival of the clan. The practice of levirate marriage is strongly associated with patriarchal societies.

In Igbo customs, it means for a widow to be “taken over or to be inherited” in a more general sense by a brother of the deceased. For example, by the son or brother of the deceased husband. The levir’s (husband’s brother) normative role is to sire children, if the widow’s family is not already considered complete; to manage the property held in trust for her minor sons; to assist her by providing labor for clearing, ploughing, planting and harvesting and to contribute to the maintenance of her household (Korieh, 1996).

Nowadays, however, the primary reason for levirate marriage is to acquire the wealth of the dead man. The new relationship becomes effective without the need to pay another bride price. In some tribe, the widow has the free will to choose who she wants to marry or whether she wants to marry any of her late husband’s relations. A widow can choose her son as her new husband, indicating that she does not wish to remarry (Okoye, 2003). The levir has the responsibility to take care of his dead brother’s dependents who cannot get along without male assistance.

Disinheritance of a Widow

According to Oreh (2014), this is a situation where a widow is not allowed to inherit any property of her husband. Igboland is mainly a patriarchal society in which a widow is seen as a chattel of her husband and his family. As a chattel, she is incapable of owning or inheriting a property but she qualifies to be inherited herself. The only exception is if the woman has a living male child who can inherit part of his father’s property and through him the mother may benefit. It is worse in a matrilineal society where the members of the man’s maternal family particularly the man’s brothers, sisters and their children dispossess the dead man’s biological children of their father’s property.

This practice contradicts section 36 of the Nigerian Marriage Act (1990), which stipulates that:

a. A widow with children is entitled to one-third of her husband’s estate.

b. Where the widow has no child, she is entitled to half of her husband’s estate.

The above therefore indicates that on paper, a widow and her children are entitled to inherit from the dead man’s estate as sole beneficiaries.

The Representation of Igbo Widowhood Practices in Nollywood Films

Francoise (2014) stated that Nigerian video films, commonly known as ‘Nollywood,’ have focused upon family life, discussing topics such
as polygamy, infidelity, childlessness and couple’s relationships with in-laws. As filmmakers grew bolder in their representation of societal issues, recent years have seen some of them joining the growing number of voices challenging long-established traditions concerning the treatment of widows. Anyanwu (2003) noted that from the 1990s onwards, Nigerian video films, often considered as a mirror of their society and whose focus on family issues was already well established, caught up with the on-going discussions on issue of widows. Most of the storylines tell the widow’s side of the story, in line with the established status of the industry as ‘edutainment’ (aiming to educate through entertainment) here to raise awareness of the issue, with storylines often featuring the church as mediator, working alongside individuals to bring about an amicable solution while respecting traditional societal structures. Yet this cinematic treatment of the subject has seldom been considered by scholars, apart from a few paragraphs in studies on women in Nigerian video films.

In *Evil Men* (1998), the widow’s story is used as a catalyst, revealing the corruption and greed of local elders. A gang of influential men terrorize a village after infiltrating the Igwe’s cabinet and local church, and dispossess or destroy all those who oppose their plans to sell the land to nearby Onitsha businessman. As the widow of a man they killed resists them, they killed her only son and persuade the Igwe to banish her from the village on murder charges. Their crimes eventually catch up with them: suspicious, the vicar of the local church excommunicates their leader, they then meet sudden deaths one by one and the widow is eventually restored to the community.

According to Samuel (2011) many video films have treated the theme of widowhood. In his narrative, *The Widow*, Ndubuisi Okoh (director) explores the helpless and hopeless situation of a widow – Chinwe in a wicked society – a society where women like her live to face those who secretly plunged them into their predicament. The two-part narrative is an expose of the travails of Chinwe, a pregnant young lady who was unfortunate to start motherhood as a widow. Produced by Obi Madubuogwu, *The Widow* also relays evil roles of a greedy brother-in-law personified by Orji, who killed his sibling – Udoka in order to dispossess his widow of her inheritance.

The treatment of widows in Igboland gradually found its way from the periphery to the heart of Nollywood, as also revealed in the movie, *Widows* (2007), which claims to be inspired by true life stories. In this film, the widow reminisces about her past, how she met her husband at the party organized to welcome him back home after his studies abroad. Her marriage to Chima, this “wonderful husband, friend and companion,” now a CEO in a pharmaceutical company, is blessed with three children. But soon a family dispute over money threatens the family’s peace as the husband, ignoring the wife’s plea, takes his brother to court. On the eve of the final hearing, Chima dies of heart attack, leaving his wife desolate. Back in the village, his death is considered as suspicious; the wife is met with hostility and ordered to submit to the “rites you must perform to prove your innocence.” She is locked with the corpse for three days, all the hairs of her body are shaved and her nails cut short. She is given the bathwater of the corpse to drink and insulted, bullied and beaten as she wails at daybreak. On the night that marks the end of her mourning, the *umuada* tear down and burn her mourning clothes, burn her hair and send her naked to the stream in the heart of the forest for ablutions. The long dialogue between her and the *umuada* gives us a glimpse of both her ordeal and the state of mind of her tormentors:

- Is widowhood not enough pain and punishment for me?
- Nnenna, do you think we are called *umuada* for nothing? […] it is pity, my child, that we have to dance to the music dictated to us by our ancestors. Don’t worry! Some day you will lead other women down the same path!
- Never! […]

Three months later, she is now faced with the demands from her elder brother-in-law, who has come to claim his right to inherit her, the
children and the deceased’s properties – refusing means losing both her home and her children. Her father himself has no consolation to offer: instead, he advises her to submit, as “this is tradition. […] you can’t change it, so you live with it. I advise you, do not aggravate their anger.” The police themselves discourage her from rebelling, explaining that levirate marriage is lawful in Nigeria, “to take care of you and your kids.” Nnenna later manages to escape with the children. The elder brother-in-law keeps stalking her as she moves from one refuge to the next, supported by her friends. In the end, she is provided with passports and visas and helped to the airport. The film concludes with a silent text: “I am caught in this cruel tradition, a tradition that metes out cruelty to widows. Why would society allow such? This is the price I am paying for being a woman. This is the sad and painful story of ‘the widow’.”

Korieh (1996) observed that for the Igbo woman, the period of widowhood is not just a ritual phase but one that may be regarded as a permanent status of some independence—a remark which seems to apply to the Yoruba as well, with Yoruba films providing some additional insight into the gradual change in women’s attitudes, with ‘educated’ wives refusing to conform to tradition. In most Yoruba films, widows in the modern setting refuse to marry the next of kin of their late husbands, as is the practice in Yoruba society. “Educational and economic empowerment have set these widows free and they are able to lead their lives without men” (Olujinmi, 2008, p.20). This same evolution can be found in some Igbo films: in the movie Woman to Woman (2011), a childless, rich and powerful woman Odibueze, lost her husband. The husband’s brother, who is married, wealthy and father of a grown-up son, visits her and demands all business documents belonging to the deceased. The widow strongly refuses to cooperate. The man keeps insisting that his late brother’s properties rightly belong to him by tradition, but when he tries to take them by force, the widow hires thugs to beat him, later, conscious of her weak position as childless woman, Odibueze arranges marriage for one Alice in order for her to bear children in the name of Odibueze’s late husband. Unfortunately for the widow, the couple, once married, refuse to play the game: the man insists to keep the woman he now considers his lawfully wedded wife and they soon throw the widow out of the apartment she rented for them. According to Ugohchukwu (2014) Odibueze, in spite of piling up convincing arguments and a good knowledge of Igbo traditions, will try in vain to convince family elders of her right to this posthumous marriage. Although the film is more interested in a reflection on alternative forms of traditional marriages, it is interesting to see how the storyline offers the widow a chance to tweak the rules of the traditional ‘woman to woman’ marriage meant to provide the husband with an offspring when the first wife cannot conceive. In the film, she now seeks to use this well-established tradition to protect herself from her in-laws’ threats: the words of the theme song and the elders’ attitude both hint to a new attitude to tradition on the part of the film director, who clearly does not accommodate such a custom.

Nollywood has really put in its best to shed light on the cultural practices of people of Africa and Nigeria particularly but in doing this, they have in most cases depicted what doesn’t really speak good of the people and their traditions. Nwachukwu (1994) suggests that most films were made with distorted ideologies. While the Briton, or white male character is adorned with intrepid heroic candor in them, the African is presented as superstitious and backward. Nollywood films have mostly been taking sides with widows, depicting their suffering and their courage in adversity; yet there are others that present a different take, seemingly turning back the tide to resurrect the old stereotypes about criminally minded widows who use their predicament as an opportunity to terrorize their communities and families (Samuel, 2011). An example of such movie is the widow’s cot (2007), where a widow’s association which was started off as an organization that helps the widows regain their lost strength turned out to be hijacked by some widows who wanted to punish the men in the society and trying every possible means to show them that widows can be very powerful and destructive. They became terror to
their society. Some of these moves might have been triggered by the growing impact of these Nollywood films in presenting the Igbo widowhood.

Ugochukwu (2014) noted that most of the films were not silent to the fact that most of the deaths were masterminded by the family members who turn around to persecute the widows. This is a pointer that widowhood practice exists simply because some people cash in on such custom and tradition to exploit others- (helpless widows).

While many Nigeria filmmakers have done good job in helping in reorienting the polity on practices that are inimical to human life, it is imperative that they understand their roles in making sure that they portray reality and not just stories that will earn them money (Samuel, 2011).

The Negative Effects of Igbo Cultural Widowhood Practices on the Widows.

It was noted that studies of women and Igbo women particularly have been plagued by more than the methodological and ideological question of male perspective. In the case of the widow, traditions, culture, family structure, and family relationship has played a big role in determining the fate and effects these widowhood practices has had on widows. Some of these effects are;

Economic and Financial Hardship

Economically and financially; widows lose their rights to their husband’s properties because of the notion and custom in Igboland that a woman is a chattel and so do not have the right to own but to be owned. Automatically whatever belonged to her husband will either be forcefully taken by the in-laws or the widow will willingly submit to tradition of levirate in order to still have a hold of what actually belonged to her and her children. Burial rites also incapacitate the widow who is not allowed to partake in both the preparation and conduction of the burial rites. Whatever compensation she would have gotten from the monetary welfare of her well-wishers will not get to her because, she is not directly involved in the burial functions which are taken over by her family members and mostly her husband’s family.

According to Unabuike (2009), the economic implications of the unjust cultural practices on women are seen in the high level of poverty. The economic hardship amongst women especially widows has forced many of them to resort to begging, sex work, and other social vices in order to feed their families. Most of the time, the widow is deprived of her husband’s landed property by the husband’s relatives. The widow in private business loses economically by the long seclusion.

Psychological Trauma and Depression

Psychologically; widows are subjected to a lifetime of trauma and emotional weakness, stress and depression because of the dehumanizing situations that they are made to go through apart from the pain of losing their life partner and companion. The psychological implications of widowhood cultural practices according to Iwuh (1998) as cited in Amalu (2013), are seen in Igbo society where widows undergo certain trauma in the name of widowhood practices. Such psychological trauma includes the widow being prevented from taking a bath, shaving her hairs, going to the farm or market or engaging in any other activity until after her husband is buried, also the act of giving widows food with unwashed plates and many other evil practices which in return demoralizes the widow’s ability to think and act rationally.

Moral Implications

Morally; the widow is forced to partake in traditional practices which she is unaccustomed to and which her belief system doesn’t accept. For instance, if the widow is a Christian, the church has established their stand on this widowhood practices which strongly oppose these practices and made sure that they discourage their followers from partaking in such practice. When a widow is forced to take part in the rituals and rites of burial against her faith, it will cause her untold regret and bitterness.
Health Implications of Widowhood

There is this saying, “Poverty breeds ill health; Poverty attracts violence”. Widows, through poor nutrition, inadequate shelter, a lack of access to health care and a vulnerability to violence, are likely to suffer not only physical ill health but stress and chronic depression as well. Widows’ reproductive and sexual needs are often ignored, and the fact that widows may be sexually active and often the victim of rape is overlooked. In the context of HIV/AIDS, Igbo widows are particularly vulnerable. They may not be informed of the cause of death of their partners, or may not find out until they too become ill. Mourning rites may involve sexual relations with male relatives, widows might be forced into a levirate arrangement with an infected brother-in-law. A widow may have spent all the resources on health care for a dying husband and on the subsequent funeral, and, as a consequence, may have no savings left to pay for drugs should she herself contract the disease.

Violation of a Widow’s Human Right

Another negative effect of these widowhood practices is the abrupt violation of the fundamental human rights of widows. They don’t really have much control over what their fate would be, even when they try to fight for their rights, they are destabilized in such a way that they have no option but to give in to the loathsome demands of the custom of the land. The civil and political rights contained in chapter four are justifiable meaning that the courts can entertain actions to enforce the respect of these rights. Unfortunately, a lot of cultural, traditional and societal constraints have made it difficult for women to enjoy these rights on equal footing with men. Some harmful traditional and customary practices are also potentially fatal such as a widow having to drink the water used in washing the corpse of her husband, or being locked up in a room alone with the corpse. While these may not take life directly and instantly, they may do so indirectly. Female genital mutilation may cause massive bleeding which could lead to shock and eventually death (Felicia & Okpalaobi, 2016).

The constitution also guarantees every one the right to dignity of the human person (constitution 1999), and continuing, it forbids that any person be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment, or held in slavery or servitude or required to perform forced labor. When a woman is required to wail at intervals, shave her hair against her will and sit on the bare floor all in the respect of a dead spouse, her right to dignity of the human person is violated.

Attainable Solutions to Curtailing these Igbo Cultural Widowhood Practices

There are solutions to these practices which might not be completely scrapped but curtailed to the barest minimum. It has been suggested by some scholars that woman right enlightenment and vast exposure should be the main focus for curtailting most of these primitive cultural widowhood practices. In order to curb most of these practices, the aim is to first enlighten most of these widows who are still very naive of their civic rights. In other to tackle this ancient cultural practices that has for long made widows vulnerable, Akinbi (2015), George (2013), Oreh (2014), opined the following proposals which can be helpful to reduce Igbo widowhood practices:

Woman Right Enlightenment

According to Gbenga (2011), one effective but non radical way of challenging the effect of deleterious cultural practices that dehumanizes widows is broad based education. Women’s education is necessary to empower the women with knowledge about dangerous implications of practices meted out on them by the society to which they obviously partner with the males. For instance, a widow deprived of deserved inheritance of economic resources on account of an old-fashioned and irrational customs or traditions, […] may result in loss of reasonable income by the family and a tendency for school going children to drop out of school (George, 2013). Government should make sure that women are given quality education, especially the girl-child and that this education is made compulsory up to at least the senior secondary school level.
Public Awareness

The need for community education and public awareness is of paramount essence (Gbenga, 2011). Besides, emerging women’s rights organizations, currently located in urban cities in Igbo states, they should extend their services to grassroots and to the local women by embarking on mass rights awareness education, providing free legal advice and shelter for the victims. Emphasis should be on local adaptation and messages must be conveyed and presented in Igbo terms that are understood. Through this, individuals will have confidence to wake-up from the fears in the private realms and show willingness to adopt a human rights consciousness.

Religious Support

Widows should try to mobilize and enhance each other’s capabilities. Indirect strategy through different capabilities may offer the best option in this regard. For example, women organizations in churches like the catholic church CWO should put more effort in enhancing the growth of her widow members, educating and supporting them when the help is needed (Onyeka, 2014).

Virile Support

Oreh (2014), proposed the need for men to offer their support, “as with any great movement, the group seeking change relies heavily on the group from which they seek the change. Men are in position of social, political and legal power. As a man might present a dowry to the woman’s family at the time of marriage in Igboland, so he should present a gift of inheritance to/for his family before he parts.” Felicia and Okpalaaobi (2016), stated that the disposition of property or succession to a deceased's property is by will (testate) or by customary and traditional rites (intestate). Thus, the existence of a valid will dispense of all cultural attachments. A man who really loves or cares about his family and his partner should be able to have a will written and as he lives, periodically amended to avoid the mishaps of intestate. In view of this, the reversal or elimination of these long standing rites need the support of many men in positions of power and influence, as well as the resources of organizations to educate and empower women.

Non-Governmental Organization’s Supports

Akinbi (2015) opined that there should be an increasing assistance to widows by Non-Governmental Organization such as Mums and Widows Association (MWA), Widows Support Center (WSC), churches and well-meaning individuals. We should begin to appropriate relevant legal frameworks, law reforms and policies on widowhood practice prevention across sectors and communities, providing training and raising bottom-up initiatives. Further, let us consider the effectiveness of the institutional responses from police, courts, judges, prosecutors and other relevant state institution. This is important to reinforce the willingness of widows to make their claims known to appropriate institutions. Taking their claims seriously is very important to the success of their rights consciousness as well, institutional response needs to engage non-state communities and actors in dialogues about law reforms in an interactive manner.

Strict Law Enforcement on Woman Rights

There are laws made to protect widows from being disinherited, these laws should be judiciously enacted and effectively enforced throughout the country. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women is an international human rights document that establishes international standards of equality between men and women (Nwogu, 2008). This convention ratified by Nigeria in 1986 brings to fore the commitment of the Nigerian government to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women. The fact that Nigeria ratified this international instrument, she is expected to recognize, fulfill, and enforce them.

Empirical Review

Korieh (1996) in his study of widowhood among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria considered Igbo women as hardworking and independent. The researcher posited that wealth is based on trade, farming and wage or salaried employment and in
this situation, widows can be obstacles to their “inheritors” full enjoyment of the property. A widow now more or less struggles to be economically independent, she wants to have more control of and defense of her rights to a portion of her husband’s property.

The study analyzed widowhood in contemporary Igbo society, the importance of cultural traditions and also gave a better understanding of what these practices and rituals are all about. The following are central in this particular study:

1. An examination of the rituals and practices which a woman undergoes on the death of the husband.
2. An examination of Igbo marriage patterns, domestic and affinal relationships, its impact on widowhood practice and the widow’s life.
3. Finally, an examination of widows’ economic survival strategies.

The study was conducted in four villages of Mbaise, in Imo state. Census data of 600 women were collected in which 24% were widows. The study concluded on the basis that it seems misleading that widowhood practices in Igboland is static and same in every community. “though an Igbo widow’s behavior is constrained in some ways, it is quite unconstrained in others. An Igbo widow is free to re-marry, she is free to leave her husband’s family. She is also free to hold and manage her own property. The society gives her freedom to take part in any economic activities of her choice and the researcher suggested that it is precisely because of the constraints imposed upon a woman’s right to inherit from her husband that she is able to enjoy the freedom cited above. The Igbo woman’s freedom of choice and action has its basis in her largely independent status as a married woman. For the Igbo woman, the period of widowhood is not just a ritual phase but one that may be regarded as a permanent status of some independence (Korieh, 1996). This study emphasizes more on the independence of women before and after the death of their husband which is quite contrary to the way they are represented in movies. In films they are portrayed as weak, fragile, helpless and dependent especially on the male folks.

Okorafor (2011) carried out a research on the inheritance practices among widows in Nigeria, the study which focused on selected urban and rural communities in Enugu state stated that in Nigeria’s statutory marriage, the inheritance law is governed by the Marriage Act of 1990. This act provides that a woman can inherit part of her husband’s property and estate including land and also there is will which signifies who the deceased wants his property to go to. This study found out that these laws are not practical as it does not apply to real life scenarios, it further stated that multiplicity of laws on inheritance leaves a gap that permits the courts and traditionalist who include unscrupulous relatives to choose the laws that are beneficial to their self-interest, and most often, to the disadvantage of the bereaved woman.

The researcher adopted the theory of symbolic interactionism which posits that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meaning that things have for them and these meaning is derived from or arises out of social interaction one has with one’s fellow. The result from the survey carried out in this research showed that the disorganization and trauma that follows the death of a spouse is greater on the woman than on the men whenever either loses his or her spouse. In the course of the study, the researcher made frantic effort to ascertain the amount of time which he called ‘waste’ that the bereaved spend on mourning their deceased one. He found out that 43.7% of respondents mourn their spouses exclusively for 1 year. While 26.1% do so for a period of 2 years and this to the researcher is a huge waste of time that should have been used in productive activities that will support the course of development.

In conclusion, the study stated that culture is dynamic not resilience. This means that it could be adjusted over time to suit present situation and contemporary demands, in this effect, the society have a vital role to play. The process of change in a positive direction which has begun, should be sustained and improved upon.
Rowland (2013) in his study “Ritual and Identity Construction in Nigerian Igbo video films: A call for policy implementation”, examined the ritual content of *Wipe your Tears* and the treatment of such rituals and the image they create for the Igbo people. And in its findings, the study revealed that there exists an imbalance in the portrayal of Igbo people and their cultures. The characters in the video films in focus engaged in rituals only for malevolent purposes, especially for the attainment of individualistic ends, to the detriment of collective goals. The study argued that such portrait of the Igbo people is not only lopsided but also violates the idea of Presentation of Culture, as enshrined in the Nigerian Cultural Policy. The study called upon relevant authorities to enforce the policy of Presentation of Culture to the letter. In conclusion the study reasonably established that images in video films are reflections of reality. Thus, video film makers must exercise caution in the deployment of rituals and culture to construct an identity for a people. In addition, the study recommended the need for professional script writers as well as the implementation of the policy of Presentation of Culture as enshrined in the Nigerian Cultural policy.

This study shows that films represents reality to an extent but tends to go off the radar when filmmakers tries to twist facts to suit their target audience and to generate more money.

Nwabueze (2010) in his journal, discussed the topic: Securing Widow’s Sepulchral Rights through the Nigerian Constitution. This study sought to explain explicitly the constitutional rights of the widow under the Nigerian constitution and in this view offered what it termed ‘the constitutional remedy’ where it offered solutions to the plight of a widow when the husband dies intestate. According to the study, “a Nigerian widow whose husband died intestate could contest the application of customary mortuary law on constitutional ground.” A widow could argue that her exclusion by customary burial law discriminates against her as a woman. She could further argue that not being allowed to bury her husband according to her wishes is an instance of deprivation of property.

These rights are guaranteed by some African states’ constitutions, including the 1999 constitution of Nigeria, and are expressed in the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights.” The study further stated that the above property argument is likely to fail in light of the common rule that there is no property right in a dead person’s body and thus offered another approach to this by suggesting the use of gender discrimination which according to it is very much practiced in Nigeria, the study pointed that, “the Equality Guarantee is available to Nigerian widow seeking to enforce her sepulchral rights.” It also divided the application of the Nigerian constitution into two phases; the horizontal and vertical application of the Nigerian constitution.

In conclusion, Nwabueze (2010), opined that a lot of Nigerian widow can be ameliorated by the promulgation of new laws or the repeal or amendment of existing laws; but she need not wait for legislative intervention because the Nigerian constitution already guarantees her certain fundamental rights. “The Equality Guarantee can protect a widow’s sepulchral rights against invasion by her in-laws, either through horizontal application applied to private actions or a vertical application that recognizes judicial enforcement of customary law as state action.” This study in its response to the travails of widows showed them the easiest access to their freedom should troubles of widowhood erupt.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Structural Functionalist Theory**

Structural functionalism, or simply functionalism, is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This approach looks at society through a macro-level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole, and believes that society has evolved like organisms. This approach looks at
both social structure and social functions. Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements; namely norms, customs, traditions, and institutions. Structural Functionalist Theory (SFT) has its roots and application to the study of society in the natural sciences (Worsley, 1992). The theory emerged first in Europe in the 19th century as a sharp response to what was perceived as a crisis of social order at that time. The analysis of Structural Functionalist Theory has a long history in sociology (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000). It is prominent in the works of August (1857) and Herbert (1903). The development of the theory was credited to Emile (1917), while Talcott (1979) refined the theory (Ogunbameru, 2008).

The Structural Functionalist Theory (SFT), unlike the conflict perspective is a value consensus theory which emphasizes the maintenance of the status quo and equilibrium in human societies. The SFT was explored within the web of social network and the sustenance of the cultural practice among the Igbo local communities. The main thrust of the theory is on how social order is maintained in the society. Hence, a dysfunction and change of any aspect of society would not only lead to chaos and disequilibrium but also, a total collapse of the entire system (George, 2010). Another functionalist, Merton (1968) states that structural functionalist analysis focuses on groups, organizations, societies and cultures. He developed the idea of dysfunction. Just as structures or institutions could contribute to the maintenance of other parts of the social system, they also could have negative consequences for them. He contended that not all structures are indispensable to the workings of the social system. Some parts of our social system can be eliminated. If there are aspects of a people’s culture that are injurious to their health or detrimental for societal progress, they can be discarded.

The structural functionalist theory is very relevant in explaining the various socio-cultural factors that sustain widowhood practices in Igbo societies especially in the 21st century. The diverse traditional and socio-cultural practices, they vary from one society to another, subject’s widows to specific mourning rites and rituals. These practices are products of the society which are considered to perform specific functions both for the widow and the larger society. For instance, the practice of levirate (Nkushi) which is practiced in some Igbo societies in spite of western culture and modern civilization is considered an essential means of ensuring that the wealth of the deceased husband is retained within the family.

According to George (2010) the structural functionalists sees beliefs, customs, and traditions as non-material cultures that exist as part of societal structures, which are perceived as essential for the survival of such society because of the roles they perform. The subject of this study, widowhood, is considered as performing vital functions for the various groups represented by the society. The modality for the practices of widowhood is functional and unique to a people. These are determined by cultural practices of the people as ‘handed down from one generation to another’. In this context, the concept of culture is examined with a view to ascertaining its functions and sustenance of certain cultural practices such as widowhood rites in this study. According to Levi-strauss (1967) culture like language, is essentially a collection of arbitrary symbols. He was concerned with the patterning of elements the way cultural elements relate to one another to form the overall system. George (2010) has explained that, cultural practices such as widowhood rites represent routine behavior that carries the norms and values of the society; it is often not easily changed. In other words, culture is a collective pattern of living conveying the norms and values handed down from one generation to another.

The structural functionalist theory, has been criticized by a feminist scholar (Lasebikan, 2001) on the ground that, rather than challenge or modify certain obnoxious and debasing widowhood practices such as drinking water used to bath the corpse, etc., that some widows are subjected to in certain African societies, SFT by its operating principles has perpetually
assisted in the maintenance of status quo, in addition to the furtherance of cultural norms and societal traditions such as widowhood practices.

The Feminist Film Theory

The focus of the theory is primarily on developing a system of ideas about women generally and how they are represented in Nigerian films. Ritzer & Goodman (2004) opined that “feminism is developed to better understand, and transform inequalities between women and men in societies.” In its broadest sense, feminism constitutes both an ideology and a global political movement that confronts sexism, a social relationship in which men as a collectivity have authority over women as a collectivity (Sheila, 2001). On the other hand, Cherlin (2005) notes that the central concept in feminist discourse, is gender which is usually defined as the social and cultural characteristics which distinguish women and men in the society.

Basically, the feminist theorists argue that, nearly all the gender differences we see in the roles of men and women are of cultural origin and have been socially constructed. The feminist theories have in common a focus on the everyday world of women, work with methods appropriate for understanding the very lives and situation of women and understanding as a means for changing the conditions studied (Kvale, 1996). In the words of Barker (2004) “feminism examines the position of women in society and tries to further their interests.”

Feminist film theory is a theoretical film criticism derived from feminist politics and feminist theory influenced by second wave feminism and brought about around the 1970s in the United States. This theory was generally based on sociological theory and focused on the function of female characters in film narratives or genres (Freeland, 1996). This theory seeks to expose patriarchal bias which they believe is dominant in films especially the “male gaze theory. The “gaze” is a term that describes how viewers engage with visual media, the “male gaze” invokes the sexual politics of the gaze and suggests a sexualized way of looking that empowers men and objectifies women. In the male gaze, women is visually positioned as an “object” of heterosexual male desire. Her feelings, thoughts and her own sexual drives are less important than her being “framed” by male desire (Sampson, 2015). The concept of the male gaze was introduced by scholar and filmmaker Laura Mulvey (1975) in her essay on Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. Mulvey believes that women are in fact “the bearer of meaning and not the maker of meaning,” which suggests that women are not placed in a role where they can take control of a scene, instead they are simply put there to be observed from an objectified point of view. This inequality enforces the ancient and outdated idea of “men do the looking, and women are to be looked at.”

“Men act, women appear. Men look at women, women watch themselves being looked at.” Women are always seen as a spectacle in relation to men (Mulvey, 1975). This theory looks at how women are portrayed in movies, which is the same way they are treated in reality. Widows are looked upon in the Igbo society as part of the husband’s property instead of a full individual who can make her own decision and manage her family when her husband dies. Nollywood filmmakers have taken it upon themselves to display the Igbo widowhood practices in ways the society views and assimilates screened messages and these movies also are constructed to fit the societal definition of who a widow is and should be through the gender roles assigned to women.

Methodology

Research methodology involves identification of data sources, collection of data and consequently analysis of data collected with a view to tackling the research problems stated earlier in every research work. This chapter is, therefore, concerned with the presentation of methods and the procedures for executing this study. Consequently, the subheadings addressed in this chapter include: the research designs, area of study, population of study, sample and sampling technique, instruments for data collection, pre-test and validation of research instrument,
administration of instrument of data collection and methods of data analysis.

**Study Population**

The population surveyed was exclusively widows of Igbo origin but of different age categories, educational backgrounds, occupations and widowhood experiences. There are 21 local government areas in Anambra state and a widow represented each of the local government areas. The choice of this particular state lies in its demographic make-up of women who are from Igbo land and also has had first-hand experience of widowhood. This made these widows recruit able for the focus group discussion (FGD).

**Sampling**

The 21 persons were selected through snowballing technique. In constituting the focus groups primarily for eliciting responses aimed at addressing the objectives of this study, two (2) separate group discussions was held twice. The First (1) group had two sessions which comprised of ten (10) widows from different local government areas while the second (2) group had two sessions which comprised of eleven (11) participants who also came from different local government areas in Anambra state.

The choice of twenty-one (21) participants is based on Liamputtong’s assertion that FDGS “involve a group of 12-24 people who come from similar social and cultural backgrounds or who have similar experiences or concerns” which is the widowhood experiences and the Glory of a Widow movie they will still watch.

These groups of individuals were selected using certain criteria like: they must be widows, must have watched the movie (Glory of a Widow) prior to the focus group discussion and have indicated prior interest in the questionnaire to participate in the FGD.

However, provision was made in the questionnaire for respondents to indicate whether they have interest in participating in the focus group interview. In all, four sets of FGD were conducted. Each set comprised of ten (10) and (11) widows respectively, each within the age bracket of thirty (30) years and above. All participants were of Igbo origin, and from Anambra state either by birth or by marriage.

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

**Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

State: Anambra

Moderator: Ogechukwu Maryann

Note taker: Olivia Nzube

Target Group: 21 Widows

Duration of Movie: 1hr 15mins

Duration of Discussion: 1hr 45mins

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic details</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
<td>20-50</td>
<td>18 Widows</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50-70</td>
<td>3 Widows</td>
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<td>Marital Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of widows that remarried</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>21 Participants</td>
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</table>

This demographic table of participants shows that the ages of the widows ranges from twenty (20) through seventy (70) years which means a generational recount of widowhood experiences. The table shows that three (3) widows remarried some years after they lost their husbands. The table also shows that most (15) of the widows are not educated while six (6) widows are
educated. Based on religion nineteen (19) widows are Christians while two (2) are traditionalists. In total the participants were 21 in number.

Answers gotten from the group would be thematically analyzed.

Discussion of Findings

Question 1: What are the Igbo cultural widowhood practices that are still in practice?

According to the Focus Group discussants, they answered this question vividly by affirming that the Igbo cultural widowhood practices are very much in practice. A good number of them pointed the practices that are still been practiced now. These practices include; Shaving of hair, wearing of white mourning clothe, paying of fine as sanction for none adherence to the culture, the removal of the white mourning clothe before six in the evening, the final removal of the white mourning clothe after 3-6 months of mourning, stigmatization of the widow when she refuses to adhere to the customs, etc.

The findings also deduced that drinking of water used to bathe the corpse, making a widow sit on the floor while preventing her from scratching her body with her bare hands, making her eat from old and dirty utensils, taking her to the stream to shave all the hairs in her body and making her take her bath at the stream to cleanse herself, forcing her to return from the stream naked, making her sleep with her husband’s corpse to prove her innocence, making wife inheritance compulsory, and so many other older practices are no longer heard of or even practiced at this time. It is also gathered that the umuada wields great power in the practice of these Igbo cultural widowhood practices. Many of the discussants also affirmed that these practices are no longer compulsory. The 21 participants attested to this in the FGD sessions held.

Participant 1: (Amansea, Awka North). I will say that Igbo tradition is kind of the same everywhere, but sometimes our families have a say on how we perform the ritual rites of a widow. I am from orlu, in Imo state but my husband is from Amansea. When he died, we had to bury him two weeks later because of my religion, I am an Anglican and according to the churches’ doctrines, corpses older than one month will not buried by the church. I travelled to the village, proper arrangements were made for the funeral, though I wasn’t part of the planners. My hair was shaved in the morning of the burial day by the Umuokpu and the hairs were burnt. Before the burial, my white gown was ready, and I wore it for six months before I went back to the village to remove it with my family. No ill treatment whatsoever because my in-laws were in good terms with me. They made it easier for me.

Participant 2: (Agulu, Anaocha). In my husband’s village, when a woman’s husband dies, her hair is shaved immediately, on that same day the husband died or it might be shaved later on the burial day. Also after the burial, the widow will wear her mourning clothe (white gown/ skirt & blouse) for three (3) months before she will go to the village to ceremoniously remove and burn the mourning clothe.

Participant 3: (Awka, Awka South). Sighs. Hmmm. It’s a long story. My widowhood experience was nothing to write home about. I saw hell in the hands of my in-laws. My husband died from a severe illness and that really affected our finances, we had nothing at the time of his death. I had a three months’ baby at the time so it wasn’t really easy at all. I started receiving ill treatment even before my husband died, my in-laws didn’t allow me to go visit my husband at the hospital even at the worst stage of his illness, I didn’t see my husband’s corpse until his burial. They alleged that I wasn’t properly wedded and so doesn’t have the right to my husband’s property. I have four children which three are boys, why would they forsake these beautiful children just because of their accusations against me? I was deprived of my husband’s properties even when I wore my mourning clothe for six months, shaved my hair and performed the necessary rituals a widow will perform, yet they denied me access to my husband’s properties. How will I feed my children? They just left them to suffer
for no just cause. I don’t have issues with mourning my husband according to the tradition but the way treated me wasn’t and still isn’t fair. I am waiting for the right time to stage a war through legal institutions. I am a catholic, so before my hair was shaved, the women who are also widows prayed five decades of rosary before they now shaved the hair, took me to the bathroom and bathed me, after which they dressed me up in white gown and white footwear, earrings and a necklace. When we were coming out they said I must cry, but I told them that I have cried enough and I don’t feel like crying again but eventually when I remembered the love I shared with my husband, I started crying.

Participant 4: (Ukpo, Dunukofia). What is seen when a woman’s husband dies is not what one will finish telling the story. It wasn’t easy. My hair was shaved by the umuada, they made it mandatory that I will not be outside after six in the evening, I wore my mourning clot he for six months, when I wanted to remove my mourning clothe, all the families came together, shotgun was shot in the air to mark the occasion. I burnt my clothes and poured the ashes in the forest. After my mourning period, my in-laws started querying me about my husband’s property, in which I told them that my husband had nothing. In the issue of wife inheritance, a widow and her children can be inherited by the husband’s brother and she can still have children for the brother. This is not compulsory as the wife has the right to agree or disagree.

Participant 5: (Ogidi, Idemmili North). I am from Ogidi Ani but I am married in Ikenga Ogidi. Immediately my husband died, they started dragging for his properties forgetting that the man just died. Well I fearlessly told them that it is not happening. They named me ‘nwaanyi chakakwu’ (over ambitious woman). When the date for the burial was fixed, my husband’s brothers said no, that the burial won’t hold on that day. We dragged on until they agreed, partly because of my grown up son who stood by me. For burial to take place, the house must be repainted. After six months I removed my mourning clothe according to tradition. My hair was shaved twice by the ‘umuada’, first was during the burial and secondly was when I removed my mourning clothe. I burnt all the clothe I wore during the mourning period and throw the ashes in the bush. This tradition is as old as man and nothing should be taken or added to it. A widow is secluded for the six months mourning period, all she has to do is wake up by 5am, take her bath, eat and sit by the corner to welcome mourners and visitors. She will be at this corner until its bedtime. In a case where a widow needs to go out because of her business, she would not be outside after 6pm. After this time, the widow will remove the white cloth and wear ‘Akasa’. They say that akwa mkpe protects the widow from evil, so when a widow stays outside after six in the evening, whatever she sees, she will take because the protection is no longer there again. I stood my ground as pertaining to my husband’s property because if I sleep on it, my children will not have food on their table and the in-laws would not care.

Participant 6: (Ninobi, Idemmili South). I was 20 years old when my husband died. I collapsed when I heard of my husband’s death because I was very young. I stayed at home from the day my husband died, till after six months when I removed my mourning cloth. I had to remove everything I was wearing on my body both my under-wears, whatsoever I was wearing was burnt at the end of the six months. I don’t have any problem with tradition because that is the way it has always been, so one must respect her dead husband. Our tradition is very good and should be obeyed because I believe that’s the only way one can honor their deceased husband. In all the burial arrangement, I didn’t have any say, I was just looking like a lost child, whatever they decided was alright by me. When things were difficult, I sought help from my in-laws which was to no avail. The small land we had before my husband’s death was taken and I couldn’t do anything about it.

Participant 7: (Abagana, Njikoka): Widowhood practice in my community is no longer compulsory, it depends on what the family and the widow wants. Gone are the days when the umuada had all the right in the world to drag you like a dog and shave your hair whether you liked it or not. The choice of hair shaving is dependent on the widow and as you have seen, most widows like shaving their hair out of respect for their husband not out of fear for tradition and nobody will fine you if you did not shave hair or wear mourning
clothe. But there must be something you will do to show that you are in mourning. You can’t just make new hair and apply make-up when your husband just died, it contradicts the assumption that you loved your husband and supports the believe that you might be happy for what happened to the dead man.

**Participant 8:** (Igbariam, Anambra East): I was a business woman at Lagos and business was booming before my husband fell sick and all the money we made from the clothing business was spent on his hospital bill and the money couldn’t even save him because he later died. Following his burial, my in-laws forced me to undergo a series of rituals that included shaving my hair, pubic hair, and stripping near my husband’s grave. When I refused, they threatened to cut ties with me and my children. I never wanted to go through that process, but I asked them what if I don’t do it, they said it means I killed my husband. The rituals are usually extreme if the wife is not in a good relationship with her husband’s family and this was the case with me, they actually accused me of killing my husband which made them to wake me in middle of the night by 2 a.m. and told me to start crying around my husband’s grave. I mourned my husband for 6 months, after which I had my hair shaved again and burnt with everything I was wearing on my body at the time.

**Participant 9:** (Mmiata Anam, Anambra West): The culture of widowhood here in Anam is just normal, there is nothing too rigorous about it. As of recent, shaving is optional, not everybody shaves their hair except it was agreed by the family that the widow will shave her hair. I did not shave my hair, I just had to cover my hair with a head tie. In wearing of white, my whole family wore the white with me at the day of the burial to show respect to my late husband and at the end of eight market days, I removed my mourning clothe together with my family and burnt it. Nowadays widows are not mandated to wear white or shave their hair again but widows practice it because they don’t want the people to look at them as if they are happy that their husband died.

**Participant 10:** (Omor, Ayamelum): Widowhood practices in my community is very much customary and I accepted it with my whole heart. My husband left me at a very tender age. It was hard for me to concentrate on anything at the time of his death and to worsen it all I couldn’t give him a child before his death. They said that when the child a woman came to carry dies, the woman will go home, so in my case after the duration of my widowhood, I had to go home to my people because there was nothing for me or nobody for me to stay with again. As for the widowhood rituals, I had my hair shaved on the day of my husband’s burial by the Umuada, after which I wore my white skirt and blouse, I was secluded at a corner of the house with some close friends when the burial was going on, I was warned not to eat anything that was meant for the burial, even if I had to eat, it will be specially prepared by a family member and the ingredients or food stuffs will be bought differently. That means nothing from the burial whether edible or not should be used for me as the widow. I mourned my husband for 3 months and during this period I did not go out of the house except for matters of great urgency.

**Participant 11:** (Awkuzu, Oyi): Our culture demands that when a woman’s husband dies, she is supposed to grieve in a special way which includes; shaving her hair and wearing her akwa mkpe for six months or three months depending on the decided time frame. Widows due to religion and civilization don’t go through all these traditions. Some will tell you that their church is against wearing of white and shaving of hair. The umuada will not kill you for that but the woman in her common sense will not purposely wear her best clothe on the day of her husband’s burial. If you won’t wear white, you will have to find a particular piece of cloth to sew which you will wear for the mourning period. During the day of burial, the Christian women who their husbands has died will take the widow to the back of the house where they pray over her and shave her hair. Then after the burial she will wear her mourning clothe for six months.

**Participant 12:** (Atani, Ogbaru): In my place, when a man dies, he is buried immediately; on that same day and the widow’s hair is also shaved that day immediately they must have buried the husband. The woman will stay at home for seven days without stepping a foot outside the compound.
If the family is not ready yet for the funeral, the umuada will ask her to go out and stretch her legs but she is restricted from going to places like church and market or any ceremonious event. When the funeral day is decided, she will choose the kind of cloth, either white or black. On the day of the burial, she will be asked to stay in corner where they have already decorated for her only. She will not touch anything with her hands or shake hands with anybody. Whether the burial is going well or not, she will not raise her voice nor interfere with the occasion, she is not supposed to reply to greetings with mouth, she can only wave or nod her head. Two persons from the umuada who are also widows will stand by her side in case she needs anything. She cannot collect gifts with her hands, a basket will be placed on her table for people who wants to give her gifts. She will be in her secluded place till 5:30pm, then she will be taken inside to eat, bathe and change her mourning clothes. A widow is not supposed to eat after 6pm because it is believed that at this time her dead husband will join her in eating. If the widow did not meet up with eating, bathing and changing her clothes before 6pm, she will sleep like that without bathing nor eating. During the mourning period, a widow is not supposed to sleep in the afternoon even when she is feeling sleepy rather they buy ‘ludo or whot card’ or any kind of game that will keep her from sleeping. It is believed that if she sleeps in the afternoon, she will be infected with sleeping sickness for the rest of her life because she must have slept with the spirits. To avoid any chances of her sleeping, her family members and well-wishers will always come by to visit her, she is not to be left alone by herself. There is what is called ‘ASA MMUO’ which is done after one month of her seclusion, and ‘ASAMMADU’ which is done after two weeks of her seclusion. It means severing the widow from evil persons and evil spirits that might want to harm her. She is to cook for the umuada to commemorate the occasion. Until after six months, she is not to stay outside after 6pm. If she is to remove her mourning cloth, the umuada will come and burn the mourning clothes. Whether you are a Christian or not, this tradition is compulsory and must be adhered to.

**Participant 13:** (Fegge, Onitsha South): I was thirty years old and still breastfeeding my baby girl when my husband died. He was buried the same day he died, because of the severity of his sickness when he was ill. After the burial, I stayed four days (inopu 1zn) before doing the official funeral event for his death which after everyone is free to go about their business including 1 the widow. For the love and respect, I had for my husband, I stayed for more 2 weeks after which I was free to go about my business. For the akwa mkpe (mourning cloth), I wore it for one year and I was the last person to do that in my community, now it's worn for six months. The church and the traditional rulers of our community changed these practice of wearing mourning clothes for one year because if the widow is a business woman, it can affect her business because some traditionalists avoid patronizing women in mourning clothes because of the assumption that their cloth makes charms ineffective. Akwa mkpe and shaving of hair is very significant because it shows respect and loyalty for the husband. For a childless widow, it is better for the woman to face her father’s house because after the burial and mourning period, you don’t have any business with your husband’s family. This widow will not be able to inherit her husband’s property in this case.

**Participant 14:** (Onitsha, Onitsha North): The loss of husband is always very painful. During the burial of my husband, I stayed in a room throughout the burial according to the tradition. People who came in to wish me well were attended to by my sisters who were there with me. I didn’t witness anything that happened during the burial event. I wore my mourning cloth for six months and after the six months I got another piece of cloth and wore it for another six months and that was on my own accord. After the burial I was asked to tell the family members what my husband had before his death; his bank balance, his properties, his will etc. I had to tell them everything I knew the repercussion will set in when I use anything I had hidden from them. A widow has to say these things under an oath in order to say the truth. Our tradition doesn’t punish a widow unless the widow is suspicious or wayward. For a mother, the children have the right to inherit the husband’s property instead of the nkushi (wife inheritance) and the child must be a son, a female cannot inherit the father’s property. For a widow
that did not beget a son or male child, she can appoint the husband's brother to inherit the property for her. It is not proper for a widow to be walking around with un-shaved hair, it has deadly implications which so many people don’t know. That is why our tradition insists on shaving hair before and after the mourning period.

**Participant 15:** (Igboukwu, Aguata): Well, I am very happy for the advent of Christianity, because it has really saved us widows from unjust rituals that some of us had to go through because our husbands died. Now, a widow is able to choose the way and method she wants to mourn her husband. Okay for widows who wants to go the traditional way will shave their hair before and after the mourning period, wear her mourning clothe for three months, after which she will go back to the village to remove the mourning clothe and burn it with her family. A day after she has done that, she will go for thanksgiving if she is a Christian. The Umada will take their time to advise her on how she must behave now that she is a widow. Remember that all the shaving of hair and wearing of mourning clothe is basically the widow’s choice to make. Nobody will force you to do anything you don’t want to do. It’s no longer the way it was during the time of my grandparents. Things has changed, civilization has now taken over.

**Participant 16:** (Ozubulu, Ekwusigo): Culture differs, so when my husband died, I was asked to bath with a leaf called (ogirisi), after which the women shaved my hair. My in-laws planned all the burial arrangements because my children were still little then and I was out of the question. They did all the preparation without consulting me but in all the arrangements were good. After the burial, I traveled back to the city and continued with my life, the only added change was that I wore my mourning clothe for six months. I am not an advocate for white wearing tradition. The church has spoken against it and I support them. According to the bishop of my parish, evil people attack women spiritually during their mourning period mainly because of the white clothe or mourning clothe. In essence, I am saying that white doesn’t signify love or respect for the husband, a woman can choose some of her clothes to wear for her husband. This practice of wearing white has really cost widows a lot; sometimes a widow will wear white to the market to sell her goods but people will not patronize her and some will be seeing her as someone that committed a crime. The tradition demands that a widow will not eat the food cooked for the burial nor use anything like food ingredients, drinks, cup, plate, fruits etc., that was meant for the burial. And the widow is meant to stay in her room or at the back of the house during the burial. It is compulsory to burn everything worn during the mourning period.

**Participant 17:** (Uli, Ihiala): in Uli, when one’s husband dies, she will not go out for one week because visitors will come to console you. For a catholic, the corpse must be buried before one month. On the night before the burial, the umada will help you arrange your mourning clothes and get it ready for the burial activities. Early in the morning on the burial day, the umada will help you take your bath and also clothe you in the white mourning clothes, you won’t wear them by yourself. During the burial, the widow is expected to keep quite all through, she can whisper when what she has to say is very important. The burial food, drinks, cooking pot, plates, cups, firewood, foodstuffs, souvenirs, etc., will not be used for and by the widow. It is believed that if eats the food meant for the burial of her husband, she will join her husband in the land of the dead after one month. Immediately the corpse is lowered to the ground, the widow is taken by the umada who their husbands are dead to the backyard to shave her hair. The process of shaving the widow’s hair involves routine singing by the widows and these songs are usually mournful. After the shaving, they will rub the head with a local oil and then cover it with a head tie. The shaved hair is not supposed to be seen by anybody, you only remove the scarf when you want to take your bath. Before six in the evening, the widow is supposed to have taken her bath, eaten and changed her white cloth. It is believed that if a widow is still wearing her mourning clothe in the house, either blue or black, depending on what she wants, but she cannot wear her white cloth in the house. The mourning clothe is worn for three
months after which she will shave her hair again and burn the clothes.

**Participant 18:** (Otolo Nnewi, Nnewi North): the burial arrangement was planned by I the widow, the family of my husband and my children. On the burial day, when others must have gone to the mortuary, other widows will take the widow to the backyard to shave her hair, bathe her and clothe her in her white uniform. After this, she will be directed to the space that has been kept for her. The widow will have to put sand in the grave of her husband to show her last respect, after which she will start wailing uncontrollably. After the burial comes the mourning period, she will wear her white or black dress for six months. Then she will officially remove it by burning everything she wore during the mourning period.

**Participant 19:** (Osumenyi, Nnewi South): the burial decision is always made by the deceased family especially the brothers. My opinion as his widow is not sought after. They shared my husband’s land two days after his death, because they said that is where they will get the money they will use to bury their brother. The widow will decide by herself if she will continue to wear her white cloth after the burial or not. The mourning duration is usually 3-6 months depending on the husband’s family. Shaving of hair is not also compulsory, also dependent on the family.

**Participant 20:** (Okoh, Orumba North): Widowhood practices are no longer tedious as it used to be. When my husband died, I traveled to the village to make preparations for his burial with the family. On the burial day, the umuada shaved my hair before the burial, had me take my bath and also helped me wear my white gown. I was given a separate position at a corner of the compound where I was surrounded by my friends and family. They were there to handle whatever problem that might need my attention because I was not meant to talk or engage in any kind of unserious conversation. My food was separately cooked with a new pot that was bought for me in particular because I was not supposed to use anything that came out from my husband’s burial. By 5pm, my fellow widows took me inside and I took my bath, ate and retired for the day, for according to the custom I was not supposed to stay up after 6pm. The mourning period came after the burial, and I mourned my husband for three months after which I removed my mourning clothe by burning it. The burning was done by the umuada.

**Participant 21:** (Umunze, Orumba North): In observing the practice of widowhood, the widow will choose if she will start her mourning rituals immediately the husband dies; this includes; wearing her mourning clothe, shaving her hair, etc., or if she will start the mourning rituals on the burial day. The former option is rarely used because some might not perform the burial rites immediately after the man dies, and you won’t continue wearing your mourning clothe even if the burial rites were performed two years later. The first option is chosen when the widow is certain of when the husband’s corpse will be properly buried, so that after the burial, the widow can officially remove her mourning clothe and move on with her life. But if she chose the second option, she will have to wear her mourning clothe for three months or six months as the case may be. During the burial, the widow is not supposed to talk or engage in any kind of chitty-chatty conversation and she is meant to retire for the day before six in the evening. During the period of mourning, a widow is not supposed to go for any meeting, events especially burial events or engage in any social activities.

**Research Question 2:** How does Nollywood films portray these Igbo widowhood cultural practices?

The study found that the Nollywood representations of Igbo cultural widowhood practices is often exaggerated and this is often caused by the desire of the filmmakers to generate more money from the film. Sixteen out of the twenty-one participants watch Nigerian movies while five doesn’t. This research question formed the core part of this study because a movie was analyzed by the audience on how Nollywood represents the Igbo cultural widowhood practices.

The research topic which says; Film representation of Igbo cultural widowhood practices: An audience analysis of a Nollywood movie ‘Glory of a widow’ has shown that
Nollywood which was represented by the movie directed by Ugezu J. Ugezu has performed poorly in the proper representation of the Igbo cultural widowhood practices. According to the discussants, the movie has failed to outline the Igbo cultural widowhood practices in the way it is done and followed, and it has also failed in educating a non-Igbo on what Igbo cultural widowhood practices is all about. Fourteen participants believed that the movie went out of proportion in its representation, while the rest have not actually witnessed but thinks that it is possible that such thing might be happening.

**Participant 1:** It threw light on the way the Igbo cultural widowhood is practiced in some places. This is the first time I am seeing a widow’s hair being shaved in front of the house or in an open place in such a disrespectful manner. I feel the filmmaker exaggerated that part a little.

**Participant 2:** I will say that the filmmaker went out of proportion in displaying the attitude of the umuada and the mother-in-law. That is why the Igbo people are seen by outsiders as evil and wicked because of the way filmmakers blow things out of proportion.

**Participant 3:** The film did well in its representation of the Igbo widowhood practices. This really happens in so many places in Igboland, but people who have not witnessed these acts will see it as mere night tale.

**Participant 4:** The success of the film is very slim because it went overboard in showing how the umuada maltreated the widow. A non-Igbo person will assume that this is the way majority of the umuada treats their widows.

**Participant 5:** There is too much exaggeration in the portrayal of the Igbo widowhood practices. This is a 2021 movie and most of us knows that this kind of practice has stopped for a very long time now. Which educated woman will allow you to drag and accuse her of killing her husband in that manner? She will tell you to meet her in court. I think what the film portrayed is not applicable to today’s widowhood practices.

**Participant 10:** Most movie scenes are exaggerated and that is to remind us that we are watching a drama beautified by camera and lightening, I know that movies represent real life situations but I don’t forget the fact that a filmmaker has to make his money, so be might add some certain things to a fact to make it more funny or more emotional as the case maybe. The movie is successful in showing what widowhood is like in Igboland, if it was addressing a stranger or someone who have not experienced widowhood and know that there are procedures they follow in performing all these rites.

**Participant 19:** It really did not represent the Igbo widowhood culture realistically in this present time. There was nothing factual about the information on what widowhood is all about now.

**Participant 20:** No! the movie failed woefully in its representation of the Igbo cultural widowhood practices. What it portrayed doesn’t happen now.

**Participant 21:** The question is: has the woman not been cooking for her husband? How can she be accused of poisoning her husband’s food? The storyline isn’t much convincing and realistic and that same thing is applicable to the practice the filmmaker portrayed in the movie.

The dominant assumptions displayed in this movie, that is what people assumed widowhood is all about which was displayed in the movie is the fact that widows actually shave their hair in so many circumstances and that they don’t do the shaving by themselves but by the umuada or umuokpu who are also their fellow widow.

**Participant 2:** The assumptions I had which was displayed in the movie is the part of the mother-in-law supporting the umuada in the maltreatment of her own daughter-in-law. Also the part where a widow is actually punished for a sin which she is assumed to have committed and not which she was given the privilege to prove her innocence. I have been hearing about widow’s accusations but the movie just confirmed that it is real.

**Participant 3:** Some people don’t believe that this kind of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship exists, this movie just proved it. the mother-in-law hated her son’s wife so much that
she marries a drunkard all in the name of keeping her son’s lineage.

**Participant 3:** People believe that the cultural practices of widowhood is long gone in the 21st century but this movie is telling everyone of us that there are places in Igboland that still upholds these cultures from beginning to end.

**Participant 4:** The glory of a widow depicts what the Igbo cultural widowhood practices centers on which is the enthronement of the umuada in matters that concerns widows and their rites. For a non-Igbo, the believe that the umuada wields much authority is confirmed from this movie.

**Participant 5:** I have watched many movies by Ugezu J. Ugezu, and to some extent, he has always tried to display what the Igbo customs and traditions is all about. This movie has answered some questions as to how widowhood is been practiced in Igbo land and what can actually prompt umuada to be strict or lenient to a widow. He also showed what might happen if a widow is found guilty of killing her husband in some places in Igbo land. Even though be exaggerated, the movie can still clear a persons’ doubt or believe about the Igbo widowhood practices.

**Participant 6:** I have heard stories of where widows were accused of killing their husbands by the umuada and also how she was made to undergo so many rituals like drinking the water used to bathe the corpse and I didn’t believe it, until I have watched this movie. I now think that the stories might be true even though I have not seen anything like that.

**Participant 7:** I have heard about how widows were accused of killing their husband and how they burnt her hair and threw the ashes in the coffin. With what I have seen in the movie, it is likely that those stories were true and may have happened or might be happening in this recent time. Another part of this movie which showed how the mother-in-law brought a man for the daughter-in-law to have intercourse with in order to keep her late son’s legacy is unheard of but it was shown in this movie, which means that something of this nature truly happens.

**Participant 8:** The movie confirmed the believe that the wife is in greater trouble if she comes into a household that she is not accepted in, especially by her mother-in-law. It displayed the level of pain that these women go through when their supporter leaves them.

**Participant 9:** The movie ended with the whole village and the umuada discovering that the mother-in-law was actually the one who killed her son and she faced the consequences by been struck blind by the son. Viewers are meant to learn that the tradition actually works, that is why widows who are learned also indulge in all these practices to avoid regret later on. The movie just displayed that there is power in the tradition.

**Participant 10:** Assumptions of whether these rituals are effective or not has been made clear by the movie. It has shown that there is a reason behind the practice of Igbo widowhood practices and some women and widows actually believe in these practices.

**Participant 11:** Many people still doubt the effectiveness of our culture, from viewing this film, their conception might change, and the umuada will also learn that they cannot just pin murder on someone because of mere allegation by their mother-in-law. From how the movie turned out, it showed that the mother-in-law wrongly accused Oma and later received the punishment she deserved.

**Participant 12:** Films depicts reality to some extent and this particular movie has succeeded in clearing the viewer’s doubt about dependency in the tradition. Why most people engage in some of the widowhood practices is because they believe that it is really effective. When a woman is wrongly accused, she might draw strength from the facts that the movie just displayed that she will be vindicated when the time comes.

**Participant 13:** People might have heard of these practices but are still skeptical about how true it is or whether it works or not. This movie has succeeded in clearing their doubts and giving them reasons to believe that the traditions have its power and effects.

**Participant 14:** It is unbelievable that a mother would kill her son just to gain material wealth. The movie has just displayed the reality of life, that the worse could happen anywhere and anytime.
also informs every viewer that one should be very careful in the midst of family.

**Participant 15:** This movie just proved that the umuada even in their flaws are not punished by the tradition. There is no provision in the tradition to reprimand the umuada when they misjudge someone.

**Participant 16:** Doubts about the tradition and its power or efficiency has been thoroughly dissected in this movie. The filmmaker even though he exaggerated some things also threw light on the traditional life style in the Igbo society.

**Participant 17:** The center focus which is on the umuada and their flaws could not be missed in this movie. One might think that the umuada knows all and are always right but from the movie, we all have found out that the umuada can be very mistaken in their judgements and can also be corrupt.

**Participant 18:** Some people feel it is wrong to remarry when their spouse dies, the movie has cleared this assumption and has also made widows to understand that they have the right to a happy life after the death of their husband.

**Participant 19:** Many people were told the story of how widows were accused and punished unjustly, the movie has displayed its possibility even in this present time.

**Participant 20:** There are different ideologies about how Igbos practice their widowhood culture, a quick view of this movie will go a long way in shaping the perception of people about these practices.

**Participant 21:** Staying with the family of your late husband when they don’t even like you and you did not give birth to any child is really dangerous and uncalled for. The widow should feel free to let go of the family and start a new life.

**Research Question 3:** What are the negative effects of these cultural widowhood practices

Thirteen participants out of the twenty-one participants confirmed that they suffered because of the cultural practices, three said the effect was because of death which was nobody’s fault, while the rest confirmed that they didn’t feel any negative effect from doing the right thing. The study observed that majority of the participants were made uncomfortable by the widowhood culture; participant 3, 4, 8 & 10 attested to this when they said that they had to take extra clothes in their bags in order to change in case they stay out after 6pm. Another also complained of getting tired from sitting still throughout her husband’s burial, while another made mention of being scared and jumpy because of the many tales she had been told.

The negative effects of these practices can have a long time effect on these widows. According to participant 3, she still has pending court cases with her late husband’s family so that she can be able to give her children what rightfully belongs to them. The court case might prolong, which strains and drains both the widow and her children and might also cause stress disorder for the widow who not only carries her burden but that of her children too.

**Participant 1:** I won’t say we suffered because of the widowhood practice. The death of my husband had heavy effect on us, because I lost my husband and my children lost their father. You understand that.

**Participant 2:** Sometimes I found it hard wearing white all day and running back home before six in the evening, it was tiring and I wanted the mourning period to end. Though mine was 3 months but it felt like a year.

**Participant 3:** My children lost their father and his properties and the opportunity to have a good education and also feel well. The effect is still taking its toll on me because we are still on the case. The children are denied their right to know their father’s root because my in-laws locked my late husband’s house and took the key. It is really affecting us negatively. As for the white, I changed it with another wrapper material I sewed for my husband’s burial, so it didn’t disturb me much. I also stayed at home for a long time, so it affected my business in a way.

**Participant 4:** There are so many effects. My long hair was shaved within seconds, I had to be running back home so that I will not be outside after six in the evening, sometimes I take extra
clothe with me to change if couldn’t make it home before six. I didn’t have enough white to change, before the end of the mourning period, my white was already brown in color. The family people that will be telling you all you needed to do when your husband died will all run away after the burial, leaving you and your children to die in hunger.

**Participant 5**: Apart from the property that my husband’s brother tried to take from us, me and my children bore our loss alone and I did all I was told to give my husband a befitting burial. I didn’t regret the hair shaving or wearing white for so long.

**Participant 6**: I will say my own. Me and my children were left hungry by the family who promised to always check on us. Education was story for another century.

**Participant 7**: The widowhood practices were quite normal and I accepted it. It had a good effect on me and my children. Things were not going well for us until we did the needful (burial), and his spirit went to rest and left us for good. That is how you know that there is power in all these traditions.

**Participant 8**: First off, they disgraced me by intruding on my privacy by shaving my pubic area themselves, shaving my hair by force and wrecking my business the more by making me stay for so long at the village because I was mourning my husband. Haaa… Wearing of white was the least of what they made me go through. People that don’t feed you or even take care of your family (hisses).

**Participant 9**: I observed the widowhood rites because I wanted to. Nobody forced me. My husband died and that has its natural negative effect which is nobody’s fault.

**Participant 10**: On the day of burial, I was really hungry but I couldn’t eat anything, and I was also very uncomfortable sitting at a position for a long time. It was really discomfiting. On a normal day, wearing white is very risky because it gets dirty easily, now think of someone wearing it every day for 3-6 months. It is really exhausting but we have to do what we have to do.

**Participant 11**: I traveled back and forth to the village in order to observe some rituals, izu asaa, the burial proper and the removing of mourning clothe, it was really tiring, I was really tired of being told what to do and how to do it. My greatest challenge was wearing white to anywhere I wanted to go. People will always feel pathetic towards you as if all hope has been lost.

**Participant 12**: The whole procedure is really demoralizing; sitting in one place, keeping mute during the burial and coupled with the loneliness that comes after the burial. The wearing of a particular uniform, which is white in this case was really disturbing. The truth is no one will find it funny wearing white for that long every day.

**Participant 13**: I had no problem with the whole process, except for the part that said I shouldn’t stay out after six in the evening. Sometimes I do forget but what I do instead is I always have extra clothe packed in my bag in case it gets late. My children lost their father and it was a huge pain for them at the time and you know; death isn’t anybody’s fault.

**Participant 14**: Everything that I did was done with the better understanding that nothing good comes easy. For you to have a peaceful and successful home, you will have to bury the dead in a proper way so that if they are resting in peace, you will also have your peace of mind.

**Participant 15**: I was really bored of staying home and receiving so much visitors. When I told the people that were staying with me that I was tired, they said I will have to bear it for a little longer because that is how it is done. The momentarily seclusion on the burial day was very tiring. I resisted myself from screaming out loud.

**Participant 16**: Apart from the fact that I didn’t know anything about the tradition and I had to be told every single thing that I was to do and that also where everyone is a teacher, it will be very hard for the student not to be very confused. I was really very very confused at the time. The confusion affected me psychologically. Yes! It was that bad. I wore white during my time and it was really tiring and frustrating, especially when you don’t have enough to change it with.

**Participant 17**: I think it was the fear that these cultures inculcated in me. Don’t do this, don’t do that; this will happen, that will happen. It was really scary and it almost made to start
thinking of my dead husband as a monster that kills. It is not supposed to be like that. People have the right to be remembered in good memories.

**Participant 18:** Even the neatest of all persons reserves white for a special occasion, to show you how delicate it is. White stains fast, so imagine wearing it for six months, it was frustrating. I will be happy if they will scrap that part of mourning or maybe restrict it to be worn on the day of burial.

**Participant 19:** The effect it had on me was that I felt voiceless and unheard. How can people plan something like burial without my consent? And when I talked, they said ‘you are only a woman, what do you know’?

**Participant 20:** To tell you the truth, the shaving of my long hair was really hard for me to bear. I would have kept it if left for me but I would have also kept my husband too. So you understand it was a must do and I did it not under force but on necessity.

**Participant 21:** As if the pain of losing a husband wasn’t enough, you will still have to bear the stigma for months. Everybody who sees you will give you that pathetic look as if all the hope has been lost.

**Research Question 4:** What are the solutions and ways to curtailing these Igbo cultural widowhood practices?

The solution to the practice of widowhood were proffered by the widows themselves who are direct witnesses of the negative effects which these practices has on them, the widows. It is very fulfilling that these solutions are coming from widows themselves, who were speaking out of experience and understanding. Reacting to the question, the participants seemed pleased that their opinions gets to matter in one way or the other. To get a glimpse of the solutions proffered, see this excerpt:

**Participant 8:** The education of women is very important. It will help them to know their rights and stand by it no matter what. The government should also abolish all these practices that humiliates women and widows in particular.

Many of the participants beckoned on the government to come to their aid by intervening in the processes of these practices, while some believes that education is the key to establishing a stronghold against these practices, as participant number 10 puts it, “Education! Education! Education! Very important for a woman. It will help build her confidence”. Few of the widows mentioned good relationship with the family of the husband in order to ensure the widow’s safety when the most dreaded happens, some also spoke of joining booming widow’s association in order to have a platform that will fight the cause of the widows.

**Participant 1:** I will ask the widows to look on to God, because there is nothing he cannot do. It’s only God that will provide for the widow and make her children successful, so that their mother’s tears will be wiped from her eyes.

**Participant 2:** The government should send help to the widows and also open functioning organizations that will project the cause of the widows.

**Participant 3:** Legal representations should be made free for widows who are fighting for themselves and their children to have a better life. When these widows have a court case, they should be duly represented without being charged.

**Participant 4:** There should be laws guiding the performance of the widowhood rites. It should not be left in the hands of people who treats bad or good depending how well they like you.

**Participant 5:** Some families uses this opportunity at get back at the widow because of some assumptions they might have about her. There should be government laws that dictates what and what the widow needs to do while performing her rites. It shouldn’t be left in the hands of custom and tradition.

**Participant 6:** I will advise women to be in good terms with her in-laws so that when this kind of misfortune befalls you, you will have shoulders to lean on. If they hate you, you will regret it for the rest of your life.

**Participant 7:** It is good to be in an association that projects the cause of widows, because they teach you about your rights, what is acceptable and what is not. When you have any kind of issues, they are there to help you pull through.
Participant 8: The education of women is very important. It will help them to know their rights and stand by it no matter what. The government should also abolish all these practices that humiliates women and widows in particular.

Participant 9: Women should always ask about traditions of people they want to get married to, make investigations, if it is something you cannot do, quit on time. Some people are ignorance of this which later makes them to dance to any tune they are being played for by the umuada.

Participant 10: Education! Education! Education! Very important for a woman. It will help build her confidence.

Participant 11: It is very essential that a woman gets proper education, not just school education alone but informal education on the cultures and norms of the society, because knowledge is power.

Participant 12: When a woman is married into the family, she is supposed to get acquainted with her husband’s family because there is an Igbo saying “ogo bu chi onye” (a person’s in-law is there god). So be good to your family, so that they can be good to you too.

Participant 13: Education is very important and crucial in a woman’s life because women are always intimated and treated as inferior. For a woman to stand strong against discrimination, you will have to be educated and wise.

Participant 14: Most of our traditional rulers are not educated. They carry on with whatever custom and tradition that was left for them, without asking necessary questions. If our traditional rulers are educated and knowledgeable, they will be able to abolish some certain customs that are not befitting for the women.

Participant 15: Some women are very stubborn and wicked, most of them are the cause of these maltreatment because a wayward woman will be suspected of poisoning her husband in order to be with another man. When this happens, the family will make the woman the first suspect for her husband’s death. Women should grind themselves morally in order to set a good standard for themselves in their husband’s home. When you respect yourself, you will be respected too.

Participant 16: The only solution I know thereof is the revocation of this widowhood cultures because I don’t see the need for it.

Participant 18: Government should come to the rescue of the women, they should make provisions to assist widows before and after the burial of their husbands. They should also make law against all those who take laws into their hands by punishing innocent women whom they pin as suspected killers.

Participant 19: I know that the government are trying not to interfere in the customs and traditions of the people but they need to reassess these customs and know which ones to remove or keep. Some customs are just too much.

Participant 20: The education and enlightenment of the youths is very important, because charity begins at home. If they learn that all these things are not good but are just superstitious believes, they will start fighting it from a younger age and by the time they are adults, they won’t carry out such practice because they are tradition, they will do it because it is what is good and humane.

Summary of Findings

This study was conducted to assess the audience perception of the film representation of Igbo cultural widowhood practices in Anambra state.

The study found out that Igbo widowhood practices are still being practiced till this day, and that these practices have gone through so many changes from the way it was been practiced some decades ago. The study also found that Nollywood films portrays cultural widowhood practices in an exaggerated manner which sends negative signal to the outside world on the Igbo widowhood practices.

Another finding was on the negative impact of these widowhood practices. The study found that wearing white mourning clothe for 3-6 months is very tiring and exhausting for the widows, running home before six in the evening in order to keep to the tradition of removing the mourning clothe before it clocks six in the evening, psychological trauma, financial
constraints, stigma and loneliness, were among the negative effects of these widowhood practices.

More still, the study also found that there are solutions to these Igbo widowhood practices which includes; government amendment of its laws on these traditional practices, proper education of women and the girl child, abolition of these practices entirely, informal education of women on their roles as wives to be, making legal representation free for widows, amongst others.

**Conclusion**

This study anchored on Film Representation of Igbo Cultural Widowhood Practices in Anambra State: An Audience Analysis of a Nollywood Movie, ‘Glory of a Widow’. It looked at the various Igbo widowhood practices in Anambra state at this time. There are many reports of widowhood practices which are very dehumanizing and brutal, the study embarked on a journey to find out if these practices are still going on even at this age and time. From the data gathered from the discussants, it discovered that even though these practices are still on, they are not very derogatory as it used to be some years back. There are new changes which included the power of a widow to choose what she wanted and how she wants it done. From the many although varied opinions of the discussants who participated in the course of this study and the audience insight into the representation of Igbo cultural practices by the Nollywood industry, the researcher was able to examine a Nollywood movie.

From the outcome of the analysis, it appeared that Ugezu J. Ugezu, using professional actors and actresses, achieved a little of what widowhood in Igboland is all about. Though the movie wasn’t entirely on widowhood rituals itself, but in his attempt to navigate through his storyline, the director skipped some of the processes involved in performing the widowhood rites in Igbo land. The reaction of the discussants during discussions about how successful the movie was in portraying the Igbo widowhood culture showed that the filmmakers really put in their best but their best was not enough to show a non-Igbo what these cultural practices is all about. The participants also elaborated that the failure of this movie was also based on its outdated facts about widowhood practices which is barely seen in the society now.

**Recommendations**

1. There is a compelling need to enhance the Igbo cultural widowhood practices through Nollywood films that will show the new changes and improvements in these practices. Filmmakers should always embark on research on topics related to widowhood in order not to misrepresent them in their films.

2. As much as widowhood practices are sacred cultural/traditional practices handed over from one generation to the next as a mark of love, honor and respect for the dead, long mourning periods aggravate the sufferings and poverty of widows. A widow that is confined indoors for as long as 3-6 months in some cases in the current dispensation, will no doubt lose her source of livelihood if she is a civil servant especially in this era of massive unemployment. If, on the other hand, she is in private business (trading), she will lose her customers, income or immediate source of livelihood as well as her self-esteem. It is against this premise that we suggest that mourning period for widows should be reviewed and reduced to about two-weeks maximum in order to alleviate the sufferings of this segment of the population who are economically incapacitated due to long mourning periods.

3. Lack of adequate information and data on widows have no doubt hindered the prospect of planning and implementation of policies targeted at this under privileged segment of the population. Supporting of researches and scholarly works on widows by all stakeholders in designated centers across the country will facilitate a robust data bank on the status and plight of widows for direct policy intervention. Just as children are registered at birth, widows should be registered to know their location and
means of assistance. Widow centers are highly recommended to enhance the collation of baseline data on widows for direct policy intervention and implementation.

4. The phenomenon of death and will preparation are topics many people in most Nigerian societies shy away from discussing, perhaps because of the sorrow and negative consequences often associated with them. The public, both the young and old irrespective of age, sex, require basic knowledge on the relevance of timely will preparation essentially because death does not give notice of its coming. Thus, public enlightenment programs, seminars and workshops on this topical issue of will preparation becomes very crucial as it will assist tremendously in reducing the problems associated with property inheritance whenever it surfaces in this 21st century.

References


