

**SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN VICTIMS OF  
WIDOWHOOD RITES IN UVWIE COMMUNITY**

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**JANUARY, 2023**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL  
WORK, FACULTY OF SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR  
OF SCIENCE (B.SC) DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN  
CITY.**

**JANUARY, 2023**

## CERTIFICATION

We hereby certify that this project was carried out by Diemuku Ejiro Mary in the Department of social work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, under my supervision.

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**Prof. E. O. Ugiagbe**  
*Project Supervisor*

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**Dr. (Mrs.) T.B. Omorogiuwa**  
*Head of Department*

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**DATE**

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**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to God Almighty for his Love, Grace and Blessing over my life through the period I spent in University of Benin.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My profound appreciation goes to God Almighty for his Grace and wisdom he gave me in completing this research work. My appreciation goes to my Mum Mrs, Bridget Diemuku for your support encourages and guidance, towards my academic programme, May God blesses you. My appreciation goes to my sibling Juliet Ojowhade for the support encouragement and financial support.

My appreciation goes to my supervisor Prof. E. O. Ugiagbe, for his intellectual contribution, encouragement and relevant correction to ensure that this work is up to standard, thanks sir, God bless you. My appreciation goes the lecturers in Department of Social Work, Mr. Ukponahiusi Owie (Course Adviser), May God bless you sir. And to all the lecturers in the Department of Social Work, the head of Department Dr. (Mrs.) T.B.E. Omorogiuwa, Dr. Osagie Egharevba, Dr. Charles Mfon, Dr. Sunny Omigie, Dr. Sunday Ofilli Ibibor, Mr. Mike Esin, Dr. K. Imafidon, for their intellectual contribution over my life. My appreciation goes to my lovely friend, Joy Lawani, for your support.

Above all, honour, adoration, thanks and majesty be unto the Lord God who is the author and finisher of our faith.

Diemuku Ejiro Mary  
University of Benin  
December, 2022

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examines social work intervention strategies for women victims of widowhood rites in Uvwie Community. The study adopted survey administration of questionnaire to a sample of 100 respondents. The data was analysed using simple percentage tables. The results revealed that the actual problems facing widow in Uvwie community can be handled by social work strategies. The result shows that cultural factors are major cause of these widowhood rite problems in Uvwie community. The result also shows that widowhood rites affect children and the society at large. The study recommends that widows need to be adequately educated; Governments, Social Worker and Non-governmental organizations, as well as religious bodies should be proactive and take up the responsibility of educating women so as to resist them from those who want to subject them to traumatizing widowhood rites. All stakeholders should embark on programmes that would empower widows through various skills acquisition programmes, for them to become self-reliant and take care of their immediate families as well as to contribute to the growth and development of the nation. Also, Social Worker, Governments and all other stake holders should embark on programmes that would enhance periodic information through enlightenment programmes for widows and the generality of women, particularly on the issue of widowhood. Women should be wise enough to encourage their husband's to write wills and also to formally concede properties to them while the man is still alive. On the other hand, the women themselves should try as much as possible to be working all find something doing this will ease the financial burden that will arise at the demise of their husbands.*

## SECTION ONE

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction

In the some parts of Asia and Africa, widowhood is associated with negativity. Women in Africa suffer stressful situations when their husband dies and this affects women mentally, emotionally, physically, psychologically and spiritually. Widowhood Rites which are described as one of the most dehumanizing. Uncivilized, barbaric and negative cultural practice in the world, because the practice is associated with violations of Human Rights of women (Chronicle 2010).

Widows are married women with /without children who lose their husbands as a result of death. In this context , widowhood refers to the loss of a husband, companion, breadwinner and a supporter and one of the events of life which many women go through is widowhood. According to Dei (1995) for most widows the death of the husband is not only a time for emotional grief but also a time that several types torture and humiliation would be melted out of them by their in-laws family members and the society as a whole. It is usually a time for scores to be settled with the deceased extended family. Under normal circumstances, a widow is supposed to be pitied and helped out of the emotional truma which she finds herself. Unfortunately, this is never the case. In most African societies, she is usually stigmatized as the killer of her husband, oppressed, suppressed, afflicted, neglected, accused, openly insulted and consequently made to submit to

widowhood rites on account of customs and traditions (source?). Usually, the widow's suffering begins the very moment her husband breathes his last. African widowhood rites are widely believed to be practices that any bereaved spouse has to go through upon becoming a widow or widower i.e. at the death of the spouse it must be noted that through the practice is not gender bias, it is usually the women who go through this practice. In the unlikely event where a man has to go through it, the conditions are usually different (TEI-Ahontu, 2008).

African Widows do not enjoy the best of health due to pressure of conforming to widowhood practice or rites. A lot of sanctions placed on widows by the society make it difficult for women to express their viewpoints as widows. Some of the practices Widows are meant to experience in the loss of the husband are shaving of hair, drinking of remains of bath water used to wash the husband's corpses, mourn her husband's death for about three to twelve months depending on the ethnic group or family and right of inheritance, others are that women do not have right to inherit land or property, widows are not allowed to bathe, clean her surroundings during the seven-day mourning period, on rare cases once bath a day. (Mekere Medical School, Uganda 2005 by Eboh and Boye).

According to Ntozi (1997) in Agunwa (2011) widowhood practices are closely tied to cultural and traditional beliefs about death, ghosts, inheritance, feminine roles, family

structure and family relationships and the overpowering belief in the ability of the ghost of the dead person to come back to dispute and haunt some persons and relatives has reinforced and perpetuated in the age-old practice of widowhood rites in Africa. They believe that death bring corruption and the dead Still have contact with the living especially their closer partners in life, and this is one of the reasons used for subjecting widows to inhuman and humiliating customary practices.

Widowhood practices in many parts of Nigeria lead to negative health concerns. Because the practices includes drinking of the water used to wash the corpse of the husband, washing the woman with a mixture of the water from the decomposed body of the deceased, beating the woman to make her confess that she is responsible for the husband's death and shaving off her hair to humiliate and shame her and this has led the Rural Widows and Orphans Foundation (RUWOF),recently to call on the newly sworn in national assembly in Nigeria to present a Bill for this purpose of eliminating the practices.

## **1.2 Statement of the Research**

Absolutely reliance of most women on their husbands for livelihood is the major reason why some women end up in abject poverty after the death of their husbands. Many women in Nigeria do not normally prepare for eventualities and are always carried away when their husbands were alive because they had confidence that their husband were always there for them in time of need. Such women are usually hard-hit by the death of their husbands due to the total reliance on them rather than enhancing and building their

capacities towards being economically, financially and socially independent. But are the problems faced by the widows as a result of their economic, social and financial dependence or is it as a result of lack of plan for the eventualities? These are vital and sensitive issue that has prompted this research work. It is also Pertinent to know if the problems being faced by Widows has any effects on their children. If it has, are these effects positive or negative? And what are their implication for the larger Society. These are the rationale for this research work.

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The want aim of this study is to identify social work intervention strategies for women victims of widowhood rites in Uvwie community. The specific objectives are to:

- (1) To examine the actual problems facing window in uvwie community and the strategies social workers we use to intervened.
- (2) To ascertain if cultural Factors are a major cause of this problems in Uvwie community.
- (3) to examine the effects of Widowhood rites on children and the society at large.

### **1.4 The Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study lies in the hope that it will create awareness in the minds of all and sundry about the problems being faced by Widows. It will also open the eyes of all to the causes identify in this project. It is hoped that awareness thus created will

motivate all and sundry especially the government to take up the challenge and find solution to these problems. The FINDING of the project will be useful in the following ways to the Widow first in Uvwie community who are at the focal points of the study it's their plight and the politicians and public servants in the Ministry of Women Affairs as it will serve as a blueprint for planning and as a guide for tackling the problem confronting widows in the area. It would also be useful to social workers that work in community to know how to handle such cases as a recipe to the problems facing widows especially rural women. It would also be beneficial to academics and students as it would deepen and bring further insights to the subject matter.

## SECTION TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Conceptual Framework**

Widowhood rites are intended as ways of showing respect for the dead and proof of the inconsolable sadness of the Widow. But these rites exposed the Widow to psycho- emotional and physical indignity, which constitutes major factors that influence the level of happiness or unhappiness experienced in most marriages or home. This paper identifies some concepts of widowhood, widowhood Rites and some negative impacts of widowhood Rites in some communities in the south-south Nigeria. Widowhood Rites are closely tied to cultural and traditional anxiety about Death, ghost inheritance, feminine rules, family structure and family relationship. Overpowering panic disorder is believed to be the ability of a dead person's ghosts to come back to dispute with and haunt the living relative and others. The belief that the dead still have contact with living, especially their closest relative in life is one of the reasons for subjecting widow so inhuman in humiliating customary rites. The successful completion of these ceremonies ritual and rites is believed to help restore balance and security, which the dead is thought would have worked against. According to Gboyega (2006) if a widow falls sick and died within one year of her husband's death, it is concluded in some cultures that she killed her husband. This shows that widowhood has serious implications for the children who then

become an orphan because it affect the physical psychological and financial well-being of Widows and their children.

Narayan et al (2000) motel that despite the economic loss resulting from a husband death, widows are often expected to participate in expensive community undertaking the most obvious which is paying for the funeral cost. Funeral cost can be exceptionally high, especially as a percentage of a poor person's income and as such bereavement and funerals can cause poverty. The plight of Widows has also been attributed to some anomalies in the African culture, which did not allow women to have control over the family property after the husband's Demise. As such many women have been thrown out of their matrimonial home as a result of cultural beliefs [www \( allafrica.com\)](http://www.allafrica.com).

Another factor that contributes to the window plight is that, women lack the heritance rights loose the right to use land upon death of the husbands (odaman2009) as a result when their husband die they are made vacate whatever land they were using and thos will spun them into economic hardship. Most time,the death of one's husband results in the deterioration of relationship between the woman and her in-laws. it is compounded "if the window objects to undergoing some of the widowhood Rites and the Widow may be deprived of the much-needed financial and moral support from her in-laws needed for the upkeep of the family" (Gboyega 2006). Most women in Africa did not normally

prepare for eventualities and we're always carried away when their husbands were alive because they had confidence that he would always provide for them in time of need.

Gboyega (2006) identify absolute reliance of most women on their husbands as a major reason why some women ended up in abject poverty after the death of their husband. Women become head of household when their husbands died and have to head for themselves because in most cases, they are neglected by their family and those of their husbands relative. Widows are the most vulnerable people in every Society being unexpectedly left to take on the formidable tasks of raising the family alone. From their traditional role of home making the abrupt thrust into breadwinner spawned numerous susceptibility for them, unemployment poverty, inaccessibility to good education for the children, inadequate healthcare among others ( the nation,2009). Gboyega (2006) also reported that.

Juliana opara lost her husband less than a year ago she was left with four Children whom no one person except herself alone was bothered to look after them. She was rejected from her rented apartments in an exclusive area of Lagos and she became subject of social disasters. Her relatives in the South-East and those of her husband were nowhere to be found. To take care of the children became so burdensome that she lost her mind as she began walking the streets of Lagos with a clear mission. To buttress this point,Narayan et al (2000) asserted that “destitution follow widowhood. Abandonment of

woman at widowhood” can lead to social vices for them and their children. Gboyega (2006) said that many widows encourage their children to engage in prostitution to eke out living bereaved family. This will compound the problem as their children comprise, because in the process some of them are infested with HIV/AIDS.

Counselling on this Narayan ethnic al (2005) said in order to generate an income some widows find work as sex worker not minding the risk of disease and social stigma attached to the work, this is generally seen as a last resort in Africa and Nigeria in particular widows find it hard to sustain themselves and their children which often resort to unimaginable and unbelievable activities in an effort to sustain themselves (vanguard 2009). As a result of the enormous problems facing widow there is the Need for all hands to be on Deck to salvage their plight. the attempt by NGOs churches and few good spirited individuals to Salvage their plight is just a drop in the ocean of myriad of problems confronting widows. As part of our vision, we have set up an NGO called Widow in need which aims at assisting and meeting the needs of Widows stressing fur discrimination ther that God is using it to help Widows who suffers serious deprivations from family and relatives and even their husbands employers when the die (oziegbe 2009) Dboyeya (2006) also reported that integrated effort by all families should be made to ensure that widoes were not subject to any culture and traditional practices that could disempowered them.

## **2.2 Perspectives On Widowhood**

As a point of Departure, it can be a gross conceptual mistake to ignore a critical comprehension of widowhood from different perspective. This prominent perspectives to widowhood are twofold in social work literature. The first one adopts the developmental perspective whilst the second one Embrace the social justice perspective.

## **2.3 The Human Developmental Perspective**

Currently, social work literature widowhood has aligned itself with the human development perspective. this perspective has tended to discuss widowhood in the context of old age(keistet & Destroyed, 2008(cited in dube, 2016), martin-matthews, 2011; zastrow & kirst-Ashman 2013)The discourses of widowhood from the human developmental perspective have viewed widowhood as a normal human development curve where at some point in a woman's old age a partner eventually dies leaving her widow as part of the human development course. The developmental perspective contends that widows exist because men Tend To Die earlier than women as they are likely to marry younger women and in terms of general life expectancy women tend to live longer than men to enable adjustment to older widowhood zastrow and kirst-Ashman (2013 p .636 )have noted that keeping busy, doing volunteer work, taking new paying pposition and taking part in community programmes are better options for older Widows for socialization and interactional purposes support groups for the age are encouraged to

facilitate adjustment and healing in the widows problems. While did human developmental perspective to the problems of widowhood provide essential lens for intervention on older Widows an evaluation of the human developmental perspective to current trends in widowhood in an Africa context especially in zimbabwe, lacks an additional and equally important focus on the young widows the focus on the older widows may not be sufficient for social work Practice in sub-saharan contexts as the trend in widowhood have changed.

There is a growing number of young widows require the human development perspective to quarantine in widowhood in an Africa contest especially is the bramble and additional and equally important focus on the young Windows system the focus on the older widow will not be sufficient for social work practice in sub-sahara contest as the trend in widowhood of Change this is a growing number of young Widows especially in the Bible where girls are in young women and now we do it is argued in this paper that the young widow require the essential empowering programmes and services of social workers as their life demands differ from an old generation of widows from that line of thought, it is important to note that this paper endorsed the importance of viewing widowhood from young age right through to the old-age so that phenomenon is understood comprehensively and relevant social work interventions are put in place.

### **2.3.1 The Social Justice Perspective**

Social justice is described as the value of social work upon which the foundation of the profession is built (DuBois & smiley, 2014) values in social work guide what social worker do. in this regard, social justice is regarded as of primary importance and beholden to the profession of social and embraced by practitioners to guide their professional conduct. this is significant in social work intervention. in widows challenges as Justice is less experienced in their psychosocial predicament to indicate the importance of social justice to the profession of social work, the national Association of social workers (NASW) and the international federation of social workers (IFSW ) place social justice as a practice imperative (DuBois & miley,2014) the social worker ethical code also mandates social workers to promote and commit themselves to social justice. This undoubtedly can accord widows of the human rights which are literally extinct in binga District in Zimbabwe.

Whilst there is no agreement among authors on the definition of social justice, a common feature is that social justice Centers on the fairness doctrine and principle. some useful and relevant definition of social justice are provided by Robinson and the national pro bono resource centre Robinson (2015,p.1) sees social justice as promoting a just Society by challenging injustice and valuing diversity it exists where all people share a common

humanity and therefore a right to equitable treatment, support their human rights, and a fair allocation of community resources.

### **2.3.2 Preventing Social Injustices to Promote Special Justice**

It is the social work mandate to prevent human suffering that preventing social injustices. The experience of Widows in their everyday live is what the profession of social work fight against. social work exercises its professional Mandate so that victims can live fulfilling lives. The injustices Society exerts on people are known as “ISMS” normally defined as the prejudicial attitudes directed against group that Society identifies as less capable, less productive and less normal (DuBois & smiley, 2014, p.137). some of the social injustice faced by certain groups of people in society are racism elitism, heterosexism, ageism, handicapism and sexism whilst social injustices should be prevented by social workers, this paper Focuses on “sexism” which in the researches view has significant contribution to the psychosocial health of the widows.

### **2.3.3 Widowism as a Social Injustice**

Literature reviewed has indicated that the existence of widows is a global phenomenon and an epidemic of its own. Further, there is widespread abuse and oppression of widows compared to widower. Also, a widower finds it easy to re-marry than a widow (Johnson & shyamala, 2012; martin-Matthews 201 due to stigma attached to the female whose spouse has died. 9Sexism can be viewed as a determinant in analysing and drawing

conclusions about the abuse of widows in zimbabwe due to the widespread existence of sexism as a social injustice. Following that line of thought, this paper posits that a new social injustice can then be explained as a practice which dehumanized, devalues, discriminates and views widows with suspicion resulting in exclusion in socio-economically beneficial activities and exposing them to socially harmful practices. The oppressive and dehumanizing experience of widows in the developing nations such as horrible widow cleansing, property grabbing isolation, burning, witchcraft accusations and land evacuations, (idialu, 2012; Mgbako & Glenn, 2011; peterman, 2012), cannot be ignored and as such intervention by social workers is crucial for their psychosocial wellbeing.

#### **2.3.4 The Effects of Social Injustices on Widows**

An analysis of the effects of social injustices provides a crucial point of departure for social work empowerment and right-based approaches to intervene and ameliorate the effects of social injustices on the widows. To this effect, an analysis of the effects of social injustices on the victims provided by DuBio and smiley(2014) is very helpful in providing a clear and significant understanding of widows experiences of social injustices. This paper argues that social injustices on widows result in discrimination, oppression and victimization.

### **2.3.5 Personal Victimization**

The process of personal victimization is painful to the widows. Widows succumb to the negative labels and connotations (DuBois & Smiley, 2014) that Society ascribed to widowhood. This makes the widows to live up to the labels given to them. One of such labels is that once the spouse dies, the woman is said to be dirty and needs to be cleansed through traditional rituals. The widow herself succumbs to the fact that she is dirty by virtue of being a widow and such personal blame results in intense feelings of inferiority, dependency and rejection by the community (Dubois & Smiley, 2014).

Psychologically, stigmatization destroys a widow's self-esteem and engenders a sense of powerlessness. It can be argued that the widows at this point identify themselves with oppression and internalize it as an acceptable, thereby reinscribing powerlessness in themselves. Due to this personal victimization, widows then find themselves alienated and isolated from social circles. This is often the case in Binga District in Zimbabwe where women's social networks and friends dwindle as soon as the status of widowhood sets in their lives. In this respect, the natural mechanism and social cycles for coping with widowhood are drastically reduced.

### **2.3.6 Coping With the Psychological Effects of Social Injustice**

A critical dimension to the analysis of the effects of social injustice is the understanding of the psychological effects that it has for the Widows. A professional social worker is expected to understand these effects so that proper empowerment rights-based interventions can be put in place. An analysis of coping with the lasting psychological effects of social injustice is documented by Cohen (2014) who provides important dimensions that can be helpful in dealing with the effects of social Injustices on the Widows. The approach provides a critical and necessary point of Departure in understanding the deep-rooted effects of social injustices. The approach provides psychological effects of social injustice and then basic coping mechanism adopted by the Widows and victims not necessarily an antidote that immediately cure the psychological effects of such social injustices. the bottom line is that social worker need to facilitate coping with social injustice in their empowerment right \_based approaches and that they need to understand the psychological effects. the discussion in the succeeding paragraphs highlights some helpful insights about the psychological effects of social injustice widows are exposed to. eg pain, fear, shame, anger and despair.

### **2.3.6 Theoretical Frameworkrk**

The social conflict paradigm is a framework for building conflict and change(macioni,1999). Unlike the structural functional paradigm which emphasizes

solidarity, this approach highlights inequalities. Sociologists guided by this paradigm investigate how factors such as social class, race, ethnicity, gender and age are linked to the unequal distribution of money, power, education and social Prestige. A conflict analysis reject the idea that social structure promotes the operation of a society as a whole so why depriving others. conflict theories points out that people with power protect their own interests (obaro, 2008). In a bid to get more for themselves there is bound to be struggle and change, no matter how minimal it is. Conflict and change, according to marx reflect the distribution of power in society and that the history of all human societies was no more than the history of class struggles( chiegwe 2000).

Sociologists using the social -conflict paradigm look at ongoing conflict between dominant and disadvantaged categories of people of colour and Men in relation to women. Typically, people on top strive to protect their privilege while the disadvantaged try to gain more for themselves. Many sociologists use the social conflict paradigm not just to understand Society but to reduce inequality. This was the goal of W.E.B .Du bois and also karl marx whose writing was especially important in the development of the social conflict paradigm. Marx had little patience with those who sought only to analyse Society. In a well-known declaration (inscribed on his monument in London Highgate Cemetery), marx asserted: “the philosopher have only interpreted the world in various ways the point. however is to change it”( macioni, 1999).

The proponent of the conflict Perspective argues that societies are not stable and united or integrated societies and are inherently divisive, mal-integrated, and dominated by sectional interests, conflicts and hostilities. These are the kinds of problems and issues which the proponents of the conflict Theory claim to be more prevalent in societies and cultures and which they therefore, prefer to emphasize when they analyse societies and cultures. It also stresses how people who occupy powerful positions in the society, use their power and position to oppress and exploit the less powerful in the society in order to get what they want. Theoretically, the problem facing Widows in Contemporary Nigeria is discussed in this paper in the context of Marxist conflict Theory. It seeks to explain not only how social order is maintained despite great inequalities but also how social structure changes. Marx sees the history of man as one of conflict between Property Owners and workers. The conflict Theoretical framework and its dialectical connotation is perceived to view the cultural system as a symbol of oppression in the general societal system.

## **SECTION THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

Methodology in a research work basically refers to the methods procedures or modalities which the researcher we employs to achieve the objectives of the research (Agbonifoh and yommere, 1999: 1o6). The methodology used in this study comprises of the following research design, population of the study, sample size and sampling method, research instruments, method of Data collection, sources of Data (primary and secondary), and method of Data analysis among others.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study adopted the survey research design. According to Tonwe et al (2007:22), survey research has become popular in modern times as a scientific method of discovering the impact and inter-relationships of social and psychological variables from given populations. More so, survey research studies large and small populations by selecting and studying samples drawn from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution and inter-relations of sociological and psychological variables (TONWE etching al, 2007:22). This involves the collection of large and standardized data using well - structured questionnaire to find out the social work intervention

strategies for women victims of Widowhood rites: A case study of Uvwie Community, Delta State.

### **3: 2 Population of the Study**

Research population is the sum total of all the elements or unit of analysis associated with a research. The population of study in this research is the women victim of widowhood rite in a community.

### **3:3 Sample Size and Sampling Method**

A sample is a subset of a population selected for measurement observation or questioning to provide statistical information about the population. The sample size for this study is (100) women that are victims of widowhood rites in Uvwie community.

### **3: 4 Research Instrument**

The main instrument for data collection in this research is a questionnaire, this will enable the researcher to obtain data that are relevant to actualizing the research objectives and testing the hypothesis. The questionnaire was designed was in a structured manner and the questions contained therein were almost completely closed ended questions in nature.

### **3: 5 Method of Data Collection**

The researcher administered the questionnaire directly to the respondents and they were retrieved immediately from the respondent after they were filled.

### **3: 6 Sources of Data ( Primary and Secondary)**

Data for this study was generated from two sources, the primary source which depends mainly on the design and administration of questionnaire to elicit information from respondents while the secondary source involves the use of archival materials such as book, journal, publications conference, Government Gazettes and internet materials.

### **3: 7 Method of Data Analysis**

Based on the objectives of the research descriptive statistics will be used to analyse the data, the study also make extensive use of tables and the simple percentage method in analysing data from the respondents.

## SECTION FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

#### 4.1 Introduction

Having discussed relevant issues and established an empirical framework that underpins the focus on the study present the following results obtained from utilizing the various methodological investigations in this chapter. A total number of 100 questionnaires were administered out to respondents to elicit information on the study. Hence, the data analysis was conducted using simple percentage (%) statistical technique to test the frequency of the personal data of the respondents and the frequency of their responses to the Research questions the t-test statistical technique was used to test the hypothesis.

**Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by religious**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Christianity	80	80%
Traditional	15	15%
Others	5	5%
Total	100	100%

The table revealed that 80 respondents which represent 80% were Christians, 15 respondents representing 15%, while 5 respondents representing 5% were other religion.

**Table 2: Distribution of the respondents by occupation**

Classification	Frequency	%
Petty trading	35	35%
Civil servants	5	5%
House wife	50	50%
Others	10	10%
Total	100	100%

The above table shows that 35 respondents representing 35% were petty trading, 5 respondents representing 5% civil servants, 50 respondents representing 50% were house wife, 10 respondents representing 10% fallen in other category.

#### **4.2 Presentation of Data and Analysis**

**Table 4: 3**

**Question 1: is poverty the major problem face by you?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	64	64%
No	36	36%
Total	100	100%

From the table above 36% of the respondents do not agree that poverty is their major problem and 64% of the respondents supported the position that poverty is there major problem. One can rightly say that poverty is a serious problem of widows. Though most

of the respondents are of the position that they have other problems like emotional stress, psychological stress and loneliness but poverty still remains the worst nightmare of widows. The plight of Widows has been further aggravated by the economic crisis in the country. they find it very difficult to afford two square meal daily and no one is willing to give them loans because of their inability to provide the necessary collateral. Widow also face discrimination from landlord and landladies who are not willing to let out their houses to them because they are afraid they might not be able to pay. it is there for pertinent for all hands to be on deck to tackle this problem. At these stage the social worker intervention strategy for victim should be that provision should be made available to solved the problem of the victims, they can go to NGO that can be of help, providing a social support is presumed to play an important role in bereavement and out act as a buffer for stressful life events, the research is inconclusive nevertheless, there is evidence that the extent to which members of The Social Network provide various types of assistance to the bereaved is important to the pattern of recovery and adaptation (Ferrari 2001). available confidants and access to self-help groups to assist with the emotional management can help counter loneliness and promote the survivor reintegration into Society.

**QUESTION 2: Do you inherit anything as a widow?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	70	70%
No	30	30%
Total	100	100%

Out of The 100 Widows sample 70% of them inherit something 70% meaning after the death of the man his kinsmen did not come to Scramble for his property, they left the man's belonging for the widow and her children they did not experience any harsh economic condition. While the other 30% after the death of the man his Kinsmen would begin to scramble for his property given little or nothing for the widow and her children. The widow would be left to cater for herself and her children and this would lead to harsh economic conditions. Though a few number of windows that are enlightened and had some resources have been able to reclaim some of their late husband property through legal actions, social worker can help a victim to resolve such issues by getting a lawyer for her.

**QUESTION 3: Are you affected by Widowhood rite in anyway?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	28	28%
No	72	72%
Total	100	100%

From the above table it is crystal clear that Widowhood rite don't use to affect widow in Uvwie Community at such, after the death of a woman husband she is meant to sit at home without doing anything or getting involved in any social activity all that she we be needing for the period of one month or three we be brought to her where she is seated and anybody that wants to visit her will come and member of the family we be bring food for her during that period, but in a situation where the man family do not like the woman she would be asked to undergo an inhuman discrimination cultural and traditional practices that would disempowered her both physically and mentally in case where they will refuse to undergo some of the widowhood rites she would be denied of the much moral and financial support by her in-laws. The widow is left to shoulder the burden wish she was hitherto sharing with her husband alone and this will have an adverse effect on her financial and psychological lyrics, in this case social worker should advocate for her to see how that problem could be adverted and to see how the widow in person would be free from that discrimination.

**QUESTION 4: Do you contribute to the family upkeep when your husband was still alive?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	46	46%
No	54	54%
Total	100	100%

From the table above out of 100 widow given questionnaires 54% were of the position that did not contribute to the family upkeep when their husbands were still alive. A major reason why most women ended up in abject poverty after the demise of their husband because they were not working. They were over dependent on their husbands to always provide for them in time of need. Such women did not prepared for eventualities, they felt their husbands would always be there for them in times of need but unfortunately death struck. The vacuum created by the husband's death leads to several problem for the woman and your children. The woman find it very difficult to take care of the family because she does not have the mist to do so. No matter how wealth a woman husbands, she should be working, so that incase of any eventualities she would be able to take care of this family in the absence of the man. On the other hand, husband's should encourage and allow their wife to walk regardless of how wealthy they are. This will make things easier for the family if he happens to die suddenly.

**QUESTION 5: Dose the problem faced by widows lead their children to social vices?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	72	72%
No	28	28%
Total	100	100%

Above table shows that many widow supported the view that the problems they face can lead their children to social vices? in order to survive, many widows have encourage their children engage in prostitution. This will compound problem as they run the risk of being infected with HIV/ AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases . Many of the widows children have become armed robbers pick pocket in a bid of living for themselves and families. After the demise of the husband the woman often find it difficult to control the children especially when she cannot meet their need. this will make them more reposed to social vices and there's need for social workers to look for any means how they can be of help to the widow and her children to bring them out of the life style they have find themselves and make provisions for the once that like to go to school and the other that wants to learn work with this put in place the risk of getting involves in social vice would be highly minimized.

**QUESTION 6: Do you think the problem being faced by widows can lead them to prostitution?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	20%
No	80	80%
Total	100	100%

The table shows that most of the widows are of the position that the problem they face cannot lead them into prostitution. This might be as a result of their religious, cultural and traditional setting in Nigeria. Even after the burial most women still remain married to the family. In some cases they would be asked if they want to remarried to another member of the family, so that the person would cater for them, but the widow might choose to marry to her son which means that she cannot have sexual relationship with another man because she is still married to the family.

**QUESTION 7: Do you think the problem being faced by widows can result in destitution?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	80	80%
No	20	20%
Total	100	100%

From the above table, it is clearly stated that destitution can result from Widowhood. Abandonment of widows by the in-laws and other members of the family is a major reason why destitution result from Widowhood. Widows are left to take on the burden of fending for the family alone and in cases where she is not working the situation is worsened because she would find it difficult to feed, may be injected from their apartments if it is rented. The duty of a social worker especially community social worker should go round the community to know people that are passing through challenges and see how the can be of help to the victims, the community which widows belong to should owe them some responsibility if they most salvaged from their agony and suffering.

**QUESTION 8: Do you think customs and traditions is a major cause of widows problem**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	64	64%
No	36	36%
Total	100	100%

The table clearly shows that most widows believe that customs and tradition is the major cause of their plight. The plight of widows can be attributed to some anomalies in the Nigeria culture which may not allow women to have control over the family property after the death of the husbands. Many women have been thrown out of matrimonial

home as a result of cultural beliefs culture in all its variants has worsened PROBLEMS of Widowhood in Nigeria.

**Table 9: Distribution of the respondents by age**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
20- 30	5	5%
31 - 40	30	30%
41 - above	65	65%
Total	100	100%

In the table 9, the classification of the age of respondents ranges from 20years to 30years and above out of the hundred respondents (5%), 30 respondents were within the age range of 31years to 40years. 65 respondents out of the hundred respondents (65%) were within the age range of 41years and above.

### **4.3 Discussion of Findings**

The result of the analysis shows that 36% of the respondents do not agree that poverty is their major problem and 64% of the respondents supported the position that poverty is there major problem. One can rightly say that poverty is a serious problem of widows. Though most of the respondents are of the position that they have other problems like emotional stress, psychological stress and loneliness but poverty still remains the worst nightmare of widows. The plight of Widows has been further aggravated by the economic

crisis in the country. they find it very difficult to afford two square meals daily and no one is willing to give them loans because of their inability to provide the necessary collateral. Widows also face discrimination from landlords and landladies who are not willing to let out their houses to them because they are afraid they might not be able to pay. It is therefore pertinent for all hands to be on deck to tackle this problem. At these stages the social worker intervention strategy for victims should be that provision should be made available to solve the problem of the victims, they can go to NGOs that can be of help, providing a social support is presumed to play an important role in bereavement and act as a buffer for stressful life events, the research is inconclusive nevertheless, there is evidence that the extent to which members of The Social Network provide various types of assistance to the bereaved is important to the pattern of recovery and adaptation (Ferrari 2001). Available confidants and access to self-help groups to assist with the emotional management can help counter loneliness and promote the survivor's reintegration into Society.

Similarly, out of The 100 Widows sample 70% of them inherit something 70% meaning after the death of the man his kinsmen did not come to scramble for his property, they left the man's belongings for the widow and her children they did not experience any harsh economic condition. While the other 30% after the death of the man his kinsmen would begin to scramble for his property given little or nothing for the widow and her children.

The widow would be left to cater for herself and her children and this would lead to harsh economic conditions. Though a few number of windows that are enlightened and had some resources have been able to reclaim some of their late husband property through legal actions, social worker can help a victim to resolve such issues by getting a lawyer for her.

Consequently, is crystal clear that Widowhood rite don't use to affect widow in Uvwie Community at such, after the death of a woman husband she is meant to sit at home without doing anything or getting involved in any social activity all that she we be needing for the period of one month or three we be brought to her where she is seated and anybody that wants to visit her will come and member of the family we be bring food for her during that period, but in a situation where the man family do not like the woman she would be asked to undergo an inhuman discrimination cultural and traditional practices that would disempowered her both physically and mentally in case where they will refuse to undergo some of the widowhood rites she would be denied of the much moral and financial support by her in-laws. The widow is left to shoulder the burden wish she was hitherto sharing with her husband alone and this will have an adverse effect on her financial and psychological lyrics, in this case social worker should advocate for her to see how that problem could be adverted and to see how the widow in person would be free from that discrimination.

The result further revealed that 100 widow given questionnaires 54% were of the position that did not contribute to the family upkeep when their husbands were still alive. A major reason why most women ended up in abject poverty after the demise of their husband because they were not working. They were over dependent on their husbands to always provide for them in time of need. Such women did not prepared for eventualities, they felt their husbands would always be there for them in times of need but unfortunately death struck. The vacuum created by the husband's death leads to several problem for the woman and your children. The woman find it very difficult to take care of the family because she does not have the mist to do so. No matter how wealth a woman husbands, she should be working, so that incase of any eventualities she would be able to take care of this family in the absence of the man. On the other hand, husband's should encourage and allow their wife to walk regardless of how wealthy they are. This will make things easier for the family if he happens to die suddenly.

The responses shows that many widow supported the view that the problems they face can lead their children to social vices? in order to survive, many widows have encourage their children engage in prostitution. This will compound problem as they run the risk of being infected with HIV/ AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases . Many of the widows children have become armed robbers pick pocket in a bid of living for themselves and families. After the demise of the husband the woman often find it

difficult to control the children especially when she cannot meet their need. this will make them more reposed to social vices and there's need for social workers to look for any means how they can be of help to the widow and her children to bring them out of the life style they have find themselves and make provisions for the once that like to go to school and the other that wants to learn work with this put in place the risk of getting involves in social vice would be highly minimized.

The result shows that most of the widows are of the position that the problem they face cannot lead them into prostitution. This might be as a result of their religious, cultural and traditional setting in Nigeria. Even after the burial most women still remain married to the family. In some cases they would be asked if they want to remarried to another member of the family, so that the person would cater for them, but the widow might choose to marr8to het son which means that she cannot have sexual relationship with another man because she is still married to the family.

The response clearly stated that destitution can result from Widowhood. Abandonment of widows by the in-laws and other members of the family is a major reason why destitution result from Widowhood. Widows are left to take on the burden of fending for the family alone and in cases where she is not working the situation is worsened because she would find it difficult to feed, may be injected from their apartments if it is rented. The duty of a social worker especially community social worker should go round the community to

know people that are passing through challenges and see how they can be of help to the victims, the community which widows belong to should owe them some responsibility if they were most salvaged from their agony and suffering.

The result also shows that most widows believe that customs and tradition is the major cause of their plight. The plight of widows can be attributed to some anomalies in the Nigeria culture which may not allow women to have control over the family property after the death of the husbands. Many women have been thrown out of matrimonial home as a result of cultural beliefs culture in all its variants has worsened PROBLEMS of Widowhood in Nigeria.

## **SECTION FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, FINDING, CONCLUSION RECOMMENDATION AND REFERENCE**

#### **5: 1 Summary**

The theme of the study was social work intervention strategies for widow victim of Widowhood rites in Uvwie Community. In this regards, it was deemed necessary to carry out research work under the headlines in the project work. Legislative Review that this was necessary as a spells out the major impact of women victim of Widowhood rites.

The present study highlights various socially and culturally entrenched beliefs about the death of husbands allegedly caused by the witchcraft powers or transgressions of their wives among the Uvwie community. These wives exonerate themselves through participation in stringent and dehumanising widowhood rites and practices that violate their human rights. It demonstrates how generations of women have grown up and been socialised into accepting and reproducing these widowhood rites and practices in the name of maintaining tradition whereas they are actually upholding the hidden male authority structure that oppress them.

The methodology for this study was based on survey research design. This involved the collection of data using well - structured questionnaire to find out the social work intervention strategies for wo

men victims of Widowhood rites: A case study of Uvwie Community, Delta State.

In order to carry out this study the problem of the study specifies that there had been a absolute reliance of most women on their husbands for livelihood is the major reason why some women end up in abject poverty after the death of their husbands. However, the of the study was stated to direct the study, which states in line with the main objective on social work intervention strategies for women victims of widowhood rites in Uvwie community. The specific objectives were to:

- (1) To examine the actual problems facing widow in Uvwie community and the strategies social workers we use to intervened.
- (2) To ascertain if cultural Factors are a major cause of this problems in Uvwie community.
- (3) to examine the effects of Widowhood rites on children and the society at large.

## **5: 2 Discussion of Finding**

The section one of the research work contained the background of the study, discussed about the statement of the problem, purpose of the study and significance of the study.

Section two of the research work exposes us to the understanding of women victim of widowhood rite, definition causes and legal protection of the victims.

Section three talks about various activities and method used in carrying out the research work. It discussed on the types of research design, population of the study, the sample size and sampling method, research instrument, sources of data (primary and secondary) validity and method of Data collection.

Section four contain the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collection and it's discussion section five comprises the summary, discussion of finding, conclusion, recommendations and followed by reference .

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

The study provides insight into perception of widow on widowhood practices which is form of gendered violence. The study is important must significantly in its search for approaches and strategies for the improvement of the rights of women in Nigeria and sub-sahara africa (SSA).This is because most countries in SSA including Nigeria are highly heterogeneity with cultural practices, rituals and traditions such as widowhood rites that have remained age-longed, universalized and negatively undermine women's human rights and well- being in general (manala,2015). This to a very large extent does not take into cognizance the sustainable development Goal 5 whose main target is elimination of

all forms of violence against women as well as harmful practices, such as early, forced and child marriage, female genital mutilation and Widowhood rites inclusive. The study identified the factor that have continually influenced the discontinuation or adjustment of traditional practices such as Widowhood rites in Nigeria. Finding in the study shows the women rights which are also regarded as human rights have been considered trivial the issues for a long time even till date. The reasons for this triviality are hinged on and cannot be dissociated from the very long and deep-rooted cultural structures that have further complicated and shrouded harmful practices in the form of violence. this can be captured in what is referred to as "theculture of patriarchy" which is still very much evident in the many societies to date, simply put, it is the privileging of men over women; thereby making women undergo various digimon dehumanizing treatments and abuse while mourning her spouse. This finding is in tandem with Ajayi and Soyinka-Airewele (2018); Ihekwaaba and Amasiatu (2016) and Onyekuru (2011).

The study further concluded that some widowhood rituals are bad and have negative implications on victims; some of the negative practices associated with widowhood rituals indicated by respondents were; stripping the person naked, bathing in the public, carrying a knife around you wait and putting ropes on your neck and waist, not allowing you to see the deceased body before burial, having your hair and sitting with the death body for a number of days.

The study finally concluded that widowhood rituals have negative effects of victims such as swollen feet, headaches, back pains, body aches and lack of concentration and trauma and the emotional effects of widowhood ritual on victims included; the temptation of committing suicide, fears and anxiety, stress and depression. Hence widowhood rituals should be abolished.

Widows across the globe share two common experiences: a loss of social status and reduced economic circumstances. Widowhood presents a countless number of economic, social and psychological problems, particularly in the first year or so after the death of the spouse. A major problem for both sexes is economic hardship (Fasorantiet al., 2007). The study sought to find out the nature and extent of widowhood rites in Bongo, the effects of widowhood rituals on the lives of widows in Bongo and outline recommendations to the concept of widowhoods in Bongo regarding the abolishment of widowhood rituals.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Widows need to be adequately educated; Governments, Social Worker and Non-governmental organizations, as well as religious bodies should be proactive and take up the responsibility of educating women so as to resist them from those who want to subject them to traumatizing widowhood rites. All stakeholders should embark on programmes that would empower widows through various skills acquisition programmes, for them to become self-reliant and take care of their immediate families as well as to

contribute to the growth and development of the nation. Also, Social Worker, Governments and all other stake holders should embark on programmes that would enhance periodic information through enlightenment programmes for widows and the generality of women, particularly on the issue of widowhood. Women should be wise enough to encourage their husband's to write wills and also to formally concede properties to them while the man is still alive. On the other hand, the women themselves should try as much as possible to be working all find something doing this will ease the financial burden that will arise at the demise of their husbands.

The researcher strongly believes that if this recommendation are look into and implemented by the social worker, Government, the families, and the women who are the focal point of the study and all sundry in society, the problem facing widow will be highly reduced.

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**APPENDIX**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN VICTIMS OF  
WIDOWHOOD RITES IN UVWIE COMMUNITY**

**Department of Social Work,  
Faculty of Social Sciences,  
University of Benin,  
Benin City.**

28th November, 2022.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am 400 student of the Department of Social Work undergoing a study on, “**Social Work Intervention Strategies for Women Victims of Widowhood Rites in Uvwie Community**”.

You are kindly requested to respond to this questionnaire as honestly as you can. Your opinion or information supplied will be used purely for the academic purpose intended; and such information will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thanks for your anticipated cooperation’s.

Yours faithfully,

**DIEMUKU EJIRO MARY**

*Researcher*

**Demographic Characteristic of Respondents**

**Please tick (✓) the option appropriate to you.**

**Section A:**

1. Religion: Christianity (    ), Traditional (    ), Others (    ).
2. Occupation: Petty trading (    ), Civil servants (    ), House wife (    ), Others (    ).

**Section B:**

- (1) Is poverty the major problem you are facing as a widow? YES / NO.
- (2) were you allowed to inherit anything as a widow? YES / NO.
- (3) Are you affected by widowhood rite in anyway? YES / NO.
- (4) Did you contribute to the family upkeep when your husband was alive YES / NO.
- (5) Does the problem faced by widows lead their children to social vices YES / NO.
- (6) Do you think the problem being faced by widows can lead them into prostitution  
YES /NO
- (7) Do you think the problem being faced by widows can result in destitution? YES /  
NO.
- (8) Do you think customs and traditions is a major cause of widow problem? YES /  
NO.