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SOCIO-RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF RITUAL COW OR HORSE IN FUNERAL RITES AMONG THE PEOPLE OF NSUKKA—SUB-CULTURAL AREA OF IGBOLAND, NIGERIA

BY

ANEKE ERIC CHINENYE
PG/Ph.D/09/51231

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION AND CULTURAL STUDIES, FACULTY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D) DEGREE IN RELIGION AND CULTURAL STUDIES
This thesis has been read and approved as meeting the requirements for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) degree in the Department of Religion and cultural Studies, Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

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DECLARATION
Aneke Eric Chinenye PG/Ph.D/09/51231 has satisfactorily completed all the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) degree in Religion and Cultural Studies.

This research study is original and has not been submitted to any institution or organization anywhere, either in part or whole, for the award of any other diploma or degree.

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Prof. C. O. T. Ugwu
(Supervisor)

Date-------------------
DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my dear late parents, Mr. Ugwu Aneke Nwa Ugwunnaji and Mrs. Nnemani Ogbodo Nwa Ugwu and all my progenitors.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For the successful completion of this work the researcher acknowledges the positive handiwork of a lot of spiritual and human beings. I thank in a very special way the Almighty God for granting me the wisdom, strength and health with which to embark on this work.

My special gratitude also goes to my ebullient and erudite supervisor, Prof. C. O. T. Ugwu who tirelessly guided the production of this work from the beginning to the end, in spite of other contending and pressing engagements. Without his frequent guidance, corrections and other inputs, this work could not have been produced. I lack words to thank him enough. May the Almighty God bless him abundantly.

Worthy of my infinite and special thanks are the Head, Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, Rev. Dr. E. A. Ituma, Rev. Prof. E. N. Chinwokwu, Rev. Prof. A. U. Agha, Prof. M. I. Okwueze, Rev. Prof. H. C. Achunike, Ven. Dr. B.C.D. Diara, Rev. Sis. Dr. Mary-Jerome Obiora and other lecturers in the Department of Religion and cultural studies, for their various assistances towards the completion of this work, and also for their regular attendance to the departmental seminars, where they made invaluable contributions. Your contributions during such seminars shaped and sharpened this work. I doff my hat for all of you in a special way.

Also in a remarkable way, I am greatly indebted to the authors whose works I consulted in this research. Reading through their works helped to widen my academic horizon greatly, and without such consultations, the work could not have been possible.

My special thanks are for my wife, Mrs. Aneke Theresa Ebere, our children and other relations for being able to absorb a lot of denials during the course of this study. Should they have done otherwise, the successful completion of this work might not have been a reality. Let the Almighty God be a source of your consolation.

Again my special gratitude goes to my able typist, Calister, who typed the manuscripts with minimal errors. It is only the Ezechitoke Abiama Oshimiri (Almighty God) who will bless her commensurately.

This unit cannot be successfully completed unless I express my profound gratitude to my con-students, colleagues, friends, members of Akpoti Graduates Association (AGA), and other well-wishers. Their constant words of advice and encouragement formed some towering inspirations in me. I am most grateful to all of you. Be blessed abundantly.
ABSTRACT

The people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland are highly obsessed with the organization of funeral rites for the forebears and to present ritual Igbo cows and/or horses to them. This ritual practice constitutes primary responsibility of any grown-up adult within the sub-cultural area. Embarking on this cultural practice often impoverishes them. Nsukka sub-cultural area includes Igbo-Etiti, Igbo-Eze North, Igbo-Eze South, Isi-Uzo, Nsukka, Udenu and Uzo-Uwani Local Government Areas of Enugu State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study include among others to: ascertain the reason why the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area are highly obsessed with the ritual practice of presenting Igbo ritual cow and/or horse to their forebears during funeral ceremonies and identify the occasions for the use of the ritual cows and/or horses. The research is essentially a qualitative one and the researcher made use of phenomenological method. Primary and secondary data were collected. The researcher interviewed traditional religious practitioners, elders, leaders of thought, priests and academia among others. Secondary data were collected from books, periodicals, dictionaries, encyclopedia, journals articles, magazines, internet, newspapers and dissertations. The data were analyzed using descriptive analytical tool. The researcher found among others that the people owe it as a special responsibility to their progenitors to organize their funeral ceremony and present to them ritual cows and horses and that severe punishment is attached to non-compliance. The researcher recommended among others that the younger generation is encouraged to embibe the commendable quality of having filial attachment to their parents and that they should not look at them as waste products, long overdue for abandonment. The researcher concluded among others that the living ones would wish that the relatinshhip that existed between the progeny and their parents should continue even when the parents are dead.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Death is a unique phenomenon among living organisms in the sense that its universality is not debatable. It is very well known in every human society and the entire humanity is undeniably aware of it. It knows no boundary and respects no personality. It is a mysterious phenomenon that is dreaded all over the world. Among the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria, some of the characteristics of death are epitomized in a good number of wise sayings. For instance, Igbo people often say that death knows no king (Onwu amaghi Eze) or that death respects no dignified human being (Onwu amaghi onye ukwu).

Death is so dreaded among the Igbo people that some of their personal names reflect their frame of mind towards death. Such personal names as Onwubiko (please death…), Onwu Chekwalu (Death, please wait), Onwudinjo (Death is bad), Onwudiwe (Death is annoying) and Onwamaghioge (Death does not know the correct time) are some of the ways Igbo people express their feeling about death. Death is an abhorrent phenomenon among Igbo people in particular and of course the entire human race.

Within Nsukka sub-cultural area, some parents refuse to give any name to their children because they are afraid that the children may die sooner or later. Such children are often referred to as Onoyima onwu (They die very soon), Urama (god’s deception), Ayogu (one should not jubilate).

Among the Igbo people, death is treated with ambivalence. As a result of this, the Igbo perform a lot of “intricate and elaborate burials and funeral ceremonies” (Hauser, 1992:1). The dead is often treated with decorum for some reasons. In this direction, Mbiti
(1975:113) asserts that “meticulous care is taken to fulfil the funeral rites, and to avoid causing any offence to the departed”. In the same manner, the view of Quarcoopome (1987:125) corroborates with that of Mbiti as he submits that in West Africa, “great care is taken in burying the dead. There are elaborate funeral rites and ceremonies which reinforce the belief that death is only a transition…." Ugwu and Ugwueye also make their own contributions on the importance Igbo people attach to meticulous and elaborate burials and funeral ceremonies. It is their belief that “in very many African communities, there is the practice of second burial (funeral) to ensure that no ritual element has been left out, so that the danger brought about by the displeasure of the deceased may be averted” (2004:58). It is against this backdrop that one often notices that Igbo people are always meticulous about the handling of issues connected with burial and funeral rites so as to circumvent avoidable mistakes and errors. Such mistakes and errors are always severely punished by the ancestors and other spiritual agents.

There are a lot of rituals that are brought to bear in connection with the last rite of passage which are burial and funeral rites. One of such crucial rituals includes the killing of ritual cow or horse for the dead. These ritual cows and/or horses are killed in honour of the deceased who receive them to add to their honour in the spiritual world. It is the belief of the Igbo people, to which the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area belong, that these ritual animals so killed are presented to the ancestors in the spiritual world. These ancestors are always ever alert waiting for the arrival of these ritual animals.

The presentation of a ritual cow or horse or both at the same time, invariably enhances the status of the deceased in the ancestral world. On the contrary, all the deceased who have not presented ritual cow or horse to the ancestors are considered to be hovering
spirits as a result are not allowed in Igbo gathering for burial and funeral ceremonies getting a fair share of the meat of such cow or horse.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Igbo people are incurably religious, inherently afraid of death and permanently in love and in constant communion with their deceased parents and relations. Their expenditure indices are always very high in their honest efforts to satisfy their deceased parents and other relations. The Igbo most often spend far above their average income in a bid to meet up with the necessary requirements involved in organizing befitting burial and funeral ceremonies for their beloved parents and relations. The reason for embarking on such an expensive venture is to avoid the wrath of the ancestors who feel offended when these rites are not well-performed by their progeny. It is believed that the ancestors often inflict their progeny with terrible punishments such as sicknesses, deaths, misfortunes, stagnation and disruptions in human endeavour when they are not happy with them. Such severe punishments are placated by engaging on funeral rites and sacrificing the appropriate ritual animals such as cow and horse. In most cases, an average Igbo man goes all out borrowing from friends and relations in order to be able to organize befitting burial and funeral ceremonies for his or her dear ones.

It is an established fact that an average Igbo man, especially those from Nsukka sub-cultural area of the Northern Igboland, does not see himself as living a fulfilled life unless he or she has successfully organized his parents’ and/or his grand parents’ funeral ceremonies. It is an expensive debt he owes and has to pay to the dead in particular and the society at large. In most cases, one is contemptuously reminded that one has not undertaken the funeral ceremonies of one’s parents, especially where one is always making
open statements to show that one is very important in the society or when and where one is often involved in open quarrel with another person. In such a situation, one is often asked to go and organize his late parents’ or close relation’s funeral ceremony.

While embarking on such funeral ceremony, killing a ritual cow for the dead is a very important ritual. One is often advised to kill the ritual cow in a given year and suspend other ceremonies until the following year if one cannot embark on all of them at the same time of the year. In most cases, relations, friends and well-wishers almost always come to the aid of one proposing to organize funeral ceremony of one’s late forebear so that one embarks on all the rituals at a stretch.

Igbo people, especially the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area, spend themselves out and also go extra miles to borrow from friends and relations so as to ensure that they organize befitting funeral rites. This is one of the major concerns of this research work. One of the major thrusts of this research work is to ascertain the reason why the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area attach much importance to the use of ritual cows for their deceased forebears and insist on organizing funeral ceremonies for them even when they are not impressively well to do.

The sons in-law are also not left out when funeral ceremonies of their parents-in-law are being organized. Such sons in-law almost always provide their respective wives with ritual cows with which to present to their in-laws for funeral ceremony of their father or mother or both. That each of the sons in-law, whether rich or poor makes some efforts to provide a ritual cow or horse to his wife for the funeral ceremony of her father or mother or for both of the forebears constitutes a major source of worry to the society at large and the
researcher in particular. Even a widowed daughter always insists on performing the same ceremony like others who are comfortably married.

Christians are not excluded from this societal expectation. They also attach much importance to this issue of using ritual cow or horse for their forebears and in organizing befitting funeral rites for them. It is against this backdrop that Ezeme (1997:134) rightly observes that “wealthy Christians have taken to buying two cows, one each to the Umunna (family/village of the deceased male) and Christians”. He also quickly adds that “even at this, the Umunna is offered theirs before the Christian group”.

1.3 Objective of the Study

A research work of this nature cannot but have some clearly stated objectives. In view of this, the objectives of this study include to:

1) ascertain the reason why the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area are obsessed with the ritual practice of presenting cows and/or horses to their forebears and close relations during funeral ceremonies.

2) identify the occasions for the use of ritual cows and/or horses for the funeral ceremony.

3) find out the socio-religious consequences of failure or refusal to present a ritual cow and/or horse to the forebears.

4) assess how modernity has impacted on funeral ritual practice of presenting ritual cows and/or horses to the forebears.

5) identify the possible future of the ritual practice of presenting ritual cows and/or horses to the forebears.
1.4 Significance of the Study

This research work is very significant in a number of ways, both theoretically and practically.

1) At the theoretical level, it adds to the existing wealth of knowledge within the areas of burial and funeral celebration in Igboland in particular and African Traditional Religion (ATR) in general.

2) It constitutes a reference material for others who might wish to embark on similar studies in future either within Igboland or among other people of various cultures.

At the practical level, this work is very significant in the following ways:

1) It emphasizes the need for the progeny to establish and maintain cordial relationship with their progenitors through the presentation of ritual cow and/or horse to the latter.

2) Again, it draws the attention of the progeny to the all important role of ritual cow and/or horse in creating and cementing cordial relationship with the forebears.

3) Also, it makes the progeny to be expressly aware that the living-dead are very much around and interested on what happens in their respective families on the earth.

4) Its significance also lies on the fact that it draws the attention of the progeny to the adverse consequences of not presenting ritual cows and/or horses to their respective progenitors.

5) Again, it contributes in no small way in promoting the traditional culture of the Igbo people to which Nsukka sub-cultural area belongs.
6) Also, it constitutes a source of inspiration to the younger ones who are not versed in the tenets of Igbo tradition and culture.

1.5 The Scope of the Study

This study is focused on Nsukka sub-cultural area of the northwestern Igboland in Enugu State of Nigeria. It refers specifically to the seven Local Government Areas of Enugu State that are at the northern part of the state. A sizeable part of this area falls within the area popularly described as the northern arrow-head of Enugu State. The seven Local Government Areas that constitute the Nsukka sub-cultural area are Igbo-Etiti, Igbo-Eze North, Igbo-Eze South, Isi-Uzo, Nsukka, Udenu and Uzo-Uwani Local government Areas.

According to Ofomata (2000) and Ozigbo (1999), the entire Igboland is situated between longitudes 6°00'1 and 8°30'1 east and between latitudes 4°15'1 and 7°05'1 north of Equator. Nsukka sub-cultural area is included in this longitudinal and latitudinal location of Igboland and constitutes the northern part of Igboland. The sub-cultural area is bounded on the north by both Benue and Kogi States, on the east by Ebonyi and Benue States, on the South by Enugu-East, Udi, and Ezeagu Local Government Areas of Enugu State and on the West by Anambra and Kogi States of Nigeria.

Nsukka sub-cultural area refers to the people who were carved out as Nsukka Division about 1922 by the British colonial masters (Afigbo, 1997; Eze, 2008). According to Afigbo (1997:1) “they (the people of Nsukka) came to acquire a measure of common consciousness as a political group under colonial rule during which time they were administered, first as part of the Awka sub-district in 1906–1908 and then as part of the Okwoga Division in 1909 – 1919”. In 1918, according to Eze (2008:12) “British administration expelled Igbo-speaking areas from Okwoga Division”. Then the people of
Nsukka sub-cultural area were constituted as Obollo district with headquarters at Nkpologwu in the present Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State. The district was renamed Nsukka in 1922 and the headquarters relocated in 1926 (Eze, 2008).

This sub-cultural area later became known politically as Nsukka zone or Nsukka Education zone or Nsukka senatorial zone. In the current political dispensation, six Local Government Areas of Nsukka sub-cultural areas are in Enugu-North senatorial zone. It is only Isi-Uzo Local Government Area that is excised to Enugu-East Senatorial zone for political reasons. However, Isi-Uzo Local Government Area still remains culturally tied to Nsukka sub-cultural area with which it had maintained strong and intimate cultural ties since the beginning of colonial administration.

1.6 Methodology

This research work is purely a qualitative one in the sense that data collection, analysis and interpretation are based on the interpretation of statements, comments and observations of the respondents and not on quantitative variables.

The researcher made use of phenomenological approach as the method adopted in the study. The data from various sources were collected using phenomenological approach during which the researcher detached his personal feelings, ideas, knowledge and beliefs.

The researcher made use of both primary and secondary sources. In the primary sources of data collection, the researcher made use of interview techniques and participant observation. Traditional religious practitioners, elders, leaders of thought, priests, academia and Christians selected from various Local Government Areas that make up Nsukka sub-cultural area were interviewed. On the secondary sources, the researcher gathered pieces of
information from books, periodicals, Dictionaries, Encyclopedia, journal articles, magazines, newspapers, dissertations, theses, internet materials, etc.

1.7 Definition of Terms

The researcher deems it very necessary to define and explain certain terms and expressions in this work for the purposes of clarity and the avoidance of ambiguity. The researcher therefore defines and explains the following terms and expressions: sacred, cow, funeral, rituals, rites, culture and religion.

1.7.1 Sacred

The term sacred, according to Goetz (2005:771), came from the Latin word *Sacer* which means “set off or rested.” For him, a person or thing is designated as sacred when it is unique or extra-ordinary. Also, Woodford and Jackson (2003:1099) state that the word sacred refers to something “considered to be holy and deserving respect especially because of a connection with a god”. Also, Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of English language (1994:1258) sees the word sacred as an adjective that has the connotation of being “devoted or dedicated to a deity or to some religious purpose” or being consecrated. The Dictionary puts it that the word sacred has the connotation of being “entitled to veneration or religious respect by association with divinity or divine things; holy”.

In the same vein, Read et al (2004:1025) see the word sacred as meaning “set apart or dedicated to religious use”. They also define it as that which is pertaining or related to deity, religion or hallowed places and things. Similarly, Encarta Dictionaries, as cited in Uchendu (2010:2) shows that the word sacred means the following: dedicated to a deity or
religious purpose; relating to or used in religious worship; worthy of or regarded with religious veneration, worship and respects and not to be challenged or disrespected.

Be that as it may, the researcher defines this word sacred as connoting being devoted or dedicated to the transcendent or to some religious purpose. The word sacred can refer to a person, thing or place. In most cases in this research work, it will be associated to an animal set aside for religious purpose.

1.7.2 Cow.

A lot of authors and scholarly materials have made some frantic efforts to shed light on the meaning of the term cow. In this wise, Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English language (1994:336) is of the view that the term “cow refers to the mature female of a bovine animal especially of the genus *Bos Taurus*”. The term “cow refers to the females of various other large animals as the elephant, whale, etc”. In a similar manner, Simpson and Weiner (1989:1080) see the term “cow as the female of any bovine animal such as ox, bison or buffalo”. Continuing, they observe that the term cow is most commonly applied to the female of the domestic species of the genus *Bos Taurus*. Similarly, Goetz (2005:694) says that “in animal husbandry cow refers to the mature female of domesticated cattle”. Also, making their own contributions, Woodford and Jackson (2003:282) submit that cow refers to “large female farm animals producing meat and milk – a diary cow”. Cow for them generally refers to “the adult female of some mammals, such as elephants, whales, etc”.

For Lechner (2004:225), the term cow refers to “a fully grown female animal of the ox family (cattle), usually kept in herds by farmers for milk”. He also states that the term
cow refers to the female of any animal whose male is known as bull, e.g. the elephant, whale and moose.

For the purpose of this research work, the term cow conceptually refers to the Igbo traditional type of cow that is zoologically known as muturu. It is most often smaller in size than the other type of cow called Ndama Ndama and white Fulani. It is not reared for the purposes of producing large quantity of meat and milk. Both the males and the females are in this context referred to as cows (Ehi/Efi Igbo). The male Igbo traditional cow (muturu) is most often used for religious rituals including funeral rites and various forms of sacrifices.

1.7.3 Ritual

The word ritual which derives its origin from the Latin word ritualis, has been defined by Woodford and Jackson (2003:1080) as “a set of fixed actions and sometimes words performed regularly, especially as part of a ceremony”. In the same vein, Lechner (2004:859) defines the word ritual as “a strictly ordered traditional method of conducting and performing an act of worship or other solemn ceremony”. In agreement with Lechner, Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language (1994:1237) sees the word ritual as “an established or prescribed procedure for a religious or other rites, a system of religious or other rites or an observance of set forms of public worship”.

Also, Brown (1993:991) states that the word ritual is “an adjective of, or pertaining to, or used in a solemn rite or rites”. In this regard, Simpson and Weiner (1989:991) see the word ritual as “an adjective pertaining or relating to or connected with rites. According to Webster (1980:1565) the word ritual refers to “a set form or system of rites, religious or otherwise.”
Having x-rayed the definitions of various authors and other scholarly works regarding the meaning of the word ritual, the researcher adopts the definition of Lechner as a working definition. For him, the word ritual is “a strictly ordered traditional method of conducting and performing an act of worship or other solemn ceremony” (Lechner, 2004:859).

1.7.4 Rite

The word rite is from the Latin word *ritus* which means ceremony (Lechner, 2004:859). He defines the word rite as “a religious ceremony or formal act of worship; any ceremony, observance and procedure. The word rite is closely related to ritual and is variously defined by scholars. Woodford and Jackson (2003:1080) are of the view that the word rite is referring “usually to a religious ceremony with a set of fixed words and action”. In the same manner, Simpson and Weiner (1989:990) and Brown (1992:2609) define the word rite as “a formal procedure or act in a religious or other solemn observance”. Also Webster (1980:1565) defines rite as “a ceremonial or formal solemn act, observance, or procedure in accordance with prescribed rule or custom, as in religious use”. In the same line of thought, Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of English language (1994:1237) further defines the word rite as “a formal or ceremonial act or procedure prescribed or customary in religious or other solemn use”. The researcher adopts the definition by Lechner as a working definition because of its relevance to the study.

1.7.5 Funeral

A host of scholars had attempted a definition of the concept funeral which is from the Latin word *funeralis*. One of such scholars is Brown (1993:1043) who states that the
concept is an adjective “pertaining to the ceremonies connected with the burial or cremation of a dead body”. Simpson and Weiner (1991:268) also define the concept in exactly the same way as Brown. In agreement with Brown, Simpson and Weiner (1980:742) define funeral as “the ceremony of burying, or otherwise formally disposing of the dead”. Webster (1980:742) observes that funeral also refers to “the procession attending the burial of the dead”. In his own contribution, Lechner (2004:384) also defines funeral as “the ceremony of burial or cremation of a dead person”. He goes further to agree with Webster that this concept funeral also refers to “the procession attending a burial or cremation. For Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of English Language (1994:54), the concept funeral refers to “the ceremonies for a dead person prior to burial or cremation”.

The conceptual definition of this word “funeral” notwithstanding, the researcher defines it contextually as the ceremonies that accompany the dead before and especially after its burial. It refers to all the varied and systematic rites that take place following the demise and the subsequent burial of an individual. These rites vary in terms of details from one community to another in Igboland and hence among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area.

These funeral ceremonies are aimed essentially at bidding adequate and appropriate farewell to the dead and providing him/her with the necessary materials that will accompany him/her to the land of the ancestors. These accompanying materials serve as the indicators of the wealth of the deceased or those of his sons and other relations and serve as conditions for admitting him/her into the ancestral world without many hitches.
1.7.6 Culture

Various scholars have defined the term culture. For instance, Hobbs and Blank (1978:75) state that the classical social science definition of culture was conceived by the British anthropologist Tylor in 1871 who avers that “culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, custom and any other habits and capabilities acquired” by members of society.

They add that “culture includes all the material and non-material aspects of society”. Going on further, they observe that “culture can be conceived as a continuous and cumulative reservoir containing both material and non-material elements that are socially transmitted from generation to generation”. According to them, culture is continuous because cultural patterns transcend the years, reappearing in successive generations. Culture is cumulative because each generation contributes to the reservoir.

Also, Hoebel, and Frost (1976:6) submit that “culture is the integrated system of learned behaviour patterns which are characteristic of the members of a society and which are not the result of biological inheritance”.

They add that “culture is not genetically predetermined; it is non instinctive. It is the result of social invention and is transmitted and maintained solely through communication and learning”. They cited another definition by Kroeber and Kluchon (1952:18) who submit that culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (ie historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their
attached values; culture systems may, on the other hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action.

Again, Kalu and Nwosu (1980:3) are of the view that as this term is used commonly in the social sciences, culture refers to “a totality of people’s ways of life”. It is the “distinctive way of life of a people, their complete design for living”.

According to them, in another sense, “culture refers to the gamut of the knowledge, beliefs, customs, traditions and skills that are available to the members of a society”. In their attempts to expatiate further, they state that “cultures are man-made rather than God-given and that they are designs, prescriptions and responses which are deliberately fashioned to guide all aspects of people’s life”.

Furthermore, Nwosu and Kalu (1980:4) cite Beals and Hoiler who are of the view that “culture is not restricted to certain special fields of knowledge; it includes ways of behaving derived from the whole range of human activity. The designs for living evident in the behaviour of the Eskimos, the natives of Australia or the Navahos are as much a part of culture as those cultivated by Europeans and Americans. Culture includes not only the techniques and methods of art, music and literature but also those used to make pottery, sew clothing or build houses”.

The researcher adopts the classic definition of culture as postulated by the British anthropologist Tylor in 1871 as a working definition. To this effect, culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs and any other habits and capabilities acquired by members of the society”.

1.7.7 Religion

The term religion has been defined by various renowned authors. James (1902:31-32) as cited in Okwueze (2003:2-3) defines religion as “the feelings, acts and experiences of individual in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they consider the divine”.

For Durkheim (1947:37), as also cited in Okwueze (2003:3), religion is “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, to things set apart and forbidden, beliefs and practices which unite into a single moral community all those who adhere to them”. He adds that the twin elements of beliefs and practices appear to be very central in religion.

Aquinas defines religion “as the virtue, which prompts man to render to God the worship and reverence that is his by right”. Kant as cited in Okwueze (2003:3) defines religion simply as “man’s recognition of his duties as divine commands”.

For Brown (1952:154) “any religion normally involves certain ideas or beliefs on the one hand, and on the other, certain observances”. Okwueze (2003:3) is of the view that “Religion can therefore be understood as a regulated pattern of life of a people in which experience, beliefs, and knowledge are reflected in man’s conception of himself in relation to others, his social world, the physical as well as the metaphysical world”.

According to Ugwu (2000:2), religion can be defined as “faith and practices involving the relationship between mankind and what is regarded as sacred”. He goes on to add that “religion generally include the belief in the supernatural and a code of ethical behaviour”.
Also, Ugwu (2000:2), citing Merriam (1980), observes that more comprehensively, religion is defined as “the outward act or form by which men indicate their recognition of the existence of God or of gods having power over the destiny, to whom obedience, service and honour are due; the feeling or expression of human love, fear or awe of some superhuman and over-ruling power, whether by profession of belief, by observance of rites and ceremonies or by the conduct of life”.

NTI (2000:3), citing Kegley, defines religion as “the attitude or active relationship, and the action growing out of that attitude or relationship towards whatever or whomever an individual and/or a group of persons, take to be of greatest value and reality”. He adds that “the case does not stand or fall, however, on the acceptance or any particular definition of religion… the three essential features of religion are belief, feeling and action”.

The researcher adopts Durkheim’s definition of religion as a working definition and draws attention to the arguments of Okwueze (2003:2) that “one of the most difficult concepts in terms of definition is the word Religion. This is essentially because no one definition by any scholar has successfully and adequately taken care of the various aspects of this ‘enigma’ called religion”.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher reviews relevance literature on the following terms and expressions: death, burial, funeral ceremony/rite for the dead, animals killed for the dead and their significance, killing human being for the dead and providing the dead with materials.

2.1 Death

Authors, scholars, individuals and societies uphold various and varied conceptions about the phenomenon of death. Against this backdrop, Mbiti (1969:158) observes that “death is a monster before which man is utterly helpless”. He adds that relatives watch a dying man and they cannot assist him to escape death. Ifesieh (1989:14) avers that “death is wicked and has no respect for personality”. Similarly, Ikwunne (2005:21-22) cites Maris (1979:23) who postulates that “death who kills indiscriminately has no regard for anybody, be he a chief or a little man”. In the same manner, Ugwu and Ugwueye submit that death “launches a deadly attack on the society of living men and it not only wrenches but also at the same time dislocates their relationship with one another within the society” (Ugwu and Ugwueye, 2004:57-58). To cap it up, Mbiti (1969), Quarcoopome (1982), Gennep (1960) and Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004) describe death as being inevitable and, in many societies, most disrupting phenomenon of all. Quarcoopome (1982:121) further adds that it is “a kind of debt to be paid by all.” Also, going further, Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004:58) assert that “it has the panic-stricken characteristics of transforming a man who needs to be a source of satisfaction into a source of pain, fear and despondence”. For Mbiti (1969) and Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004), death is standing between the worlds of human beings and the spirits and between the visible and the invisible.
The contributions of the above-mentioned renowned scholars are very bright but they are mere human conjectural work. Death is a mysterious phenomenon and it is believed that it is only God that has a sound knowledge of it. Human conceptions can only be based on guesswork.

That death is mysterious, incomprehensible and feared everywhere are the views held by Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004) and a host of other scholars. For them, it presents perennial problems, not only to individuals, but also to societies. In the same manner, Glazier (1987:85) notes “that the Island Carib dreaded death, and it was forbidden to utter the name of the deceased”. He adds that the dead is often referred to as the husband or wife of so-and-so, and not being mentioned by names. It is felt that mentioning the names of the deceased, will tantamount to bringing them back to the earth. This idea of not mentioning the deceased by their names is also obtainable among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Enugu State of Nigeria where the dead is often referred to as Onye Jederu (the departed). In such cultural area, it is strongly believed that calling the deceased by his or her name results in bringing his or her malevolent spirit to the earth.

In addition to the fact that the living ones dread death and the dead, a lot of factors are held to constitute the causative agents of death. In the views of Goetz (2005:805), death “has been viewed as resulting from the attack of some demonic power or ‘death god’”. He goes ahead to cite the example that in Etruscan Sepulchral art, a fearsome being called Charun was responsible for striking the death blow and that the medieval Christian art depicted the skeletal figure of Death with a dart. He also maintains that according to Christian theology, death entered the world through the original sin committed by Adam and Eve, the progenitors of mankind.
Consequently, Mbiti (1969:155, 1975:111) believes that “by far the commonest cause (of death) is believed to be magic, sorcery and witchcraft.” He believes that this view is held by most African societies, though with varying degrees of emphasis. According to him, someone is often blamed for using his magical formular to cause the death of another. By implication, death is caused by both natural and unnatural means. He adds that whatever happens, people must always find or give immediate causes of death. He goes further to include the living-dead, spirits and God as some of the causative agents of death. For him, God is responsible for causing death through lightning, death of old people (natural death) or where a person may contravene an important custom or prohibition. Whatever be the case, he believes strongly that even though God may be seen as the ultimate cause of death, other intermediary agents might be brought into the scene so as to satisfy people’s suspicions and curiousity. It is against this backdrop that he concludes that one or more of the causes of death must always be given for virtually every death in African community.

With reference to the cause of death in African set up, Parrinder observes that “not only disease…death…is thought to be due to an evil spiritual force” (1962:107). He adds that the idea of natural death is foreign to many peoples (of Africa). Almost always, according to him, an enemy must have been responsible for causing a death.

There is no doubt that most Africans are thinking in this way. It is quite unfortunate. If most deaths in African societies are caused by magic, sorcery and witchcraft, Africans should be advised to channel their mysterious and esoteric powers and abilities to more positive ventures such as inventions and discoveries for man’s use and
human advancement. They should not concern themselves with destroying lives which they cannot create or reproduce.

One very important conception about death is that it is seen as a transition and not as a complete annihilation or obliteration of the deceased. In this direction, Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004:58) observe that “it (death) is regarded as a transition from one state of existence to another. It is a passage from this earthly existence to another world”. In the same vein, Mbiti (1969:25) believes that “after the physical death, the individual continues to exist in the Sasa period and does not immediately disappear from it”. Continuing, he posits that such a person is often remembered by relatives and friends who know him in this life and who have survived him. He also adds that they call him by name, though not necessarily mentioning it; they remember his entire personality, his character, his words and most often the incidents of his life time. For him, the reason why the departed is so remembered by name is because he is not really dead. He is described as being alive. Mbiti calls this category of the deceased the living-dead and goes ahead to explain that the expression living-dead refers to a person who has become physically dead but alive in the memory of those who knew him in his life as well as being alive in the world of the spirits. It is his conviction that so long as the living-dead is thus remembered, he is in the state of personal immortality. Going further, he avers that “this personal immortality is externalized in the physical continuation of the individual through procreation, so that the children bear the traits of their parents or progenitors” (Mbiti, 1969:25).

Mbiti (1975) also submits that various expressions were used in Africa to describe the actual act of dying. He states thus:

Many words are used all over Africa concerning the actual act of dying. People refer to dying as returning home, going away, answering the summon, saying ‘yes’ to death,
disappearing, departing, ceasing to eat, ceasing to breath, sinking, fighting a losing battle, refusing food, rejecting people, sleeping, taking one away, saying goodbye, shutting the eyes, being broken up, being snatched away, being taken away, being called away, joining the fathers, becoming God’s property and so on (pp.112-113).

To add to Mbiti’s long list of expressions used in Africa concerning actual act of dying are sending home the book of one’s record (*Ipana akwukwo*) and going home from the market (*Ila ahia*). These two expressions are in frequent use among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area in Enugu State of Nigeria to show the actual act of dying. These expressions are used euphemistically to refer to the actual act of dying in Igboland in particular and Africa in general.

Igbo people, in general and the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area in particular, believe that death is a transition. That the people are constantly in very close communion with their progenitors or that they would wish to be in constant close communion with them is as a result of this belief that the deceased are always very close to their earthly relations.

Organization of funeral ceremony is one of the means through which living human beings create, establish and maintain very cordial relationship with their forebears and stem the tide of suffering terribly from their hands when they get annoyed. The traditionalists, Christians and Muslims believe that death is a transition from one state of existence to another and that death is not the end of the deceased. The deceased on this earth has just been transformed into another level of existence and has not gone into oblivion. To further buttress the point being made here, Mbiti (1969) asserts thus:
Death is conceived of as a departure and not a complete annihilation of a person. He (the dead) moves on to join the company of the departed, and the only major change is the decay of the physical body, but the spirit moves on to another state of existence (p.157).

In addition to the fact that death is seen to be a transitional phenomenon, it is also conceived by some scholars as being universal. It is the conviction of Mbiti (1969) and Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004) that death is a universal phenomenon among the human race. For Mbiti (1969:149), “death is something that concerns everybody, partly because sooner or later everyone personally faces it and partly because it brings loss and sorrows to every family and community”

It is the belief of the researcher that the universality of death among human race is unquestionable. Death strikes blows at one time or the other in every known human society. According to human conception, it knows no boundary and respects no personality. It is also believed that it has no clear cut formular of operation.

In a traditional Igboland, corpses are dressed before burial. The extent of dressing may vary from one community to another according to the statuses of the deceased and from time to time. A host of scholars like Forde and Jones (1950), Basden (1966), Thomas (1969), Mbiti (1975) and Ezeme (1997) are unanimous in their submissions that in Igboland, corpses are dressed before burial takes place. Thomas (1969), for instance, talks about Nibo people of Awka area of Anambra State, Nigeria when he posits that the body (corpse) is laid on a mat, anywhere in the house, and cotton thread is put between the big and second toes, then the body is taken out and two women wash it four times and rub camwood four times, then they put black marks and pass a razor over the face four times (p.79)
Basden (1966) talks about the Awka people of Anambra State, Nigeria. He observes that the corpse is made to lie in state and
  a long stockinet hat (‘Okpu Nwa-Agbara’) somewhat resembling a maltster’s, is placed on the head, while eagle feather and the scarlet feathers of a bird called ‘Aghum Nme’ are laid along each side of the face. The body is then rubbed lavishly with camwood dye (‘Ufie’). This is done for dressing and corresponds to the anointing of the Easterners. The eyes are marked round with chalk rings, giving the effect of a huge pair of white spectacles. All this follow the exact usage as on the day of his taking title. Their use now, as then, indicates that all sacrifices have been completed (p.271).

In a similar manner, Mbiti (1975) avers that there are rituals concerning the preparation of corpse for disposal. In some places, it is washed either with water or with water and traditional medicines. In other areas, it is shaved and the nails are cut off. There are places where oil or butter is put through the mouth and nostrils, ears and other bodily openings. Skins, leather, cotton, bark clothes, or leaves are used to cover the corpse and the whole body is in some places anointed with … oil (p.113).

The works of Basden (1966), Thomas (1969) and Forde and Jones (1950) must contain some out-moded ideas because of their ages. However, it is still very necessary to make use of them so as to get to know what it used to be in Igboland. It is for this reason that this work refers to a more modern write up from Ezeme (1997) who submits that under normal circumstances, the corpse is washed and it is a compulsory rite. If a corpse is already decomposing, it is symbolically washed by applying water on the fore-head and feet. The essence is for the dead to join the ancestors in a clean nature (p.93).

He adds that the corpse is made to lie in state, fully dressed in his cherished attire as decided by his children and relations. Be that as it may, no particular description of how
the corpse is being prepared before burial can suffice for all communities and cultures. What appears in this work can be taken as just a sample and not as a standard.

2.2 Burial

Burial, which is the act of interment of the corpse, and burial rites are variously carried out among the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria. The act of burial and the accompanying burial rites are fraught with varieties among the Nsukka sub-cultural Igbo people. The burial of the elderly ones are carried out differently from those of the young ones and children. The burial of men is quite different from those of women. The burial of the titled ones are also different from those of the ordinary person. It is likely that Basden was responding to these varieties of burial practices when he asserted that “the following description of death and burial pertains rather to the Awka District, they are not universal in Ibo(Igbo) country. Each neighbourhood has its (her) own peculiar adaptation” (1966:271). Again, Thomas (1969:79) states clearly that “it is impossible to give in detail any account of burial rites (in Igboland) which differ from town to town, and quarter to quarter”. What Basden and Thomas postulate include what happens among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland.

Be that as it may, the researcher has to point out certain issues regarding burial of corpse in Africa in general and Igboland in particular. The spatial positioning of the grave is one of those issues that readily come into one’s mind. With references to the direction of sun-rise and sun-set, the grave is positioned in various societies in Africa. Mbiti (1969:150) observes that “the grave has an east-west shape, presumably capturing the movement of the sun”. Going further, he observes that “the body is laid down (inside the grave), facing south; the man is put on his right, the woman on her left”. The woman is
buried with her head pointing the direction of the sun-rise, while a man is buried with his head pointing the direction of sun-set.

He also cite another example that among the Abaluyia people of Kenya, “the body (corpse) is buried facing west, and completely naked just as the person was when he was born” (1969:154). He adds that this nakedness symbolized birth in the hereafter.

A look at what happens in other parts of the world as shown by Glazier (1987) reveals that among the Caribbeans,

Archaeological evidence indicates that the Island Arawak performed several types of burials: direct interment, with skeleton in a sitting or flexed position; interment within a raised mound, with the body in a crouched position; interment within a grave covered with an arch of branches topped with earth and burial in caves, with skeletons in a flexed position (p.85).

He adds that the burial customs for the leaders differ markedly from those of the masses and are more elaborate. Going further, he also states that archaeological record reveals that the Island Arawak bury a majority of her dead in crouching or flexed position.

There are varieties of burial customs in various cultures of the world. Each variety is closely associated with certain religious interpretations and observances. Burials are not embarked upon in a haphazard manner but in a well-thought out plan according to traditional norms.

In addition to the directional positioning of the grave and the corpse in the grave, the place of burial is another issue that attracts enormous attention. Various societies bury their dead at various places according to their traditional norms. For instance, Mbiti (1969:153) observes that among the Abaluyia people of Kenya and “for the family head, the grave is dug inside his first wife’s house. He adds that “for a woman, unmarried son or
daughter, or a married man without children or with only up to two children, it (the grave) is dug on the left-hand side behind the house.

Forde and Jones who also studied the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria postulates that “there are many local variations in burial rites. Grave burial, now general for all, was formerly accorded only to the aged or those of social importance”. They add that the corpses of the younger people are thrown into the ‘bad bush’.

What Forde and Jones are saying have some elements of truth especially in the past years and especially in the communities where the traditional norms and customs are aglow over and above modern and Christian traditions. Children and unmarried young ones are rarely accorded adequate burial and funeral ceremonies. In the same vein, they are not accorded ancestral position because of their premature death.

Similarly, Talbot (1969:498) who also studied the Igbo people of the southeastern Nigeria observes that “for young and unmarried persons, or one who has no house of his own, the burial takes place in a part of the bush”. However, when an adult died, “the grave…is dug in the house where the deceased used to live or in the compound, but for a titled man generally in the house”(1969:495). He goes further to add that “an Eze or Obi…is always buried behind the kitchen and a fence erected round the spot, an Okpala, Mkpesi or Ogbu in the house….”

Mbiti (1975:113) submits that burial “may take place in the backyard of one of the houses in the village, in a family burial place or at the original place of birth”. He goes ahead to describe the shape of the grave which can be “rectangular, oval, cave-like or even in a big pot made for that purpose”. The above-mentioned submission notwithstanding, he also observes that
formerly other methods of disposal were used in some places, such as throwing the body in the bush to be eaten by animals and birds, throwing it into a running stream or river, or keeping it in a small house nearby so that it would decompose completely until the bare skeleton was left (p.11).

The above-mentioned variations of where corpses are buried or disposed in Africa are acceptable. Some of them are so done in order to show the status of the deceased when he was alive. Some of the ways of disposing the corpse are archaic or old fashioned because culture is dynamic and changes keep on occurring. The issues discussed so far concern generally the burial of men and not those of women to which this work now diverts attention.

The burial rites of a woman are not as easy-going as those of a man in Igboland in general and among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural group of villages. The Igbo practice exogamy in marriage and a woman normally marries “outside her own village/family and lives in that of her husband” (Green, 1964:97). The implication is that a married woman normally dies away from her kinsfolk. He further postulates that on the death of a woman in most Igbo communities, her kinsfolk “have to come to fetch her (corpse) for burial in or near her native place, but before this is done, her children must give them certain customary payments of food and money”.

Other scholars like Talbot (1969) and Thomas (1969) observe that the corpse of a woman is fetched by his kinsfolk and buried in her parental home. This is what Ezeme (1997:91) refers to as *Ichoje Onwu Nwada* (fetching the corpse of a deceased married woman) by her kinsmen. A funeral cow and a goat have to accompany the corpse of a married woman to her parental home amidst funeral songs by her kinsmen and women. In
some communities, the sons, daughters and other well-wishers have the responsibility of sending the corpse of their mother to her parental home with cow and goat amidst funeral songs.

In a typical traditional Igbo setting, this is done practically. But nowadays, a lot of factors have been working against the practice of carrying home the corpse of a married woman. Christianity and modernity are joining their efforts together to put the practice to a halt. The church is currently kicking against a cow accompanying the corpse of a married woman to her parental home. This time around, the fetching of the corpse of a married woman by her kinsmen and women is only symbolically done. The corpse is no longer released to the woman’s kinsmen and women. The corpses of married women are currently buried in their marital homes.

### 2.3 Funeral ceremony/rite for the dead

Funeral ceremonies so to speak are universal phenomena. By this position, it is believed that all cultures of the world do it in one form or the other. It is an activity that seeks to accord the dead a befitting fare-well and at the same time establish and strengthen the cordial relationship that exists between the living and the dead members of a given family or village. In consonance with the above stated premise, Mbiti (1975:113) submits that “there … many complex and even long rituals and ceremonies associated with death. In every African society, people are very sensitive to what is done when there is a death in the family”. Writing about the funeral rites among the Baltics of ancient Europe, Goetz (2005:781) observes that “several different phases are discernible during the period between deaths and burning. Usually, the deceased was laid out in his house for a longer or shorter period, depending on his social position and the size of his estate”. He further adds
that during this period, a meal lasting several days is prepared for the friends and relations of the deceased. Such things as lamentations, praises of the deceased and wishes for a safe-journey to the great world beyond accompany the corpse on the way to the funeral pyre. He also adds that one of the significant peculiarities of Baltic funeral rites was their similarity with wedding ceremonies. According to him, the corpse and a human partner are dressed in elaborate wedding costume amidst wedding songs and dancing. The basis of these ceremonies, according to him, is the belief that the dead anticipated a new partner, with the same joy as the living do when a new in-law is got. He emphasizes that the use of living people to stand symbolically for the partner of the dead in funerary practices suggests an important and dominant concept in Baltic religious thought, namely that the assumed boundary between the worlds of the dead and the living is not significantly real. Even if this exists, it must be very slightly.

In addition to what happens among the Baltics of ancient Europe regarding funeral ceremony, there are other scholarly works on what obtains in Africa. To this end, Mbiti (1969:151) writes about what happens among the *Ndebele* people of Rhodesia, positing that “one to three months later (after burial) the burial party is summoned together once more to observe the rite ‘to wash the hoes’”. He adds that for this rite, beer was brewed, all the implements used for the burial of the dead were washed with the beer, and medicine was dispensed to the children in the homestead. Furthermore, he adds that after one year, another ceremony was performed which was called ‘the ceremony of calling back the soul of the deceased to his own people. According to him, this ceremony was done only for men and women who were married before their demise. During the ceremony, all the relatives and friends were gathered for a big festival and dancing. Beer for this ceremony
was made from the grain grown after the death of the man and from seed got outside the homestead. In his opinion, it was from this ceremony that all the restrictions hitherto imposed on the normal life of the homestead following the death were lifted and normal life resumed.

He goes further to say that after this ceremony, the widows were free to remarry, the property of the deceased is divided and a new animal is chosen to be the new ‘beast of the ancestors’. For him, this animal was normally a black ox, but never a sheep, and was thereafter cared for by the main heir who was usually the eldest son. In his view, the ceremony ritually ended all the interruptions of life caused by the death.

He also observes that the rite of washing in the river is a ritual act of cleansing from the pollution caused by death. He states that the same thing applied to the ceremony performed a month or two later, when the implements were washed with beer. He further posits that the final funeral ceremony among the Ndebele people of Rhodesia was partly a symbolic way of ‘receiving’, ‘summoning back’, ‘inviting back’ the deceased and thus renewing the flow of contact with him in the next world and partly declaring an official resumption of life. For him, it was a ritual celebration of a man’s triumph over death because it had only disrupted and not destroyed the rhythm of life. It also indicated that the deceased is not really dead. He is a living-dead and can be contacted, invited back and drawn into human affairs. The new ‘beast of the ancestors’, according to him, symbolized the continuing presence of the living-dead in the family and among his people. Members of the family are in constant communion with the deceased who in turn have their eyes always on the members of their earthly family. It is against this backdrop that individual
members of each family are very careful over what they do within their family circle on earth.

Also, Talbot carried out his studies among the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria and submits that “when death occurs among the Ika, a great feast is made and many ‘plays’ given by the societies to which the dead man belonged” (1969:495). Talking about the people of Ebu, he adds that at the end of the seventh month (of drying the corpse), guns were fired and a big feast made, to which the son of the deceased contributed three cows and the rest of the children, a goat each. He also adds that in the middle of the night, all the native ‘doctors’ of the town were called in to sing. What they did was to praise the deceased and ‘consult his medicines’ for which they received a large sum of money. It is the belief of the people that if this rite is not performed, all the children would be facing death penalty. The ‘consultation’ with the ‘medicines’ is perhaps carried out in order to deprive the medicines of the power to affect and disturb the children. He further states that all the sons of the deceased who bring a goat each, shave half their heads seven times on alternate sides. He adds that if their father had not previously divided his property before his demise, it was done when the seventh time of shaving was completed.

Furthermore, he asserts that in Onitsha area, funeral ceremony was carried out before the end of one year of the death if the family was rich. During the ceremony, fifteen gun shots were fired off and many goats and cows were killed for the funeral.

Writing about what happens in Awka during funeral ceremony, Talbot (1969) posits as follows:

_Ikwa ozu_ or second burial (funeral), takes place about four months later if the family can afford it. Some plantain (sic) is cut down and their stems tied together in the rough semblance of a coffin, over which a cloth is spread. The deceased’s cap and feathers are
laid on this along with palm leaves. The whole is fastened together with the tie tie and thorns are used as nails; this is called the *Ibudu or Ibwudu ozu*. The *Ikenga* of the dead man with his *Offaw* (*Ofo*) and *Ndimaw* (personal god), hoe, gun, if any, and *matchet* are placed in front. Drums are beaten and dancing and ‘plays’ given in his honour (p. 499).

Other scholars like Thomas write about funeral ceremony in other parts of Igboland. He describes what happens in Nibo during funeral ceremony. He states that “when the time comes for second burial (funeral), a gun is fired very early in the morning and the part of the wall over the door knocked down; four *Oglisi* (*Newbouldia laevis*) are planted outside the door, a she-goat and cock sacrificed to them” (1969:79). In Igbo traditional setting, the *Oglisi* is regarded as the symbol of the dead. In most cases, it is used to mark the head of the deceased in a grave. It is one of the sacred trees in Igboland. The planting of the *Oglisi* symbolizes the ever presence of the living-dead in his family circles and matters. He also adds that the people then dance to the beatings of the drum; at the end of it they clap their hands. The goat and the fowl were then shared. He emphasizes that when death occurred in Nibo, no woman of the quarter in which death occurred went to the farm or market. The incident was regarded as an obstacle. The widow, according to him, shaved her head bare and took the hair therefrom and the house ashes to the bad bush. The widow’s movement was restricted; she stayed in-doors for twenty-eight days during which she came out only in the night when no person was assumed to have seen her.

Speaking generally about the entire Igboland, Basden (1966:271) correctly submits that when death occurred in Igboland, “visitors will arrive, bringing presents of money, clothe, drinks, brass- rods, hats, eagle (Ugo) feathers and other gifts befitting the occasion”. Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004:58) aver that “there are elaborate funeral rites and
ceremonies which reinforce the belief that death is only a transition”. Going further, they add that what obtains is dependent on the status of the deceased. There might be drumming, dancing, firing of muskets and guns and pouring of libations as part of the funeral rites.

With particular reference to hair-shaving as an aspect of funeral rites, Mbiti (1969) posits that among the Abaluyia of Kenya in East Africa.

the day following the cattle drive, the hair-shaving ceremony is performed. All those who came into contact with the deceased man, either in his death-bed or during burial, are shaved. It is believed that his breath caused impurity and makes disease stick to the head of the one in contact with the dead body (p.154).

In his bid to advance further explanation, he adds that the hairs were hidden to avoid witches and birds taking hold of them for their use for destructive and diabolic purposes.

Achunike (1995:107) as cited in Ezeme (1997:123) observes that “traditional funeral ceremonies are still widespread in many Igbo societies because these rites cement social relationship and re-enact the indestructible link between the living and the dead”. The link between the living and the dead is actually indestructible. In what seems to be a contribution in an opposite direction, Mbiti (1975:117-118) submitted that “funeral rites are aimed at marking the separation of the departed from the living, even though it is believed that the dead continue to live in the hereafter”. He adds that this (physical separation) was a radical one to the extent that funeral rites and ceremonies were meant to draw attention to this permanent separation. It is only an apparent separation because it only involves the physical realm. In the spiritual realm, no such separation exists at all, rather the link is indestructible.
Achunike’s observation that traditional funeral ceremonies are still widespread in many Igbo societies is quite in order and very correct. It is very dominant among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of northwestern Igboland and it is an expensive venture. That the rites cement social relationships between the living and the dead is a strong belief of the Igbo people in general and the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area in particular.

Funeral rites only mark the end of a physical relationship that had been existing between the deceased and his erst-while fellow human beings and the beginning of a new and permanent spiritual relationship that should be existing between the living and the living-dead and other ancestral beings. The link between these two realms i.e. the physical and the spiritual realms, is actually permanently indestructible. It is not very correct that once death occurs, the relationship existing between the progenitors and the progeny is cut and everything about the progenitors are forgotten.

2.4 Animals killed for the dead and their significance

Another issue that attracts attention is that of killing animals for the dead before, during or after burial. Some significance are attached to these animals that are killed. The ones to be killed and the method of killing them vary from one cultural area to another.

What is very significant and pertinent is that a host of scholars agree that some animals are killed for the dead. For instance, Ilogu (1974), Arinze (1970), Talbot (1969), Thomas (1969), Parrinder (1962), Mbiti (1969), Anyacho (2005), Glazier (1987) and Ezeme (1997) agree that animals are killed because death has occurred and that certain significance is attached to each of these animals killed, depending on the socio-cultural area. Glazier writes about the Caribbeans and observes that there, “important men were
buried with cooking pots and utensils; their dogs...were killed so they might continue to serve their masters in the next life” (1987:85). Writing on the same issue, Parrinder wrote about the Swazi of South Africa and submitted that “two cattle are killed and others are later sacrificed to different ancestors” (1962:63). Also, Mbiti (1969:151) upholds that “the animal killed afterwards serves, as it is called, to ‘accompany’ the deceased, to provide him with food on the way and livestock in the next world”. He goes ahead to add that among the Abaluyia of Kenya, when a man is about to die, the relations or children of the dying man kill a sheep or a goat at the family shrine, calling on all their ancestors to come and eat the meal. The remains of the animal killed are then eaten by members of the family, together with the dying man, if he can. For Mbiti, this animal used to be the final donation of the dying man to his living-dead and a means of requesting them to receive him peacefully.

Writing about Igboland, Ilogu (1974) postulates, and correctly too, as follows:

The death of a titled man involves all amounts of religious observances. A cock is killed, its blood is mixed with some leaves, with which a specially invited titled man who is also a medicine-man washes the hands of the dead man to cleanse him of the evils committed with hands while still alive (p. 45).

Advancing further, he cites an example from Ihiala where a sacrifice of a chicken was offered by the extended family head before the young men and some elderly men and their wives when the news of the death of an elderly woman is announced.

Also Arinze submits that “it should be noted that although many fowls and animals are killed when a man dies, most of these killings are not sacrificial (1970:87). He admits that some animals are killed following the death of a man, but his point of argument is that
the practice did not constitute a sacrificial act, especially as the ancestors are addressed in a
harsh voice and not in a beseeching tone. Continuing, he adds that “most of the animals
killed are mere marks of honour for the dead. Others have other purposes, some of which
could in a wide sense be called ritual”. He writes to say that in Maku, when a ram was
slaughtered at the death of a brave man, the blood was smeared on the deceased’s right arm
to wash his hand of all the evils he might have committed in the past. He also adds that
when a fowl or cock is killed by twisting its neck and tearing its mouth, the blood issuing
from the mouth is made to flow into the eyes of the corpse. The essence is to purify the
eyes so that the departed can have clear vision in the ancestral world. He also adds that a
dog is also killed over the deceased’s feet so that during his reincarnation he might not fall
in his journey nor feel pains and tired (the dog is called *nkita ukwu na ije*). A cat can also
be killed for the purposes of having good sight in the spiritual world.

Similarly, Talbot (1969) who writes about various communities in Igboland such as
Nkanu, Onitsha, Aguleri, Ihiala, Anam, Umuoji and Nkpaw confirms that various animals
such as cow, ram, goat, dog and fowl are slaughtered when death occurred in Igboland. He
avers that “animal - including cows …are slain in profusion…” (1969:473). He adds that at
Onitsha, “the death (of Obi) is made public on the twenty-eight day, when seven cows are
killed (1969:497). Continuing, he observes that “at Aguleri, Ihiala, Umuoji, Anam and
Nkpaw, the usual sacrifices consisted of one cow, goat and a ram” (1969:498).

There is no doubt that various animals are slaughtered when death occurs in
Igboland and perhaps in other parts of Africa. The slaughtering of each of these animals
and birds has some significance. It is believed in Igboland that each of these animals and
birds has some spiritual qualities and significance. The dog, for instance, is believed to be
imbued with strength and long stamina for running and walking without getting unnecessarily tired on the way. The same thing applies to the horse which has the capacity to walk or run for a long time without getting unnecessarily tired on the way. It has both physical and spiritual capability to walk or run for a long time without getting tired. Also it is an animal used exclusively by the kings and the wealthy ones. In Igbo traditional belief system, the cow is highly esteemed and deemed to be an equivalent to a human being because a lot of its characteristics are equivalent to those of human being. For instance, its gestation period, according to Nwaigwe, (2012, oral interview), is between 270 and 280 days like a human being and it usually gives birth to only one calf at a time just as human beings are expected to give birth to only a baby at a time. According to Onyenuga (1967), Domingo, (1976), ILCA (1979b), Adeniji, (1985), and Maule, (1990) cited in the internet material, it has the capacity to produce one viable calf annually (http://www.ilri.org/InformServ/Webpub/Fulldocs/T1300B).

Also, among the people of West Africa, it is an abomination to steal a cow because it is regarded as a sacred animal in many communities (http://www.dahomey-zwergrind.com/egi-dad.du/world?468, Afr). Cows often resist movement when such an act is attempted.

2.5 Killing human beings for the dead.

It appears that from time immemorial, the history of human being has always been associated with human sacrifice for one reason or the other. In various cultures across the universe, human sacrifice has always been associated with the burial of important personalities of varying categories. In consonance with the above-mentioned viewpoint, Goetz (2005:808) posits that “in some societies, the burial of the dead has been
accompanied by human sacrifice, with the intention either to propitiate the spirit of the deceased or to provide him with companions or servants in the next world”. He goes ahead to cite a classical instance of such propitiatory sacrifice which occurred in Homer’s Iliad (vol. xxiii, 175-177) where young Trojans were slaughtered and burnt on the funeral pyre of the Greek hero Patrochis. He also adds that the royal graves excavated at the Sumerian city of Ur, dating about 2700 BC, showed that large retinues of servants and soldiers had been buried with their royal masters. He goes further to cite an additional example from China and Egypt. He submits that evidence of a similar Chinese practice had been found in Shang dynasty graves (12th to 11th centuries BC) at An-yang.

In ancient Egypt, Goetz also observes that models of servants placed in tombs were designated to be magically animated to serve their masters in the hereafter. He states that a particular type of these models was known as Ushabti (answer), and was inscribed with chapter vi of the Book of the Dead, commanding it to answer for the deceased owner if he were required to serve in the hereafter.

Making his own contributions, Talbot (1969) posits that in Egypt, the lengthy reigns of kings of the 1st dynasty were in all probability partly due to the fact that many of the courtiers were killed, apparently by being sand-banged, and inferred with them occasionally only half stunned. Later on in the Hyksos period, slaves were buried with the kings, but after the eleventh dynasty, Ushabtiu figures were substituted. With the Ibibio, both the human sacrifices and Ushabtiu were made (p. 472).

He also adds that this kind of situation obtained among the Romans where at one period, if a master were murdered, all the slaves in the house were killed. The interest of the kings in killing a large number of courtiers and slaves in this kind of situation was to
ensure that a large entourage accompanied them to the ancestral world and rendered to them the same services they were rendering in the human world.

Parrinder writes about the people of Kumasi, Abomey and Benin, all in West Africa. He estimates about eight human victims for the Annual Customs of Dahomey (Benin Republic). According to him, “these human victims were killed on the occasion of royal funerals and their anniversaries, and were examples of filial piety…” (1962:62). He goes ahead to add that according to the belief of the people, “the king must not go to the underworld unaccompanied, but must have servants befitting his status”. It is also his view that certain pre-destined officials and slaves must have to be buried with the king, as it was also done in Mesopotamia. He goes further to add that later at the Annual Customs, another batch of victims is killed in honour of the dead monarch so as to send some messages to him and increase his prestige. He upholds that such customs were made on a large scale in Kumasi, Abomey and Benin which he describes as the cities of blood, and to a lesser extent in many other towns and villages.

Leaving the West African environment, Parrinder goes ahead to cite other examples in East Africa. He submits that “in Uganda, human life was taken freely at different stages during the ceremonial of the accession of a new king” (1962:62-63). He postulates that some of those who were slaughtered were intended to protect the monarchy by magical benefit and others to show his powers of life and death. He also notes that during his reign, further ritual murders are made to protect the monarch from sickness, or to cure disorders in the land. He is of the opinion that among the Ugandans, the welfare of the monarch is of great importance to the people and those who are slaughtered are justified as setting the land in order. He comments that these killings, here and elsewhere, are not done from lust
for blood, but to gain some benefits from the flow of blood because blood is shed so as to enhance life.

He ends up by being somehow judgmental in the sense that in his opinion, these ancient rites, where they are still being performed, are performed with animal substitute. Such animal substitute might include cow, which is equated with human being in Igbo traditional setting, and horse which is meant for the monarch and the wealthy.

He also adds that the so-called human sacrifice which shocked early travellers in East and West Africa are in most cases part of the ancestral filial rites. In most cases, according to him, the practice should not be properly classified as sacrifice, since they had no gift or propitiatory purpose, but only sought to provide a retinue of servants for the dead kings.

Having highlighted what happens regarding human sacrifice when an important personality dies in ancient Egypt, Rome, Mesopotamia, Ghana, Uganda, Kumasi and Benin Republic, attention is now directed to what obtained in Igboland where such human sacrifices or ritual killings were predominant. In this direction, Ilogu (1974:66) observes that human sacrifice occurred “when chiefs and some noble men holding the Ozo title were buried with their slaves partly to ensure a smooth passage to the land of the spirits where they joined the eternal of the ancestors”. He adds that it was the belief of Igbo people that such slaves would also serve their masters in the life-after-death. He also makes a reference to a case where Crowther reported of a woman slave at Onitsha who would have been killed but for his (Crowther’s) intervention. According to him, he pleaded with them and succeeded in convincing the people that it was wrong to sacrifice a human being in burying the nobles of the land. The woman, according to him, was liberated.
Furthermore, Ilogu makes another reference to what happened during one Christmas day. He observes that on that fateful day, after preaching a Christmas sermon and feeling rather happy, one Anglican preacher, Perry, went out on a visit, and was astonished to find the body of a boy whose head had been chopped off. According to Perry, he was told that it was done by the king’s orders, to implore the protection of the old dead kings who used to live around that place.

Like other scholars, Arinze (1970) also writes regarding the slaughtering of other human beings for the burial of kings and other important personalities. He submits that it used to be the custom in the old days to give the deceased personality an honourable following of servants to accompany him to the next world. He adds that the persons so executed in those old days were most often slaves, or persons captured from other neighbouring towns and from far away towns. In his opinion, those persons hunting human beings for burial of kings and other important personalities, avoided their fellow townspeople.

Furthermore, Arinze avers that such killings in those days were not sacrificial in character. Those killed were called *ndi eji akwa ozu* (those used in funeral rites) and were not in any sense sacrificial victims. In his view, they were killed solely in order to accompany their Lords as he entered the great world beyond.

The contributions of Talbot (1969) are also in tandem with those of Arinze and Ilogu regarding human killing when the king and other important personalities were buried. He states categorically as follows:

Human sacrifices were offered at the death of every chief or man of any importance and wealth; some were buried in the grave, while others were slain at the places which had been in particular use by the dead man, such as his sitting,
dining, sleeping and bath rooms, while yet more were killed for his feet, his head, etc, (p.494).

He goes further to submit that “for a rich woman, a female called by the name of Abaw (Abo) (trading basket), was often sacrificed so that she should carry this for her mistress after death” (1969:494).

He also goes further to submit that “for a rich woman, a female called by the name of Abaw (Abo) (trading basket), was often sacrificed so that she should carry this for her mistress after death” (1969:494).

He also adds that at Onitsha-Olona, on the death of an Obi or Okpala, a female slave was buried alive; the coffin was placed on top of her and the earth filled in on top. He also cites another example that a male slave was beheaded by the sacred Egbo tree.

According to him, at the death of the Obi (the king), in Agbor more than ten male and female slaves were offered up. The bodies of five of them were laid in the grave underneath the coffin and the rest on the different parts of the road. Those slaves buried at different parts of the road were to serve as the carriers to the Obi (king). According to him, the same thing happened among the people of Ika.

Going on further, he writes about what happened in Onitsha Ado, Nnewi and Atani where slaves were freely killed for the burial of kings and other important personalities. He observes that in Onitsha, “the death of Obi (the king) was made public on the twenty-eighth day, when seven cows were killed and formerly three slaves”. These slaves, according to him, were all males and were clubbed to death and lowered into the grave of the king. One of the slaves was placed on the right hand side of the coffin containing the king, the other on the left hand side while the third was placed under his head.

Talking generally about the Ibo (Igbo) and other semi-Bantu people in Africa, Talbot (1969) further posits as follows:

Among some of the Ibo and Semi-Bantu, especially the Ibibio, chambers were excavated under the ground in which the dead body was placed, surrounded by
furniture, wealth in cloth, ornaments and currency, and by living and dead slaves and wives; these greatly resembled the earliest Egyptian underground burial-place, which consisted of real subterranean houses (p. 741).

In what looks like a conclusive statement, he submits that “except among the Bantu, human victims were offered up almost everywhere on the death of persons of distinction. Wives were sometimes sacrificed, but as a rule, slaves were employed for the purpose….” Continuing, he adds that besides being a mark of devotion towards the dead man, and at the same time showing the power and wealth of the family, it was in addition thought that the slaves and wives would resume the same services to the dead chief as they had been accustomed to perform.

Mbiti also makes his own contributions when he posits that “formerly in some places, servants and wives of kings or other rich people were also buried with the body” (of their master) (1975:144). He adds that the belief behind this practice was that the dead needed weapons to defend himself along the way to the world beyond, or food to eat on the way, wives and servants to keep him company until he reached the underworld, and other property to use so that he would not arrive there empty-handed or remain poor. In the same manner, Glazier (1987:85) observes that among the Caribbeans “slaves were killed so they might continue to serve their masters in the next world”.

In a similar vein, Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004:63) observe that “it is believed that chiefs and lineage heads continue to occupy their positions of importance after death. As a result …servants and slaves are buried with them to accompany and serve them in the after life”.

Similarly, Ezeme gathers from Ozioko Onah Nwa-Ugwuanyi that “some people were buried with slaves as a mark of honour” (1997:77). Furthermore, he states
categorically that “even as late as 1956, it took the British security agents several days of keeping watch to prevent the people of Obollo Afor from burying chief Ohabuenyi Ugwu Abonyi… with some slaves”.

There is no doubt that in the years back, various cultures, including the Igbo, buried their kings, titled men and women and other wealthy and important personalities with servants, slaves and wives. These were meant to render their normal services to their masters in the world beyond. In this wise, Parrinder (1962:62-63) posits that such “killings were done not from lust for blood, but to gain some benefits from the flow of blood”. He describes these practices as ancient rites and opines that where they are still being performed, they are done with animal substitute.

It is possible that these practices have not been wiped out entirely from various cultures of the universe. It is still believed that some societies still bury their important personalities with their fellow human beings who are forcefully caught, suppressed and subjugated.

2.6 Providing the dead with materials

Human beings the world over, while making use of their thinking faculties apportion certain attributes to the spiritual realm. It is the belief of human beings all over the world that death is not the end of a human being but just a transition from one level of existence to another. According to the contributions of Allouche (1987), Seidel (1987), Talbot (1969), Mbiti (1969), Goetz (2005) and a host of other scholars, it is strongly believed that just as human beings on earth, the dead also need materials for their up-keep in the hereafter. In the light of this belief, the living ones provide their deceased relations with varieties of materials which are buried along with them.
In line with this belief system, Goetz (2005:805) posits that “the Paleolithic peoples not only buried their dead but they provided them with food and other equipments, thereby implying a belief that the dead still needed such things in the grave”. He adds that by this provision for the dead, Paleolithic man had been expected by his predecessors, with the result that this very significant practice can be traced back to an even greater antiquity. He (2005:766) also observes that “in the ancient European Religion, the Celts of Gaul believed in a life after death, for they buried food, weapons and ornaments with the dead”. He further submits that some graves contain models of ships, boats, chariots and horses and that these might suggest that the dead are thought to go on a journey to the other world. In another entry, he expresses a great surprise when he avers that

It seems unbelievable that even as late as 1377 and 1382 respectively, the Lithuanian king Algirdas and his brother Kestutis could still be buried according to the old tradition in Christian Europe; dressed in silver and gold, they were buried in funeral pyres together with their possessions, horses, hunting dogs and weapons (p.781).

He also refers to archaeological excavations which has also yielded evidence of fire funeral rites where the bones of humans, animals, metal jewelry and weapons are found at the site of the funeral pyres. He quickly adds that in Greek eschatology, coins were placed in the mouths of corpses with which to pay the fare of being ferried to the realm of Hades by Hermes.

In the same vein, Allouche (1987:366) posits that “among the Arabians, excavations which took place in 1937-1938, 1951 and 1960 respectively, brought to light artifacts consisting of pottery, jewelry (mostly beads), incense burners and a few tools and
utensils”. He adds that these objects are placed in the tombs for future use by the dead. Similarly, Seidel (1987:124) asserts that “the elaborate furnishings found in Shang royal tombs suggest that the dead were thought to exist in a style similar to the living, needing servants and possessions”. He further opines that the dogs interred in the grave under the coffin might have the role of guiding the dead to the land of the ancestors. In a similar vein, Glazier (1987:85) writes about the Caribbeans that “important men were buried with cooking pots and utensils, their dogs and slaves who were killed so they might continue to serve their masters in the next life”.

Also, Mbiti (1969:150) shows that among the Ndebele people of Rhodesia, “a few personal belongings were put into the grave and then earth was shoveled over (during burial). Going further, he adds that such personal belongings are buried with the deceased to accompany him so that he did not lack anything in the hereafter. He sees those materials as the property of the deceased and maintains that the living relations should not rob the deceased of his personal property. In a similar vein, the same Mbiti (1975:114) in a different work maintains that “it is the custom in many parts of Africa to bury some belongings with the body such as spear, bows and arrows, stools and domestic utensils”. He opines that some African people thought that the land of the dead was in the desert or desolate places away from homesteads. In such a situation, the dead have to travel several hours or days to get there, and that it is for this reason that they are buried with food and weapons for use on the way.

Similarly, Talbot (1969:475) submits that among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, “food and drinks are usually buried with the corpse -- also about 10 heads of cowries, in order to pay the guardian of the gates of the ghost realms”. Going further, he adds that in
In some cases, the personal property of the deceased are generally thrown away in the bush. He cites an example that a farmer’s implements and clothings are usually placed at the side of the road leading to his farm. Such materials are deposited in such a place for the deceased to collect his personal belongings which is symbolically done. He further adds that among many tribes, especially the Semi Bantu Eko, the clothings and utensils used by the deceased are gathered together and placed in a certain spot, most often on the part near the entrance to the town. This is a sort of handing over the materials that belong to the dead to him or her. He also observes that among the Ika Lbo, the dead is buried in a coffin in which cloths and cowries are laid. He points out that in certain towns such as Onitsha-Olona, the actual corpse is buried at once, but an empty coffin is kept in a verandah until enough money had been collected to make a big display, and is then buried as if the deceased were inside it.

In a similar contribution, Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004:62) assert that “articles such as clothing, sponges, towels, combs, pomade and, in the case of the wealthy or those of royal descent, gold trinkets and precious ornaments are put into the coffin”. They also add that in some cases, small sums of money and treasured materials are also put into the coffin. This is to help the deceased on the last stage of his journey to the next world. In the same vein, Basden (1966) who writes about the Niger Ibos (Igbo) also submits that implements, tools, guns, bag, fishing gear and a bowl filled with cowries or cash were often buried with the dead. He points out that the placing of these materials in the grave is very symbolic. The deceased would require the tools to enable him prosecute his occupation in the underworld; the money, the deceased would use to maintain his dignity and status as when he was on the earth.
Ezeme also observes that when death occurs, “pieces of cloths are presented by his (deceased) wife or wives and children, friends, in-laws and associates. Those of his wife/wives, first son and first daughter are put inside the coffin before it is finally closed” (Ezeme, 1997:94). He adds that the rite of presenting some yards of clothing materials to the deceased marks the last clothing of the dead by his most cherished people. The deceased is expected to dress gorgeously well and have a lot of other clothing materials in stock as he proceeds to the underworld.

A lot of scholars have observed that the dead in Africa and perhaps, throughout the whole world, are buried with certain materials with the belief that they need these materials in the world beyond. Such human conception appears bright but inherently anthropomorphic in character in the sense that what happens in the human world is thought to be happening in the same manner in the spiritual world. It may not be exactly so. However, human knowledge and reasoning fall short of accessing the events that take place in the spiritual realm. Human beings have to be contended with the much their present knowledge and perception can carry them and look forward to further development in that direction.

2.7 Summary of literature review.

In the conceptual approach to the review of literature, the researcher reviewed scholarly works of individuals on death, burial, funeral rites, animals killed for the dead and their significance, killing human beings for the dead and providing the dead with materials things. Various scholars, for instance, see death from different perspectives. For instance, Mbiti (1969), sees death as a monster before whom man is helpless. For Ifesieh (1989), death is wicked. Death is believed to have various causative agents such as
demonic power, death god, witchcraft, sorcery, magic, the living-dead, spirits and God. Death is conceived as a transition and not a complete annihilation or obliteration of the deceased. In most Africa societies, the deceased is washed and dressed in his best attire before burial.

Burial and burial rites are variously carried out among the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria. Titled and elderly ones are buried differently from the young ones and children. Even the positional direction of the grave differs from one culture to another. Some bury the dead lying on one side while others make the corpse to lie on their back facing the sun-god (Anyanwu Ezechitoke Abiama Urua) and the Almighty God (Ezechitoke Abiama Oshimiri) for immediate judgement. It is also known that the corpse is buried in flexed or crouched position or in a raised mound or caves in some cultures. In a typical Igbo society, the corpse of a woman is buried in her parental home. However, Christianity and modernity have brought some changes to bear on this practice.

Various symbolic animals are often killed when death occurs so that these animals can accompany the dead to the underworld. In the time past, human beings are killed for the same purpose of rendering the same services to their masters as when they were living in the world of human being. A lot of valuable and expensive materials such as clothing materials, cowries, matchets, money, et cetera, are also buried with the dead with the aim of boosting his personality in the great world beyond. It is strongly believed that just like human beings on earth, the dead also need materials for their up-keep in the hereafter.
CHAPTER THREE

SOCIO-CULTURAL RELEVANCE OF RITUAL COW (EFI/EHI IGBO) AND HORSE IN FUNERAL RITES

Various animals and birds are killed by the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland when death occurs. Such animals include cows, horses, goats, rams, pigs, dogs, cocks and hens. Each of these animals is killed using certain specified and prescribed methods and styles, depending on the community and relevance of the animals. The researcher now focuses attention on the socio-cultural relevance of ritual cow and horse.

3.1 Cow (Efi/Ehi Igbo)

The animal popularly called Igbo cow (Efi/Ehi Igbo) is not restricted to Igboland. It is called Igbo cow because Igbo people constitute part of the people that rear the animal. The animal is reared throughout West and Central Africa according to Hanotte et al (2000) and MacDonald (2000). According to these scholars, recent molecular genetics and archaeological findings have established African taurine domestication as the origin for the present-day humpless shorthorn cattle (Bos Taurus), popularly called *muturu*. The term *muturu* is a Hausa term meaning humpless. The animal is called Igbo cow so as to differentiate it from the other species of cows popularly called Hausa cow (Ndama Ndama and Fulani white).

Igbo cow (Efi/Ehi Igbo) is a very popular ritual animal among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area. Whenever a person of substance such as an elderly man or woman, a married man or woman, a titled man or a woman dies, Igbo cow is presented to him/her as a ritual animal. According to Agbo-Ukwede Christopher and Ugwoke Pius Ede (oral interviews, 2012) from Mbu in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State, the cow is figuratively called *ihe or anu usoro* (funeral/ritual animal). In the typical tradition
of their people, this *ihe or anu usoro* (funeral/ritual animal) can be procured a day or two before the demise of an elderly man or woman. This happened when the children of the sick elderly man or woman were almost conclusive that their father or mother was going to die very soon. Such progeny then felt that their father or mother would not be buried without the presence of the ritual cow. In such a situation, the progeny are fairly rich to the point that they feel that the ritual cow due to be presented to their father or mother should not be delayed even for one day. This practice was what used to be when the dead were buried immediately after their demise. The kind of honour was often accorded to an elderly person such as an *Oha* (an eldest man in a given family or village) and not just to any married man or woman. In this situation, the presentation of ritual cow to the deceased preceded the funeral ceremony which can come in some months’ time say six months or one year. Such a ritual cow is kept outside the family compound until after the demise of such a person.

However, at present modernity, science and technology are introducing some changes in the burial, funeral rites and presentation of ritual cow to the deceased. At present when an elderly person dies, he/she is often kept in the mortuary for some weeks or months and the burial/funeral date is fixed. On such a date, the burial rites, funeral rites and presentation of ritual cow(s) are done at a stretch. This practice characterizes the modern burial/ funeral rites among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area. If the deceased has many daughters who are married, each of such daughters is expected to present a ritual cow to her deceased fathered or mother. In such a situation a deceased forebear can be presented with several ritual Igbo cows. What happens to these ritual cows is dependent on the present tradition of a given community within the sub-cultural area.
In Alor-Uno in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Iyeke Alexander (oral interview) submits that if many ritual cows are presented to a deceased forebear, all the cows must be slaughtered instalmentally. He emphatically states that none of the ritual cows is sold. The slaughtering takes place on *Nkwo* (one of the four-day Igbo market days) day and the ritual animal is slaughtered one after the other until they are exhausted. Whatever be the situation, what happens at Alor-Uno may be peculiar to them. For instance, according to Eze Daniel and Nnaji Ngwu from Ikem in Isi-Uzo Local government Area of Enugu State, some of the ritual animals can be sold to anybody who needs them. In such a situation, other villagers can buy any of those ritual animals for their own funeral rites. The rule here is that at least one ritual cow must be presented and killed in honour of the deceased forebear before other ones are disposed or used for other purposes.

In the present dispensation, the traders who deal on Igbo cows can buy those ritual cows which are in excess. In such a situation the prices of those ritual cows are often slashed down by the traders who capitalize on the fact that a single individual is not allowed to sell his/her Igbo cow in the open market. The traders of Igbo cow have such a strong Association that ensures that their bye-laws are enforced to the letter. So, individuals who are proposing to buy Igbo cows and present to their forebears are always motivated to buy from those who recently organized funeral rites and who have surplus Igbo cows. It is always cheaper more convenient and time-saving to buy such Igbo cows from those who have surpluses of such cows after organizing funeral ceremonies.

However, for economic prudence, some families within the sub-cultural area would decide in advance that only one live cow will be presented to each of their deceased forebears and that other presentations would be through a representation of the ritual cow.
This can be done through the presentation of the *Ukpu efi* (the rope to the ritual cow). When this is done, the cow is monetized and one pays to the bereaved family the equivalent of the cost of the ritual cow or certain amount of money as stipulated by the bereaved family. In the modern time, this practice of monetizing the ritual cow is embarked upon so as to avoid having too many surpluses after slaughtering one ritual cow for the dead and so as to avoid selling the ritual cows far below their actual market prices to the ritual cow traders. This practice is carried out because of far-reaching economic consideration and prudence.

Be that as it may, it has to be noted that having a large number of live ritual cows presented to a forebear gives him/her a far-reaching prestige and places him or her in a very high esteem. It is the belief of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland that any ritual cow presented to a given forebear accompanies him/her mysterious to the ancestral spiritual world. By this reasoning, any forebear that is being accompanied to the ancestral spiritual world by a large number of ritual cows is highly esteemed and believed to be well-received by the ancestors.

In addition to using Igbo cows as ritual animal, they are also used as victims of scarifies to some highly revered communal deities and divinities like *Efuru* of Idioha in Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area, *Api* of Opi, *Adoro* of Alor-Uno/Agu, *Ezugwu* of Amala, *Ube* of Uhunowere, *Arikpo* of Ezimo, *Emukpe* of Ogbodu Aba, *Lolo Uhere* of Iheaka, *Udele* of Ekwegbe, *Enwe* of Enugu Ezike, *Ani Adaba, Alu* of Ikem, *Igbogbo* of Eha-Alumona, *Abari* of Mbu, et cetera. From time to time, the adherents of such highly revered deities and divinities present Igbo cows to their deities/divinities. In this kind of situation, Igbo cows become the highest victim of sacrifice. They are also sacrificed to *Odo*
and Omaba/Omabe masquerades which are the most popular masquerades within the sub-cultural area. Within this sub-cultural area, there are other masquerades such as Akatakpa and Iga, but Odo and Omaba/Omabe are the most popular and most revered ones. In the old days, these masquerades, deities and divinities were so popular that human beings could be sacrificed to them. At present, Igbo cows are used for such sacrifices.

They are also given to a well-behaved wife or daughter as a mark of honour according to the submission of Ugwoke Nnamani Nwebi (oral interview). A husband can present a live Igbo cow to his wife when the wife is well-behaved and a man can also present a live cow to his daughter that is well-behaved. According to him, whenever this happens, the recipient of the live Igbo cow, be that a wife or a daughter, takes a new title and name. From this moment, she becomes Oriefi (one given the gift of a cow or literally eater of a cow). Such a person takes the name of Oriefi or Oriaku. In the case of a wife, she becomes Oriaku di ya (one that consumes the wealth of the husband) while in the case of a young lady, she becomes Oriaku Nna ya (one who consumes the wealth of the father). It is a highly dignified honour to make a wife or a daughter Oriefi/Oriaku (consumer of cow/wealth). On the day that this honour/title is consummated, all the members of the woman’s age mates, parents, associates, friends and well-wishers are entertained sumptuously.

Live cows, according to Eze Daniel (oral interview) were used as dowries/pride-prizes in the years past. A man who is rich can hand-over a live Igbo cow to her daughter who is being married by a man. In such a situation, the live Igbo cow accompanies the well-behaved young lady to the husband’s house. This cultural practice amounts to a great honour on the part of the young lady. On the contrary, a young man wooing a young lady
into marriage can be asked to present a live Igbo cow to the family of the young lady. In this situation, the live Igbo cow has to be a vibrant female and not male. This cultural practice is becoming more or less extinct among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area. The persons interviewed cannot remember when last they witnessed the cultural practice.

This time around, a lot of traditional cultural practices are being monetized for convenient purposes. For instance, a lot of monetization of traditional cultural practices takes place during traditional marriage practices.

The socio-cultural significance of Igbo cow also lies in the fact that it is the highest gift one can give to another especially during a highly esteemed ceremony. According to Ezikanyi Felix (oral interview) from Aku in Igbo Etiti Local Government Area, one can give the gift of a cow to a man taking the title of Ozo. A lot of communities within Nsukka sub-cultural area take the title of Ozo. In Igbo Etiti Local Government Area, the following communities take the title of Ozo: Aku, Ukehe, Ikolo, Ochima, Ujueme, Onyoho, Idoha, Umunko, Umuna, Ohebe Dim, Ekwegbe, Ozalla, Ohodo and Diogbe. In Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area, such communities as Umulokpa, Adaba, Ukpata, Uvuru, Nkpologu, Nimbo, Ug bene Ajima, Abbi, Nkume, Nrobo and Akpugo take Ozo as a title. Ozo-title taking is also noticeable in Nsukka Local Government Area because some communities such as Lejja, Obimo, Edem, Okpuje, Okutu and Eziani take Ozo as a title. It then means that in all these communities mentioned above, Igbo cow can be one of the gifts given when a man is taking Ozo title. Ezikanyi (1997) also wrote an article where he submits that when Ezike Ogbonne tooke the first ever Ozo title in Aku in Igbo Etiti Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria, he invited all the villages in Aku and each of them came with some presents including Igbo cows, goats, fowls, et cetera. The gift of a cow actually
constitutes the zenith in gift-giving in any occasion. The implication is that whether the gift is to the supersensible beings, communal masquerades, deities, divinities or to ordinary human being, it constitutes the highest gift one can give and carries with it the highest honour and respect one can think of especially nowadays that human beings can no longer be given as gifts.

Also, in the tradition of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area, Igbo cow is socio-culturally very significant when the foundations of a town, village, market, house, village squares, et cetera, are laid. Eze Michael (oral interview) from Unadu in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria is of the view that foundation sacrifice combines both propitiatory and preventive sacrifice, the purpose of which include to appease the earth goddess and all her attendant spirits so as to ensure that all may be well with that which is being founded. It is on record that in the years back, “human beings were sacrificed during the foundation laying of a new town or village” (Ugwu and Ugwueye, 2004:83).

3.2 Horse (Equus Ferus Caballus)

. The horse (Equus Ferus Caballus) is another animal noted for its cultural significance in Igboland in general and among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area in particular. It is an animal for the rich and the kingly ones. An old adage has it that if wishes were horses, beggars can ride. The implication of this adage is that horses are not for the poor ones like the beggars but for the royalty. The presence of a horse signifies dignity and royalty in the traditional socio-cultural milieu of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland.
It is on record that the people of Nsukka sub-cultural zone came into a prolonged political cum socio-cultural contact with the Igala people between seventeenth and late eighteenth century (Afigbo, 1997). The contact between the Igala and the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area acquired new economic dimensions as the Igala got interested and involved in recruiting slaves for the Atlantic traffic. It is reported by Afigbo (1979) that when Shelton (1968) put certain questions to Igala people, they replied thus:

At first in the olden times, Igala would take horses down to Nsukka and sell them to the Igbo for slaves, and then our father would sell the slaves to river people at Idah who take them down the river to Beke (Europeans) (P. 247).

Very vital information from the above quotation is that horses were exchanged for human beings. When the Igala people from the middle belt of the nation brought horses from the northern part of the country to the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area, they exchanged these horses with human beings whom the Igala traders carried as slaves to Idah. The implication was that horses were so highly esteemed that they could exchange for human beings in the past years. At present, a horse, to some extent, retains this high esteem among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area, though it can no longer be exchanged for a human being as before. Afigbo (1997:6-7) corroborated this assertion when he postulated that “from time immemorial, the Igbo valued the horse for ritual purposes. It was used for burying the distinguished dead as for taking titles”.

Odo Alexander (oral interview) from Amufe in Igbo-Eze North Local Government Area of Enugu State asserts that the horse is for the noble ones. He states that even though the animal is used for ritual purposes, it is meant for those who can afford it because it is very costly. According to him, it is not presented to every forebear because it is not every
family that can afford it. In his opinion, ritual Igbo cows are used more frequently than the ritual horses which are reserved for the nobility.

The implication of his statement is that anyone who can afford the ritual horse uses it in addition to the ritual Igbo cow. Generally, the progeny start with the presentation of the ritual Igbo cows to their forebears and can extend to that of the ritual horse if they can afford it. The views of Eze Michael from Unadu, Iyeke Alexander from Alor-Uno, Asogwa Eammanuel from Ede Oballa and Ugwu Denis from Eha-Alumona are in agreement that Igbo cows are most often used as ritual animals and horses are in most cases reserved for the nobility. Nevertheless, it is a thing of pride that one presents a ritual horse to his/her forebears especially a noble one. Examples can be taken from Umualor, Neke, Mbu, Ikem and Eha-Amufu in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria, where a progeny often prides himself/herself with the statement that he/she has presented and killed ritual cows and horses to his/her late father and mother.

A horse is sometimes presented as a gift to a wife or young lady. In each case, the recipient is highly honoured and she immediately assumes her new title of Ori-anyinya (one honoured with the gift of a horse ie literally eater of horse). The recipient can also be addressed as Oriaku Nna ya or di ya or just Oriaku in a short form (one enjoying the father or husband’s wealth). The honour and the subsequent title go only to the well-behaved daughter or wife as the case may be.

Also, it is presented as a sacrificial animal especially to the dead. It is often presented in honour of the dead during burial or funeral ceremony (Afigbo, 1997). The implication of this presentation is for the dead to ride on the horse as a king or an important personality as he or she proceeds to the spirit world.
Horses are used to offer sacrifices to various communal masquerades such as *Omaba/Omabe* and *Odo* which are the major masquerades of majority of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area. From time to time, the adherents of these masquerades offer horses individually and collectively to show the royal standard of the masquerades in the community. The following *Odo*-based communities, according to Ezechi (2011) within Nsukka sub-cultural area: Ukehe, Aku, Akpugo, Udueme, Ohebe-Dim, Umunko, Umuna, Onyoho, Ochima, Idoha, Diogbe, Ikem, Neke and Eha-Amufu sacrifice horses to their major masquerades. The same thing applies to the *Omaba/Omabe*-controlled communities which include Nsukka, Lejja, Opi, Ede Oballa, Edem, Alor-Uno, Ibagwa-Ani, Okpuje, Mbu, Eha-Alumona, Ekwegbe, Ohodo, Ozalla, Orba, Imiliki, Obollo, Ovoko, Obukpa Iheakpu-Awka, Okputu, Ogbodu-Aba, Umundu, Igugu, Ezimo, Ibagwa-Aka, Uhunowere, Obimo and various communities in Enugu Ezike.

In addition to presenting the horse to the *Odo* and *Omaba/Omabe* masquerades in Nsukka sub-cultural area, a horse is also presented to certain popular and highly dignified dance calle *Igede*. This *Igede* music is for the noble ones and not for the common people. In a typical cultural setting among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area, not everybody is allowed to dance to the rhythm of the music. In the yester-years, all those classified as slaves were not allowed to dance to the rhythm of the *Igede* music and the common people were not allowed to touch the drum as a sign of stopping the music after dancing to the tune. The common people are allowed to dance to the rhythm of the music but not to touch the drum after dancing as a sign of stopping the music. This practice of touching the drum as a sign of stopping the music is an exclusive reserve of the noble ones.
The *Igede* dance is so much of a noble music that it is also presented with horses. Individuals who feel that they are noble enough in the community present and kill horses for the *Igede* music. Anyone who embarks on this cultural practice also feeds the custodians of *Igede* dance sumptuously in a given date. Such a person plays host to *Igede* dance which is beaten in his compound all day long. This practice goes to authenticate the popular maxim that *Igede anaghi aba be onye ukpa* (*Igede* dance does not enter into the compound of the wretched person). A person has to be classified as a noble one for him to be able to feed the custodians of *Igede* sumptuously in a given day and present them with a live horse. The person presenting a horse to the *Igede* dance does not only stop at feeding the custodians of *Igede* sumptuously, he has to feed the well-wishers who have come to witness the occasion and who have come to assist him in carrying out the assignment. In fact, a man has to be a noble man for him to be able to present a horse to the *Igede* dance in such communities as Ikem, Mbu, Neke and Umualor in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Nevertheless, modernity, Christianity, academic pursuit, poverty, divergent interests, et cetera, have all combined efforts to be acting against the presentation of a horse to the *Igede* dance. In some communities, the cultural practice of presenting a horse to *Igede* dance has been so forgotten that individuals cannot remember when last someone presented a horse to the dance. However, in some other communities, the cost of presenting a horse to the dance has been slashed down and monetized so that an average man can afford it and so that more people can be attracted to embark on the cultural practice.
CHAPTER FOUR

FUNERARY OCCASIONS FOR THE USE OF RITUAL HORSES AND IGBO COWS

Sacredness is a sterling attribute that is often accorded to human beings, animals, trees and certain places in the human bid to adequately relate well and adore the supersensible beings of the universe. In Igbo socio-cultural milieu, cow and horse are regarded as ritual animals. They are used most often for sacrificial purposes. They are in most cases sacrificed to the Supreme Being (Ezechiko Abiama Oshimiri), earth goddess (Ala/Ani), sun god (Anyanwu Ezechiko Abiama), other gods/goddesses, divinities, and deities. They are popularly referred to as ritual animals. They are used at various occasions during burial/funeral rites as discussed hereunder.

4.1 Burial and funeral ceremonies of married men and women

Marriage is a sacred social institution in Igboland and accords partners involved certain dignified social status. This dignified social status is denied the unmarried ones irrespective of their ages and wealth. When a married man or a woman dies, he or she is accorded full burial and funeral rites which are denied the unmarried ones. This is so because there is no place for celibacy in Igbo social life. All those who decided to be celibates either because of their religious belief system or sheer conviction or certain psychological problems or any other reason are disregarded in a typical Igbo traditional society. They are regarded as ndi afogori (useless/worthless human beings). In some communities such as typical Ezza communities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria, such celibates are not allowed to get any share of anything in their various families. In such Igbo communities, even seniority of individuals in a given family is based on when one married
and not on one’s date of birth. Such celibates are so disregarded because they refuse their
forebears from reincarnating into this world through the process of procreation. When such
a celibate dies, he/she is treated like a child in all ramifications.

In agreement with the above-stated viewpoint, Ikwunne (2005:87) posits that when
a child dies in Obosi, the corpse “is thrown into the evil forest after performing some
rituals on it”. He further adds that;

The death of a youth is also regarded as an abomination. The youth is also buried
at the evil forest after some rituals have been performed on him or her. No burial
rites, no funeral rites, no shooting of gun, etc for the (deceased) youth (P. 87).

What Ikwunne states above were most likely what obtained in the entire typical IgboLand
including among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of IgboLand. In some communities
like among the Ezza people of Ebonyi State, the corpse of a youth is not buried at all but
thrown into the Ikirikpo (evil forest).

On the contrary, the married ones, especially the aged ones are accorded full burial
and funeral rites. Ikwunne (2005:87) also adds that “the death of an aged person is an
occasion for merriment and happiness. It is a ‘good death’.” In a related contribution,
Mbiti (1975) and Ifesieh (1988) observed that death marked the physical separation of the
living and the dead. On earth the separation rituals involve the family of the deceased in a
series of religious ceremonies which include the killing of Igbo cow and/or horse. Mbiti
(1975:113) rightly observed that these “burial and funeral ceremonies are intended to draw
attention to the permanent separation and that meticulous care is taken to fulfill the funeral
rites and to avoid causing any offence to the departed”. A cow is the most important
animal that is killed in honour of the deceased person. The cow mysteriously accompanies
the deceased to the spirit world where it enhances the status of the deceased. If the deceased is a woman, the cow is not killed but handed over to the members of her family. In Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria, according to Okweli Gerald (oral interview) this ritual ceremony is climaxed in a symbolic collection of the corpse of a deceased daughter/woman from her marital home to her paternal home which is known as ichoje onwu (fetching the corpse of a woman relation). According to him, the sons and daughters of deceased woman feed their maternal relations sumptuously and provide them with ekwa okpe (burial cloth) with which to carry symbolically their deceased daughter. These maternal relations of the bereaved sons and daughters also carry to their home the drinking pot, basin, kitchen knife and kitchen seat of their daughter.

In this regard, when a married woman dies in her marital home, her sons and daughters are involved in a lot of intricate rituals. The first son and the first daughter or at least the first son has the responsibility of going to his maternal home to pass the information about the health condition of his mother. He may do that in company of another grown up male from his immediate family. According to Iyeke Alexander (Oral interview 2013) of Alor-uno, such a bereaved son does not inform his maternal relations directly that his mother has died. What he does first and foremost is to inform them that his mother was very sick. Having delivered such a message, he leaves for his home or pretends to be doing so. After going out of his maternal home, he comes back in a short while to announce to his maternal relations that his mother has given up. It is then that he starts crying for the death of his mother. His other maternal relations then rally round him and join him in crying for the death of his mother.
After crying for a while, he is consoled by his maternal relations who sit him down for some interrogations and clarifications. The questions normally border on whether he would just bury his mother or bury and organize her funeral ceremony immediately. His response determines what his maternal relations would do. If the bereaved sons and daughters have decided to bury their mother, their maternal relations would get ready to go and carry the corpse of their relation (sister). A team of umuada (married daughters and even unmarried ones) and some young men are sent to fetch the corpse of their sister. The trip takes the team to another family, village or town as the case may be.

On arrival, they have to inspect the corpse of their deceased sister and see how well-dressed she is. Then they settle down for their sumptuous entertainment, beginning with kola nut and extending to well-cooked food, palm wine and other assorted alcoholic drinks. It is during their entertainment that the traditional property of the deceased woman are assembled for her relations to carry them home. Such property include traditional basin/basket woven with grass material or material from the palm tree, (eka nwa mkpukpu/agba) traditional wooden spoon (eku), kitchen knife (mma ekwu), drinking pot and a few other things. According to Okweli Gerald (oral interview, 2013), certain amount of money is also put into the traditional basin/basket as a compensation to the deceased woman. All these are put inside the traditional basin/basket and tied together with a traditional net (anyaka). The woman who will be carrying home the property of her deceased sister is given a special share of the entertainment package and the money put inside the traditional basin/basket.

When the team is satisfied that they have been well-entertained, they get ready to carry home the corpse of their sister. However, nowadays, a lot of sons and daughters do
not accept that their deceased mother should be carried to her paternal home. What obtains in the modern dispensation is that such sons and daughters pay certain amount of money to their maternal relations so that they be allowed to bury their mother at her marital home. The payment is called *igbata ani* (picking a piece of land for the burial of a woman). When this is done, they provide their maternal relations with a piece of cloth for the burial of their mother. The piece of cloth, according to Okweli Gerald (oral interview, 2013) is called *ekwa okpe* (burial cloth). This piece of cloth will be designed as if it is containing the corpse of the deceased woman and carried to her paternal home. This team also goes home with a ritual cow or goat. This goat is known as *ewu chi* (ancestral goat), according to Okweli Gerald. The ritual cow/goat belongs to the closest male relation(s) of the deceased woman. In a typical Nimbo tradition, according to Okweli Gerald, a goat is provided. However, nowadays, a ritual Igbo cow is often provided or can be provided depending on the financial capabilities of the sons and daughters of the deceased woman.

Ezeme (1997) describes vividly how this ritual exercise is carried out in Udunedem, Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria;

> A piece of cloth is also offered to them (the team) with which to carry their daughter home symbolically. At the end of the entertainment, they rise with the *umuada* (daughters). The deceased woman goes home with a little dog, wooden spoon and other articles enclosed in a traditional roped basket (*anyaka*) (p.114).

He also adds that this ritual practice implies that a woman’s journey to her matrimonial home is purely on a temporary measure which is often brought to an end by her death. He further states that;
The piece of cloth presented by her (deceased) husband (or sons or their family members) is held at both ends by two men who take the lead (one in front of the other) in their journey back home. This combined group of ndi umuada (daughters) and umunna (sons) carry these things amidst funeral songs and hurry back to their village or town as the case may be (p.115).

On the team’s arrival at their village square, according to him, the traditional roped basket and its content are deposited at the onu umuada (the shrine of the daughters). Member of the team then continue their journey until they get to the senior-most male next of kin to the deceased and ‘returned’ woman. The next of kin collects the piece of cloth from the team and entertains them. It is then that members of the team give him detailed information about their trip to collect the corpse of their sister. “If the group returned with a cow, he receives the cow with a goat which is killed and shared by the entire people who participated in the journey” (Ezeme, 1997: 115).

In a typical Igbo traditional set up, especially among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area, a deceased woman must not be buried in her matrimonial home but in her paternal home. A team of her relations made up of umuada (daughters) and umunna (sons) have to be dispatched to fetch the corpse of their deceased sister. In some other communities within Nsukka sub-cultural area like Eha-Alumona, Opi, Mbu, Neke and Ikem, it is the responsibility of the sons and daughters of the deceased woman to symbolically carry her corpse to her paternal home. They do this in company of their friends, relations and sympathizers and amidst funeral songs, dancing and stylistic rhythmic walking, shouts of joy and merriment in the company of professional minstrels. Whether the corpse of a married woman is fetched by her relations or carried home by her
sons and daughters, the final analysis is that the corpse is buried in her paternal home where her spirit joins her ancestors.

Be that as it may, the practice of *ivule or ichoje onwu* (sending home or fetching the corpse) has been so acted upon by the combined efforts of modernity and Christianity that the practice is now only symbolically done. The sons and daughters of a deceased woman pay to their maternal relations certain amount of money for buying a piece of land (Igbata ani) where their mother is buried. This cultural practice allows them to bury their mother at her matrimonial home. The practice that is now in vogue is that of burying the corpse of a deceased woman in her matrimonial home with her relations in attendance. They have to inspect their sister while lying in state, and the grave and satisfy themselves that all is well. Wherever and whenever they are not satisfied, they quickly raise objections. Their complaints and objections are taken care of with dispatch.

In some other communities within Nsukka sub-cultural area such as Mbu, Ikem, Umualor, Eha-Alumona and Opi, the ritual ceremony is known as *ivule ozu nwada* (sending home the corpse of a deceased woman from her marital home to her parental home) because it is the responsibility of the sons and daughters of such a deceased woman to symbolically carry her corpse to her parental home amidst singing, dignified stylistic dancing, shouts of joy and merriment in the company of professional minstrels. They are often accompanied by their relations, well-wishers, sons and daughters. The songs of praise and joy include *ezigbo mama m* (my good mother); *oke ehi/anyinya mama m* (my mother’s male cow/horse); *mama m a naruo* (my mother has reached her spiritual home); *mama m anadogbuzu* (my mother has gone home well).
When the ritual cow or horse is being presented to a male forebear, the songs of praise and shout of joy as *oke ehi/anyinya papa m* (my father’s male cow/horse); *papa m alaruo* (my father has gone home well), *o bukwana ehi/anyinya na ukwu ano* (it is a vibrant cow/horse on four legs), et cetera, are used. The emphasis is always on the use of a vibrant *oke ehi* (male Igbo cow) or *oke anyinya* (male horse). No person talks about or uses the female cow or horse. The male cow or horse is preferred because of its dignity. It is because of this kind of dignified position that some individuals have taken the name *okenya*, which means *oke anyinya* (male horse). Horses are known for their strength and male horses are known for having extra strength and power. Those who take the title or name or nickname of *oke anyinya* (male horse) must have distinguished themselves in one way or the other by proving to have one sterling quality or the other over and above others within their immediate neighbourhood. They are seen as being more vibrant than others in one aspect of life or the other. The name is metaphoric in character just like one taking the name *agu* (lion).

In most cases, the vibrant ritual animal and the accompanying procession go right round the market square on a market day, and hence present the ritual animal physically to human beings to witness, and make their comments and possibly pass their judgments, and symbolically to the ancestral spiritual beings. It amounts to a grievous offence for a mourner(s) to present an underaged or weak or old cow or horse to the forebears as a ritual animal. The ritual animal must be a full grown, vibrant and energetic cow or horse. When it is the other way round, members of the public make their negative comments and pass their judgments.
A ritual cow to be presented during funereal ceremony

A ritual horse to be presented during funeral ceremony
It is believed that whatever that is done on the earth is equally done in the spirit world. As the people’s comments and judgments are going on in this world, the same thing is believed to be going on in the ancestral spirit world. A favourable comments and judgments by members of the public on this earth are likely going to attract the same favourable comments, judgments and commendations in the ancestral spirit world. When this happens, the mourners are given a pass mark and are likely to be favourably disposed to the forebears. They can be assured of their blessings, adequate protection and full intercessory roles of the forebears.

On the contrary, when members of the public are passing negative comments, the same things are believed to be going on among the forebears. Such negative comments are believed to attract very severe punishment from the forebears. When the forebears are angry with the progeny, it is believed that a lot of unfavourable conditions are unleashed to the latter that culminate in painful and regrettable life experiences. The progeny who are not in the good book of the forebears can be experiencing difficulties and hardships in various fields of human endeavours. The inexperienced ones among them and those of them suffering from unbelief, go on suffering for a long time while the experienced ones seek for solution to their problems through oracular consultations or consultations with traditional or modern ‘seers’. The mourners, therefore, ensure that only the very healthy, vibrant and full grown ritual animals are presented so as to ensure that they score a pass mark and be free from very severe spiritual negative sanctions.

It is a strong belief of the Igbo people, especially the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area, that without the presentation of the ritual animal, the deceased forebear cannot reach the real home for the dead. Such a deceased person, according to the belief of the people,
A ritual cow heading for presentation during funeral ceremony
A ritual cow due for presentation during funeral ceremony

A team of mourners going to present their ritual cow
A ritual cow due for presentation during funeral ceremony
A ritual cow already presented to the chief mourner and his relations
continues to hover around and haunt the living. In affirmation of the above, Ikwunne (2005:16) averred that “proper or befitting burial (and funeral rites) is (are) necessary to ensure a peaceful co-existence between the living and the dead”. He also adds that “if proper burial (and funeral) rites is (are) not accorded to the deceased, the spirit world and his (the deceased) spirit will be hovering around haunting the members of the deceased family”.

The implication of this belief could be that any human spirit that is not accompanied to the spirit world by a cow or horse, is not given a resounding reception and may even be ignored and rejected out-right. Such a spirit is not allowed to get a share of cow or horse meat brought in by other human spirits. It is believed that such a spirit is so marginalized and isolated that it regrets ever being found in the spirit world. To this end, Talbot (1969) succinctly posits that

unless a person is buried with the due ceremonies (funeral ceremony inclusive) it is thought he would be unable to go to ‘heaven’-to the place of his ghost-town and the habitations of his family and friends and will therefore wander about desolate, and more or less foodless, haunting the houses of human beings and the bush, while often, he is reborn in animal shape (P. 470).

Also, Basden (1966) submits that;

second burial (funeral) if done soon after death, it is termed ‘ozu-ndu’ (fresh-death funeral) if after a longer interval, it is called ‘ikwa ozu ndu’ or ‘ikwa-ozu-okpo-nku’ (long-death funeral). This … is very important; in deed a very serious business for, without it there can be no rest for the spirit which has, as it were, slipped its moorings. The disembodied spirit is doomed to ceaseless wandering to and fro
until the ceremonies are completed whereby it may enter its final resting place and be at peace (P. 269).

Igbo people and hence the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland, hold tenaciously to the potency and efficacy of funeral rites especially when it is capped with outstanding ritual animals like Igbo cow and horse which are believed to have the capacity of accompanying the spirit of the dead to the ancestral spirits and subsequently being used to present to the ancestral spirits in order to appease them.

**4.2 Burial and funeral ceremonies of young unmarried men and women**

Age is a very strong determinant factor in Igbo traditional setting. Young unmarried men and women are hardly accorded befitting and resounding burial and funeral rituals, especially such that will involve killing of ritual animals like Igbo cows and horses. According to the submission of Asogwa Emmanuel of Ede-Obolla in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria the death of the unmarried young one is so much a calamity and annoying event that such death hardly attracts extensive burial and funeral rites and the subsequent presentation of Igbo cow and horse. In the typical tradition of Ede-Oballa people, such a person is buried in a ‘bad’ bush in a shallow grave. According to him, nobody takes time to dig the grave deep and to dress it well.

Ilogu (1974:47) posits that “the death of young people and children do not call for religious ceremonies of any magnitude. Such deaths are regarded as great calamities and gods do not merit much consideration on such occasion”. Similarly, Ikwunne (2005:18) submits that “Africans (Igbo people inclusive) believe that death is natural and that everybody must die, but when somebody dies prematurely, it would be regarded as a ‘bad death’ and the bereaved family usually consults diviners for the confirmation of the cause
It is on record that the corpse of the young unmarried men and women used to be deposited at the evil forest in a typical tradition of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igbo land, Nigeria. In an interview with Ayogu Daniel (oral interview, 2013) of Adaba, he avers that it is an abomination for any one to die when young and unmarried. It is against this backdrop that Talbot (1969:498) submits that in Awka area, when an Ozo tilted man is dead, “the grave is dug in his house (Obi) or sometimes behind it, but for young or unmarried person, or one who has no house of his own, in a part of the bush”. Some communities go to the extent of not burying the corpse of unmarried young men and women but rather throw them into the evil forest.

Throwing the corpses of the young ones into the evil forest serves as a punishment to the young ones who have accepted to die at such a premature age. It also serves as a deterrent to other young ones who might be contemplating on dying young. There are a lot of mysteries in this world and death is one of them. It is a phenomenon that its knowledge permanently defies human conception. A lot of questions asked about death remain unanswered by human beings. It is believed in African traditional setting that individuals on the earth have already agreed with the Almighty God how long they would live on this earth. It is believed that some people have accepted to live for a few numbers of years and die and others have accepted to die at their youthful age. Yet it is also believed that some persons have agreed with the creator that they would die at very old age. Among the people of Nsukka cultural area, this phenomenon is called obute uwa (choosing how long one will live on this earth). It is strongly believed that each person chooses his or hers before being born and that some persons chose to die young so as to punish their parents and relations.
The idea behind throwing the corpse of any one who died very young to the evil forest is to return evil for evil and to serve as a deterrent to other ones who are yet unborn so that they dare not choose to die young. It is believed that the supersensible beings are watching the reactions of human beings towards death and dying and whatever that happens to the corpse of the dead is reported at the great world beyond for interpretation and analysis. It is believed that when such corpses are given very harsh and callous treatment, the spirit being in charge of allocating the longevity of life on earth will be forced to desist from assigning short life spans to the unborn ones and the unborn ones will equally desist from accepting short life spans for the fear of very severe punishments due to it.

However deaths from road, industrial or home accidents are in a different class. In most cases, such deaths are occasioned by adoption of some aspects of science and technology. In most cases such sudden deaths are caused by mechanical and human errors. Even the ones classified as mechanical errors have some elements of human errors. Those accidents classed as due to human errors on the road are caused mainly by the drivers and this constitutes larger percentage of the road accidents. When road, home, industrial or any other kind of accident claims lives, such lives have been terminated by an external factor and not the dead choosing to die. Be that as it may, the deaths of the young ones are regarded as abominations and the corpses are not qualified to be buried but to be thrown into the evil forest. However the combined efforts of modernity and Christianity have impacted on this age-long cultural practice of depositing the corpse of the unmarried young ones in the evil forest. At present, all the corpses are buried and not thrown into the evil forest.
It is believed that a lot of factors can cause death including the activities of sorcerers, witches, wizards, spirit beings, deities, divinities, et cetera. The sorcerer, witches and wizard most often cause the deaths of children and young ones out of sheer jealousy and wickedness. When such a death occurs, it is often erroneously believed that the young one has chosen a short life destiny from the spirit world. These evil ones perform the heinous act just to punish the parents of the young ones. They hide under the cover of the spirit beings and the mechanism of short life destiny. The activities of the evil ones in causing the death of the young ones introduces so much of a confusion that one can hardly determine and differentiate between death caused by the spirit beings and the ones manipulated by the evil ones. Whatever the situation is, the deaths of the young ones are abhorred and their corpses are not accorded any form of honour and respect.

When such a death occurs twice or more in a given family, the members are led into making some consultations with the diviners or oracles or seers or men of God. Whatever name that applies is dependent on one’s religious belief and conviction. Some Christians from various denominations and groupings are prepared to consult with the men of God in such a matter while members of African Traditional Religion are often prepared to consult with the diviners and oracles. Those so consulted claim to have ‘four’ eyes and see beyond the ordinary human beings. When one consults the appropriate man of God/diviner/oracle, one is given correct pieces of information on who the sorcerer/witch/wizard is. Appropriate prayers, incantations, libations, sacrifices and antidotes, et cetera, are often prescribed so as to forestall further deaths of the young ones in the family.
Enejere Felix (oral interview, 2013) from Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani Local Government of Enugu State, Nigeria, is of the view that any one who dies young, has not completed his/her destiny which takes place when one has lived up to certain old age. This goes to accentuate African proverb which states that the uncompleted destiny must be completed (Quarcooopome 1979). According to him, for one to live out one’s life span, one is expected to reject all enticing gifts of the malevolent spirits to die young. An Igbo adage states that onye Kwe, chi ya ekwe (whenever one accepts, his/her spirit also accepts). This implies that whenever one accepts to die young, his/her spirit also accepts, but if one refuses to die young, his/her spirit also refuses. Based on this Igbo philosophical frame of reasoning, one can either accept to die or to live.

Be that as it may, when one is involved in a case of manslaughter, which involves a young unmarried person, one is often required to provide a cow for the funeral ceremony. This should not be seen as a contravention of the standing tradition and custom of the people. Rather, it is based on the belief that given all the chances, the young one whose life has been so terminated through accidental event, could have lived to a ripe old age and could have qualified for adequate funeral ceremony with the concomitant cow and/or horse presentation. That a young person’s life has been terminated by another person through accidental event does not automatically mean that the accident victim decided out of his/her own volition to die young. What it means is that all his/her hopes, aspirations and life have been abruptly terminated.

According to the submission of Omeje Innocent (oral interview, 2013) from Iheakpu-Awka in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area of Enugu State such an imposition on the person responsible for terminating a young person’s life is a form of
punishment, requiring him or her to be more careful and meticulous with the issues involving human life. It also serves as a deterrent to others that human life is sacred and should not be terminated any how, and that care should be taken to avoid any incident that might lead to accidental termination of one’s life.

The cow or horse so presented and killed in honour of a young one whose life is abruptly terminated by another person serves as a means of appeasing the earth goddess whose young one has been killed. The venom of the earth goddess against the perpetrator of the accidental termination of life is diluted by the blood of the cow or horse so presented and killed. The angry ancestors, whose young one has been prevented from reaching his/her life destiny, are also requested to temper justice with mercy through the killing of a cow or a horse. So, the practice of killing a cow or horse for a young one whose life was terminated through accidental event should not be seen as an aberration of the cultural practice of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland, but an action which aims at achieving normalcy in the great world beyond.

**4.3 Burial and funeral ceremonies of titled men and women**

Very much in vogue is title-taking among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland in southeastern Nigeria. Men and women of high social standing undertake a lot of titles which invariably enhance their social statuses. Such titles include “Ozo, Mkpozi, Ozioko, Igwurube, Asogwa, Asadu, Ishiwu, Onyishi and Oha” (Ocho, 1997:55). Various titles demand different requirements from the prospective title-holders.

Title-holders, among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland in Enugu State, Nigeria, according to Ezikeanyi (oral interview, 2013) are accorded highly esteemed respect. In the first instance, according to him, they are greeted in special ways depending
on their respective titles. During greeting, titled men/women are addressed as *agu* (*Lion*), *edoga*, *oruruo*, *igwurube*, *oziko*, *lolo anyi*, *onowu*, *onogoru*, et cetera, depending on the title they have taken. For instance, if a titled man is addressed as *agu* (*lion*) whenever and wherever he is being greeted, it implies that he performed the role of a lion sometime in the past. He must have killed a lion or one of the dangerous wild animals like zebra, buffalo, et cetera, or killed an enemy or some enemies. He must have fought gallantly in the past and emerged victorious. It is such a person that can take the title and be addressed as a lion in a metaphoric sense.

In accordance with the submission of Ugwoke Nnamani Nwebi (oral interview, 2011) of Mbu in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria, a titled man can be addressed and greeted as *igwurube* in consonance with his title. It is a title connected with yam production. Farmers who are good in planting yams take a lot of graded titles in connection with yam. In the first instance, one can take the first title of *igo ji* (*adoring the god of yam*). After taking the first title of *igo ji* one can step up to the second level of *idoyi oku ji* (*establishing personal shrine of the god of yam which is called Ahiajioku*). It is at this stage that one is addressed or greeted as *igwurube* or *igwurube ji* (*producer of innumerable number of tubers of yams*). The implication is that such a person has produced so large quantities of yams that the tubers cannot be counted easily. Such a person’s position can be likened to that of an academic professor who has acquired chains of certificates and demonstrated outstanding proficiency in academic endeavours.

They are also entitled to special attention should there be any amenity to be distributed in their respective communities. According to Ilogu (1974), titled men take precedence in all public entertainments and feasts not minding their ages.
At death, such titled persons are expected to be buried in a special way. Their funeral rites are also expected to be organized in a special way. Ilogu (1974) observes that the society bestows great honour on the ozo title holder such that when he dies, especially in old age, his burial assumes pious and sacred forms which indicate the people’s belief that his spirit has joined the gods and the ancestors and that he has become divine. The ritual animals such as Igbo cows and horses are expected to feature extensively and they actually do. For instance, Ilogu (1974:33) argued that “at death all the *Ozo* titles which a man has acquired...are removed from him in a very solemn religious ceremony which involves the sacrificial killing of some goats, cocks and cows”.

Arinze (1970) also states that;

…for the funeral of big chiefs or very important personalities, it was the Ibo (Igbo) custom in the old days to give the deceased personality an honourable following of servants to accompany him to the great beyond. These people executed were often slaves, or people captured from far-away towns, but never fellow townsman (P. 88).

A reference to the enormity of human sacrifice due for the burial and funeral rites of titled personalities in Igboland in the past is to highlight the magnitude of the use of ritual animals nowadays. Eze Michael of Unadu (oral interview, 2013) holds the view that at the death of chief or other important personalities among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural of Enugu State, Nigeria, sons, sons-in-law, daughters in-law, in-laws, friends, associates, well-wishers, societies, etc, present cows for the funeral rites of the deceased. With all these, a large number of cows ‘accompany’ the deceased to his ancestral home where he is believed to be given an impressive reception and ranked accordingly.
In Igboland, the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area inclusive, titled men and women are very influential and accorded dignified honour and respect. At death, such high honour and respect are also accorded to them. They are buried in a very special way and in most cases, their burial and funeral rites are accompanied with the slaughtering of a good number of ritual Igbo cows and horses among other sacrificial items.

4.4 Burial and funeral ceremonies of warriors and men of valour

Bravery, courage, perseverance, dexterity, excellent performance and the like are but some of the outstanding qualities human beings are expected to possess. In Igbo traditional setting, warriors and men of valour were distinguished because of their excellent performances during inter-communal or inter-tribal wars which were prevalent in those days. To become a warrior can be likened to taking a highly esteemed title in the society. Among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area, warriors and men of valour are so highly regarded and honoured that the death of any one of them constitutes a great loss to the community.

When death strikes any warrior among the people, meticulous care is taken in the organization of his burial and funeral rites. In the first instance, a ram is sacrificed. A reference to the submissions of Arinze (1970) is very informative here. According to him, when a brave man, a man who participated actively in the inter-town wars of old and most probably killed enemies, or at least had on record the killing of any of the dangerous animals, died, his progeny provide a ram for sacrifice. The ram is slaughtered and the blood is smeared on the deceased’s right arm to wash his hand of all the evils he might have committed when he was alive. This only serves as one of the preliminary actions to
be taken at the death of a warrior. What Arinze says also applies to the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Enugu State, Nigeria.

According to Aroh J. I. (oral interview, 2013) from Ukehe in Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria, Igbo cows are presented in their large numbers and slaughtered. Being a warrior is holding a special kind of title. He also observes that before a titled man is buried, Igbo cow is slaughtered and its blood poured into the grave. All these go a long way to show that the death and funeral ceremonies of a warrior are not taken lightly. On the contrary, meticulous care is taken to ensure that all that are required to be done are done. It is on record that in the old days, according to Talbot (1969:494), “human sacrifices were offered at the death of every chief or man of importance and wealth”. Going further, he adds that “some were buried in the grave, while others were slain at the places which had been in particular use by the dead man, such as his sitting, dinning, sleeping and bath-rooms”. All these were done so as to ensure that the dead has enough entourage and servants in the spirit world. The observations of Talbot also applied to the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland, Nigeria. The burial and funeral rites of warriors required a lot of Igbo cows, horses, rams, goats and cocks. Some of these ritual animals are killed at the shrine of his her personal god (Onu-Anyanwu Ezechitoke Abiama). A cock is killed to appease and notify his personal god of his coming to the ancestral world. As a special person, a horse has to be killed so that he can ride on the back of it to the ancestral spiritual world. Also Igbo cows have to be presented to him and slaughtered at the various stages of the funeral rites. Such a warrior belongs to various associations and Igbo cows are presented and slaughtered in honour of these associations.
4.5 Burial and funeral ceremonies of elderly men and women

Age is a social virtue to be reckoned with regarding the type and level of burial and funeral rites to be accorded any given individual at death. The type, level and quality of burial and funeral rites graduate with the age of the deceased. The higher the age of the deceased, the higher the level and the quality of his/her burial and funeral rites. Some deaths are regarded as moments of ‘happiness’ for the bereaved family members while others constitute moments of extreme grief and sorrow. When a forebear lives for a very long time on this earth, his/her progeny regard his/her death as a moment of ‘happiness’ especially when the forebear has a lot of achievements to his/her credit. In such a situation, there is little or nothing to grief about. What makes such death a moment of ‘happiness’ and ‘joy’ or less sorrowful is that the deceased has lived very long on this earth to the point of almost completing his/her life destiny and has made a lot of achievements. Such a person has become the eldest man or woman in a given unit, family, quarter, hamlet, clan, village, town and the like that his/her death is not regarded as a premature one. What one prays for on this earth is long life and prosperity not eternal life on this earth. It is believed by African traditional religionists that the people’s ‘home’ is not on this earth. Rather people’s ‘home’ is believed to be in the ancestral world in the great world beyond. It appears that the adherents of the three major religions in Nigeria, namely African Traditional Religion (ATR), Islam and Christianity are unanimous in their belief systems in this regard that the people on this earth are just here on temporary measure and are here preparing ground for blissful life hereafter. Each of the three major religions believes in life after death at the people’s eternal home. They also believe that this place is a preparatory ground for the eternal home and that death is a compulsory phenomenon for
all. Death at old age is most often prayed for in most cases among Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria to which Nsukka sub-cultural area belongs.

Such a death, in Igbo belief system, is regarded as a ‘good death’ as against those ones that are regarded as ‘bad death’. It is perhaps against this backdrop that Ikwunne (2005) avers that:

The good death is that which comes when one lives to a ripe old age. Although death is regarded as uncanny and disturbing, the death of an aged person in African worldview is an occasion of much rejoicing and the ritual elaboration is heaviest at the burial, since people see nothing tragic about it (P. 19).

Ogbu Francis (oral interview, 2013) from Igogoro in Igbo-Eze North Local Government Area of Enugu State observes that when an elderly one dies, his/her sons and daughters take on the funeral rites very squarely. What they do, according to him, depends on their financial capabilities. They can present Igbo cows and horses individually or collectively. Married daughters present their Igbo cows most often individually but can be allowed to do it collectively if it is established that they and their husbands are wretched and cannot afford a cow. A horse can also be presented to the elderly one whose funeral rites are being organized. The essence is for him or her to ride on the horse as he/she goes to the ancestral spiritual world.

Interactions with Ayogu Daniel from Adaba in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area, Aroh Jonathan from Ukehe in Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area, Asogwa Emmanuel from Ede-Oballa from Nsukka Local Government Area, Eze Daniel from Ikem in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area, Eze Michael from Unadu in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area and Ezeme Anthony from Ezimo in Udenu Local Government Area
reveal that the situation is the same thing throughout Nsukka sub-cultural area. The funeral rites of the elderly ones are organized in a highly dignified manner where one is financially capable.

There is no upper limit of what one can do during the funeral rites of an elderly person. What exists is the minimum performance. For instance, if the elderly person whose funeral rites are being carried out is a woman, the progeny must provide *ewu chi* (ancestral goat) which is handed over to the relations of the deceased elderly women. According to Okweli Gerald (oral interview, 2013) from Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria, a cow can be given in place of the goat if the sons and daughters of the elderly woman can afford it. Also, a second cow can be presented and killed within the family of procreation of the deceased elderly woman. As earlier on stated, certain other items are provided for the team that ‘carries’ the corpse of a deceased woman to her paternal home. Also, at Mbu in a Isi-uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State, one can present a cow and a horse according to Christopher Agbo-Ukwueze (oral interview, 2012), to her deceased elderly mother. If a progeny can, he can present the two ritual animals at the same time or do it instalmentally. A lot of factors determine what one does and how one does it.

With special reference to what happens when a titled man died, Ilogu (1974:48) postulates that “before his corpse is buried, a goat or a cow, according to his children’s or relation’s financial means, is slaughtered and (its) blood poured into the earth where he is to be buried”. What Ilogu states about the burial of a titled man are also applicable to an elderly person among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland. The age of the elderly man/woman constitutes an enviable asset. Similarly, Talbot (1969:447) who carried
out his studies among the Nkanu people of Enugu State, submits that “on the death of the father in-law, a husband (son-in-law) must provide one or two cows for the funeral ceremonies (of the father-in-law)”. He goes ahead to cite examples of other places where cows are slaughtered at the demise of an elderly person. Such places included Aguleri, Ihiala, Umuoji, Anam, Nkpor and Agbaja. These areas mentioned above are located in both Anambra and Enugu States of Nigeria. The same also applies to the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland who are living side by side with Nkanu people.

All these examples of cow-killings at the death of an elderly person are to buttress the point that cows are killed when elderly ones dye. For instance, Ezeme (1997:150) who carried out his studies among the Udunedem people of Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria, states that “the traditionalists...see the provision of a funeral cow as the highest in the line up of funeral rites/activities”. He goes further to add that it is a few days after the funeral rites had been completed that the family members assemble for the killing of the cow. He, however, sounded a very serious warning that according to the tradition of Udunedem people, first sons who had not killed cows for their fathers dare not come near the place where the cow is being slaughtered.

The implication of the above-mentioned statement is that being a ritual animal, it is not killed and eaten anyhow. Anyone killing and eating the ritual/funeral cow has to be guided by the tradition of the people. For instance, in an oral interview with Iyeke Alexander of Alor-unu, in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, he states that all those who have not presented and killed ritual cow or horse for their deceased parents are not qualified to partake in the eating of meat of the ritual animal. Such persons avoid the vicinity where the ritual animal is being killed so as to avoid the temptation of
partaking in eating the meat. He adds that anyone who has not performed the ritual ceremony for his/her deceased parents should not participate in any level during the presentation and slaughtering of the ritual animal. Such a person should not even attempt holding the rope with which the animal is tied. According to him, when one has not presented and slaughtered ritual cow or horse to his/her late parents, one is banned from contributing financially in an attempt to aid another person in performing his/her own. One should not even lend money to another person preparing himself/herself for the ritual act.

When one defiles or refuses to pay heed to these rules and regulations guiding the presentation, slaughtering and eating of the meat of the ritual cow or horse, one has to be prepared to face the wrath of the ancestors and other spirit beings who are the custodians of the religious culture of the people. It is believed among the Igbo people, especially the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area that if anyone who has not presented ritual cow to his father ventures to participate in killing and eating the meat of the cow killed for another man, the spirit of his deceased father will strike him dead or he will become terribly sick. What happens in the case of a deceased man also happens to a deceased woman. This means that if a person has not presented and slaughtered a ritual cow and/or horse to his/her mother, he/she should not contribute or participate in killing and eating the meat of the cow and/or horse killed for another woman. Death is believed to be the ultimate consequence of behaving otherwise. This is a strong belief among the entire people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland.
CHAPTER FIVE
IMPACT OF MODERNITY ON THE PRESENTATION AND USE OF RITUAL HORSES AND IGBO COWS FOR BURIAL/FUNERAL IN NSUKKA SUB-CULTURAL AREA OF ENUGU STATE

Change is a constant phenomenon that ever continues to act on other variables. No phenomenon ever remains constant for a long period of time, not even for a short period of time but continues to be acted upon by change agents. To this effect, Hobbs and Blank (1978:76) aver that “culture is continuous because cultural patterns transcend the years, reappearing in successive generations”. They also add that it is “cumulative because each generation contributes to the reservoir” and that culture is dynamic rather than being static. The researcher now diverts attention to how the deep-rooted cultural practice of presenting and using ritual horses and Igbo cows are being affected by education, urbanization, Christianity, Western technology and trade and commercial ventures.

5.1 Education

The history of western education in Nigeria cannot be completed without a reference to the activities of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, Church Missionary Society and the Roman Catholic Holy Ghost Fathers and other societies whose activities led to the effective evangelization of the area that is today called Nigeria (NTI, 2000). The Missionary Societies used the establishment of schools as part of their strategies for the effective and grass-root evangelization of Nigeria. Formal education started with them and ever since then expansion has continued.

Education is one of the major agents of change in Nigeria as a nation and Igboland in particular. Since western education was introduced in Igboland by the second half of the
19th century, the interest on its acquisition has always been on the high side and has always led to a reduction of attention being given to some other cultural practices. Such cultural practices that have been affected in one way or the other by a high rate of interest on academic pursuit in Igboland include marriage, farm work, devotion to the gods, burial rites and funeral ceremonies. Change is always a variable that is always constant.

Some fundamental changes are very glaring in the interaction between cultural practices in Igboland and the pursuit of formal education. A huge amount of money is plunged into the pursuit of formal education to the detriment of a lot of expensive cultural practices. Some cultural practices like burial and funeral rites, killing a cow or horse for the Omaba or Odo masquerade, killing of a cow or horse in honour of the yam deity (Ahiajioku) are fundamental to human existence among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area and yet capital intensive. The pursuit of formal education, which is currently in vogue, has diminished extensively attention of the Igbo people, especially the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area, from the cultural practice of presenting and slaughtering of ritual cow or horse to one’s deceased parents. Instead of focusing all attention on embarking on the funeral ceremony of one’s deceased parents and other relations, one diverts attention to the provision of formal education to one’s children which is extensively capital intensive. One hardly completes the payment of the children’s school fees before another chains of fees are lined up. The amount of money being sunk into the acquisition of formal education is so high that very few persons can afford to organize funeral ceremony with the concomitant cow and/or horse presentation and slaughtering in honour of the deceased.

Also, it has been observed, that certain persons who have attained certain enviable academic heights have developed very poor and negative attitude towards the ritual
practice of celebration of funeral rites and the attendant cow and/or horse presentation and slaughtering in honour of the deceased parents and other relation. Such persons look at the ritual practice as being of no value. Such academia would always think that the ritual practice of organizing funeral ceremony and cow and/or horse presentation and slaughtering in honour of the deceased are meant for the uneducated ones.

Again, some individuals who are pursuing higher academic qualifications within and outside the country have become so alienated from the ritual practice of organizing funeral rites with the attendant cow and/or horse presentation and slaughtering that they hardly remember that such cultural practice exists. Such persons are so committed to their course of studies either outside or within the country that certain cultural practices are brushed aside in favour of academic pursuit. Little or no time is reserved to give attention to the people’s cultural practices.

Under this kind of situation, the struggle within many individual minds would be on many occasions, to embark on pertinent cultural practice of burial and funeral rites with the attendant cow and horse-killing or focus all attention on the pursuit of formal education which is in vogue now. Most often, it appears that individuals most often strive to attain a balance between the two contending issues. Burial and funeral rites with the concomitant cow and horse-killing go on fairly unmitigated at the same time with academic pursuit especially when it is a matter that hinges on existence. It is the belief of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland that the dead ones are not allowed to settle down in the world beyond unless their funeral ceremonies with the attendant cow and horse-killing have been completed. It is in accordance with this belief system that Mbiti (1969:159) asserted that according to the belief of the people of Lodagaa of Ghana, “as soon as the
funeral rites are performed, the soul begins its journey”. Also, Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004:58-59), for instance, submit that “a person whose corpse is not properly buried will not be admitted into the abode of the departed blessed ones. Such a person will become a wanderer, living an aimless haunting existence”. Similarly, Basden (1966) describes the organization of funeral ceremony as being very important and as a very serious business because without it, the spirit of the dead cannot rest. According to his submission, “the disembodied spirit is doomed to ceaseless wandering to and fro until the ceremonies are completed whereby it may enter its final resting-place and be at rest” (Basden,1966:269).

If all these assertions are true of the dead whose funeral ceremonies and the accompanying cow and horse-killing have not been undertaken, it is most likely that no right-thinking human adult would subject his/her forebears to these harsh conditions. An interaction with Ugwoke Pius Ede, (oral communication on 12/12/2012), shows that the dead live in families as the living one and in similar rankings and statuses. According to him, this is one of the reasons why Igbo people make all the endeavour to ensure that the corpse of the deceased is taken to his /her home where he/she is buried among his/her kith and kin so as to enable his/her ghost spirit to join his/her other deceased family members in the spirit world.

That very huge amount of money is sunk into the acquisition of formal education is not contested. However, this has not put to a stop the organization of funeral ceremonies and the concomitant cow and horse-presentations. Embarking on funeral ceremonies and the accompanying presentation of Igbo cow and/or horse to the fore-bears are spiritual affairs and cannot be toyed with. It borders on sound and healthy relationship with the spiritual beings.
5.2 Urbanization

A popular adage states that no condition is permanent on this earth. It is only change that is constant among other variables. The influence of urban cities and the entire phenomenon of urbanization have been affecting African tradition, custom and laws extensively. Various urban cities continue to spring up here and there and continue to exhibit pressure on the adjoining villages. The number of urban settlers continues to increase astronomically on daily basis.

These large armies of urban dwellers are migrants from various villages. Most often they translocate between the urban cities and their respective rural areas. For instance, Ezema (1995) states that economic factor constituted one of the factors that either ‘push’ or ‘pull’ the emerging population to the urban cities. He observes that:

Prospective job seekers move from one geographical area to another in search of employment opportunities. Involved in the search are young school leavers and university graduates. The urban centres where there are concentrations of banking institutions, companies and ministries serve as first ports of call. The urban centres therefore act as magnets to these young men and women from the rural areas of the country (P. 130).

The contributions of Udo (1978:41) cited in Ezema (1995) corroborates this point when he states that “an increasing number of people, especially young school leavers, migrate to look for jobs in the rapidly growing port towns and administrative capitals…which are also important industrial, educational and commercial centres”. Also, Agalamanyi (2007:234) submits that “most young people who now crowd our cities come from villages in the rural areas which they have abandoned because of lack of essential amenities such as water, electricity, motorable roads, health centres and good educational institutions”. The ever-
increasing expansion of the existing urban cities and the ever-increasing influx of the young ones into the urban areas have adversely affected the cultural practice of organizing funeral rites with the attendant cow and/or horse presentation and slaughtering among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igoland. For instance, the rural areas in Igbo-Eze North, Igbo-Eze South, Uzo-Uwani, Nsukka, Isi-Uzo, Udenu and Igbo-Etiti Local Government Areas are greatly depopulated with the result that only very few elderly ones are left behind in various villages. The young ones migrate to Nsukka town, Obollo-Afor, and Orba which are the fast growing urban and commercial centers among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area. Some young ones also migrate to other towns in the whole federation. The vibrating young ones engage themselves in struggles within the urban setup to the detriment of embarking on cultural practices in their respective rural villages.

At the ever-expanding urban centres such as Nsukka, Obollo-Afor and Orba, the culture and the tradition of the people are watered down. The adjoining villages around these various urban centres find it very difficult to embark on their cultural practices to the letter. They are often booed and humiliated as they carry on with their cultural practices. For instances, at Nsukka town, the urban dwellers do not allow the indigenes of Nsukka to carry on well with their Oriokpa (Omabe) masquerading. They most often stay at the corridors of tall buildings and make caricature of masquerades. They also boo them as they are passing. The groves of the masquerades are almost cleared by land speculators. The rules and regulations guiding masquerading in the typical village setting cannot be obeyed by the urban dwellers. A lot of castigations are directed to them that they often feel ashamed of themselves and, therefore, tend towards abandoning their cultural practices,
including embarking on funeral rites with the attendant cow and/or horse presentation and slaughtering in honour of the deceased.

It is the opinion of Eze Daniel (oral interview, 2013) from Ikem in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State that the teaming young ones who constitute the larger percentage of the population of the urban centres tend to be ‘swallowed’ up and carried away by the urban/commercial activities. They tend to forget everything about the rural areas including their cultural practices. According to him, some of them rarely visit their rural villages and rarely participate in the village affairs. This pitiable situation might lead to complete abandonment of the tradition and culture of their people. Example of this alienation can be cited from the fact that when death occurs and the relations of the deceased residing in the urban centres are called upon to come back to the village, they ask a lot of questions regarding the cultural practices involved in the burial and the funeral ceremony of the individual. There are a lot of cultural intricacies involved in the burial and organization of funeral rites of the deceased and the urban dwellers lack adequate knowledge of them. For them to perform at all, they have to ask a lot of questions to the rural dwellers who would also serve as their guides.

He also submits that when such urban dwellers either fail or refuse to ask questions when they are bereaved, they are bound to present shabby occasions during burial and funeral ceremonies. They are bound to make a lot of mistakes and offend people here and there.

On the contrary, urban centres are looked upon as areas where there is preponderance of job opportunities. When such jobs are secured and one’s income is enhanced, one can use one’s income to enhance the cultural practices in one’s rural area.
For instance, an Igbo adage, which reflects also their philosophy of life, states that ‘aku ruo ulo, o kwuo onye kpara ya’, (When the wealth acquired outside home gets to the home of the owner, it explains who owns it). The import of this statement is that individuals go outside their homes to struggle and make their money and invariably take their money to their various villages and homes for their use. Such money is used for building of houses, provision of some social amenities, taking of titles and organizing social functions like marriages and funeral ceremonies which are often accompanied with presentation of ritual cows and/or horses to the forebears.

There is no doubt that the ever-increasing number of urban areas, the ever-expanding of the already existing ones and the increasing influx of the rural dwellers into the urban areas must be affecting in one way or the other the traditions and culture of the people. It might be possible for some people to get into the urban area and be carried away by the life style in the area that they forget what happens in their various villages. Some might still remember, but rather very faintly. Also, the encroachment of urban influences into the rural/traditional spheres is capable of reducing the propensities of various traditional practices. However, a reference to the contribution of Ezechi (2010:204) that a people’s “worldview hardly die” can go a long way to assisting in reinforcing one’s belief that all hopes are not lost regarding the erosion of the traditional culture of people of Nsukka sub-cultural area by the ever-increasing influence of urbanization. Furthermore, Ezechi cited a specific example to buttress his line of thought that people’s worldviews hardly die. He submits that:

In terms of ancestral piety, experience shows that Igbo Christian converts do not always outgrow the apparent covenant with the fathers of the family entered into as
a matter of cultural orientation. Of course, it is not easy to stop thinking that the ancestors are still their fathers and progenitors (P. 204).

He went further to cite the contributions of Ejizu (1986) as quoted in Metuh (1986:153) to the effect that

The worldview of most Igbo professing Christians remains that which is inherited from the traditional religion. Certain traditional beliefs as reincarnation, ogbanje, sorcery and the dynamic, often negative, activities of spirits and cosmic forces still persist in the minds of many professing Christians today (P. 133-156).

5.3 The influence of Christianity

Christianity is one of the three major religions (Agalamanyi, 2004) exacting very strong influences among Nigerians in general and Igbo people in particular. Christianity and Islam were alien to African soil but they are now exacting a lot of influence on African traditional culture and hence that of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland.

Various Christian societies and missionaries were responsible for planting Christianity on African soil in general and Nigeria in particular. The Portuguese missionaries, for instance, arrived Benin in 1486 (Agha, 2004: NTI, 2000) and attempted embarking on missionary work through converting traditional rulers and chiefs and hoping to convert others through them. Later in the 19th century other missionary societies like the Church Missionary Society (CMS) (1844), the United Presbyterian Mission (1846), the Roman Catholic Mission (R.C.M.) (1867), the Wesleyan Mission, the Primitive Methodist Mission and the Free Church of Scotland embarked on very serious missionary work in southern Nigeria (Agha, 2004). Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland is part and parcel of the southern Nigeria where these missionaries operated and made a lot of impact on the traditional culture of the people. The missionaries did not waste much time to stop the
continued existence of obnoxious cultural practices. For instance, Agha (2004) asserts that these missionaries preached against witchcraft, ritual murder, human sacrifice, killing of twins and their mothers, et cetera. He states succinctly that “various missionary societies in Nigeria did not leave any stone unturned in their war against the evil cultural practices wherever they existed” (Agha, 2004:128). According to him, they also touched on marriage customs especially those ones that were regarded as being obnoxious or that constituted a sort of inhibition on the human rights of female folk such as killing of twins and their mothers, insisting that women must not eat eggs and making women entirely responsible for the birth of only female children in a family.

There is hardly any aspect of the Igbo culture that Christianity has not influenced in one way or the other. However, various Christian denominations and groupings give different meanings and interpretations to certain cultural practices in Nigeria in general and Igboland in particular. No single statement suffices to explain the attitude of various Christian denominations and groupings towards such a cultural practice as presenting a cow and/or horse in honour of the dead. A good number of the Pentecostal churches such as Assemblies of God church, Christ Apostolic church, Christ the Answer Ministry and Christ Ascension church abhor embarking on funeral rites any day outside the day the deceased was buried. For them, the social function of organizing funeral ceremony is not anti-Christian, provided it is done on the very day the dead is buried. For them, at least as at present, anything done in connection or for the dead, any day outside the burial day is unchristian. Their line of thought/doctrine/teaching may be modified with time especially as change is regularly acting upon human ideas.
Even among the main-line churches, for instance, the Roman Catholic Church, Church of Nigeria Anglican Communion, Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church and the Baptist Church among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland, there is no agreement on how and what members of the church should do during the burial and funeral ceremonies of their deceased members. In most cases, church-members are invited for the burial of their erstwhile colleague after which they are entertained. What usually follows is that the sons, daughters and relations of the deceased settle down to the tradition of their people with regards to burial and funeral rites. An average Christian from Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland is often battling between his traditional Igbo worldviews and those of the foreign Christian religion. It is perhaps at this point that the contention of Ezechi (2010) that people’s worldviews hardly die becomes more pertinent. Perhaps, it is also very informative and educative for one to stop and reflect on the submission of Ejizu (1986:153) that “the worldview of most Igbo professing Christians remains that which is inherited from the traditional religion”.

Advancing the issue further, Ezeme (1997:124) asserts that the Christians from Udunedem clan of Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State are often “guided by the belief that a person who has not been accorded a befitting funeral rites will not reach ‘home’ ”. He adds that such Christians are often put in a very serious dilemma. The issue is whether the Christians from Nsukka sub-cultural area should think and act like European Christians or think and act according to the dictates of their tradition. In most cases, the traditional worldviews take precedence over the Christian doctrine/teaching because a people’s worldviews hardly die and it is a case that involves life and death. Ezeme (1997:88) also put it succinctly clear when he avers that the adherents of African
traditional religion in Udunedem clan of Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State and Christians “are rubbing shoulders in various areas because an Igbo Christian cannot or may not be able to break away completely from the traditional set-up of his kith and kin”.

Even though it is the contention of Ezeme (1997:83) that “no fewer than 90% of Udunedem people are Christians”, he still upheld tenaciously to the submissions of Okolo (1998) whom he cited as asserting that:

As a matter of fact, in many nations in Black Africa, for instance, in nearly all Christian denominations, there are no problems about the number who go to church on Sunday and externally...profess the Christian faith but in reality their practical belief, lives, loyalties, fears, joys, sorrows, etc are securely anchored in the ethics of their traditional religion. We find many African Christians who have apparently turned backs on traditional religion, relapsing into it particularly at crisis periods, leading, in practice, lives of superstition, magic, charm, talisman, etc., prohibited by their new faith. It is simply a life of religious ambiguity for many African Christians, half-Christians and half-traditional religionists (P.16).

Quite informative is another statement which Ezeme (1997) credited to Okolo to the point that Christianity is in a deep crisis, whether the Roman Catholic Church or the Anglican Church. That those who profess Christianity are quite large should not be taken as convincing evidence that Christianity has swept African religion away. Okolo was quoted as describing the faith of the Christians as a mere garb, for they lack the real transformation of the inner self. The submission of Nwazojie as cited in Okolo (1995) buttressed this point further as he asserted that;

A dual personality characterizes the African Christian: there is one foot in Christianity and one in traditional culture. This comes out more clearly in the
major happenings of the African life, periods of joy, peace, illness, anxiety, distress, trial, barrenness, etc. (p.125).

On the average, both the Christians and the traditionalists are very much interested in the presentation of ritual cow and/or horse to the progenitors. According to Ezeme (1997:124), “the issue of who kills and eats the funeral cow is where the problem lies” between the Christians and the traditionalist in Udunedem in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State. Both the Christians and the traditionalist lay claim to the meat of the cow slaughtered in honour of the deceased. It is the conviction of Ezeme that members of the nuclear family (umunna) of the deceased claim the right of ownership of the ritual cow and/or horse throughout Igboland. The researcher is of the view that the nuclear family (Umunna) of the deceased is the rightful owner of the ritual cow or horse presented to the deceased.

Be that as it may, this cultural practice of presenting and slaughtering a ritual cow and/or horse in honour of the deceased is vehemently condemned by Ndiokwere (1994) as cited in Ezeme (1987). He asserts that:

The old pagan custom of slaughtering a ‘sacred cow’ for the dead must be completely forbidden. Still these days there are some Christians that indulge in the superstitious practices associated with ‘killing of the sacred cow...Today, this practice is not only forbidden to Christians; those who secretly or under any pretext indulge in such a practice are usually expelled from the Church or are seriously punished (P. 211).

What one can infer from the observation of Ndiokwere above is that some Christians are still involved in presenting ritual cow and/or horse to their deceased
progenitors and relations and that the church still warns her faithful against being part of the practice, describing it as unchristian. It appears that the Christians from Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland would rather accept the sanctions imposed on them in their various churches than allow themselves to be severely dealt with by their forebears or rather compromise their traditional belief system. It is perhaps against this backdrop that Ezeme (1997:123) avers that “some Christians themselves could not see how they can do without taking part in major cultural observances which satisfied their sociological, emotional and psychological needs”. He further adds that “while a good number of Christians could, to some extent, tolerate some of the sanctions; it is indeed difficult to divorce death and funeral rites from their traditional setting” (Ezeme, 1997:123).

Should there be any Christian denomination or group that does not participate in traditional funereal ceremonies, it is most likely to be located among the Pentecostal churches such as Assemblies of God Church, Apostolic Church, Apostolic Faith and Christ Answer Ministry. The official position of other main-line churches is that their members should avoid the cultural practice or in a more moderate sense, should not think like the traditionalists while they are presenting the ritual cow and/or horse in honour of the deceased ones. Perhaps, the Church, especially the Roman Catholic Church, is forced to take a moderate stand because of the insistence of her members to continue embarking on the cultural practice of presenting ritual cow and/or horse to their progenitors. For them, the ritual practice is so much an important event that borders on the issues of life and death.

Doubtless, Christianity has exerted and continues to exert a lot of adverse influence on Igbo traditional culture in general and the people’s religion in particular. In this wise,
Agalamanyi (2004:236) postulates that “the Christians now regard the traditional religion believers (African traditional religionists) as people who do not know God…. The herbalists, medicine men, soothsayers are now seen as agents of darkness…. Shrines, deities and oracles with their priests are now agents of darkness”.

Be that as it may, Christianity has not succeeded in putting to naught the traditional belief system and worldview of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland. The ritual act of presenting ritual cows and/or horse to the deceased progenitors during funeral ceremonies is ever winning the admiration of the younger generation among the people because of its vitality and relevance. The ritual act is a form of recognizing the enviable place of the various spiritual beings, paying due homage or respect to them and securing assurance of safety, security and benevolence from them. Ezechi (2010:204) submits that “today Christians manifest, if only unwittingly, their continued recognition of and submission to the authority of the ancestors or Ndihu, in spite of their Christian faith”. This is quiet revealing, informative and encouraging. Advancing further, he avers that;

they (Christians) may confess or perform rites of purification in cases of immoral conduct to avoid being smitten by the ancestors; they still see their grandfathers coming to their rescue in their dreams, and may still look at their sons as incarnate of the grandpa. They may even utter unwittingly ejaculations beckoning them to help, but may not go outright to pour libation (P. 204).

Arguing his case further, he maintains that “in Roman Catholicism the attitude of Igbo Christians towards the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM) and the saints seems to present a classical case of the continuation of ancestral piety in the acquired religion” (Ezechi, 2010:205). He adds that some people are already proffering some suggestions that there are
no significant difference between this fervent filial piety and the ancestral piety found among the traditionalists in Igboland.

5.4 The influence of modern trade and commercial ventures

Social issues and variables have certain unique characteristics of being multi-causal and receiving multi-dimensional influences from other intervening variables. This is very true of the act of presenting ritual cow and/or horse to the progenitors among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland which is being influenced by a whole lot of variables including modern trade and other commercial ventures.

Just as modernity and the ever-increasing rate of urbanization are affecting the act of presenting ritual cow and/or horse to the forebears, modern trade and other commercial ventures are exhibiting a lot of influence on the ritual act. The rural dwellers among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland are ever diversifying their trade and commercial ventures. They are relentlessly seeking for better and alternative trading techniques. Many of the traders have the tendency to migrate to the urban areas or at least diversify their goods and services in line with modern and popular demands. All their efforts are geared towards maximization of profit. These efforts are to enable business men and women to break even.

When those embarking on modern trade and other commercial ventures are deeply engulfed in their business enterprise, especially when this happens outside their village, they may tend to lose sight of traditional ritual acts like the presentation of ritual cow and/or horse to their progenitors. The business enterprise may alienate them entirely from their socio-cultural environments. They may sever relationship with their cultural ties. If the business enterprises have taken the business men and women to the ever-expanding
and multiplying urban centres, the tendency is for them to be detached, at least temporarily, from their cultural milieu, a situation that may have the capability of reducing their interests and love for their traditional culture.

On the contrary, the same singular act of being detached from their rural set up, may turn around to create a sense of nostalgia and strong love for their cultural practices. The possibility is that they consolidate their savings so as to enable them to take a trip to their villages where they can engage themselves in various cultural practices. It is a statement of fact that one’s worldview never die easily. The mere fact that one is embarking on his business outside his/her traditional cultural milieu does not necessarily preclude him/her from being interested in the traditional cultural events taking place in his/her home. On the contrary, the interest can be accentuated.

When one’s interest is so heightened, the tendency is that one would reserve a substantial part of one’s earnings for embarking on cultural practices in one’s village. The implication of this situation is that the money one makes from the urban centres, are utilized, at least in part, in the rural areas for building houses, construction of bridges, embarking on rural electrification projects, provision of pipe-born water and the organization of burial and funeral rites with the attendant presentation of a cow and/or horse to the progenitors. The issue borders on the principles of opportunity cost and ordering and re-ordering of priority. Embarking on burial and funeral rites borders on socio-religious obligations and one is often apt to fulfil one’s religious obligations so as to smoothen the relationship existing between one and God and other supersensible beings. Africans are known to be notoriously religious according to Mbiti (1969) and religion
permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it. Again, he puts it succinctly that:

wherever the African is, there is his religion: he carries it to the field where he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop; he takes it with him to the beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony; and if he is educated, he takes religion with him to the examination room at school or in the university; if he is a politician, he takes it to house of parliament (P. 2).

It then follows that the mere fact that one is involved in modern trade and other commercial ventures, either within or outside one’s community, does not preclude or alienate one from one’s traditional religion. Wherever, one finds oneself, one is there with one’s traditional religion. Should one be found in the parliament, departmental store, civil service job, open market, company, lecture room or any other engagement or office, one is there with one’s traditional religion. It is perhaps against this backdrop that Mbiti (1969:2) avers that the religion “accompanies the individual from long before his birth to long after his physical death”.

Nobody denies that fact that some changes are noticeable in the practice of African Traditional Religion in the midst of seemingly ever domineering and pervasive urbanization, modernization, Christianization and Islamization. In this wise, Diara (2010:31) postulates that “it is a widely accepted axiom that change is the only thing that is constant in history”. To buttress his point further, he cited Igbo and Anugwom (2002:9) who posit that “an appropriate way of conceptualizing social change may be in stating ab initio that change is the only consistent fact in human and social life”.
In like manner, NTI (2000:126) states it categorically clear that “social change is continuous in the sense that it does not have a time that it shall stop occurring. As long as man lives, social change will continue to occur”. The NTI Course Book further submits that “every community is prone to change at any time or the other”. However, the fact that social change is a continuous process and continues to act on every society does not mean that such changes are very traumatic, total and comprehensive. Such changes are gradual, systematic and most often not easily noticeable. The old ways of doing things continue to exist side by side with the modern ones and continue to disappear from the scene gradually. These kind of gradual changes continue to act on every other social institutions and variables with the result that none of them remains static.

Such fundamental changes are also acting on other religions in Nigeria in general and Igboland in particular with the result that none of them remains what it used to be in the past. Such gradual but fundamental changes are not particularized to the issues surrounding African Traditional Religion but embraces all other social issues and variables.

To this end, it appears that the effects of such changes are more or less on the surface and hence ephemeral. On this note, Mbiti (1969:2) argued that “through modern changes these traditional religions cannot remain intact, but they are by no means extinct. In times of crisis, they often come to the surface, or people revert to them in secret”.

To buttress Mbiti’s argument, there are certain aspects of African Traditional Religion that many African converts to Christianity appear to find very difficult to sever ties with. That is the acquisition and use of charms, talismans, amulets and other esoteric powers. It is often alleged that many of them procure and carry or wear charms, amulets
and talismans on various parts of their bodies or hang or place them at various parts of their property under various disguises. Some, for instance, hang them as chaplets inside their vehicles, houses or pieces of land. Some use such charms, amulets and talismans as ‘holy water’ which they spray on their bodies or vehicles on regular bases. Whichever way many African converts to Christianity, for instance, procure and use their charms, amulets and talismans, what is completely certain is that they have not severed ties with those African practices.

It is often noticed that during crusades and other public worships organized by powerful men of God, some Christians among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland declare publicly or privately their interests to hand over their charms, amulets and talismans to the powerful men of God organizing the crusade. When such charms, amulets and talismans are collected, fellow Christians are marvelled that such could be the property of a fellow Christian.

Also during gatherings organized by the Christians within the sub-cultural area such as harvest and bazaar, crusades, et cetera, fellow Christians nowadays find it very difficult to relax their minds for the fear of the activities of sorcerers. Such sorcerers are also fellow Christians yet they engage in a lot of heinous practices. Nowadays, Christians from Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland no longer eat and drink freely when in the midst of fellow Christian, even right inside the church because of the fear of the activities of Christians who are sorcerers, witches and wizards.

In a like manner, Onuh (2012:4), commenting on a Sunday Gospel reading (16/09/12) among the Roman Catholic faithful, submits that “but for the transparent divinity of Jesus, it is indeed most difficult to say correctly who any one is, because many people live their
whole lives wearing masks”. He further adds that “some others also prefer to live on the false self - founded on the shifty esteems of others; they gloat and bloat in the, often untrue and unsubstantial, assessment returned by praise singers and bootlickers”.

The implication of the above-stated submissions is that a lot of individuals are professing to have been converted from African Traditional Religion to Christianity and Islam, but in the actual sense, the behaviour they exhibit in the course of living their lives shows that they are living on false assumptions and are wearing masks. Most likely, their real personalities are masked by the two foreign religions on African soil. The huge numbers of persons that are seen attending church services and mosques for prayers are quite intimidating but perhaps very deceptive.
CHAPTER SIX

CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO ORGANIZE THE FUNERAL RITES OF
THE FOREBEARS AND PRESENT THEM WITH RITUAL COWS OR HORSES

Failure to perform one’s civic and spiritual responsibilities always goes with some levels of consequences which are in most cases negative in character. Presenting a ritual cow and/or horse to the forebears is one of the responsibilities the progeny owe to the former. If for any reason, the progeny fail to perform their responsibilities to their forebears, they are visited with a lot of negative consequences to which this research work focuses attention for detailed and in-depth analysis.

6.1 Spirit haunting

The three major religions in Nigeria that are blessed with large membership and perhaps other religions of the world are rich in belief systems. The adherents of these religions have to believe a lot of things, especially when the relationship existing between human beings on one side and the supersensible beings on the other hand is based purely on what the former believe about the latter.

The adherents of African Traditional Religion (ATR) anchor a lot of their relationship with the Supreme Being and other attendant supersensible beings on a good number of beliefs. Among such beliefs is that the spirit of the dead ones have the capacity of haunting the living ones and their surroundings which include among others their forests, farmlands, streams, houses, lonely roads and riversides. According to Ugwoke Pius (oral interview 2012) these haunting activities of the dead are full of destructive and malevolent tendencies. It is believed by the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland
that the dead ones who were not properly buried and whose funeral rites have not been well-performed are the ones that are often involved in the haunting exercises.

This belief is so strong among the people, that it forms one of the bed-rocks of the relationship that is existing between the living and the dead. The living ones are constantly afraid of the malevolent activities of the deceased. They are very much alert to satisfy the needs of the deceased so as to ensure that the deceased do not turn back to haunt them and cast their venom on them.

The belief that the spirits of the progenitors haunt the abode of the living ones when the latter have not fulfilled or done all the things required of them for their progenitors is common place among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland in Enugu State, Nigeria. The belief is so high that almost all are of the view that the progenitors should be accorded their due respect through funeral rites and the concomitant presentation and slaughtering of cows and horses on their behalf. Some of these personalities consulted such as Ugwoke Pius Edeh, Agbo-Ukwueze Christopher, Iyekw Alexander and Eze Michael are of the view that the funeral rites are the continuation of the filial piety. However, some other ones like Asogwa Emmanuel, Attamah Christopher, Ugwu Denis Okeke and Ugwu Clement believe strongly that these rites are not just a continuation of the filial piety, but unavoidable rites that must be performed and that a failure to undertake these rites has to go with very serious negative consequences. The issue at hand revolves around the belief systems of the adherents of a particular religion – African Traditional Religion (ATR).

6.2 Unidentifiable sickness

Just as it is strongly believed among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland that there are certain spirits of the dead that are unsettled and that they often
haunt the abode of the living, it is also believed that they can choose to be causing unidentifiable sicknesses among their living relations and children. According to Ugwoke Nnamani Nwebi and Nnaji Ngwu (oral interviews 2011) from Mbu and Ikem respectively in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria, it is believed that when the spirits of the dead start manifesting themselves in this manner, they are likely harbouring some ill-feelings against their living children and relations. Such ill-feelings could be as a result of multifarious factors which might include lack of proper burial, non-performance of the funeral rites with the accompanying cow and/or horse-slaughtering, premature death and a whole lot of manifestations from bad deaths. Ogbalu (n.d.: 55) posits that “the dead are believed to exercise tremendous influence over the living whom they can harm, cause their death if they become offended or if they are not remembered through sacrifice or worship”. In the same manner, Seidel (1987:124) submits that the people of the Shang period in China “show that practically all the events of life –illness, misfortune or defeat, as well as good harvests and victory – were ascribed to the influence of the ancestral spirits”.

The implication of the above statements is that human beings are co-habiting the universe with a whole lot of spiritual beings who are believed to be in constant interaction and communication with them. It is perhaps against this backdrop that Ogbalu (n.d.: 54) avers that “they (the dead) are able to influence the lives of the relatives on earth for they can bring fortune and misfortune on them, protect them against ndi akaro-ogeri (the evil spirits) and other dangers”. In the same direction, Talbot (1969:469) submits that “the dead are in most places regarded as being more powerful than the living and more able to affect one for good or evil; their goodness is essential for prosperity and success in life”.
It then follows that human beings are often aware of the existence of these spiritual beings and that the former most often accord the latter supersensibility and superiority of existence. Human beings are, therefore, constantly afraid of the activities of the supersensible beings, especially the spirit of the dead who, it appears, are closer to them and who, it also seems, constitute part of the agents of the Supreme Being, *Ezechitoke Abiama Oshimiri*.

It is strongly believed among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland in Enugu State of Nigeria that the spirit of the dead can cause a lot of unidentifiable sicknesses to their living progeny and relations when they are not happy with the state of affairs. In the same vein, Talbot (1969:498) postulates that “if the relatives (of the dead) fail to carry out the second burial (funeral), it is not thought that any harm will befall the deceased, but merely that he will be vexed and can send his sons many misfortunes”. He goes further to cite an example from Awka that if a man is not given the funeral rites he will trouble members of his family. Okweli Gerald (oral interview 2013) from Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State holds tenaciously to this view and adds that this troubling of members of one’s family is with all sort of severity. Also, Eze Godfrey O. (oral interview 2012) from Alor-Uno in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State upholds this view and warns that living human beings have to be very careful with what they do with their forebears who have the power to do and undo. According to him, the forebears most often get annoyed when they are not treated well by their progeny and they vent their annoyance through unleashing innumerable troubles to them. In the same manner and based on their personal convictions, Forde and Jones (1950:27) posit that “if these (funeral) rites are too long delayed, the anger of the deceased’s spirit is believed
to make itself felt through mishaps to the family”. At this juncture, it might be very
germane to take a cross-cultural view of the issue at stake by highlighting on Seidel’s
submission. According to him, in China “elaborate funerals, tomb furnishings, and
sacrifices at the tomb were provided to assure the contentment of the p’o’ (soul) energy
under the earth, lest it troubles the family as a malevolent demons” (Kuei) (Seidel,

All these above-mentioned submissions go to point to the fact that the aggrieved
spirits of the dead go ahead to inflict unidentifiable sicknesses on their progeny and other
relations as a way of showcasing their ill-feelings and possibly as a form of warning to the
latter that more serious malevolent actions are imminent. The progeny and the relations of
the dead, if they are able to read the handwriting on the wall, have to retrace their steps
immediately, or where they are ignorant of the handwriting on the wall or at least, claim to
be, have to suffer terribly from the hands of the aggrieved deceased ones. When this kind
of situation emerges, the progeny and relations of the dead ones, either relapse from the
practice of their new religion and consult the oracle for the cause of their problems or live
with their problems unidentified and suffer most terribly.

This kind of situation also occurs when certain deities withinNsukka sub-cultural
area choose their priests. Such deities include Adoro of Ero, Ube of Uhungwore, Api of
Opi, Igbogbo of Akwari Eha-Alumona, Udele of Ekwegbe, et cetera. Each of these deities
among others chooses their priest by themselves in the event of the demise of the serving
priest. When this happens, any member of the adherents’ family can be chosen, not
minding the person’s position and profession in the society. In the present dispensation, a
lot of civil servants, businessmen and Christians have been compelled by forces beyond
their human control to take up the priesthood of these deities. It is the affliction of unidentifiable sickness on them that compel these individuals to look for the root-cause of their problems.

The spirits of the deceased ones cannot speak physically with the living ones. So the only means of showcasing their ill-feelings and anger is through the affliction of the living with some illnesses. Such illnesses, in most cases, prove to be incurable especially through the orthodox medicine. When one attempts curing it from one angle, it changes to another angle. Such sicknesses defy the potency of the laboratory tests and other aspects of orthodox medicine.

When the above-stated situation prevails, the sufferer may wish to consult the oracle for an exposition of his/her problem. When the correct oracle is consulted, such a person will be informed that the cause of his/her problem is because his/her deceased progenitor is angry with him/her because he/she has not performed the required funeral rites.

6.3 Problems in human endeavours.

Also included among the consequences of failing to present ritual cow and/or horse to the forebears and to organize their funeral ceremonies among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Enugu State is the issue of incessant problems in all human endeavours. This situation is very much related to the issue of unidentifiable sickness which is also one of the consequences of failing to present ritual cow and/or horse to the forebears. It is a well-known fact that human beings are often engaged in various struggles for survival on this earth. Even though a man continues to make some efforts geared towards his survival, he is not always very successful. Some of his efforts are sometimes put to naught. Udaya
Thomas (oral interview 2013) of Umu-Agama in Igbo Eze North Local Government Area of Enugu State observes that it is believed that the fingers of the supersensible beings are at work in making a man successful or not in his numerous human endeavours. Human beings according to him struggle on daily basis in the farms, market places, schools, working places, on the roads and other fields of human endeavours, but their successes are determined by the supersensible being. Some attain remarkable successes while other ones fail. These various levels of successes and failures, according to his views, are attributed to the activities of the supersensible beings acting upon human beings who seem to be operating on an inferior existential level to those of the spiritual beings. In line with the above, Ogbalu (n.d.) postulates that the dead are believed to be capable of influencing the lives of their relatives on earth in the sense that they can bring fortunes or misfortunes on them. It is also the belief of Igbo people to which the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area belongs, according to Ogbalu, that ndi akaro-ogori (the evil spirits) are capable of unleashing misfortunes on human beings on earth and that the living-dead always protect their progeny and relations on earth against evil machinations of these evil spirits (ndi akaro-ogori), more especially when the living-dead are cordially relating with their progeny and other relations. This kind of relationship is likely possible when the progeny and other relations of the living-dead have conducted the burial and funeral ceremonies of the living-dead in a highly dignified manner, especially with the accompanying ritual cow and/or horse for gracing the occasion.

In the same way, Seidel (1987) studied the China people during the Shang period about late second millennium BCE and showed that they believed that generally all the events of life including illness, misfortune, defeat, good harvest and victory were attributed
to the activities of the ancestral spirits. Part of the implications of Seidel’s observation is that misfortunes or lack of observable progress in human endeavour or problems in human engagements are the handiwork of the spiritual beings acting negatively on the human beings due to possibly ill-contentment. Such dissatisfaction could have arisen from poor burial and funeral rites among others.

In a similar manner, Talbot (1969) carried out his studies among the Igbo people of Southeastern Nigeria to which the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area belongs, and concluded that it is a strong belief among them that when the deceased are vexed, they send misfortunes to their progeny and other relations. One might be inquisitive enough as to attempt to ascertain the cause of their being so vexed to the extent that they tend towards unleashing animosity and acrimony on their progeny and other close relations on earth. If one consults the oracle appropriately, one might possibly be informed that the deceased members of the family circle are not properly and adequately situated in the ancestral world, leading to their acrimonious propensities and displays which ultimately end up showcasing themselves in misfortunes, mishaps and incessant problems in various human endeavours. Talbot (1969) cited an example that in Awka when a man is not given adequate and appropriate funeral ceremony, and possibly with the attendant ritual cow and/or horse, he will trouble his family members including his progeny and tend towards frustrating their businesses or introduce all sorts of misfortune to them.

Even though no two Christian denominations share exactly the same belief system, it is on record that at least one of the denominations acknowledges the intercessory roles of the Church Fathers for and on behalf of the church members. On the contrary, if the Church Fathers are capable of interceding for members of the church on earth, they are
also likely to be capable of introducing some confusions, misfortunes, mishaps and incessant problems in various human endeavours should they be ignored and neglected by human beings. Or where they do not by themselves introduce such mishaps and misfortunes in various human endeavours, they might remain unconcerned when the devilish beings introduce some distasteful intervening variables in human endeavours. Whatever be the situation, all these border on the belief system of various worshipping groups which cannot be subjected to observable scientific investigation.

Be that as it may, it is a strong belief of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland that living human beings relate cordially or otherwise with their deceased relations and forebears and that such deceased relations and forebears can be offended by the living human beings. When the deceased forebears and other relations of the human beings are offended, the later bear the consequences which can be showcased in various forms such as mishaps, misfortunes and incessant problems in various human endeavours. When this situation takes place, the suffering human beings are bound to read in-between the lines and ascertain the source of the ill-feeling on the part of the progenitors. This is done through due oracular consultations and the subsequent appeasement of the progenitors.

6.4 Death of livestock

In the traditional setting of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland, livestock are kept for various reasons. One of such reasons is that the owner of the livestock can make use of them at any short notice or whenever the need arises. For instance, whenever one gets a visitor without any notice or whenever one’s close relation or age-mate dies, one can pick any of the livestock and kill it. Another major reason why
the people keep livestock according to Mgbechi Joseph (oral interview 2013) of Adaba in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State of Nigeria, is that whenever the ancestors need anyone of them, they can come back to the family and ‘pick’ one symbolically. Whenever such a ‘picking’ takes place, the livestock loses its life. According to him, it is strongly believed that whenever the ancestors come back to their various families for such a ‘picking’ and find no livestock around, they may decide to ‘pick’ human beings. In the belief system of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland, this is one of the numerous causes of sudden death among the people. This idea of the ancestors coming back to their earthly families to ‘pick’ livestock especially when they are aggrieved was highlighted by Talbot (1969) when he states that in Awka, if the funeral ceremonies are not performed, the living-dead will trouble the family and kill livestock. Also, Forde and Jones (1950) just state that the spirit of the deceased is believed to make itself felt through mishaps to the family. Such mishaps in their earthly families may include the death of livestock.

When the livestock die in this way in a given manner, according to Mgbechi Joseph, it is believed in the traditional setting of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland that fingers of the progenitors are at work. It is either that the progenitors are angry with their progeny or that they want to pass certain pieces of information to them. Whatever be the case, the progeny have to make some consultations with the oracles so as to ascertain the wish of the progenitors. He further observes that such consultations have to be at various locations and at different times so as to ensure the reliability of the information obtained from the various sources. Where the pieces of information obtained from various consultation areas are pointing to the same direction, they are seen to be very
reliable and authentic. However, if they are divergent and unrelated, further probe is made towards consulting other oracles for clearer information.

When the progenitors decide to pour their venom on the livestock and their owners remain uniformed, untouched, unconcerned and uneducated, the tendency is that the progenitors will have to increase the tempo and severity of their actions. At this point, they might decide to include in their activities the death of human beings or suffering from unidentifiable sicknesses. All these are just signals to show that something is wrong somewhere and that attention is being demanded for corrective purposes.

The implication of this is that the progenitors use various methods to communicate with the living ones, including the death of the livestock. The owners of the dying livestock have to be all-ears and all-eyes and should be very prepared to read in-between the lines. They must have to be prepared to read the hand-writing on the wall and give interpretations to their misfortunes. In the final analysis, the oracles have to be consulted for clearer information from the progenitors.

6.5 Death of members of the family

Death is a natural phenomenon but still can be imposed on a living human being as a form of punishment. Where it is imposed on a living human being as a form of punishment, it is regarded as the highest form of punishment. It is called a capital punishment. However, when it is caused by the supersensible spiritual beings, death is regarded as a natural phenomenon. But the actual natural death comes up when one has lived out his/her life span and is dying at a rightful old age. The expectation is that death should come when one has lived out one’s life span and is very old.
But not all deaths occur at one’s old age. Many of them occur when one is still very young. Deaths at one’s youthful age are the ones that send cold blood through one’s marrow. This is the kind of death, according to Idoko Charles (oral interview 2013) of Obollo-Afor in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State of Nigeria, that the progenitors send to their progeny in order to showcase their grievances especially as it affects funeral rites that have not been attempted and the concomitant presentation and slaughtering of ritual cows and/or horses. According to his submission, when the progeny are rich enough to perform the funeral rites of their progenitors, but do not pay any attention to that, they can be visited with sudden deaths of the youths in their family. However, this kind of death is always as a last resort and comes when other methods have been used and have proved to be ineffective. Such deaths are always without much notice and sicknesses. For instance, Ezeme (1997:109) asserts that “there are cases of instant deaths of people who participated financially and very actively in other people’s funeral rites prior to similar performance for their deceased father or mother”.

Cases of such deaths abound but for the interest of privacy, anonymity and for the fact that such deaths lack objective scientific proofs, the names of those who suffered such deaths are withheld. However, it has to be noted that not everything that happens on this earth can be proved objectively scientifically. Sometimes in the past, such death took place within University of Nigeria Nsukka when a man who had not presented ritual cow for his late parents bought a cow and other materials for the funeral ceremony of his father in-law. Available piece of information show that he loaded all these things in a pick-up van and came back to his apartment and collapsed and died. The same situation was the case of Eha-Ndiagu in Eha-Alumona community where a man who had not presented a ritual cow
to his late father, bought one for the funeral ceremony of his father-in-law. He also died the same day that the ritual cow and other materials left his house to that of his father-in-law. Eze Michael of Unadu in Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area of Enugu State reports of another such death at Ibagwa-Ani in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

When such a death occurs, people quickly ask questions and immediately get at the root cause of the deaths. In grief, they whisper the cause of such a death. The root-cause of such a death becomes an open secret. No announcement is made to that effect, yet everyone hears it. Also, the death of one-time frontline politician in Imo State was associated with the defilement of this religious rules and regulations. There are other cases here and there, even those ones that have not been identified.

The import of these submissions are that among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland, all those who have not organized the funeral rites for their late fathers and mothers, do not have to take very active part in the organization of other people’s funeral rites. They do not also contribute financially or otherwise to other people’s funeral rites or the attendant presentation and slaughtering of ritual cows and/or horses. Should anyone ignore the basic rules and regulations guiding the performance of funeral rites and otherwise, one can be struck dead by one’s progenitors. The situation most often leads to instant death. To buttress his point further, Ezeme added that “even distant relations of a deceased person who have not performed funeral rites for their deceased parents avoid contribution towards any other funeral rites until they have done so for their own parents” (Ezeme, 1997:109). Should they decide to do otherwise, their deceased parents, whose funeral rites have not been performed, might decide to strike them dead. This is a typical
traditional belief of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland that remains ever fresh in the minds of the people wherever they find themselves.

The people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland take their time to ensure that this popular belief system is not contravened. Several cases abound where it was contravened and was consequently visited with instant death, especially of the head of the household who is responsible for organizing and embarking on such an extra-funeral rites without first of all clearing the back-log of the funeral rites of the earlier deaths. It is pertinent to note here that causes of deaths are always whispered and not always publicly announced and for this singular reason, anonymity always prevails. Death is a mystery but some are more mysterious than others. Their causes cannot easily be pinned down to a point.

6.6 Social relegation

In the traditional setting of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland, organizing a funeral ceremony for one’s forebears is a very expensive and capital intensive project. It consumes a lot of money and time. Any person, who is warming up to perform such a ceremony in a given year, has to accumulate large sums of money and other materials. It is because of its capital intensiveness that some individuals continue to postpone the exercise almost indefinitely.

Asogwa Emmanuel (oral interview, 2013) from Ede-Oballa in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria observes that because of the fact that performing funeral ceremony in a particular year is a capital intensive project, anyone who succeeds in doing it is highly rated at least in his community. Just like when titles are taken to increase one’s social status in the community, performing funeral ceremony increases one’s social
standing in his/her community. According to him, performing the funeral rites of one’s progenitors is considered to be a debt that one owes to both the living-dead and the living ones. For one to be able to pay this debt is a mark of nobility.

On the contrary, when one is unable to perform the funeral rites of his forebears, one is socially relegated. Such a person, according to him, finds it very difficult to speak in the public because he/she is often reminded that he/she has not performed the funeral rites of his/her progenitors. If he/she visits another person performing the funeral ceremony of his/her forebears and eats well as to the point of being noticed or eats in a very dignified manner to the point of being noticed, he/she is quickly reminded that as he or she is eating the food in dignified manner, he/she has not performed the funeral rites of his/her forebear. In the same manner, when he/she drinks well and shows that he is drunk, he/she is quickly reminded that he/she has not performed the funeral ceremony of his progenitors. When he/she ventures to quarrel publicly with another person, he/she is also quickly reminded that he/she has not performed his/her duties of performing the funeral ceremony of his/her forebears with the concomitant presentation and slaughtering of a ritual Igbo cow and/or horse. Such social relegation continues indefinitely until the person so relegated performs the funeral ceremony of his/her forebears.

However, if it becomes impossible for an individual to perform such a ceremony before he/she dies, according to Asogwa Emmanuel’s view, he/she has died with a backlog of debts. It is believed that such debt is capable of hindering his/her blissful settlement in the spiritual ancestral world. In such a situation, the children of such a man now own up the responsibility of embarking on the funeral ceremonies of both their father and grandfather. They may even be forced to extend to that of their great grandfather if nothing
has been done about that. In such a situation, grandsons and great grandsons cannot start embarking on the funeral ceremony of their father without including those of their grandfather and great grandfather if nothing has so far been done about them. It is perhaps in response to this kind of situation that Ezeme (1997) postulates that;

Another factor which determines whether or not funeral ceremony should be performed for a person is whether such a ceremony has been performed for his father. In other words, funeral rites for a son will not precede that of his father if he was already dead (pp.108-109).

He goes ahead to state a popular Igbo adage that “nwa anaghi ebu nna ya uzo eri ehi” meaning that a son will not be presented with a ritual cow before his father.

The implication of Ezeme’s statement is that before anyone embarks on performing the funeral ceremony of his/her father or mother, one has to settle down well and ask questions from one’s elderly ones. Such questions are very vital so as to ascertain what one’s father has done or has not done regarding the organization of funeral rites. When one fails to ascertain the extent one’s father has done and just jumps into organizing funerals ceremony, it is believed one can be struck dead by the progenitors who are angry because they are left out in the scheme of things.

In a typical traditional setting of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland, one is expected to consult with the oracles so as to find out if one is free to embark on the funeral ceremony of one’s forebears in a given period of the year. It is through such oracular consultation that one might be directed to perform certain sacrifices and pour some libations before embarking on certain ceremony. Such oracular consultations are very necessary before one embarks on any programme or project. For
instance, such consultation are made before one starts a new farming season, makes a trip especially outside the community, engages in contracting a new marriage, et cetera. With such consultations, one is expected to be behaving according to the wishes of the supersensible beings and not in contrary to their opinions.

Quite often such supersensible beings so consulted act as guardian-spirits to the persons(s) performing any ceremony of any sort. Such guardian-spirits hold in check a lot of unforeseen circumstances from disrupting whatever ceremony one is embarking on. Such unforeseen circumstances could be spiritually or humanly ignited but the guardian-spirits have the capacity to neutralize all their effects.

So when one embarks on the funeral ceremony of one’s forebears with the concomitant presentation and slaughtering of cow and/or horse, one is socially elevated. The moment this happens, one stops suffering the social degradation and relegation associated with the non-performance of the funeral ceremony.
CHAPTER SEVEN
FUTURE OF THE USE OF RITUAL COWS AND/OR HORSES FOR THE PROGENITORS DURING FUNERAL RITES

Nothing is as constant on this earth as change. Issues, events, tastes, happenings, styles, et cetera, continue to be receptive to categories of changes with the passage of time. The age-long cultural practice of presenting ritual cow and/or horse to the progenitors is not an exception. The practice is bound to be very receptive to changes with the gradual passage of time. It is against this backdrop that this research now focuses attention on the possible future of the use of ritual cows and/or horses for the progenitors during funeral ceremonies among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of northern Igbo land, beginning with the positive impacts of the cultural practice.

7.1 Positive impacts of presenting ritual cows and/or horses to the forebears

Human endeavours on this earth have their positive impacts and these justify their continued existence. For this reason, the socio-cultural cum religious practice of presenting ritual cows and/or horses to the forebears have a lot of positive impacts.

In the first instance, the person proposing to embark on the funeral ceremony of his/her forebears has to be vibrantly up-and-doing in order to accumulate the required amount of money for the ritual. As earlier on stated, the ceremony and its concomitant presentation of cow and/or horse require large sums of money and a lot of human and material resources. The planner has to exhibit a lot of ingenuity in order not to fail in the execution of the project.

As large amount of money are involved during funeral ceremony, a lot of purchases are made, thereby increasing the volume of commercial activities going on. Cows, horses, pigs, clothings, food items, et cetera, are purchased. Even renovations of houses are
sometimes embarked upon. In all these activities, money exchanges hands extensively thereby increasing the volume of commercial activities going on.

Also, a lot of business men and women who deal on the materials most often required during funeral ceremonies always look forward to see gay and dry weather when funeral ceremonies are embarked upon most of the time. At this period, they make more money than any other periods of the year. For instance, those business men who are dealing on cows and horses are always on business trips during the dry period of the year because a lot of sales are witnessed during this period.

Also, gun-powder is extensively used during deaths and funeral ceremonies. Dealers on gun-power make a lot of money during the dry weather when funeral ceremonies are always fixed. Dane-guns and other locally produced explosives are fired extensive to mark funeral ceremony, according to Christopher Agbo Ukwueze (2012, Oral interview). When a specific date is fixed for a given funeral ceremony, gun-shots are fired extensively four days to the fixed date. Such gun-shot firing must be in the late evening. He adds that the gun-shots pass a lot of pieces of information to both the human and the ancestral spiritual beings. All are informed that the funeral ceremony would be coming up in four days’ time. The gun-shots confirm the reality of the occasion and all those who never knew about the funeral ceremony or who have forgotten about it are informed or reminded. It is believed by the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland that the gun-shots send some exciting messages to the ancestral spiritual beings that they start jubilating for a liberating festival around the corner. The gun-shots take off again on the eve of the funeral day and continue throughout the night and on the funeral day. In fact, those who deal on gun-powder sell in large quantity and make large amount of money.
Palm wine is so much an essential commodity among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland that no meaningful ceremony can be done successfully without it. Wine tapers are often booked far in advance for the funeral ceremony. Such booking are negotiated from within and around the surrounding communities. Wine tapers make large sums of money from the sale of their wines. A given quantity of palm wine sells for up to four times of what it used to cost on ordinary days without many ceremonies.

Also, some human beings act as service-providers to the individual performing the funeral ceremony of the forebears. They provide such materials as canopies, chairs, and some others act as caterers. The service of truck drivers are often needed for conveying materials from one place to another. All these service-providers always look forward to see occasions for celebration of funeral rites so that they can render their services and collect their payments. Those who have musical equipments, public addressing systems and, sometimes, live bands are invited to perform during the ceremony for two or more days. It all depends on the financial capability of the person performing the funeral rites. These service-providers are paid large sums of money for their services which enhances their economic power.

Among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland, the services of a traditional medicine-man or woman is sought so as to hold constant the incidence of mishaps. According to Igbo belief system such mishaps (Odachi) can be prevented, diverted, suspended or held constant mysteriously. The medicine-man or woman so engaged ensures that no mishap is allowed to disrupt the funeral ceremony. In Igbo traditional setting, such phenomenon as death, sudden and severe sickness, accidental happenings and others woven by fellow human beings constitute mishaps in the society.
and can disrupt planned programmes. The traditional medicine-man or woman whose services are hired is paid heavily at the end of the funeral rites. Such payments enhance the financial capability of the medicine-man or woman.

Also very important is the services of a rain-maker. Should the funeral ceremony be performed during any of the rainy months, the services of rain-making and rain-preventing personnel have to be acquired. In Igbo traditional setting, it is strongly believed that rain can be made or prevented by some personalities knowledgeable in the art. Emphasizing the importance of rainmaking and rainmakers, Mbiti (1969:179) asserted that rain-making is a “communal rite and rainmakers are some of the most important individuals in almost all African societies”. He adds that various African people such as the Zulu, Luvedu, Koma, Udhuk, Akamba, Katab and Lugbara rate rainmakers highly in their various societies and respect them highly. These rainmakers who are engaged during funeral ceremonies are well paid. This enhances the distribution of income to the generality of the people.

Again, funeral ceremonies with the concomitant presentation and slaughtering of cows and/or horses are now video-taped. Some photographs are taken on this occasion to serve as memorials. Some individuals who can afford it invite one radio station or the other to cover the ceremony. Some also place the ceremony in the print media like newspapers. All these are efforts being made to document events in African/Igbo traditional setting. Large sums of money are used for the services of these personalities and corporations.

Funeral ceremony and the attendant presentation of cows and/or horses to the forebears are forms of festivals. Even though these ritual cows and/or horses are presented to the progenitors, they are only spiritually acquired by them. The physical essence of the
ritual cow and/or horse still remain with the people when the spiritual essence have been collected by the deceased to whom the ritual animals were presented. When the ritual cow and horse are killed, human beings enjoy the meat. They share the meat among themselves according to specified guidelines in each community within the Nsukka sub-cultural area. Christopher Agbo Ukwueze (oral interview 2012) of Mbu in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria submits that the meat of the ritual cows and horses are for the elders (Ndi oha) in the community. In the same manner, Eze Celestine (oral interview 2013) of Edem-Ani in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State observes that they are for the Ozo-titled men. According to Ezeme (1997), the cow so slaughtered is humorously described in Udunedem of Udenu Local Government Area as Efi/Ehi Onyishi. The cow is humorously called in this way because the eldest man in the clan/village/community collects the larger portion of the meat.

On the funeral days, villagers, special guests and other invitees are sumptuous entertained with food and various types of drinks. They are also entertained with various musical outfits. These funeral days are moments of great festivals. After eating and drinking heavily, these guests, invitees, non-invited guests and the general public deliver their judgments on the level of performances by their host(s). The judgments of the people are passed individually and not collectively. No single individual waits for the other person before he/she makes his/her comments on the credibility or otherwise of their host(s). When all these comments, both positive and negative ones are summed up together, they form the popular human opinion of the person who performed the funeral ceremony of his/her progenitors.
Just as human beings regard funeral days as days of festival, so do the ancestral spiritual beings of the clan, village and the community, according to the observation of Okweli Gerald and Mgbechi Joseph of Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State of Nigeria. All the materials for the funeral rites are first presented to these spiritual beings that collect them spiritually. It is believed that just like human beings, these ancestral spirits enjoy these materials for the funeral in the spiritual realm. It is a strong belief of the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland that these ancestral spirits enjoy eating the food, drinking wine, dancing to the tune of music and all the ritual animals presented to them during the funeral rites. The progenitor whose funeral rite is being celebrated is believed to ride on the back of a horse if he/she is provided with one. Such a progenitor so honoured with a cow or horse or both finally presents these ritual animals and other gifts and animals to the league of ancestral spirits. The people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland believe that such a progenitor is immediately ranked very high in the spiritual world. It is then after the funeral rites have been celebrated that the spirit of the progenitors for whom it is conducted is allowed to settle down comfortably in the ancestral spiritual world. This is a strong belief of the people and this belief informs one of the reasons why they are very much interested on embarking on funeral ceremony of their forebears. Each reasonable and sensible adult would want his forebears to be comfortably settled in the spiritual world and not to constitute one of the hovering spirits haunting human abodes, farm-lands, forests, lonely roads and places, with the intension to inflict injuries on any human being that comes across their way. When the progenitors are comfortably settled in the ancestral spiritual world, it is believed they would stand the chance of protecting members of their earthly families. The interests of such members of
the earthly families will be protected. Their prayers are quickly relayed to the Almighty
God for immediate action. That they are comfortably positioned in the ancestral spiritual
world gives them the opportunity to perform their intercessory functions creditably well. It
is believed that the progeny stand the chance of benefiting immensely from such a
comfortable position of their forebears in the great world beyond.

7.2 Negative impacts of presenting ritual cows and/or horses to the forebears

Presenting ritual cows and/or horses to the forebears is a socio-religious rite which
is bound to have both pros and cons. Even though the ritual act has a lot of positive
impacts, there must be some negative implications associated with it. In the first instance,
it is an expensive project. It is so expensive that anyone preparing for funeral ceremony of
his forebears has to accumulate a lot of money for it. The person has to start on time to
conserve both money and other material resources required for the ceremony.

Also, preparing for funeral ceremony saps a lot of energy from the person making
the plan. Such a person has to provide a lot of material things and keep in touch with a lot
of personalities. To ensure that embarking on the project is not a failure, the host has to
incorporate a lot of persons as his/her co-planners. All those incorporated as co-planners
have to spend a lot of time, money and initiative so as to ensure that the ceremony
becomes a success and not a failure.

Embarking on funeral ceremony dislodges and dislocates other people’s
programmes and other activities. The date for the funeral ceremony is announced far ahead
of time so that other persons within the locality will shift their own programmes from that
day. Once a date is picked, it is made public to others so that no other engagement will be
fixed for the same day within the same locality. It is the same group of persons that attend
one occasion that will be expected to attend the other ones. If they are lumped together on the same day, they are not going to find it very easy. This is one of the reasons why anyone preparing for funeral ceremony within a given locality has to pick his/her date far ahead of time and make it public.

Just as the hosts during funeral ceremony are not finding it easy to assemble money and other materials for the ceremony, the guests, invitees and other well-wishers are finding it very difficult to assemble the money and other materials with which to honour the invitation. Some invitees may attend the funeral ceremony with some jars of palm wine, cartons of beer and some amounts of money. Female invitees attend the occasion with various types of condiments and some amount of money. Such condiments are usually handed over to the wives of the males hosting the funeral ceremony of their forebears so as to enable them over-come or at least cushion the effect of the difficulties involved in providing the soup for the occasion.

The man organizing the funeral ceremony of his forebears and his wife/wives take accurate record of all the money and other material gifts handed over to them by their guests, invitees and other well-wishers. They have to reciprocate whenever such guests, invitees and well-wishers are performing the funeral ceremonies of their forebears. The implication of this gift-giving is that just as the host in a given funeral ceremony is receiving gifts from invitees and well-wishers, he is accumulating debts which he must pay. Even though he must have paid for some of the gifts he is receiving in the present dispensation, he must be paying for some of them in future.

The sons-in-law also bear the full financial weight of organizing the funeral ceremonies of their parents-in-law. This time around, their wives are the ones directly
organizing the funeral ceremonies of their parents. Their husbands take active part in order to ensure that things happen accordingly. Members of the families of each of the sons-in-law, their guests, well-wishers and other invitees take active part during the funeral ceremony from the point of view of in-laws. To crown it up, each of the sons-in-law is expected to provide a cow for the wife for the funeral ceremony. The cows are finally presented to their eldest brother and members of his family. Special entertainments are provided for such sons-in-law who were able to provide their wives with ritual cows. Family members of the various sons-in-law, their friends and well-wishers par-take in the entertainment. In addition, the chief host, that is, the eldest man among those who are performing the funeral ceremony of their progenitors, provides each of the sons-in-law with a goat for daring to provide his wife with ritual cow. Gifts of money are given very extensively during the occasion. Traditional musical outfits like Akwu na-eche Enyi, Egwu Ogene, Odabara, Uhere inyinya et cetera accompany a female presenting a cow and/or horse from her matrimonial home to her paternal home. Such a female dresses gorgeously and dances in tune with the accompanying background traditional music. She often engages herself in traditional stylistic movement called ighunghu or omaganga, with shouts of joy that her father or mother or both have reached the ancestral spiritual home. She often thanks her husband publicly for providing her with a ritual cow or horse. She addresses the husband as ezigbo di m (that is my good husband). She also frequently addresses the parents whose funeral ceremonies are being undertaken as ezigbo papa m and ezigbo mama m (my good father and mother). She also calls them by their various pet and title-names and quickly coins other good and pet names for them by way of admiration.
Although funeral ceremony is full of merry-making, enjoyments, eating, drinking, dancing, gift-giving, et cetera, it is nowadays heavily fraught with the problem of poisoning which comes in various forms. Food, wine and even money given as gifts can be used as instrument of poisoning. In view of this pathetic situation, anyone organizing funeral ceremony these days is always aware of the possible end result of the occasion. Such a person can start deteriorating health-wise some days or weeks or months after organizing funeral ceremony of the forebears. It is because of this kind of development that some individuals employ the services of medicine-men or women to guard against the incidence of poisoning during funeral ceremony and other ceremonies.

Organizing funeral ceremony of one’s forebears is an expensive project that demands a lot of human and material resources from the organizer. A lot of persons collect huge amount of money as loans from friends, well-wishers, organizations and banks in order for them to be able to organize the funeral ceremonies of their forebears. Some other ones who might not have gone so much aborrowing during the organization of the funeral ceremony, might spend all they have to the point that they become impecunious, leading them to the state of abject poverty and penury. Or to say the least, organization of funeral ceremony makes one to lose one’s financial standing and disrupts one’s other financial programmes like academic pursuit and expansion in business activities.

It is a very painful experience that all those who have not performed the funeral ceremonies of their forebears are in perpetual fear of their progenitors. They are always proposing and failing to embark on the ceremony. They keep on keeping their progenitors in suspense and most likely unhappy. Being in this kind of unhappy mood therefore makes the progenitors to be unfavourably disposed always toward their progeny with its attendant consequences. It can always be a harsh and horrible experience on the part of the progeny.
CHAPTER EIGHT
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Having gone through the preliminary and medial chapters of this work, it now becomes very necessary that the work is concluded with a chapter on summary and conclusion. The researcher now directs attention to the following sub-units of this chapter, namely, research findings, suggestions for further studies, recommendations, limitations of the study and conclusion, and begins with research findings.

8.1 Findings

1. The people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland are intimately related to their parents who are alive and when the parents are dead, the progeny would still want the relationship between them and their deceased parents to remain intimate as before. It is the tradition of the people that parents are frequently consulted by their progeny before the latter embark on any project or programme. During such consultations, parental feelings, comments, objections and approvals are highly valued. They are enough to put to naught the proposed projects or programmes or strengthen them. When the parents are dead, the progeny would want such consultations to continue. The progeny are intimately attached to their parents whether they are dead or alive. It is for this singular reason that the people are obsessed with the ritual practice of presenting cows and/or horses to their forebears.

2. Also, it was found out that it is a strong belief of the people that the progeny should organize the burial/funeral ceremonies on the following occasions: during the burial/funeral of married men and women, titled men and women, warriors and men of valour and unmarried young men and women. Children are not entitled to a colourful
burial and funeral rites. In the years past, the corpse of the children and young ones are not buried but deposited at the evil forest.

3. It was found out that the consequences of failure/refusal to present a ritual cow and/or horse to the forebears include among others spiritual haunting, unidentifiable sickness, problems in human endeavour, death of livestock, death of members of the family and social relegation. These problems as originated by the ancestral spirits can be identified through oracular consultations through which one can ascertain the wishes of the ancestral spirits.

4. It was found out that modernity has actually affected the socio-religious cum cultural practice of presenting ritual cows and/or horses to the forebears among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural areas of Igboland. Various other socio-cultural practices like marriage rites are still being impacted upon by modernity and Christianity. Nevertheless, the cultural ritual practice of presenting cows and/or horses to the forebears has not been wiped out entirely.

5. From the interactions with the interviewees and from personal observations, the socio-religious practice of presenting ritual cows and/or horses to the forebears among the people has a bright future. The younger ones still embrace the practice very seriously. Even though Christianity and modernity are fast eroding the cultural practices of the people, it is believed that some remnants of the cultural practices are still left behind.

6. It was also found out that there are some rules and regulations guiding the organization of funeral rites in various communities. The most outstanding one is that one does not skip one outstanding funeral ceremony to celebrate a newer one. If, for instance, that a father was unable to celebrate the funeral ceremony of his own father before he dies,
his son/sons automatically inherit(s) all these liabilities. Such a son(s) cannot celebrate the funeral ceremony of his/their father, skipping that of his/their grand father and even great grandfathers. However, all these ceremonies can be celebrated on the same day with different sets of gun shots, invitees and different cows, beginning from the earliest amongst them. It is always more economical to celebrate a back-log of funeral ceremonies on the same day and at the same time.

8.2 Contributions to Knowledge

This work has made some contributions to knowledge which among others includes the following;

1) It has created a lot of awareness on the importance of the use of ritual cows and horses among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland in Enugu State Nigeria.

2) It has also added to the existing literature in African Traditional Religion.

3) Other students will hence forth use this document as a reference material in their studies.

4) It has also heightened the interest of the public on the use of ritual cows and/or horses to honour the progenitors.

5) It has gone a long way to correct the wrong impression that the cultural practice of presenting and slaughtering ritual cows and horses in honour of the progenitors is dying a natural death.

6) Also, it has succeeded in re-awakening the interests of the younger generation on the use of ritual cows and horses in honour of the progenitors among the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area of Igboland.
8.3 Suggestions for further studies

Having gone through this work, the researcher proffers a good number of suggestions on how further research can be carried out in the related areas of ATR. In the first instance, other researchers should carry out their research on the same topic and on the same group of people. This action will enable them to engage in some comparative analysis with the view to ascertain the authenticity or otherwise of the claims of this work. This exercise should not be seen as a mere waste of precious time and resources.

Also, the same topic should be undertaken by other researchers who should focus their attention on other sub-cultural areas of Igboland. If this exercise is undertaken, the various sub-cultural areas of Igboland will be incorporated in the study. In most cases, a study covering the entire Igboland as a whole at a stretch is quite often very eclectic, skeletal and shallow-rooted, with the result that a lot of the sub-cultural areas are left out untouched and a lot of false assumptions are made about them.

Again, further studies should be carried out on Igbo eschatological ideas. Eschatology is very much related to death, dying, and funeral rites. There is a strong need for the Igbo people to attempt an explanation of the fate, in the great world beyond, of those who died good practitioners of African Traditional Religion. It might be discovered that a good number of them are in the paradise against the expectations and teachings of the adherents of other religions around.

Furthermore, prayers are said using the names of the progenitors and libations are poured to them. All these are the efforts of the progeny to establish smooth, good and cordial relationship with their progenitors so that their requests and petitions can be attended to without many hitches. Further studies should be carried out on the relevance,
potency and efficacy of prayers and petitions in African traditional setting with the view to ascertain or attempt to ascertain whether the progenitors answer the prayers and petitions of their progeny and whether they intercede for their progeny in the presence of Ezechitoke Abiama Oshimiri (Almighty God).

Death is a mysterious phenomenon the world over and various religions of the world make some efforts to situate it. Further studies should be carried out within the realm of ATR with the view to ascertaining how Africans prepare themselves for death, when they are most likely prepared to welcome death, the possibility of delaying the arrival of death and other mysterious issues surrounding death, dying and the dead.

Some deaths are categorized as being ‘bad’ while others are ‘good’. It is the conviction of the researcher that further studies should be carried out on various forms of death with the view to identifying which ones are ‘bad’ or ‘good’ across the various sub-cultural areas of IgboLand in particular and Africa in general. Efforts should be made to ascertain how various types of death are treated at the ancestral spiritual world.

Again, the issue of life after death is seriously calling for attention. More research should be carried out on what are the life patterns of the deceased in the great world beyond. A lot of guesses are made on how the deceased live in great world beyond but very intensive research should be carried out so as to unravel the truth.

8.4 Recommendations

1. It is quite commendable that the people of Nsukka sub-cultural area have very strong filial attachment to their parents when the latter are alive and are highly obsessed with the organization of the funeral rites when they are dead. Such attachment is encouraged to continue. The younger generation is encouraged to imbibe this commendable quality
of having filial attachment to their parents. This kind of situation compels them to take good care of their parents when they are ageing and when they are so incapacitated that they cannot take good care of themselves. Their parents should not be looked upon as waste products long overdue for abandonment. Also, the progeny should not lose the sight of organizing the funeral rites of their forebears especially when it is seriously believed that it has a liberating effect on the latter in the great world beyond. The progeny so far on earth should ensure that their parents and other forebears in their lineage are liberated from the ancestral spiritual restrictions and other bondages so that all of them over there can unanimously be interceding for them in the presence of Ezechitoke Abaima Oshimiri (Almighty God). When this happens, a lot of their blessings will be reaching them unhindered on the way because of the unanimous intercessory actions of the progenitors.

2. The occasions for the organization of funeral ceremony and presentation and slaughtering of ritual cows and/or horses should be adhered to by the people. Such occasions should be looked at as periods of honour and respect to the deceased with respect to their immense contributions on this earth. The forebears deserve such periods of commendations, honour and respect in view of the invaluable contributions they have made for the younger generations and other generations yet unborn.

3. The progeny should not at any moment lose sight of the adverse consequences of failure/refusal to organize the funeral ceremonies of their forebears and to present them with the ritual cows and/or horses. They should rather be very prepared to perform their responsibilities to their forebears who have on their own part contributed immensely to the welfare of the progeny. The adverse consequences of failure/refusal
to organize the funeral rites of the progenitors and to present them with ritual cows and/or horses are so severe that the progeny should not allow themselves to experience them.

4. It is a statement of fact that no condition is permanent except change. However, the progeny should not allow change agents being introduced by combined efforts of modernity and Christianity to sweep away all the cultural practices of the people. It is admitted that the socio-cultural practices of the people cannot remain static but the change acting on them should be gradual.

5. The present generations of the progeny and those yet unborn should ensure that the cultural practice of organizing funeral ceremonies for the progenitors and presenting them with ritual cows and/or horse should not be allowed to die a natural death. Such cultural practices should be encouraged to continue in existence.

6. The progeny should adhere strictly to the basic rules and regulations guiding organization of funeral rites and presentation of ritual cows and/or horses. If this is done, they must have avoided the untimely death and other adverse consequences of not obeying the rules and regulations.

8.5 Limitations of the study

1. This study is fraught with some limitations. In the first instance, it is limited to just a sub-cultural area in Igboland and did not cover the entire Igboland. The ideal thing would have been to cover the entire Igbo race. However, this would have been very cumbersome financially and otherwise for the researcher. So its first limitation is the scope.
2. Secondly, the ideal thing would have been to stretch the study for a whole length of time so that all the details are captured during the study. But the study was carried out for a very short period of time so as to reflect the capacity of the researcher.

3. Also, given all the chances, the study should have covered a wider area and length of time, demanding huge amount of human and material resources. This ideal situation could not be attained because of the financial short-comings of the researcher. As a single individual, the researcher is financially handicapped to embark on highly standardized and well-funded research.

8.6 Conclusion

Having gone through this research, some conclusions are bound to be made. First among equals is that the people under study have very strong filial attachment to their forebears to the point that they appear to be inseparable. The living would wish that the relationship that existed between them and their parents should continue even when their parents have been physically separated from them by death. Such physical separation is looked upon as being unrealistic and ephemeral. The people often believe that even though their forebears are far in the ancestral spiritual world, they are still very close to them, especially in the period of need and difficulty. This can be given as the reason why individuals from this cultural area would always call on their forebears for assistance whenever they are in difficulty.

Also, even though embarking on or organization of funeral rite is an expensive project, the progeny are not scared away from performing the ceremony. The ceremony is so vital in their belief system that it is among the utmost priority of every adult among the people. Anyone who has not performed the funeral ceremony of his/her forebears looks at
himself/herself as living unfulfilled life. Individuals continue to aspire and struggle from year to year to ensure that they embark on the funeral ceremony of their progenitors. However, where one fails to do it before one dies, one’s death is regarded as a fundamental ‘bad’ death. The debt continues to accumulate for the in-coming generations who must clear the back-log of such debts.

Again, when such debts are so cleared, it is believed that a lot of the ancestral spirits who have been suffering from restrictions and isolations are freed from such type of life. They are liberated and allowed to join other ones who have earlier on qualified. From their new position, they can have access to Ezechitoke Abiama Oshimiri (Almighty God) for abundant blessings for their progeny.

All adult members of the people are encouraged to continue to struggle in various fields of human endeavours so that they can make enough money with which to organize the funeral ceremony of their forebears because it is believed to be very vital to life. It is very disastrous for anyone to overlook the organization of the funeral rites of one’s progenitors and highly rewarding for one to do so. All efforts, therefore, should be geared towards performing the ceremony.
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## APPENDIX

### LIST OF THE INTERVIEWEES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Name of the interviewee</th>
<th>L.G.A. of origin</th>
<th>Date interviewed</th>
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